The Complete School of the Bible Manual

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THIS CHRISTIAN EDUCATIONAL TOOL IS DEDICATED...

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dr. Paul C. Paino General Overseer-CMI

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Introduction

The following comments and suggestions are presented to help you better utilize <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
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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

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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.

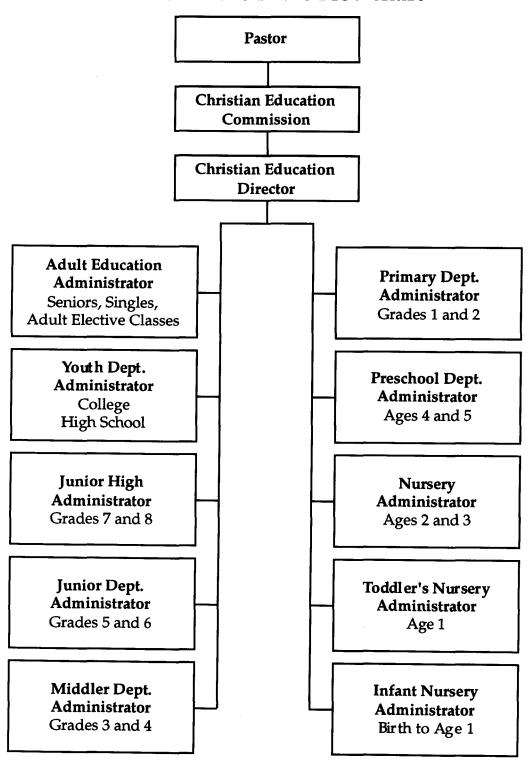
We strongly encourage developing ministry teams, rather than having a single teacher in the class. Every Bible class should have at least two members on the teaching team, even if the class is small. A team is able to generate more excitement, pray more effectively, and minister more comprehensively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

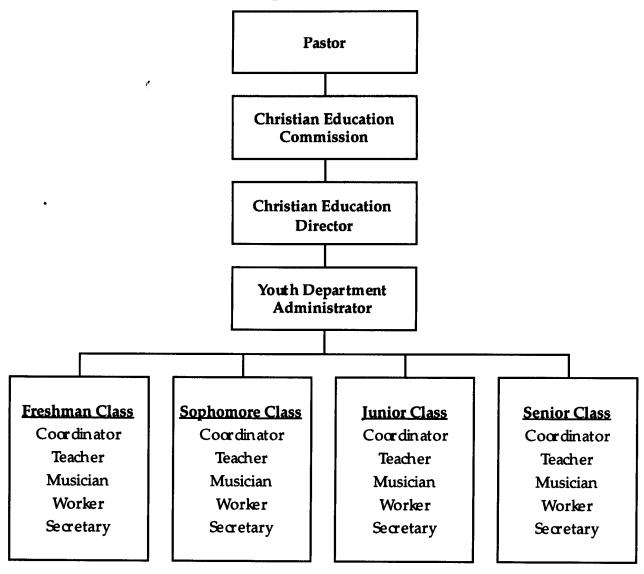
It is also important to establish a clear line of authority in the School of the Bible. Confusion reigns when there is more than one person thinking they are in charge. The larger the body, the more responsibility needs to be delegated, and the more authority needs to be established on multiple levels.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

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- 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.

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- 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.

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- 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 Eleventh and Twelfth Grade Students

Physical Development

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

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

Intellectual Development

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

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

Social Development

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

- diminish. Often, the teenager sees the need for parental help and guidance in selecting a college or vocation. Communication begins to improve. We can never overemphasize the importance of family relationships. (Ephesians 6:1-3)
- 4. During this time, dating becomes important in the teenager's life. Thoughts of marriage may even enter the picture. Teenagers are becoming more skillful in relating to members of the opposite sex. We must continually stress the importance of developing healthy relationships and of having self-control in the area of physical involvement.

Spiritual Development

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

- and happiness come from following Him.
- 3. We must continually present good role models to teenagers. In the long run, our character will do more for

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

Children of the '90's

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

A. Education and Entertainment in America Today.

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

B. What Secular Education Cannot Do.

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

Note: It is possible for some to operate in the satanic counterfeit, such as 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 <u>Bible Manual</u>. 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 Augustine

Augustine was born in the year 354 in North Africa, in an area that is now Tunisia. During that time, the church was becoming more and more carnal, and the Dark Ages were about to begin. His father was a pagan (non-Christian); but his mother, Monica, was a devoted Christian. Augustine had a sharp mind, and was a brilliant student. He studied the great philosophies of the day, and became welleducated. He moved to Carthage, where he studied to be a teacher and speaker. There, away from his mother's godly influence, he indulged himself in foolish and wicked living. Even though he was brilliant intellectually, he foolishly sought pleasure and wasted much of the strength of his youth. But his mother continued to pray; and God dealt with him in quiet ways. He began his own school, where he did a superb job of teaching. somehow the students kept forgetting to pay their tuition. Often, on the day he was to be paid, students would leave the school. Because of Monica's prayers back home in Africa, God would not let poor Augustine prosper in his wickedness.

When he was almost 30 years old, Augustine moved to Rome, where there were many good speakers. He joined a religious cult that focused on heathen philosophies, with a little Bible thrown in to make it seem legitimate. However, he occasionally went to hear a local bishop named Ambrose, because he admired the man's outstanding preaching ability. The preaching of Ambrose and the prayers of Monica were quietly moving his heart toward God.

One summer day, after his mother had visited him, he was sitting in his garden. He heard a soft voice saying, "Take up and

read." He had a scroll of Paul's letter to the Romans, so he opened it and read, "Let us walk honestly...not in rioting and drunkenness...But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh...." (Romans 13:13-14) The Word of God touched his spirit; and at the age of 33, Augustine repented of his many sins, and gave his heart without reservation to the Lord.

Augustine began immediately to serve God zealously. He began an intense prayer life, and now used his oratory skills in defense of the gospel. He went back to North Africa, where he settled in the small town of Hippo and became a priest. When the old bishop there died, he took on the task, and served there the rest of his long life. He wrote many great books, and 394 of his sermons are still preserved to this day. He is still regarded as a master thinker and preacher; and he has been a major influence on all succeeding generations of preachers. The great English preacher, C. H. Spurgeon, said that Augustine's sermons are a "quarry from which nearly every preacher of note has dug."

Augustine's mother died before he became famous; but she died knowing that her many prayers were answered and that he was serving God. Later, his old heathen father gave his heart to the Lord before he died. Augustine himself lived to be 76 years old. His 43 years of serving God were filled with joy and diligent work; and the little town of Hippo became renowned as a center for Christian wisdom, because of his influence. He is still regarded as one of the greatest minds the world has ever known.

The Story of Robert Blumm

Robert Blumm has come a long way. Born in New York City, at an early age he became a member of one of the gangs which roamed the streets at night. They were apparently seeking vengeance against the society they hated. At the age of 13, Robert began taking drugs. By the time he was 16, he had become an addict. No one seemed to care for him; and the God he only faintly knew about seemed very remote.

Dropping out of school, he joined the army, vaguely hoping to find some meaning for life. He was assigned to combat duty in Vietnam in 1966. There, fortunately, he became acquainted with two young Christian soldiers, who led him to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ in May of 1967. That same night, he experienced a further demonstration of the power of the gospel. He was instantly delivered from his life-controlling drug addiction by the Holy Spirit's anointing.

Bob Blumm learned that God had additional blessings for him in the experience known as the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Three months after his conversion he was baptized in the Spirit; and he spoke with other tongues, as the Spirit gave him utterance. He said, "Now I have a language to speak to God with, and the added blessing of power to preach the message of Christ crucified, risen, and coming again." (Of course, God understands English, too.)

Blumm often slipped away when off duty to find a secret place to pray. One night, after treating mass casualties, he left the surgical hospital to take his heavy burden to the Lord. As he felt the presence of the Holy Spirit around him, he began praying fervently in an unknown tongue.

After praying for some time, Bob felt the burden lift. At the same time, he sensed the presence of someone behind him. Looking around, he saw two Vietnamese civilian workers. For two months, they had observed him as he prayed from time to time. They told him that he had just prayed in the Vietnamese language; and through him, the Holy Spirit had addressed them by their names, Moui and Tinh. The Spirit had called them to repent of their sins and receive God's gift of salvation. He had also spoken to them about this supernatural baptism, with speaking in tongues.

Both of the Vietnamese men received Christ as their Savior that night. Robert Blumm is now an Assemblies of God minister, and a youth director in New York.

from "Spoken by the Spirit" © 1973
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The Story of Catherine Booth

Catherine Mumford was born in 1829. Three of her four brothers died in infancy; and so, her mother was very protective of her two remaining children. Catherine grew up in an atmosphere filled with love and wisdom. She received an excellent home education. Before she was twelve years old, she had read through the entire Bible eight times. As a child, she wrote brilliant and insightful magazine articles for magazines, being careful not to let them know that she was only a child.

One day, she was playing outside when she saw a drunk being arrested and taken off to jail. There were many people around who were jeering and mocking the poor man; but Catherine marched over to walk beside the man as he was led away. Later, while in boarding school, she was quick to defend and comfort those who were picked on by the older or "smarter" children who would play "practical" jokes on them. (This is called "folly" in the Bible.) She worked hard, but had to give up her schooling because of poor health. She had severe back problems; but while she was bedfast, she gave herself to reading and memorizing.

In her early teens, she "fell in love" with a young man; but then she realized that he was not completely devoted to God, so she broke off the relationship. This was a wise move, because she would later marry a great preacher and have a long and fruitful ministry with him.

Although Catherine was a devout and diligent person, she struggled with doubts about her salvation. For six weeks, she wrestled with God for assurance. Finally, she read a hymn which said,

"My God, I am Thine, what a comfort divine.

What a blessing to know that my Jesus is mine."

These words ignited her soul, and she ran to tell her mother of her joy.

One day, Catherine heard a fiery young Methodist preacher named William Booth. They became close friends, and began to encourage each other spiritually. They would talk about God, and inspire one another as soul-winners. In four months, they had led 1,739 people to the Lord. After a happy three-year courtship, they were married; and they began to travel together as an evangelistic team.

Mrs. Booth was very timid, and loved only to hear her husband preach. While she was focused on her four small children, God began to move her again. After Mr. Booth had preached to a group of 3,000 people, Mrs. Booth stood up and surprised him by publicly confessing that she had resisted God's call to preach, and that she would start preaching nightly. This was unusual, because many people were strongly opposed to women preachers. William and Catherine Booth became one of the greatest husband and wife preaching teams in history, and founded the great Salvation Army. In addition to a heavy preaching schedule, Mrs. Booth did her own housework, and ministered to the poor and to many guests. She also managed to do a lot of writing. Despite her physical pain, she labored diligently; and all of her nine children became preachers and soul-winners.

Section 5 Life-related Stories

The Story of David Brainerd

David Brainerd was known as a man of prayer. He was a missionary to the American Indians, during the early days of the nation.

David was born in 1718. His parents were of godly Puritan stock; but sadly, both of them died when he was young. From his youth, he was inclined to be sober and melancholy. He came to realize his sin at the age of 7 or 8. He was terrified at the thought of death; but he turned to a focus on works, rather than faith. He struggled with thoughts of sin, guilt, and of hell.

When David was a teenager, he spent long hours in intense prayer, seeking for the assurance of God's forgiveness. After seeking God with his whole heart and confessing his sins with deep sorrow, the light of God finally broke through the gloom in his heart, and he was gloriously saved. He later wrote, "Having been endeavoring to pray, then, as I was walking in a dark, thick grove, unspeakable glory seemed to open to the view and apprehension of God....My soul rejoiced with joy unspeakable to see such a God...."

David attended Yale College, in order to study for the ministry. In those early days in America, Yale and all the other colleges were Bible colleges. One day, after a professor gave a particularly dull sermon, David remarked to a friend that the man "had about as much grace as this chair." Someone overheard him, and he was expelled from college for the remark. This was very discouraging to him; but he continued to seek God with his whole heart.

David Brainerd was later accepted by the Scotch Missionary Society as a missionary to the American Indians. For several years, he braved great dangers and hardships in preaching to the Indians. Most Indian tribes were hostile to white men, both because of the unethical way they had been treated by the intruders, and because their religion was filled with superstition and occult practices (witchcraft). Nevertheless, this frail young man who came to them unarmed was accepted and then loved by the Indians, because he demonstrated so much love for Though many hardships greatly weakened his failing health, David was a young man given to intense prayer. It was normal for him to go into the woods and pray all night. He was once observed in the morning praying outdoors, with a circle around his body where the snow had melted. The ground was also spotted with blood he had coughed up.

David was in love with the daughter of his friend, Pastor Jonathan Edwards, in Northampton, Massechussettes. age of 29, he was told that he was dying. This pleased him, for he longed to be with Christ, Whom he loved more than life. He was concerned with the ministry, especially for the school he had founded for the Indians; but he was comforted by the fact that his brother John would go in his place to carry on the work. nineteen weeks, Jerusha Edwards lovingly cared for David. But the years of hardship and exposure were too much for his weak body. He told her, "Dear Jerusha, I am willing to part with you....We shall spend a happy eternity together." He died -young, but very ready to face the Jesus he had served faithfully.

The Story of William Bramwell

William Bramwell was born in Lancashire, England, in 1739. He was the tenth child out of eleven in the family. His parents were dedicated Christians; and they taught him to be honest and to work faithfully. He had a fine voice, and was an excellent singer.

He obtained a job as an apprentice courier several miles from his home, so he stayed in his employer's home. The man recognized that he was hard-working and honest, but he thought William was something of a religious fanatic. And so William was forbidden to use candles, to discourage him from reading the Bible so much. But he lay by the fireplace until late at night, pouring over the Word of God by the hour.

William was deeply convicted by his sins, and he sought pardon desperately. He would sometimes put coarse sand on the floor, and kneel on his bare knees. He even cut the skin off the tips of his fingers, inflicting pain to remind him of his sin. Some nights he would walk the ten miles to his parent's home and back again, praying all the way. But this penitence did him no good, because we are not saved by works or acts of penitence. We are only saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. His self-inflicted sufferings only damaged his health, and baffled his doctor.

Finally, during a communion service, William fully believed on the Lord, and received forgiveness. God also graciously healed his frail body, and restored him to good health instantly.

His family had forbidden him to relate to the Methodists, which had begun in revival fervor under men like John Wesley. The Methodists in those days were zealous for God, and they preached a strong holiness message. One day he heard a woman make a remark about "those Methodist devils," and became curious as to why they were so hated. He went to a Methodist meeting, where the people were worshipping God with great joy, and the Word was being preached with a powerful anointing. Ah, this was his kind of folk. William became a Methodist for life, and went on to become a fine preacher.

William Bramwell spent his life in a diligent pursuit of God and holiness. No matter what time he went to bed, he never slept past 5:00 in the morning, and was usually up praying by 4:00. One time he spent 365 straight hours in a sand-hole, seeking God. He discovered that holiness, also, was not to be obtained by works, but by faith. As he focused his attention and affections on the Lord, he found it a joy and privilege to walk in moral purity.

Bramwell married a fine Christian woman, and was a devoted husband and father. But he only saw his wife about once every six weeks or so, because he traveled in the ministry most of the time. He had a passion for lost souls, and his wife always encouraged and supported his calling.

Because he was so given to prayer, William Bramwell was sensitive in his spirit. In one church, he visited a sick man in his home. He said, "All is not right here. This man is not your husband. You have been living together in sin!" They both confessed in tears that it was so. On another occasion, he spoke to a woman who was highly respected in the church,

and said, "Woman, you are a hypocrite; and if you do not repent, you will go to hell." To everyone's amazement, she confessed that she was not right with God, and that she was grateful for his reproof. These are examples of the gift of the word of knowledge, spoken of in First Corinthians chapter twelve.

After sixty years of joyful and diligent service, William Bramwell met Jesus Christ face to face in the year 1818. The secret of this life that was so well lived was faithful, diligent, consistent prayer.

The Story of Anoosh Bullock

Anoosh was a dark-haired Armenian girl, born about 1952. exceptionally intelligent; and she gave her heart to Jesus at an early age, even though her father was not a Christian. When she was still very young, her father decided to move the family to Russia. Russia was an even more oppressive land than Armenia. Generally, people were allowed to move into Russia, but they could never move The Communist government worked very hard to keep people from leaving. It was a land ruled by atheists who hated God; and the system always created poverty and poor living conditions. Anoosh dreaded the idea of moving to Russia, for she wanted to travel and tell people about Jesus. Nevertheless, she went with the family.

In Russia, Anoosh excelled in learning, and was allowed to attend the university. Although Christians were harshly discriminated against, God helped her to do so well that they were forced to pass her with honors. Through it all, Anoosh was faithful to serve the Lord in this land of darkness and persecution; and she continued to pray that God would let her be free.

The desire of her heart was to be a preacher's wife. Specifically, she wanted to marry an American preacher. One day, as she was praying, she asked God to tell her why she was still not married. God said, "You have never said what kind of man you wanted." She said, "I want an American, with blond hair and blue eyes."

Alan Bullock was an American preacher who had spent years in Florida in

the drug business. He was a dangerous, hardened criminal, until the Holy Spirit came with convicting power, and turned his life around. He became a strong Christian, with a dynamic testimony of the grace of God. Alan moved to California. One night, he had an unusual dream. He saw clearly the face of a young, dark-haired girl; and he knew that it was the face of his future wife. Soon after that, he was with a minister friend who had just returned from a trip to Russia. As he was showing pictures of the scenes and people of Russia, Alan saw one picture that amazed him. He said, "Wait! That is the girl I am going to marry!"

It happened that the man remembered the girl, and knew how to contact her. Alan wrote to Anoosh, and she wrote back. In one of the letters, he asked her to marry him, and she said "Yes." They were still looking forward to meeting each other, and were praying that God would miraculously enable him to get her out of Russia.

Alan finally made the trip to Russia. After some exciting adventures, and some dangerous encounters with KGB agents, they prayerfully made their plans. Through much effort and prayer, Anoosh was finally granted freedom; and she went with her new husband to America. Today, the Bullocks have two children and a busy and fruitful life in the ministry. God continues to use them both, and to inspire thousands of people with their testimony that God is faithful to answer prayer, even though with men it is impossible.

The Story of John Bunyan

John Bunyan was born in England in 1628 to poor, but good parents. Both Thomas Bunyan and his son, John were tinkers by trade. A tinker was a craftsman who repaired pots and pans. As a youth, John was a pleasure-seeker. In the evenings, the young people of the village would gather to dance, play games, and create mischief, and John was a ringleader of the group. He married while still a teenager; but his first wife died. His second wife was a Christian, and she exerted a strong godly influence on his life. The more she prayed, the more God dealt with John about his selfish ways.

John loved to play sporting games, especially on Sunday. This increasingly became a struggle, especially when the preacher would speak against violating the Lord's day. For years, John Bunyan struggled with the gospel. He would try to be righteous, but he was usually overcome with guilt and fears. He was advised to study the Bible. He focused on the Ten Commandments, and sought diligently to keep them. He would be overcome with guilt when he broke one.

One day, John overheard four old Christian women talking about the things of God. They spoke with joy about their salvation and their victorious lives. Even though they were poor, John saw that they possessed the greatest treasure in the world; and he longed to have it, too. He studied the Bible faithfully, and prayed for God's mercy on his tormented soul. For two years, he could not even cry, though he wanted to repent. Finally, the light of God broke through his spirit when he read, "...having made peace through the blood of His cross,...." (Colossians 1:20) He received Christ as his Savior; and he

gained peace. Still, for some time, John was beset by doubts and the temptation to renounce Christ. He still tried to be righteous by works of the law. Finally, while walking in a field, the Lord spoke to him, and said, "Thy righteousness is in heaven." His faith responded; and he was baptized a Christian, never to be a doubter again.

John later began to preach on occasion, and many people were saved. eventually became the pastor of the small church he attended with his wife and five small children. But political strife was brewing. King Charles, out of fear that people would rise up against his rule, banned all "irregular assembly." Churches were to read only the liturgies of the Church of England, and were not to preach the gospel. John Bunyan continued to preach to his little flock; and he was arrested and imprisoned for twelve years. Many preachers died under the persecution; but John was strong, and survived, ministering to all those he could. While there, he wrote three books, including "Pilgrim's Progress" -- which became the most translated and read book in history, next to the Bible. Because of his suffering for the sake of the gospel, John Bunyan's life touched millions with this inspiring analogy of the Christian's quest for heaven. He was pardoned in 1652; but he was again jailed for preaching the Word in 1675. He was released after six threat months, although the persecution never lifted from his life. John Bunyan died in 1688, at the age of sixty. He was not wealthy or "important" by the world's standards; but he was rich in faith, and great in heaven's view.

Section 5 Life-related Stories

The Story of John Calvin

"Calvinism" is a term associated with the idea of "once saved, always saved," although John Calvin himself did not teach that concept. Calvin was a very godly man who believed strongly that people reap what they sow, and that God is a just and holy God.

John Calvin was born in France, in 1509. He was just a boy, when the German monk Martin Luther nailed his "Ninety-five Theses" on the door of the Wittenberg church, beginning the great Reformation. "Reformation" is a term referring to the fact that, during the Dark Ages, the Roman Catholic Church had gradually become more and more corrupt, and had focused primarily on tradition and politics, rather than God's Word. John Calvin was to become another great reformer of the Christian faith in the sixteenth century.

John was the son of a successful lawyer, who had great ambitions for his bright son. John's mother was a kind woman, who also possessed a keen intellect. They began to train John at an early age, and learning became a lifelong pursuit of John Calvin. At the age of 12, he was appointed a chaplain in the cathedral; and this job helped to finance his education. John graduated from the University of Paris, the most important college in Europe, at the age of 19. His father then sent him to another university to study law.

There, the young law student began his study of Greek. When his father died, John decided to study the Bible. In 1532, after diligently studying the Scripture, he surrendered to the call of the Holy Spirit and committed himself to the ministry.

In Paris, John studied theology; and he began to learn about the teachings of Martin Luther and the other teachers of the Reformation. Knowing the Bible well, he quickly recognized that they were correct, while the traditions of the Roman Church were not biblical. The French king supported the Roman Church in persecuting reformers; and John was exiled from his native land.

John Calvin fled to Switzerland, seeking to travel to Germany. In Geneva, he met Pastor John Farel, who was teaching Luther's doctrines at the leading church in the city. Pastor Farel decided that this brilliant and dedicated young man should work with him in Geneva, and he insisted that he remain there. In fact, he threatened John with the wrath of God if he dared go anywhere else. With the big pastor's fists grasping his collar, John agreed that it was surely God's will to stay.

John became the most influential man in Geneva. He sent out hundreds of men to preach the gospel throughout Europe; and he boldly preached the gospel and its principles to the Church. The city's civil government was strongly influenced by his teaching; and many laws were passed in response to his sermons. John Calvin wrote many books and articles in his career. Because of the opposition of ungodly people, both Calvin and Farel were banished from Geneva in 1535. But, in 1540, he was asked to return with his new bride; and he remained in Geneva for the remaining 23 years of his life.

Calvin built a great Christian academy in 1559; and he promoted education for children and adults. He was a powerful

leader of the Reformation, and established hundreds of churches in France -- the homeland that had rejected him as a young man. John Calvin is remembered today as a courageous champion of biblical Christianity, and as a man of God who helped change the world.

Section 5 Life-related Stories

The Story of William Carey

William Carey is called the "Father of modern missions." He was born in England in 1761. His father was a weaver, who later became a teacher. As a boy, William had a quick mind, and loved to read and learn. He especially loved to learn about science, history, and travel. He delighted in spending time in the forest, collecting botanical samples. But his frail health dictated that he find indoor work; and so, he learned the craft of shoemaking.

When he was 18, he was dramatically saved. He was zealous for God, and felt strongly the call of God to preach. His father, who was a strict church man, was pleased, although William refused to involve himself with the dead ceremonies of the Church of England. He chose to relate to the Methodists, who preached salvation by grace through faith. His mother even attended meetings in which he preached.

Young William pastored a small church; but he was paid so little that he had to make shoes and take a side job teaching. Because his heart burned with a passion for lost souls, he did not mind. He was troubled by a burden for the lost in foreign lands. In 1789, he started a society for the promotion of missions; and in 1793, he personally sailed with his wife, three children, and another family to India.

After an arduous 5-month voyage, they landed in Calcutta, India. The following year, Mr. Carey and Mr. Thomas were offered the position of managing an indigo factory. They immediately wrote to their society in England, informing them that they no longer needed any missionary support. Carey rapidly learned the

Bengalee language; and he began to preach to the people in their native tongue. He also started a school, and began translating the Bible for the people. During that time of labor, his little son, Peter died of a fever. Mr. Carey also took ill for five months.

The first Indian convert was named Krishnu Pal. It was difficult for Hindus to become Christians, because their families would usually persecute them, and often kill them. But when they realized that Jesus died for them, they saw that no price was too great to pay, compared to the joy of heaven and the Christian life.

As Mr. Carey progressed in his writings and translations, he was offered a teaching job for the government. It developed into a professorship with a large salary, almost all of which he gave to the work of the gospel. He was utterly unselfish; and he gave with kindness, although his wife was insane for years. She constantly ranted and complained, but he always treated her with tenderness. She died in 1807. Later, he married Miss Charlotte Rumohr, who was the joy of his life, until her death in 1820.

Professor Carey translated the Bible into seven languages, having learned to speak 20 languages. He wrote many books in many different tongues; and he taught the nation of India many things about agriculture and science, as well as the gospel. By 1817, he had founded 45 schools, a college, a hospital, and a newspaper. From his secular work in India, he gave over \$230,000 -- which was a large sum, in those days. William Carey worked hard all of his long life, and had many other accomplishments. But perhaps his most satisfying legacy was the

fact that all of his four sons became strong, self-sacrificing Christians. Three of them became full-time missionaries.

It was William Carey who said, "Expect great things. Attempt great things, and

always remember that we are not great men of God, but men of a great God." This is the picture of a great and happy man.

The Story of B. H. Carroll

B. H. Carroll was born in 1843 in Mississippi, the seventh child of Ben and Mary Carroll. In 1858, the family moved to Texas, where he spent most of his life. Young Ben was a big, strong boy. He grew to be six feet, four inches tall. He was also blessed with a brilliant mind. Ben was not able to obtain much formal education, but he read a lot on his own. In fact, he was a speed-reader, with a tremendous memory. He could quote many passages from books he had read years earlier, and could even cite the page numbers.

When we think of an intelligent scholar, we do not usually envision such a big, robust man; but B. H. Carroll was blessed both physically and mentally, far above others. He exercised his body and his active mind, and kept them both strong. Seeking excitement, he joined the Texas Rangers in 1861; and then he joined the army, in order to fight in the Civil War. He loved the thrill of fighting; and he was a skilled and courageous soldier. After being seriously wounded in a battle in Louisiana, he was sent home to Texas.

As a young man, B. H. Carroll was not a Christian. He had read many books on religion and philosophy; but he did not believe the gospel. He had read the Bible several times through, and he could debate brilliantly against Christians who were less familiar with their Bible than he

was. He even wrote a book in opposition to the Christian faith.

One day, a friend persuaded him to attend a Christian camp-meeting, where the preacher challenged unbelievers to give Jesus a fair try. He went forward, to the amazement of his friends, saying that he was not converting. He was going to give Jesus a chance. On the way home, he got down on his knees and prayed, wrestling with the claims of the gospel—and with the conviction of the Holy Spirit that gripped his heart. Jesus won; and B. H. Carroll surrendered his life to His service. He became a devoted follower of Christ.

His conversion was in 1865. The following year, Carroll began preaching; and soon he was named pastor of the First Baptist Church in Waco, Texas, where he served for 28 years. He eventually founded Southwestern Baptist Seminary, and was its first president. As a result of his years of fruitful and exciting ministry, B. H. Carroll wrote An Interpretation of the English Bible, which was originally published in thirteen volumes. included many sermons from his years in the pastorate, and other writings by this renowned scholar. He is still respected today as one of the great Bible scholars of all time. He died in 1914.

The Story of George Washington Carver

George Washington Carver was born a slave in Diamond Grove, Missouri, in 1864. His mother was owned by the Moses Carver family, and his father belonged to a neighboring plantation. The Carvers had been wealthy; but the marauding thieves of the early Civil War called "night riders" had stolen or destroyed much of the wealth in that part of Missouri. One night the night riders stole baby George and his mother, and took them to Arkansas. Mr. Carver sought after them, and found only the boy. The men offered to give him the sickly black baby for his valuable race That horse was about the only possession of real value he had left; but he accepted the trade. He took the dying baby home, and the Carvers nursed him back to health.

However, the boy remained frail during his childhood, so he was usually found in the kitchen, helping Mrs. Carver do "women's work." He became skilled at sewing, knitting, ironing, and working with plants. He also gained a deep faith in God, as he was spiritually trained by the devoted Christian family that raised him.

As a young boy, he found a spelling book, and quickly memorized the entire book. He then went to Neosho to attend a small school there, where he learned all they could teach him in only one year. George had a deep desire for education. He traveled to Kansas, where he earned his living by washing and ironing clothes, while he learned. He applied to a college, and was accepted. However, when he arrived, he was told that "Negroes are not welcome here." But he found a college in Iowa that would accept him, and he continued his education. He again started a laundry business, and studied art and

science. He later entered Iowa State College, where he earned a master's degree in botany, and was offered a teaching position.

Later, Booker T. Washington, a famous black educator, persuaded George to move to Tuskegee, Alabama, to head their agriculture department. He became concerned with ways to help the struggling agriculture industry in the south; and he worked to develop uses for such "useless" plants as the sweet potato and the peanut. Mr. Carver eventually created 150 uses for the sweet potato, and 300 products from the lowly peanut. Until then, they were considered weeds, unfit for human consumption. He made milk, soap, soup, wood stains, axle grease, ice cream, sugar, and hundreds of other things from peanuts, as well as roasted peanuts, and, yes, peanut butter.

He was summoned to present his findings in Washington to a congressional committee, who laughed at his sloppy clothes and unshined shoes. They had allotted ten minutes for his presentation; but even after he spoke for an hour and forty minutes, they asked him to continue. When asked how one man could have such amazing ability to create useful things out of plants, he would quickly say, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth." (Psalms 121:1-2) In addition to teaching from his vast knowledge of botany and chemistry, George loved to teach his Bible class. He was always quick to tell people that the secret to his success was, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:6)

Life-related Stories

The Story of the Chicken Church

Euley Hudson was a car salesman from Georgia, who loved to lead people to Jesus. In fact, he became so involved in evangelism that he eventually went soul winning full time. He has traveled all over the world, teaching many believers the art of one-on-one evangelism.

In the earlier days of his ministry, he was asked to take the pastoral role in a small southern Church of God church. The congregation had been in existence for 28 years. When the church started, someone suggested a chicken dinner to raise money for the building project. There were several excellent cooks in the group; and the dinner was a great success. In fact, it was so successful that the practice continued every Friday night for 28 years.

When Pastor Hudson arrived, he was blessed by the warm and friendly people. They fixed a delightful dinner for the new pastor and his family, and then informed him of their favorite fund raiser. Businessmen all over town testified that the best meal to be found was the Friday night special at the "Chicken Church." The young pastor was heartbroken to learn that the church was not known for prayer, helping the needy, or soul-winning. It was known only for its chicken.

The people insisted that the dinners were absolutely necessary for the work of the church to continue. After all, the total giving in tithes amounted to an average of only \$584 per month. There were only 37 members of the church -- and 30 of them were women. Without the dinners, the people felt that this nice little Pentecostal church would fold.

But, for the first time, they had a pastor who refused to be a "chicken" pastor. He talked to the ladies about how much time and effort went into their chicken work each week; and he challenged them to spend a third of that time on their knees. "I want you to go from wishbones to prayer bones." He taught them about evangelizing the lost, and intercessory prayer. He began to challenge them to follow his lifestyle, which witnessing involved to the lost everywhere he went. Very often, he would go to a restaurant and begin to talk to the waitress about her soul. Sometimes patrons would be surprised to see their waitress at this other table, on her knees, asking Jesus to come into her heart.

Pastor Hudson had a prayer meeting with the women, in which he gave them some basic instruction on witnessing. He sent them out by twos. Two hours later, the first pair pulled up the parsonage, their car screeching to a halt. They ran out of the car, shouting, "It works, it works!" "What works?" he asked. "The woman got saved. We got off our wishbones and on our prayer bones, and the woman we witnessed to got saved!" That was the beginning of a revival. Within 30 months, 114 souls were won to the Lord by personal evangelism, and 113 were added to the church. Seventy of these were men. The Sunday School attendance went from an average of 62 to 260 per week. The church that had been such a threat to the area chickens was now a threat to the devil. It all happened, because one pastor decided that a church should be empowered by prayer and do the work of soul-winning.

The Testimony of Christopher Columbus

Everyone in America knows that over 500 years ago, Christopher Columbus sailed from Spain in three small ships and "discovered" America. However, secular historians have twisted the story, and have omitted important facts, in order to avoid the Christian message of his story. Christopher Columbus was not seeking a trade route to India; but his primary purpose was to take the gospel to India and to fulfill his given name, which means "Christ-bearer." He was also convinced that the earth was round, not by watching ships sail over the horizon, but by reading in Isaiah 40 about the "circle of the earth." It was the Christians who thought that the earth was round; and the scientists of the day laughed them to scorn.

Columbus had to overcome the fears of his sailors, as well as his own. On October 9, 1492, he met with the captains of the Pinta and the Nina, who told him that the men were about to mutiny, unless they They had already gone turned back. further than expected -- and there was no land in sight. Discouraged, he pleaded for just three more days; and then, he promised to give up the dream, if they did not find land. We all know that they did sight land that third day. Christopher was the first to step on the new shore. He called the place San Salvador (Spanish for "Holy Savior"). He had landed on what we know as Central America.

Columbus still thought he had arrived in India, and called the natives there "Indians." Native Americans are known by that name today, even though it was a mistake. He took a few of the natives home with him; and after many other perils and the loss of two of the ships, he

made it back to Spain in the Nina and received a hero's welcome.

Some historians had a hard time believing that anyone would be so dedicated that his motive was really to spread the gospel; so they wrote that Columbus was merely trying to establish a trade route to the East. They also guessed that he must have derived his idea about a round earth from watching ships sail over the horizon. After all, why give the Bible so much credit? Here is an account, which is taken from Christopher Columbus' own words:

"It was the Lord who put into my mind (I could feel His hand upon me) the fact that it would be possible to sail from here to the Indies. All who heard of my project rejected it with laughter, ridiculing me. There is no question that the inspiration was from the Holy Spirit, because He comforted me with rays of marvelous inspiration from the Holy Scriptures....

I am a most unworthy sinner, but I have cried out to the Lord for grace and mercy, and they have covered me completely. I have found the sweetest consolation since I made it my whole purpose to enjoy His marvelous presence. For the execution of the journey to the Indies, I did not make use of intelligence, mathematics or maps. It is simply the fulfillment of what Isaiah prophesied...

No one should fear to undertake any task in the name of our Saviour, if it is just and if the intention is purely for His holy service. The working out of all

things has been assigned to each person by our Lord, but it all happens according to His sovereign will, even though He gives advice. Oh, what a gracious Lord, who desires that people should perform for Him those things for which He holds

Himself responsible! Day and night, everyone should express their most devoted gratitude to Him."

(From Columbus' <u>Book of Prophecies</u>. Available only in Spanish.)

The Story of William Cowper

William Cowper was born in England in 1731. He was an extremely quiet and gentle boy. His dear mother died when he was only six years old, and he was overwhelmed by grief. At school, a fifteen-year-old bully decided to pick on him. The larger boy noticed his sad countenance, and he took sadistic pleasure in inflicting pain and fear upon him. Poor William lived in dread of his cruel tormentor; and these early sorrows affected him throughout his life.

William eventually became a law student, but his fearfulness continued to hinder him in life. When he finished his studies, he was scheduled to go before the bar to be examined for his expertise as a lawyer. The thought of this great evaluation filled him with such dread that he could think only of suicide as a way to avoid the moment. One evening, the sad 32-year-old William went to an apothecary's shop and bought a vial of poison. He walked around a field, looking for an isolated spot to end his miserable life.

He then hired a coach to take him to the wharf, where he determined to throw himself into the cold waters of the sea. But the tide was low, and a porter was there. Intimidated by his presence, William went on home.

Struggling with conviction, and now thinking himself a murderer for attempting to end it all, William again listened to the condemning voice of the devil. Since he was not saved, he had no spiritual defense against the evil spirits who sought to drive him to death and destruction. Unable to bear the responsibility for his actions, William

Cowper had a mental breakdown. In the terms used in those days, William went mad. He spent five lonely months in an insane asylum.

After a visit from his brother, a ray of hope came into his heart. He picked up a Bible and began to read. He found Romans 3:25, which said of Christ, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." In a moment, he believed and received the gospel. His mind was now filled with gratitude and unspeakable joy. William, for the first time in his life, had joy and hope.

William Cowper wrote some of the hymns we sing today. He was the composer who wrote the great words:

There is a fountain filled with blood,

Drawn from Emmanuel's veins;

And sinners plunged beneath that flood

Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see

That fountain in his day.

And there may I, though vile as he wash all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood

Shall never lose its power,

Till all the ransomed Church of God

Be saved to sin no more.

When this poor lisping, stammering tongue

Lies silent in the grave,

Then in a nobler, sweeter song,

I'll sing thy power to save.

Section 5 Life-related Stories

Deliverance in Brooklyn

All Americans know that the American colonies declared independence from the British Empire in 1776; but today, most do not know that the war effort was motivated by Christian leaders, covered by prayer, and blessed by frequent supernatural acts of assistance by the Holy Spirit.

In August, 1776, shortly after the Declaration of Independence, the British decided to take control of the Hudson River by taking the town of Brooklyn on the western end of Long Island. The Americans had only 8,000 troops there, and half of them were untrained farmers. The British, under General Howe, had 32,000 professional soldiers on nearby Stanton Island, including 8,000 Hessians (German mercenaries).

On August 22, 15,000 British troops landed on the shore of Brooklyn, and were reinforced three days later by 5,000 Hessians. When they attacked the Americans, the defenders fought valiantly; but most of the patriot's lines fell under the overwhelming odds. When fresh enemy troops poured in, General Washington, who was watching from across the river with his generals, cried out to God, saying, "Good God, what brave fellows I must this day lose!"

The Americans grimly waited for the final British assault that would surely crush the group on the island; but, it did not come. Howe, for some unknown reason, did not take advantage of his opportunity, but waited until later to make his final move to crush the resistance. It seems that God had blinded the mind of a noted military genius, for this was a glaring mistake.

The next morning, there was again no final attack, although the Americans were surrounded by great odds, and had their backs to the mile-wide Hudson river which they could not be crossed without boats. That afternoon, a cold, pelting rain fell. It was miserable for the Americans, but it kept the British from attacking them; and the wind was keeping the British warships from entering the East River.

Washington quickly announced his plan to his officers. He would rescue the soldiers by evacuating them from the island on small boats. The other leaders were quick to point out that it was a foolish move. The British would devastate small boats on the wide river. They would be "sitting ducks." But some of the new recruits happened to be expert oarsmen, and there were some boats available.

All night long, the men rowed through the waters, carrying as many grateful soldiers across the river as they could. After midnight, the wind died down, and they glided through still waters. Skillfully they rowed, without a sound. General Washington went to the island, keeping some troops at the front, in order to screen the activity. At dawn, the sun threatened to reveal the vulnerable fleet to the British. But then, an amazing thing happened. A heavy fog rolled in over the island, settling over the front lines. It remained, completely shielding the evacuation; and it did not lift, until the last man had been carried to safety. As soon as the last boat was out of range, the miraculous fog suddenly lifted, revealing to the British that the 8,000 rebels had escaped, without the loss of a single life.

Life-related Stories

The Story of Domitian

During the time of Christ and the early Church, the world was under the political control of the Roman Empire. The Roman leaders were generally cruel and selfish, for they were pagans who rejected the gospel. The Christians, in the meantime, were spreading the gospel to the whole world. After the day of Pentecost, the early believers carried the happy message of salvation everywhere. The Church experienced explosive growth, in spite of opposition from Jewish leaders as well as the Romans.

After the death of the vile Emperor Nero, several emperors ascended to the throne, only to die from one sort of treachery or another. The next one to reign for very long was Domitian, who was also a cruel and godless tyrant. He killed his own brother, and also anyone else he suspected might threaten his position. He had some rich men executed simply to take their wealth for himself; and he ordered the death of anyone descended from King David.

He had Simeon, the Bishop of Jerusalem, crucified. The Apostle John, now the only one of the twelve who had not been killed as a martyr, was boiled in oil. But he miraculously survived; and so, he was banished to the prison island of Patmos, where Jesus appeared to him and gave him the great Revelation.

Emperor Domitian found it convenient to blame Christians for any national problem or natural disaster, such as earthquakes and famines. It was falsely rumored that Christians held indecent meetings at night, and murdered their children. A law was passed that mandated

that every Christian must be punished, unless he or she renounced Christ before the Tribunal. Many people would report Christians to the authorities, for the sake of personal gain.

Christians were stretched out and pulled on racks, seared with fire, boiled, scourged, stoned, and hanged. They were tortured with red-hot pincers, or put in arenas with wild bulls, to be gored. To add to the indignity of persecution, the relatives of the martyrs were refused permission to bury their bodies.

Timothy visited the Apostle Paul, just before his execution. Then he returned to Ephesus, where he served as the senior pastor of the church until almost the close of the first century. One of the pagan practices in Ephesus was to celebrate an annual feast, in which the people paraded through the streets in masks, carrying images of their heathen gods. Pastor Timothy met the procession, and reproved the wicked people for their idolatry. The crowd became enraged, and many of them beat the pastor with clubs. Within two days, he was dead.

Amazingly, Christianity flourished during these dark days of persecution. For one thing, people had to be sure they were really born again, because it often cost them their life. Also, it was a source of inspiration and wonder to other people who saw the courage and conviction of these saints, who had found a faith worth dying for. Many who witnessed their love and bravery gave their hearts to the Lord. God's Word also promises special honor and reward in heaven for those who give their lives as martyrs for the faith.

The Story of Christmas Evans

Christmas Evans was born near the village of Llandyssul in Wales, on Christmas Day in 1766. His father, who was a shoemaker, died when he was a baby. Since his mother was unable to care for him, he was given to an ungodly uncle. His uncle was cruel and selfish. He put little Christmas to work on the farm, when he was but a small boy. Christmas was not allowed to go to school. He was virtually a slave on the farm.

When Christmas was seventeen years old, he was sent to a Presbyterian church, where he became the servant of the pastor. He was, however, allowed to attend the church meetings. He was saved in one of the revival services. Under the influence of the church, and with the Holy Spirit burning in his heart, he learned to read and write. He had a deep hunger for the Bible, and he was very diligent in his prayer life.

The teenage Christian also suffered persecution. Some of his childhood companions, feeling convicted by his godly lifestyle, gave him a severe beating. In the process, they gouged out his right eye. But Christmas Evans continued to serve the Lord faithfully, and he never went back to his old life. He began to fellowship with some Baptists, who showed him much kindness.

When Christmas was 24 years old, he was ordained as a minister of the gospel. He began to travel around his home country of Wales (which is a part of Great Britain). He preached in churches, coal

mines, and out in the open fields. Anywhere people were willing to gather and listen, Christmas was willing to preach. Having suffered much in his younger life, he preached a recurring theme of grace and forgiveness. Because of the anointing of the Holy Spirit, thousands responded to his ministry and were powerfully converted.

Revival swept through the nation of Wales. It was referred to as the "Welsh Revival," although it did not have the Pentecostal emphasis of the great Welsh Revival of 1904. The emphasis here was on sin and salvation; and whole towns became dominated by the message of the gospel. Reports of the revival spread throughout the world. As the Welsh people prayed and sought God, there were even sovereign, supernatural visitations of the Spirit. People fell under conviction, even when there were no preachers around.

Christmas Evans is credited as the principle leader of this national revival. He was both an excellent preacher and a fervent prayer warrior. He had the rare combination of a sharp intellect and a humble spirit. He was fascinating to listen to, because he had a wonderful imagination and a quick wit. He was also passionate in his love for souls and his devotion to God. Christmas Evans is a great example of what God can do through a young person, even if he is neglected and abused. Suffering is not a sign that God does not love you. It can be preparation for a great life of compassion and purity.

The Story of Henrietta Green

Henrietta Green was a very unusual woman. She was not a Christian, but we can learn an important lesson from her life. Mrs. Green was divorced from her husband; and she lived with her son, Edwin in a cheap tenement apartment in New York City, around the turn of the century. She lived as many people there lived -- shivering through the winter in a cold, damp room, and living on the cheapest possible food available. When her son was young, Mrs. Green would read her copy of the newspaper, and then send the boy out to the street to sell it to some passerby. Sometimes she would use the newspapers to wrap around herself under her shabby coat, as insulation against the cold New York winter. She also used them under her boy's clothing, for in winter, their room temperature was often nearly freezing, and they almost never used the stove, even for cooking. would eat soup cold out of the can, because she wanted to save the cost of wood or coal.

Henrietta's son was used to living a meager existence. He never had toys, or new clothes. His only garments came from the Salvation Army, or were handme-downs from people who felt sorry for Mrs. Green or for him. He seldom had the luxury of a hot meal, or a nice, hot bath.

One day, young Edwin broke his leg. Mrs. Green tried to set the leg in a homemade splint made from sticks and rags; and she did her best to care for him. After weeks of agony, Mrs. Green took him to a clinic to get some medical help. Yes, the doctor said, young Edwin needed an operation. He must be in a cast. But it might be expensive. She would thank the doctor, and they would trudge on around town, looking for a clinic or a doctor who might take care of the leg at no charge. But no one offered, and Edwin suffered on.

Months passed, and the leg continued to deteriorate. Finally, during a visit with his father, Edwin confided his suffering. The father was determined to help. He sold many of his few possessions, in order to pay for medical help. But gangrene had set in, and Edwin's leg had to be amputated. Edwin did survive, but oh, how different his life could have been, if it were not for his mother.

You see, Hettie Green did not have to suffer in poverty all her life; but, she did. Mrs. Green had money in the bank. She was just too stingy to spend it, even when her son needed an operation. Because she did not know God as her source of peace, she hoarded her money, thinking it would make her secure. But she lived her whole miserable life saving money that she would never spend. In fact, she died with as much as one hundred million dollars—the richest woman in the world. Now, we would look at her life and say that she was also the poorest woman in the world.

Section 5 Life-related Stories

Ann Higgens Versus the Puritans

Modern historians tend to paint a very false picture of the Puritans who settled in New England in the 17th century. are always portrayed as dull, frowning people who thought all fun was a sin. The fact is that the Puritans were generally a happy people, who were committed to God and to one another. Historians who like to portray Puritans as mean, witchhunting bigots probably have a personal problem with these people who were submitted to God; and so, they picture any godly person as miserable. They see rebellion as a source of fulfillment, rather than the path to ruin as Christians see it.

The basis of early Puritan law was the Bible, which is always the best basis for a legal system. When a matter was to be judged, it was judged according to the wisdom of God, and not by the whim of the judge.

One Puritan woman who became rebellious was a woman named Ann She had accused another Higgens. member of the church in Boston of overcharging her for woodworking. He insisted that his price had been fair; and so, the church was called in to judge the matter. Several woodworkers from another town were called in to evaluate the work, and testified that Mr. Davis had given her a very fair price. In fact, it was perhaps too low. Mrs. Higgens was humbled, and confessed her wrong attitudes. But she would not let it be settled. She continued to speak negatively about Mr. Davis. She was sowing discord in the church, which is something God hates. (Proverbs 6:19) Finally, the good leaders of the church were called in again to consider excommunication.

After giving her another chance to repent, Pastor John Cotton and the other leaders of the church reluctantly pronounced that Mrs. Higgens must be disfellowshipped by the church "...for slandering...for raising up an evil report...for several lies...for hardening your heart against the admonition of the church...for sowing discord iealousies...." She was cut off from worship, and from all fellowship with the church, according to the Biblical pattern of I Corinthians 5.

The purpose of excommunication was not to hurt the person, but to help her come to a place of repentance. It also diminished her evil influence in sowing discord and division. Unfortunately, Mrs. Higgens did not come to repentance. Her heart remained hardened to God's correction, and it led her into even deeper sin. Ten years later, Mrs. Higgens was again brought to trial. This was a civil case, and the charge was witchcraft. This time, the sentence was death by hanging. It is true that "rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft," and in reality leads to more overt expressions of evil.

While it is true that there were some who were executed by the Puritans for the sin of witchcraft in the 1600s, it should be noted that the number of those convicted of that crime in America was rather small, compared to the many hundreds in Europe who died for the same crime. The Puritans, being a gentle people, reluctantly allowed a few executions because of the wicked things that were done by witches. History records that they were generally justified in their concerns.

The Story of "Just As I Am"

Charlotte Elliott was born in 1789. Although she lived about 82 years, she was puny and sickly as a young woman. One day, she was entertaining a visiting minister in her home. Her distinguished guest was Dr. Caesar Malan, from Geneva, Switzerland. Dr. Milan was ministering in England for a short time. As they engaged in polite conversation, the preacher gently asked her if she had been genuinely born again. He wanted to know if she had a covenant relationship with the Lord. Charlotte was offended by such a personal question. She had been taught that it was impolite to speak of such things, because it implied that the person did not seem to be a true Christian. She replied, "I do not wish to discuss the matter." Dr. Malan said that he would not pursue the matter if it displeased her, but that he would pray that she would become a born-again Christian.

Several days later, she saw him again, and apologized for her rude response. She said, "I do not know how to find Christ. I want you to help me." Dr. Malan said, "Come, just as you are." This simple suggestion led to her conversion. Later, it became the basis of inspiration for her best known poem, which has become one of the most widely used hymns in the history of Christianity.

Charlotte Elliott, the young and happy new Christian, wrote:

Just as I am, without one plea,

But that thy blood was shed for me,

And that thou bidd'st me come to thee,

O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am, and waiting not,

To rid my soul of one dark blot,

To thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,

O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am, though tossed about

With many a conflict, many a doubt,

Fightings and fears within, without,

O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

One summer evening in 1875, Pastor D. W. Couch was struggling through a service. He was expecting a visiting minister, who did not arrive. He turned to the music director, and asked him to lead in a familiar song. The congregation sang, "Just As I Am." The next morning, the pastor received a note from a lawyer, who said that he had something interesting to tell him. When they met, the man tearfully told him that he had found Christ as the Savior of his soul.

He said, "I am the son of a pastor, and I have lived a selfish and sinful life. I was in my room across the street, meditating on the wickedness of my soul, and the

many opportunities for salvation I had avoided. I felt that I had sinned against light, and against the prayers of my parents, and that there was no hope for me. Then, I heard you young people downstairs singing "Just As I Am," and I

thought, 'Does God bid me to come? Is this for me?' Then the congregation upstairs sang the same hymn, and I knew God was speaking to me. I said, 'O Lamb of God, I come!' My soul is filled with joy, and I know my parents will rejoice."

The Story of Terry Law

Terry Law is a mighty preacher, who leads a great ministry team from Tulsa, Oklahoma. He has had tremendous results in Spirit-led evangelism throughout the world, particularly in the Soviet block countries.

Terry Law was born in 1944. He grew up in Canada, in the home of a Pentecostal pastor. His father was a pioneer preacher, who established churches in Northern Saskatchewan. When Terry was 13, he went with his family to a camp meeting. One night, he was very moved by the service; and he stayed in the tabernacle, while everyone else went to their cabins. Late at night, the speaker remembered that he had left his Bible on the pulpit. He walked into the dark hall, and said, "Is anyone here?" Terry said, "Yes," and the preacher walked over to him and began to pray for him. He then prophesied, "Young man, I see you standing before hundreds of thousands of people, as you preach the gospel throughout the world." knew he was called to travel; but he did not want to go.

When Terry was 16, he was working in a grocery store, making as much money as his poor father made in the ministry. He felt the call to adventure; and he looked forward to getting out of his strict religious home, so that he could have some fun in life. After high school, he went to study law at the university. One night, he got drunk with some college buddies. They all decided to go to his father's church and disrupt the service. Sitting in the back, they made noise talking and laughing; but no one paid any attention to them. Halfway through the service, Terry became instantly sober, and was overcome by conviction. He went forward and committed his life to Christ. He immediately left law school and started in Bible college.

After graduating, as he was working in a hardware store, the Holy Spirit spoke to him about traveling with his friend, Dennis Bjorgan. He had not heard from him in a year; and he had no idea how to reach him. The next morning, he got a letter from Dennis, which had taken a month to reach him. The letter said that Dennis felt that God wanted Terry to travel with him. And so they traveled through North America, singing and preaching. In 1965, they went by freighter to Africa, where they saw thousands of souls saved by the power of the gospel.

In 1967, Terry went to Oral Roberts University. Soon, he was involved in Dr. Roberts' crusades as a worship leader and assistant. On a trip to Europe with the World Action Singers, he met Jan D'Arpa. They were soon married; and they launched the group, "Living Sound." Through a series of miracles, the Lord arranged for them to spend a year as a ministering music group in Africa, where thousands of people were saved and filled with the Holy Ghost.

God blessed Terry and Jan Law in the ministry; and He also blessed their marriage with three fine children. But one day, in 1982, while Terry was in London preaching, he received word that his beloved wife had been killed in a car accident in Tulsa. He was crushed, and unable to function for some time. He was later called by Oral Roberts, whose own son had recently died. Oral said, "Terry, go home, get down on your knees, and start

to pray in the spirit. You have got to begin to praise the Lord."

The next morning, Terry rose and began to pray. He struggled for hours, trying to praise God; but it seemed so hollow. He struggled with the temptation to become bitter toward God. Finally, the words from Psalms 34:1 came to him: "I

will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth." He made the decision to bless the Lord, even though he did not feel like it. As he began to offer the "sacrifice of praise," the bands of bitterness were broken; and God healed his spirit. Terry Law went on to do exploits for God, as a missionary in Communist countries.

The Story of R.G. LeTourneau

Have you ever wondered who invented the bulldozer, and the many giant earth-moving machines that are used to build highways and dams? The leader of that industry was a Christian businessman named Robert LeTourneau.

When World War I broke out in 1917, Robert was a young, hard-working man who had his own auto garage business. He went to help the war effort by going to work in the shipyard; and he left the business in the hands of a partner. When he came home in 1919, he discovered that the partner had wasted all of his money on drinking and immoral living.

As Bob worked long, hard hours trying to restore the business, he found that there were more and more bad debts and losses, because the partner had not kept records. He would repair a car and sell it, only to find that the partner had borrowed much more on the car than it was worth, and then had kept the money for himself. After many months of hard work, he finally sold his business; but he was still \$5,000 in debt.

Bob was a hard worker; and he soon got a job operating road building equipment for \$2 an hour, which was a good wage at that time. However, he and his wife had to live in an old, leaky shack with no plumbing or electricity, because they had no money. Later, God provided the money to buy an old scraper and tractor; and Bob began to operate his own business again. He dedicated his life to the Lord, thinking that he would have to give up his secular work to become a preacher; but the Lord called him to be a businessman, and so he dedicated his finances and

abilities to help his local church, missionaries, and the poor.

When he took on his first major building contract, he found that he could not meet the deadline without more efficient equipment; and so he invented the bulldozer to replace the old scraping machine that was pulled by a tractor. Over the years, he invented many giant earthmoving machines that could increase the productivity of one man to do the work of hundreds.

He discovered that every time he went into partnerships with men, he would have conflicts with them. It seemed that God would bless his business when he was working to raise money for missions; but when there were partners, they would be plagued with envy, doubts, and mounting losses. He learned that God was the Partner he could depend upon; and that when he worked for God's honor, he always prospered. Whenever he faced an impossible deadline, he would go to prayer and give it to the Lord. God would then give him ideas for new machines that would meet the need.

Bob learned that whenever he worked for money, he was not successful. When he sought to bring increase to God's kingdom, he was anointed to make money. In 1928, he found that he had more contracts than his men and machines could handle; and he prayed, "God, if You do not help me, I am ruined." Bob quickly realized his mistake; and he prayed, "God, I did not mean that. God, please help me not to let You down." He went to bed with peace in his heart; and the next day, God gave him the plan for a cable-controlled scraper that could move

ten tons of dirt at a time. The next road was finished three months ahead of schedule.

One day, Bob and his wife decided that since they were working for the Lord, they should dedicate half of all their business and personal profits to God. Eventually, they began the practice of giving 90% of their income to Christian work. R. G. LeTourneau died in 1969 at the age of 80, a happy man who had done much in his life for the work of missions and evangelism, because he gave his business to the Lord.

The Story of Dr. Morrison

Many years ago, a prominent preacher named Dr. Morrison was asked by a mission society to conduct a ministry tour around the world. There were many Christian leaders who needed training and encouraging, in so many nations. He consented, knowing that the trip would take much more than a year to complete, because he would travel mostly by ship and by train.

After the long and exhausting journey, he arrived at his home town late at night. He was the only passenger who got off the train at that station; and there was no one there to help or even greet him. One solitary light bulb dimly illuminated the platform. The night man had gone on home. Dr. Morrison, already weary, found it necessary to pick up his own heavy baggage and carry it up the hill to his home.

As he trudged up the long road, he began to feel sorry for himself. He had just read in the paper of the recent homecoming of President Teddy Roosevelt. The President had been to Africa on one of his famous big game hunting expeditions, attended by many servants and surrounded by the press and many celebrated people. When he arrived in New York, he was greeted by a large

brass band and a cheering crowd. He was given a ticker tape parade down the main street of the city; and the news of his arrival was spread across the nation.

Dr. Morrison frowned as he made the inevitable comparison. "Lord, I nearly died in India from drinking the filthy water there. I suffered through unbearable heat and terrible living conditions in that land, so filled with demonic activity. I was nearly killed in Borneo by wicked native warriors; and I endured many hardships and perils. Roosevelt was on a vacation, shooting animals -- yet he is warmly greeted by a great crowd. I have labored to preach the gospel and save souls, and not one person is here to welcome me home."

As he continued on, he began to be quiet before the Lord, and then a strong but gentle Voice spoke to his spirit, "Son, you are not home yet." With that comforting word from the Holy Spirit, his countenance brightened, and his steps became lighter. He saw that the last chapter was yet to be written, and that this was not the end of the story. As he thought about his real home, and the greeting he would one day receive, he began to rejoice on his way, and to look forward to the next day's adventures.

Section 5 Life-related Stories

The Ministry of Paul E. Paino

Dr. Paul E. Paino was born in Indianapolis, Indiana in 1923. His parents were Italian emigrants who became involved in the Pentecostal revival in America; and they were both outstanding preachers of the gospel. At one point, both Thomas and Lyda Paino pastored separate churches. It should be duly noted that Mrs. Paino had the larger of the two congregations. Many of their children and grandchildren are actively involved in Christian ministry today, which is a strong testimony to their faith and faithfulness.

Paul continued to pursue the ministry, although he was often reluctant. He graduated from Central Bible Institute of Springfield, Missouri, in 1944. That same year, he married his high school sweetheart, Mary Lascu.

With Mary at his side, Paul Paino answered the call to pastor in Lebanon, Indiana. He often thought of his father, who had told him, "A congregation will never be any more spiritual than its leader." In 1950, they moved to Fort Wayne, Indiana, where they eventually founded Calvary Temple Worship Center on June 10, 1956. Calvary Temple began with meetings, first in a garage, and then in a movie theater. Today, the ministry's facilities are located on a large development on the city's northwest side.

During the 1960s, Calvary Temple opened its doors and heart to the "hippies;" and it experienced great spiritual and numerical growth. Dr. Paino earned his reputation as a Sunday School man by reaching out throughout the city with a strong bus ministry and a large team of youth workers. He developed a training program for young preachers,

which has become known as Christian Training Center. It has graduated hundreds of people from its two-year junior college program. Dr. Paino also established a beautiful 220-acre campground near Angola, Indiana, which provides the setting for many Christian camps and activities. He is also the Calvary founder of **Ministries** International, which is a fellowship of more than 125 churches, worldwide. Dr. Paino, who is a tireless worker and is strongly self-disciplined, is known as a man who is quick to forgive and give people a second chance. He is one of the most sought-after speakers for conferences and conventions in America, because of his ability to inspire and instruct preachers in the practical aspects of Christian ministry.

Paul Paino is motivated with an intense desire to win lost souls and to focus on foreign missions. He has raised millions of dollars for other ministries. Because of his vision for Sunday School, he raised up a staff of workers to develop the Complete School of the Bible Manual, which is now going all over the world as a training tool for young people (and Christian workers, as well). This great resource is the product of the spiritual zeal and leadership skills of this one man, whose influence has touched many nations with a solid, full-gospel Bible This dynamic curriculum is revolutionizing Bible classes across America, and is being translated into several languages.

Perhaps the greatest source of satisfaction for this highly honored and successful preacher is the joy of seeing both of his sons also do well in the ministry. Paul Craig Paino is now the senior pastor of Calvary Temple. He is a strong and capable leader, with a true shepherd's heart. Philip Carter Paino is a brilliant Bible teacher, with an emphasis on ministry to people with addictive and compulsive behavior.

After such a successful and rewarding ministry, which has spanned over 50 years, one would wonder about what title or honor Paul E. Paino would like to be remembered for. But Bishop Paino said, simply, "I would like my epitaph to say, 'Paul Paino, a preacher."

Section 5 Life-related Stories

The Story of John Patton

John G. Patton was born in Scotland in 1824. He grew up in a small, three-room cottage with his four brothers and six sisters. His father was a godly man, who went into the small inner room of the thatch-roofed home to pray three times every day for God's blessing on his family. His good father made a strong impression on his life; and John became a committed Christian as a young boy.

At the age of twelve, he was helping his father in the stocking business. In his free time, he was already studying Latin and Greek. He went on to study medicine and theology in Glasgow. After Bible school, John spent ten years ministering to the poor people in the slums of the city where he had been educated. It was hard and discouraging work. But he led many people to the Lord; and eight of his young converts later became preachers.

John married a Christian girl when he was thirty years old. That same year, they were asked to go to the New Hebrides Islands (located in the south Pacific) as missionaries. They were informed that, although the islands were beautiful and the weather was very pleasant, it was difficult to get missionaries to go there. The last couple had been eaten by the local cannibals.

It was indeed dangerous. The Pattons did not know the language, so they had to communicate as best as they could with sign language. As he learned the language, he started developing a written form, for there was no reading nor writing in this rare language. Eventually, he developed a Bible for them.

Life was indeed difficult for this gentle missionary. His wife and baby boy died with a tropical fever. Natives were always stealing his belongings and equipment; and he was in constant danger. He continued to labor in the gospel for many years among the savage people of the islands, and God gave him fruit in his labors.

By the time he died in 1907, at the age of 83, John Patton had built a home, a school, a missionary headquarters, two orphanages, and a church. His translation of the New Testament into their native language was printed and published in 1899. Twenty-five of the thirty islands had missionaries and churches; and there were no more cannibals. Most of the people on the islands had followed the faith of this good leader, and had become born-again Christians. John Patton went on to his great reward, leaving the world a much better place than he had found it.

Pray for Our Bus

In the late 1960's, a spiritual renewal was sweeping America and other parts of the world. Pentecostal and Charismatic churches were experiencing growth; and many miracles came about, as a result of believing prayer. While many spectacular things happened in the big churches and the cities, God was also moving in the little towns.

Don Burchett and his wife, Bonnie were old-fashioned Pentecostal pastors with a special love for kids. The pastored the Pentecostal Holiness Church in Independence, Kansas, for many years. They had three children of their own; but over the years, many more learned to call them "Mom" and "Dad." They were hardworking folks with big hearts. The church congregation was small; and so it took Pastor Burchett three years to build a new church. He labored on the building 50 hours a week, in addition to his pastoral Most of the time, he did the carpentry, masonry, and other work alone; and he built a beautiful building.

As the young people became more and more focused on spiritual things, they developed quite a witnessing program. As youth groups do, they would gather for recreation and eating -- but there was a difference. Instead of the leaders trying desperately to work in a short prayer or devotional after hours of fun and games, they would more often hear, "When do we quit the volleyball, so we can start praying?" "Let us get on with the Bible study." That was not the leaders. That was the kids!

Eventually, the group became very active in weekly street evangelism and open street meetings in other small Kansas towns, as well as their own town of 18,000. The church had purchased an old school bus, which was the only transportation for the youth group.

One evening, as the youth group was preparing for a Friday night street meeting, the sponsor came in with some sad news. The bus had a broken piston rod, which required a complete overhaul. He could hear the clank of metal against metal, as he cranked over the engine of the old bus.

Suddenly, one of the teenagers said, "If God can heal bodies, why can He not heal our bus?" No one seemed to have any better sense, except perhaps for the adults who did not want to dampen their enthusiasm. So they all gathered around the old bus and laid hands on the fenders. "Crank it up." The starter was engaged, and the old engine gave forth a sickening "clank, clank, clank" sound. Undaunted, they prayed again. They lifted their hands, praying in tongues, and someone said, "Try it again." "I did already. running." The engine was indeed running, but now it was running smoothly. It had a healed piston rod. God had given the old bus a major overhaul, instantly. That night, the group had extra reason to rejoice, and faith to believe that God wanted them to be out witnessing and singing for Him.

The Story of Russian Believers

The Apostle Paul said that "...where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Romans 5:20) This is clearly illustrated in the nations of the world which strongly oppose Christianity, such as communist countries. When people's very lives are threatened if they believe, they tend to have much more grace from God, in order to overcome the evil in their society.

Since 1917, historians claim that the communist party has been directly responsible for the deaths of about 65 million people in the world -- and many because they were Christians. Marxists felt that Christianity threatened their ability to promote their political ideology, because Christians tended to have stronger families, and greatly valued freedom. But when an oppressive government is in control of a country, the Christians there will tend to be much stronger in their faith than believers in other nations, who live an easy life.

During the 1960s, when socialism was still the controlling element in Russia, the Christians were forced to function underground. The state-sanctioned churches were spiritually dead, and therefore no threat to the communist party.

But the underground church was alive and well. With no money to operate, it was a pure venture of faith. Reports of God miraculously turning water into wine were common, because water was all they had. Meetings were often held in dark, remote basements, in the middle of the night. Even then, the believers were told that the time and place of the meeting could not be divulged ahead of time, because of the danger of spies. The people would have to receive a word from the Lord.

One night, in a secret believers' meeting, the sermon was interrupted by a knock at the door. A group of Russian soldiers burst into the room, waving machine guns at the startled congregation. The officer in charge said, "This is an illegal meeting. We know you are Christians. Those of you who wish to renounce Christ may do so by leaving the room. You have twenty minutes to comply. Those who remain will be shot."

The people were troubled, but they had known to expect this very real possibility. Millions of believers throughout history have had to make the choice of renouncing their faith, or dying. As the minutes ticked by, some of the people, ashamed and embarrassed, quietly filed out of the dim room and into the night. But a good number of men, women, and young people stayed in their seats, quietly praying and weeping.

After the time was up, the officer ordered the remaining believers to stand up against the wall. Many of them held hands as they wordlessly complied with the orders. As the soldiers positioned themselves on the other side of the room, the officer suddenly smiled and said, "Brothers and sisters, we are Christians, too. Now that all the phonies are gone, we can really have church!"

It was a good service, after all.

Section 5 Life-related Stories

The Story of A. B. Simpson

Albert Benjamin Simpson was born in 1844, the fourth of nine children. His parents were Scottish. They had moved to Prince Albert Island, Canada, where Albert grew up. The Simpsons were good, devout people; and several of the Simpson boys, including Albert, had plans to enter the ministry later in life. But Albert was torn. He was concerned that if he really gave his life to the Lord, he would not have much fun in life — and fun was very important to him.

His great love was hunting. He longed to be out in the fields with a beautiful steel shotgun in his hands, waiting for flocks of unsuspecting birds to come within his deadly range. When he was fourteen years old, he had saved enough money to buy a used shotgun, which he hid from his parents. Whenever he could, he would sneak out of the house, and become the terror of all things flying.

But one day, the inevitable happened. The Simpsons found out about Al's gun. He was humiliated and crushed, as his parents made him return the gun to the man from whom he had bought it. They also insisted that his money not be refunded. It was a great loss to Albert. But his character was such that, rather than rebel in bitterness, he submitted; and he settled his heart to pursue the honorable occupation of the ministry.

The Simpson family was large, and did not have a lot of money. Albert's father met with him and his oldest brother, explaining to them that he was financially able to send only one of them to college to study for the ministry. It was Al's duty to stay home, allowing the eldest brother the opportunity to go to college.

Later, Al became very ill. During this time of physical suffering, God met with him in a very special way; and he gave his heart unreservedly to the Lord. When he recovered, he received his father's permission to go to Bible college, with the understanding that he would have to pay his own way. In 1861, he enrolled in Knox College, near Toronto. He earned several scholarships; and he also worked for his tuition by teaching and preaching at every opportunity. He was ordained in 1865; and he accepted his first pastorate in a church in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. He was married the following day.

Pastor Simpson later was called to serve as pastor of a Presbyterian church in Louisville, Kentucky. He had a passion for souls, and began to conduct evangelistic meetings every Sunday night at different places around the city. One night, he went out during a storm to call on a man who was not saved. The man was moved by such a display of compassion; and he readily received salvation.

A. B. Simpson was skilled in the Word; and he earned a doctor's degree. He later moved to New York, and continued to be active in evangelism, as well as missionary work. He had such a heart for missions, that his ministry eventually grew into what is now the Christian and Missionary Alliance organization, which continues to support and send out many Christian missionaries around the world. When asked the secret of his success, he acknowledged that it was the power of prayer.

The Story of Bud Sickler

The year was 1944. Bud and Faye Sickler were newlyweds, launching their new life together. But they did not have ordinary dreams of just a house, a car, and a house full of children. They had a missionary call burning in their hearts. That very year, they traveled to Kenya, West Africa, to begin working as missionaries for Jesus. A half century later, they are still there, faithfully and joyfully doing the work of evangelists, pastors, and apostles, and leading thousands of African families in their walk with the Lord.

Bud and Faye began in the bush country of Kenya, where the villages were scattered by the hundreds over vast areas of hot, dry bush country. They taught and cared for the people in their little mission station for nine years. When their missionary term was up, they did not return to the United States. Instead, they moved to Mombasa, a port city, which is the second largest city in Kenya.

They started a church; and they were faithful, hard-working pastors. In 1962, Pastor Sickler felt impressed by the Lord to get some kind of van to use as a church bus. He found an old Volkswagen van for \$800; and he discovered that they could stack in 22 kids. Since he had little money, he decided to obtain a short-term loan, and believed God to raise the money on his next trip to the United States.

But that trip was a disappointment. He was not able to raise any money at all for the van they so needed. He began to

question God about the wisdom of buying it in the first place. It was Friday evening, and the note was due the following Monday. Mrs. Sickler prayed, "God, I am tired of this debt. Please provide the money we need, and show us what You want to do about this vehicle."

On Sunday morning, she saw that the van was a blessing to some very important little people. As she made her rounds, she was startled to see a little girl running behind the van, crying and calling out for her to stop. The girl was entirely naked. She had overslept, and when she heard the sound of the old Volkswagen, she grabbed her clothes and ran for the door. She did not want to miss Sunday School. The van stopped; and she clamored in, happily pulling on her clothes, as they made their way to church.

The next day, the note was due. Pastor Sickler went to the mail box, and he found one letter. It was from an acquaintance in the United States. The letter read, "Dear Bud, You have been on my heart lately, and I felt impressed to send you an offering. Here is \$800. Please use it for any need you might have."

Today, the Sicklers minister in a large church in Mombasa, and oversee some 4,000 native churches in Africa. God has blessed their faithfulness with much fruit; and He has blessed their lives with great joy. Many preachers who attend full-gospel conferences in the States know Bud Sickler for his hearty, shrill, distinctive laugh.

The Story of Billy Sunday

Billy Sunday was born in 1862 in Ames, Iowa. His father was a Civil War soldier who died when he was just one year old; and so, he was reared in an orphanage. He lived a rough life as a boy, working at odd jobs and growing up around street gangs. He proved to be especially athletic; and in 1883, he joined the Chicago White Sox and became a successful professional baseball player.

A few years later, he was among the people who heard a sermon at a street meeting by Harry Monroe of the Pacific Garden Mission; and he responded to the altar call. Until 1891, he continued his career in baseball, as he eagerly grew in the Lord as a young Christian. At the peak of his career at age 29, he quit professional sports and took a low-paying job as an assistant secretary for the YMCA, which in those days was a strong evangelical Christian ministry. He faithfully served as a helper to other ministries for three years, and was eventually ordained as a preacher.

He conducted preaching campaigns in army camps during World War I, and then began to preach in tent meeting crusades across America. In Philadelphia, over 2,300,000 attended the meetings, in the eight weeks of the city-wide revival services. Billy Sunday continued to preach for 20 years in cities around the country. He was a fiery preacher, preaching fervently against sin — especially the sin of drunkenness. He was famous for his acrobatic style of preaching.

He was one of the most energetic preachers who ever lived. To emphasize a strong point, he would do a cartwheel or a hand spring, or leap over furniture. It was rare that anyone would sleep through a Billy Sunday meeting. At the close of the sermon, people would throng to the front up the "sawdust trail" to respond to the call for repentance and salvation.

It is said that his sense of humor was a bit wild at times; but with his two-fisted preaching, he brought a million souls to Jesus Christ in his years of preaching, and he helped influence the nation to pass legislation outlawing liquor. The nation approved a Constitutional amendment prohibiting the sale of alcoholic drinks. It was called "prohibition." Even one of his critics said, "He greatly aided the cause of temperance." Billy Sunday died in 1935, just two weeks before his 73rd birthday. 4,400 people attended his funeral.

Here is an excerpt from his sermon entitled, "Booze."

When you come staggering home, cussing right and left and spewing and spitting, your wife suffers, your children suffer. Don't think that you are the only You're placing a shame one who suffers. If you're a dirty, lowon your family. down, filthy, drunken, whisky-soaked bum you'll affect everyone around you. You can't live by yourself. I occasionally hear a man say, "It's nobody's business how I live." Then I say he's the most dirty, low-down, whisky-soaked, beer-guzzling, bull-necked, foul-mouthed hypocrite that ever had a brain rotten enough to conceive such a statement and lips vile enough to utter it. You say, "If I am satisfied with my life, why do you want to interfere with my business?" If I heard a man beating his wife, and heard her shrieks and the children's cries and my wife would tell me to go see what was the matter, and I went in and found a whiskysoaked, hog-jowled, weasel-eyed brute dragging a little woman around by the hair, and he said, "Isn't this my wife that I got a license for, and aren't these my kids?

If I want to beat them, it's none of your business," I would never apologize. I'd knock seven kinds of pork out of that old hog."

The Story of T. DeWitt Talmadge

Thomas DeWitt Talmadge was born in 1832 at Bound Brook, New Jersey. He was the youngest of 12 children. He was a bright and exceptional child. His parents were loving, godly people who consistently prayed together twice a day. They were faithful in family devotions, and wisely imparted the fear of the Lord and good character values to all of their children. They were faithful to soundly spank each of their children when they were rebellious; but Tom later recalled that they were probably a bit softer on him than they had been on all the others, because he was the baby of the family. It was evident that he was a boy of exceptional talents and potential in life.

Thomas graduated with honors from the University of New York, and then began to study law. But God had mightily saved him at the age of 18; and as he sought the Lord, he felt strongly led to pursue the ministry, instead of the legal profession. After one year of law school, transferred to the Brunswick Theological Seminary. Thomas again did well in academics, and he finished his seminary studies. During the Civil War, he served as a chaplain in the U. S. Army. After the war, he became the pastor of the Central Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn, New York. He had been offered other churches which were larger, because he was already acknowledged as a great preacher. But he prayed, and felt God directing him to this church that really needed ministry. There had been problems in the church, and it was down to only nineteen active members.

Talmadge worked hard, and prayed diligently. Under his leadership, the

church grew large and strong. The people, in one accord, gave and worked together to build the Brooklyn Tabernacle. In 1872, the new tabernacle burned to the ground. Undaunted, the faithful pastor and his congregation set to work rebuilding it. When that second building burned up, they prayed, rolled up their collective sleeves, and built it back the third time. This building was used for the ministry for many years. The 5,000 seats were usually filled every week with eager listeners. For 25 years, he filled auditoriums everywhere he preached, and saw thousands of people saved every year.

Talmadge was a prince of preachers. He was a skilled speaker, and knew how to keep people's attention with stories, gestures, and vivid illustrations. He also had a good sense of humor. He was criticized by jealous preachers for being a "clown;" but he got the message across, and he kept the people coming to hear what God was going to say through him. Talmadge prepared thoroughly, and he habitually preached without any notes. His sermons were printed in 3,000 newspapers and magazines throughout America and Europe every Sunday; and he served as the editor of several Christian publications. He was very active, until his death in 1902.

The greatest preacher of his day in England was C. H. Spurgeon. He once said, "I am often astonished when God blesses me, but I am not surprised when God blesses Talmadge." God used the abilities and gifts of T. D. Talmadge, because he gave himself to the Lord, and was faithful to pray and serve.

The Story of George Whitefield of England

George Whitefield was born in Gloucester, England, in 1714. His father died two years later, leaving his mother with the sole responsibility for her seven small children. The children contacted measles; and due to the lack of proper care, George was left with a permanently squinted eye. Desperate for work, Mrs. Whitefield tended bar at an inn. George was mischievous as a child. He was given to lying, and stealing from his mother, while she slept.

George had a deep desire to learn; but only the wealthy could afford to send their children to school. Many of the poor children in England in those days were forced to work long hours in mines or factories; and some starved to death. Finally, when George was twelve years old, he was able to start attending a Catholic school. There he applied himself to learning, and was noted as a very capable actor. However, when he was fifteen, he had to quit school, in order to work with his mother. At home, he continued to faithfully read his Bible whenever possible; and he harbored a deep desire to go to Oxford and become a preacher, even though he was not saved. His great-grandfather had been a man of God, who had prayed that his descendants would serve the Lord.

Later, George was able to return to school, where he tried diligently to be good. But he was said to waver from sinner to saint to sinner. At Oxford, he became friends with John and Charles Wesley, and read books faithfully. He read that works cannot save us; but he continued to live a life of discipline and self-denial, seeking God through good deeds. Once when he was ill, he was

seeking God; and he was gloriously saved. Still sick, he was sent home to rest; but he was so full of joy, he could not rest. He went to visit a lady who had admired his acting while in school, and quickly led her to the Lord. One by one, he shared his faith with his acquaintances, and led many of them into a saving faith.

Young George Whitefield had strong spiritual convictions, and a burning desire to win souls to the Lord. He was gifted with a beautiful speaking voice and an excellent mind; but he remained humble before the Lord, recognizing his need for God's anointing. He never relied on his own ability; but rather, he gave himself to prayer, so that he could be guided and strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

In 1736, he was ordained a deacon. A week later, he preached his first sermon in the church where he had attended school as a child. When the pastor of the Tower Chapel in London took a leave of absence, he appointed George to fill his pulpit. He did a superb job. Each service drew more and more people, until the church was overflowing. Wherever this young man preached, people's lives were changed by the power of God.

After the pastor returned to his much larger church, George continued to answer calls to preach. He sailed to America to preach. During the long voyage, he spent much time preaching to his captive audience. Sometimes when the sea was calm, the three ships sailing together would be close enough so that people in all the ships could hear his powerful voice. That voyage was noted for the excellent, calm spirit that prevailed,

whereas the atmosphere was normally turbulent.

In England, George met with opposition from jealous church leaders;

but he was popular with the people. He became one of the greatest preachers of the Great Awakening, especially in America.

George Whitefield's Conversion

During the revival in America called the Great Awakening, God was moving in the same way in Great Britain. In 1733, a 19-year-old boy named George Whitefield went to Oxford to study. At that time, Oxford was a major college, whose primary purpose was to train men for Christian ministry. However, there were many people there who were religious, but not really saved. That is, they read the Bible and sought to be good people; but they had never been born again by the Spirit of God.

George was the son of a widow, who kept an inn in Gloucester, England. He was a very intense young man. He worked hard to be a good person. He visited the sick, the poor, and those in prison. He studied with great diligence, and read the Bible faithfully. Many of the students at Oxford would laugh at his serious ways, because they themselves were there to do as little work and as much partying as possible.

George soon began to meet with a group of serious-minded students, led by John and Charles Wesley. They were called the "Holy Club" by their carnal fellow students. They were also called "Methodists," because they were so methodical in their religion.

George worked hard to try to please God, but he was not happy. He was struggling with dead works. As he sought God, he came across a book called The Life of God in the Soul of Man. He learned that all of his works could not earn him favor with God. It said that he needed to be born again. George began to deny himself and work even harder at seeking God. It even wore him down physically.

Finally, in desperation, he threw himself across his bed, and cried, "I thirst!" He gave up his efforts to be good enough for God; and he surrendered in faith to God's great grace. The Lord told him, "George, you have ceased to struggle, and you have simply believed; and you are born again." George Whitefield began to laugh with joy, saying, "Joy, joy unspeakable, joy that's full of, big with glory!"

George rushed out of the room to share his joy with his friends, and kept sharing. He became the greatest evangelist of the eighteenth century, and preached to so many people, that he had a great influence on whole nations. He was ordained to the ministry in 1736, at the age of 22. In the first three cities where he preached, great revival broke out. Large crowds would gather; and they would flock in response to God, when called forth for salvation.

In his life, George Whitefield preached more than 18,000 sermons, often outdoors to as many as 30,000 people at a time. He was called the "silver-tongued orator;" and he could usually be heard for nearly a mile. Benjamin Franklin (although he never became a Christian) was an admirer and friend of George Whitefield.

One day, a drunken sailor in New England came up to Mr. Whitefield and said, "Well, Reverend Whitefield. S' good to see you again. I (hic)...."

"I do not know you sir." Whitefield replied.

"Don't know me? Why, you converted me ten years ago."

Whitefield said, "I should not wonder. You look like one of my converts. If God had converted you, you would still be sober."

As an old man, George Whitefield was advised to slow down. His zeal had not diminished, and he was working too hard. He replied, "I would rather burn out for God, than rust out."

George Whitefield in America

George Whitefield, born in England in 1714, was one of the original "Methodists" of Oxford college, and a friend of John and Charles Wesley. He first sailed to America as a young man, with a desire to preach the gospel in Georgia. Although he turned the voyage across the Atlantic Ocean into a virtual revival, he did not meet with that much success in Georgia. Many of the Christians in America were still given to drinking alcohol and other vices, and they did not take kindly to this youngster, who preached strongly against sin. He finally sailed back to England.

Back in England, he was ordained a minister in 1739 at the age of 24; but he met with another kind of opposition there. The church there taught that water baptism was sufficient for salvation -- but he preached repentance and faith. Soon, London was closed to him, as far as the official church was concerned. George preached several open-air meetings in the mining district near Bristol, England, and was often opposed by the Bishop and other church leaders. In Kingswood, he preached on John 3:3 to 2,000 people; and hundreds were saved. In spite of his success, the Bishop informed him that he was not supposed to preach without official permission from the church. He replied, "As for declining the work in which I am engaged, my blood runs chill at the very thought if it. I am as much convinced that it is my duty to act as I do as that the sun shines at noonday. If you and the rest of the bishops cast us out, our great common Master will take us up." He was often expelled from inns and otherwise persecuted by those who opposed the gospel, and met with much opposition. He was also beaten with a club

for preaching. He said, "I am ashamed that I can do no more for Him, seeing that He has done so much for me. His service is perfect freedom. His yoke is easy."

When George Whitefield returned to America, he began preaching in Philadelphia, and spent much time traveling. He would preach to a few people, or to great crowds of as many as 20,000 at a time. He rode on horseback from city to city, enduring great hardships and dangers for the sake of lost souls. In 1740, he started an orphanage called "Bethesda," with three German orphans.

Mr. Whitefield married a godly widow in Scotland when he was 26 years old. In Scotland, as in America, he preached tirelessly, as many as 19 times in four days. We note that this was without a public address system, often outdoors, and usually about two hours or more at a time. In his 56-year lifetime, he won thousands of people to the Lord, and influenced nations with the clear gospel message.

Back in America, as the exhausted Rev. Whitefield was dying, he asked God for the strength to preach one more sermon. He said, "I go to a rest prepared: my sun has arisen, and by and by from heaven it will give light to many; now it is about to set -- no, it is to rise to the zenith of immortal glory. I have outlived many on earth, but they cannot outlive me in heaven. My body fails, but my spirit expands. How willingly I would live forever to preach Christ! But I die to be with Him!" He preached for two hours, his face shining like the unclouded sun. He died the next morning.

Smith Wigglesworth is Healed

Smith Wigglesworth was an English plumber, who was born in 1859. As a young father, he was just learning the wonderful ways of God. He was a zealous soul-winner, constantly looking for someone to witness to. He considered himself a very poor speaker; but he could talk about the Lord to anyone.

One day, the family arose to find that their two sons were extremely ill. Mr. and Mrs. Wigglesworth prayed for them; and they were instantly healed. They went off to school, while their father went to the home of a wealthy man to do some plumbing work. The lady of the house said, "Can't you send your apprentice to the shop for something?" He complied; and then the lady said, "Sir, I noticed the bright smile on your face. I am so unhappy. My husband left in anger this morning, and we have no peace. How is it that you have such joy?"

The plumber told her that God had just healed both of his sons, and that their joy came because they were born-again Christians. He led her in a prayer of repentance, and she was wonderfully saved. She then said, "Sir, how can I keep this joy?" He replied, "When you have some friends to your home, tell them what God has done for you, and lead them to the Lord. That is a source of great joy."

Not long after this, Mr. Wigglesworth himself became sick. He was doubled over

with severe abdominal pain, and was helped home by his employees. When the pain did not subside after much prayer, he said to his wife, "I may be dying. Please call a doctor, so you will not be blamed for negligence." The doctor came, and said, "I am sorry, but this man cannot live. He has had appendicitis for six months, and his body is full of toxins. He is too weak to survive an operation. I will come back this afternoon, to see if he is still alive."

While the doctor was away making other calls, an old woman and a young man came in to visit. They were Christians who had great faith in God; and they prayed for Mr. Wigglesworth. The young man was of the opinion that all sickness was caused by demons, so he cried out, "Devil, come out!" His theology may have not been totally accurate, but his faith was right on target. Smith Wigglesworth was completely and instantly healed. He got up out of his deathbed, and said, "I have some plumbing jobs that need to be done right away."

When the doctor returned, he was told that his patient had left to go to work. He said, "They will bring him back a corpse, as sure as you live." But the happy plumber lived for many fruitful years, ministering healing to thousands of sick folks, and even raising the dead. He also had a strong faith for appendicitis. Every time he prayed for someone suffering from it, the person was completely healed.

Section 5 Life-related Stories

The Early Ministry of Smith Wigglesworth

Smith Wigglesworth was a plumber who lived in England during the early part of the 20th century. He was intensely in love with Jesus, and very bold in telling everyone about the salvation and healing that they could receive. During his long lifetime, there were many hundreds of stories about this extraordinary man of God; and those stories still inspire and encourage us today.

Smith was a wonderful soul-winner. but he was not a preacher. His wife did most of the preaching, while he witnessed and prayed for people. After he had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, he telegraphed his wife with the news. She was reluctant to believe that it was necessary to speak with other tongues to be Spirit-baptized, so she decided not to sit with him on the platform, the next time they ministered. He preached with such anointing and power that she realized tongues were real. It was not long, before she was speaking in tongues, rejoicing in greater anointing. A great Pentecostal revival broke out in their home church, because neither of them could keep it to themselves. Hundreds received the baptism; and they all spoke in tongues.

Their next meeting was in a Methodist church in Shropshire, England. There was bitter persecution from many people in the small town; but the fire of revival fell one night, and the church saw a mighty move of God. Smith was charged up. The next morning, he walked into the grocery store. There were three people in the shop. When he walked out of the store an hour later, there were three new believers. He had won them all to the Lord. Carrying his bag of groceries, he walked on down the road a little way. He saw two

women in the field, carrying buckets. He shouted out, "Are you saved?" Somehow, tremendous conviction came on them both; and they dropped their buckets and knelt down in the field to pray and weep.

That afternoon, he walked by a stone quarry. As the men were pounding on the great rocks, Wigglesworth walked up and began talking about Jesus to them. It was not long before conviction fell on them; and many of the workmen knelt there in the rough quarry to give their hearts to the Lord. Big, burly men melted in tears, as they poured out their hearts in repentance to God.

As Smith was returning to his room from the quarry, he passed by a saloon. There, for some reason, two men in a carriage pulled up beside him, and glared at him with obvious hatred. He did not know the men; but he recognized instantly that they were full of the devil. The evil spirits in the men recognized a pure man of God, and they became angry. For no apparent reason, both men began to shout and curse, and tried to injure Smith with their whips. Hearing the commotion, seven other heathen people ran out of the saloon. They were cursing and shouting as well. They acted like mad dogs.

Smith cried out, "In the name of Jesus, in the power of the blood of Jesus, I drive you back into your den." Suddenly they stopped; and they all whirled around to rush back into the saloon. The vicious men in the carriage ran after them. Smith Wigglesworth, still full of the Holy Ghost, marched right in after them, and started preaching the gospel to them.

This was one ordinary day in the life of an extraordinary man, who had a passion for souls. Soon after this, Smith Wigglesworth quit his plumbing business, in order to devote all of his time to the ministry.

The Story of Smith Wigglesworth Raising the Dead

Some people try to claim that supernatural healings and miracles were for the church in the Bible days, but they are not for today. But Jesus told the church, "...He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and [greater {works} than] these shall he do;" (John 14:12) Jesus did some amazing miracles, including raising the dead. Today, throughout the world, there are many miracles, signs and wonders occurring; but most of them go unreported. God is still healing thousands of people from impossible diseases -- and yes, even raising the dead.

Smith Wigglesworth was an English plumber who ministered through the first half of the twentieth century. He had great zeal and anointing, and he prayed. Thousands of people were saved, healed, and filled with the Holy Spirit through his ministry.

One day, he was asked to visit a woman who was dying with a tumor. looked at her, he realized that she was beyond medical help. Her strength was completely gone. She was a barely breathing skeleton. Smith said, "I know you are very weak; but if you wish to be healed, and cannot raise your arm, could you please lift a finger." She was able to move one finger slightly. Smith said to his friend, "Let us pray, and anoint her As they prayed, her chin with oil." suddenly dropped, and she died. friend began to tremble in terror, and he backed away, shouting, "She is dead!" He then asked, "What shall I do?"

Wigglesworth then did something very unusual. He seemed to become angry. He

picked up the frail woman's body by the shoulders, carried it across the room, and slammed her up against the wall. He looked into the face of the corpse, and shouted, "In the name of Jesus, I rebuke this death!" The body began to tremble. He then said, "In the name of Jesus, I command you to walk!" She opened her eyes, and walked.

Her doctor was summoned, and he quickly came. He said, "Mr. Fisher, the elder, told me that you were raised from the dead. Is that true?" She said, "Yes." He then asked her to go to a meeting that night to give a report.

At the meeting hall, she stood on her own feet, and said, "For many months I have been going down to death. But I wanted to live for my children. A man prayed for me, and told me to lift my finger if I wanted to live. After that, I remember going to Glory. I saw great crowds of people, and I heard heavenly, joyful singing. It was lovely, and the face of Jesus lit up everything. I was having a beautiful time in heaven, when the Lord suddenly pointed to me without speaking. I knew I had to go back to earth. The next moment, I heard a man say, "In the name of Jesus, I command you to walk!"

The good doctor then rose to give his testimony. With tears and trembling lips, he was finally able to say that he had been praying for months for this woman. He had informed the family to prepare for death, for she was beyond all medical help. He strongly encouraged everyone he knew to go to Smith Wigglesworth's meetings if they ever had the opportunity, for he had God's anointing on his life.

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

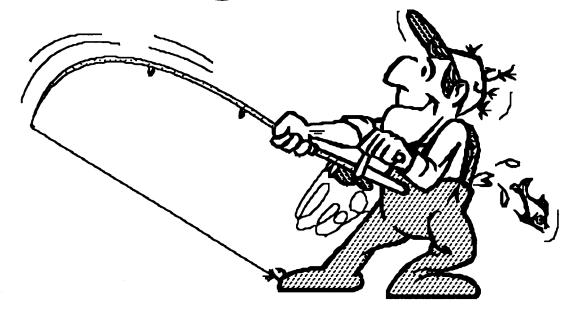
We can fulfill the command of our Lord by ministering to those who are in need.



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.



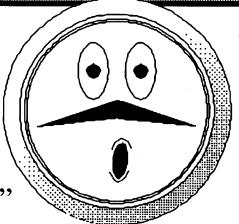
You can earn valuable prizes by learning God's Word and by bringing your friends to Sunday School. Start today, and together we can become "fishers of men". Charles Link
Charles Up
Charles With
Charles JESUS — 3-63

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"

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Link C Up C With						CL	ASS								
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Memory Verses Learned Record the verse "address," below. Award 2 links per verse.															
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		-741			<u></u>								į		
At	tenc	lan	ce	Record	l the d	lates in	attenc	lance,	below.	Awa	ard 1 lii	nk.			
					i.										
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.

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	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
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	Link Up With JESUS-0-0	Verse:	Name Date

	Link Up With - JESUS- G- Q	Attendance	Name Date
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0000¢	Link Up With - JESUS- ©- ©	Attendance	Name
0000	Link Up With - JESUS - 13-1 2	Attendance	Name
Q Q Q Q Q Q Q	Link Up With - JESUS - 12- 22	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



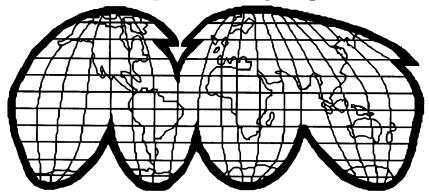
Anyone in the world who needs to know Jesus as their Savior.

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:

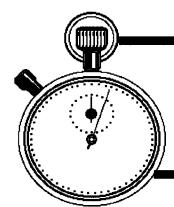
Students Earning 80-119 Total

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
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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:

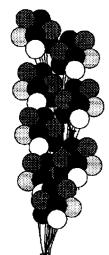
Earn Tickets For The Festival By:

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)

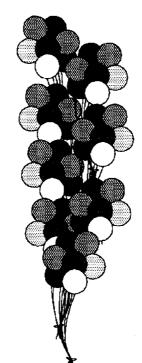
(Friends who have attended Sunday School during the last 4 months, do not qualify.)

Games



Prizes

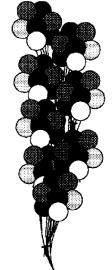
Rides



Food

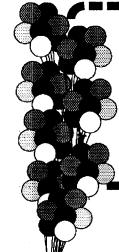
Dunk Tank

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

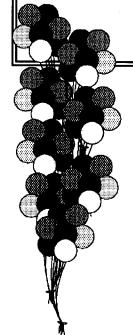




Date:

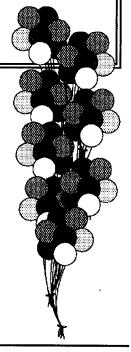
Time:

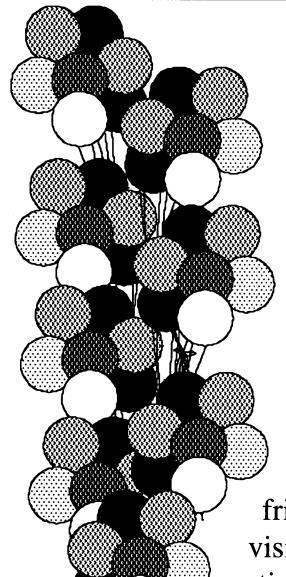
Place:



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

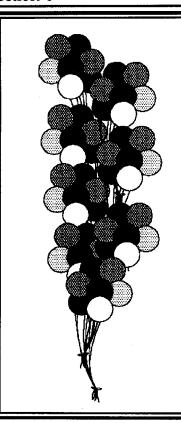
Remember to bring your friends -- especially first-time visitors -- and join us for a great time in Sunday School. Then, join the fun at The Fall Fun Festival

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.

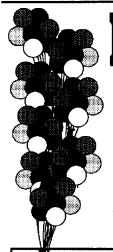


Fall Fun Festival Ticket Certificate

(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).

	Tall Fun Festival Veekly Point Chart: Week#						
	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						

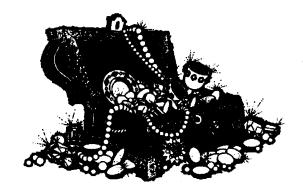


Fall Fun Festival

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
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Unlock The Treasure

Christ is truly the "key" to "Unlocking the Treasure." In this promotion, we want to increase attendance in the School of the Bible and emphasize to the students that Jesus is the key to unlocking vast treasures in our lives -- and not just material ones. We want to encourage students to reach out and witness to their friends, so that they, too, may experience the "treasures" Jesus has to offer.

This promotion is held during the fourth quarter, and runs for six weeks. As in other promotions, points are awarded to the students for their attendance; for bringing their Bible and offerings; for learning their memory verse; for bringing friends; and for contributing food items to the church's emergency food pantry.

Every time a student accumulates 40 points, he or she is awarded a special coin, which is worth 1 gift. A variety of gifts will be available, from which students may choose. Gifts should be displayed in a convenient, central location for the students to see. Some gifts will be worth 1 coin; others worth 2 coins; and some worth 3 coins. Students may elect to use the coin(s) they earn, or save them for a prize of higher value.

At the end of the promotion, the student in each class with the highest

number of points over 200, will receive a special, bonus gift and will be given an opportunity to unlock a treasure chest, filled with gifts valued at over \$200.

Only students who have earned a minimum of 200 points will qualify for this honor. If more than one student in the class earns 200 points or more, the student with the highest point total will be the one who qualifies.

During this promotion, the total number of points earned by each student will not be displayed or announced. It is acceptable to let the students know how many points they have earned from week to week. However, their total points should not be revealed, especially during the last week of the promotion.

At the end of the promotion, the top winner from each class will be given a key. Only one of the keys will open the treasure chest of prizes. IMPORTANT: because we do not want to award the grand prize based on "luck" or chance, the student who earned the most points will be given the key which opens the chest. Only the person who distributes the keys will know in advance the name of the grand prize winner. Everyone else will discover who the grand prize winner is when the students try their keys in the lock on the

treasure chest. It will add a bit of excitement and suspense if you have the grand prize winner try his or her key last.

During the course of this promotion, it is good to take the treasure chest of prizes into every classroom and display it briefly, as an incentive for the students. Flyers will also be distributed in the classes, and letters and flyers will be mailed to the parents of students, asking for their help and encouragement.

Specific Instructions:

Each Secretary will have a Weekly Point Chart on which to record the points each student earns. A supply of coins will also be distributed to every class. Additional coins will be available in the Audio-Visual Room. Every time students

accumulate 40 points, they will be given one of the coins. Be sure to sign the coins before you distribute them. Coins without signatures cannot be redeemed.

For example: when a student earns a total of 40 points, he or she will be given one coin. When the point total reaches 80 points, he or she will be given a second coin, etc. It is up to the student to decide whether to redeem the coin for a prize, or save it and try to earn a prize of greater value.

Re-Cap sheets will also be included in the Secretary's folder. Record on this sheet the total number of points each student earns each week. This will help you to determine when students qualify to receive a coin.

YOU CAN Unlock The



Treasure

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								
ireasure	Bringing food Item (5)								
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	Memory Verse (5)								
Bringin	g an offerir	ng (2)							
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
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Section 7

Catechism In Doctrine

Introduction to Catechism in Doctrine

"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." (I Timothy 4:16)

Jesus said, "Take heed what ye hear..." (Mark 4:24) Be careful about what you allow to enter your mind, because it will affect your heart. We are living in a day that is characterized by the deception Jesus warned about in Matthew 24. Our young people are being taught the doctrine of secular humanism, which leads to rebellion, pride, hedonism, and self-destruction.

The purpose of this material is to help stimulate a focus on truth that will change lives. Truth is not just a set of ideas. No one person has all the right answers to every detail of theological thought. Each of us sees "through a glass darkly," (1 Corinthians 13:12) particularly when it comes to our eschatology. It is important that we respect one another in our pursuit of truth. As orthodox Christian teachers, we agree on the essential basics that are expressed in the "Apostle's Creed." Beyond that, we have different perspectives and insights concerning the particular matters of interest relative to Bible history and application. Our purpose is to present basic concepts that will stimulate an interest in young people to seek after wisdom, not to present our views as the final word on doctrine.

Truth is not a set of concepts: truth is the Person of Jesus Christ. When we know the Truth (Jesus), the truth will set us free. Freedom is not the right to do whatever we want, but is the power to do what we should.

God's Word includes a curriculum guide for all education. It outlines the priorities that should be the basis for every training program. (I Peter 1) The first objective of a wise teacher is faith. We are to define and stimulate a focus on God and His purposes in the earth. Before we can train anyone, we must know that he has been supernaturally born again by God's grace through faith. Unless he is born again, he cannot possibly see the Kingdom of God (spiritual reality). (John 3:3)

The second priority is character training. Peter said, "Add to your faith virtue." Virtue is the positive influence that flows out of a life that is whole, and transformed by the power and love of God. After he has been led to a personal relationship with God, he needs "instruction in righteousness." (II Timothy 3:16) He needs lessons that will teach him to live well, not just to make a living.

Notice that **knowledge** is third on God's list of priorities, not first, as is the agenda of the secular world of educators. In a secularized education, faith and virtue are eliminated by the state, with the erroneous belief that knowledge apart from faith can bring man to wholeness and fulfillment in life. But knowledge without the balancing perspective of faith results in pride and rebellion. "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up." (I Corinthians 8:1)

These lessons emphasize doctrine that stimulates wisdom, which begins with the fear of the Lord. (Proverbs 9:10) There is a focus on creation, grace, spiritual gifts, accountability, and eschatology. When young people are taught that they are not a cosmic accident, but an eternal soul designed by a loving Heavenly Father, they will tend to be more responsive to other authorities. They will be more likely to have an attitude of gratitude, and a heart for the things of God.

Our goal is not simply to increase our knowledge, but also to hear those things which will have the greatest possible benefit for our lives: things that will still have value ten thousand years from now. We do not want simply to learn facts about Jesus, but we want God's abiding presence in our lives. We want to know Jesus. As the Apostle Peter said, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (II Peter 3:18) In other words, humble yourself and receive more of God's enabling power and strength, and get to know Jesus more personally and intimately.

We pray that these lessons will stir your faith, encourage your heart, and stimulate your desire to search the Word of God with joy as we anticipate the return of our Lord Jesus Christ to the earth.

What Is the Purpose of the Lord's Table?

In the sacrament of communion, or the Lord's table, we are expressing our covenant with God and with one another as members of the Body of Christ.

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 10:16)

Biblically, the first purpose of communion is to commemorate the event which brought about our redemption and salvation: the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. As the Lord, He is the Creator and Owner of all things. He established an inheritance for us, and made heirs of those who would be born again through repentance and faith. Jesus said,

"This cup is the new testament in my blood..." (1 Corinthians 11:25)

A legal will comes into effect only when the testator dies. The death of Christ fulfilled the demands of God's holiness and justice and became the atoning blood for the people who would make a covenant with God. Jesus fulfilled the Passover law as the perfect Lamb without blemish. He was not marred in His character by any sin in His life. Just as the blood of a lamb was applied to the doorpost of the believer's house to save those in his house from death, so Jesus was the

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

The cup of the Lord's table does not become literal blood. This is a belief held by some and is called "transubstantiation." It represents the blood of Christ. The cup is an ongoing reminder to believers that Jesus gave His life's blood for their redemption and that they have a covenant with God because the blood has been applied to their sins. (1 Corinthians 11:26)

The bread represents His broken body,"...by whose stripes ye were healed." (1 Peter 2:24) It also reminds us that we are reinforcing a blood covenant with one another as fellow Christians. As part of "one loaf," we have a "common union" with one another. We are commanded by God to be honest with and loyal to one another, because we are part, or "...members one of another." (Ephesians 4:25)

We are part of God's army together. We are His house (Ephesians 2:20), His vineyard, His Body, and His corporate Bride. We are given specific guidelines in the way we should respond to one another ethically when we have misunderstandings or conflicts. We are commanded to love one another and to speak well of one another. We are a covenant family, and a covenant says, "I am for you, and I'll

never turn against you. I'm blessed to see you blessed, and I seek your success and welfare, because in Christ we are brothers and sisters."

The time for corporate communion is a time for self-examination and for resolving any conflicts which will hinder the moving of God's Spirit among us. It is a time to "judge ourselves," as well as to forgive and restore one another. It is also a time to receive and to minister healing as we partake of the "cup of blessing." Christians who break bread together regularly with this kind of motive will experience greater harmony and unity. This is essential if the church is to be an example to the world of the lifestyle of God's kingdom.

What Was the Purpose of the Feasts of the Lord?

God commanded the people of Israel to gather together three times a year to offer sacrifices and to celebrate their relationship with Him.

"Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread:... and the feast of harvest, ... and the feast of ingathering...." (Exodus 23:14-16)

It is a natural human tendency to get so caught up in the activities and pursuits of life and living that we neglect to direct our attention toward God. He is the most important person in life; and He deserves to be first in our affections and priorities. God commanded His covenant people to take a day off each week to rest and to focus their attention on Him. He also established three major feasts during the year to encourage the people to be mindful of eternal values, and to commemorate His great work in their lives in the past.

The first feast was the Feast of Unleavened Bread, in which the Passover was celebrated. The Israelites were reminded each year of the day of their deliverance from Egypt. They had obeyed God's command: each family had slain and sacrificed a lamb in the prescribed manner; and then they had applied the blood to the doorposts of their houses. The death angel came to kill all the firstborn males; but, the death angel passed over the homes where the blood was seen as a propitiation. This was also a picture of Christ, who, 1500 years later, was the

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

Jesus was crucified on the cross on the very day of Passover. Because His blood is applied to our hearts when we repent and believe, the death penalty for sin will pass over us, and we have the gift of eternal life. We also celebrate the Passover every time we partake of the Lord's supper in communion.

The second feast was the Feast of Harvest, or Pentecost. Fifty days after the Passover, God gave Israel the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai. "Pente" means "fifty." Not only had the Lord set them free from the bondage of Egypt, but He had also given them principles for living. In the new covenant, we receive the fulfillment of this feast when we are baptized in the Holy Ghost. Again, on the exact historic day of Pentecost, the believers gathered in Jerusalem; were baptized in the Holy Ghost; and spoke in tongues as the Spirit gave them the utterance. God makes us His children and sets us free in salvation. Then He gives His Spirit to live and work in us so that we are able to live effectively for Him in a wicked world. God intends for every believer to be filled with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38-39)

The third great feast was the Feast of Ingathering, or the Feast of Tabernacles, which had its climax in the Day of Atonement. On that day, the high priest went into the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle and offered the blood of the

lamb on the mercy seat, to cover the sins of the people for one year. Of course, this was also fulfilled by Jesus, who offered His own blood on God's mercy seat, to atone for every born-again believer once and for all.

What Is Reconciliation?

Reconciliation is the restoration of a friendship or covenant relationship, which had been broken by one or both parties in the past.

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:18)

It is very important for us, as believers, to understand the dynamic of sin and of God's holiness. Since God is perfectly holy and perfectly just in all of His dealings with man, He cannot arbitrarily overlook sin. God is so holy that any sin is intolerable in His presence.

"Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity...." (Habakkuk 1:13)

Sin is defiant disobedience and self-determination. It puts us in direct conflict with God's eternal purpose to have a people who live for Him instead of for themselves. The Kingdom centers around the King. Sin causes us to center our lives around self. As long as self is lord in our lives, we cannot respond to God as Lord. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself..." — not allow self to remain on the throne of his life. (Luke 9:23)

Sin is an expression of self-assertiveness. It is the opposite of righteousness, or "right standing with God." When Adam and Eve disobeyed

God, they were establishing their own lordship. By doing so, they broke fellowship with God.

All of us were born with that same self-willed sin nature; and we declared our independence from God's authority over our lives when we willfully violated our conscience. Through willful disobedience, we were alienated from God's presence. All of us are sinners, both by birth and by choice. We deserve everlasting separation from God.

There are only two places we know of in the universe where unsaved people can dwell eternally. They are called "hell" and "the lake of fire." They were created as places of torment for the devil and his angels; and the lake of fire will also contain those of the human race who are not part of God's covenant family by grace when they finish this life.

As self-willed sinners, we have lived apart from God's good presence. He is not one to forsake His children. However, we forsake Him in the same way the "prodigal son" left his father in the parable in Luke 16. This son demonstrated a temporal values system. He wanted immediate gratification, so he left his father to enjoy the world. When he suffered, he was brought to repentance.

Repentance means to "turn around." The prodigal son left the pig pen and went to seek his father. He had spent his inheritance; but, he was reconciled to his father. The relationship was restored. Now he was willing to let his father make the major decisions; and he was content to be a servant. He realized that his father loved him and that his father's will for him was the best.

We were all alienated -- separated -- from God. We were not a member of

God's family. But, through His death on the cross, Jesus Christ provided a way for us to be pardoned legally and to be redeemed to a sweet and eternal relationship with God. Our goal as faithful soul winners is to lead people to a relationship with God by helping them to see the seriousness of sin, as well as the love of the Father, whom they have rejected through sin. We encourage them to repent and give themselves to God.

What Does it Mean to Be "In Christ"?

To be "in Christ" is to be a partaker with Him as an heir of God through the new birth.

"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)

There are many rich and exciting truths connected with the Christian walk and the plan of salvation. We realize that "Christ in (us is) the hope of glory," (Colossians 1:27) and that we accept Him into our lives as Savior (one who sets us free from sin) and Lord (the one who has the right to rule our lives). But, as believers, we also need to see that in a very real sense, we are in Christ. The Bible says that we are "accepted in the beloved." (Ephesians 1:6) Scripturally, we do not let Jesus in to become part of our lifestyle; rather, He lets us in to become part of His family, and we grow as we become more and more like Him.

When discussing the fact that the priestly order of Melchisedec was greater than the Levitical order, the writer to the Hebrews said that Levi was "in Abraham" when Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec. Therefore, Levi, the tribe which received the tithes, was credited with paying their tithes to the greater priest. (Hebrews 7:9-10) The writer to the Hebrews said that Levi was "in the loins of Abraham." Levi was descended from Abraham, and so he inherited not only family traits from him, but also Abraham's wealth and honor.

The Apostle Paul said that we were "in Adam" racially. He spoke of the fact that every member of the human race inherited traits and qualities from Adam, including a "sin nature." Just as Levi paid tithes "in Abraham," so we sinned "in Adam."

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:22)

We were in Adam in the Garden of Eden, and his sin was on our account. We also have the tendency to be like him in character, because we are his children.

But, the message of the gospel is that we can be "in Christ" through the new birth. When we repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, we are forgiven, because the death penalty was paid by Christ. We are born again of the Spirit, and we have a new life. We were "in Christ" when He died on the cross, and that payment for the penalty of our sin was credited to our account. When we are in Christ, we are a new creation. Just as God breathed into Adam the breath of life, so the Spirit of God comes into our spirit, and we are able to see and to live life as a brand new person. We have genuinely been born again and not just converted to a religion.

As Christian believers, we now have a tendency to be like Him in character, because He has imparted His righteousness to us. Those who are in Christ have lives that are changed by the grace of God in them, and they will live with Him forever in Heaven.

We have a new **perspective** on life -- wisdom -- new **power** in life -- grace -- and a new **potential** for life. "We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2)

Why Is It So Important that We "Fear Not"?

Fear is caused by a wrong focus on self and temporal values. Fear is the opposite of faith, without which we cannot please God.

"....Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." (Isaiah 43:1)

The Bible frequently admonishes us not to fear. We find this command in over 300 references in scripture. Fear is a natural human response to that which is new or unknown, and it is the first indication of a lack of faith. The first recorded words of man after the fall in the garden were, "I was afraid." (Genesis 3:10) Adam had never known fear until he disobeyed God.

Fear is the sense of apprehension or dread over the perceived threat of personal harm or loss. We fear when we are threatened with injury, death, or the loss of freedom or property. Fear is caused by ownership. Adam and Eve had dominion over all God had created on earth, as long as they recognized God's ownership. The moment they disobeyed, they declared independence and took possession of their own lives. When they took ownership, they lost dominion. They said, "I am my own person," and they were cast out of the garden.

Christians realize that everything in this life belongs to God. We are stewards of His property, whether it be money, children, our bodies, or whatever. Jesus said, "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (Matthew 10:39)

We become fearful -- insecure -- when we base our happiness or security on things we cannot keep. When we cling to temporal possessions we cannot keep and "own," we establish the basis for fear. When our whole life is centered in this life on earth, we become afraid to die. The more we can "die to self," the more we free ourselves from the bondage of fear.

If you look to men for your security or blessing, you will be basing your hope on an unstable source and will not be free. "The fear of man bringeth a snare...." (Proverbs 29:25) God's purpose is to bring us into a personal, continual walk with Him, so that we can look to Him as our source and our protection.

Fear is an indicator of a lack of faith, which is sin. Sin always causes us to focus on ourselves; God's love causes us to seek the blessing and good of others. The more we are concerned with the needs of others, the less fear we will have for our own wants.

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear...." (1 John 4:18) The psalmist trained himself to let fear be a reminder that his faith was weak, so he would turn to God and stir up his faith. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." (Psalms 56:3)

Fear is the opposite of faith. Faith focuses on God and His purposes and causes us to be positive and courageous.

Fear focuses on negatives in people and in life and causes us to fail. Our decisions should never be based on fear. "I was afraid people would laugh at me, so I did not respond to God." The servant with one talent tried to use that as an excuse, but he did not get sympathy from the master. (Matthew 25:18, 24-30) Let faith rule your decisions, and not fear.

What Is the Fear of the Lord?

The fear of the Lord is the understanding and awareness of God's justice and holiness. It is the realization that God will hold us accountable for all that we do in this life.

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." (Proverbs 9:10)

While it is important that we do not fear things, or people, or death, it is equally important that we learn the fear of the Lord. In fact, the greatest key to overcoming fears in life is a healthy sense of the fear of the Lord. When we have a proper sense of the fear of the Lord, we will be continually aware of His presence. We will be constantly reminded of His goodness and power. We will tend to see life as a part of His plan and purposes -- we will see the bigger picture. We become less inclined to be shaken up by the material things of life, because we see this brief life on earth as a beginning and preparation for eternity. We are less fearful of man, because we understand that God is infinitely greater than man.

As a youth, David had the fear of the Lord. He went boldly to the battlefield where the other Israelites were quaking in terror of the giant warrior, Goliath. David was not afraid of the giant, as the Israeli soldiers were, because he saw that Goliath was in defiance of God and was no match for Him. David overcame the fear of man, because he was so strongly aware of God's power. (1 Samuel 17)

Satan's goal with man is to get man's attention focused on things, money, himself, and anything but God. When we get our eyes off God, we become proud, weak, and easily manipulated. The "secular humanist" philosophy of seeing life as if there were no God is a classic form of satanic deception. In Deuteronomy 6, God told Moses to have the people talk to their children about the Lord several times every day, in order to prevent them from becoming secular and proud in their thinking.

We are commanded to fear the Lord. (Ecclesiastes 12:13) When we have the fear of the Lord, we will also love Him more. We tend to focus on whatever we fear. Everything about God is good: to know Him is to love Him. We will also have peace, because

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

The fear of the Lord is not a negative dread; but, rather, it is a positive response to life. "The fear of the LORD is clean...." (Psalms 19:9) We are commanded to "serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice...." (Psalms 2:11) So, the fear of the Lord and rejoicing go together. When we fear the Lord, we will honor our parents and other

authorities God has placed over us, and we will depart from evil. "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil...." (Proverbs 8:13) When we fear the Lord, not only will we avoid evil because we do not want to suffer the consequences; but, we will also hate evil because of all the damage it does to people.

"Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." (Revelation 14:7)

What Are the Benefits of the Fear of the Lord?

The fear of the Lord causes us to receive all manner of physical and spiritual blessings.

"By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honor, and life." (Proverbs 22:4)

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge...." (Proverbs 1:7) It is also the beginning of wisdom. (Psalms 111:10) That means, if you do not fear God, you really do not know what you need to know in life; and you will not be able to see truth until you know the fear of the Lord.

There are more than 30 benefits to the fear of the Lord listed in scripture. It is an important part of wisdom and an essential key to a successful life. The Bible promises that "the LORD is with them that fear him..." (Psalms 25:14); He is good to all that fear Him (Psalms 31:19); "The Lord is upon them that fear him..." (Psalms 37:18);

"The angel of the LORD encampeth around them that fear him, and delivereth them." (Psalms 34:7)

When you fear the Lord, God supplies your needs (Psalms 34:9); and God will be your banner (Psalms 60:4). God will give you a special heritage (Psalms 61:5); mercy (Psalms 103:11); and pity (Psalms 103:13). God will provide food for those who fear Him (Psalms 111:5) and will bless them (Psalms 115:13). God will teach you His

ways. Your soul shall dwell at ease; and your descendants will inherit the earth (Psalms 25:12-13). "The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant" (Psalms 25:14).

When you fear the Lord, godly people will relate to you (Psalms 119:63); and you will be glad in the Lord (Psalms 119:74). God will fulfill your desires (Psalms 145:19); and He will take pleasure in you (Psalms 147:11). The fear of the Lord will cause you to hate evil (Proverbs 8:13). It will also cause you to live longer on the earth (Proverbs 10:27). God promises that you shall be rewarded (Proverbs 13:13); and you will have a strong confidence (Proverbs 14:26). Notice that, when you fear anyone or anything else, it will have the opposite effect. The fear of man makes you timid and bound, but not the fear of the Lord.

The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life (Proverbs 14:27); and it will cause you to learn righteousness (Proverbs 15:33). It is really the only thing that will cause men to depart from evil (Proverbs 16:6). The fear of the Lord has a tendency to make life in general better and longer (Proverbs 19:23). The fear of the Lord will also cause more wealth and honor to come into your life (Proverbs 22:4). God promises that your hopes and expectations will not be cut off (Proverbs 23:17-18); and, in general,

life will go well with you (Ecclesiastes 8:12).

Fear motivated Noah to build the ark which saved his family (Hebrews 11:7). In fact, it is the response that will motivate some people toward salvation who may

not be moved by the message of God's love (Jude v. 23). Also, the fear of the Lord makes us candidates to receive physical healing from the Lord (Malachi 4:2). When you fear the Lord, you are going to be happy (Proverbs 28:14).

Why Did God Love Jacob and Hate Esau?

Jacob desired and sought the blessing of God. Esau despised his birthright.

"As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." (Romans 9:13)

God is love. God "... so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,..." (John 3:16) While recognizing and emphasizing the love of God, we need to understand the completeness of His character and to recognize that He is perfectly just and fair. While God is perfect in His absolute love for mankind, He is also just and deals with each person according to His righteous judgment. To those who love Him, God gives blessings. To the humble, He pours out His grace. To the wicked, He will pour out His wrath. Proverbs 6:19 lists seven things that God hates, including "...he that soweth discord." God does not just hate the sin of spreading division among brethren; He also hates the person who does it.

In spite of Jacob's carnal methods, his goal in life was ultimately to obtain God's blessing. He had a heart for God, and God allowed him to obtain the family blessing and the birthright. The birthright was the double portion, which went to the firstborn son. Esau sold his birthright to his younger brother for one meal. Esau despised his birthright.

The word "despise" does not mean "hate". It means "to scorn," "to hold in profound contempt;" "to consider

something to be worthless or meaningless."

The letter to the Hebrews says that Jesus,

"...for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame...." (Hebrews 12:2)

This refers to the shame of hanging naked on a cross and being publicly executed. Being rejected was nothing, compared to the joy of bringing many sons to glory and presenting a holy and beautiful body of believers to the Father.

We are also commanded to "Despise not prophesyings." (1 Thessalonians 5:20) This command means that we should recognize that when God gives a prophetic word, it is very important. It should not be taken lightly.

Esau was born into the covenant family of God. He had the heritage of his father, Isaac, and of his grandfather, Abraham, who was God's friend. God wanted to bless Esau for the sake of his fathers; but, Esau was more concerned with his stomach than with the blessing and heritage of God. By loving himself more than God, he was, in effect, despising God. God, in perfect righteousness and justice, always responds fairly to the heart response of men. He rewards us according to our responses in life. (Psalms 18:20)

"The LORD is in his holy temple, ...his eyes behold....the children of men. The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth." (Psalms 11:4-5)

It is important for us, as Christians, to cultivate a grateful heart for the blessings and opportunities God has given to us. He has given to us the Bible, godly leaders, freedom to worship, and a wonderful plan for salvation and spiritual growth. The book of Hebrews is the book of "better things." We read in the book of Hebrews, that, if the Word of God in the Old Covenant was sure and glorious, then

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation...." (Hebrews 2:3)

What Is Sanctification?

Sanctification is the work and process of being set apart for the Lord and His purposes.

"Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 5:22-23)

We believe that sanctification is a part of God's plan of salvation for our lives. It is both an initial work of grace to everyone who is born again and an ongoing process of cleansing and maturing in our lives.

The word "sanctification" literally means "to be set apart for exclusive use". Every time a vessel in the temple was sanctified, it was ceremonially cleansed with water or blood; and from that moment on, it was to be used only in the service of the temple and the sacrifices to the Lord. The use of a sanctified object for a selfish or secular purpose was a serious offense.

We are sanctified by the Holy Ghost. (Romans 15:16)

We are sanctified in Christ Jesus. (1 Corinthians 1:2)

We receive sanctification by faith. (Acts 26:18)

The Heavenly Father sanctifies us. (John 10:36)

We are sanctified by the blood of Christ. (Hebrews 13:12)

We are sanctified by the truth: the Word of God. (John 17:17)

Our spirit is sanctified by God; and that sanctification brings us to wholeness in our lives. (2 Thessalonians 2:13)

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour." (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4)

This was the apostle's instruction to the Christians in Thessalonica. He was not referring to the work of grace at salvation, but, rather, to their responses in life as believers. God sets us apart for Himself. We no longer belong to the world and do not have a right to use our bodies for immorality.

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:20)

We need to remind ourselves that we belong to God. In response to God's grace in our lives, we need to continue to dedicate our lives to His service; to possess our bodies in sanctification and honour. We are taught to

"...reckon ...yourselves to be dead ...unto sin, but alive unto God...."
(Romans 6:11)

To "reckon" is to "consider or deem" to be dead to sin. God has set us free from the bondage of sin. We must walk in that freedom and guard our hearts, so that we do not become "...entangled again with the yoke of bondage." (Galatians 5:1)

What Is Genuine Repentance?

Genuine biblical repentance means a turning around -- a change in the direction and purpose of life -- from living for self to living for God.

"Now I rejoice...that ye sorrowed to repentance... For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation...." (2 Corinthians 7:9-10)

John the Baptist preached the message, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3:2) When some people told Jesus of the suffering of some Galileans who were put to death by Pilate, He replied, "...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3)

When Peter was preaching about Jesus to a great crowd in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, the people became convinced that Jesus was their true Messiah and that they had sinned against Him. They cried out, "what shall we do?!" Peter said,

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

In other words, "Respond to the godly sorrow in your hearts and turn from your sin to God. Give your life to God and do something right away to confirm that you belong to God. Be buried in the waters of baptism and identify with Christ as the Lord of your life."

The letter to the Hebrew Christians lists six "foundation stones" of the Christian

life. The first one is "repentance from dead works." (Hebrews 6:1) "Dead works" refers to our acts of self-righteousness, which we do in our effort to be good enough for God.

When we truly repent, we are no longer just seeking for ourselves; we are seeking to live our lives for God's pleasure, to His glory. Jesus becomes the center of our lives and our first love. Now, every other relationship flows out of that basic motivation in life. As Christians, we not only seek blessings from God, but we also desire relationship with Him. "Seek his face" (Psalms 105:4)

It is possible, particularly in a religious climate, to accept the Messianic claims of Jesus and to make a profession of faith, without having the convicting work of the Holy Spirit in the heart to bring a person to genuine repentance. A century ago, the founder of the Salvation Army, William Booth, said, "I fear the day will come when men will preach heaven without hell, a crown without a cross, and salvation without repentance."

The new birth is not an act of the will or of the mind. It is not just an emotional response to a sermon. Genuine salvation is a work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit deals with our spirit to bring conviction and sorrow over our sin. Sorrow is not repentance; but, it leads to repentance -- an honest turning toward God and away from sin. At the same time, God imparts the faith to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and to receive Him as both our Savior and Owner, or Lord.

"...God is no respecter of persons." (Acts 10:34) This means that God is not partial to

anyone, regardless of his birth, beauty, background, or brains. Anyone who will respond to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit with repentance and faith can be born "...of the Spirit," (John 3:5-6) and receive the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Is It a Sin to Drink Beer or Liquor?

The Bible speaks clearly against the sin of drunkenness. It does not teach that Christians should avoid alcohol entirely.

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit:..." (Ephesians 5:18)

Bible scholars use the term "dispensation" to refer to a period of time when God deals with man according to a covenant, or contract. In the Old Testament, God dealt with man in several dispensations, most recently the Law. The New Testament -- new covenant -- instituted by Jesus is called the "dispensation of grace". This dispensation began with the Book of Acts, and is the covenant through which God has established His Church.

We cannot and must not take any conditions of an old contract -- covenant -- and transfer them to a new contract, unless the new contract specifically includes those same conditions. The Apostle Paul wrote the Book of Galatians to address this problem in the early Church. The Galatians, having "...begun in the Spirit,..." were now returning to the bondage of the ordinances of the Law, seeking to be made "...perfect by the flesh." (Galatians 3:3)

We cannot "pick and choose" certain aspects of the old covenant to apply to the new covenant, without applying all aspects of the old to the new. An example of this is the ordinance in the Old

Testament against wearing garments with "mixed threads". (Deuteronomy 22:11) This would mean many of the garments manufactured today would be unlawful for believers to wear.

We cannot use Old Testament text to prove any New Testament doctrine, unless that doctrine is affirmed in the New Testament.

The Bible clearly teaches against drunkenness in the New Testament, as well as the Old Testament.

"But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator,...or a drunkard,...with such a one, no, not to eat." (1 Corinthians 5:11)

"...Be not deceived: neither thieves,. ..nor drunkards, ...shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

Nothing is said in the new covenant about abstaining from alcohol entirely. Note that John the Baptist, of whom the Bible says. "...he shall drink neither wine nor strong drink;...." (Luke 1:15) was under a Nazarite vow. The new covenant, established by Jesus Christ, was not in

effect until after His death and resurrection.

"For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." (Hebrews 9:17)

Note also that Jesus, even while under the old covenant, drank wine. (Luke 7:33-34) Paul even encouraged Timothy to "...use a little wine for thy stomach's sake..." (1 Timothy 5:23) Apparently Timothy was having problems with the drinking water; and this is still the case in many parts of the world today.

As Christians, we must remember several considerations regarding the partaking of alcohol:

- 1. We must not judge another believer's liberty in either food or drink. (Romans 14:1-10)
- 2. Do we love one another enough that, if alcohol becomes an issue, we are

- willing to abstain from it? (Romans 14:15-17)
- 3. Does the use of alcohol hinder my testimony before the worldly -- unsaved -- people I am in contact with?
- 4. Am I a stumbling block to another believer who, in sincerity, is offended by my use of alcohol; that is, a brother weak in the faith, or a new believer who is not knowledgeable in the Word?

"All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient;...I will not be brought under the power of any." (1 Corinthians 6:12)

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Romans 14:17)

What Is the Unpardonable Sin?

The only unpardonable sin mentioned in the Bible is the state of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

"...whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven." (Luke 12:10)

Many people have feared that they have committed the "unpardonable sin." Perhaps, as an unbeliever, they had spoken against the Holy Spirit, or railed against the Pentecostal outpouring and the biblical practice of speaking in tongues. The Greek word for "blaspheme" means to "vilify" - to "speak evil". They may have said that "tongues were of the devil," or something similar.

We believe that this blasphemy Jesus is speaking of is not a singular act, but a state of mind; it is contrary and not receptive to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. If a person is in a state of rejection and rebellion, he cannot and will not respond to the work of the Holy Spirit. No one can be saved if he rejects the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, which leads to repentance.

"...he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:...." (John 16:8)

The Apostle Paul testified that he had verbally "blasphemed" the work of the

Holy Ghost many times before his conversion. However, Paul was gloriously forgiven and saved by God. He said he used to be a blasphemer, and a persecutor. He hurt people. But he obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly and because he was not a Christian believer. (1 Timothy 1:13)

Notice that Paul specifically states the reason he was forgiven. He said, "because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." To follow the same logic: if he had known better, he may not have received the same forgiveness, because he would have been willfully railing against the Holy Spirit is loving work in his life. As it was, he did not know any better; and he was only railing against a religion, or a concept.

Paul spoke of some who are "reprobate concerning the faith", because they reject the truth. (2 Timothy 3:8) "Reprobate" means "worthless, a rejected castaway." A reprobate mind is one which has willfully chosen to reject the truth and embrace a lie. In the Book of Hebrews, we read:

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost...if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify ...

the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." (Hebrews 6:4,6)

The Bible says that

"...whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:13) Those who have blasphemed against the Holy Spirit in their reprobate hearts will never repent. They will not call on the name of the Lord; and, therefore, they cannot receive God's forgiveness. If you feel conviction and grief for your sins and want to be forgiven, that is proof that you have not committed any unpardonable sin. If you will turn to God by repentance through faith, you can be saved.

How Could a Brazen Serpent Be a Type of Christ in the Bible?

The serpent was the creature, cursed because of sin; and Jesus became a curse for us when He hung on the cross.

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up...." (John 3:14)

Everyone knows that the serpent was the beautiful creature the devil used to beguile Eve into sinning against the Lord; and, from that point on, all snakes were cursed and made to crawl on their bellies. We understand the name, "that old serpent," as one of the names of Satan, who is eternally cursed for his rebellion. But, did you know that the serpent is also a type — picture — of Christ?

In Numbers 21:5-9, there is the account of the brazen (bronze) serpent. The people of Israel had become discouraged by the way in the wilderness. They were complaining and gossiping about Moses, the man God had appointed to be their leader. God sent a hoard of poisonous snakes to kill the people. At the same time, He ordered Moses to make a snake out of bronze (brass) and lift it up on a pole before the people. God instructed Moses to tell the people that whoever would look up at the bronze serpent would live; and many obeyed the Word of the Lord to Moses. They may have been bitten; but, all it took to survive was an act of obedience to the Word of the Lord.

Many of the people died, because their entire focus was on the problem. When the ground is crawling with snakes, it is hard to look in another direction. That takes faith and obedience. Sin always brings death. The only way to be saved is to look up to Jesus and believe He will save us by grace. We cannot prevent the consequences any other way.

Bronze ("brass" in the King James Version) is a biblical type of judgment. The serpent speaks of the curse. We need to realize that God is holy; and sin is very serious. When Jesus was made "...to be sin for us,..." (2 Corinthians 5:21) and took upon Himself the sins of the whole world, He was like the brass serpent.

"For it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." (Galatians 3:13)

Jesus became cursed for us, so that we might inherit the blessing of eternal life. He became sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ. He suffered, so that we might be healed. The Roman method of execution by crucifixion was not only extremely painful, but it was also very shameful. As we reflect on the cross, we see the immense seriousness of sin in the eyes of God.

But Jesus "...endured the cross, despising the shame," (Hebrews 12:2) or counted it as trivial, compared to the joy of bringing many sons to glory. He understood that the pain and the curse were all necessary to satisfy the demands of God's holiness and eternal justice in relation to man's sin. He knew that many would respond to the greatest expression

of love and compassion the world had ever seen and would embrace Him gladly as Lord of their lives.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (John 12:32)

Hallelujah!

What Does It Mean to Be Justified by Faith?

Justification refers to the legal aspect of the new birth, whereby we are forgiven of our sins; pardoned by grace; and we receive imputed righteousness.

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

Spiritual regeneration by God's grace is the most wonderful miracle that can happen in any person's life. We are sinners -- rebels against the God who created us. We deserve the eternal torment of separation from God. But, Jesus Christ paid the penalty of death for the sins of the whole human race; and, we who were lost -- outside of the care of the Great Shepherd -- have the opportunity to be brought into the family of God.

When the Holy Spirit moves on the heart of a sinner to convict him of his sin, either he will harden his heart and resist the Holy Spirit, or he will be broken before God, repent of his sin, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said,

"Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." (Matthew 21:44)

Repentance is humbling; but it is not as humbling as the ultimate alternative-- the judgment of God.

At the moment we repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, faith takes hold of the provisions of the cross, and we are "born of the Spirit," or "born again." (John Chapter 3) We are "new creations," and our sins are remembered against us no more.

The Psalmist said that God removed our sins as far away from us "...as the east is from the west". (Psalms 103:12) There is a limit to north and south at the poles, but east and west keep going forever. The word "justify" means to "make just, or righteous". A popular expression for "justification" is, "just as if I had never sinned." When faith responds to God, we are legally justified. We exchange our "...filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6) for the robe of righteousness from Jesus Christ.

The ultimate act of love was the crucifixion of Christ. It was also the ultimate act of righteousness and obedience. It was a vicarious act on behalf of those who believe. "Vicarious" means "in the place of."

When we stand before God on the day of judgment, we will know that no amount of good works can balance the weight of our sin before God. We deserve the death penalty. But, Jesus will be our defense lawyer; and, because we came to God and pleaded "guilty," we can fall on the mercy of the court, because the just penalty has been paid. We receive "imputed righteousness," or that which is credited to our account by grace through faith. However, as long as we plead "innocent" and try to justify ourselves, we cannot receive the grace to be pardoned, based on the cross. We can be saved only by grace; but, there is an aspect of justification that is by works. As we walk by faith, our actions will reflect our obedience to God. James cited the example of Abraham and Rahab, saying, "by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." (James 2:24)

Why Did God Create Diverse Languages at Babel?

Man was seeking to maintain world unity through a monument to secular humanism, and God did not let that happen.

"And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." (Genesis 11:4)

After the flood, the three families of Noah multiplied rapidly; and they became three basic races of people. As the numbers began to grow, the leaders became concerned that the people would scatter over the earth and the leaders would have less power. It was decided that men should build a great city and tower in a place called Babel -- Gate of God -- in the plains of Shinar.

They wanted to build the "wonder of the world", which would exalt man in and for himself and create a visual image to the glory of man. They wanted a way to get to heaven, without surrendering to God as Lord and obeying His covenant. All false religions do the same thing. They try to make a way to heaven, without receiving God's covenant of grace through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior. These false religions are called "cults."

The tower was a supreme expression of secular humanism, the basic false religion of man. "Secular" means "to exclude God", and "humanism" means "the exaltation and worship of man as his own

master and savior". The humanist believes that, ultimately, mankind will bring about world peace through diplomacy, technology, and a "new world order", based on socialism -- the focus on state ownership of property, and a "shared society," with very limited free enterprise and little private ownership.

God in His mercy stopped the project by confounding the languages. People instantly forgot their language and began to speak in a new tongue. Since that time, "Babel" has meant "confusion." This "babbling" created instant distrust and discord. The building stopped; and the people were divided. Language is still a great deterrent to world unity, although men are still trying to establish world unity apart from God.

This is also a good lesson for some Christians, who have a problem with unity. We could build so much more for God and win so many more souls to Christ, if we could learn to "speak the same thing" and avoid division among us. (1 Corinthians 1:10) Most of our disunity and division is caused by our tongues, either because of gossip, misunderstandings, judging offenses, or failure to communicate and restore quickly.

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but

that which is good... Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another..." (Ephesians 4:29-32)

It is interesting to note that, when tongues were given to the ungodly, there was discord. Later, when the believers were in "one accord," God gave the gift of tongues to the believers; and they were given the authority to build the church for God.

What Is Prayer?

Prayer is talking with God. It should involve thanksgiving, petition, praise, intercession, communion, and listening with submission.

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." (Philippians 4:6)

Prayer is our communication with God. It may be verbal -- audible -- or just in our thoughts and spirit, because God can "hear" our thoughts and "see" into our hearts. (1 Samuel 16:7) God is the only one who can do that. We cannot read one another's minds or know one another's hearts, and neither can the devil. We can talk to God any time, and we should live with an attitude of prayer, or the continual sense of God's presence. We can thus: "Pray without ceasing." (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

To pray, we must be in fellowship with God as believers and come before Him in His presence. We

"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise...." (Psalms 100:4)

It is important to begin our communication with God with thanksgiving for what He has already done and with praise for being the wonderful Lord He is. This builds our faith and blesses Him.

Petition is the practice of turning to God with our needs and desires. We are prone to forget God or to be casual in our prayer life when life is easy and we have everything we need. So, God lets us experience need to motivate us to turn to Him. God wants us to turn to Him as our first source of healing, help, and provision. It is not a sin to seek a doctor's help, for instance, but prayer should be our first response to injury or illness, not the last resort. "Ask, and it shall be given you...." (Matthew 7:7)

Intercession is the practice of praying for others. It is an indication of maturity and is very important for our own growth. It is especially wise to pray for those in authority over you, because the more your parents, pastors, and government leaders are spiritually strengthened, the more they will protect and bless you. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

Communion and worship are a part of prayer. Also, we should listen and allow God to speak to us as we seek His face. To seek His face means to pursue a relationship with Him, not just to seek His hand of provision or blessing. The first commandment is that we should love the Lord our God. That is what it is all about. We would be poor conversationalists, indeed, if we spent all of our time talking

and never allowing the other person to reply. Listen to God.

We should also "...pray with the spirit." (1 Corinthians 14:15) When you pray with the spirit, you are not praying with your mind. This is expressed verbally with tongues, and will always have a healthy positive effect on your life. Every believer should also seek to pray "...in the Spirit...," (Ephesians 6:18, Jude 20) that is, to allow the Holy Spirit to direct your praying,

whether it is expressed in your natural language, or in tongues.

Prayer is personal communication with God, and it should be a part of our life every day. Jesus taught us to **pray to the Father** in the name of Jesus, although it is not necessarily wrong to pray to Jesus or the to Holy Spirit on occasion.

Why Did Jesus Give to Us the Lord's Prayer?

Jesus taught this prayer as a pattern, or example, to give some direction to His disciples in their prayer life.

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." (Matthew 6:9)

Jesus did not give this prayer to be recited or repeated over and over. In fact, He warned that prayer should not be "vain repetitions," but it should be a personal conversation with God. (Matthew 6:7) He told His disciples that the heathens think they will be heard because of their repetition; but, God does not need information. He is looking relationship and response. It is ironic that some people have taken this very model and used it contrary to Jesus' teaching. He said, "when you pray, pray to your Heavenly Father." Talk to Him as you would to a perfect, loving father.

"Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." (Matthew 6:9) Honor the names of God. Focus on who He is. For every need in life, there is a corresponding name of God. He is Jehovah-Tsidkenu, the Lord our righteousness; Jehovah-Ra-ah, the Lord our Shepherd; Jehovah-Rapha, our healer; Jehovah-Nissi, our banner; Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is present; Jehovah-Shalom, our peace; Jehovah-Jireh, our provider; Wonderful, Counselor, Everlasting God, Prince of Peace, and

many other names that express attributes of our great God.

"Thy kingdom come." (Matthew 6:10) Kingdom means literally "king's domain." We are not only praying for the coming kingdom with the reign of Christ on the earth, but we are also praying that His complete rule be established in our lives, families, and church.

"Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10) "Let your will reign supreme in me and in this church as it is perfectly done in heaven."

"Give us this day our daily bread." (Matthew 6:11) Bring your specific needs to God. God knows what we need; but, we need to turn to Him as our source and know that it was His good hand which provided it, and not mere chance.

"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." (Matthew 6:12) As believers, we continue to ask forgiveness for sins in our lives. We need to continue in humility and repentance and judge ourselves. If we refuse to forgive others, we are disqualified from receiving forgiveness from God for our wrongdoing. (Matthew 6:15)

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil...." (Matthew 6:13) We

need to ask continually for the grace to overcome evil forces that seek to distract us and derail our honest pursuit of God and his purposes. We are not praying, "God, do not let anything happen to me that I do not like," but, rather, "God, do not let pride or bitterness get into my spirit so that I am overcome by the spirit of the age and corrupted in my heart against you."

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever." (Matthew 6:13) "God, all of it really belongs to you, and I know that you will accomplish your purposes in the earth and will reign forever. You have all power, and all of the honor belongs to you."

"Amen." So be it.

What Is Fasting?

Fasting is the practice of giving up food -- or food and drink -- for a time, in order to devote special time to prayer and to seeking God.

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?" (Isaiah 58:6)

One practice that should be a part of every believer's life is fasting. Jesus did not say, "If you fast," but, rather, "when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites...." (Matthew 6:16) As we see in Isaiah 58, and also in Matthew 6, it is possible to fast with wrong motives. Such abstinence will not receive the same rewards from the Lord.

Fasting benefits the spirit, soul, and body. It strengthens the spirit by exercising control over carnal desires and making a person's spirit more sensitive to God. Fasting helps the soul by stimulating humility (Psalms 35:13); and it has a wonderful cleansing effect on the body when it is done properly. (Isaiah 58:8)

There are several types of fasts. In a regular fast, the believer abstains from food for a specified time, drinking only water. The duration can vary from one meal to forty days. Moses and Jesus each fasted for 40 days. The Bible does not say that Jesus was thirsty after His fast. It only tells us that He was hungry. It is helpful to avoid caffeine and sugar for a few days before a fast and to drink plenty of water

throughout the fast. During the first day or two, the person is very hungry. After the second day, most people experience little hunger problems. In fact, we usually discover numerous health benefits as an extra benefit.

In a partial fast, we omit one or two meals each day; or we eliminate certain kinds of food. Generally, a partial fast will exclude rich foods and desserts and focus on bread or vegetables. (Daniel 10:3) Another variation of this is the liquid fast, which allows for juice, broth, or beverages, but no solid food. This is recommended for long fasts.

In a complete fast, neither food nor liquid is taken at all. Both the Apostle Paul (Acts 9:9) and Esther (Esther 4:16) each went on a complete fast for three days. Such a fast can be dangerous if extended further than that. Long, complete fasts are not recommended.

Fasting should always be accompanied by prayer and Bible reading. Otherwise, it could just be a hunger strike. When combined with fervent prayer, fasting brings deliverance, healing, and discipline in a person's life. It also releases faith.

Jesus encourages us to fast in secret; that is to say, do not make a show of it and spread the word to impress people. There are times when a group of believers will fast together and encourage one another. Obviously, it will not be entirely "secret;" but, the key is the motive. God also

encourages us to pray and give alms (for the poor) in secret; but, there are times to pray and give publicly to encourage others to do so.

What Is the Difference Between a Religious Rite and a Sacrament?

A religious rite is only an outward show, based on tradition. A sacrament involves both a spiritual meaning and a spiritual work in the life of the believer.

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6)

Religion is man's attempt to know or understand God. True Christianity is a living relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible is the revelation of God to man. Every religion has certain rites or rituals that will involve some kind of effort or sacrifice. Unless the practices are based on the revealed Word of God, they will not be pleasing to God. God alone initiates His covenants; and He sets forth those things that are pleasing to Him.

There is nothing that a man can do of his own invention which can please God. God is impressed only with faith and the obedience that results.

Religious rites are based on traditions. Jesus said,

"...in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandments of God, ye hold the traditions of men..." (Mark 7:7-8)

God spoke to Israel through His prophet, Isaiah, and told them that He was sick of their rituals. He wanted them to repent of their sins and serve Him in truth. (Isaiah 1:10-20)

Religious rites can be impressive to people and have an emotional effect on the participants. But, spiritual sacraments have eternal value and spiritual benefits. In Christian baptism, for instance, the Bible speaks of an inner washing, (Acts 22:16) a burial with Christ, and rising to walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4)

Healing and communion with God are involved in the partaking of the Lord's table. There is spiritual identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Partaking unworthily, or with wrong motives, can have serious negative effects on a person. (1 Corinthians 11:27-30) In the breaking of bread, we are affirming our covenant with the Lord and with His body, the church; healing offenses; and examining ourselves. As we take the cup, we are showing the Lord's death until He comes.

The sacrament of marriage is also a spiritual union, and not just a legal one.

Marriage is sacred in God's eyes, and it should also be in ours.

The sacraments were designed by God, the designer and initiator of the Covenant we have through the blood of Jesus. God has a perfect and eternal purpose in everything He does. We probably do not understand fully every part of the sacraments. But, God knows our hearts; and He is pleased as we respond honestly to that which He directs us to do as His children and as His church.

What Is the Doctrine of Eternal Judgment?

Jesus Christ is the one who judges all men. When He pronounces final judgment on a person, the verdict will be permanent.

God "... hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained..." (Acts 17:31)

Every member of the human race will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ and will be evaluated, or judged, and will be given rewards or punishments which will continue forever. In this short life on earth, everything is temporary. The primary purpose of this physical life is to prepare us for eternity. God is seeking worshippers (John 4:24) and is building His church, which is the holy company of believers from all the ages, who are the born-again overcomers.

The word "judge" in the Greek is "krino," which means "to decide." Judging makes subjective conclusions about the intent and integrity of a person, as well as about his external actions. When you make a judgment, you categorize the person according to what you perceive his motives to be. You may know that a person has made an incorrect statement based on the facts. But, do you know it was intentional? To say, "That was a false statement; let us check out the facts," would be an example of discerning. To say, "That person is a liar," is a judgment. We can see actions, but we do not see motives.

"Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)

Jesus Christ commands us not to judge. (Matthew 7:1) We may see and should respond to some actions; but, we must always be aware that we cannot see the heart. When we judge one another, we cut off relationships and damage the unity that God has designed for His children.

We are told to restore someone who is overtaken in a fault (Galatians 6:1) or to go privately to a believer who misses the mark. (Matthew 18:15) However, we cannot be restored to a person whom we have judged. The moment we believe that a person does not love us, or is insincere, we preclude restoration, because we will not receive his apology or his effort to restore.

It is human nature to judge others and excuse ourselves. The Bible teaches us to reverse that. We should be patient with one another and give others the benefit of the doubt. But, if we are wise, we will "judge ourselves." That is to say, "I was really selfish and unkind to say that. I should apologize."

"But let a man examine himself,...for if we would judge

ourselves, we should not be judged." (1 Corinthians 11:28,31)

When we are judged by the Lord, we will be judged righteously. He knows exactly what we have done in this life; and He sees our motives. He knows the potential He gave us; and He will expect more from those who had more opportunities and blessings in this life.

(Luke 12:48) The only way to live wisely and well is with the awareness of accountability: that is, the reality that we belong to God and will have to give an account to Him.

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

What Is the Bema Throne?

The Bema Throne, or Judgment Seat of Christ, is the place where all believers will be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ, according to their works here on earth.

"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." (2 Corinthians 5:10)

The Greek word "bema" (pronounced bay-ma) means "a step, a rostrum, tribunal, or judgment seat." The judgment seat of Christ is the throne in heaven, where He will sit in judgment over all the believers from all the ages. All those who are evaluated there will be redeemed by His blood. They will not be cast into hell; but, they will receive various rewards or reprimands for their works and choices on earth.

The fact that we will be judged at the Bema Throne will be proof that our names are written in the "Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 3:5), and that our names will not be blotted out. All those whose names are not found in the book of life will be judged after the millennium at the "Great White Throne Judgment." (Revelation 20:11-15)

After the rapture of the church, at the end of the church age, the believers will stand before the judgment seat of Christ. We believe that the stage is being set and that this will happen very soon. It is important for believers to have this sense

of urgency about the coming of the Lord and to be prepared. When a person loses the vision for the coming of the Lord, he may tend to become carnal and selfish. (Matthew 24:45-51)

At the judgment, Jesus Christ will cause all of us to give an account of our lives. He will know exactly what He called and equipped us to do and the number of opportunities we had in life.

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

The Lord will demand more of a fivetalent man than He will of a one-talent man. God will "...render to every man according to his deeds:...." (Romans 2:6)

The Bema Throne will be a time for rewards, when the Lord shall assign to some the responsibility to rule over five or ten cities. It will also be a time of sorrow and regret, when we see what we could have done and where we fell short of God's highest will. How will the Christians feel who had turned against one another, or split apart in jealousy or bitterness, when they are judged for the ways they treated one another?

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ;...

Knowing...the terror of the Lord, we persuade men;..." (2 Corinthians 5:10-11)

Many Bible teachers believe that the tears which God will wipe from our eyes will be the tears shed at the Bema judgment. (Revelation 21:4)

There are many things in life that are "unfair." Some people seem to get great rewards for little effort, and others do what is right and suffer. In the end, Jesus will be the righteous judge, and will make it right. In fact, to judge is to make things right; to settle the score. The proud will be brought down, and the humble will be exalted. "Judge me, O LORD, for I have walked in mine integrity." (Psalms 26:1)

What Is the "Great White Throne Judgment"?

The Great White Throne Judgment refers to the great judgment of all of the unbelievers of the human race. It will take place, after the Millennium, at the resurrection of the wicked dead.

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." (Revelation 20:11)

When a believer dies, his spirit leaves his body and goes to heaven to be in the presence of God. He is conscious and, very possibly, is aware of the events on the earth. At the time of the First Resurrection, the "dead in Christ" will come with the Lord and be restored to their physical bodies. Their bodies will be miraculously rebuilt and glorified. That is, they will become bodies of "flesh and bone," immortal and incorruptible, like that of Christ's when He was resurrected from the dead. "We shall be like him;..." (1 John 3:2)

The unbelievers, or all those who are not born again when they die, leave their bodies in the grave and go to Sheol, or Hades, a place of fire and torment for spirits. Apparently, this place is located within the earth. We know it to be a literal place of darkness and intense heat. The righteous saints will be resurrected at the close of the church age and before the Millennial reign of Christ on the earth.

After that time of one thousand years of peace on the earth, there will be another

great resurrection, followed by another great judgment. The same judge, the Lord Jesus Christ, will preside over both judgments. However, this will be the resurrection of the wicked dead. Their spirits will be taken out of Sheol-Hades; and they will stand before the throne. The record of all their deeds and the Book of Life will be opened. The people will be judged according to their deeds. The main factor in determining their eternal fate will be whether they did repent and believe. If they did not, their names will not be in the Lamb's Book of Life.

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.... And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (Revelation 20:12-15)

Those who choose not to live for God, will never live with God in all eternity. They will be cast into a place of "outer darkness" and torment, where they will

have all of eternity to regret their selfish, wasted lives, and their rejection of the grace of God. All those judged at the Great White Throne will be cast into the lake of fire with Satan and his angels.

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool. ... A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: a thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." (Daniel 7:9-10)

Does God Predestine Some People To Be Saved and Others To Be Eternally Lost?

The Bible teaches that God's predestination is based on His foreknowledge, and that anyone can be saved if they will respond to the Holy Spirit and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Romans 8:29)

Predestination is a wonderful truth that can easily be taken out of context and out of balance. Some teach a fatalistic approach to predestination. Their concept is, "Since God is sovereign, He must choose those He wants to save and leave the rest to go to hell. We really do not have anything to do with it. God knows what is going to happen, because He has made all the decisions ahead of time."

The Bible teaches that God's foreknowledge is not based on His fore-ordination. Rather, His predestined plan is based on His foreknowledge. Otherwise, the verse would say, "Whom He did predestinate, He also knew ahead of time."

God knows everything that has ever happened and everything that ever will happen. He knows what choices and responses we will make; and He has a perfect plan for each of our lives. Predestination simply means a plan for the future. God has in mind a destination for us and He plans ahead. When we

disobey Him, we damage God's best for our lives and can fall short of what He wanted us to do or have in this life.

God is sovereign. He is so sovereign that He can let us make choices and still be God. If we are not free moral agents, then there is no great blessing in the fact that we respond to Him in faith and love. The fact that we chose to love God in the midst of a wicked world makes our lives pleasing to God. If we had no choice, we would just be responding like a machine.

We know that God does not choose arbitrarily who will be saved or lost, because He is just. He does not select anyone to go to hell.

"The Lord is ... not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

He wants everyone to be saved. God knows that, when given a choice, most people will love themselves and will not really want to surrender their lives to Him. Everyone wants to go to heaven; but, God wants a people who believe His Word and will love Him more than they love the world.

Why did God choose Abraham to be His friend? Abraham believed and responded to God. God chose David, because David had a heart to love God. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, because he was the only man on earth in his day who believed and obeyed God.

From the foundation of the world, God knew who would have a heart to seek and honor Him with their lives; and He chose them for Himself. If God arbitrarily chose some to succeed in life and others to fail, He would not be a just God. He does give to some more opportunities in life; but He also holds them more accountable. (Luke 12:48)

Predestination is the principle that God has a wonderful purpose, plan, and destination for your life. It is not an excuse to do whatever you want and to think that you do not have any responsibility in life.

What Does "New Testament" Mean?

A testament is a will or covenant.

"New Testament" refers to the new covenant God offered to mankind and is based on the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matthew 26:28)

The Greek word for "testament" comes from a verb which means "to dispose," or "to assign, as in a will". A will is the statement of a person concerning what he would like to have done with his property after his death. It expresses his will about the use of the things he owns. A testament goes into effect after his death. The person who makes a will is called the "testator."

"For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all...." (Hebrews 9:17)

When man sinned, he broke his relationship with God and lost dominion over God's property. It is only on the basis of a legal covenant that any person or group can be restored to God; become His people; and thus enjoy the blessings and benefits of God's domain. God made a covenant with the descendants of Israel, whereby they could be His chosen people and receive His protection and blessing. Although there were many laws relative to the peoples' responsibility to God, the basis of the covenant was the sacrifice of animals, which represented the people

and paid the penalty of death in their place. This is called "atonement."

One problem was that the people were never able to live up to the perfect standards of the law consistently. Another weakness was that the blood of animals was not valuable enough to atone permanently for the sins of the people. The priest would offer fresh sacrifices regularly as sin offerings.

The book of Hebrews is God's best explanation of the difference between the old covenant and the new. Basically, the old covenant was a picture and preparation for the new, which came into effect when Jesus died on the cross as the Lamb of God.

"But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle,...neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us....And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of

eternal inheritance." (Hebrews 9:11-15)

The old testament -- or covenant -- is the picture of the new. The new testament is the fulfillment of the old. The old covenant gave man the law of God, which teaches us righteousness. The new covenant gives greater grace, which changes our hearts and enables us to be righteous. Under the old covenant, Israel had the law on tables of stone; but, we have it written in our hearts by grace.

"But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." (Hebrews 8:6)

When Jesus offered His blood of atonement on the mercy seat in heaven, the people who had received the old covenant by faith entered into the new covenant and were given entrance into heaven. (Ephesians 4:8)

Who Is a Jew?

The term "Jew" refers to a person who is one of the natural descendants of Israel, or to one who has been converted to the religion of Judaism.

"What advantage then hath the Jew? ...Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." (Romans 3:1-2)

God made a special covenant with His friend, Abraham, concerning his descendants. He said that they would be

"as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore...." (Genesis 22:17)

This is perhaps referring to the fact that Abraham would have many natural descendants through his son, Isaac, as well as many spiritual descendants who are "...Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:29)

Israel (or Jacob), Abraham's grandson, had twelve sons. Their descendants became the mighty nation of Israel. After Solomon's reign, the kingdom was divided by political strife. Ten of the tribes formed a new kingdom. They adopted the practice of idolatry and turned away from God. Eventually, they were scattered and destroyed by the nation of Assyria, about 722 B.C. The other two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, became the southern kingdom and were known as the nation of Judah. They continued the dynasty of King David, who was from the tribe of Judah, and

maintained their capitol in Jerusalem. The worship of the true God, Jehovah, was usually the official religion; and they were not destroyed.

Later, the region of the nation of Judah was called Judea, and the descendants of Israel became known as Jews. Jesus Christ came to earth through the Jewish line. In fact, Jesus was a direct descendant of David. Even His foster-father Joseph was of the tribe of Judah. The disciples of Jesus were Jews. Virtually all of the Bible was given by God through Jewish writers. The apostle Paul had a Jewish mother and a Roman father.

Because of God's covenant with Abraham, God chose to identify with the Jewish people. God had given to Moses the Levitical covenant of the law and had laid the foundation for the new covenant through Jesus Christ, their Messiah. The people of Israel largely rejected Jesus. Many are still waiting for another messiah. John said that Jesus

"...came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God,...." (John 1:11-12)

In the Bible, any person who was not a Jew was called a "Gentile." To a Jew, that

usually implied inferiority, because the Jews were very much aware of their special place in the economy of God. Until Jesus came, a person had to convert to the Hebrew, or Jewish, faith in order to get right with God. But now, because of the cross, anyone who will repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ can be born again and enter into the new covenant with God.

Since Jesus came and fulfilled the law of the old covenant, no one can have a

valid relationship with God through the old feasts, observances, and sacrifices. In fact, to sacrifice an animal today, as in the old days, would be to deny the work of Christ on the cross and would not be pleasing to the Lord. Jews have a special place in the heart of God; but, they still need to accept Jesus as their Messiah and to be born again in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

What Is an Idol?

An idol is anything that takes the place of God in a person's life and usurps the devotion, trust, or dependence which should rightfully go to Him.

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:3)

When we hear the word, "idol," we usually envision a statue with some kind of human or partly human form, with ignorant people bowing and praying vainly to this wooden, stone, or metal image. There are such cultures that worship physical man-made idols, such as Hinduism. The Hindu religion is centered in India, and teaches polytheism, or the concept of many gods. In fact, it is estimated that there are over three hundred million gods in India, and many of them are actual demon spirits who influence the misguided throngs in a depressing and oppressively vain religion.

Men have fashioned idols almost since the race began; but, they are just images and they have no power in themselves. Why do people worship idols? Because, when a man makes an idol, he can develop the ideas and character of the idol in his own mind and, therefore, do what he wants. It is as if, in his rebellion, sinful man, has said, "let us make God in our image." Notice that the Greek and Roman gods of mythology are like foolish and fickle men and women. They are not like the perfect and holy God, who is the one real God.

In our culture we do not practice idolatry as such; but, we do in fact have a serious national problem with idolatry. An idol does not have to be a statue. An idol is anything or anyone which displaces God in our lives. Your God is the one to whom you go when you have a need, because He is your Heavenly Father, Jehovah-Jireh. But, some people turn to other people or to social agencies instead of to the Lord.

We are called to serve God and live for Him; but, many people serve money and live to gain wealth. Their god is money, and they think that money will solve their problems. It is a problem when a nation's leaders forsake the Lord and look to money as their god. They try to solve every problem with money; and, eventually, they spend far more than they have available. Unless they look to the Lord and repent, they can spend the nation into financial ruin. There is no end to spending the country into impossible debt, because there is no end of problems where the money is needed.

Some people live for pleasure: "...whose god is their belly." (Philippians 3:19) In America today, our largest industry is pleasure. We pay entertainers obscene amounts of money, while our nation's leaders and most skilled people receive relatively little. Some people are

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even outraged when a minister of the gospel is well-paid; but, they seem to think nothing of paying an entertainer millions of dollars. We bestow great honor on entertainers, which shows where our priorities as a nation are. When a person is referred to as a "screen idol," it is not just an expression. It is a fact. People literally worship the "stars" of music, movies, and sports.

When a person is more devoted to his sports than he is to God, then sports are idols to him. Whatever we love more than God is an idol, and we demonstrate our love by the priorities in our schedules. God is called a "jealous God." (Exodus 20:5) He deserves to be first in our lives and affections.

Why Did God Command His People Not to Make Graven Images?

God knows that the carnal tendency of man is to focus his attention and affections on physical things and to neglect the spiritual realities of life.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image,..." (Exodus 20:4)

When God created man, He placed him in a time space world and made him a physical creature as well as an eternal spirit. But man's sin blinded his spiritual vision, and, since his fall, man has had a problem keeping the eternal things in perspective. He tends to get caught up in the physical and temporal things of life and to neglect the eternal things of the spirit. Jesus taught that, if we are not careful, the cares of this life will choke out the Word in our lives. (Matthew 13:22) He told us to

"seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33)

The Apostle Paul taught this principle of man's tendency to be carnal.

"For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope." (Romans 8:20)

In simpler terms, man (the creature) was created with human weakness and the potential to be very carnal (made subject to vanity). It was not man's choice. God had a

purpose in subjecting man to the limitations of a physical body and very limited understanding, so that he of necessity would be dependent upon God and would succeed in life only by seeking after God daily. If left to his own resources, man tends toward vanity (a carnal focus on self and things that will not last). We can enter into the liberty of the sons of God only by God's grace, which we receive by faith. We cannot do it with our human ability.

The fact that we are "subject to vanity" is reflected in our response to images. Man tends to "worship and serve the creature more that the Creator." (Romans 1:25) When Aaron made a golden calf for Israel, it was intended to represent God. But, the people immediately started to worship the image instead of God.

Today, there are many people who actually worship relics which relate to the Christian religion. People revere, adore, and pray to statues of Jesus, Mary, or to dead saints. They will flock in great numbers to pay homage to trees or tortillas that seem to look like an image of Jesus. Men have spent their lives searching for the cup Jesus used for the last supper -called the "Holy Grail" -- or the shroud --linen cloth -- used in His burial. Churches treat with awe the remains of familiar

leaders. In fact, St. Peter's fingers and St. Paul's skull are preserved in European cathedrals. (At last count, apparently Peter had 26 fingers, and Paul had 12 heads!)

God knew that man would have this tendency, so He commanded His people not to make images, so they would not be tempted. But, obviously, they did, and they were tempted. We do not believe that it is wrong to have any statues or artwork and

to enjoy their beauty; but, we want to be careful to avoid any statues or artwork which seek to represent God, or a god, such as a Buddha or a Tiki god. These draw attention to false gods, and they are generally associated with the realm of darkness.

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24)

Why Does the Bible Say that God Is a Jealous God?

God loves us and does not want anything to take His place of preeminence in our hearts.

"I the LORD thy God am a jealous God." (Exodus 20:5)

Jealousy is a word that only a few people understand today. It is often confused with envy or covetousness. To covet is to desire something belonging to another person. It is a destructive emotion, leading to bitterness or stealing. Envy is a damaging sense of ill will against a person, because of who they are or what they have achieved. It is a desire to have their place or situation. Jealousy is simply the fear of being replaced.

In interpersonal relationships, jealousy is also a negative emotion; it is not an indication of genuine love. Godly love between friends or spouses involves trust; jealousy shows a lack of trust. It is a form of fear - a lack of faith. When people are jealous, they are showing that their focus is on themselves and not on the needs or feelings of the other person. This kind of fear can be conquered only by developing genuine love, which is a focus on the needs of others. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear." (1 John 4:18)

But the Apostle Paul said, "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy:...." (2 Corinthians 11:2) Selfish jealousy is a fear that I might be replaced in the affections of another person, and it reacts to that person

on the basis of violated rights. The response is a self-centered anger. Paul's godly jealousy was motivated by his desire for God's best for the Christians at Corinth, and it had no selfish agenda. The key is the **motive**. His motive was his concern that the people might get so caught up in the love of things or pleasure that they would develop a form of idolatry and miss out on God's best for their lives. It was godly, because it was motivated by love, not by selfishness.

God is a perfect and loving God, and He is not negative or destructive. He had every reason to be concerned for His people, because they had consistently demonstrated a fickle attitude. God would bless them, often in supernatural ways, and, within days or even hours, they were complaining. Their focus turned away from God and toward their stomachs. After only a few sessions of murmuring, usually they were ready to quit the journey, return to bondage, stone the leader, and take up another gold offering for a new idol. No wonder God was concerned.

It is also important for us to know that God is not interested in playing a "Santa Claus" role in our lives. Many people try to incorporate God and religion into their lives, but they keep things centered on themselves. They see God as a kind

benefactor, who comes around when we have a need, but usually stays up at North Pole Heaven and does not get too involved. No. God is a jealous God. He does not want us only to accept Him into our lives; He commands us to receive Him as Lord and Master of our lives. He is

God, and He will not be our servant. We are His servants and His property; and that is fine, because He loves us very much.

"This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise." (Isaiah 43:21)

What Does It Mean to Take the Name of the Lord in Vain?

We take God's name in vain whenever we speak His name irreverently or disrespectfully, or when we use His name to curse others.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain;...." (Exodus 20:7)

The Hebrew word "vain" means desolating, evil, or useless. God is holy and is worthy of absolute respect, awe, and reverence. All of us associate with one another by our names, and we are affected by the names we are called. We communicate the way we feel about one another by the names we use. Consider the man who calls his wife "sweetheart." Then, think of the man who refers to his wife as "the old lady." What can you tell about these men?

As Christians, we demonstrate what we think of God by the way we use His name. As we refer often to the Lord in our speaking or singing, we are reminded of His wonderful attributes. He is Jehovah-Jireh -- the Lord our provider -- Jehovah-Shalom -- peace -- and other special names. Many ancient Jews held God's name in such reverence that they used the unpronounceable name, JHWH.

Sin, which turns a man's heart from God to an evil focus on self, stirs up strong feelings of animosity and resentment toward God. This is called "enmity." When man sins, it affects his conscience, which is the awareness in his spirit that he

is wrong. He must respond to that conscience by confessing his sin to God and repenting; or, he will seek to justify himself in his heart and build up resentment against the One who is and will be the judge of his life. The more enmity he stirs up against God, the less guilty he feels over the sins in his life.

This is reflected in his talk. Jesus said that "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." (Matthew 12:34) When a person has evil in his heart, it will tend to come out of his mouth in the form of evil words. Usually this comes out in two basic forms: profanity and cursing. "Profanity" is the use of words which draw attention to things that are filthy or profane. There are words in every language that speak of bodily functions or private parts of the body in demeaning or vile ways. Usually they are short, coarsesounding words that convey to the listener, "this person has a dirty mind and limited intelligence."

"Cursing" is the use of words and phrases that communicate condemnation or damnation to someone. "God, damn it" actually is a cursing prayer to consign something to hell. It is an expression of hatred, and affects only the speaker, because "the curse causeless shall not come." (Proverbs 26:2) Usually it is in

cursing that people take God's name in vain or use God's name in an evil way, and God will hold us accountable.

It is important for us to avoid bywords, or "minced oaths." "Darn it" is a diluted form of "damn it." Golly and Gosh are derivatives of the name God. Gee, Jeez, Jeepers, and Jiminy Cricket are demeaning forms of the name of Jesus Christ, and

they should not be used by Christians. It is good not to use any oaths at all. Jesus said,

"Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." (Matthew 5:37)

Why Did God Command Us to Honor Our Father and Mother?

God knows that sin leads to rebellion against authority, and that the way we respond to our parents will affect our attitudes toward Him.

"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." (Exodus 20:12)

The Hebrew word for honor means "weighty, important, of great worth." Honor involves respect and reverence. Many oriental cultures take this to an extreme, because some religions teach ancestor worship. On the other hand, other cultures, which have been influenced by the teaching of evolution and secular humanism, have a very low view of the role of parents. They portray parents as the enemies of self-realization.

The family is the central unit in God's plan for growth and development. The family is also the basis for any strong nation. Satan knows that, if he can destroy the family, he can destroy the church and the nation. God designed the family, and not the state, to be the center of education. God placed each of us in the family of which we are a member. To be resentful of the parents God gave us is really an expression of resentment toward God, because He assigned us to our parents.

The Apostle Paul points out that this is the first commandment with a promise attached directly to it. (Ephesians 6:2-3) The promise is that we may live long upon the earth. There are several reasons for this. It is not a guarantee of a long physical life; it is the expression of the principle that a right attitude toward one's parents tends toward a longer life. One reason is obvious. When people live in resentment and rebellion, their bodies are affected by those attitudes and are more susceptible to disease and decay. Our parents are a very important part of our lives, and we will be greatly affected by dishonoring them.

Secondly, God gave parents to us as our protectors, particularly our fathers. If we stay under authority, we stay under protection. They are not only for physical protection, but they also provide spiritual and emotional protection. The best protection any girl has against marrying the wrong man is her father, because he can detect wrong motives, which she is not equipped to see. Notice how the movie industry constantly portrays fathers as being wrong about the romantic inclinations of their daughters. That is because there is a strong anti-family and pro-humanist mind-set in Hollywood.

To honor parents does not necessarily mean to do everything they say. The Bible teaches that we should "be subject unto the higher powers." (Romans 13:1) In other words, obey your parents unless their command is in violation of God's

Word. In that case, the Bible is the higher authority, and we must obey God. But, we do honor our parents and acknowledge that they have the right to make the final decisions until we are married. Then

"shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife:..." (Genesis 2:24);

and they will become a new family. Even then, their parents should be honored in their place of counsel.

Section 8

Lessons

Promotion Sunday

Volume 11

Lesson 1



Bible References

Luke 2

Ephesians 4:15



Theme

The first lesson is an introduction for the new class and an opportunity for the youth leaders and students to get acquainted.



Scripture Reading

Luke 1:80

80 "And the child (John the Baptist) grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel."

Luke 2:40, 52

40 "And the child (Jesus) grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him."

52 "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."



Memory Verse

Ephesians 4:15

"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."



Outline

I. Who Is Here?

- A. A greeting and introduction is given by both the youth leader(s) and the students.
 - 1. The teacher of the class is introduced (and youth leaders, if applicable).
 - 2. The students are introduced.
 - a. The students may know each other fairly well (although, the beginning of a new class is when new students often appear); but they should introduce themselves for the sake of the teacher and youth leaders.
 - b. Introductions can be interesting, if some imagination is used (see Methods).
- B. A general overview of the year is given by the teacher to the students.
 - The subject matter to be taught is briefly mentioned and/or summarized.
 - 2. The special activities for the year are briefly discussed.
 - a. The teacher may already have annual trips or activities planned.
 - b. The teacher want to select a few student leaders to help plan new activities or trips.

II. What Are the Goals For the Class?

- A. Class will start on time each week.
- B. The teacher will do his or her best to prepare for the class. (2 Timothy 2:15)
 - 1. The purpose of the class is to increase knowledge and understanding of the Bible.
 - 2. The purpose of the class is to increase love and appreciation for the Bible.
 - 3. The purpose of the class is to increase knowledge, understanding, love and appreciation for Jesus Christ.
- C. The teacher (and youth leaders, if available) will follow up on absentee students.
 - 1. Evangelism and discipleship are processes that happen in the context of relationships.
 - 2. The purpose of the class is to build strong friendships between the youth leaders, students, and the Lord.

III. What Are the Goals For the Students?

- A. Immediate goals.
 - 1. The Bible is the textbook for the class; therefore, every student needs to bring a Bible.
 - a. The students are to bring a notebook and pencil to class.
 - b. If a teenager does not have a
 Bible, then a serious attempt will
 be made to provide the teenagers
 with one.

- 2. The students need to be sensitive to the atmosphere of the class.
 - a. There is a time for everything. (Ecclesiastes 3:1)
 - (1) There is a time to keep silent, and a time to speak. (Ecclesiastes 3:7)
 - (2) There is a time to talk and laugh, and there is a time to be quiet. It is important that the students are able to discern between the two.
 - b. A teacher cannot make a student listen; this is a right the teacher must earn. However, the teacher does have the right and responsibility to make a distracting, disrespectful student cease from disrupting the class.
- 3. The students are expected to be on time for class each week.

B. Growth goals.

- 1. The students grow in their relationship with the youth leaders and one another.
 - The opportunity for this to be accomplished is in classroom interaction and outside class activities.
 - It is important for the class to continue to develop a sense of community.
- 2. The students grow in Christian character, so that they become mature, responsible adults.
 - a. This will be achieved, as they learn the Word of God and apply it to their lives.
 - b. This will be achieved, by encouraging students to become involved in the ministries of the church.
 - c. This will be achieved, by the youth leaders being good examples.

- d. This will be achieved, by the youth leaders being available to help the students when they encounter difficulties.
- 3. The students grow in their ability to make wise decisions for their future.
 - a. As upperclassmen, the students will begin to be confronted with life-directing questions. What about a job or career? What about further education? What about a relationships with the opposite sex -- how far is too far, and what about marriage?
 - b. The class subjects or topics will begin to touch upon these issues.
- 4. The students grow in their relationship with the Lord. (Luke 2:52)
- 5. The teacher may set additional goals as he or she is led by the Holy Spirit.

IV. How To Close the First Meeting.

- A. God made today a new day.
 - 1. Forget what is behind, and keep moving forward. (Philippians 3:13,14)
 - 2. Rejoice and be glad. (Psalms 118:24)
- B. God will do a new thing. (Isaiah 43:19)
 - 1. God will "make a way in the wilderness."
 - 2. God will put "rivers in the desert."
- C. God made us new creations. (2 Corinthians 5:17)
 - 1. Old things are passed away.
 - 2. We are his children. (John 1:12)

- D. God wants us to be renewed. (Roman 12:1-2)
 - 1. In our bodies. (verse 1)
 - 2. In our sacrifice. (verse 1)
 - 3. In our service. (verse 1)
 - 4. In our minds. (verse 2)
 - 5. In our lives. (verse 2)



Spiritual Truths

- In order to make satisfying progress with the class, we need to set goals for the class. God has a future for every one of us; and part of His plan for us is that we set worthwhile goals to achieve for His glory.
- Enthusiasm builds enthusiasm. We get what we expect -- with God's help!
- If teenagers are challenged properly, they will rise to meet the challenge.



Lesson Material

The first class is always a time for introductions. The teacher should introduce the youth leaders, if there are any, and give the leaders an opportunity to say something to the students. The teacher should briefly explain why he or she decided to be a teacher, and perhaps share a few interesting experiences. Then the

students should be given the opportunity to introduce themselves.

It is important that the teacher remembers names and faces as quickly as possible. There is nothing which impresses a person more than when his or her name is remembered.

The teacher must decide on the specific goals for the class. The teacher should know exactly what he or she desires to accomplish with the teenagers. Goals, as well as the general expectations, should be expressed to the students in the first meeting. Remember, teenagers love a challenge.

It is important that the students know what is expected of them in the area of class behavior. If this is discussed up front, then problems are less likely to develop. Teenagers must know what is acceptable and what is not. If there are problems, then the teacher should handle them immediately. This will allow the class to run smoothly.

By the time a students are Juniors and Seniors (upperclassmen), their cognitive abilities are expanding. They are beginning to relate on an adult level; and we need to treat them as adults -- unless they prove otherwise. Our teaching must not be spoon-feeding sessions -- "I talk, you listen." The teacher should use plenty of interaction and active learning exercises. This is not at all to say that lecture is inappropriate. The fact is that the students' attention span and concentration should be increasing, which enhances their ability to benefit from lecture. The point is that they now want to question the teacher, because they do not take everything at face value; and opportunities for questions, discussions, "buzz groups," etc. should be allowed in class.

When the teacher has shared the goals and expectations of the class and everyone has been introduced, the teacher may want to share a closing challenge. The teacher may use the one in the outline, or perhaps the Holy Spirit will direct in a different way. The closing should be kept brief, especially if the teacher is serving refreshments at the end of class.

A teacher must always remember that genuine enthusiasm breeds enthusiasm, and we get what we expect. If we expect a great year, then with the Lord's help, we will get it.



Methods

Begin the introductions be having everyone tell their most embarrassing moment at church; or by giving their greatest experience at church; or by sharing how they came to church; or by what they like best about church; or by something else. Do not simply have each person give their name. Again, most of the students have been together for at least two years, so they should feel fairly comfortable with one another. (It is important that the teacher and youth leaders introduce themselves first, and in their introduction they demonstrate how they want the students to introduce themselves. For example, if they students are to give their most embarrassing moment in church, then the youth leaders must go first and do the same.)

Have every student find a friend or someone they do not know and gather as much information about each other as possible; and then, everyone must introduce their friend or new acquaintance to the class. (If friends are to introduce each other, then make sure that no one is left out. If someone does not have a friend, then a youth leader knows immediately who to befriend, and the youth leader should introduce the student.)

If possible, serve refreshments. This is always a winner, if the food is palatable.

Why Trust the Bible?

Volume 11

Lesson 2



Bible References

Luke 1:1-4

John 8:31-32

John 19:35

1 Thessalonians 2:13

2 Timothy 3:16

Hebrews 4:12



Theme

Understanding how the scripture has come to us and how God miraculously designed His written Word.



2 Peter 1:19-21

19 "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

20 "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

21 "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

2 Peter 3:15-16

15 "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

16 "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."



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. What Will Trusting the Bible Mean To Us?

- A. The truth will set us free. (John 8:31-32)
 - 1. The parables, historical stories, and other accounts can have real meaning in our lives.
 - Knowing that the Bible is inspired by God gives us a solid foundation in our Christian lives and heritage.
 - 3. Knowing the trustworthiness of the scriptures will enable us to fulfill Paul's challenge to us. (2 Peter 3:15)
- B. The scripture will teach us, convert us, and guide us. (2 Timothy 3:16)
 - 1. As we daily read His Word, God can speak directly to our hearts.
 - 2. We may search His Word for wisdom and direction.

3. Hearing, reading, and retaining His Word in our hearts will lead, guide and direct our lives.

II. How Did God Give His Word To Us?

- A. Many accounts of history and religious works were written about biblical events, but all were not inspired or preserved by God. Those works that were eventually became the "Canon."
 - 1. "Canon" means a "rule" or "standard." It refers to the divinely inspired collection of sixty-six books that make up the Bible.
 - 2. There were three major tests applied to the writings to determine if they were inspired and qualified for the Canon.
 - a. Authority (inspiration).
 - b. Authorship (apostles or disciples of the apostles).
 - c. Acceptance (recognition by men of God).
- B. By all accounts, God miraculously guided men, time, history, and events to preserve and present His written Word for us.
 - 1. Scrolls and codices are still being discovered that allow us to see His preservation of secular history, and more importantly, His inspired Word.
 - 2. God used more than forty different authors over 1600 years to deliver His message to men -- the Bible.
 - a. Moses: political leader -- 14th century B.C.
 - b. Joshua: military general -- 14th century B.C.
 - c. Solomon: king -- 10th century B.C.

- d. Amos: farmer -- 8th century B.C.
- e. Nehemiah: cupbearer -- 5th century B.C.
- f. Paul: rabbi, tentmaker -- 55 through 65 A.D.
- g. Luke: doctor -- 60 A.D.
- h. John: fisherman -- 85 through 90 A.D.
- 3. The scripture was written in different places, continents and languages.
 - a. Places.
 - (1) Moses: in the wilderness.
 - (2) Jeremiah and Paul: in prison.
 - (3) Daniel: in a palace.
 - (4) John: on an island.
 - (5) David: in the fields.
 - b. Continents: Asia, Africa, and Europe.
 - c. Languages: Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic.

III. His Word Sets Forth the Certainty of Our Faith. (Luke 1:1-4)

- A. We can know the certainty of our faith in Him through the understanding of His work in history.
- B. We should be compelled to defend and answer any man for the reason of our hope. (1 Peter 3:15)



Spiritual Truths

 The Bible was written by men who were inspired by God.

- God has the power to preserve His Word; and He has done so through the course of history.
- Archaeology and historical research continue to validate the accuracy of the Bible.
- All history is really "His story."
- The Bible is God's manual for men; and it will bring strength and faith to those who trust and believe in it.



Lesson Material

Many of us, no doubt, have had the frustrating experience of trying to convince someone that the Bible is authentic and true. Some people refuse to believe that the Bible is reliable, in spite of the evidence that supports its accuracy. Archaeology supports the Bible. biblical cities once thought to be myths have been discovered. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has supported the accuracy of the Bible. Many other findings and scientific evidences have come to light which authenticate the Bible. Christian believers are thrilled with every shred of evidence found that affirms what they already know to be true. It is fascinating to watch discovery after discovery confirm the Bible. Yet, it seems the "world" will not be convinced.

Have these incidents of bringing to light physical evidence of biblical truth convinced anyone? Certainly, some are convinced; but many choose to harden their hearts toward the Bible, regardless of the evidence that supports it. Their hearts are not open toward God or His Word. (John 14:17)

Perhaps the greatest way to prove to people that the Bible is true is to challenge them to do what the Bible says. Challenge them to read the Bible and do what it says. God says that He will prove Himself to us when we obey His Word. (John 7:17) If they are not willing to do what the Bible says, then they are not sincere in their inquiry of biblical truth. (James 1:22)

The Bible is full of parables, stories and accounts that are intended to draw us close to God. However, reading and knowing what the Bible says is not enough. We need to meet the Author. When we have established a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ, and then read the Bible, God will use it to guide us, fill us, and use us in reaching the world for His kingdom.



Methods

On a blackboard, first list five headings, as shown in the table below.

The listing below will show the students the order of the Canon of scripture and how God laid out His plan of salvation. (For more impact, the teacher should list all of the books under their headings.)

Bring to class (or be prepared to talk about) some of the recent archaeological evidences that confirm the Bible.

Ask the students to discuss things that they have heard or read that support or undermine the Bible.

Ask the students if they have ever tried to convince someone that the Bible is true by sharing biblical evidence with them. What was the reaction that they received?

Preparation (Old Testament)	Manifestation	Publication	Explanation	Consummation
The Law: Genesis through Deuteronomy	The Gospels: Matthew through John	Acts	The Epistles: Romans through Jude	Revelation
<u>History:</u> Joshua through Esther				
Poetry & Wisdom: Job through Song of Solomon				

Prophecy: Isaiah through Malachi

Why Trust the Bible? II

Volume 11

Lesson 3



Matthew 5:17-18

Luke 24:27, 44

John 1:1

John 5:39, 47

John 14:6

1 Peter 1:25



Scripture Reading

Matthew 5:17-18

17 "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."



Theme

The trustworthiness and divine accuracy of the scripture.



Memory Verse

Matthew 24:35

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

2. Jesus, the apostles, scholars, and numerous others attest to the Bible's overwhelming accuracy, trustworthiness and life-changing power. (Matthew 24:35; 1 Peter 1:25)



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus used the scripture to proclaim His purpose and message.
- There is more manuscript evidence for the reliability of the Bible than for any other piece of literature in antiquity.
- Archaeology continues to confirm the accuracy and reliability of the Bible.



Lesson Material

Archaeological discoveries and scientific evidence confirm the Bible. But people whose hearts are hardened toward God cannot be saved by this knowledge. There are a few things that must happen before a person will believe the Bible is the God's Word to men.

First, there must be belief that God exists. Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith (it is) impossible to please (him): for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and (that) he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Romans 12:3 says that every man is given by God a

"measure" of faith. It is possible for all men to believe in God; however, it is not enough to believe that God exists.

Many of us have grown up believing in God, and many may have gone to church regularly. We may have even measured ourselves by the Ten Commandments and felt that we were doing pretty well. Surely, a little slip-up here and there would not hurt? Or, would it? Galatians 3:10 says, "...for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." We cannot be righteous if we sin — even if we think it is only a little thing or minor error. Isaiah 64:6 says that our righteousness is as "filthy rags."

If we have examined ourselves and found that we really have fallen into wickedness, we might feel that there is no way that God will forgive us. Maybe we broke one of the Ten Commandments, and we feel unhappy and terrible about it. Our feelings of remorse are good, because it is our conscience and the Holy Spirit dealing with us. If our heart is not hardened toward God, then God can still work in our lives. In 2 Corinthians 7:10, it "For says, godly sorrowworketh repentance to salvation...." The sorrow that we feel is the Holy Spirit working in our hearts. (John 16:8) Before God can bring us the "Good News," He must show us that we are without hope in our present state.

The bad news is that sin came into the world and we got caught in its trap. The "Good News" is that God loves us so much, that He made a way to escape the penalty of sin. (John 3:16) Jesus, Who is called "Emmanuel" ("God with us"), died on the cross and rose from the dead, so that we might live forever with Him. We

The Purpose and Importance of Prayer

Volume 11

Lesson 4



Bible References

Daniel 9:23

Ezekiel 22:30-31

Matthew 6:8

Matthew 9:36-38

Revelation 22:17



Theme

Why God wants us to pray.



Scripture Reading

Luke 18:1-8

- 1 "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;
- 2 "Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:
- 3 "And there was a widow in that city: and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.
- 4 "And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;
- 5 "Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.
- 6 "And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.
- 7 "Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

8 "I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"



Luke 18:1

"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."



Outline

I. Prayer Is a Mystery.

- A. Why should we pray at all?
 - 1. God knows what we need, before we ask Him. (Matthew 6:8)
 - 2. Our prayers do not inform God of something that He does not know.
- B. God is powerful enough to do whatever He wants to do.
 - 1. He spoke the world into existence. (Hebrews 11:3)
 - 2. He holds the universe together by the Word of His power. (Hebrews 1:3)

- C. If God can accomplish any conceivable end, why do we have to pray at all?
 - 1. If God loves us and knows what we need, then why should we have to pray?
 - 2. Could He not accomplish His purposes and His good pleasure without any help from our prayers? For example:
 - a. In Ezekiel chapter twenty-two, Israel is heavily involved in wickedness and sin.
 - (1) Murder was common. (verse 3)
 - (2) They were involved in idolatry. (verse 3)
 - (3) They oppressed the strangers and vexed the orphans and widows. (verse 7)
 - (4) They desecrated the Sabbath. (verse 8)
 - (5) They were involved in sexual perversion. (verse 9-11)
 - (6) The rest of the chapter describes more of their sins.
 - b. In verse fifteen, God says that He will put an end to their wickedness and scatter them among the heathen countries.
 - c. Yet, in verses thirty and thirtyone, God makes an amazing statement.
 - (1) God says that He looked for someone to "make up the hedge," and "stand in the gap" so that He would not destroy the land.
 - (2) He found no one to do this; and so, He decided to consume them with the fire of His wrath.

- d. This passage is saying that if someone would have interceded for the nation -- if someone would have made up the "hedge" and stood in the "gap" through travailing prayer on behalf of Israel -- then God would not destroy it (scatter Israel among the heathens).
- e. The question is, if God wanted to spare the nation from judgment, then why did He not do so?
 - (1) If God wanted to show mercy and spare the land from His wrath, then why did He not do so, regardless of whether someone stood in the "gap?"
 - (2) Why should God be dependent upon anyone to accomplish His purposes?
- f. Would God really have spared the nation? Yes -- and we have an example in Psalms 106:19-23.
 - (1) The Israelites made a golden calf and worshipped it in place of God. This entire event is in Exodus 32:5-14.
 - (2) God's anger burned against them so much that He was going to destroy them.
 - (3) Moses stood in the "breach." (Psalms 106:23) He interceded on behalf of the Israelites. God did not let His judgment fall, because Moses prayed.
 - (4) The word "breach" in Psalms 106:23 is the same word for "gap" in Ezekiel 22:30.
 - (5) God spared the Israelites, because of one man's prayer.

II. What Is the Key to Unlock the Mystery of Prayer? Why Does God Wait for People to Pray, Before He Acts?

- A. Examples from the Bible indicate that God will not move or perform His work and will, if people do not pray.
 - 1. The book of Daniel has a great example of this. In Daniel chapter nine, Daniel learns from the book of Jeremiah that it was time for the captivity of Israel to end. (verse 2)
 - 2. Daniel earnestly prayed that God would accomplish His purpose and rescue Israel from captivity. (verse 3-19)
 - 3. The angel Gabriel appeared to Daniel and told him that when he (Daniel) began to pray, Gabriel was sent forth. (verse 23)
- B. From scripture, it appears that if we do not pray, then God will not act. God has limited His involvement in the affairs of men to the prayers of men.
- C. Prayer is God's training program for the saints.
 - 1. God has limited His ability to move in earthly affairs, in order to train His people.
 - 2. If we are to reign and rule with Jesus throughout eternity, then He must prepare us to be a kingdom of priests. Prayer is His training program for our future reign with Him.

- D. Prayer does not change the purpose or will of God. Prayer activates the purpose and will of God; and, in this process, prayer trains the saints.
 - 1. If this is God's training program for the saints, then God will not ruin His program by enforcing His will and work without prayer.
 - God has a purpose; but, in order for His purpose to be carried out, the saints must pray.
 - 3. John Wesley, the great English preacher and scholar, said that "God will do nothing, but in answer to prayer."
- E. God uses prayer to activate and enforce His will and work upon the earth, so that He can prepare the saints for their future reign.
 - God will not destroy His training program by going "over our heads" to get His will and work accomplished.
 - 2. If we do not pray, then God is limited in what He can do. This is not because God is powerless, but it is because He will not jeopardize His eternal training program.
 - 3. This means that if we do not pray, then God's work and will may suffer. For example:
 - a. In Matthew 9:36-38, Jesus sees the multitudes of people and has compassion on them. He turns to His disciples and tells them that the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. He then commands them to pray to the Lord of the harvest that He (the Lord of the harvest) will send forth laborers.
 - What is amazing about Jesus' statement to pray to the Lord of harvest for laborers is that in

- Luke 10:2, we learn that Jesus is the Lord of the harvest!
- (1) Why did Jesus tell the disciples to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers, when the Lord of the harvest was right in front of them?
- (2) Jesus was teaching them the major principle of prayer. God will not act, if people will not pray.
- F. Prayer is what will accomplish God's work and will. Prayer is what will change the world.

III. We Must Pray!

- A. Since prayer is the catalyst to accomplish God's work and will, it is understandable why the scripture is filled with hundreds of examples of prayer and commandments to pray.
 - 1. We are commanded to "pray without ceasing." (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
 - 2. We are commanded "always to pray, and not to faint." (Luke 18:1)
 - 3. We are commanded to be "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." (Ephesians 6:18)
 - 4. The apostle Paul commanded "that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands." (1 Timothy 2:8)
- B. Perhaps the greatest realization of the importance of prayer is in regards to the souls of men.
 - The Bible clearly states that it is God's will for all men to be saved. (1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9)

- 2. There is no respect of persons with God. (Romans 2:11)
- 3. The Bible says that it is God Who draws all men unto Himself.
 - a. The Father draws men. (John 6:44)
 - b. The Son draws men. (John 12:32)
 - c. The Spirit draws men. (John 3:5-8)
- 4. Why is God successful in drawing some men, but not others?
 - a. Is it because some are beyond God's power to draw?
 - b. Or is it because some are subject to more powerful prayer?
 - (1) The apostle Paul was struck down on the Damascus road, when he was in rebellion against God.
 - (a) Did God show special favor to Paul, which He does not show to others?
 - (b) No, because God does not respect one man above another. (Romans 2:11)
 - (2) It would be fair to assume that Paul had many saints praying for him.
 - (a) Paul was persecuting the church; and so, it would be fair to expect that many Christians were praying for his removal or salvation.
 - (b) Paul had relatives who were "...of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me." (Romans 16:7) Paul had Christian relatives who were strong, notable saints in the Lord. Certainly, they were praying for Paul.

- (3) God had the liberty to move in Paul's life, because of the prayers that ascended before the throne on Paul's behalf.
- 5. The Bible pronounces that "...the Spirit and the bride say, Come....." (Revelation 22:17)
 - a. It is not the Spirit alone who beckons men to come, but the Spirit and the Bride -- the saints of God.
 - b. It is the saints, and not the devil, who hold the power of life or death over the souls of men.

IV. Prayer Is What Will Change the World and Eternity!



Spiritual Truths

- God has allowed His working in the affairs of men to be contingent upon the prayers of the saints.
- Prayer is God's training program to equip the saints for their eternal reign with Jesus.
- Prayer is what God uses to draw men unto Himself.
- Prayer is what changes the world and eternity.
- Christians must make prayer a number one priority.



Lesson Material

The scripture is full of instructions, exhortations, and promises concerning prayer. Prayer is one of the most important activities of every Christian. It is also one of the few ministries with which every Christian can be involved. This lesson is a challenge for teenagers to get serious with prayer.

The Bible says that God desires to meet our needs (Matthew 7:11); and God knows all of the needs that we have, before we ask. (Matthew 6:8) If this is the case, then why should we have to pray at all? If nothing is too difficult for God to accomplish (Jeremiah 32:17), and God loves us (1 John 4:11), then why does God not simply meet our needs? Why do we have to bother with prayer? Why is the scripture so full of admonitions to pray? If God can do anything (Luke 1:37), and God cares about us (1 Peter 5:7), then why do we have to hassle with praying?

The answer to these questions is profound. God has a higher purpose in prayer than granting our requests. Prayer is God's training program for the saints. Prayer is how God gets us into shape for eternity. The Bible gives many indications that God's ability to work in the affairs of men is limited to prayer. If we do not pray, then God is limited in what He can do for us. God will do no more for us than what we ask for in prayer. Why is this? It is because God has made prayer the training ground for the church. God uses prayer to strengthen us in spiritual warfare. God uses prayer to cause us to rely on Him and put our faith in Him. God uses prayer to

prepare us for eternity. If God worked without the prayers of His people, then He would ruin His training program for the church. This being the case, God does not work unless we pray. If we understand this important truth, it will change our prayer life.

Prayer dispatches angels. (Daniel 9:23) Prayer moves the hand of God. Prayer changes destinies and eternity. Prayer causes people to be drawn to the Lord. It is no wonder that the Bible is filled with commands, admonitions and pleas to pray. There is great power in prayer, because prayer allows God to accomplish His purpose and work in the lives of men.

If we want to see our family and friends saved, then we must pray. If we want to see God move in our lives, or in our youth meetings, or in our schools, then we must pray. Nothing happens by accident. Everything happens by the power of prayer or lack thereof. It is God's desire and good pleasure to give us the kingdom (Luke 12:32); but, we must discipline ourselves to pray. (Luke 11:2)



Methods

Have a few students give testimonies on answers to prayer.

Before the lesson is taught, ask the students to answer the question, "Why does God require us pray?"

At the end of class, the students should be challenged to renew their prayer life. The challenge should be to pray every day.

The Prerequisites of Prayer

Volume 11

Lesson 5



Matthew 21:21-22

Mark 11:22-26

1 John 5:14-15



Theme

The conditions that we must meet, in order to get our prayers answered.



Matthew 7:7-11

- 7 "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:
- 8 "For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.
- 9 "Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?
- 10 "Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?
- 11 "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"



Jeremiah 33:3

"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."



Outline

- I. For Every Promise In the Bible, There Is a Prerequisite that Must Be Met.
- A. The Bible is filled with promises from God.
 - 1. But every Bible promise has a qualifier or condition.
 - 2. God does not try to hide His blessings from us, but He does say that we must meet the conditions, in order to gain His promises.
- B. The scripture is filled with prerequisites for attaining the promises of God.
 - 1. "Draw nigh to God (condition), and he will draw nigh to you (promise)...." (James 4:8)
 - 2. "But as many as received him (condition), to them gave he power to become the sons of God (promise), even to them that believe on his name (condition)." (John 1:12)
 - 3. "...I am the light of the world: he that followeth me (condition) shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life (promise)." (John 8:12)
 - 4. "...If ye continue in my word (condition), then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (promise)." (John 8:31-32)

II. God Promises to Answer Our Prayers, but We Must Meet the Prerequisites.

- A. If we want God to answer our prayers, then we must ask according to His will. (1 John 5:14-15)
 - 1. The promise is that when we pray, we can know that God will hear us and will grant our petitions.
 - 2. The condition is that we must pray according to the will of God.
 - a. The true purpose of prayer is to accomplish the will of God.
 - b. Prayer will never change God's will; prayer activates God's will.
 - c. God is waiting for His saints to pray, so that His work and will can be accomplished.
 - d. Prayer opens the door for God to do what He purposes to do.
 - 3. We need to understand what the Lord's will is. (Ephesians 5:17)
 - a. We must study the Bible to find God's will.
 - (1) It is God's will that people are saved. (1 Timothy 2:1-4)
 - (2) It is God's will that the church grow. (Acts 2:47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 9:31; 11:21)
 - (3) It is God's will that our needs are met. (Psalms 37:25; Philippians 4:19)
 - (4) It is God's will that we have peace in our lives. (John 14:27; 2 Thessalonians 3:16)
 - b. What if we do not know God's will for a particular situation?
 - (1) We should study the Bible, in order to see if we can find the answer in biblical principles.
 - (a) The Bible may not specifically say, "Marry a

- particular person -- John Doe."
- (b) But the Bible does give us principles to follow for successful courtship and marriage relationships. It does tell us the kind of person that we should look for in marriage.
- (2) If anything we desire is contrary to biblical commandments, then it is not God's will.
 - (a) The Bible may not specifically say, "Marry John Doe."
 - (b) But the Bible does tell us that it is not God's will to marry an unbeliever; and if John Doe is an unbeliever, then it is not God's will.
- (3) We should consult with our parents, if we are living at home under their authority.
- (4) We should consult with a trusted pastor or minister.
- (5) We should be patient and pray for God to give us wisdom. (James 1:5)
- 4. If we pray according to God's will, then our prayers will be answered.
- B. If we want God to answer our prayers, then we must obey His commandments. (1 John 3:21-22)
 - 1. The promise is that whatever we ask, we will receive from Him.
 - 2. The prerequisite is threefold.
 - a. Our hearts must not condemn us.
 - b. We must keep His commandments.
 - c. We must do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

- 3. If we expect God to do what we ask, then we must do what God expects.
- 4. There are over one thousand commands in the New Testament and well over three thousand commands in the Old Testament. How do we keep track of all those commandments?
 - a. This is the wrong approach to obeying God's commands.
 - b. We need to simply ask ourselves, "Do our hearts condemn us in any area?"
 - (1) If our heart does not condemn us, then we can have confidence.
 - (2) If there are areas in our lives in which our hearts condemn us, then we must confess and clean up these areas.
- 5. God's commandments are not impossible or grievous to obey. (1 John 5:3)
- C. If we want God to answer our prayers, then we must abide in Christ, and His Word must abide in us. (John 15:7)
 - 1. The promise is that whatever we ask, it shall be done for us.
 - 2. The condition is that we must abide in Him, and His Word abide in us.
 - 3. How do we abide in Christ?
 - a. In John 15:5, Jesus is comparing Himself as a Vine with us as the branches. In other words, our life flows from Him. He is our life.
 - b. To abide in Christ, we must "walk in him." (Colossians 2:6)We must follow Him, stay close to Him, and be obedient to Him.
 - (1) We must not get sidetracked or pulled away from following and fellowshipping with the Lord.

- (2) Our relationship with Jesus must be of first priority in our lives.
- 4. How does Christ's Word abide in us?
 - a. We must read and study the Bible, so that it becomes a part of our lives, and so that Word of Christ will dwell in us richly. (Colossians 3:16)
 - b. We must allow the words of Christ to guide us.
- D. If we want God to answer our prayers, then we must have faith that God will answer. (Mark 11:22-24)
 - 1. The promise is that the things we say in prayer will come to pass, and whatever we desire we shall receive.
 - 2. The condition is that we must believe and not doubt. We must have faith in God.
 - 3. This scripture passage may lead us to believe that we can ask for anything, and if we have enough faith and do not doubt, then it will happen. This is what the verse says.
 - a. If we are not careful, this verse and others like it can lead to confusion, frustration, failure, and error.
 - b. For example, when people who pray for physical healing do not get healed, does this mean they do not have enough faith?
 - (1) There are examples in scripture of people who were healed that had very little faith (Mark 9:24); and some who were not expecting to be healed (Acts 3:5-7); and others who were not believers, so they certainly did not have enough faith (Acts 5:16); and a few were

- dead and had no way to exercise faith. (John 11:43; Acts 9:40)
- (2) The word "faith" in Mark 11:22 is the same word used in Ephesians 2:8, which says that we are saved through faith. Therefore, if we have enough faith to become Christians, then we have enough faith to be healed.
- (3) If we are born again, then we have enough faith to meet the prerequisite in Mark 11:22-24.
- 4. The key condition is that we do not doubt God's ability to answer our prayers.
 - a. "Doubt" means that we do not fully believe something is possible.
 - b. It is praying for things and not really believing answers will come, because we question whether God is capable of doing what we ask.
 - c. In the Bible, God continually lets us know that nothing is impossible for Him. (Jeremiah 32:17; Matthew 19:26; Mark 10:27; Luke 1:37; 18:27)
- 5. If our prayers are not answered, does this mean that we have doubts? Perhaps, but perhaps not!
 - a. In Daniel chapter three,
 Shadrach, Meshach, and
 Abednego are in trouble with
 King Nebuchadnezzar, because
 they will not bow to the king's
 idol. The king in his fury tells
 them that they will be thrown
 into a fiery furnace and says to
 them, "Who is that God that
 shall deliver you out of my
 hands?"

- b. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego give a courageous response to the king by saying, "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." (Daniel 3:17-18)
 - The three Hebrews knew that God could deliver them out of the furnace.
 Beginning with verse seventeen, they did not know if God would deliver them.
 - (2) They did not doubt God's ability. They knew that He could; the question was that they did not know if He would.
- c. They did not know if deliverance from the furnace was in His divine will. (Psalms 116:15)
- d. God's answer to our prayers is sometimes, "No," because it is not His will for us.

III. God's Answer to Our Prayers Is Sometimes, "No."

- A. If we have met the prerequisites for prayer, and our answer does not come, then this may mean that our request is not God's will for us.
 - 1. Paul prayed three times to be healed of a "thorn in the flesh," but God did not grant Paul's request. (2 Corinthians 12:7-8)

- a. God used the infirmity to keep Paul humble and to teach him that Christ would be his strength in weakness. (2 Corinthians 12:10)
- b. God had a higher purpose for Paul.
- 2. Jesus had a prayer that was not answered.
 - a. Jesus prayed three times in the Garden of Gethsemane that the Father would "take away this cup" from Him. (Mark 14:36)
 - (1) "Cup" was an Old Testament metaphor for "suffering."
 - (2) Jesus knew the suffering He was about to endure, and He asked the Father to take away the "cup."
 - b. Yet, Jesus knew it was not the Father's will to answer this prayer. (Mark 14:36)
- B. We must interpret scripture with scripture.
 - 1. We must look at the entire Bible as a whole.
 - 2. There are verses that say that we can receive whatever we ask for in faith. (Mark 11:22-24) But there are also verses that show that we do not get everything we ask for. (2 Corinthians 12:7-9)
 - a. These verses are not contradictory.
 - b. God promises to give us anything that is in accordance with His will.

IV. Sometimes, God's Answer Is "Wait" and Persevere In Prayer.

- A. There are many examples in scripture in which God honors perseverance. (Luke 11:5-8; 18:1-8)
- B. We must keep knocking. (Matthew 7:7)
- C. God wants us to learn the discipline of prayer.



Spiritual Truths

- If we want to enjoy the promises of God, then we must obey the conditions.
- There are prerequisites that we must meet, if we want to enjoy answered prayer.
- There are times when God will say, "No," to our requests. His answer is always for our benefit.
- We must pray according to the will of God; and the best way to find out God's will for our lives is to study the Bible.
- God honors perseverance in prayer.



Lesson Material

Prayer is the greatest activity in the life of a Christian. It is one of the few

ministries that every Christian can be involved in. It is easy; and it is difficult. We must challenge teenagers to pray.

The Bible offers many promises to those who pray. The key to the promises of prayer is meeting the conditions. We must understand the prerequisites, in order to pray effectively. The Bible says that it is possible to pray incorrectly or with wrong motives. If we pray selfishly, then we will not receive anything. (James 4:3) If we pray a long time, this does not mean that we will receive anything. (Matthew 6:7) We cannot expect God to answer our requests, if we are not following His prerequisites.

For example, if we want the Lord to answer our prayers, then we must stay away from sin. (Isaiah 59:1-2) If we are living in disobedience to commandments, then we cannot expect God to do anything for us. Our first prayer needs to be to confess our sins; and then, we need to clean up our disobedience. If we want to enjoy the promise of answered prayer, then we must start to walk the straight and narrow pathway. The teacher needs to share with the teenagers that they will not experience the power of God, if they are not walking uprightly with Him. They must make a choice. They must meet the prerequisite.

If we want the Lord to answer our prayers, then we must pray according to God's will. This not as difficult as it seems, because the Bible is very clear about God's will for many areas of our lives. It is God's will for teenagers to obey their parents. (Colossians 3:20) It is God's will for teenagers to take care of their bodies. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) God wants teenagers to know His will. (Ephesians 5:17) The teacher must challenge teenagers to read the Bible, in order to understand God's will.

It is also important that teenagers understand that the Bible never says that if we do not get what we ask for in prayer, then we do not have enough faith. Too often, Matthew 21:21-22 and Mark 11:22-24 are taken out of context. When is it ever God's will to move a literal, physical mountain? "Mountain" is figuratively in the Bible for the major problems that we face. (Isaiah 40:4; 49:11; 54:10; Zechariah 4:6-7) Jesus used the expression of "moving a mountain" more than once. (Matthew 17:20) It is an expression for overcoming great difficulty. Jesus was saying that no matter how bad the problem is, God can solve it. With God, all things are possible. (Matthew 19:26) This does not mean that God will answer every prayer, or if He does not, then we do not have enough faith. We must interpret scripture with scripture. Paul did not have all of his prayers answered. Why not? It was not God's will for Paul's life at the time. (2 Corinthians 12:7-9) God promises to meet our needs and answer our prayers, when we pray according to His will. Sometimes, God's will and what we ask for are not the same: and then, God will say, "No." We must remember that God wants what is best for us. If we are walking with Him and He

does not answer our requests, then He has something better for us.

We must encourage teenagers to pray. Jesus is our great Example. He prayed more frequently than anyone in scripture. We must follow in His steps.



Methods

Before the teacher begins to teach, have a group discussion on why some of our prayers are not answered.

Ask the students to write down any prayer they would like to have answered by God; and then, go through the list of prerequisites and see if there is anything that may hinder an answer. If a student is not sure if his or her prayer is in the will of God, then (if the student is willing) discuss this with the class.

Have the students share a few testimonies on answered prayer.

Good Shepherds

Volume 11

Lesson 6



Bible References

Jeremiah 3:15; 23:4

Ezekiel 34:23

John 10

John 21:17

1 Peter 5:2



Theme

The characteristics of good shepherds.



Scripture Reading

John 10:1-11, 27-28

1 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the

sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

- 2 "But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.
- 3 "To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.
- 4 "And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.
- 5 "And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.
- 6 "This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.
- 7 "Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.
- 8 "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them.
- 9 "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.
- 10 "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.

11 "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

27 "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

28 "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."



John 10:14-15

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep."



Outline

I. What Are the Characteristics of Good Shepherds?

- A. Jesus is the Door through which all good shepherds must come in.
 - 1. A good shepherd must preach and teach about Jesus as Savior.
 - 2. Anyone who exalts themselves above Jesus in their teachings is

false.

- B. Characteristics of good shepherds.
 - 1. A good shepherd protects the flock from danger.
 - a. When a wolf comes, the shepherd stays to protect the flock of God.
 - b. A good shepherd leads his sheep to safety.
 - 2. A good shepherd feeds the sheep.
 - a. He feeds the flock the truth from the Word of God.
 - b. He strengthens his flock with his own example of love and caring.
 - c. He emulates Christ, so that the flock is not confused about whom they are following.
 - 3. A good shepherd calls his sheep by name.
 - a. The good shepherd knows his flock personally.
 - b. The good shepherd knows their needs, and ministers to them accordingly.

II. What Are the Characteristics of a False Shepherd?

- A. The false pastor or shepherd comes to steal, kill and destroy the flock of God.
 - 1. The Bible warns against shepherds who are consumed with their own purposes.
 - 2. They exploit the flock. (Jeremiah 23:2)
- B. Other characteristics of false shepherds. (Isaiah 56:10-12)
 - 1. Unfaithful.
 - 2. Loving to slumber.
 - 3. Immoral.
 - 4. Greedy.

- 5. Gluttonous.
- 6. Drunk.
- 7. Out for their own gain.

III. Jesus Is the Good Shepherd.

- A. Jesus is the Door by which every true shepherd must come.
- B. His sheep hear His voice.
 - 1. It is a true Voice of caring, loving, protection and guidance, which can be heard through Him or any of His pastors, teachers or prophets whom He has called.
 - 2. Jesus goes before and leads His flock.
 - 3. Jesus opens the gate, goes before the flock, and calls them to follow. He leads them.
- C. If one of His sheep goes astray, He goes to find them.
 - 1. When we go astray, He will come and find us. (Matthew 18:12)
 - 2. He is faithful to rescue us from harm and evil. (2 Thessalonians 3:3)
- D. He feeds His flock good food.
 - 1. Jesus puts us in the body of Christ, where we can eat from his hand and partake in His pleasures.
 - 2. He gives us shepherds who will feed us with knowledge and understanding. (Jeremiah 3:15)
 - 3. He gives us pastors after His own heart, who will love us like He loves us. (Jeremiah 3:15)
 - 4. He sets shepherds over us who cause us to fear no more, nor lack any good thing from God in our lives. (Jeremiah 23:4)

- F. Jesus gives His life for the flock's safety. (John 10:15)
 - 1. Jesus makes sure that we are safe and secure in Him.
 - 2. Instead of running when the wolf comes to scatter the sheep, He stays to defend us.
 - 3. He is not concerned about His own needs, or putting them before the needs of the people. (Matthew 9:36)
 - 4. He is moved with compassion on us, when we are without a shepherd to lead us to God. He supplies that need by giving us good shepherds after His own heart. (Jeremiah 3:15; Ezekiel 34:23)
- IV. As Young People, We Need to Discern the Character of Leaders, Before We Follow Them.
- A. Good leaders must care about our need to know the Word of God.
- B. Good leaders must teach us the truth of God's Word.
- C. Good leaders must instruct us in the way of the Lord, encouraging us to put God first.
- D. Good leaders will not exalt themselves above Christ, the Chief Shepherd.
- E. Good leaders will not be immoral, deceitful, unfaithful to God, liars, exploiters, drunk, gluttonous, etc.
- F. Good leaders will care for us, love us with Christ's love, and nurture us in Christ.

- G. Good leaders will feed and protect us from evil, warning us of impending danger.
- H. Good leaders will battle with us in prayer, instead of fleeing at the sight of danger.



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus is the Example for the shepherd who leads us. He gave his life for the flock.
- A good shepherd will feed the flock of God with God's Word, and not their own words.
- A good shepherd will exalt and lift up Jesus as God's Son, and not themselves or any others above that.
- A good shepherd will not forsake his flock or lead them astray.



Lesson Material

Imagine the fearful things that could happen to a lost sheep, when it wanders away from the flock -- wolves, snakes, cliffs, hunger, danger or death! This could happen to us without a shepherd. We can wander off away from the protection and safety of the family of God and find ourselves in the hand of strangers who

want only to exploit us. Pastors, teachers and shepherds are there for an important purpose in our lives -- to keep us safe from wolves. There are many wolves outside the safety of "home."

Jesus gives us good shepherds, who love us as Christ loves us. God raises up people to give careful and loving guidance to us in our Christian walk. A strong arm of compassion is there to reach out and catch us, when we venture off into the unknown. That strong arm can be the loving voice of a caring teacher or pastor. The sheep know the voice of the true shepherd. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice,..." (John 10:27) and again in verse 14, "...I...know my sheep and am known of mine." We need to understand that we must know what to look for in following a shepherd. We must know that that shepherd is not a stranger to God. We must look at their lifestyle and see if it is Christ-like.

If the servant of God is feeding the flock with good things from God's Word, then they are worthy of our attentiveness. The true shepherd of God loves us. If they are not concerned about the needs of the flock and only about their own gain, they are not true shepherds. We must remember that Jesus loved his flock so much that He laid down His life for us. The true shepherd will give his all for our safety and protection. He will show us the true way to Christ; and he will lead us to the Chief Shepherd, where we can at last find Him Whom we must ultimately follow and answer to at the end of our lives.



Methods

Ask the students what they think it takes to be a pastor.

Invite the pastor to come in and share with the students on being good shepherds. Give the students an opportunity to ask questions.

God's Testings

Volume 11 Lesson 7



Job 42:12-17

Psalms 32:8; 37:25; 119:75

Isaiah 43:2

Matthew 5:4; 26:36-39

Mark 10:21

Romans 11:33-34; 12:2

1 Corinthians 1:4-9; 10:13

2 Corinthians 4:11

Philippians 3:10

2 Timothy 2:13; 4:16-18

1 Peter 1:6-7; 4:12-13

James 1:2-4, 12



Theme

Biblical reasons as to why we are afflicted, tempted and tested.



Lamentations 3:1-3, 7-8, 11, 18, 20-26, 31-36

- 1 "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath.
- 2 "He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light.
- 3 "Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day."
- 7 "He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out; he hath made my chain heavy.
- 8 "Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer."
- 11 "He hath turned aside my ways and pulled me in pieces: he hath made me desolate."

- 18 "And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the LORD:"
- 20 "My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.
- 21 "This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.
- 22 "It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.
- 23 "They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."
- 24 "The LORD (is) my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.
- 25 "The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.
- 26 "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD."
- 31 "For the Lord will not cast off for ever:
- 32 "But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.
- 33 "For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.
- 34 "To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth,
- 35 "To turn aside the right of a man before the face of the most High.
- 36 "To subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not."



1 Peter 5:10

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."



Outline

I. Through Our Trials, God Remains Faithful to Us.

- A. The children of Israel are an example of His faithfulness through testing.
 - 1. He was faithful to meet the needs of His children during their wilderness wanderings.

 (Deuteronomy 29:5 -- "...your clothes are not waxen old upon you,....") God kept them clothed and fed by His miraculous provision.
 - 2. God was faithful in their affliction by delivering them from the cause of their afflictions -- Egypt.
- B. The widow could not pay her husband's debt, but God delivered her. (2 Kings 4:1-7)
 - God caused her pot of oil to multiply, so that she could pay her husband's debt.

- 2. She had so much of God's provision that it was enough to fill all of her neighbors' jars with oil.
- C. Paul, on the Island of Melita, found God's faithfulness in his affliction. (Acts 28:1-12)
 - 1. His affliction was being shipwrecked on the Island of Melita among heathen people.
 - 2. The heathen showed kindness to Paul.
 - 3. God supplied Paul's material needs through the generosity of the people of Melita.
 - 4. They gave him enough provisions for the trip to Syracuse. (Acts 28:10)
- D. Peter was unable to pay his taxes; and God provided in his time of financial testing. (Matthew 17:27)
 - 1. The Lord provided Peter with his financial need.
 - 2. Jesus instructed him to go and catch a fish; and when Peter had done so, there was enough money in the fish's mouth to pay the taxes.
- E. Elijah was fearful and defeated in his time of testing. (1 Kings 19:1-4)
 - God did not let His servant Elijah go hungry, while he sat in discouragement.
 - 2. God supplied him a cake and a cruse of water. (1 Kings 19:6)
 - 3. God strengthened Elijah for forty days and nights. (1 Kings 19:8)
 - 4. God will meet our material and spiritual needs, for Jesus' Name's sake.

- F. The needs of the prophet Elisha were provided for by a woman. (2 Kings 4:8-11)
 - 1. A well-to-do woman and her husband provided food for Elisha.
 - 2. They provided a room for him to rest in, whenever he passed by.
- G. God provided for 5,000 who were hungry, when they sought His kingdom and His Word. (John 6:1-13)
- H. God will provide for us in our time of testing.
 - 1. Deliverance from our source of testing is given to us (e.g., deliverance from Egypt for the children of Israel).
 - Deliverance from financial testing and debt is given to us. (Peter, and also the widow with her husband's debt.)
 - 3. Provision during times when our lives are shipwrecked. (Paul on Melita, and Elijah under the juniper tree.)
 - God will use the unbelievers to help us in our time of testing. (Paul on Melita.)
 - 5. When we have material needs during times of testing, God will provide. (Elisha, and the children of Israel.)
 - 6. Food and nourishment is given during our times of defeat and fear. (Elijah, Paul, and also the widow's barrel.)
 - 7. When we suffer want because of Jesus' sake, He provides. (Feeding of the 5,000.)
 - 8. More can be said of Job, Daniel, Joseph, Moses and others who went through valleys of deep despair, but who came through perfect,

established, strengthened and settled. (1 Peter 5:10)

- II. Christians Experience Trouble, Persecution, Perplexity, Physical Weakness, Pain and Suffering. Yet, God Promises to Deliver Us. (2 Timothy 4:16-18)
- A. We must face trials, in order to know that He is our deliverer and salvation. We must realize that He is our only hope and way out.
 - 1. We must hold on to God's promises and never let them go.
 - 2. God is faithful in our testing times, even though we may want to turn away from Him. In truth, we may want to hide from Him, but there is nowhere that we can go to escape the Lord's presence. In 2 Timothy 2:13, it says, "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself."
- B. God wants us to flee only to Him as our refuge. (Psalms 46:1)
- C. God will often bring us closer to Himself by rendering us helpless, so that we stop trusting in ourselves and start trusting in Him. (1 Corinthians 1:9)
- D. God afflicts us, so that He might use us for His glory afterwards. "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 4:13)
- E. God draws us closer to Himself through our suffering and afflictions. "That I might know him...and the

- fellowship of his sufferings...." (Philippians 3:10)
- F. We are tested, so that the faithfulness of God can be made manifest in our lives.
 - 1. God can reveal Himself to us in our trials.
 - 2. The biblical examples of God's faithfulness to people in times of testing should encourage us to trust Him.
- G. The enemy buffets us; it is not God who buffets us. God allows it to happen to us.
 - 1. God allows us to be tested, but He never tempts us or purposely turns our lives upside down.
 - a. Lamentations 3:36 says, "To subvert a man in his cause, the Lord approveth not."
 - b. James 1:13-14 says, "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: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."
 - 2. God wants to do a work of lasting value in our lives, while we are here on earth.
 - 3. We suffer, so that we may be made perfect, established, strengthened and settled in Christ. (1 Peter 5:10)
- H. Christians may suffer burdened lives, frustration, attacks by Satan and all sorts of other unpleasantness.
 - 1. How low do we have to go for God? Read about Job, David, Stephen, etc.
 - a. Job lost everything and experienced bodily pain, too.

- b. David suffered being hated, chased, and almost murdered; and this happened after he was anointed by Samuel to be king.
- c. Joseph suffered temptation, false accusation and imprisonment.
- d. Stephen was stoned to death. Death in this life is as far as we have to go in our stand for Christ.
- e. But look at the end result! They all obtained a more "...exceeding and eternal weight of glory...." (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)
- 2. It does not matter so much when we have our affliction, test, or deprivation of comfort. What matters most to God, and is of paramount importance in eternity, is the aftermath of our test. After the test is over, are we better? Are we more perfected in Christ? Are we more able to reflect His glory? This is God's desire for us. If we want to shine brightly as a star (1 Corinthians 15:41-44), we must be faithful in are trials.

III. God Knows Our Hurt, Pain and Suffering. He Cares Deeply When We Are Hurting, and He Delivers Us.

- A. Joseph became a ruler and saved his land from famine and his family from starvation, after being delivered from prison.
- B. Jacob became "Israel," after being afflicted by God.
- C. David became a man after God's own heart in his trial with Saul.

- D. We can come to know Jesus more intimately through God's testings; and we will have greater joy.
- E.. Jesus ever lives to help us. (Romans 8:34-39)
- F.. It is not strange to endure hardships for the glory of God. (1 Peter 4:12-13)

IV. What Is God's Part In Our Testings?

- A. He consoles us. (2 Corinthians 1:4)
- B. He comforts us by His Holy Spirit. (Matthew 5:4)
- C. He makes a way of escape and gives us forbearance. (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- D. He teaches us how to help and comfort others. (2 Corinthians 1:4)
- E. He encourages a deeper walk with Him. (2 Corinthians 4:11)
- F. He perfects us. (1 Peter 5:10)
- G. He stabilizes us in Christ. (1 Peter 5:10)
- H. He brings us through to the other side with joy. (1 Peter 4:13)
- I. He upholds us. (Isaiah 43:2)
- J. He strengthens us. (1 Peter 5:10)
- K. He gives us mercy, compassion and remains faithful to us. (Lamentations 3:22, 23)
- L. He shows His faithfulness to us when we are unbelieving. (Psalms 119:75)
- M. He honors us. (Acts 28:10)

- N. He teaches us not to trust in ourselves, but in Him. (Proverbs 3:5)
- O. He restores us with more in our lives than we ever had before our affliction. (Job 42:12-17)
- P. He delivers us from every evil work. (2 Timothy 4:18)
- Q. He preserves us for His heavenly kingdom. (2 Timothy 4:16-18)



Spiritual Truths

- Mighty men and women of God have suffered all sorts of affliction, including near death or death situations.
- Christians everywhere experience trouble, persecution, perplexity, physical weakness, pain and every other affliction imaginable.
- Jesus delivers us out of all of our afflictions.
- God does not approve of taking away a man's rights by making him suffer. He wants our best. It is immaterial how we feel during the trial; but what matters is the end result of that trial. The end result can be for our eternal benefit, if we respond positively.
- God remains faithful during our testings; and He will bring us through to the other side with joy.



Lesson Material

In our walk with Jesus Christ, we often ask, "Why, God?" When our emotions are being tested or family ties are being shaken, or when our successes and worldly ambitions are all gone, then we want to ask God, "... Why hast thou made me thus?" (Romans 9:20) We go through testing and tormenting, like being in deep waters, in which the stormy winds rock us to and fro and we loose our footing. We are tested to our limits when God uses such tools as material possessions, worldly success, loneliness, family ties, our most beloved friends, things we treasure above God, emotions and all other imaginable infirmity and physical distress. However, we know from scripture that Jesus ever lives to help us. (Romans. 8:34-39)

Often times, we do something great for the Lord only to find ourselves all alone and unable to cope with our present situations. Elijah was able to call fire down from heaven to prove what a great God Jehovah was; but, shortly after, he was found alone in the desert, having fled from the wicked Jezebel. He was alone in the desert for three and one half years, so that God could make him ready to face Ahab and Jezebel. During his time in the wilderness, God fed him, ministered to him and cared for his needs. This is exactly the type of faithfulness we can learn to expect from God when we are fearful, unbelieving and afflicted. God, in His faithfulness, afflicts us, so that we may come to know Him more deeply. He wants to bring us to the other side of our testing and pour out His everlasting joy upon us. (Psalms 119:75; Philippians 3:10)

Moses came to know God in the burning bush. He had a divine visitation from the bush; and he heard God speak to him audibly. He stood on holy ground! Yet, he would suffer rejection from the world and from his brethren (Israel) as well. He had to retreat to the back side of the Midian Desert and experience loneliness with God. Abraham had to give his only beloved son, Isaac, to be slain on an altar, after God promised him that his seed would be as many as the grains of sand on the seashore. Why? What does God expect of us, that He should press us with heartache, suffering and heaviness? We need victory, blessing and comfort to be happy, do we not? "Why?" shows that faith ends with our understanding and that we cannot trust His wisdom or His will for our lives, without sufficient explanation. We must be careful in the afflictions that we go through not to throw out the precious element of faith within our trials. Faith endures; and Romans 11:33-34 says, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?"

Psalms 105:18-19 speaks of Joseph's period of testing. "Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him." Job spoke beautiful words of faith, instead of rationalizing his circumstances with his own finite understanding. He said in Job 1:21, "...The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." It takes a special man or woman of God to say what Job said. Job did not say this lightly or flippantly, for his sons and daughters were dead. Only faith in God would cause us to say "Blessed be the name of the Lord" in the midst of our

suffering. In the unexplainable, we must rest in God alone. For some, this is a longer process than others. Only God knows our hearts.

Things we treasure above God are tools for our own demise. As Isaac was Abraham's beloved, we have our own "beloveds," too. We must learn to exchange the things that we treasure for God's best gifts in our lives. There is a greater reward in heaven for us when we do this as a result of our suffering.

Every purpose of God is good; and He expects us to believe in His faithfulness through our afflictions, and not lean on own arm of strength understanding. Jacob wrestled through with God and became Israel, the chosen seed. We are now Jesus' brothers and sisters; and He will take care of us with His loving kindness during our time of testing. If we could not take the heat in yesterday's affliction, still His mercies are new every day for us, in order to start afresh with Him.



Methods

Have the students think of all the ways in which God can test us; and write their suggestions on the blackboard. Some examples are temptations, afflictions, sickness, loneliness, material inadequacy, and financial difficulty.

Have the students think of ways out of, or solutions to, afflictions. In addition, have them think of things that God may want to teach us through each type of affliction. Some examples are learning to resist temptations, learning to pray effectively, learning to comfort others, learning to trust God more, etc.

Have students offer encouragement to one another in a group discussion about the afflictions that are currently in their lives. Pray for those in the class going through tough times. Assign prayer partners, and have them pray together once a week over the phone or elsewhere.

Have the students take notes on this lesson. Write down scriptures such as 1 Corinthians 10:13 that will help when the pressures of the tests are too great to handle.

A Perfect Fit

Volume 11

Lesson 8



Bible References

Jonah 1-4

Matthew 16:21-24

Philippians 2:8

Hebrews 12:1-3



Theme

God's will is always a perfect fit.



Scripture Reading

Jonah 1:1-3, 17

1 "Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,

- 2 "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.
- 3 "But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord."
- 17 "Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."

Jonah 3:1-3

- 1 "And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying,
- 2 "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.
- 3 "So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey."

John 18:1-11

1 "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

- 2 "And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus ofttimes resorted thither with his disciples.
- 3 "Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.
- 4 "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?
- 5 "They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth,. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.
- 6 "As soon then as he had said unto them, I am {he}, they went backward, and fell to the ground.
- 7 "Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.
- 8 "Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:
- 9 "That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.
- 10 "Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.
- 11 "Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"



Proverbs 3:5-6

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."



Outline

I. Jonah Goes to Nineveh.

- A. Disobedience to the first call.
 - 1. "I will not go."
 - 2. "I will go."
- B. Obedience to the second call.
 - 1. "I am here."
 - 2. "I should not have come."

II. Peter's Encounter with God's Will.

- A. Not everything we experience in God's will is pleasant.
- B. Trust is believing that God has an invisible purpose, which ultimately will be seen.

III. God's Will Is Always a Perfect Fit.

- A. Doing things God's way brings great release.
- B. Doing things God's way prepares us for the next step.



Spiritual Truths

- Not giving God our whole hearts will limit how much He can use us.
- Our own abilities will never replace God's abilities.
- The mature believer will learn to trust in God's abilities.
- God always gives a second chance for service.
- To do things God's way is to see His power released.



Lesson Material

God called Jonah personally to be His ambassador to the heathen city of Nineveh. Jonah had the opportunity to be the first man of God to see results happen in a city marked for death. But Jonah did not want to obey the call of God. He ran to Tarshish; and, according to Jonah 1:10, he

had even acknowledged to his shipmates that he was running from God.

God prepared a "great fish" -- a whale, or other large sea animal, to consume Ionah. In the midst of the whale's belly, probably surrounded by rotting animals (already consumed) and digestive juices, Ionah decided that maybe he did not have it so bad on the outside, after all. He decided to obey God. His decision was much like the person who says, "If you get me out of this, God, I will do anything." And so Ionah arrived in Nineveh, after being vomited up on dry land by the poor animal that swallowed him. Apparently, this wretched man gave the fish indigestion -- disobedience always causes some type of problem for those around the person in question. Jonah would have drawn quite a crowd because of his appearance alone, after spending three days and nights in the stomach of a whale. His clothes would have been tattered, and his complexion would have been very pale and quite grotesque. He would have instilled fear with his message, "God is going to destroy this city in forty days." Notice that in Jonah 3:1-3, the city of Nineveh was three days' walk just to see the entire city; but Jonah only preached for one day. He still had not allowed the Lord to "kill" or deal with his bad attitudes. "Okay, God, I did my part. That is it. That is all You get."

When God forgave the Ninevites, and Jonah saw that no judgment was coming, Jonah had no ability to rejoice in God's mercy. Instead he became angry, and he asked God to let him die. Jonah put himself in the place of critiquing God's instruction to him. He was unwilling to give God his entire heart and life. He held back a portion for his own desires. We must be careful that when God uses us --

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we must be willing to give Him everything.

Not everything we experience in God's will is pleasant. Peter's response to Jesus' arrest in the garden reveals his shock and reaction. His plan of action was to physically step in with his own strength and fight his way out of the situation. It was at this encounter that Peter reached out, grabbed a sword, and cut off a servant's ear. Jesus settled the matter by not only healing the servant's ear, but by correcting Peter's view of strength. What was needed was not Peter's abilities, but Peter's trust in God's abilities. The Bible teaches that Jesus had been preparing Peter for His coming betrayal, crucifixion, and resurrection. (Matthew 16:21-23) Even at this time, Peter told Jesus "No way;" and he had to be rebuked by Jesus for his lack of teachability and trust.

We must believe that God has an invisible purpose, which ultimately will be seen. Jesus wanted Peter to see that God had everything under control. Jesus' response to Peter's gallant sword play was "...Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11) There was an important progression which was essential for Peter's maturity in the Lord. Jesus' prayer in the garden of Gethsemane had already settled the question of obedience. Iesus' obedience contained the trust and strength to go all the way through a crucifixion. The plan and promise of Father God would not end with a death, but would be fulfilled with a resurrection. It is the same lesson that every "on-fire, serious-about-God" Christian encounter. There must come a settled will to obey, despite death-dealing situations. We know that God will have the last Word. Without the obedience and death of Jesus on the cross, there would be no

resurrection. It is amazing that after we see the entire picture, all of the pieces fit perfectly together.

Doing things God's way brings great release. Jonah witnessed God's power in Nineveh. Peter witnessed the resurrection of Jesus.

Doing things God's way prepares us for the next step. Jonah never really allowed God to have total lordship; and he missed out on God's purpose and blessing. Peter repented and gave all to his Lord. He preached to thousands on the Day of Pentecost; and he became an apostle in the early church.



Methods

Divide the students into two groups. One group should prepare the story of Jonah to present in a skit, while the other prepares the lesson on Peter in the garden. Tell them to pay close attention to the attitudes and mind sets of those whom they are portraying. If they had been Peter or Jonah, what would they have done?

Blindfold a class member, and have a volunteer lead them through the classroom, up and down the aisles, and out of the doorway and back in again. The one who does the leading must be careful and conscientious that the blindfolded person does not run into anything. This is an object lesson. Even when we cannot see, God does; and He will get us through.

Bring in someone from outside the class who has a testimony of going

through a tough time, and who had to trust God, and then saw His will and purpose fulfilled. (Examples would be a marriage healed, coming through a battle with cancer or sickness, etc.) Always receive your pastor's approval before inviting a guest speaker to address the class.

Discussion questions:

A man hired a carpenter to build him a house. The carpenter took the man's money and used cheap materials, rather than the quality materials for which the man had paid. The carpenter pocketed the remaining money for himself. When the house was finished, he presented the final product to the man, who handed him the

key and said: "I wanted to bless you. Since you did all of the work, you know what is in this house. This is your house." What does this story teach you about dealing with our attitudes? Who did the carpenter's attitude affect? Who did the man's attitude affect? Who had to live with the fruit of his own attitude?

Is having the gift of a free will a positive or negative attribute? (Write this question on the blackboard, and have the class list the pros and cons.) Bring the matter to a positive conclusion, by saying, "When choice is used for love and obedience, we always will see God's plan revealed."

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Look In the Mirror

Volume 11

Lesson 9



Bible References

1 Samuel 16:7

Proverbs 4:23

Psalms 139:14

Romans 7:18-20

1 Peter 3:4



Theme

God has designed us; and He will help us to become all that He intended for us to be.



Scripture Reading

Romans 7:18-20

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."



Memory Verse

1 Samuel 16:7

"But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."



Outline

- I. God Made Us What We Are. We Grow and Change Within that Framework.
- A. We are not always what we want to be. (Romans 7:18-20)
- B. "Temperament" is the combination of inborn traits that subconsciously affects man's behavior.
 - 1. Good and bad traits are passed on genetically by our parents.
 - 2. Our genetic inheritance is both varied and unpredictable.
- C. Character is what is inside of us. (1 Peter 3:4)
 - 1. Character is the soul of man, consisting of the mind, emotions and will.
 - 2. Character is the result of our natural temperament, modified by childhood training, education, and basic attitudes, beliefs, principles and motivations.
- D. Personality is the outward expression of ourselves, which may or may not be the same as our character, depending upon how genuine we are.
 - 1. At times, our personality may portray someone whom we think we ought to be, but not whom we really are. (1 Samuel 16:7)
 - 2. This kind of behavior can cause mental and spiritual chaos.

II. The Four Basic Temperaments.

A. Sanguine.

- 1. Strengths:
 - a. Lively, enjoying, has lots of friends.
 - b. Optimistic -- lives in the present, easily forgets the past.
 - c. Friendly, outgoing, a basic, genuine love for people.
 - d. Compassionate and tender.
- 2. Weaknesses:
 - a. Restless, often impartial and disorganized.
 - b. Weak-willed, undisciplined.
 - c. Egotistical, thinks most often of himself.
 - d. Emotionally unstable.

B. Choleric.

- 1. Strengths:
 - a. Strong willpower, self-disciplined, very determined.
 - b. Practical, organized.
 - c. A leader, quick, bold, forceful.
 - d. Optimistic, natural selfconfidence, pioneering.
- 2. Weaknesses:
 - a. Hot-tempered, hard, at times unsympathetic of others.
 - b. Cruel, runs over others' feelings and rights.
 - c. Impetuous, stubborn and tenacious, even when wrong.
 - d. Self-sufficient, proud, domineering, to the point of becoming obnoxious.

C. Melancholic.

- 1. Strengths:
 - a. Sensitive, rich, deep and geniusprone.
 - b. Perfectionist, leads to much introspection.

- c. Creative thinker, combined with perfectionism and keen analytical mind.
- d. Faithful friend, extremely sacrificing.
- e. Dependable.

2. Weaknesses:

- a. Self-centered, everything that troubles life is of primary importance.
- b. Pessimistic, because of analytical and perfectionist traits.
- c. Indecisive, fearful, amplifies the negative.
- d. Moody, frequently discouraged.

D. Phlegmatic.

1. Strengths:

- a. Witty, superb timing, imaginative.
- b. Dependable, cheerful, goodnatured.
- c. Practical and efficient.
- d. Efficient and neat.

2. Weaknesses:

- a. Slow and lazy, a spectator, lacks motivation.
- b. A tease, can be a detached observer.
- c. Stubborn, self centered, unwilling to exert energy, opposing to change.
- d. Indecisive.

III. A Wonderful Creation. (Psalms 139:14)

- A. We are a unique combination of temperaments.
- B. God destined our intricate parts.



Spiritual Truths

- God has made each one of us different.
 If we look at a grain of sand or a snowflake, we will notice each one is different; and so it is with us.
- God wants to take our personality and character, blend it with His life-giving Spirit, and make us the best Christians we can be for His glory.
- God wants to strengthen our strong areas and build up our weaknesses, by changing us daily to be more like Jesus.
- In Psalms 139:14, we read, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well."



Lesson Material

God does not want cheap fakes or imitations. He does not want us to be phony, but rather, real. After all, He created us, did He not? What He wants to do with us is to take our uniqueness and abilities and mold them into the character of Jesus Christ. In doing this, He can best use us, just as He intends to.

"I am fearfully and wonderfully made." What a short statement for such a marvel of engineering, both in a physical sense, and in the intricacy of our varied personalities. It is mind-boggling to think

about. Then again, in so many ways, we are so much alike. How can we all have the same number of parts — two legs, two arms, one head, etc. and yet, all look different? And, it all works. If we spend time "people watching," we will notice so many different shapes and sizes. Somehow, our bodies hold together; and we can walk down the street.

Just thinking about the way our eyes connect us to the world around us is amazing. What a miracle seeing is! And hearing too! How light and sound waves can be turned into moving pictures and sounds in our minds is too glorious to comprehend.

Our bodies are even more astonishing. We are filled with chemical and electrical processes that act as switches to turn things on and off and keep our bodies running smoothly. So many wonderful things happen in our bodies, and we do not even have to think about them -- we do not even know about them. Some of our most interesting parts are abstract and difficult to explain, such as our minds and the emotions of our souls. There are many similarities among us in these areas, but enough differences to keep things interesting.

Another interesting point is that the same basic body plan can be made into so many shapes. When we think of all the different animals that share a basic plan and yet, are more different from each other than we are, it is a marvel to behold.

How could anyone possibly think that our bodies happened by accident? No, we are fearfully and wonderfully made by an infinite and loving Creator, Who cares for us and has a plan for our lives. We are unique!



Methods

Discuss with the students some of the marvels of God's creation. Ask the students if they know some interesting stories about how we are made or about the way God has "programmed" into some of the plants and animals unusual traits or actions that cannot be explained. Try to gather some interesting material to take to class.

Bring a full-sized mirror to class. Place it by the door, so that the students can see themselves as they walk in. At the end of the class, remind them that they each looked different, as they looked at themselves in the mirror.

Bring an ink pad, and have the students put their thumb print on a large piece of paper. Compare all of the thumb prints on the one paper, in order to see that they are all different. Impress upon the students that God knew what He was doing when He created all of us unique.

A New Creation

Volume 11

Lesson 10



2 Corinthians 5:17

2 Peter 1:4

Galatians 5:22-23



Theme

To examine the Spirit-filled and controlled temperament and look at our own lives in perspective.



Galatians 5:22-23

22 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 "Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."



2 Corinthians 5:17

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



Outline

I. A New Creation.

- A. A complete transformation is available through Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- B. Jesus can give us a divine nature. (2 Peter 1:4)
 - 1. We can escape our weaknesses and corruption.
 - 2. We can be partakers of a divine nature.

II. A Look at the Spirit-filled Temperament. (Galatians 5:22-23)

- A. Love: love for God and fellow man. (Luke 10:27; Matthew 19:19)
- B. Joy: enduring joy that comes from above. (Romans 14:17; John 15:11)
- C. Peace: untroubled; unworried; a peace that passes our understanding. (Philippians 4:6-7)
- D. Longsuffering: patience and endurance. (2 Peter 3:9)
- E. Gentleness: considerate; tender hearted; compassion for humanity. (Mark 10:13-14)
- F. Goodness: generosity with our possessions; unselfishness; hospitality. (Hebrews 13:2; Romans 12:13)
- G. Faith: a complete abandonment to God and complete dependence upon Him. (Psalms 27:14)
- H. Meekness: submissive, mild and humble. (Matthew 5:5)
- I. Self-control: disciplined, consistent, well-ordered. (1 Corinthians 9:27)



Spiritual Truths

 God knows that we have had our creative personalities and character tainted by our sin nature and the world. This is why He made salvation

- available for us -- so that we can turn from our sinful ways.
- With salvation from God comes the life-changing power of Jesus Christ, which will transform us from our sin nature to Christ's divine nature.



Lesson Material

Matthew 5:44 says, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you;...."

Romans 12:20 says, "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."

Facing our enemies with love is a true test of the Spirit-filled temperament. Our worldly tendency is to lash out and not let anyone take advantage of us -- or at least make nasty faces behind their backs. Or we may tell others what terrible things they have done to us. But if the character of Christ is to be formed in us, then we have to give all revenge and anger over to God. This process of being changed can be painful. The apostle Paul writes to the Galatians in chapter 4 verse 19 "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."

Romans 5:3 says, "But we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience." We will have patience worked out in us, but it might take a while to appreciate the "glory" part. James 1:3

says, "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."

When we become Christians, we are sometimes astonished and often grieved to find that we still do not love our enemies; and we often react the same way we did before we received Christ into our lives. We thought we were going to be different -- a "new man." We must not get discouraged. The process of maturing in our Christian walk takes time. The apostle Paul would commiserate with us, for he wrote in Romans 7:18-24, "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. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 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. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

What is the answer to this problem?

Paul writes further in Romans 7:25, 8:1-2, "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. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which 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."

In other words, we can not change ourselves -- at least not by ourselves. We have to submit each area of our lives that the Holy Spirit prompts us to surrender. With much prayer and by continually submitting these areas for cleansing, God will change us. Occasionally (perhaps often), we have to go through some pain, in order for the character of Christ to be formed in us. For one thing, our sins are going to grieve us more, as we see them in His light. This is good, if it makes us want to work harder at being submissive to change. 2 Corinthians 7:10 says, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."

The character of Christ is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and self-control. These are the attributes that Christ wants to be evident in our lives. This will happen as we allow the Holy Spirit to change us into a new creation.



Methods

Discuss with the students some methods the Lord might use to bring about the changes we need in our temperaments. Can anyone in the class give examples of how the Lord has worked these things out in them?

Have the students take a piece of paper and write down the subpoints of Number II in the outline. Have them list how they think they rate in each area. Then have them share what they think are their strong points and weak points. Have them share why they think this way about themselves.

The New You

Volume 11

Lesson 11



Bible References

Psalms 51:10

Romans 8:29

2 Peter 1:4

1 John 4:12



and true holiness."

mind:

Memory Verse

2 Corinthians 5:17

23 "And be renewed in the spirit of your

24 "And that ye put on the new man,

which after God is created in righteousness

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



Theme

The Holy Spirit at work in our transformed character.



Scripture Reading

Ephesians 4:22-24

22 "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;



Outline

I. What Is a New Nature?

- A It is being partakers of the divine nature. (2 Peter 1:4)
- B. It is being predestined to be conformed to the character of Christ. (Romans 8:29)

- 1. God is at work making us like Jesus.
- 2. We must change, before we can be like Jesus.

II. Why Do We Need a New Nature?

- A. We need a new nature because of God's promise. (Ezekiel 11:19-20)
 - God has promised a day will come when His people will possess a new spirit and a new heart.
 - 2. The purpose of this heart is so that we can be obedient.
- B. We need a new nature because of God's provision. (Romans 6:3-10; Galatians 2:20)
 - 1. Christ died on the cross to pay the penalty for the sin which rules in our lives.
 - Paul says that we can be crucified with Christ, and yet live by faith, since our lives are now dead to sin. We are no longer slaves to sin.
 - 3. The world can only see God as He is manifested through us. Love in action is the perfection of His love in us.

III. How Can We Receive a New Nature?

- A. We must re-focus our affection. (Colossians 3:1-3) What does the old man love? What should the new man love?
- B We must re-clothe our behavior. (Ephesians 4:22-32) We are to change what we can change. We must develop discipline.

- C We must rethink our perspective. (Romans 12:1-2)
 - 1. We are to present our bodies to God as our sacrifice.
 - 2. We must renew our minds by disciplining our thought processes.
- D. We must request our renewal. (Psalms 51:10)
 - 1. David's rebellion and sin.
 - 2. David's cleansing and restoration.



Spiritual Truths

- God works continually in our lives to bring the new nature forth in us.
- We must die to ourselves, before Christ can live through us.
- God manifests Himself to the world through our manner of life.
- To have a new nature, we must change our thought processes.
- To find renewal, we must repent and ask God's restoration. He will do it.



Lesson Material

There are many examples in nature of a transformed character. An acorn is

transformed into an oak tree; a caterpillar is transformed into a butterfly; and a tadpole is transformed into a frog. It is an excellent question, when someone asks how such a change can transform a person's life when Jesus Christ is invited into their heart. This study is an answer to that question. The new nature which a Christian possesses is a whole new behavior and reaction process. It is a transformation on the inside that affects behavior on the outside. It is the nature of a dog to chase a cat, and the nature of a cat to chase a mouse. It is the nature of an animal to bite when cornered. It is the nature of God to tell the truth; and it is the nature of Satan to tell a lie. God is a builder; and the devil is a destroyer.

God is at work within our lives through the ever-present working of the Holy Spirit, changing our carnal nature to become like the nature of Jesus Christ. Because we know what we are like, we know that God has a very involved task ahead of Him. Jesus' death on the cross not only paid the penalty for our sin, but also conquered the deadly stranglehold of power that sin has on our lives. By identifying with Jesus Christ, we can be set free from this dominating control of sin.

The four subpoints to "How Can I Receive a New Nature?" are simply stages in being transformed in our thinking and our behavior. Putting off the "old man" and putting on the "new man" can be illustrated by putting on and taking off a jacket or a sweater. This is a command to the hearer. We are commanded to put off the old and put on the new. God places that responsibility upon us. Christ made this possible by dying on the cross; but, we make it real by our decision.

Every great Bible character had a conversion experience in his or her personal life. The story of David's failure to walk in a continual state of holiness by his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba leads to an excellent opportunity to challenge the students to a prayer of rededication or cleansing in their own lives.



Methods

The teacher may ask the students what God's divine nature is like. List God's characteristics on the chalkboard. Then, ask how many of these characteristics of God should be characteristic of Christians with a divine nature.

The teacher may bring in a guest who can share a brief testimony of God's conversion in his or her life (subject to the pastor's approval).

The teacher can encourage discussion of Romans 8:29, and relate it to the conversion process. How do the bad things in our lives make us more like Jesus? The good things?

The teacher may divide the class into small discussion groups and assign the following task: List five ways in which we can show God's love to the world.

The teacher may wish to use the final outline point, David's prayer, as an opportunity to lead the class in a rededication time or prayer of cleansing.

Friendship

Volume 11 Lesson 12



Bible References

Proverbs 17:17

Proverbs 18:24

Proverbs 27:6

Proverbs 27:17



Theme

The importance of having the kind of friendships that Christ modeled for us.



Scripture Reading

John 15:12-15

12 "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13 "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 "Ye are friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

15 "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."



Luke 6:31

"And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.



Outline

I. Friends: Everyone Needs Them.

- A. We need friends for encouragement along life's journey.
- B. We need friends for accountability.
- C. We need friends for Christian fellowship.
- D. We need friends, so that we can share the love of Christ with them.

II. What Are the Principles of Friendship?

- A. We must have unconditional love.
- B. We must be willing to forgive, when we are wronged.
- C. We must be friendly and follow the Golden Rule, as Jesus taught. (Matthew 7:12)

III. Our Friendship with God Is Our Most Important Relationship.

- A. God should be our best Friend. He proved His friendship to us, when He died for us.
- B. The relationship that we have with God is manifested in our relationships with others. (1 John 4:20-21)



Spiritual Truths

- God put people on earth to be our friends.
- Christ is the model Example of what real friendship it.
- If we want friends, we must be friends.
- What we sow in relationships is what we will reap.



Lesson Material

Friendship is a very important element in each of our lives. God did not intend for us to be alone on the earth. He gave us friends.

Friends are a great source of encouragement. We should be accountable to our friends. They are the ones who are around us and who know what areas we could use work in. Friends are for us to be in fellowship with.

God wants us to witness to our friends. We are to be the light in the darkness. Our friends should be able to see Christ through us.

To have friends, we must be friends. If we treat our friends with respect and dignity, we will most likely receive the same in return. Basically, what we sow is what we reap! (Galatians 6:7) The most important aspect of friendship is our friendship with God. He should be our best friend. He died for us; and He is the model Friend. He showed us His unconditional love. We should do the same to our friends. Our relationship with Christ should be manifested through our relationships with our friends. When we have a good relationship with God, we will usually have a good relationship with our friends.



Methods

Have students list as many qualities for friendship as they can think of. Make a list of these qualities on the blackboard, if one is available. Ask the students if these qualities can be found in Jesus Christ. Have the students look up scriptures showing how Christ displayed these qualities.

Have the students discuss what they like most about having a good friend.

The Four Kinds of Love

Volume 11 Lesson 13



Romans 5:5-8

Romans 12:1-2

1 Corinthians 13:4-13

1 John 4:7-21



Theme

The biblical meanings of the word, "love."



1 John 3:1-3, 16

- 1 "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.
- 2 "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.
- 3 "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
- 16 "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."



1 Corinthians 16:14

"Let all your things be done with charity."



Outline

I. What Is the Meaning of "Love," as Described in the Bible?

- A. Agape means "unconditional love."
 - 1. God loved us so much that, while we were yet sinners, He died for us. (Romans 5:8)
 - 2. Whatever we ask of God, we receive, because we keep His commandments. (1 John 3:22-24)
 - a. We are to do those things which are pleasing to Him.
 - b. We are to believe on the Name of His Son, Jesus Christ.
 - c. It is commanded that we love one another.
 - d. Those who keep His commandments dwell in Him.
 - e. We know that He dwells in us by the witness of His Spirit.
 - 3. God's love is in our hearts by His Holy Spirit, Whom He gives us. (Romans 5:5)
 - 4. What are the characteristics of agape love?
 - a. God's love is strong.
 - b. God's love is unfailing.
 - c. God's love is enduring.
 - d. God's love is pure.
 - e. God's love is abundant toward
 - 5. There is nothing in heaven or earth that can separate us from God's love. (Romans 8:35-39)
 - a. Tribulation, distress, or persecution will not separate us.
 - b. Famine, nakedness, peril or sword will not separate us.

- c. Death, life, angels, principalities, or powers will not separate us.
- d. Things present, or things to come will not separate us.
- e. We are more than conquerors through God, Who loves us.
- B. Storge means "family affection."
 - 1. God established the family.
 - 2. The Christ-centered home offers the strongest support system.
- C. Philea means "brotherly love."
 - 1. We are to have brotherly love. (1 John 4:7; 1 Peter 1:22)
 - 2. Christian friendships often become closer than brothers.
 - 3. "Philadelphia" actually means the city of "brotherly love."
- D. Eros means "sexual affection."
 - 1. God created male and female with unique differences.
 - 2. God established the institution of marriage for sexual expression.

II. The Greatest Love Is Agape.

- A. The most important love for us to learn is *agape* love.
- B. God's love in us produces righteousness.
- C. God's love in us produces godly character.



Spiritual Truths

- God's love never fails and never lets us down.
- God's love casts out all fear.
- God's love flowing through us makes a difference in this world that does not know real love.



Lesson Material

Who can define love? Is love more than an emotion? Is love just a warm, fuzzy feeling? Someone has jokingly defined love like this: "Love is a funny thing, shaped like a lizard, it goes around the heart and penetrates the gizzard." Our English use of the word "love" is almost that ludicrous! We express ecstasy over the most trivial inanimate objects and the deepest experiences of our lives using the all inclusive word, "love." Do we really love peanuts, popcorn and pizza with the same kind of love that we have toward members of our family, or toward our best friend, or toward the Lord Jesus, Who gave His life for us? Our emotional pendulum swings from glee over our favorite food to deep devotion for God. Thus, in a moment of time, we can lose the perspective in life that God intended us to have.

For a clearer understanding of love let us take a close look at the original language of the New Testament. The Greek culture used four different words to express "love." Our focus in this lesson is on the pure, unconditional love of God.

Agape means "unconditional love." Agape best describes God's kind of love. God demonstrated His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8) When we keep His commandments and abide in Him, His love will be manifested in us. (1 John 3:22-24) This is made possible because the love (agape) of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, Who indwells us. (Romans 5:5)

The characteristics of agape love are evident from Genesis to Revelation. The psalmist David repeatedly declared God's love as unfailing, enduring, full of mercy, and kind. The apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, gives us a beautiful pattern of how love behaves, no matter how difficult the situation may be.

Love is a choice to walk in oneness with God, in daily fellowship. That choice makes a difference in our relationships at home, at school, at work, or wherever we go. His love strengthens us, purifies us, and keeps us steadfast in our values. His love gives us purpose and direction, and it makes life worth living.



Methods

Give the students an opportunity to briefly share how God's love made a difference in a difficult situation.

Select three or four students before class begins to role play a family depicting life without God's love and then life with God's love. Themes could be getting permission for the car, for a date, etc.

Ask two students in advance to memorize 1 Corinthians 13 and present the chapter in drama form, as if Paul was sharing it with Timothy, or Ruth with Naomi.

Perseverance and Pressing On

Volume 11

Lesson 14



Job 17:9

Hosea 10:12

Matthew 10:22

Luke 9:62

John 15:9

Philippians 3:13-15

Hebrews 4:14; 12:1, 7

James 1:12; 5:11

Revelation 3:3, 11



Theme

This lesson is a study about persevering and pressing on in Christ.



Hebrews 3:6-19

- 6 "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.
- 7 "Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,
- 8 "Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:
- 9 "When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.
- 10 "Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.
- 11 "So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)
- 12 "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

- 13 "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.
- 14 "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;
- 15 "While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.
- 16 "For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.
- 17 "But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?
- 18 "And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?
- 19 "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."



Galatians 6:9

"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."



Outline

I. We Are Called to Endure to the End for the Sake of Christ.

- A. Those who endure temptation will receive a crown of life from Jesus. This is a promise of Jesus to those who love Him. (James 1:12)
- B. Those who endure with Christ to the end will be saved. (Matthew 10:22)
- C. We are even called to endure God's chastening. Any loving father will punish his child for entering into danger. (Hebrews 12:7)
- D. When we reach the end of this life and have endured, we will find that God has been very understanding, kind and merciful toward us. (James 5:11)
- E. We will be happy, after having endured for Christ's sake. Job is our example. (James 5:11)

II. God's Child Is Called to Persevere to the End for Jesus' Name's Sake.

- A. When we remain close to the Lord, holding on to His way, we will become stronger and stronger. (Job 17:9)
- B. We must not decide to quit following Jesus, because the reward we will receive will far outweigh the pain of endurance. (Galatians 6:9; Romans 8:18)

C. We are to be alert and watchful, avoid danger, and hope to the end, when we will receive a crown of life. (1 Peter 1:13; James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:8)

III. We Can Learn from the Children of Israel in Their Wilderness Wanderings.

- A. The children came to a place in their desert wanderings called "Rimmonpares." (Numbers 33:19)
 - 1. "Rimmon-pares" means "a gap in fruit-bearing."
 - It would be safe to assume that the children of Israel reached a place in their walk which was void of fruit.
 - 3. We study Israel, in order to avoid the mistakes which they made. (1 Corinthians 10:1-11)
- B. The Israelites came to a place after Rimmon-pares called "Libnah."
 - 1. "Libnah" means "to become hard."
 - 2. Strong's Concordance says, "to make brick become white."
 - 3. Apparently, after they stopped bearing fruit for God, they became hard, like bricks baked in the sun.
 - The way of the backslider is a hard place. The Israelites were worse off now, than when they were in Egypt.
- C. After Libnah the Israelites came to Rissah. (Numbers 33:21)
 - "Rissah" means "returning to righteousness and into God's tempering."
 - 2. Strong's Concordance says, "to moisten (with drops); temper."
 - 3. Webster's dictionary defines "temper" as follows: "1. to dilute or soften by the addition of something

- else (such as justice with mercy); 2. to bring to a desired consistency or texture (as clay by moistening and kneading, or steel by gradual heating and cooling); 3. toughen; 4. tune."
- 4. God was loving and faithful in His dealings with His children. We know that He desired to bring them to a place where He could mix the proper amount of mercy, judgment, heat and cooling, in order to bring their spirits to a desired state of blessing.
- 5. The children of Israel lost contact with the "living water;" and they could not produce any fruits.

IV. The Way of the Backslider Is Hard, if We Fail to Press on In Christ.

- A. We can learn from the example of Israel that the first step in their hardness was "a gap in their fruitbearing."
- B. We see a warning for ourselves that we must continue to remain in the Vine, so that we can bear His fruit. Jesus is the Vine and we are His branches. (John 15:1-8)
- C. We must experience these same things, in order to be overcomers of the hardness of our hearts.
- D. Better yet, we can learn by the Israelites' example, and make it easier on ourselves in the long run.
- E. We must search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. We must lift up our hardened hearts to God, Who can apply the living water and temper us

again to be fruitful and in love with Jesus. (Lamentations 3:40)

V. We Are Called to Be Fruitbearers, for the Sake of Christ.

- A. We exercise our fruit-bearing ability, when we radiate the fruit of the Spirit as shown in Galatians 5:22-23.
 - 1. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance are qualities we should seek to radiate exuberantly.
 - 2. These qualities developed in us will draw others to Christ.
 - Others will be drawn to our fruits of righteousness and take and eat for themselves, becoming fruit-bearers in turn.
- B. In due season, our fruit will become mature, if we continue to hold on, persevere and press on in Christ. (Galatians 6:9; Job 17:9)
- C. The Bible says that if we are planted in the house of God, we will flourish in His courts. We will even bring forth fruit in our old age, if we continue moving forward toward the goal. (Philippians 3:13-14; Proverbs 4:27; Luke 9:62; Psalms 92:13-14)



Spiritual Truths

 We learn by example from the children of Israel, as their accounts were

- recorded for our admonition. (1 Corinthians 10:1-11)
- We are admonished in God's Word to persevere, endure and press on in Christ, in order to obtain our prize. (Philippians 3:13, 14)
- God has no pleasure with those who draw back and become hardened in their hearts. (Hebrews 10:38)
- We are to continue on in fruitfulness, bearing much fruit, even until we are old. (Psalms 92:13-14)



Lesson Material

God's dealings with the children of Israel as they wandered in the wilderness are recorded for us, as summarized in Deuteronomy, chapter 33. We read of the many places in the desert where they stopped. Each one of these places gives us instruction in our walk with the Lord; and we can take heed to their mistakes, or suffer the same as they did. As mature Christians, we should take a close look at the warnings which we must heed, when we read 1 Corinthians 10:1-11. It reveals their idolatry, fornication, tempting of God, murmuring, backsliding, hardheartedness and unfruitfulness. These are our examples of mistakes that can be made while we walk as Christians.

Jesus was tempted for three days in the wilderness; and He overcame everything, as an example for our good. (1 Peter 2:21) We do not have to be hindered in our walk by hardening our hearts toward God

and giving in to the thought of giving up. If we think about giving up, then we know without a doubt that we lose everything precious that we have obtained in Christ. Think twice, before giving up in Christ. We have the strength, encouragement and example of Jesus and others to enable us continue to hold on to hope until the end. Then, when the end comes, we will receive a crown of life. Here on earth, we can endure and persevere to receive a great and wonderful prize, which is the very, utmost and highest calling in Christ. That highest calling is different for each individual; but it is the same, in one respect. We are to be fruitful and multiply, giving glory to God in the process. Christ can do it in us!

If we have a hard heart through unbelief and are about to give up, then instruction must be given to us on making the right decision. We must encourage every Christian not to give up. We must remind them of all that they are giving up, and, as teachers and lovers of God, instruct them in the Word of God. Instruction will give the would-be quitter better understanding of the consequences of leaving Christ's shepherding. We must encourage one another to press on in righteousness. We must verbally strengthen our weak brothers, by telling them to hold on. Hold on to God's promises, and do not fall back into sin. because then we will enter into a vicious circle of sin/repentance, sin/repentance. This is the circle that the children of Israel traveled in for forty years. So will it be with us, if we choose the same way.

However, encouragement and instruction with teenagers will go a long way. Jesus said, "If you love me, feed my sheep...feed my sheep...feed my sheep." (John 21) If we love God, then we must feed the sheep whom He loves. We know that young people who are not exposed to the Word of God do not know how to receive Christ, unless they are taught. The warnings, wisdom and strength of God's Word are to be taught to teenagers, in order for them to understand that they must continue on in Christ. The consequences of giving up the fight for their high calling need to be considered. Rash decisions about turning away from God can be remedied by instruction in righteous.



Methods

Have the students discuss all the things they would lose, if they were to turn from God.

Have the students think of all that they would gain, from pressing on in Christ.

Pair off the students, and have them share their struggles with Christianity. Have each student write their partner a letter of encouragement to press on toward the prize in Christ Jesus. Give a copy of each letter to the teacher.

Where Did It All Begin?

Volume 11

Lesson 15



Bible References

Genesis 1:1, 26-27

Job 12:7-10

John 1:1-3

Romans 1:20; 5:12; 8:4-6

2 Corinthians 5:17

Colossians 1:16

Hebrews 11:3



Scripture Reading

Colossians 1:16-17

16 "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him;

17 "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."



Theme

God created the universe; He authored it all, and He maintains it all.



Memory Verse

Genesis 1:1

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."



Outline

- I. God Brought the Universe into Existence.
- A. He created it.
- B. Nothing exists that He did not create.
- II. Our Universe Operates on Unchangeable Natural Laws.
- A. The scientific method is based on the law of cause and effect.
 - 1. Nothing happens in isolation.
 - 2. Every event has a precedent.
- B. Something had to function as a first cause, or first event.
 - 1. Infinite and eternal.
 - 2. Omnipotent and omniscient.
 - 3. The first cause could only have been God.
- C. The laws of thermodynamics support the biblical testimony of creation.
 - 1. The law of conservation supports creation.
 - 2. The law of entropy supports creation.
 - 3. Both laws contradict evolution.

III. God Created the Universe with a Purpose.

- A. Man is at the center of God's purpose.
 - 1. Man was created in the image of God.
 - 2. Man was given dominion over the earth.
- B. God's redemptive plan is being fulfilled in His creation.
 - 1. God reveals Himself in nature.
 - 2. Jesus revealed the redemptive plan of God.
 - 3. All that has taken place since creation is in fulfillment of God's eternal purpose.



Spiritual Truths

- God created the universe. Nothing exists that He did not create.
- The natural laws of the universe support the biblical account of the origin of the universe.
- The theory of evolution contradicts the natural laws of the universe.
- God created the universe with a purpose.
- Man is at the center of God's purpose, which was completed through Jesus Christ.



Lesson Material

Genesis 1:1 states that "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth."

God brought the universe into existence. (Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:16) He created it out of nothing. (Hebrews 11:3) The Bible states that nothing exists that was not created by God. (John 1:3)

When God created the universe, He set into motion certain natural laws that have remained unchanged. These laws always prevail, even when man attempts to deny or circumvent them. For example, one can only violate the law of gravity for a given length of time; and then, "what goes up, must come down."

Scientific thought is based upon the premise of cause and effect. Nothing happens independently; everything that happens is the result of an event which happened before. This logic continues on, until one reaches a necessary first event, or first cause, which had to have no preceding cause. Something or someone had to have started it all. Because everything in the universe has a traceable cause except for this first cause, the first cause is not able to be observed according to the scientific method. The first event, or first cause, had no preceding cause; and yet, it was the cause of all subsequent events.

By definition, only God could have been this first cause, or first event. Only God exists independently of the universe; and only God could have the power to begin what we know as the universe. The order of the universe bespeaks an intelligent Supreme Being. To claim that the universe began as a spontaneous "Big Bang" could be compared to placing an explosive device inside a bucket of watch parts, and having a watch instantaneously produced by the explosion.

The laws of thermodynamics point to this universe having had a Creator. The first law of thermodynamics is called the Law of Conservation. This law simply states that matter cannot be created or destroyed. Therefore, no spontaneous "Big Bang" could have produced the universe. That being the case, there is no explanation for the origin of the universe within the natural laws that govern the universe. But God, Who exists outside of the realm of natural law, is the One Who both created the universe out of nothing and Who sustains it by His power. Colossians 1:17 states this very clearly: "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." This scripture states that God Himself pre-dates the universe, and that the universe is held together by His power.

The second law of thermodynamics is called the Law of Entropy. This law states that matter naturally proceeds from order to disorder -- from integration to disintegration. If the "Big Bang" occurred, it would have been a direct contrast to the Law of Entropy, because the universe would have proceeded from disorder to order; and scientific observation of all matter clearly shows that the opposite is true, without exception. The universe is not improving. It is slowly dissolving.

To further support the "Big Bang" theory and its violations of the laws of thermodynamics, the theory of evolution has been presented, which states that the universe is operating through a process of

self-organization, or spontaneous integration. There is no sound scientific evidence for the theory of evolution. There is much sound scientific evidence, however, for the laws of thermodynamics and the first cause, or first event. The universe, as stated before, is not becoming more organized; the universe is disintegrating.

Because men do not wish acknowledge God, they have accepted the theories of the "Big Bang" and evolution as fact, without support scientific evidence. The mind of man is anti-God by nature; only regeneration (the new birth) can produce an understanding of God and spiritual things. (John 3:3) In 1 Corinthians 2:4, we read, "But 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." Only God can explain God; and He has sent Jesus Christ, so that we could understand the love and plan and nature of God. The Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Triune Godhead, takes of the things of God and explains them to the regenerate (born again) man:

"For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." (1 Corinthians 2:11-12)

Men will go to great lengths to deny the existence of their Creator. But they will still give an account of themselves to Him, with all of creation testifying against them:

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed (it) unto them. 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:" (Romans 1:18-20)

God created the universe with a purpose -- a plan of redemption. Man is at the center of His purpose. Man was created in the image of God. (Genesis 1:27) Man was given dominion over the earth. (Genesis 1:26; Psalms 8:4-6) In the book of Revelation, chapter 5, we see the triumphant Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, reclaiming the title deed to the earth, which had been forfeited to Satan by Adam's sin. Thus, God's plan of redemption is completed; and the Bible says that believers in Jesus Christ will reign on the earth with Him. (Revelation 5:10)

Job 12:7-10 says, "But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind."

God has revealed Himself in every aspect of nature (Romans 1:20); but the natural man chooses to worship the creation, rather than the Creator. But, for "whosoever will," God's plan of redemption and restoration is available, by repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The present world is passing away. But Jesus said that even though this world is passing away, His Word would not pass away. (Matthew 24:35) To enter into the promise of God, one must be born again. The promise of God is that "...whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

There is a glorious promise for the redeemed of mankind in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."



Methods

Illustrate this lesson with examples of natural laws from science. Demonstrate the law of gravity, by dropping an object. Demonstrate a violation of the law of gravity, by folding a paper airplane and flying it across the room. Draw attention to the fact that the natural law of gravity prevailed.

Develop the premise that violations of the natural laws of the universe do not last long. Therefore, the process of evolution, which is reported to have occurred over millions of years, could not have taken place, in violation of the natural laws of the universe. (Note that it is called the "theory" of evolution.)

Ask the students to try imagine the universe creating itself out of nothing, and then organizing itself over time into the world we now know. It is much more difficult to imagine this sequence of events than to simply accept that God authored it all.

Why do scientists adhere to evolutionary theories, such as the "Big Bang" theory, that have little or no scientific support, rather than accept the biblical account?

Why are people dedicating their lives to an effort to prove that the biblical account is wrong?

Why should Christians become more involved in defending the Bible scientifically? What can we do as Christians to become better informed about the world in which we live?

In and Out of the Water

Volume 11

Lesson 16



Bible References

Genesis 1:1-2

Genesis 6:1-7

Genesis 7

Isaiah 14:12-17

Isaiah 45:18

Ieremiah 4:23-26

2 Peter 3:5-8



Theme

The biblical account of the creation and possible re-creation of the earth.



Genesis 1:1-2

- 1 "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
- 2 "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness {was} upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

Jeremiah 4:23-26

- 23 "I beheld the earth, and, lo, {it was} without form, and void; and the heavens, and they {had} no light.
- 24 "I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.
- 25 "I beheld, and, lo, {there was} no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.
- 26 "I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place {was} a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, {and} by his fierce anger."

2 Peter 3:5-8

5 "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

- 6 "Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:
- 7 "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.
- 8 "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day (is) with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."



Isaiah 45:18

"For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I {am} the LORD; and {there is} none else."



Outline

I. The Age of the Earth.

- A. Man, as we know him, has existed for approximately 6,000 years.
- B. By appearance and fossil evidence, the earth seems to be much older than 6,000 years.

C. God is the Creator of the universe. (Genesis 1:1)

II. Three Theories of the Age of the Earth.

- A. The Genesis account of the seven days of creation refers to seven lengthy periods of time, rather than seven 24-hour days.
- B. God created the earth in a matured state, as He created Adam fully matured.
- C. The "Gap Theory," which states that a period of time passed between the accounts of Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2.

III. What Is the "Gap Theory?"

- A. God created the heavens and the earth in perfect condition. (Isaiah 45:18)
- B. A cataclysmic event occurred between the time of Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, which rendered the earth uninhabitable.
- C. Between the creation of the earth and the creation of Adam, there existed a pre-adamic race on the earth.
- D. Wickedness and rebellion led to the destruction, by flood, of the pre-adamic race.
- E. The "gap" refers to the period of time between the creation of the earth in Genesis 1:1 and the re-creation account beginning in Genesis 1:3.

IV. Great Cataclysmic Events on the Earth.

- A. The pre-adamic flood of Genesis 1:2 (Past).
- B. Noah's flood of Genesis 7-8 (Past).
- C. The purging of the earth by fire, as seen in 2 Peter 3:10 (Future).



Spiritual Truths

- God created the universe.
- Bible scholars differ on their opinions as to the age of the earth.
- The earth has gone through great cataclysmic events, as a result of the judgment of God.
- God created the earth to be inhabited; He did not create it void, or in vain.



Lesson Material

Genesis 1:1 states that "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

While all Bible scholars agree that God Himself is the Creator of the universe, there is a differing of opinion among Bible scholars as to the age of the earth and its ancient history. From the Bible, it is generally agreed that mankind, as we know it, is approximately 6,000 years old. But there are differing theories as to whether the earth itself is older than 6,000 years; and, if so, if there is scriptural evidence of the earth's history prior to the time of Adam and the human race, as we know it.

Many Bible scholars believe that the earth was not created by God in seven, literal, 24-hour days, as we use the term, "day." Rather, it is suggested that the seven "days" of Genesis 1:3 to 2:2 refer to seven periods of time, each of which could have been "ages," or perhaps thousands of years in length. This would account for the age of the earth, as evidenced by the earth's strata, fossil evidence, etc.

Other Bible scholars account for the age of the earth by theorizing that the earth was created by God in a state of maturity -- it was created aged, much in the same way as God created Adam in a mature state, rather than as an infant.

A widely-held theory by Bible scholars is called the "Gap Theory." This theory is based on the premise that the biblical account of the creation of Adam and the earth as we know it was not the first creation of the earth, but rather, a recreation; and that a gap in time occurred between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2.

According to Genesis 1:1, God created the heaven and the earth. Then, in verse 2, we read that the earth was "without form, and void." The Hebrew for this verse indicates that the earth "became" formless and empty. But in Isaiah 45:18, we read that the Lord did not create the earth in vain; He formed it to be inhabited. This is the same word, "vain," as in Genesis 1:2 (Hebrew, tohu). Therefore, it is thought by many Bible scholars that the

earth was indeed created in perfection, but that it became formless and empty.

In Genesis 1:2, the picture of the earth is indicative of a great cataclysmic flood: the surface of the earth was entirely covered over with water; there was no dry land; and there was no light. Peter refers to this period of time as the earth having been "out of the water." (2 Peter 3:5) Then, he says that the earth was "in the water," referring to Noah's flood. The world of Noah's time, "in the water," perished (2 Peter 3:6); and now, the earth, which will never again be destroyed by a flood (Genesis 9:11), is headed for a judgment by fire. (2 Peter 3:10)

The prophet Jeremiah gives a most interesting account of a vision he saw of the earth in the state of its formlessness and emptiness, in Jeremiah 4:23-26. Jeremiah's terminology of the earth's condition is the same as Genesis 1:2 --"without form and void." Jeremiah saw that all of the mountains and hills were trembling; no man was to be found; the birds were fled; the fruitful land was a wilderness; and the cities of the earth were destroyed, all as a result of the wrath of God. The picture here is of an earth that had been inhabited and had suffered the great cataclysmic judgment of God. Only in Genesis 1:2 is the earth described as "without form and void;" therefore, this could not have referred to the condition of the earth after Noah's flood.

Because the earth was not created formless and void, but was later (in Genesis 1:2) found formless and void, it is theorized that the biblical account of creation beginning in Genesis 1:3 is a recreation of the earth, and not the original creation of the earth.

It is thought by many Bible scholars that a pre-adamic race inhabited the earth before the time of Adam and this cataclysmic event of Genesis 1:2. This race had inhabited cities on the earth. And this race was affected by Satan's rebellion against God.

In Isaiah 14:12-17, we find the account of Satan's rebellion against God. He is described as the one who "made the earth a wilderness." (verse 17) It is theorized that Satan, in his rebellion against God and subsequent removal from ministry in heaven, led the earth and its civilization at the time in wickedness and rebellion against God; and God's judgment by flood resulted in the earth's condition as described in Genesis 1:2.

The earth may indeed be older than the 6,000 years of recorded human history that we now have. What we know now is that God has established a covenant with mankind -- a covenant sealed with the blood of Jesus Christ. God will someday soon, once and for all, judge all sin and wickedness and rebellion. In order to escape the judgment and wrath of God, men must repent of their sin, and turn to God in faith, by believing in Jesus Christ. God's plan for this earth is to totally renew it and restore it. And, even as the earth itself will be renewed, so also can we be "new creations" in Christ Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:17)



Methods

Divide the students into three groups. Have each group present one of the three

theories on the age on the earth, and support each theory with scripture.

What is God's covenant with mankind today? How can we be in covenant relationship with God?

Does Satan still attempt to incite rebellion against God on the earth today?

When will Satan's work be stopped, once and for all?

Close in prayer with your students. Encourage them to be students of God's Word, so that they can defend their faith and share it with others.

God's Plan for the Ages: Part 1

Volume 11

Lesson 17



Ephesians 3:9-12

Matthew 26:28

Isaiah 14:12-14

Genesis 1:1, 27; 2:7, 17; 3:1-6, 15, 21

Romans 3:23; 6:23

Hebrews 9:22



Theme

God created the universe with an eternal purpose.



Ephesians 3:9-12

- 9 "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:
- 10 "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,
- 11 "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:
- 12 "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him."



Memory Verse

Matthew 26:28

For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.



Outline

I. In the Beginning, God Created the Heavens and the Earth.

- A. God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit was present in the beginning.
- B. The purpose of God's creation was the establishment of a relationship with man, and a plan of redemption for man.

II. God Created Man to Fulfill His Eternal Purpose.

- A. Man was made by God.
 - 1. Man had a beginning.
 - 2. Man is not co-eternal with God.
- B. Man was made of the dust of the earth.
 - 1. God formed him. He did not evolve.
 - 2. He was made in the image of God.

- C. God breathed life into the body of man.
- D. Man was given dominion over the earth.
 - 1. Man had authority over everything on the earth.
 - 2. Man's only restriction was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

III. Sin Begins with the Statement, 3I Will.

- A. Lucifer said in his heart, 3I will.
- B. Adam said in his heart, 3I will.

IV. Man Became Unrighteous through Disobedience.

- A. Man was created in innocence.
- B. Man chose to disobey God.
- C. Man's sin separated him from God.
- D. Man cannot atone for his sin by his works.
- E. A plan of redemption was needed to save man from eternal death and separation from God.

V. God Promised to Send a Redeemer.

- A. The Redeemer would be of the seed of the woman.
- B. The shedding of innocent blood would be required to atone for sin.

VI. The Pattern of Redemption Was Established by God.

- A. Disobedience leads to sin.
- B. The wages of sin is death.
- C. Innocent blood is required to atone for sin and restore fellowship with God.



Spiritual Truths

God created the heavens and the earth.

Nothing came into existence that was not created by Him.

God created with an eternal purpose.

God's purpose was the establishment of a plan of redemption through Jesus Christ.

The eternal purpose of God is clearly seen throughout His Word, in a pattern of sin, death, and resurrection.

The innocent blood shed by Jesus Christ fulfilled God's redemptive plan for man.



Lesson Material

Genesis 1:1 says, In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.

The first verse of the Bible dispels all doubt as to the origin of the universe in which we live. The triune God was there. The triune God created it all. The triune God did not create it in vain; He had a purpose in mind. (Ephesians 3:9-11)

Nothing takes God by surprise, because He is omniscient and omnipotent. God foresaw the effect sin would have on His creation. God also foresaw the need for a Redeemer. In His creation, He provided the means for a Redeemer and a plan whereby redemption could be achieved.

Genesis 1:26-27 says, 3And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth on the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Genesis 2:7 says. 3And 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.

God created man to fulfill his eternal purpose. He was made by God. He had a beginning, like all of God's creation. Man is not co-eternal with God. God alone is eternal. Neither did man evolve. His creation deliberate and complete. No evolution was necessary. No evolution is implied. God simply granted life to the figure of dust, by breathing into man's nostrils the breath of life. The result was a being made in the image of God, comprised of body, soul, and spirit.

Man was given dominion over all of the earth. It was his to take care of. It was his to enjoy. His only restriction was the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Of that fruit, he was not to eat. (Genesis 2:17)

Isaiah 14:12-14 says, $\ni How$ art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 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.

Sin begins with the statement, \Im I will. Lucifer said in his heart, \Im I will, five times, in rebellion against God. Similarly, the sin of Adam was no different. Adam believed the crafty serpent and said in his heart, \Im I will be as God. (Genesis 3:1-6)

Genesis 3:7 says, \ni And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Adam and Eve were created in innocence, but they became unrighteous through disobedience. Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, as every man has done. (Romans 3:23) Their sin caused them to be separated from God. They tried to cover their shame by their own works, but God rejected the attempt. As God promised, death would be the consequence for disobedience. (Genesis 2:17) A divine plan of redemption was needed, which God would soon establish.

In Genesis 3:21, we read, JUnto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them. To make the coats of skin, innocent blood was shed. In this act, God set forth a precedent by which sin would be covered (atoned

for). A blood sacrifice would be necessary. The works of man would never be sufficient to atone for sin. Only God could provide such a plan of redemption. Only innocent blood could cover the sin.

Disobedience to God constitutes sin. The wages of sin is death and separation from God. Innocent blood is required to atone for sin and restore fellowship with Him. (Hebrews 9:22) This is the pattern established by God in the book of Genesis. This is the pattern perpetuated throughout the scriptures. This is the pattern by which we live today. This is the pattern which demonstrates our need for a Savior.

God promised to send a Redeemer, Who would atone for the sin of the world. (Genesis 3:15; Numbers 24:17; Isaiah 9:7; Micah 5:2; Daniel 9:25; Isaiah 7:14; Zechariah 9:9; Isaiah 53) As set forth typically in the coverings of skin, the shed blood of the Redeemer, provided by God, would be the method by which the sin of the world would be atoned for. (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:22)

Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, would become that Redeemer. Some four thousand years after the creation of Adam, Jesus Christ died on the cross. His innocent blood was shed, that we might have the forgiveness of sin and inherit eternal life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23)



Methods

Any discussion of God's plan for the ages must be based on His eternal purpose -- salvation. An understanding of the scriptures based on any other purpose will soon become confusion, because every

page of scripture points to the redemptive plan of God, fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Emphasize the pattern set forth in the book of Genesis. Most students have never realized the importance of the covering that God made out of the animal skins, especially as it relates to Jesus Christ. Take time to develop this point well.

God's Plan for the Ages: Part 2

Volume 11

Lesson 18



Matthew 26:28

Romans 3:23; 6:23

Ephesians 1:7; 3:9-11

Hebrews 9:22

Revelation 6-19; 20:7-10; 21:1



Theme

God created the universe with an eternal purpose.



Ephesians 3:9-12

- 9 "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ,
- 10 "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,
- 11 "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:
- 12 "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him."



Matthew 26:28

"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."



Outline

- I. The Pattern of God's Plan of Redemption Has Remained Unchanged Throughout History.
- A. Disobedience leads to sin.
- B. The wages of sin is death and separation from God.
- C. Innocent blood is required to atone for sin and to restore fellowship with God.
- II. The Pattern Was Perpetuated from Adam to the Flood of Noah.
- A. Through the children of Adam and Eve, the earth was populated.
- B. The people of the earth became increasingly wicked.

- C. The wrath of God fell upon the earth, in the form of a flood.
- D. A new beginning was established through the family of Noah.

III. The Pattern Continued from Noah to Abraham.

- A. Through the children of Noah, the earth was re-populated.
- B. The people of the earth became increasingly wicked.
- C. The wrath of God fell upon the earth at Babel.
- D. A new beginning was wrought from among the scattered nations.

IV. The Pattern Continued from Abraham to Nebuchadnezzar.

- A. Through the promised seed of Abraham, God's chosen people began to multiply on the earth.
- B. The chosen ones of Israel rejected the authority of God.
- C. The wrath of God culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity.
- D. A new beginning was established in Jerusalem, with the rebuilding of the temple and the city.

V. The Pattern Continued unto the Time of Jesus Christ.

- A. A remnant returned from captivity to Jerusalem, to re-establish the nation of Israel.
- B. Many became enmeshed in the culture and external religion, and were not prepared for the coming Messiah.
- C. Because of their unbelief, Jesus Christ was crucified by His own people.
- D. The resurrection of Jesus Christ established a new beginning for all who would believe on Him.

VI. The Pattern Is with Us Today.

- A. Disobedience produces sin, which results in death and separation from God.
- B. The earth is becoming an increasingly evil place.
- C. The wrath of God will fall during the tribulation period, followed by a period of restoration during the Millennium.
- D. The shed blood of Jesus Christ functions as an atonement for sin, making eternal life available to all who believe on Him.

VII. The Pattern Will Repeat Itself One Final Time, at the Close of the Millennium.

- A. The earth will be populated by those who have lived under the sovereign rule of Jesus Christ.
- B. A great multitude will follow Satan in a final act of rebellion.

- C. The wrath of God will dispel the rebellion and end the reign of Satan forever. Death and hell will be no more.
- D. A new heaven and a new earth will be established, over which God will reign forever with His creation.



Spiritual Truths

- God created the heavens and the earth.
- Nothing came into existence that was not created by Him.
- God created with an eternal purpose.
- God's purpose was the establishment of a plan of redemption through Jesus Christ.
- The eternal purpose of God is clearly seen throughout His Word in a pattern of sin, death, and resurrection.
- The innocent blood shed by Jesus Christ fulfilled God's redemptive plan for man.
- Jesus Christ was the final Sacrifice.
- The pattern of sin, death, and restoration will end.



Lesson Material

Romans 6:23 states: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

Disobedience to God constitutes sin. The wages of sin is death and separation from God. Innocent blood is required to atone for sin and restore fellowship with Him. (Hebrews 9:22) This is the pattern established by God in the book of Genesis. This is the pattern perpetuated throughout the scriptures. This is the pattern by which we live today. This is the pattern which demonstrates our need for a Savior.

The pattern that began in Genesis continued unto the time of Noah. Sin resulted in death. A blood sacrifice was required to atone for the sin. The children of Adam and Eve populated the earth. In the 1600 years between Adam and Noah, their descendants also became increasingly wicked. (Genesis 6:5) Only Noah found favor in the sight of the Lord. (Genesis 6:8) God's wrath fell upon the earth in the form of a universal flood, destroying every living thing. (Genesis 7) Noah and the other seven members of his family emerged from the ark alone on the earth. A new beginning for mankind was established from this remnant.

The pattern continued between Noah and Abraham. Through the children of Noah, the earth was re-populated. As it happened before the flood, the people of the earth became increasingly wicked. The wrath of God fell upon them at Babel, as God confounded their language and scattered them across the face of the earth. (Genesis 11:1-9) A new beginning was

established from among the remnant who feared God, who also then became the ancestors of Abraham.

Once again, the pattern continued from Abraham to Nebuchadnezzar. Through the promised seed of Abraham, God's chosen people, Israel, began to multiply on the earth. But even God's chosen ones rejected His authority and put their faith in idols. The wrath of God fell upon Israel. Their wickedness culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity. Following the exile, a remnant returned to Jerusalem to begin to rebuild the city and the temple.

The pattern subsequently continued unto the time of Jesus. The remnant that returned to Jerusalem became enmeshed in contemporary culture. External religious practices superseded the faith of many. The Jewish people, as a whole, were unprepared for the coming Messiah. Because of their unbelief, Jesus Christ was crucified by His chosen people. Only a remnant believed that He was the promised Redeemer. The resurrection of Jesus Christ established a new beginning for all who would believe on Him; and it represented the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose. His shed blood atoned for the sin of the world. He was the final Sacrifice.

Ephesians 1:7 says, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

The pattern that began in Genesis is still with us today. Disobedience and unbelief produce sin, which results in death and separation from God. The shed blood of Jesus Christ now functions as an atonement for sin, making restoration with God and eternal life available to all.

As it was in the days of Noah, so it is today — the people of the earth are becoming increasingly evil. In perpetuation of the pattern, the wrath of God will fall on the earth during the tribulation period. (Revelation 6 to 19) Only a remnant will be spared. This period of judgment will be followed by a period of restoration — the Millennium — during which Jesus Christ will be the sovereign Ruler.

The pattern will repeat itself one final time, at the close of the Millennium. The earth will be populated by those who have lived under the rule of Jesus Christ, in a perfect environment. Even so, a great multitude will follow Satan in a final act of rebellion. (Revelation 20:7-9) The wrath of God will dispel the rebellion, putting an end to the reign of Satan. (Revelation 20:10) Death and hell will be thrown into the lake of fire, never again to emerge. A new heaven and a new earth will be established, over which God will reign forever with His creation. The pattern will then have come to an end.

Revelation 21:1, 4 says, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall

there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."



Methods

Use the familiar stories of Noah and the tower of Babel to illustrate the pattern of sin, destruction (death), and restoration (resurrection). Emphasize how the events recorded in the Old Testament point to the coming of Jesus Christ and illustrate God's plan for the ages.

Use some of your students to portray the various Bible characters that illustrate the pattern, such as Adam and Eve, Noah, Nimrod, Abraham, Nebuchadnezzar, Jesus, Satan, etc. Redemption is what the Bible is all about.

Instruct the students to begin to read the Bible with God's redemptive plan in mind. It will change the way in which they interpret the Bible stories that they have heard, adding deeper meaning to each of them. Use other familiar stories (e.g., Sodom and Gomorrah), if you feel that further emphasis is needed.

In the Twinkling of an Eye

Volume 11

Lesson 19



Colossians 3:1-4

James 5:7

1 John 2:28; 3:2-3



Theme

The Rapture of the church.



Scripture Reading

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

13 "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them

which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14 "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15 "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the 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."

1 Corinthians 15:51-58

51 "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 "In the moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

- 53 "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.
- 54 "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.
- 55 "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?
- 56 "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.
- 57 "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 58 "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."



1 John 3:2-3

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."



Outline

I. The Rapture Is a Mystery of the Church.

- A. It was not foreseen by the Old Testament prophets.
 - 1. They saw His second coming in the clouds (Daniel 7:13); but, they did not see His meeting the living saints in the clouds. (1 Thessalonians 4:17)
 - 2. The Old Testament prophets did not foresee the New Testament church; and so, they certainly did not see the Rapture of the church.
- B. It was apparently revealed to Paul by special revelation (1 Thessalonians 4:15), although Jesus alluded to it Himself. (Luke 21:36; John 14:1-3)

II. What Will Happen at the Rapture?

- A. "Rapture" means to be "taken forcefully or quickly; to be caught up." The Rapture will happen in a "twinkling" of time.
 - 1. The trumpet will sound. (1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 15:52)
 - 2. The bodies of the dead in Christ will rise out of the grave.
 - a. The souls and spirits of those who have died in Christ will come with Christ from heaven. (1 Thessalonians 4:14; John 5:28-29)

- b. They will be reunited with their earthly bodies.
- 3. The saints who are living will be "caught up" in the clouds and meet the Lord in the air. They will also meet the dead in Christ, who have come with Christ from heaven to receive their resurrected bodies.
- B. The living saints, who are changed or translated, will receive their resurrected bodies. (1 Corinthians 15:52-55)
 - 1. At the Rapture, we will receive our new bodies. (verse 52)
 - 2. Our new bodies will be incorruptible. They will never decay or wear out. (verses 53-54)
 - 3. Our new bodies will be immortal. They will never die. (verses 53-54)
 - 4. Death will be no more. (verses 54-55)
- C. When we meet the Lord in the air, we will be with one another and the Lord forever.

III. Who Is Going to Be Taken in the Rapture?

- A. Those who are caught up with Jesus in the clouds will be the ones who trust Him. (John 14:3)
- B. Those who are raptured will be believers "in Christ." (1 Thessalonians 4:13, 16-17)

IV. What Should Be Our Attitude Toward the Lord's Return?

- A. We are to comfort one another with the hope of the Rapture. (1 Thessalonians 4:18)
- B. We are to stand strong and not be shaken in our work for the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:58)
- C. We must remember that we will be rewarded for our faithfulness to Him. (1 Corinthians 15:58)
- D. We are not to sorrow, as those without hope, when our loved ones die in the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:13)
- E. We should purify ourselves and live holy lives. (1 John 3:2-3)
- F. We should set our affections on eternal things, and not on earthly things. (Colossians 3:1-4)
- G. We are to abide in Him, so that we will be confident and not be ashamed at His coming. (1 John 2:28)
- H. We should be clear-minded and prayerful. (1 Peter 4:7)
- I. We should be looking for His return. (Titus 2:13)
- J. We are to be patient. (James 5:7)

V. When Will the Rapture Take Place?

- A. The time or the hour is not known. The trumpet may sound any minute.
- B. Most Bible scholars believe the Rapture will take place before the Second Coming; therefore, when the signs of

the Second Coming are beginning to take place, then it is apparent that the Rapture is very near.

C. The Lord is coming quickly! (Revelation 22:7, 12, 20)



Spiritual Truths

- The Rapture is when believers in Christ will be resurrected to be with the Lord.
- The Rapture will take place in the "twinkling of an eye."
- The Rapture of the church is not the same as the Second Coming. There are no signs that need to be fulfilled for the Rapture to take place; therefore, it could happen at any moment.
- With the Rapture in mind, we should live holy, prayerful, and faithful lives.



Lesson Material

In 1 Corinthians 15:51-58 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, we have the two clearest scripture passages on the doctrine of the Rapture. The Bible teaches that not everyone will die a natural death. There will be those who will be changed in a "twinkling of an eye" and caught up in the

clouds to be with the Lord forever. This is one of the great mysteries of the church.

The Bible teaches that the Rapture and the Second Coming of Christ are not the same event.

Jesus said that there would be many obvious and dreadful signs that would precede His Second Coming. (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21) Yet, Paul spoke throughout his ministry as if the Lord could come at any time. Indeed, Paul fully expected the Lord to come in his lifetime. (Romans 13:11; 1 Corinthians 7:29, 31; 10:11; Philippians 3:20-21) It is interesting that in the two clearest scripture passages concerning the Rapture, 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 and 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, Paul uses the plural pronoun, "we," thus indicating that he himself planned to be a participant in the event, and that he sincerely believed that it would happen in his lifetime.

And Paul's admonition for the Thessalonians to comfort themselves with the Rapture in mind, or for the Corinthians to be steadfast and abounding in the work of the Lord, would have had no value, if he did not expect the Rapture to be imminent.

Jesus said that His Second Coming would be preceded by persecutions (Matthew 24:9), famines (Matthew 24:7), and terrors. (Matthew 24:16-21) Paul gives no such signs that must be fulfilled in his Epistles to the Thessalonian and Corinthian churches. And it is doubtful if Paul's teachings on Christ's return would be the "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13) of the church, if the saints must suffer tribulation and martyrdom and not be alive to see Jesus' return.

Paul is not contradicting the teachings of the Lord. Paul is distinguishing the Rapture as a separate event from the Second Coming. At the Rapture, Christ does not physically come to earth to set up His kingdom, as He will do at the Second Coming. Christ is coming in the air (atmosphere) to take His own to be with Him forever. (John 14:1-3)

There are no prophecies that must be fulfilled for the Rapture to take place. It could happen at any moment. This has been the expectancy of all Christians throughout the church age.

In light of the imminent return of the Lord for His own, Paul and other biblical writers encourage the church to be ready. We should not be like those who fall into laziness and sleep, but we should be diligent and alert. (1 Thessalonians 5:6-9) The thought of Jesus' return is a blessed hope (Titus 2:13); and it should fill us with joy. It is also a purifying hope (1 John 3:2-3); and it should fill us with the desire to live a holy life. And it is a comforting hope (1 Thessalonians 4:18); and it should fill us with inner peace. Jesus is coming soon!



Methods

The teacher should challenge the teenagers to examine their lives. Would they be confident and unashamed, if the Lord would return? What areas of their lives do they need to improve? A time of prayer or an altar call may be conducive to this lesson.

Ask the students at the beginning of class what they know already about the Rapture.

Discuss current world events with the teenagers, so that they can see the signs of Christ's Second Coming being fulfilled; and then, ask them what this means in light of the Rapture. (Since the Rapture comes before the Second Coming, then it means that the Rapture is soon!)

The Great Tribulation

Volume 11

Lesson 20



Daniel 9:24-27; 11:40-45; 12:1

Matthew 24

Revelation 6; 8-9; 16



Theme

The Tribulation and the Great Tribulation.



Matthew 24:21-22

- 21 "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.
- 22 "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."



1 Thessalonians 5:9

"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."



Outline

- I. Before the Second Coming of Christ, the Bible Teaches that a Time of Grievous Trouble Is Coming to the World. In Scripture, It Is Called the "Tribulation," or "Jacob's Trouble." (Jeremiah 30:7)
- A. Daniel prophesies that it will be the worst trouble since the history of nations. (Daniel 12:1)
- B. Jesus says that it will be the worst tribulation in the history of the world. No period in history ever has or ever will equal it in suffering and in terror. (Matthew 24:21)
- C. Jesus says that unless the tribulation days are shortened by His return, all human life will be destroyed.

II. When Will the Tribulation Come Upon the World?

- A. God's Word does not give specific dates for the beginning of the Tribulation.
- B. God's Word does give us specific signs that are keys to the beginning of the Tribulation.
 - 1. The behavior of human beings will be characterized by selfishness and wickedness. (2 Timothy 3:1-5)
 - 2. Jesus said that there would be various signs: wars and rumors of wars, famines, pestilence,

- earthquakes, and false prophets and Christs. (Matthew 24:5-7)
- a. Jesus said, "...all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." (verse 6)
- b. However, when these signs begin to increase in frequency and intensity, we can know that the end is near. "All these are the beginning of sorrows." (verse 8)
- 3. When Israel is re-established as a nation, we know that the end is near. (Jeremiah 31:1-9; Matthew 24:32-33)
 - a. Israel became a nation again, in 1948.
 - b. The fig tree is symbolic of Israel, and Jesus said that when the fig tree "putteth forth leaves...know that it is near, even at the doors." (Matthew 24:32-33)
- 4. One of the most amazing signs is Daniel's seventy weeks. (Daniel 9:24-27)
 - a. It is a predicted time period of "seventy weeks" (verse 24), or 490 years.
 - b. These prophetic seventy weeks are divided into three periods.
 - (1) The first division of weeks is seven weeks of years (49 years) that begin with the decree to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity. (verse 25) It took 49 years to rebuild the city.
 - (2) The second division of weeks is "three score and two" or 62 weeks of years (434 years). This time period is from the time of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem until the Messiah is "cut off." (verse 26)

- (3) The third division is the last week of seven years. This is the Tribulation period, when God will once again deal with the Jewish nation.
 - (a) After the Messiah is "cut off," an indefinite amount of time elapses until the last week begins.
 - (b) This last week is the seventieth week. It is also called Daniel's seventieth week. It is the Tribulation.
- c. The prophecy specifically says in verses 26-27 that the "prince that shall come" (the Antichrist) will negotiate a seven-year covenant or agreement with Israel.
 - (1) The signing of this contract signifies the beginning of the Tribulation.
 - (2) Halfway through the agreement (after three and one-half years), the Antichrist breaks the agreement with Israel, and the Great Tribulation begins.
- d. From Daniel's seventy weeks, we know that the Tribulation will not begin until Israel signs a pact with the Antichrist -- the ruler of the Ten Nation confederacy.

III. What Will Happen During the Tribulation?

- A. The seven-year tribulation period will begin with the signing of a peace pact between the Antichrist and Israel.
- B The Tribulation is divided into two parts of three and one-half years. The

- second half is called the Great Tribulation.
- C. It is believed by many Bible scholars that Russia will make an attempt to control the Middle-East at the beginning of this last half of the seven years.
 - 1. Russia will march against Israel, and will be supernaturally destroyed. (Ezekiel 38; 39)
 - 2. Many believe that this battle will take place near the middle of the Tribulation; and, after Russia's defeat, the Antichrist will break his agreement with Israel and declare world dominance.
 - 3. This battle is not the Battle of Armageddon, but it is a battle that takes place some time during the Tribulation period.
- D. Great ecological nightmares, demonic evil, human cruelty and death will take place. These are judgments of God poured out on an unbelieving world and represented by seven seals, seven trumpets and seven bowls.
 - 1. The seven seals. (Revelation 6:1-14; 8:1-2)
 - a. First seal: The Antichrist is revealed and sets up his satanic government. (6:-2)
 - b. Second seal: The red horse represents war upon the earth. (6:3-4)
 - c. Third seal: A black horse represents judgment and famine upon the earth. (6:5-6)
 - d. Fourth seal: A pale horse represents death by war, famine, and wild beasts. One-fourth of the world's people are killed. (6:7-8)

- e. Fifth seal: The martyred saints represent a terrible persecution of those who put their faith in God. (6:9-11)
- f. Sixth seal: This represents a great ecological catastrophe. A great earthquake shakes mountains and islands, and the star in heaven fall. (6:12-14)
- g. Seventh seal: It begins with thirty minutes of silence; and then, it introduces the seven trumpets. (8:1-2)
- 2. The seven trumpets. The angels will blow seven trumpets, and great catastrophes will happen upon the earth. The first four trumpets are ecological disasters. (Revelation 8:6-12) The fifth and sixth trumpets release demonic activity on the earth. (Revelation 9) The seventh trumpet announces the sooncoming kingdom of the Lord. (Revelation 11:15-19)
 - a. First trumpet: Hail and fire is cast upon the earth, and one third of the earth's trees are burned up along with all of the green grass. (8:6-7)
 - b. Second trumpet: A burning mountain is cast into the sea, and a third of the oceans turn to blood, killing one-third of all creatures in the sea, and destroying one-third of all of the ships. (8:8-9)
 - c. Third trumpet: A great star called Wormwood ("Bitterness") falls from heaven. One-third of the rivers and fresh waters of the earth turn bitter; and this bitterness kills many people. (8:10-11)
 - d. Fourth trumpet: One-third of the sun, moon, and stars are struck (by what, we are not told); and

- one-third of the sun, moon, and stars go dark. Also, one-third of the day and night turn dark. (8:12)
- e. Fifth trumpet: A star (representing an angel) falls from heaven and open the Abyss, a prison in Hell that holds fallen angels and demons. Demonic beings in the appearance of locusts are released to sting men and cause such suffering that men want to die. (9:1-12)
- f. Sixth trumpet: Four fallen angels are released from the Euphrates river; and they lead an army of 200,000,000 to kill one-third of mankind. (9:13-21)
- g. Seventh trumpet: The announcement that the kingdom of the Lord is about to be established. (11:15-19)
- 3. The seven vials. The angels pour out seven vials upon the earth. (Revelation 16) More death and destruction fill the earth, and culminate with an earthquake that shakes the planet.
 - a. First vial: Painful sores break out on everyone who has the mark of the beast. (verse 2)
 - b. Second vial: The sea turns to blood, and everything in it dies. (verse 3)
 - c. Third vial: The rivers and fresh waters turn to blood. (verse 4)
 - d. Fourth vial: The sun emits searing heat, which scorches men. (verses 8-9)
 - e. Fifth vial: The kingdom of the beast becomes full of darkness, and his subjects are in pain because of it. (verses 10-11)
 - f. Sixth vial: The water of the Euphrates river dries up; and

- unclean spirits go forth to draw the kings of the earth to the great battle of Armageddon. (verses 12-14)
- g. Seventh vial: Thunder and lightning from heaven and a great earthquake that levels mountains, eliminates islands, destroys cities around the world, and causes great hailstones of up to one hundred pounds to fall upon men. (verses 17-21)
- E. The Tribulation will end with the Battle of Armageddon.
 - 1. Armageddon is a small mountain located near the Mediterranean Sea and overlooking the valley of Megiddo. The valley of Megiddo will be the sight of the greatest battle in human history.
 - 2. The armies of the world converge to destroy the nation of Israel and to fight it out among themselves for world dominion.
 - 3. During the last days of the Great Tribulation, nations will revolt against the Antichrist; and they will assemble in Megiddo for the last battle.
 - a. At the time of the end, a king of the south and a king of the north will oppose the Antichrist's rule. (Daniel 11:40)
 - b. Apparently, at the beginning of this war, the Antichrist will have preliminary victories (Daniel 11:40-41); and he will gain victory over Egypt and surrounding African nations. (Daniel 11:42)
 - c. As he is conquering, reports of an army from the east will alarm him. A king of the east will oppose him. (Daniel 11:44)

- 4. Inspired by demon power, the armies of the world gather for the "...battle of that great day of God Almighty." (Revelation 16:14)
- 5. The armies are brought against each other by the powers of Satan, in an effort to oppose the Second Coming of Christ. It is the final revolt, in this present age, between God and the nations of the earth.
- IV. Jesus Predicted that if He Would Not Return, the World Would Be Destroyed. (Matthew 24:21-22)
- A. The Second Coming will happen during the Battle of Armageddon.
- B. The Lord will return to save the world from complete annihilation.
- C. The Lord will defeat the Antichrist with the breath of His mouth and the splendor of His coming. (2 Thessalonians 2:8)



Spiritual Truths

- God will pour out His wrath on an unbelieving and wicked world during the Tribulation.
- The Bible gives many indications that the church will not have to endure the Tribulation. It is the time of God's dealing with the nation of Israel. The Rapture of the saints will occur before the Tribulation.

- Although we do not know the exact time of Jesus' Second Coming, we are given specific signs that will indicate when we can expect His return.
- The Battle of Armageddon will be when Jesus returns; and He will destroy the Antichrist with the breath of His mouth.
- God is long-suffering and not willing that anyone should perish; but God is also just, and He will someday judge evil with His wrath.



Lesson Material

The book of Revelation is the greatest prophetic book in the Bible. The book promises that whoever reads its content will be blessed. (Revelation 1:3) The awesome and magnificent power of God is displayed within its pages. It foretells the great events that will take place to fulfill human history; and it reveals the new heaven and new earth, which God will create when He closes the ages of human history.

Revelation also reveals the final days of man, before the Lord returns to set up His kingdom. It describes a period of unparalleled destruction and horror known as the Tribulation. This seven-year period of time is when God lifts His protective hand from the earth and allows sin and evil to flourish unchecked. War, famine, ecological disasters, human cruelty and death are the result. God pours out His wrath on an unbelieving, Christ-rejecting world. (Revelation 6:15-17)

The Tribulation begins when the Antichrist makes a peace pact with the nation of Israel. This is the start of Daniel's seventieth week, when God deals with the Jewish nation again. God's purpose in the Tribulation is not only to purify the earth of its wickedness, but also to purify Israel and fulfill His promises to the Jews. (Zechariah 13; Romans 11:25-29) God is getting Israel and the nations of the world ready for the return of the King.

The wrath of God that occurs in the Tribulation is divided into three sets of seven judgments. These judgments are the seven seals (Revelation 6:1-7:2); the seven trumpets (Revelation 8:1-9:21); and the seven vials. (Revelation 16) There are a total of twenty-one judgments that fall upon the earth within the seven-year tribulation period; and the majority of these judgments come during the last three and one-half years, which is called the "Great Tribulation." (Matthew 24:21)

The seven seals reveal the infamous "four horsemen." Evil is unleashed upon the earth; and war, famine, ecological disaster, and death are the result.

As the judgments progress, they also intensify. The seven trumpets are more terrifying than the seven seals. One-third of the world's vegetation is destroyed. One-third of the world's marine life is destroyed. One-third of the world's drinking water is destroyed. Demons of unparalleled magnitude are released upon the earth to torture men. The pain is so excruciating that men desire to die. Other demon power is released to destroy one-third of mankind.

The seven vials continue the unmitigated destruction of the earth. Everything in the oceans dies. Men are racked with disease, scorched by the sun,

and plunged into darkness Yet, they will not repent and turn to God. (Revelation 16:11) The worst earthquake in history shakes the world and topples mountains, islands, and cities. The nations of the world are demonically gathered to Armageddon for the final conflict.

The book of Revelation makes it clear that Jesus' Second Coming will be at the Battle of Armageddon. Jesus said that if He would not return, then mankind would be destroyed. (Matthew 24:22) Many Bible scholars believe that a large portion of the judgments of God may be the natural consequences of man's evil and his disregard of humanity. In other words, God allows the sin and evil of man to take its course, which results in many of the judgments. They are the outcome of man's own doing. It is believed that nuclear war, even in a limited exchange, could produce the mass destruction depicted in many of the judgments.

Who will go through the Tribulation? Most Bible scholars believe that Christians, members of the true church (those who have sincerely asked Christ to be their Savior), will be raptured out of the "wrath to come." (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9) In Revelation 3:10, it says that those who keep God's Word will be kept from the "evil hour." There are numerous indicators in the Bible that the church will not go through the Tribulation. God is judging the nations and Israel; He is not judging the church. The judgment of the church is at Calvary for sin and at the Judgment Seat of Christ for works. After Revelation chapter three, there is no more mention of the church on earth. This is because most Bible scholars believe that the saints are raptured into the presence of the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1

Corinthians 15:51-58) It is those who do not know Christ, who will have to experience the terror of the wrath of God.

Now is the time to respond to the Lord's mercy, grace and calling. This is the time of God's forgiveness and grace. There is coming a time, in which His grace will turn to judgment, and His mercy will turn to wrath. His delay of the Tribulation is only so that men will seek Him and repent. (2 Peter 3:9) Today, if we hear His voice, let us not harden our hearts. "...Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Corinthians 6:2)



Methods

The teacher may want to use a blackboard to draw a time line, in order to show the events of the Tribulation.

Divide the class into three groups; and have each group research one of the three sets of judgments. After the groups have had time to study the judgments, then have them report their findings to the rest of the class.

Discuss with the class how it could be possible for some of the judgments to be the result of man's unchecked sin and wickedness.

This is a good lesson for a call to salvation and/or rededication. The teacher must follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The Antichrist

Volume 11

Lesson 21



Daniel 7; 9:24-27; 11:40-45

Matthew 24:15-21

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

1 John 2:18, 22

Revelation 13



Theme

The Antichrist.



Revelation 13:1-10

1 "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea,

having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

- 2 "And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.
- 3 "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.
- 4 "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?
- 5 "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.
- 6 "And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.
- 7 "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.
- 8 "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not

written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

9 "If any man have an ear, let him hear.

10 "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. He is the patience and the faith of the saints."



2 Thessalonians 2:8

"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."



Outline

I. The Spirit of Antichrist Is Already In the World. (1 John 4:3)

- A. The spirit of Antichrist is any spirit that denies that Jesus is come in the flesh. (1 John 4:3; 2 John 7)
- B. The spirit of Antichrist is anyone who denies that Jesus is the Christ. (1 John 2:22)

- C. The apostle John says that there are many antichrists. (1 John 2:18)
 - 1. In other words, there are many, already in the world, who have the spirit of the Antichrist. They deny that Jesus is the Christ. (1 John 2:22) They are deceivers. (2 John 7)
 - 2. They are copies of the real Antichrist. If there are copies, then there must be an original. (1 John 2:18)

II. What Are the Various Titles of the Antichrist?

- A. The antichrist.(1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3)
- B. The beast. (Daniel 7:11; Revelation 13:1; 19:19)
- C. The man of sin. (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
- D. The son of perdition. (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
- E. The Wicked. (2 Thessalonians 2:8)
- F. The prince. (Daniel 9:26)
- G. The spoiler. (Isaiah 16:4)
- H. The extortioner. (Isaiah 16:4)
- I. The king of Babylon. (Isaiah 14:4)
- J. The Assyrian. (Isaiah 10:24; 30:31)

III. When Will the Antichrist Be Revealed?

- A. A ten-nation confederacy will rise to world power. (Daniel 7:24; Revelation 13:1; 17:12)
 - 1. The ten-nation confederacy will arise out of the old Roman empire.
 - a. Economic power will shift from other areas of the world, such as the United State and Japan, to Europe and the Middle East.
 - b. European industry and Middle East oil may be the catalyst for the shift of economic power.
 - c. The actual nations involved in the confederacy are not known.
 - It is possible that the ten nations may be made up of surrounding Mediterranean nations from Europe, Africa and the Middle East – all of which were a part of the old Roman Empire.
- B. The Antichrist will rise to power from one of the nations in the ten-nation confederacy.
 - 1. He will conquer three nations of the original ten, and then take control over the entire confederacy. (Daniel 7:8, 20, 24)
 - 2. The ten nations will give their power and strength to Antichrist. (Revelation 17:13)
 - a. The ten nations will keep their national sovereignty, but together, they will be as one. (Revelation 17:13)
 - b. The Antichrist will rule over the ten nations, as if they were one nation. (Revelation 17:13)
- C. The Antichrist will not come on the world scene, until the ten-nation confederacy comes into existence.

When this happens, it still may take a while, before the Antichrist rises to power.

- 1. He must rise to power within the confederacy. (Daniel 7:8)
- 2. He must subdue three of the ten nations. (Daniel 7:8, 20, 24)

IV. What Are the Characteristics and Attainments of the Antichrist?

- A. He will be a world conqueror. (Daniel 7:8, 20; Revelation 6:1-2)
- B. He will be empowered by Satan.
 - 1. It is Satan who establishes his rise to power, authority, and position of world leadership. (Daniel 8:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10; Revelation 13:2, 4)
 - 2. He will also establish his rule by great intelligence (Daniel 8:23), great deceit (Daniel 8:25), and great vanity. (Daniel 8:25) These traits are all qualities of Satan.
- C. For a short time, he will have control of the world. (Daniel 7:23; Revelation 13:7)
 - 1. For the first three and one-half years of the Tribulation, he will masquerade as a world peacemaker and savior. He will solve the volatile Middle East tension with a seven-year peace pact with Israel. (Daniel 9:27)
 - a. This pact with Israel will signify the beginning of the Tribulation.
 - b. The Jews will consider him to be their Messiah.
 - c. He will not have complete, world control during this first

- three and one-half years, but he will be maneuvering for world domination.
- 2. During the last three-and-a-half years of the Tribulation, he will have complete power and world dominance. (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:7)
 - a. He will break his agreement with Israel halfway through the seven-year pact. (Daniel 9:27)
 - b. He will seek to destroy the Jews. They will realize their mistake in accepting him as their Messiah, and they will flee from his wrath. (Matthew 24:15-21)
 - c. He will use his power to crush and oppress all who oppose him. (Daniel 7:23; Revelation 13:7)
 - d. He will persecute and prevail against the saints. (Daniel 7:21, 25; Revelation 13:7)
 - e. Satan's Antichrist will have three and one-half years (fortytwo months) of dominance as world dictator. (Daniel 12:11; Revelation 13:5)
- D. He will desecrate the temple and proclaim himself to be God.
 - 1. He will speak blasphemy against God Almighty, and declare that he is God. (Daniel 7:25; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 13:5-6, 8)
 - 2. This is the abomination of desolation that is frequently spoken of in prophecy. (Daniel 9:27; 11:41, 45; 12:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 11:2)
 - a. This marks the midway point of the Tribulation and the beginning of the Great Tribulation, when the Antichrist has absolute power.

- b. He will take over Jerusalem, set up his rule in the Holy City, and proclaim himself to be God.
- 3. He will change times and make his own laws. (Daniel 7:25)
- E. He will have the political, economic, and religious control of the world.
 - 1. He will rule over the ten-nation confederacy, which will control the world politically.
 - 2. He will have great economic power, and he will control world trade. (Revelation 13:16-17)
 - a. He will make everyone receive a mark. No one will be able to buy or sell without his mark.
 - b. Computer technology makes this totally possible.
 - 3. He will have great religious power.
 - a. He will blaspheme God and set himself against God's laws. (Daniel 7:25; 11:36; Revelation 13:5)
 - b. He will destroy a puppet religious system that he has tolerated during his rise to power. (Revelation 17)
 - c. He will proclaim to be God. (2 Thessalonians 2:4)
 - d. He will be worshipped as God. (Revelation 13:4, 15)
- F. He will reign until Jesus returns to the earth to destroy him.
 - 1. Antichrist will be destroyed by Christ at His coming. (2 Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 19:11-21)
 - 2. If the Lord would not have returned, then the Antichrist would have destroyed the entire human race.

Lesson 21 The Antichrist

V. What Will Happen to the Antichrist?

- A. At the end of his reign, he will wage war against the nations of the world that rebel against him. He and his armies will gather against the armies of the world that oppose him at the place of final conflict -- Armageddon.
- B. During this battle, the Lord will appear; and he will wage war against the Lord. (Daniel 7:21-22; Revelation 17:14; 19:19)
- C. He will be destroyed by the Lord (Daniel 7:9-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 19:20-21)
- D. The Antichrist will be cast alive into the lake of fire by Jesus at His coming. (Revelation 19:20)



Spiritual Truths

- The spirit of the Antichrist is already in the world. This is any spirit that opposes God.
- The Antichrist will be energized and empowered by Satan.
- The Antichrist will not appear upon the world scene, until the ten-nation confederacy is established.
- The Antichrist will deceive people into thinking that he is the Christ.
- The Jewish people will recognize the deceit of Antichrist, when he seeks to destroy them and the nation of Israel:

- The Antichrist will have absolute power for three and one-half years.
- The Antichrist will be destroyed by the Lord at the Battle of Armageddon, when the Lord returns.



Lesson Material

The Antichrist is a human being, who is the epitome of evil and everything that opposes the true God. The Antichrist is a man of great intelligence, cunning and cruelty. Unfortunately, he is to become the most powerful leader in human history. His reign will cause more mass destruction and carnage than the world has ever witnessed. The Antichrist will be responsible for bringing the human race to the brink of annihilation at the Battle of Armageddon.

Ironically, his tactics in his rise to power will be so deceptive, that the Jewish nation will believe that he is their Prince of Peace. And he will convince the world that he is divine.

It is only in the middle of the Tribulation, when the Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel and seeks to annihilate them, that the Jews recognize his treachery and evil.

The Antichrist will be empowered by Satan himself. The great enemy of God will use Antichrist to attempt to annihilate the Jewish nation. Satan has attempted to destroy the Jews by using wicked dictators throughout history; but only with the powerful Antichrist will

Satan almost succeed. In fact, Satan would achieve his wicked stratagem, except for the return of the Lord Jesus, Who will save Israel and the planet from ultimate destruction.

The Antichrist will rise to world power through a ten-nation confederacy, which will emerge from the old Roman empire. He will seize control of this ten-nation confederacy by conquering three of the nations and pressuring the other seven to submit to his rule. He will not appear on the world scene, until after the ten-nation confederacy has come into existence.

His signing a peace agreement with Israel is the biblical signal that the Tribulation has begun. It is during the Great Tribulation, after he breaks his treaty with Israel, that he rules as a world dictator for three and one-half years.

Some Bible scholars believe that after Russia makes its attempt to control the Middle East and is mysteriously defeated (Ezekiel 38; 39), the world balance of power will be in the Antichrist's favor; and he will then make his successful bid for world supremacy. After he breaks the treaty with Israel, he will show his true character and seek to annihilate Israel.

The Antichrist will have absolute rule for three and one-half years; and it will be a reign of terror, in which he seeks to destroy all who oppose him. He will wage war against Christians and Jews; and they will be persecuted and killed by him.

Near the end of his three and one-half year reign of absolute dominion, many nations (specifically thought to include Russia and China) will revolt and challenge his supremacy. The great armies of the world will gather at Megiddo for the ultimate battle, called "Armageddon."

Jesus told His disciples that, unless He returns, the Battle of Armageddon will destroy the human race.

At the final battle, the heavens will break open and Jesus with His armies will appear in blazing glory. The Antichrist will be destroyed by the splendor of the Lord's return and by the breath from the Lord's mouth. All of the power the forces of Satan and the world can muster are no match for the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

The final outcome of the Antichrist will be eternal punishment in the lake of fire. He will be the world's last military conqueror, before the Lord's Second Coming and Millennial Kingdom.



Methods

The teacher should use a blackboard, if available, and draw a time line to illustrate the rise and rule of the Antichrist.

Discuss with the students the meaning of 1 John 2:18, which says that the spirit of Antichrist is already in the world. Have the students name dictators in history, who would be considered to be antichrist in nature.

Have the students write down any questions they have about the Antichrist; and discuss these questions as a class.

The Return of the King

Volume 11

Lesson 22



Bible References

Isaiah 11

Zechariah 14

Matthew 24

Acts 1:11

1 Thessalonians 5:1-9

2 Thessalonians 1:7-8; 2:8

Revelation 1:7

Revelation 19-21



Theme

The Second Coming of Christ and the events that follow it.



Revelation 19:11-21

- 11 "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him as called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.
- 12 "His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were name written, that no man knew, but he himself.
- 13 "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.
- 14 "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.
- 15 "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.
- 16 "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.
- 17 "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of

heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

18 "That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

19 "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20 "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21 "And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."



Acts 1:11

"Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."



Outline

I. The Return of the King. (Revelation 19:11-21)

- A. Jesus will return as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, when the nations of the world are positioned to destroy each other at the Battle of Armageddon.
 - 1. We are not told the specific day or hour of His return, but the scripture is very clear that He is coming back during the Battle of Armageddon.
 - a. He is prepared for war (verse 11),
 and His armies are with Him.
 (verse 14) This signifies that He is going to battle.
 - b. The beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies are gathered to make war with Him. (verse 19)
 The beast is the Antichrist.
 - 2. With the armies of the kings of the earth are gathered with the armies of the Antichrist, there is no question that Revelation 19:19-21 is referring to the Battle of Armageddon.
- B. Jesus will return as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, in great splendor.
 - 1. His coming will be sudden. He will appear in the sky like a flash of lightning. (Matthew 24:27)
 - 2. He is coming in the clouds, and He will be visible for all eyes to see. (Revelation 1:7)
 - 3. He is coming with power and great glory. (Luke 21:27)

- He will come on a white horse, clothed in glorious splendor. (Revelation 19:11-13)
- 5. His saints are coming with Him, following Him on white horses. (Revelation 19:11, 14)
- 6. He is coming in flaming fire, and with the angels of heaven. (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8)
- C. Jesus will appear in a moment; but His coming will not be a quick event like the Rapture, because He will descend to earth with His armies, in great glory.
 - 1. It will be a spectacular procession from heaven to earth.
 - 2. Some scholars believe that as the great heavenly procession moves through the sky and the earth rotates, this is how all eyes will see Him.
 - 3. We do know that the procession from heaven and the battle of Armageddon will last no longer than one day. (Zechariah 14:1, 4, 6-9, 13)
 - 4. This could explain Revelation 19:19, which says that the beast and the kings of the earth gather to make war against the Lord. The armies at Armageddon see Him, and after their initial shock, they join forces against Him. They see Him coming in the clouds; and in their foolishness and wickedness, they turn their weapons against Him and His army.
- D. Jesus will return to the very place from where He ascended -- the Mount of Olives. (Acts 1:11; Zechariah 14:4)
 - 1. He is coming in judgment; and He will destroy the armies of the Antichrist with the breath of His

- mouth and the brightness of His appearance. (2 Thessalonians 2:8)
- 2. He will rescue Israel from total destruction by the Antichrist.
- 3. He will put an end to the Tribulation and set up His kingdom on earth. (Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14)

II. The Millennial Reign of the King. (Revelation 20:1-9)

- A. Jesus establishes His Kingdom and reigns on the earth for one thousand years.
 - 1. Satan is locked in the Abyss for a thousand years. (verse 3)
 - 2. Satan will no longer be able to deceive the nations of the earth. (verse 3)
- B. The saints will reign with Christ in the new Kingdom. (verses 4, 6)
- C. What it be like in the Millennial Kingdom?
 - 1. The Millennial Kingdom will be characterized by world peace. (Isaiah 2:4)
 - 2. There will be universal prosperity. (Isaiah 65:21-24)
 - 3. Human beings will live much longer. (Isaiah 65:20)
 - 4. There will be great changes in the animal kingdom. (Isaiah 11:6-9; 65:25)
- D. At the end of one thousand years, Satan will be loosed to deceive the nations. (verses 7-8)
 - 1. In spite of the fact that the nations will have Christ Himself ruling over them in perfect love and wisdom, they will be deceived by

- Satan; and they will rebel against the King. (Revelation 20:8)
- 2. This will be the last earthly rebellion against God.
- 3. God will destroy this last rebellion by fire from heaven. (Revelation 20:9)

III. The Great White Throne Judgment. (Revelation 20:11-15)

- A. The Great White Throne displays the awesome magnificence of God Almighty. (verse 11)
- B. Since the time of Adam, all of mankind who did not put their faith in Jesus Christ as Messiah and Savior will stand before the throne and be judged. (verse 12-13)
 - 1. The unjust will be resurrected. (Compare John 5:29)
 - 2. Every man will be judged according to his or her works. (verse 13)
 - 3. There are degrees of torment in the lake of fire, just as there are degrees of glory in heaven. The evil works of each man will determine the degree of hell.
 - 4. The judgment will be eternal.
 - 5. When the wicked are cast into the lake of fire, this is called the Second Death. (verse 14)
- C. Satan and his angels will be judged. They, too, will be cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:10)
- D. All those whose names were not written in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire. (verse 15)
- E. God will bring an end to all rebellion in the universe.

- 1. God will never again allow sin to enter the universe.
- 2. God will judge rebellion immediately, because He has displayed His mercy and grace to all future creations by the redemption of His saints.

IV. The New Heaven and New Earth. (Revelation 21:1-22:5)

- A. The first heaven and the first earth pass away. (21:1)
 - 1. This does not mean that the first heaven and earth cease to exist.
 - 2. The fact is that heaven and earth are renovated by fire. (2 Peter 3:10-13)
 - 3. The earth will be recreated a second time. (The first creation was in Genesis 1:1; the recreation is recorded in Genesis 1:2-31; and the final recreation is in 2 Peter 3:10-13.)
 - 4. The new earth will not have any oceans. (21:1)
- B. God the Father will come down from heaven to dwell in the New Jerusalem. (21:3)
- C. God's dwelling place and headquarters for governing the universe will be in New Jerusalem, on planet earth. (verse 2)
- D. There will be no more tears, death, sorrow, crying or pain. (21:4)
 - 1. There will be no more sin or suffering in the universe.
 - 2. We will live in eternal joy with God.



Spiritual Truths

- The Lord is returning to earth at the Battle of Armageddon; and He will save Israel and the entire world from final destruction.
- The Lord will set up His divine kingdom. He will be physically present to rule the nations from Jerusalem.
- Satan will be bound in prison during the kingdom age; and he will not be able to work deception, until the end of one thousand years.
- When Satan is released from the Abyss, he will deceive the nations that are controlled by Christ, and he will convince them to rebel against the King of Kings. This will be the last rebellion of mankind. God will put an end to the rebellion with fire from heaven.
- The Great White Throne judgment will be the final judgment of mankind. The wicked will be judged according to their works and then cast into the lake of fire. It is an eternal judgment.
- God will create a new heaven and new earth; and the redeemed will enjoy His presence forever.



Lesson Material

The Second Coming of Christ is one of the most frequently discussed and important doctrines of the Bible. Nearly every book in the Bible predicts the Second Coming of the Lord. Entire New Testament books are written on the subject. (1 and 2 Thessalonians; Revelation) Entire chapters in both the Old and New Testament are written about Christ's return. (Zechariah 14; Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21) There are over three hundred references to the Second Coming in the New Testament; and the Old Testament prophets spoke much more about Messiah's Second Coming than His coming the first time. Indeed, the Old Testament prophets and the Jews did not understand the Messiah being "cut off." (Daniel 9:26) There are hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament about the Second Coming and Millennial Reign of Christ.

When Jesus came the first time, He was born in relative obscurity and unnoticed by the world. When Jesus comes the second time, the scenario will be much different. His return will be the most glorious, dazzling and earth-shattering event in history. Every eye will see Him. (Revelation 1:7) He is not returning as a baby or the Lamb of God, but as a king and the Lion of Judah.

Heaven will break open, and the Son of Man will appear in blazing fire, like lighting in the sky. He will ride a white horse, dressed for battle, with His armies of saints and powerful angels following. It will be a glorious processional to the earth. He will place his feet upon the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4); and the earth will shake at His return. He will destroy all of His enemies by the very brightness of His coming. (2 Thessalonians 2:8) The world will know that the King of Kings and Lord of Lords has returned.

Jesus will judge the nations (Matthew 25:31-46) and set up His kingdom. The world will be delivered from impending destruction to divine utopia. Jesus will establish His government (Isaiah 2:3); and He will take direct control of human history. Jesus will rule over the nations of the world. In the Millennial kingdom, people will live in peace and prosperity. The curse upon nature (Genesis 3:17-18) will be lifted; and the lion, wolf, lamb and little children shall play together. (Isaiah 11:6)

Satan, the former prince of this world (Ephesians 2:2), will be bound in prison for one thousand years. Yet, at the end of the thousand years, he will be loosed; and he will go forth to deceive the nations in the Lord's divine kingdom.

It is hard to imagine that men will still rebel against Jesus, even when they have benefited from His visible presence and blessings. Apparently, men will be obeying God with their actions during the kingdom age, but not with their hearts. Satan will give them the false hope that they can rebel against the King and destroy His rule. They will gather from the four corners of the world, and be as numerous as the sands of the sea. They will surround Jerusalem, in order to assault the beloved city. God the Father will put an end to this battle before it begins, by sending fire from heaven to destroy them. (Revelation 20:8-9) This will be the last rebellion of men throughout eternity.

God will resurrect the wicked dead from all ages of human history and judge them according to their works. The Great White Throne judgment will be a terrifying event, in which even earth and heaven flee from the presence of the One Who sits upon the throne. (Revelation 20:11) Wicked humanity, angels and demons will be judged and cast into the lake of fire, where they will suffer eternally. This is the second death. (Revelation 20:14)

At the Great White Throne judgment, God will put an end to all rebellion in the universe, which began with Satan and Adam. The New Jerusalem will descend out of heaven to the earth. Revelation chapter 21 gives a description of its incredible brilliance and beauty. God the Father will dwell in the city with Jesus and the saints. We may see the fullness of the Godhead, if the Holy Spirit manifests Himself. This is not indicated in scripture.

God will begin His creative works again. The earth will be purged and recreated by fire. (2 Peter 3:10) The heavens will be recreated. And we will enjoy the love, wisdom and power of God forever and ever.

With all this in mind, we should be diligent in our Christian faith, and walk in holiness and peace. (2 Peter 3:14) Come quickly, Lord Jesus! (Revelation 22:7, 12, 20)



Methods

The teacher should use a blackboard, and write out the order of End-Time events on the board.

Allow the students to ask questions about any area they do not understand. If the teacher does not know the answer, then challenge some students to research it.

In view of the lesson, the teacher should challenge the students to live holy lives. The Lord will reward them for faithfulness.

The Bride of Christ

Volume 11

Lesson 23



Bible References

Deuteronomy 14:2

Isaiah 61:10

Isaiah 62:5

Hosea 2:19-23

Matthew 25:1-13

2 Corinthians 11:2

Ephesians 1:4-6, 10

Ephesians 5:25-27, 32

Revelation 22:17



Theme

The Bride of Christ; the Marriage Supper of the Lamb; and the importance of being ready, when the Lord returns.



Scripture Reading

Matthew 22:2-14

- 2 "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,
- 3 "And sent for his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.
- 4 "Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.
- 5 "But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:
- 6 "And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.
- 7 "But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.
- 8 "Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

- 9 "Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.
- 10 "So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.
- 11 "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:
- 12 "And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.
- 13 "Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- 14 "For many are called, but few are chosen."

Revelation 19:7-9

- 7 "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.
- 8 "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.
- 9 "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."



Revelation 19:7-8

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."



Outline

I. The Bride of Christ Is the Church.

- A. The Bride is the church.
 - 1. Jesus was like the grain of wheat, which fell to the ground and died. (John 12:24)
 - 2. Jesus' death brought forth much fruit. His death brought forth the church.
- B. The New Testament church was born after Jesus' death, burial and resurrection.
 - 1. The church was born on the Day of Pentecost, which is referred to in Acts chapter 2.
 - 2. The church started with 120 believers; and it received 3,000 new members, after the gospel message

was preached the first time by Peter.

- C. The universal church is all of the believers in the world since the Day of Pentecost, which was almost 2,000 years ago.
- D. We are the church of the firstborn, written in heaven. (Hebrews 12:23)
 - 1. We will be presented to a city of the living God.
 - 2. We will be presented to heavenly Jerusalem.
 - 3. We will be presented to an innumerable company of angels.
 - 4. We will be presented to God, the righteous Judge.
 - 5. We will be presented to Jesus, our Mediator.
 - 6. We will be presented to Abraham and the patriarchs. (Matthew 8:11)

II. God the Father's Bride is Israel.

- A. Israel rejected the Lord.
- B. Therefore, the gospel was preached to the gentiles. Those who believe the gospel of Jesus Christ are the church. We are the bride that the Father is preparing for His Son, as spoken of in Matthew 22:2.
- C. Israel's eyes will be opened, to one day behold the Messiah.
 - 1. Hosea 2:23 states that God will sow Israel unto Himself from the earth.
 - 2. The holy city, New Jerusalem, is spoken of in Revelation 21:2 as being the bride of God.
 - 3. The book of Hosea speaks of God's marriage to Israel. He will betroth Israel in righteousness.

- D. We will all be made one, in God's time: the church, Israel, and God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
 - 1. Ephesians 1:10 says, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:"
 - 2. Revelation 21:2 says, "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

III. What Is Characteristic of the Bride of Christ?

- A. She is decked by God with jewels and a robe of righteousness. (Isaiah 61:10)
- B. She springs forth for all nations to see her. (Isaiah 61:9)
 - 1. All eyes are on the bride. (Isaiah 61:11)
 - 2. The bride's eyes are on the groom. (Hebrews 12:2)
 - 3. In the parable of the wise virgins (Matthew 25), only the virgins who were prepared and looking for the bridegroom were allowed to enter into marriage with him. The virgins who were not watchful and ready were shut out.
- C. Are we prepared for the coming of the Bridegroom?
 - 1. The foolish virgins of Matthew 25 neglected their preparations.
 - 2. The bridegroom shut the door on them, and denied knowing them.

- D. Chaste virgins will marry the king. 2
 Corinthians 11:2 says, "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."
 - 1. We are spoken of as a holy people unto the Lord God. (Deuteronomy 14:2)
 - 2. The meaning of "sanctify" and "holy" is "set apart" for God. In the Bible, "holy" and "sanctify" refer to both people and things.
 - 3. People are set apart from the world by the following things:
 - a. Redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ sets us apart for God. (Hebrews 10:9-10)
 - b. The saints are made holy by believing. (1 Corinthians 1:2; Hebrews 3:1)
 - c. We are sanctified by the work of the Holy Spirit, through the Word. (John 17:17; 2 Corinthians 3:18) Ephesians 5:26 says, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."
- E. Among other things, pure religion is keeping ourselves unspotted from the world. (James 1:27)
- F. The bride is without blemish.

 Ephesians 5:27 says, "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."
- G. Our garments must be pure and spotless.
 - 1. The Lord provides us with our wedding garments. (Isaiah 61:10) It is up to us to wear them.

- 2. In the wedding parable (Matthew 22:1-14), a person arrives at the wedding without a wedding garment. The person is cast outside into outer darkness.
- 3. Revelation 19:8 says, "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."
- 4. To meet the bridegroom, we must be wearing our pure, white garment of righteousness, which the Lord will provide for us.
- H. The Bride is in love with the Bridegroom. Revelation 19:7 says, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."
 - 1. We must give honor to the Bridegroom, or we will not obtain the wedding promise.
 - 2. Those who did not honor the invitation of the king in Matthew 22 were destroyed. They were destroyed, because they made light of the king's invitation, laughed at the servants, and killed some of the king's men.
 - 3. We must not make that same mistake of esteeming lightly the invitation to the wedding banquet.
- IV. The True Church, the Bride, Has Christ as Its Head. (Ephesians 1)
- A. Christ is the Head of the true church.
- B. The true church is predestined by God. (Ephesians 1:5)

- C. The true church is holy and blameless. (Ephesians 1:4)
- D. The church was chosen before the foundation of the earth. (Ephesians 1:4)
- E. We have been adopted by the good pleasure of His will. (Ephesians 1:5)
 - 1. We were adopted in place of Israel, because they rejected the invitation to come to the wedding.
 - 2. The parable of the wedding banquet in Matthew 22:2-14 speaks of Israel being invited and rejecting God's invitation.
 - The gentiles are now part of God's wedding feast. Many were called to come to His wedding banquet, but few were chosen.
- F. A false church does not have Christ as Lord and Head of the body.
- V. The Bride of Christ Must Prepare for the Wedding Banquet.
- A. As a light on a hill, the bride is visible for all to see. (Matthew 5:14)
 - 1. We are chosen to be holy and separate from the world, and to show forth praise to God in our lifestyle.
 - 2. God has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9)
- B. We will be presented to Jesus by the Father; and so, we must meet together and grow in love.
 - 1. We must not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

- 2. We must let the love of God be in us. (John 17:26)
- 3. We are accepted in the Beloved. (Ephesians 1:6)



Spiritual Truths

- The church of Jesus Christ, universal is the Bride of Christ.
- We are to be pure, prepared, and able to hear Him, when He calls us to the marriage supper.
- If we know the truth and do not prepare, we will be cast into outer darkness.
- The Greek word for church is ekklesia, which means a "called out assembly" of believers; and that is what we are, as the Bride of Christ.



Lesson Material

She is a glorious church without spot or wrinkle, washed by the blood of the Lamb. The bride of Christ is the church, and she is dressed in fine array. She is initially spoken of in the book of Acts, on the Day of Pentecost. Consisting first of 120 believers in a small upper room, she grew to 3120 members that very day, when the message was spread of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. The true church has

Christ as the Head; a false church does not recognize Christ as her Lord.

Israel, the bride of the Father, was cut off from the gospel because of unbelief; and the gentiles were grafted in, because they received and believed in Jesus. This means that we who know Christ as Lord and Savior are His bride and will attend the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, when we have made ourselves ready.

"Church" in the Greek is the word ekklesia, meaning "a calling out." We are called and separated to serve a holy God and to be holy, sanctified, and unspotted from the world. Our garments are clean and white, meaning that we are dressed, prepared and ready to meet our Bridegroom, Jesus. We have a job to do, as we approach the wedding day -- and it is to make ourselves ready. We are not to sit and wait, but we are to work and make the preparations for the day when we meet Christ face to face.

Jesus said in Matthew 22 that the kingdom of heaven is like a wedding, in which a king prepared a banquet for his son and sent messengers to invite the guests. The guests refused to come, and laughed at, and even killed, some of the messengers. These guests were called, but they rejected the invitation; and so, the king destroyed them and found others from the street corners. They all came; and this signifies that the church, which is the bride of Christ, prepared herself with the robes of righteousness provided her by the Lord. The remnant of Israel beat and killed God's messengers and prophets, and even killed Jesus. (But God still loves Israel; and He will cause her eyes to be opened, too!) In other words, Matthew 22 is expounding that we, the church, were chosen to be the Bride of God's Son, even though others were called first. However, in verse 12 of Matthew 22, we read that there was someone who was at the banquet that did not have the white robe on, which the king had provided for him to wear. Consequently, he was cast into outer darkness. It typifies that we must be obedient, watching, and preparing ourselves, if we are to partake in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

another example We see preparedness in Matthew 25. The wise virgins are prepared for the coming of the bridegroom. They prepared their lamps with oil ahead of time, in order to be ready, in case he came at midnight. When the bridegroom came, those who were ready went in with him to the wedding. Others, who were unprepared, had the door shut on them, and they were not recognized or let in by the groom. Again, this typifies the church/bride of Christ hearing His call, and being ready and spotless. Notice that all were virgins, yet some were wise and some were foolish. So, it is not just being pure that is acceptable; it is also being ready and watching for His coming that allows us to attend the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. We must be pure, prepared, and hear His call, in order to partake of the wedding promise.



Methods

What plans need to be made, in order to get ready for a wedding? Compare it to the preparations we need to make, if we are going to meet Christ. Have a class discussion. Plan an imaginary wedding. Make students aware of the work

involved when we as Christians are truly serious about getting ready to be His bride.

Who to invite? (Who would we invite -- who would the Lord invite to heaven?)

Who not to invite? (Who would not be welcome at our wedding? Who would not be welcome at the Lord's wedding?)

What to wear? (What would our wedding garments reflect about us?)

How long will it take to get everything ready? (It takes a while to plan a wedding. Only the Lord knows how long it will take, before we are ready to meet Him.)

Food? (What will we eat in heaven? Good fruits such as love, fellowship, friendship with Christ. What would we want at our wedding? Only the best!)

Cost? (A wedding costs a lot of money. Our pure and holy walk with Christ may cost us such things as popularity, fame, earthly riches, or earthly success.)

Who will present the bride to the groom? (Our natural father. Our heavenly Father will present us to Jesus.)

These are all topics of discussion that relate directly to the church, in her preparation for Jesus. Discuss them naturally and truthfully; and base the answers on scripture.

(Note: The emphasis is not on finding a soul-mate here on earth, on but getting excited about the wedding between us and Christ. It is up to the teacher to emphasize the spiritual application, rather than earthly relationships.)

Doctrine of the Trinity

Volume 11

Lesson 24



Bible References

Matthew 28:19-20

1 John 5:7

2 Peter 1:17

John 1:1, 14; 10:30, 32

Romans 8:27; 11:34

Exodus 3:14

1 Corinthians 2:10-12, 16

Ephesians 4:30

Isaiah 40:12-14; 44:6; 45:21-22

Hebrews 9:14

Acts 5:3-4; 8:29; 10:19; 13:2; 15:18; 21:11

Revelation 2:7, 11; 22:13, 16

Luke 12:12

Deuteronomy 6:4



Theme

Three distinct Persons within the one nature of God.



Scripture Reading

1 John 5:7

7 "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."



Matthew 28:19

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:"



Outline

- I. Historical Background of the Word, "Trinity."
- A. The origin of the word.
- B. The council of Nicaea.
- C. The Creed from the council of Constantinople.
- II. Scriptural Evidence for the Trinity.
- A. There is only one God.
- B. There are three Persons in the Bible Who are called God.
- III. Analogies of the Trinity.
- A. The Sun.
- B. Water.



Spiritual Truths

• Within the nature of the one and only true God, there are three distinct Personages.

 The one God of the Bible is made up of three eternal Persons in complete unity with each other.



Lesson Material

The word "Trinity" is not found in the Bible, but it is a convenient term that theologians use to describe the three Persons of the one God. The Greek word trias seems to have been used first by an early church leader named Theophilus (115-181 A.D.). Tertullian (160-220 A.D.), another early church leader, used its Latin form, trinitas. Tertullian argued that God is simultaneously the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Though the word "Trinity" was originated in the second century, the belief in the Trinity is much older.

In the early fourth century, a bishop by the name of Arius developed a false teaching concerning God. Arianism taught that Jesus was a creation of God, or a created god, and therefore inferior to the Father. It was this attack on the church that brought together the ecumenical council of Nicaea in 325 A.D.

At the council of Nicaea, Arianism was disputed and branded as heresy. This heresy did not totally disappear. Today, the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, better known as Jehovah's Witnesses, spread this false doctrine. Although the teaching did not disappear, the council set fourth a declaration in defense against the heretical teaching.

The Creed that most Christians are familiar with came out of the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D. The council had to further its statements on the Trinity, in order to defend the faith, which was being attacked by heretical teachers. The Creed states,"...to venerate one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; not confusing the person, not dividing the essence, the persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have all and the same Godhead, equal glory, and co-eternal majesty...The Father is God. The Son is God. The Holy Spirit is God. Yet there are not three Gods but one God."

There are three Persons in the Bible referred to as divine, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In 2 Peter 1:17 we read, "For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This verse shows us a Person called "the Father" and a Person called the "Son." The Holy Spirit is also a Person. He was lied to, in Acts 5:3. How can we lie to a thing, or a force? We cannot. We can only lie to a person. The Holy Spirit has emotion, as in Ephesians 4:30: "...and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God,...." In 1 Corinthians 2:10-11, we read, "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Here reference is made to the Spirit possessing knowledge. It would be absurd to replace the word "essence" for "Spirit" in the text, for we would have the "essence" searching all things! The Father is a Person, the Son is a Person, and the Holy Spirit is a Person. The following paragraphs will show that each of the three Persons is called God.

In 2 Peter 1:17, the Father is clearly called God, "For he received from God the Father honour and glory,...."

Jesus is the Son of God spoken of in 2 Peter 1:17; and, according to the gospel of John, Jesus was in the beginning with God, and He was God. (John 1:1, 14) In Hebrews 1:8, the Father has this to say about His Son: "...Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever:...." In these two verses alone, it is clear that Jesus Christ is called "God." In John 8:58, Jesus Himself claimed to be the same "I AM" as that of the Old Testament. (Exodus 3:14) The Jew's reaction of picking up stones to stone Jesus makes it even more apparent that Jesus was referring to Himself as God, the "I AM." Jesus later confirms this in John 10:32-33, by asking the Jews why they wanted to stone Him. The Jews replied, "...for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." The Jews realized Who Jesus was claiming to be. Furthermore, in Revelation 22:13 the speaker says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." Who is the speaker in this passage? Verse 16 says that Jesus is speaking. In Isaiah 44:6, God the Father refers to Himself with the title, "First and Last." In John 10:30, Jesus says, "the Father and I are one." Jesus also made Himself "equal" with God, in John 5:18 and Philippians 2:6. With these scriptures, it can be assured that Jesus Christ is called "God."

Often pushed off to the side is the Holy Spirit. To establish that the Holy Spirit is God, we will first show that attributes which can be ascribed to God alone are ascribed to the Holy Spirit. One of the divine attributes is the eternal nature of God. He has always existed. Hebrews 9:14 says that Christ, "...through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God,...." Another attribute of God is His

omniscience. God knows all things (Acts 15:18) This attribute is also ascribed to the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 2:10-11. To know all things and to be eternal is to be God, for the only eternal Being is God. The Holy Spirit is called "God" in Acts 5:3-4: "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back (part) of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit; and the apostle Peter said he (Ananias) lied to God. It is certain that the Holy Spirit is called "God."

Deuteronomy 6:4 says, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God {is} one LORD:" Isaiah 45:21-22 declares there is no God, apart from the true living God. Isaiah 43:10 says, "Ye {are} my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I {am} he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me." The Bible makes it very clear that there is only one God. So how can there be three Gods in God? It is not three Gods in one God. It is three Persons in one God. These three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are called "God."

Jesus and the Holy Spirit cannot be "other" gods. This would contradict with Isaiah 43:10, "...before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me." They are within the same nature of the one and only God. Thus, this is the Trinity: Within the nature of the one and only true God, there are three distinct Personages -- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We see evidence of the Three in Genesis 1:26: "Let us make man in our image,...." Who is "us?" Who is "our?" Then in

verse 27, we read, "So God created man in his own image,...." Verse 26 is plural, but verse 27 is singular. What does this mean? The plurality in verse 26 shows God the Father talking with the Son and the Holy Spirit. But in verse 27, man is created in "His" (singular) image. This text clearly shows the oneness in the Godhead.

Although it may be impossible for the finite mind to fully comprehend the Trinity, it is possible for us to try and understand more clearly, by means of analogy. Every analogy has its limitations because it is drawn from the finite creation; but with this realization, let us take a look at two analogies.

The sun is a good illustration of the roles of the Persons within the Godhead. The Father is, and always has been, the unseen Source of all, just as the star is, scientifically speaking, the unseen source of light and heat. The Son is the manifestation and brightness of the Father's glory, as the light is that part of the star which we can see. The Spirit is the invisible Person, Whose presence and work is felt, just as the heat of the sun is not seen, but felt.

Water is another great analogy of the Trinity. It is found in a solid, a liquid, and a gas. It is has three distinct forms, and yet it is the same in essence -- H2O. The Trinity has three distinct Personages, all with the same essence or nature.

In conclusion, this is what we know: There are three Persons in the Bible, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, each of Whom are called God; and yet, there is only one God. This is the Doctrine of the Trinity.



Methods

Before the teacher starts the lesson, have every one in the class stand up. Ask them to remain standing, until they answer "No" to any of the questions below. If they answer "No," have then sit down.

Do you believe in only one God?

Do you believe that Jesus is God?

Do you believe that the Holy Spirit is God?

Do you believe that the Father is God?

Now ask them to remain standing, if they can give five verses to defend the Doctrine of the Trinity. Most will sit down. This shows one of the problems believers have today -- we know what we believe, but we do not know why. This is one reason why so many Christians get seduced into the cults. We are to study the Word of God, in order to show ourselves approved, and in order to contend for the faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints. (2 Timothy 2:15; Jude 3)

Christology

Volume 11

Lesson 25



Bible References

Exodus 3:14

Isaiah 40:3; 43:10; 45:22-24

Psalms 90:2

Matthew 1:18-25; 4:2; 7:15; 8:23-27; 22:42; 26:37-38

Luke 8:1; 11:46

Mark 2:5-9; 3:5; 5:30-32; 9:21; 10:14

Galatians 1:6-9

John 1:1-30; 4:4-6; 5:18; 8:44, 58; 11:35; 15:15; 19:26; 20:1-30

Colossians 2:9

2 Corinthians 11:3-4

Hebrews 1:8

Jude 3

Revelation 19:13



Theme

Jesus Christ, the God-Man.



Scripture Reading

Philippians 2:5-11

- 5 "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
- 6 "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:
- 7 "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:
- 8 "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.
- 9 "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:
- 10 "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and

things in earth, and things under the earth;

11 "And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."



Memory Verse

John 1:1, 14

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."



Outline

I. Jesus Is Truly Man.

- A. He was born the same natural way we were born (except for the miraculous conception).
- B. His body needed the same basic necessities as ours.
- C. His mental attributes were the same as any human being.

II. Jesus Is Truly God.

- A. The Old Testament prophecies showed that God was to come in the flesh and save His people.
- B. The apostles taught that Jesus is God.
- C. Jesus Himself claimed to be God.



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus Christ is the self-expression of God -- God revealed in a real human life.
- Jesus has two natures -- a human nature and a divine nature.
- When Christ walked on the earth, He was 100% God and 100% Man: the God-Man.



Lesson Material

In Matthew 8:27, one of the most important questions ever asked about Jesus was, "What manner of man is this?" The question is a matter of eternal consequence. Throughout the New Testament, we see the importance of the question, "Who is Jesus?" The apostle Paul warns about false teachers coming and preaching another Jesus and another gospel. (2 Corinthians 11:4) If we are

serving a counterfeit Jesus, we have a counterfeit salvation.

How do we know we have the right Jesus? The answer is that we must study the Word of God.

Jesus was born as all humans are, in the sense that He was in the womb and was born by Mary in the same way we were born out of our mother's womb. (This is not to detract from the fact of the miraculous conception of Jesus through the Holy Spirit.) Jesus did not merely appear on earth as some phantom guru from an alien planet. He came in the form of a human being. (Matthew 1:18-24; John 1:1, 14; Philippians 2:5-8)

Not only was Christ Jesus in the same kind of flesh as we are, He also needed the same basic necessities. For example, when Jesus commanded the wind and sea to obey Him (Matthew 8:23-27), an important fact is often overlooked. Jesus was sleeping. What does this mean? Jesus needed rest, in order to function in an effective manner, the same way our bodies need rest.

There are many examples in the Bible of Jesus' physical needs. What purpose would it have served for Christ to fast for forty days in the desert, if it was not a sacrifice to His body? Matthew 4:2 even tells us that He was hungry. John 4:6 tells us that Jesus was tired after a long journey. He had to function in time and space, just as we do; and, therefore, He had to make His way from place to place, just as we do. (Luke 8:1; John 4:4)

Many times, we do not look at the human side of Christ. We forget that He was an example for us to follow. He experienced the same physical needs we do – food, water, and rest.

Another important fact about Jesus' human nature was His mental attributes. His mental abilities were the same as ours. When He was young, He was found in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers and listening and asking questions. Jesus asked questions, in order to gain information. For example, in Mark 9:21, Jesus asked a man how long his son had been demon-possessed. Again, in Mark 5:30-32, Jesus had to ask who it was that touched Him in the big crowd. For what purpose did He ask? He was limited, as God in human form. He had emptied some of His godly attributes, when He became flesh. (Philippians 2:5-11)

Jesus displayed many emotions common to man. One example is the love of family and friends. (John 15:15; 19:26) He expressed anger of moral indignation. (Mark 3:5; 10:14; Luke 11:46; John 6:43). He knew sorrow (Matthew 26:37-38), and He wept. (John 11:35)

Clearly, we can see from the facts presented that Jesus is 100% human. This is where we run into a problem, because some people do not consider the rest of the facts. They stop at Christ being a Man. This is what the apostle Paul warned about in 2 Corinthians 11:3-4: "...For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus,..." and again, in Galatians 1:8: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

Let him be accursed? Strong words for the misconception of Who Jesus Christ is. This is why we must study all of the facts about Christ. For Jesus Himself warned us of false prophets coming in sheep's clothing, but inwardly being ravening wolves. (Matthew 7:15-23) He also said that many would claim to know Him, but in the end, He would proclaim to them the most terrifying words we could hear -- "I never knew you. Depart from me, you who work iniquity." We must know Who Jesus Christ is; and above all, we must know Him personally.

Throughout the Old Testament, there are many prophecies concerning the coming of Jesus. One very revealing passage is found in Isaiah 40:3, "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." This verse indicates that God is coming, so make way for Him. When we cross-reference this verse with John 1:23, we see that the voice in the wilderness is John the Baptist. Who is John the Baptist referring to? Look at verse 30, and the answer clearly shows that Jesus is the One spoken of in Isaiah 40:3.

Psalms 90:2 says "...from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." There can only be one everlasting to everlasting, because Isaiah 43:10 says, "...before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me." Micah 5:2 gives insight on the coming of the Messiah, when it says, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, {though} thou be little among the thousands of Judah, (yet) out of thee shall he come forth unto me {that is} to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth {have been} from of old, from everlasting." Clearly, these passages show that the Messiah to come forth is God.

In John 1:1, we read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Continuing in verse 14, we read, "And the word was made flesh,...." Obviously, John is referring to Christ in these passages. So, Jesus was the Word before He came to earth, and He is the Word, according to Revelation 19:13. Jesus is the Word from everlasting to everlasting.

It is very important what the apostles taught about Jesus. They already delivered the gospel in its completeness, as we see in Jude 3. So the Bible is the only source that we need, in order to see Who Jesus is.

Thomas, better known as "Doubting Thomas," called Jesus "God." (John 20:28) Thomas would not believe that Christ was raised from the dead in bodily form, until he touched the wounds of Jesus. Thomas had his chance (John 20:27); but he could only worship the Lord. Some would argue that Thomas said "My Lord and my God" as an expression. But that would be blasphemy. Jesus, as a teacher and rabbi, would have rebuked him. But as we read in verse 29, Jesus did not rebuke Thomas but rather said, "...because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Thomas was calling Jesus "God."

Isaiah 45:22-24, with God the Father being the Speaker, says, "...That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear...." The apostle Paul quotes this passage in Philippians 2:10-11, but in a way that shows Jesus as God the Son: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,... And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Clearly, the apostle Paul is teaching that Jesus is God the Son, the second Personage of the Trinity.

In John 5:18, Jesus was equating Himself with God.

In Hebrews 1:8, the Father has this to say about the Son, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever:...." All throughout the New Testament, we can read that Jesus is called "God."

Some may argue that only other people called Jesus God, but what about Jesus Himself -- who did He claim to be?

In Mark 2:5-9, Jesus told a paralyzed man, "...Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." But there were some scribes sitting nearby, who objected to what Jesus was saying. "Why doth this {man} thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?" (verse 7) Jesus challenged them "... Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?" (verses 8-9) Then, Jesus healed the paralytic. The implication was clear -it was obvious that no one forgives sin but God. Anyone can say they can forgive sin; but Christ proved His authority by healing the paralytic. Jesus was clearly claiming deity.

In John 8:58, Jesus claims to be the "I am" of the Old Testament: "Verily, verily I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." God Himself used this same phrase in Exodus 3:14, when speaking to Moses and instructing him to tell the children of Israel "I AM" has sent him (Moses). The Jews knew what Jesus was claiming; therefore, they picked up stones to stone Him. To make it more evident, Jesus asked the Jews later (John 10:32-33) why they were trying to stone Him; and they

replied, "...Because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." Without a doubt, it can be assured that Christ Jesus Himself claimed to be God.

In conclusion, we know that Jesus is 100% man, and we know that He is 100% God. But how can this be?

A cup may be a good illustration of Jesus' human and divine nature. A cup is still a cup, no matter what is inside of it. The outer shell is still the same. So it is with Jesus, Who "poured out" His divine attributes for a time, and became a man. Jesus was still God, even though His divine attributes were poured out for a time. A cup is a cup all the time. This is why Colossians 2:9 says, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."



Methods

Break up the class into small groups; and have each group discuss and give the best description they can on Who Jesus Christ is.

The Big Event

Volume 11

Lesson 26



Bible References

Luke 2:1-14

Philippians 2:5-11



Theme

God became a Man, in order to bring men to God.

- 8 "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.
- 9 "And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.
- 10 "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.
- 11 "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.
- 12 "And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."



Scripture Reading

Luke 2:7-12

7 "And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.



Memory Verse

Philippians 2:3

"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."



Outline

- I. The Creator and King of This Universe Was Born into This World in a Lowly State. (Luke 2:12)
- A. The humble birth of the Lord Jesus Christ shows us that He did come to earth as a man, in order to identify with man's deepest needs.
- B. The true meaning of Christmas is found in 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."

II. There Was No Room for Him, in the Inn.

- A. Christ experienced rejection, from His birth to His Ascension. (Isaiah 53:3; 1 Peter 2:7-9)
- B. We are not to be surprised, when the world rejects us or the Christ of Christmas. (John 15:20)
- C. Let us always keep our hearts open to receive Him.

III. Christ's Ultimate Gift Was To Die for the World.

- A. Jesus, being in the form of God, humbled Himself. (Philippians 2:5-11)
 - 1. Jesus was born into this world as a Man.
 - 2. Jesus became obedient to His heavenly Father, unto death, in order to redeem us.
- B. The greatest gift that we can bring to God is ourselves. (Romans 12:1)



Spiritual Truths

- Our God is so awesome He was willing to become one of us to save us.
- God in His wisdom knew how important it was for Jesus to come to earth as man so we could know He is touched by our feelings and weaknesses.
- We cannot reach the world by striving after the world and its pleasures.
- The world will be drawn to God as they see Jesus in us.
- As we give Christ first place in our hearts others will see the joy and peace He brings into our lives.
- Only as we sacrifice will God's will be accomplished.



Lesson Material

The story of Christ's humble birth reminds us, once again, that life's most treasured and meaningful moments are often found in thoughtful deeds of love and kindness.

Elaborate decorations and expensive gifts can never fill the God-shaped vacuum (void) in the human heart. The gift that fills the vacuum is the gift of salvation offered by Jesus.

Christmas is empty and meaningless, apart from Christ and His love shining through us. The most cherished moments are those when we give of ourselves, in order to bring hope to others.

Christ brought hope to all mankind by His birth, as well as His death and resurrection. He continues brings hope to all of us as we wait for His return; and we anticipate spending eternity with Him in heaven.



Methods

Ask the students to share what aspect of Christmas means the most to them.

Discuss which gives the most satisfaction: To give a gift, or to receive a gift?

Select places where the class could go Christmas caroling, such as nursing homes, shut-ins, etc.

Have the students bring in food and clothing for the needy.

Make sure each student present has received the greatest Gift -- the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Thankfulness

Volume 11

Lesson 27



Bible References

Deuteronomy 11:26-28

Psalms 68:19

Matthew 6:33

Romans 1:20-25

2 Timothy 3:1-5

James 1:17



Theme

An unthankful heart is often an inner (root) cause of problems that are expressed outwardly in attitudes.



Scripture Reading

Deuteronomy 11:26-28

26 "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;

27 "A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day:

28 "And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known."



Memory Verse

Psalms 68:19

"Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation."



Outline

I. Society Is Characterized by Unthankfulness.

- A. The blessings of God are often taken for granted.
- B. Things quickly lose their ability to satisfy, once they are obtained.
- C. Unthankfulness is a source of great unrest.

II. Thankfulness Produces Obedience.

- A. Thankfulness produces faith, which is necessary to obedience.
- B. Unthankfulness produces rebellion.

III. Disobedience to God Brings a Curse.

- A. God's laws are not arbitrary.
- B. Unthankfulness is a sin.
- C. Adam and Eve's disobedience brought a curse.

IV. Unthankfulness Is Reflective of the Sin Nature of Man.

- A. Unthankfulness is often expressed outwardly in rebellion.
- B. Rebellion takes on many forms, such as the works of the flesh.

V. Thankfulness Must Be Learned.

- A. Learn to be thankful for the simple things.
- B. Practice thankfulness with others.
- C. Above all, be thankful to God.



Spiritual Truths

- Society is characterized by unthankfulness.
- The many blessings of God are often taken for granted.
- Thankfulness is associated with obedience.
- Unthankfulness is associated with disobedience.
- Unthankfulness is expressed in sinful actions and attitudes.
- Thankfulness is associated with the blessings of God.
- Unthankfulness is a sin, and is therefore associated with a curse.

• Thankfulness must be learned and practiced in all things.



Lesson Material

2 Timothy 3:1-5 says, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away."

All of these things characterize our society today, but one of them, in particular, usually gets overlooked --unthankfulness. It perhaps is not as obviously evil, as is "blasphemer" or "fierce." However, if it was not important, it would not be mentioned. God does not waste words. Every word of the Bible is there by design. Although unthankfulness is not obviously evil, it is a condition of the heart which is the root cause of behaviors that are more obvious, such as cynicism and pride.

God said that unthankfulness would characterize the world in the last days. We certainly live in an ungrateful society. The many blessings of God are taken for granted every day. That which we desire to obtain and strive to gain soon lose their excitement. We rarely become satisfied with what we have.

If someone could be taught to be thankful for what God has already given them, it is likely that they would require very little additional instruction concerning personal attitudes. The blessings of God are associated with a thankful heart. The cursings of God are associated with an unthankful heart. Among those are the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21) and the attitudes that accompany them.

Thankfulness produces obedience. Unthankfulness produces rebellion. If you are thankful for your parents, you will obey them. If you are thankful for God, you will obey Him. If you are thankful for the Bible, you will read it. If you are thankful for your friends, you will serve them in love. If you are thankful for your education, you will apply yourself to the best of your ability. If you are thankful for the food you eat, you will not complain about its quality.

Adam and Eve were guilty of unthankfulness. Satan convinced them there was more to life than the Garden of Eden. He made it seem as if God was keeping something from them that they deserved to have. Satan told them that they could be as gods, if they so desired. (Genesis 3:5) Unthankfulness, evidenced by a lack of satisfaction with God's provision, produced disobedience.

Romans 1:20-25 says, "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: 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. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the

glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things."

Hearts darkened by unthankfulness toward God are responsible for many of the atheistic philosophies that Satan uses to deceive the world. Existentialism, for example, is the basis for the conduct of many who claim that there is no hell, no consequences for your actions, and no separation from God, and that it is only important to live for now. Man, among the other constituents of God's creation, is worshipped instead of God, by minds darkened by sin rooted in unthankfulness toward God.

Unfortunately, God's laws are not arbitrary. He does not "wink" at sin. Every one of our actions is associated with either a blessing or a curse, according to Deuteronomy 11:26-28: "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known."

Disobedience never tells us about the curses it will bring. Free sex never says that it will cause disease and pervert the mind. Drugs never say that they will destroy your mind and body through addiction. Rebellion never says that it will cause a lack of discipline.

Unthankfulness is a sin, just like these things. Unthankfulness brings a curse, just like these other things. There are specific curses associated with being ungrateful. A wide variety of sinful attitudes and actions are associated with the sin of unthankfulness.

Just as apple trees always produce apples and orange trees always produce oranges, an unthankful heart is always expressed outwardly in negative attitudes. Jealousy, for example, is a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21), which is rooted in a heart characterized by unthankfulness.

When God is not acknowledged as the Source of all things, He is taken for granted. When all of life's blessings are not attributed to God, they, too are taken for granted. Thus, when He is taken for granted, or when His provision ceases to satisfy, unthankfulness is at work. Jealousy, using the above example, is always associated with a lack of satisfaction. Ultimately, that lack of satisfaction points to God, Who is the Source of all things. A thankful heart, in contrast, is never jealous, because contentment with (and gratefulness for) God's provision is dominant. Psalms 68:19 says, "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation."

When we are ungrateful, it breaks the tender heart of God, Who gave His only Son, Jesus Christ, to die in our place. We know that Jesus paid our way by dying on the cross, but we do not appreciate it. We take it for granted; and our love for Him eventually grows cold.

When we become thankful to God, Who daily bears our burdens, we will begin to get close to Him again. We will appreciate the sacrifice that He made for us. Thankfulness must be learned. It must be practiced.

When is the last time you thanked your parents for working to support you;

for buying and preparing your food; for buying your clothes to wear; for giving you money to spend; for sending you to school; for giving you rules to protect you? Perhaps you should learn to appreciate the value of these things. Learn to be thankful for your parents, your home, the things you have, your job, your education, the food you eat. And, most of all, learn to be thankful to God, for He is the Source of all things, and He has given everything to you, because He loves you.

We can learn an important lesson from Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."



Methods

Before the lesson, ask volunteers to stand up and mention something for which they are thankful. During the lesson, point out that it is sometimes difficult to think of something to be thankful for.

At the close of the lesson, pass out a cracker and an empty paper cup to everyone in the room. Challenge them to eat the cracker the next morning for breakfast, along with a cup of water. They are not to eat anything else, until the evening meal.

Instead of eating, instruct them to thank God for all that He has given them, especially their food.

Challenge the students to fast once each month in this fashion, always substituting the time not spent eating with thankful prayer to the Lord.

Ask the students to share their experience during the next meeting.

Giving Our Best to Him

Volume 11

Lesson 28



Bible References

Judges 5:31

Daniel 12:3

Matthew 5:14, 16-20

Acts 13:47

Ephesians 5:2

1 John 1:7; 2:6



Theme

The purpose of this lesson is to find godly examples of those who lived lives before God with an "excellent spirit."



1 Peter 2:11-20

- 11 "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;
- 12 "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.
- 13 "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;
- 14 "Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.
- 15 "For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:
- 16 "As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.
- 17 "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

- 18 "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.
- 19 "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.
- 20 "For what glory is it, if, when ye buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."



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. God Is Worthy of Our Best.

- A. The apostle Paul said, "...I delight in the law of God after the inward man."
 (Romans 7:22)
 - 1. For us to delight in obeying God and His laws is proof to the unbelieving

- world that there is truly joy in a life with God.
- 2. Our redeemed, inward man and inward joy in Christ shines outward to others, who are studying our life.
- B. Serving the Lord with gladness will please the Lord. (See Psalms 100 below.)
 - 1. Different ways to worship, thank and honor the Lord for everything He has given us are found in Psalms 100:
 - a. "Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands." (verse 1)
 - b. "Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing." (verse 2)
 - c. "Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." (verse 3)
 - d. "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name." (verse 4)
 - e. "For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations." (verse 5)
 - 2. We see in Psalms 100 that we can use our spirit, soul and body as an instrument of worship to God. It is our heart attitude that we must examine. Thankfulness, praise, and our expression of praise by worshipping brings Him honor. We do not stand dumb and silent; but we praise Him aloud with acts of worship such as singing, joyfulness, and giving thanks with our lips.
 - 3. Our bodies can be used for vehicles to give Him honor, instead of dishonor. (Romans 12:1)

- a. Paul said that in a large house, there are things of beauty and things that are best kept in a closet. He compares this to our lives. A life that glorifies God can stand in the light for everyone to see; but those who do not live to honor God are should not be displayed. (2 Timothy 2:20-21)
 - (1) They must purge themselves from iniquity in their lives.
 - (2) They are to be a "vessel" of honor and sanctified, so that God can use them.
- b. There is a difference between those who honor God and those that only talk the "talk" without bearing fruit. (John 15:2) The Lord is our Husbandman; and He is aware of what branches need to be pruned, so that we can bear more fruit.
- C. God is worthy of a life that glorifies Him.
 - 1. Revelation 4:8-11 states that sanctified believers fall down before Him and willingly, unashamedly give him praise and thanks:
 - a. "...Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." (verse 8)
 - b. "And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever," (verse 9)
 - c. "The four and twenty elders fell down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying," (verse 10)
 - d. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and

- power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (verse 11)
- 2. Note: The elders who worshipped God in heaven were men who lived on earth honoring God, or they would not have received the crowns to cast at the feet of Jesus.

II. What Did Joseph Give Back to God, In relation to Our Giving Back to God?

- A. He forgave his brothers' sins. (Genesis 45:15)
 - 1. Joseph's forgiveness to his brothers is a picture of the forgiveness of Jesus toward us.
 - 2. Jesus wants us to forgive, so that we can be free from anything holding us back from God. (Matthew 5:21-24; Mark 11:25-26) Unforgiveness interrupts our fellowship with God.
- B. Joseph returned good for evil to his brothers. (Genesis 50:19-21)
- C. Joseph honored his father with dutiful, affectionate devotion. (Genesis 46:29)
 - 1. He gathered his family together, and he felt a duty and a responsibility to save their lives from famine and starvation. He loved his family.
 - 2. We can honor God, when we choose to honor our parents and bear the burden for the salvation of our family members.

- D. Resistance to temptation is our expression of loyalty to God. (Genesis 39:7-9)
 - 1. Joseph knew that sleeping with another man's wife was wickedness, and a sin against God.
 - 2. God has commanded us to order our lives properly. Sinning against the Ten Commandments does not fall within the boundaries of obeying God. Psalms 50:23 says, "...To him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God."
 - a. We also read in Genesis 39 that because Joseph refused to sleep with his employer's wife, he was falsely accused and thrown into prison. We must be prepared to pay a price for obedience to God's commands. (2 Timothy 3:12)
 - b. We must also be prepared to expect God to restore us thirty, sixty, or one hundred times over with His abundant provision for our lives. (Luke 8:8)
- E. Honoring God gave Joseph favor with God. (41:16)
 - In the presence of Pharaoh, Joseph confessed his belief in God. He told Pharaoh that the answer to the meaning of his dream would come from God.
 - Joseph denied himself any glory for the wisdom he had, but rather directed the glory to God. God was the Giver of Joseph's gift of divine knowledge.
- F. Joseph is an excellent example of a life that was given back to God. Joseph can be shown as our example of how we can please God.

III. How Did the Life of Daniel Honor God?

- A. Daniel was promoted to the highest office. (Daniel 2:48)
 - 1. Daniel was so highly respected, that king Darius wanted to set him over the whole kingdom.
 - 2. There was nothing that Daniel was doing in his walk with God amidst an unbelieving nation that put him at fault with anyone or anything in the kingdom of Chaldea.
- B. Daniel maintained his spiritual life in the middle of his place of employment. (Daniel 6:10)
 - 1. Daniel 6:4 says, "Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he {was} faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him."
 - Evil co-workers sought to find some way to trap Daniel, so that he would have to loose his favor with king Darius and be thrown into a den of lions to be killed.
 - 3. Daniel continued to pray three times a day, contrary to the king's decree. 1 Peter 2:19 tells us the right way to fashion our lives in this situation. "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully." Daniel makes this verse come to life for us.
- C. Daniel overcame great conflicts.
 - 1. Between self-indulging in the rich foods of Chaldea and his conviction

- to abstain, he chose abstinence. (Daniel 1:8-15)
- Between magic and heavenly wisdom in the interpretation of dreams, he chose God's heavenly wisdom. (Daniel 2:1-47)
- 3. When heathen idolatry was arrayed against loyalty to God, he chose loyalty to God. (Daniel 3:1-30)
- D. There is no evidence of Daniel pressuring his co-workers to live under the same convictions that he did, as far as "eating healthy" for God.
 - 1. On the contrary, there is more evidence in the Bible that each man or woman has their own individual convictions, as far as what we are to do with our lives for God. (Philippians 2:12) We must each work out our own salvation, with care and contemplation.
 - 2. Philippians 3:20 says, "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." In other words, we are to live like citizens of heaven, while here on earth.
- E. The lifestyle of Daniel is truly a picture of a godly citizen in the middle of ungodly surroundings.

IV. What Can Ye Give Back to God?

- A. We can give Him our obedience to His laws and commandments.
- B. Loyalty to God -- we can live a life that is pleasing God, using Christ, Paul, Daniel or Joseph as our models.

- 1. We can obey the ordinances of the land. (1 Peter 2:17)
- 2. Honor the leaders of our community and nation by praying for them. (1 Timothy 2:2)
- 3. Learn to forgive. (Mark 11:25-26)
- 4. Resist temptation. (Matthew 5:19-20)
- 5. Have an excellent spirit, like our examples in the Bible. (Philippians 2:5)
- C. We can let our light shine before men. (Matthew 5:16)
- D. We can walk in the light which God has given us, so that we can have fellowship with Him and draw others to Christ. (1 John 1:7)
- E. Abstinence from sin -- we can serve Him with our whole life committed to Him, and not be self-serving. (Ephesians 5:8-10)
- F. Be like Christ. 1 John 2:6 says, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."



Spiritual Truths

- God is worth of our thanks, our praise, and a life that honors Him.
- We can see examples in the Bible of those who gave Him their best. We can learn how these people were blessed by giving their lives to God.
- When our lifestyle is ordered to honor God, it provokes unbelievers to jealousy and turns them to Christ.

 Our loyalty to God, and our walking in the light of what He has revealed to us, are our gifts back to God, in thanks for all He has done for us.



Lesson Material

The reason that Daniel and Joseph were introduced into a study about how we can give our best to God in return for all that He has done for us, is that their lives brought glory and honor to God. Besides bringing honor to the God Whom they served, they had godly qualities that were noteworthy. We can learn, by looking closely into their lifestyles and spiritual habits, just exactly how it is we can give God our absolute best in thanksgiving for what He has done for us. They both had the excellency that God is looking for in us.

This lesson does not focus on why God is worthy or the countless ways in which He has blessed us. It would take volumes to explain why He is worthy and what He has done for us. However, we are zeroing in on a lesson that speaks of our own desire to give back something to God as an expression of our gratitude toward Him. What can we possibly do for a God, Who far outreaches our capacity to give or love, Whose holiness, purity and unselfishness extends beyond the span of our finite mind? Can we really give anything at all of ourselves to such an awesome, magnificent One as He, when we have fallen so short of His standards? The answer is "yes;" and there are some things that we can give to Him that are very acceptable, even coming from imperfect

beings such as ourselves. (Romans 12:1) That is the purpose of this study — to learn what those things are. We are trying to answer the question, "What is He looking for from us in return, as an expression of our appreciation?"

God awaits our gift to Him of the pure, sweet-smelling savor of a life lived righteously before Him. This is precious in His sight; and He delights in us, as we live for Him. It makes Him sing: "...he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing." (Zephaniah 3:19) God sings, because of us! We must surely understand the pleasure and beauty of two-sided love. When we love someone and place them as the "darling" of our heart, but do not receive the love in return, it becomes an unfulfilled heartache. That kind of love causes many a soul great frustration and disdain. There is a similarity between us and God -- we take pleasure in love expressed and in love returned. God is delighted when we find ways of returning love to Him; but, sadly, not many have fully manifested that skill. There is one that can return His love, however, and she is loyal to Him. She watches His every move. She is still learning this "pure love" phenomenon, but she definitely shows potential.

The Bride-to-be of God loves God. The church is learning to love with a skill only learned through a masterful eye that watches His every move. Because of her love for God, the bride keeps trying, until she succeeds. The Bible says that a righteous man falls seven times, and each time he rises up again. (Proverbs 24:16) Seven times of failure to God's betrothed is seven more reasons to praise Him for lifting us up. (Psalms 119:164) Why does the church praise Him in the midst of trouble, suffering and failure? Why does

the bride respond so readily to this invisible God of secret and mystery? Because we can see Him more and more plainly, as the days pass by. Why do we keep trying to return our insufficient love to Him? The answer is that we know we believe in Him, and He in us.

Like the prophet Daniel, we can behave with an excellent spirit, which pleases both God and unbelieving man. (Daniel 5:12) Our loyalty to God is not picturesque of a blurry scene consisting of green rolling hills and blue flowing streams. It is instead a love of determination and purpose; and we deliberately order our steps to do His commandments, even in the face of threat. For Daniel, this led to jealousy from the presidents and princes, and caused his demise. But Daniel, through God's wisdom, strong loyalty, and a determination to trust God, was saved from the jaws of lions.

The apostle Paul spoke of projecting Christ to others. He wanted to bestow Christ on others. Paul wanted to let the Jewish people, who had rejected the gospel, see his godly qualities and thereby be provoked to jealousy and choose Christ. If such glory could be manifested in the gentiles when God lived inside them, then how much more would God's eminence shine through the Jews (the original branches)! And if we, like Paul, can live a life in Christ that stimulates others to want Him, then we are giving our best to God. Our goal is to walk alongside the unbeliever and stimulate them to seek

after God. That is more easily said than done! It is plain to see that in ourselves, we are unable to do anything which pleases God, except by the help of the Holy Spirit in our lives. When we are successful in being our best in Christ, then it is truly an occasion for both us and God to rejoice together.



Methods

Let the students name some role models in their everyday lives (i.e., godly parents, good parents, godly teachers, good teachers, godly pastors).

Teach students to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing for role models.

Have the students define in their own words what an "act of worship" is (i.e. singing, clapping to God, playing instruments for God).

Put together a special "thanks and praise" group of students, who can bring instruments and percussion and song together to worship in class.

Have everyone stand in the presence of God, and together sing in praise and thanksgiving to Him.

The Pathway to Success

Volume 11

Lesson 29



Bible References

Genesis 39:3

2 Chronicles 26:5

Joshua 1:8



Theme

The importance of the Word of God in finding God's plan, enjoying God's presence, and experiencing God's power.



Scripture Reading

Joshua 1:1-9

1 "Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,

- 2 "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.
- 3 "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.
- 4 "From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.
- 5 "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.
- 6 "Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.
- 7 "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.
- 8 "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.

9 "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."



Memory Verse

Joshua 1:8

"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."



Outline

- I. Definition of a Successful Person.
- A. One who enters the plan of God. (verses 1-4)
- B. One who enjoys the presence of God. (verses 5, 9; Compare Psalms 23:4 and Hebrews 13:5-6)

- C. One who experiences the power of God. (verses 6, 7, 9)
- II. The Secret to Biblical Success Is In Verse 8 -- Doing the Right Thing with the Word of God, the Bible.
- A. Take our Bible and look it up.
- B. Take our Bible and let it in.
- C. Take our Bible and live it out.



Spiritual Truths

- True success is biblical success.
- The Word of God is our source of direction for success.



Lesson Material

All of us want to prosper and be successful, whether it is academically, or athletically, or professionally. Is it legitimate for a Christian to strive for success? Absolutely! God wants us to have the right kind of success; and it is this kind of success and prosperity that He offers us, in this great promise in Joshua 1:8.

Read Joshua 1:1-9. Notice that in these verses, there is a description of the truly

successful man. Where God speaks of a successful man, He means:

One who enters the PLAN of God: Verses 1-4 describe how Joshua entered into God's plan for his life, which was to succeed Moses as leader of the children of Israel. Joshua entered God's plan, when he heard God calling him and commissioning him. In the same way, God has a plan for your life and for the lives of every one of His children; and we can only be successful if we are fulfilling God's plan for our life -- that is, obeying His voice and doing His will.

One who enjoys the PRESENCE of God: Verse 5 and the last part of verse 9 contain the promise that God made to Joshua that He would be with him, just as He had been with Moses. This is true success and real prosperity -- to be conscious all of the time of the presence of the Lord, and to know that He is with us every moment of every day, and that He will never fail us. Compare Psalms 23:4 with Hebrews 13:5-6.

One who experiences the POWER of God: Verses 6, 7, and 9 contain God's commands to Joshua to "be strong...and very courageous." All of God's commands are God's enabling. The same powerful enabling that God promised and made available to Moses and to Joshua, He has promised and made available to us through the Person of the Holy Spirit, Who dwells within us. (John 14:16-17)

The question, however, is this: How do we achieve this success? What must we do, in order to enter the plan of God, enjoy the presence of God, and experience the power of God? What is the secret? The whole secret is in verse 8 -- doing the right thing with the "book of the law," the Word of God, the Bible. Three things are indicated in verse 8:

1. The first step to success: We must take our Bible and LOOK IT UP.

In other words, we must frequently and regularly take our Bible and read and study it. When God says, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth...," He means, "Feed on it. Let it be food for your souls. Eat and enjoy it, for it is the only food that will feed and sustain your spiritual life." In the Bible, there is milk for babies (1 Peter 2:2), and meat for grownup Christians (1 Corinthians 3:1-2); and in the Bible, God gives us His balanced diet for His own children. (Matthew 4:4) Perhaps you feel that it is different to read some parts of the Bible, because you cannot understand them. Do not stop reading the parts that you do not understand, for those parts are still food for your spirit. Do you understand all of the food you eat, of what it consists and how it is made? Yet, if you eat it, you enjoy it and receive the benefit of it.

2. The second step to success: We must take our Bible and LET IT IN.

We are not only to have the Word of God in our mouths, but God says that we are to "meditate therein day and night." The Word is to enter into our hearts and our minds. (Colossians 3:16) We must allow the Word to "dwell deeply" in us. The word "meditate" is a critical word. We are the "fast food" generation. But the Word of God must be like a seven-course meal -- ingested slowly, and digested carefully. The word "mediate" also means "to bow down." In other words, we must be in subjection to the Word of God. We are to bow to its authority. Every part of our life must be in subjection to the authority of God's Word. The Bible is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. (Psalms 1:2; James 1:21)

3. The third step to success: We must take our Bible and LIVE IT OUT.

The important words to notice now in verse 8 are these: "...that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein." Now, compare verse 7: "...that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law." The truth we look up and let in must be lived out. In other words, we must allow it to become a part of us. (Titus 2:10; James 1:22-25) Dwight L. Moody's life motto was 1 John 2:17: "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." The key word is "doeth."

This is the three-fold secret of the life that is truly successful and prosperous.



Methods

Here is a suggestion for a class participation. Give each member of the class the following suggestions for helping in their devotional study of the Bible:

- 1. Begin your devotion with prayer. (Psalms 119:18)
- 2. Pray that you will be guided to some definite thought for yourself.
- 3. Dwell prayerfully on this thought -- Is it counsel? A precept? A warning? A promise? An experience? A command?
- 4. When its meaning is clear, use it as a basis of a prayer for grace to realize it in experience.
- 5. Yield yourself in full surrender to its truth and power.
 - 6. Link it to truths already known.
- 7. Trust God to reproduce it in your life that day.

The teacher may want to pick a scripture portion and read it out loud. Then discuss point "3" from the outline; and make this exercise the emphasis of the class.

Decision Making: Part I

Volume 11 Lesson 30



Bible References

Exodus 32:20

Numbers 13:30

Joshua 24:15

1 Samuel 17:9

Ruth 1:16

Acts 21:13

2 Corinthians 13:1

Galatians 1:16; 6:6-9

1 Thessalonians 2:10

2 Timothy 2:2



Theme

Our decisions will always reflect our character.



Scripture Reading

Joshua 24:15-18

15 "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Ammonites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

16 "And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;

17 "For the LORD our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we passed:

18 "And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Ammonites which dwelt in the land: therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God."



Memory Verse

James 1:8

"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."



Outline

- I. There Are Only Two Ways to Live on Planet Earth.
- A. God's way is serving in the army of God.
- B. Satan's way is serving with the powers of darkness.
 - 1. There is no D.M.Z. (Demilitarized Zone) in this battle.
 - 2. We can not have it both ways.
 - 3. We will always reap what we sow. (Galatians 6:6-9)
 - a. There is a price to pay for bad decisions.
 - b. There is fruit to harvest for good decisions.
 - (1) Others are usually affected by our decisions. (Personal examples could be shared.)
 - (2) It may take years for good or bad consequences to manifest. (Personal examples could be shared.)

- C. At some point in our life, we must make a public stand.
 - 1. Decision of Moses. (Exodus 32:20)
 - 2. Decision of Caleb. (Numbers 13:30)
 - 3. Decision of Joshua (Joshua 24:15)
 - 4. Decision of Ruth. (Ruth 1:16)
 - 5. Decision of Paul. (Acts 21:13, Galatians 1:16)
- D. We face a constant battle, as we are confronted with decisions every day. (1 Samuel 17:9)
 - 1. Everyone must battle with difficult choices, many of which are brought upon us unexpectedly.
 - a. Drugs.
 - b. Sex.
 - c. Pornography.
 - d. Alcohol.
 - e. Money.
 - f. Cigarettes.
 - g. Immoral living.
 - h. Gossip.
 - 2. Depending on how we choose, we will either live in victory serving God, or we will live in defeat, serving and being in bondage to the area in our life that we choose to serve.
- E. Our decisions reflect our character; and they either damage or confirm our testimony.
 - 1. We are witnesses and representatives of God. (1 Thessalonians 2:10; 2 Timothy 2:2; 2 Corinthians 13:1)
 - 2. We are who we run with. In other words, we are influenced by the people with whom we spend the most time.

II. How To Make a Good Decision.

- A. Pray. (Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- B. Seek counsel. (Judges 18:5; 1 Samuel 14:37; Psalms 1:1-2; 16:7; 73:24; Proverbs 11:14; 12:15; 15:22; 19:20; 20:18; Isaiah 11:2)
- C. Does the decision glorify God?
- D. Will the decision affect our testimony?
- E. Will the decision bring reproach to the name of the Lord?
- F. Does the decision line up to the Word of God?
- G. Will the decision affect others around us? And if so, how?
- H. Can we afford to make this decision?
 - 1. Financial decisions.
 - 2. Time management decisions.
- I. Will the decision produce fruit?
- J. Will others be driven away from the Lord, because of my decision?



Spiritual Truths

- There are only two ways to live. (Matthew 6:24)
- We all have to make choices. Making no decision is in itself making a decision.

- We will reap what we sow.
- Good decisions will glorify God; bad decisions will glorify Satan.
- If we surrender in the light of bad decisions and repent, God will use that experience for his glory.
- Our testimony will reflect our character.
- Our bad decisions as Christians may bring dishonor to God and turn nonbelievers away from finding Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. It may cause them to say, "If that is what Christianity is all about, I want nothing to do with it."



Lesson Material

It is important to understand that teenagers want to be accepted and liked by their peers. For many teenagers, being accepted by peers is the only acceptance that they receive. There is no positive interaction at home; and running with the crowd is a way of helping their self-esteem.

Teenagers are faced with decisions every day: whether or not to do homework, and how to do it; whether or not to do household chores, and how to do them; whether or not to accept Jesus Christ as Savior, and how to live for Him; whether or not to have sex, use drugs, drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, etc. The pressures on teenagers are tremendous.

In this age of modern technology and an ever-changing society, it can be hard to imagine what it must be like to be a teenager. It is our task and responsibility to try to instill some Christian values in our young people, during the short time that we have their attention. We must do all that we can do, in order to impart boldness and confidence in our young people, so that they can lift up the Name of Jesus Christ in their schools and on their jobs.

Teenagers want to be accepted. For many teens, their self-esteem is at an alltime low; and to be a witness for Jesus Christ in the world would not be easy for them.

We must show teenagers that some decisions that they make at their age will remain with them for the rest of their lives. So, it is critically important that we give teenagers the tools to make wise decisions.

We need to be able to relate to the teens, explaining how decisions we have made in the past have affected our lives, and how making the right decisions have helped us. We need to communicate that making the right decision does not necessarily mean the road after making the decision will be easy. Life is not a rose garden, nor is life fair; but one thing we do know: God is good, and all things work for good to them who love Him and are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)

We need to communicate that all decisions should glorify God, and that all decisions will affect our testimony and reflect our character. Even small decisions, such as speaking in a harsh or kind tone of voice, will affect someone. There is life

and death in the power of the tongue (Proverbs 18:21); and young people need to be careful with what they say. They tend to speak before they think -- and we can all relate to that. How many of us would undo some things we have said, if we could? We need to relate those examples to the class, in the short period of time that they are with us.

One of the biggest reasons that teenagers leave the church is that they hear about the fruit of the Spirit on Sunday, but do not see the fruit of the Spirit in practice Monday through Saturday. It is critical that the teacher and the students practice what is preached. Teenagers are watching us, in order to see if the decisions that we make line up to what is being taught.



Methods

Have the students interact with each other and talk about some of the decisions they have made and how those decisions have affected their lives and the lives of those around them. (Try not to lecture; but get them to participate.)

We need to communicate that God will use the decisions that we make to mold us and shape us and conform us to the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. (Romans 8:29) An altar call may be appropriate for the end of class, for those who have made bad decisions.

Decision Making: Part II

Volume 11

Lesson 31



Bible References

2 Samuel 14:17

2 Samuel 19:35

1 Kings 3:9-14

Isaiah 30:21

Matthew 16:3

Romans 8:28-29

Galatians 6:7-8



Theme

Discerning the Lord's will in our everyday decisions.



Scripture Reading

1 Kings 3:9-14

- 9 "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?
- 10 "And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.
- 11 "And God said unto him, because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;
- 12 "Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.
- 13 "And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.
- 14 "And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments,

as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days."



Isaiah 30:21

"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."



Outline

- I. We Are Faced with Situations Every Day, which Require Decisions.
- A. In every decision, we need God's wisdom.
 - We need to be able to discern good from evil. (2 Samuel 14:17; 2 Samuel 19:35)
 - 2. Like Solomon, we need to seek the wisdom of the Lord. (1 Kings 3:9-14)
- B. We need to ask basic questions, in making decisions.
 - 1. Is the decision pleasing to God?
 - 2. Does it glorify His name?
 - 3. Does the decision line up to His Word?

- 4. Will the decision affect my testimony?
- II. How to Know God's Will, in Making a Decision. (Romans 8:28-29)
- A. If we trust God and seek His direction, He will guide us in every situation and every decision.
- B. What if the decision turns bad, after it is made in good faith? (Romans 8:28-29; Isaiah 30:21)
 - 1. God will honor us, if we made the decision to the best of our ability at the time.
 - 2. If the decision turns out to be bad, God can still use what has happened, in order to work in our lives to conform us into the image of Jesus Christ.
- C. Examples of decisions that we have to start thinking about. (Good place for interaction -- have teens complete list of decisions.)
 - 1. Career.
 - 2. Education.
 - 3. Marriage.
 - 4. Family.
 - 5. Ministry calling.
 - 6. Serving God.
 - 7. Serving man.
 - 8. Finances.
 - 9. Sex.
- D. "Gray area" decisions in life:
 - 1. Stealing from employer.
 - a. Eraser.
 - b. Note paper.
 - c. Petty cash.

- 2. Will these decisions eventually catch up with us? (Galatians 6:7-8)
 - a. Smoking.
 - b. Drinking.
 - c. Careless driving.
 - d. (Have teens interact, in order to add to this list.)



Spiritual Truths

- It is virtually impossible to always make perfect decisions. Accepting Jesus Christ as your personal Savior is the only sure-fire, perfect decision that man can make.
- Whatever decisions we made in life without Christ will be subject to imperfection. There is no perfect job, no perfect employer, no perfect marriage, no perfect child, etc.
- If we walk carefully before God and listen to His voice and follow His direction, He will guide us and tell us what path to take, when we are faced with decisions.
- Decisions may not always turn out the way we thought they would; but, if we love God and are called according to His purpose, all things will work together for good.



Lesson Material

Once again, it is important to get teens talking about the decisions that they are facing in their life. The teacher should use questions to get the students to roundtable their concerns, fears, and questions about decisions.

The teacher should share some important and specific decisions that he or she had to make as a teenager, and how those decisions affected his or her walk with the Lord. The teacher should share bad decisions, as well as good ones. Let the teenagers know that they will make bad decisions in their lives; but, if they love God, those decisions will turn around and work for their good. They may not see the results for years and years, but eventually they will be able to look back and see how God worked in their lives, shaping and molding them into the image of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We are all human; and we all need to lean on the everlasting arms of Jesus Christ, to help us in all situations.



Methods

Have the students roundtable their concerns about certain tough decisions fading them. Give scriptural feedback, comparing scripture with scripture.

Use feedback from students, in order to help them in decision-making. Encourage

students to seek godly counsel and to seek the counsel of God's Word. In the multitude of counselors, there is great wisdom.

The teacher must do his or her homework to validate the "right" decisions with examples from the Bible.

Decision Making: Part III

Volume 11

Lesson 32



Bible References

Genesis 1:11-12, 21, 24-25, 29

Deuteronomy 30:19

Joshua 24:15

1 Chronicles 21:10-11

Job 34:4, 33

Proverbs 1:29; 3:31

Matthew 7:1-5; 18:23-25

Mark 16:15-16

Luke 13:1-5

Acts 2:38

Galatians 5:19-23; 6:7-8



Scripture Reading

Galatians 6:7-8

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

8 "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."



Memory Verse

Galatians 6:7

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



Theme

The universal law of sowing and reaping.



Outline

I. We Have the Power to Choose.

- A. God will not violate our free will; He will hold us responsible for our decisions. (1 Chronicles 21:10-11; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 13:1-5)
- B. Decisions that we make today will affect us in the future. This law never changes. (Genesis 1:11-12, 21, 24-25, 29)
- C. If we sow bad seed, we will reap bad fruit. (Galatians 5:19-21)
 - 1. Everything God created reproduces after its own kind.
 - a. Birds reproduce birds.
 - b. Ants reproduce ants.
 - c. Trees reproduce trees.
 - d. Whales reproduce whales.
 - 2. Fleshly man reproduces fleshly
 - a. Anger reproduces anger.
 - b. Deceit reproduces deceit.
 - c. Lying reproduces lying.
 - 3. There is an old American saying, "What goes around, comes around."
 - a. If we constantly make decisions to steal, cheat and deceive, the day will come when those same qualities will be put into practice against us.
 - b. If we have an unforgiving spirit, the day will come when we will need forgiveness, and it will not be available. (Matthew 7:1-5; 18:23-35)

- D. If we sow to the Spirit, we will reap everlasting life. (Galatians 6:8)
- II. We Know that We Have a Free Will and Have Power to Choose.
- A. Joshua 24:15.
- B. Job 34:4, 33.
- C. Proverbs 1:29.

III. The Scripture Tells Us that We Are to Make Choices.

- A. Deuteronomy 30:19.
- B. Joshua 24:15.
- C. 1 Chronicles 21:10-11.
- D. Proverbs 3:31.
- E. Luke 13:1-5.
- F. Acts 2:38.



Spiritual Truths

- People may not see the choices we make in secret, but God does.
- Our choices will affect others around us.
- We cannot say that we truly love God, and continue to make decisions that violate His will and Word.



Lesson Material

One of the last things we wanted to hear as a teenager was how our decisions could affect us in the future. We thought we knew it all; and we generally did not want to listen to anyone older than us, telling us what to do. We thought that parents and teachers were invading our privacy. Basically, we wanted them to get lost, so that we could go through life making our own decisions -- because, up until a certain point, most of our decisions had been made for us.

We call this rebellion, independence, coming of age, maturity, etc. We can look back on those days and call it for what it really is -- stupidity, stubbornness. If we had only listened carefully to what was being said to us, then we may have avoided many of the pitfalls that we fell into.

Today's teens are probably no different than we were. They have been told what to do for many years; and now, they are starting to make some decisions on their own. Our job is to encourage them to examine the full consequences of those decisions, in the light of God's Word.

Again, we can try to explain some of the decisions we made, why we made them, and what we would do differently, if we had to make the same decisions today under similar circumstances. Personal testimony and experience will probably be the best teaching tool in this particular lesson. Teens relating their own experiences in their short life will be another good teaching example.

Interaction during this lesson will hopefully help to get the students to think about the decisions they are making.



Methods

Ask the students to share the best decision they ever made.

Ask the students to share the worst decision they ever made.

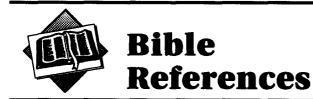
Divide the students into groups. Give them some difficult situations, and then have each group come up with the best decision for each difficult situation. Have each group share their solutions; and discuss together as a class which group came up with the best decision for each situation.

Share with the group this scripture reading, to be used as a motto for decision making: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Change, Checks, and Currency

Volume 11

Lesson 33



Genesis 14:20

Leviticus 27:30

Malachi 3:7-10

1 Corinthians 4:1-2



Theme

Christian stewardship in giving.



2 Corinthians 9:1-7

- 1 "For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you:
- 2 "For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.
- 3 "Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready:
- 4 "Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.
- 5 "Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up before hand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as {a matter of} bounty, and not as {of} covetousness."
- 6 "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.
- 7 "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."



Memory Verse

Luke 6:38

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."



Outline

I. God Owns It All.

- A. God, as Creator, possesses all He has created. (Psalms 24:1; 89:11; Nehemiah 9:6)
 - 1. He is the Creator of man.
 - 2. He is the Creator of all the earth and all that is in it.
 - 3. As the Creator and Owner, He has a right to a return on His property.
- B. Man is a steward or custodian of God's work. (1 Corinthians 4:1-2)
 - 1. As part of God's creation, man is a caretaker over God's handiwork.
 - 2. As a caretaker or custodian, man is required to demonstrate faithfulness over all that God has entrusted to him.
 - 3. It is required that man be accountable to God for his

stewardship. This is best expressed in man's act of giving to God.

II. "What Should I Give?"

- A. The law of sowing and reaping. (Genesis 8:22; Galatians 6:7)
- B. The tithe (one-tenth of all our increase) belongs to the Lord. (Genesis 28:22; Leviticus 27:30)

III. How should I give?

- A. Willingly. (2 Corinthians 9:2)
- B. Capably. (2 Corinthians 9:2)
- C. Enthusiastically. (2 Corinthians (9:2)
- D. Generously. (2 Corinthians 9:5)
- E. Cheerfully. (2 Corinthians 9:7)



Spiritual Truths

- Man owns nothing, but is merely the custodian of God's creation.
- God's people are expected to give a portion (tenth) of all to God.
- The Bible not only teaches what man is to give God, but it also reveals what our attitude should be in giving.



Lesson Material

"The earth is the LORD's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." (Psalms 24:1) The Bible clearly teaches that God is the Creator. He is also the Owner of all that He created. As the Owner, He has a definite right to His property. And He certainly has a right to a portion of his property.

God has placed created man over His creation. Man is therefore God's steward, or custodian. It is very clear in the scripture that God sees man this way. The Lord expects from man faithfulness, as His caretaker. It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. (1 Corinthians 4:2)

It only seems natural, then, that man must be accountable be God for his stewardship. Man is therefore called upon to give to God an accounting of his stewardship.

The Bible informs us of the law of sowing and reaping. Galatians 6:7 says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Each and every day, we see this law carried out. In the fields around us, we see it in the sowing and harvesting of crops; in our own back yard, we see it in our gardens; and, more importantly, we see it in our daily lives. An investor knows that if he is to receive a sizable return, he must make a wise investment. Certainly, as God's people, if we want a good return on life, we should readily invest in the things of God.

The Bible also gives instruction concerning the tithe. It belongs to the Lord.

A "tithe" literally means "one-tenth." Understandably then, one-tenth of all we have and are belongs to God. We should give God a tenth of our finances, and everything else hat we possess as God's custodians. Our time and talent should be given to the Lord, as well.

God not only is concerned that we give but "how" we give. The Bible tells us in 2 Corinthians 9:1-7 that there are five elements to our attitude in giving:

First, we are instructed to be willing. This means that no matter what the need, we are available to God. It means, too, that we are a willing participant. We are not coerced. God can count on us as willing, participating stewards.

Second, we are told to be capable, or ready, givers. This means that we are not surprised when called upon to participate in giving. We have set aside ourselves for the Lord -- both our wallets and our lives.

Third, we are called upon to give enthusiastically. Our emotions do play a part in our giving. By our zeal, we will provoke others to do likewise. Our enthusiasm in giving will encourage others to give, also. Again, we see the law of sowing and reaping in action.

Fourth, we are asked to give with a generous spirit. We can never out-give God. The more we give to Him, the more He will return to us. Our liberality will bring great dividends.

Finally, the Bible tells us to be cheerful in our giving. Our attitude plays an enormous part in the plan of giving. Young people especially need to learn that giving is not a thing of necessity, but an act of obedience that will bring unbelievable blessing, not only to us, but to others as well.



Methods

The teacher may want to expound on the Old Testament principle of tithing. Finis Dake has additional material concerning this subject. Dake's Annotated Reference Bible (page 270 in the New Testament) contains wonderful material on the subject of The Doctrine of Tithing.

The teacher may want to bring in to the class an adult who has been tithing for many years, who can offer the students a positive testimony to the faithfulness of God in financial matters. (Always obtain your pastor's approval, before inviting a guest speaker to address the class.) The teacher may want to solicit a testimony from among the students, as well.

A time of commitment would be appropriate, at the point of discussing personal time and talent being given to the Lord.

It might be interesting to wait until the end of the class to receive the offering, instead of the regular time.

Good illustration: A lad of 16 years named William left home to seek his fortune, with all of his possessions tied in a bundle carried in his hand. He met an old canal-boat captain. William told him that his father was too poor to keep him, and that the only trade he knew was soap and candle making.

The old man then kneeled and prayed earnestly for the boy, and then advised, "Someone will soon be the leading soap maker in New York. It can be you, as well as someone else. Be a good man, give your heart to Christ, pay the Lord all that belongs to Him, make an honest soap, give a full pound, and I am certain that you will be a prosperous and rich man."

Into the city, William remembered the captain's words; and, though poor and lonesome, he united with a church. The first dollar earned, he gave one-tenth to God. Ten cents of every dollar were sacred to the Lord. Having regular employment, he soon became a partner, and later, sole owner of the business. He made good soap, gave a full pound, and instructed his bookkeeper to open an account with the Lord for one-tenth of all income. The business grew; and so, he gave two-tenths, three-tenths, four-tenths, five-tenths, and finally, all of his income.

This is the story of William Colgate, who has given millions of dollars to the Lord's work.

Why Listen To Christian Music?

Volume 11

Lesson 34



Bible References

Psalms 150

Philippians 4:8

2 Corinthians 10:5

Psalms 68:25

Ephesians 4:27



Scripture Reading

Philippians 4:8

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."



Theme

Choosing to listen to music that glorifies God and edifies us in our mind and our spirit.



Memory Verse

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;"



Outline

I. Music Is a Powerful Force.

A. It effects our emotions.

- 1. The music we choose to listen to can affect our moods. It can make us happy or sad; it can mellow us or excite us.
- 2 Music also affects our attitude and outlook on life. It can incite rebellion and exalt immorality, or it can offer us hope and encourage us to live godly lives.

B. It affects our spirit (relationship with God).

- 1. Music has a spiritual impact on us. The music we listen to will encourage and help to strengthen our relationship with Christ, or it will be a hindrance and stumbling block to us spiritually.
- 2. If our music is glorifying the things of the world and the fleshly desires of man, then it is not glorifying Christ.

II. Music Is Not Evil. (Psalms 150)

A. God created it.

- There are hundreds of references to music and musical instruments in the Bible.
- 2. There is music in heaven, and around the throne of God.

B. It is what we do with it that matters.

- 1. God does not condemn certain styles of music.
- 2. It is the spirit and motivation of the artist that determines whether a particular song glorifies God or not.

III. Why Should We Listen to Christian Music?

- A. The answer to this question can be summed up in 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."
- B. We must be careful what we allow to enter our minds.
- C. Satan desires to control our minds. If he can control our minds, he can control us. He will use the force of music to speak thoughts to our minds, if we let him.
- D. We cannot control what comes knocking at the door of our minds, but we can control whether or not to let it in. (2 Corinthians 10:5)
- E. When listening to a song, we should ask ourselves if it lines up with Philippians 4:8.
 - 1. Is it true? Does it offer a biblical view of life and reality, or does it offer a false reality?
 - 2. Is it honorable? Does it bring honor to God and His values, or does it degrade the things that He has

- created (such as sexuality, or respect toward an authority)?
- 3. Is it right? We should ask ourselves, is it right to listen to this material?

 Does our conscience convict us?

 Does the Holy Spirit convict us?
- 4. Is it pure?
- IV. Is Our Music Building Us Up in Jesus, Or Is It Tearing Us Down in Our Relationship with the Lord?



Spiritual Truths

- Music was created by God. It was created as a vehicle for us to bring glory and honor to Him.
- Music can have a profound affect on our emotions, as well as our spirits. It can influence the way we feel about ourselves, others and God.
- Music is not evil, but good. However, as with many of God's blessings, it can be used for evil. It can be used by Satan to degrade and pervert the things of God, including sexuality and respect for authority.
- There is a spiritual battle raging over the control of our minds. If Satan can control our minds, then he can control us. The music we listen to has direct access to our minds. This is why it is important to chose our music carefully.



Lesson Material

We live in a culture that is bombarded with music. We cannot turn on a television or go to the mall without the sounds of music reaching our ears and minds. Teenagers are saturated with music, which is geared directly to them. Music, often intertwined with sexual messages, is used by advertisers to sell teenagers everything from jeans to light beer. With the success of MTV, the sexual or violent nature of a particular song is not even left up to a young person's imagination, but is visually dramatized for them. Our society understands that music is a powerful, influential force that can have tremendous impact on our behavior, attitudes and minds.

Music effects our spirits, as well as our minds. By the music we listen to, we can be encouraged to live a godly life, as well have a healthy attitude in our relationships with others. However, our choice of music can also bring dishonor to God, by glorifying sin and the things of the world. This type of music can do severe damage to our faith. For example, if we listen to sexually explicit music, which glorifies sex outside of marriage or other types of sexual sin, then we are opening our minds to a message that God strictly forbids. This music will eventually influence our thought life, attitudes and even behavior. Worst of all, however, it will draw us away from God. God intended music to bring glory and honor to Him. God uses spiritual music as a vehicle to worship and praise Him. Godly music draws us near to God. Remember, our minds are a battlefield. Satan will do

whatever he can to get to our minds. One of his weapons is the influence of music.

As Christians, we should choose very carefully the type of music we listen to. We are instructed in Ephesians 4:27 not to give the devil a foothold. If we give the devil the foothold of our mind through music, he can cause us to become ineffective in our spiritual lives.

The teacher should challenge the class to listen to music that has a good, biblical message. The style of music is a matter of taste; but the message of the music must be evaluated with great care.



Methods

The main purpose of this message is to expose young people to Christian music. Many Christian teens do not listen to Christian music, because they do not think the quality or variety is comparable to secular music. In America, much has been said about the evils of rock music. However, this lesson focuses on the positive qualities of Christian music.

In order to help expose teenagers to Christian music, the teacher may wish to record several songs by popular Christian artists. If time allows, these songs can be played between the major points of the message. Or, they can be played at the beginning and end of the teaching.

The more familiar the teacher is with Christian music, the more he or she will have to offer the young people. It may be a good idea for the teacher to spend some time at a Christian bookstore, if available, and become familiar with different Christian artists and styles. There are also several excellent contemporary Christian music publications available, which can be a tremendous aid.

Christian music can easily be programmed into your ministry. Attending Christian concerts and using Christian songs as teaching and discussion tools both offer great exposure, as well as enhancing ministry.

The teacher should stress that listening to Christian music should never replace Bible study and prayer. Christian music is a benefit and a blessing to our spiritual lives; but if it takes the place of prayer and the Word of God, then it is out of balance.

Music in the Life of the Christian

Volume 11

Lesson 35



Bible References

Psalms 27:6

Psalms 33:2

Psalms 44:8

Psalms 57:7



Scripture Reading

Philippians 4:8

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."



Theme

The scriptural guidelines for music in the Christian life.



Memory Verse

Colossians 3:16

"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."



Outline

I. What Is Music?

- A. Music is a series of generated tones from an instrument, which have been placed in order.
- B. Music is a powerful medium for expressing emotions, feelings and thoughts.

II. What Is the Origin of Music?

- A. Jubal, who was the seventh generation from Adam, is the first reference of music from man in scripture.
 - 1. Genesis 4:21 says, "the father of all who play the harp and flute."
 - 2. This reference states that Jubal was the first music director on earth.
- B. Lucifer was a minister of music to God, before he fell in his rebellion against God.
 - 1. Ezekiel 28:13 says that Lucifer had pipes for music made into his body.
 - 2. He was the anointed cherub to minister music in heaven.
- C. Historically speaking, music has no known origin.
 - 1. It is found in every culture.
 - 2. It is found in every geographic region of the world.
 - 3. It is at the center of virtually all religions.

III. What Is the Purpose of Music?

- A. It is an expression of thought and emotion, both positive and negative.
- B. The scriptural use of music is to glorify God.
 - 1. Exodus 15 shows that music is used in times of victory.
 - 2. In the Psalms, music is songs to God in almost every emotional circumstance.
 - 3. In the New Testament, believers are urged by Paul to sing. (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16)

IV. What Kind of Music Is Right for the Christian?

- A. Music that uplifts and encourages the listener is right for the believer.
- B. Music that provokes an desire for God's truth is right for the listener.
 - 1. We must test the words and music, in order to see whether it is really communicating God's unadulterated truth.
 - 2. Sometimes the most insidious lies come from that which is called "Christian," such as false doctrine and unbiblical world views.
- C. Music that is right for Christians motivates the listener toward good works and good thoughts.
 - 1. It awakens our conscience to evil.
 - 2. It opens our eyes to the importance of relationships.
 - 3. It increases our sense of awe and admiration of God.



Spiritual Truths

- Music is a powerful force. It affects and impacts our emotions. It affects our mood and outlook on life.
- Music also affects our spiritual relationship with God. Thus, it is important that the Christian discerns what is good or bad for his/her walk with the Lord.
- Music is not evil. Music in itself is neither good nor bad; rather, it should be judged on its impact on the listener.
- There is a spiritual battle going on for the focus of the Christian's life. Will the Christian be led by the powers of darkness? The flesh? Or, by the Holy Spirit? Music can point one in any of these directions.
- It is vital that the believer use discernment when choosing his/her music.

notable exception of the scriptures. In Exodus, we find that the Hebrews were to plunder the Egyptians, before they left for the wilderness. So we too, as we are leaving this world, should gather all of the truth that can be found, even the truth found in the world.

The notion that "Christian" music is good and "secular" music is bad is not only erroneous, it is dangerous. If we reject all that is called "secular," we may miss the good that is in it. Conversely, if we embrace all that is called "Christian," we run the risk of absorbing false doctrine and perspective.

Therefore, the teacher should encourage the students to decide responsibly for themselves what types of music to listen to, with an aim to edify themselves as well as others -- without offending the weaker brother. An old rhyme states: "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still." So it is with music; and the responsibility of the teacher will be to give the Holy Spirit room to work in the hearts and lives of the students.



Lesson Material

In 1 Corinthians 8:8, it states that food sacrificed to idols is neither bad nor good for the believer to eat. Whether or not a Christian should eat the food should be a matter of personal conviction. And so it is with music. The good can be extracted from it, and the rest thrown out. This is how we should treat all matters, with the



Methods

Ask the students to write down their definition of music.

Ask the students to write down where they think music came from.

Encourage discussion; do not dictate, but guide the discussion, in order to demonstrate biblical truth.

Salvation: How To Be Ready and Know It!

Volume 11

Lesson 36



Bible References

Romans 1:18-32; 3:23

1 Timothy 1:15

1 Peter 2:24; 3:18

1 John 1:8; 5:13, 19

Revelation 4:11; 20:15



Theme

We can know where we stand with God, by examining what biblical salvation is.



Romans 5:12

12 "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"

Ephesians 2:1-5

- 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;)"



Romans 6:23

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."



Outline

I. What Is Our State of Affairs, Without God's Gift of Salvation?

- A. The whole world is in sin. The wages of sin is death. (1 John 5:19; Romans 1:18-32; 6:23)
 - 1. The wrath of God is apparent. All the ungodliness and unrighteousness of man has ruined an orderly world and turned it into perversion and chaos.
 - 2. Man has changed the glory of the incorruptible God into foolishness and darkness.
 - 3. Because some men have put God out of their minds, God has given up their minds to be thoroughly corrupt, or reprobate.
 - 4. Because of sin against God, men became:
 - a. Vain in their imaginations;
 - b. Unthankful;

- c. Darkened, without understanding;
- d. Without natural affection;
- e. Unmerciful;
- f. Deceitful;
- g. Murderers;
- h. Envious;
- i. Filled with unrighteousness, fornication and wickedness.
- B. We need to be saved from the curse of death. (Romans 5:12-21)
 - 1. One man, Adam, brought about the curse of physical and spiritual death to the whole human race.
 - 2. One Man, Jesus Christ, brings us eternal life, when we accept Him and believe in Him.
- C. We were created for the purpose of God's pleasure. (Revelation 4:11)
 - 1. God is worthy to receive glory, honor, and power; and we, instead, are lost in sin.
 - 2. We have fallen short of God's expectations, by not obeying His commandments. (Romans 3:23)
 - 3. When men turn from God, sin follows.
 - 4. We have all gone astray, forsaken God, and followed our own corrupt ways. (Isaiah 53:6)

II. We Cannot Save Ourselves. Jesus Is the Only One Who Can Save Us. (Acts 4:12)

- A. We are saved by the grace of God, and not because of any good works we have done. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
 - 1. Faith in Jesus and His gift of grace to us is our only way out of our death penalty.

- 2. His mercy saves us, when we accept Him as Savior. (Titus 3:5)
- B. There are other ways that men seek salvation and relief from the effects of sin and death; but those ways all lead to death. (Proverbs 14:12)
- C. Jesus is the Truth, the Way, and the Life; and there is no other way to reconcile ourselves back to a place of favor with our heavenly Father, except by believing in Him. (John 14:6)

III. Examples In the Bible of Those Who Received Salvation.

- A. Nicodemus (in John 3) asked Jesus to explain how a person could be born again.
 - 1. Jesus answered that unless a man is born of the water and the spirit, he could not enter into the kingdom of heaven.
 - 2. Does this mean that a person enters into his mother's womb a second time, in order to be born again?
 - a. No. It means that we are born of God's Spirit, when we receive Jesus into our hearts.
 - b. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and the same applies to the spirit. We become born of God's Spirit, when we receive Christ as Savior.
- B. The Philippian jailer was saved. (Acts 16:30-31)
 - 1. The jail guard, who was in charge of the prison, fell trembling at the feet of Paul and Silas and asked, "...Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (verse 30)

- 2. "...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" was Paul and Silas' reply. (verse 31)
- C. In the New Testament, there are countless examples of many who received salvation, by simply believing in the Lord Jesus.

IV. We Must Do the Following, in Order to Receive God's Plan of Salvation:

- A. We must repent of the sinfulness in our lives.
 - 1. We must turn from our sin.
 - 2. We must follow God's plan of salvation, and not our own.
 - 3. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; and no man can come to the Father, except by receiving Jesus. (John 14:6)
- B. We must confess that we are guilty before God.
 - 1. We must confess to Him that we are sinners.
 - 2. To deny the fact that we are sinners is to call God a liar.
 - 3. If we confess our sin, He is faithful, and just to cleanse us from the iniquity in our lives and forgive us completely from all wrong that we have done. (1 John 1:9)
- C. We must believe in the Lord Jesus, and believe that God raised Him from the dead. (Romans 10:9)
 - 1. Through the prophets in the Old Testament, we can see the coming of Jesus foretold.
 - a. We are told in many instances that if we believe in Him, we

- will receive remission of our sins.
- b. Isaiah 53:4-6 says that Jesus was coming to bear our sins, and that He would be bruised for our iniquities.
- c. The psalmist David spoke of Jesus' suffering on the cross for us, in Psalms 22.
- 2. Acts 10:43 says, (speaking of Jesus), "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."
 - a. "Remit" means to "forgive" or "pardon." It is to refrain from exacting or enforcing a penalty.
 - b. In other words, when we believe in the Lord Jesus, we are free from having to pay the penalty for our sin.
- D. We must receive Jesus, by inviting Him into our lives. (John 1:12)
 - 1. When we believe in Jesus with faith in our heart, He will give us eternal life.
 - 2. He will give us the power to become a son or daughter of God, when we receive Him into our hearts.
- E. Example of a salvation prayer: "Jesus, I know that I am a sinner. I repent of my sin, and ask You to cleanse me from all my unrighteousness. I want to serve You; and I give Your my life. I believe that You died for my sins and that You will live in my heart, if I ask. Please come into my heart, Lord Jesus, and restore me to my Father in heaven. I receive You now. Thank you, Jesus, for being my Savior."

V. The Purpose of Christ's Death and Resurrection.

- A. Christ came into the world to save sinners. (1 Timothy 1:15)
- B. Christ calls sinners to repentance. (Matthew 9:13; Luke 15:2)
- C. Christ bore our sins for us on the cross. (Psalms 22; Isaiah 53; 1 Peter 2:24)
- D. Christ died on the cross, in order to bring us to God. (1 Peter 3:18)
- E. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 names three facts about Christ which were taught by the apostle Paul.
 - 1. He died for our sins.
 - 2. He was buried.
 - 3. He rose again on the third day.
- F. Christ is able to do two things for us, because He is now alive evermore, and has been raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. (Hebrews 7:25)
 - 1. He is able to save us.
 - 2. He intercedes for us.
 - a. To "intercede" is to act between parties, with a view to reconciling differences.
 - b. The Greek meaning of "intercession," as used in Hebrews 7:25, is "to intermediate between, confer with, or to entreat."

VI. Salvation Is for Today.

- A. We should receive the gift of salvation immediately. Today is the day of salvation. (2 Corinthians 6:2)
- B. The Spirit of God will not always persist with us. We must take the

- opportunity to answer the Lord's calling to us, while we can still hear Him. (Isaiah 55:6; 2 Corinthians 6:2)
- C. We may not have another chance to escape sin's penalty before we die. We may die today; and if so, we must be ready to meet God by accepting salvation through Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 2:3)
- D. As finite humans, blinded from what tomorrow may bring, we must give thought to how we will spend eternity -- in heaven or hell. (Proverbs 27:1)
 - 1. Romans 14:12 says that we will all give an account to God for ourselves.
 - 2. John 3:36 says that if we believe in Jesus, we will live; but the wrath of God is upon us, if we choose not to believe.
 - 3. Whomever does not have his or her name written in the book of life will be case into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:15)



Spiritual Truths

- The whole world is in sin, because men have put God out of their minds and failed to give Him thanks, glory and honor.
- The punishment for all of our unrighteousness is eternal death.
- The purpose of Christ's death and resurrection was our salvation from

- sin's penalty and restoration to relationship with God.
- We can be restored, redeemed, and made a child of God by the receiving of God's gift of salvation, through belief in Jesus Christ.



Lesson Material

We were created for God's pleasure. We were made in His image as triune beings, with bodies, souls, and spirits. Our spirits need to be brought back to fellowship with God, for all who wish to worship God must do it in spirit and truth. (John 4:24) Before we knew Christ and accepted Him as Savior, we were in darkness. (Ephesians 5:8)

The whole world is in sin; and the spirits of the disobedient and unredeemed lie in Satan's power. But Christ died for our sin, so that we could walk in newness of life. If not for Jesus and our acceptance of Him as God's Salvation, we would be lost and dead -- spiritually and physically.

To come to know God intimately can only be done one way, which is through accepting Jesus Christ as Savior and believing that God has raised Him from the dead to be the atonement for our sins. "Atonement" means "reparation for an offense." We may think of other ways in which we would rather be saved, but our ways only lead to death. Jesus is the Truth, the Life and the Way back to fellowship with God; and there is no other way provided for us to escape the lake of fire,

which has been prepared for those who reject salvation through Jesus.

After we receive the gift of salvation by repenting from sin, we become a child of God. In our walk with Him, we may still make mistakes and fall short of the purpose for which He created us (to bring honor, thanks, and praise to Him). However, God has made provision for us, by letting us have His free gift of grace for our times of weakness. The Bible encourages us that we can have victory over sin, strength to fight temptation, and power to overcome the world; but we are not infallible -- only God is. He gives us grace when we need it. (Romans 8:3) We are reminded that when we fall, we do not lose our salvation. God is prepared to give us His grace, when we submit ourselves to "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse {your} hands, {ye} sinners; and purify (your) hearts, (ye) double minded." (James 4:6-8)

The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable. (Romans 11:29) When God calls us to Himself and gives us the gift of eternal life through salvation, He does not change His mind and take back what He has given us. He is faithful in promising us the gift of life through Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 10:23) We are not given the liberty to sin, however; and punishment awaits those who tempt God by sinning. James 4:17 says that if we are able to do good and we choose not to do it, we sin.

After we receive Jesus, He lives in our hearts by our faith in Him. Eternal life past death, and abundant life while we live on earth, is from God, in Christ. We can do all

things through Christ (Philippians 4:13); and He will help us through every problem. (1 Corinthians 10:13) He understands every problem we face, and He will be present through every difficulty. (Hebrews 2:18; 13:5) The reason that Christ came into the world was to save sinners. If we confess Him to our fellow man, then He will confess our names to the Father in heaven. If we deny knowing Christ in our lives, then He denies knowing us. A person who is born of God and lives by faith in Jesus, God's Son, can overcome the world and its temptations. (1 John 5:4-5) With God's help, we will overcome.



Methods

Encourage the students to ask themselves some hard questions, by either writing the answers down on paper or having small group discussions. If small groups are chosen, then have a teacher, leader, or youth worker in each group hand out a paper with the following questions:

Where am I at with God right now? (i.e. OK, not good, do not know God, do not believe, need more of Him, not interested, would like to be closer.)

What are my needs right now, and what are my wants? (List "needs" on the left hand side of a piece of paper, and "wants" on the right hand side.

If I obtained my wants, would they be healthy for my growth in God? Would

receiving my wants bring me closer to God, or farther away from Him?

Explain to the students why it is important to do some soul-searching (i.e. because we do not want to end up unprepared for what lies ahead, if we continue in our present path; because we can change some things about our lives

that we do not like; because, if our lives ended today, we may not be prepared to meet God, or be satisfied with the way we are living).

Provide an opportunity for students to receive salvation, if they wish to be right with God.

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Bible References

Deuteronomy 8:3

Psalms 119:89

Matthew 12:34

Luke 1:26-38

Romans 4:17-21; 10:9-10, 17

James 2:19, 14-20



Scripture Reading

Hebrews 11: 1-3

- 1 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
- 2 "For by it the elders obtained a good report.
- 3 "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."



Theme

We need to know the Word of God, in order to build our faith.



Romans 10:17

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."



Outline

I. Faith Deals With Things that Are Unseen. (Hebrews 11:1)

- A. It is a confidence and conviction toward something that we have never seen with our natural eyes.
 - 1. Mary said, "...Be it unto me according to thy word...." (Luke 1:38)
 - 2. She did not reason with her own understanding, when the angel of the Lord brought the promise of the Messiah to her. She had faith in the Word of the Lord.
- B. Faith is a life-changing experience, and not simply a mental assent.
 - 1. It is life-changing *rhema* for our souls.
 - 2. Faith does consist of our agreement on something and then our walking away.
 - 3. Faith produces a reality for us, based on the Word of God.
 - a. Matthew 24:35 says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."
 - b. Belief alone is not enough. (James 2:19) Faith must be confessed and acted upon.
 - c. We must put works with faith. (James 2) Faith in our hearts produces outward expression.

II. Abraham's Faith Is Our Example of Something Impossible Becoming Reality.

- A. Abraham and Sarah were past the child-bearing age; and God told them that they would have as many children as the sands of the seashore.
- B. How ludicrous this sounded to the thinking mind. Faith in God's Word made it clear what they must do.
 - 1. Prepare to have a son. (Hebrews 11:13)
 - 2. Be persuaded of the promise.
 - 3. Embrace the promise in a personal way.
 - 4. Confess the promise from the heart with the mouth.
- C. There was something different about Abraham's faith.
 - 1. Abraham is spoken so highly of in the Bible. What is different about his faith?
 - 2. Jesus said, "Be it unto you according to your faith." (Matthew 9:29)
 - 3. Stagger (waver) not. Have surefooted confidence in God to perform it. (Romans 4:20)
 - 4. Abraham gave glory to God. (Romans 4:20)
 - 5. He was persuaded that God was able. (Romans 4:21)
 - 6. We can have the same faith, by believing in God, Who raised Jesus. (Romans 4:24)

III. Faith Bypasses the Senses and Goes Directly to the Word of God.

- A. God calls things which are not as though they were. He does not limit Himself to human understanding, and neither should we. (Romans 4:17)
- B. Faith comes to us through hearing the Word of God. (Romans 10:17)
- C. Faith has nothing to do with the seen world or the things that we can touch, see, smell, hear, etc. It is a substance; and it is made up of things we cannot see. Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

IV. Faith cannot stand alone, but needs confession or action.

- A. We cannot be saved by faith alone. (Romans 10:9-10)
 - 1. The demons believe and tremble; and so, it is not simply our belief that brings God's promise to pass in our life. (James 2:19)
 - 2. When we confess what God's Word says, we are agreeing with and acknowledging His Word.
 - a. Do as Mary, when she said, "...Be it unto me according to your word...." (Luke 1:38)
 - b. Do not do as Satan, when he twisted God's Word and said, "...Ye shall not surely die." (Genesis 3:4) That is a lie, because God had already told Adam and Eve that they would surely die.
- B. What we believe is what we do. (James 2:14-20)

- 1. Our proof of faith in our hearts is our works.
- 2. James 2:26 says, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."



Spiritual Truths

- True Bible faith always originates in God's Word.
- Faith is cooperating with God, and giving glory to Him, as Abraham did.
- Faith originates by the Holy Spirit is work of making the Word real to our heart, and not by our own understanding.
- True faith is expressed in good works.



Lesson Material

True Bible faith originates in the Word of God. Faith comes from hearing the Word of God. The faith in our hearts manifests itself in an outward expression, either by confessing it or acting on it.

By our speech, our works and our actions, the invisible becomes visible. We see what we had believed for, in ways we had not imagined. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an

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inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." (Hebrews 11:8) Abraham continued to travel in God's land of promise, looking for a higher dwelling which was constructed in perfection by God. In other words, he looked for a city which was built by God. (Hebrews 11:10) He received the promise in his heart when it was somewhere in the distance, hidden from view; and subsequently, it came closer and closer to reality in his life. Faith produced a reality of something that was once unseen!

Faith deals with the unseen. It is a confidence that we have something or will receive it. It is a persuasion of something which we have never physically seen. Faith is not our mental assent or agreement with someone — it is more than that. It is something life-changing in our heart. It is the *rhema* of the Word of God. Jesus said, "...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4)

Bible faith is belief in what God's Word has to say about us. We are sinners. Jesus died for us to save us from the penalty of our sin. He lives in our heart, and we are born of God, children of God, joint-heirs with Jesus. Our faith tells us that the Word of God is true; but our eyes cannot see the actual, physical proof. Jesus said if we have faith as small as a tiny mustard seed, then we have all it takes to move mountains. (Matthew 17:20) We can exercise our faith by knowing more of the Word of God. Faith can be compared to a muscle -- the more we exercise it, the more it grows. Once again, it is the Word of God that is the main focus.

By faith, we understand things that we cannot see, because the Word of God explains them to us. We know that we have the gift of salvation, through faith in

what God has said. The Word of God says that He is not only salvation, but everything to us. There is nothing based on God's Word that He cannot do for us, by faith.

Great men of the Bible have understood unseen things and believed God, through faith in what He said to them. (Hebrews 11) Abel offered an acceptable offering to God, by faith. He pleased God by his faith. Enoch was translated from earth directly into the presence of God, without having to die. Noah is a great example of faith in the unseen. Noah took 120 years out of his schedule to follow after a promise that God put in his heart. By faith, Noah took that promise as a reality and built his whole life around it. He built a huge boat to save his family, while suffering persecution and the scorn of men. Faith works, and God comes through. God's Word stands forever. Whether we have faith in it or not is not what makes it valid. Our own faith simply makes the Word become reality to us personally. Jesus is our faith made real. John speaks that he actually saw the Word with his own eyes, and he touched it with his hands (1 John 1:1); and the disciples' portrayal of Jesus is our proof that the Word is reality. Jesus really exists.

Dr. Paul E. Paino's observation of "operating faith" gives us the insight we need regarding faith. His experience and wisdom from God serve him as he says, "Brethren, I am talking about 'operating faith', and not 'saving faith' (I am talking about faith that brings the blessing of God). It comes to us as a witness of spirit. You cannot generate it; you cannot produce it; you cannot make it up; you cannot just act like you have got it. It comes to us as a witness of spirit."

We can see the truth in these words; and as we look at Romans 8:16-17, we read, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;...." We know that we are God's children by our faith, which His Spirit has witnessed to us.

Faith always goes a step further, in order to believe something more in God's Word. If we have the faith to believe that we are His children, then we can also know that we are risen with Christ and seated in heavenly places. (Ephesians 1:3) The saints in the Hebrews "Hall of Fame" (Hebrews Chapter 11) saw the promises from a distance "as a witness of spirit." They also embraced and confessed the promises of God, through the "witness of spirit" which was in their hearts.

With faith in our hearts regarding God and His promises, we can please Him, like Abraham did. We linger around that which we love. If we linger long enough around the promises of God, we will see what we have so earnestly hoped for come to be a reality in our lives, by faith.



Methods

Ask students to discuss examples of faith from their own life experiences.

Read through the "Hall of Faith" in Hebrews 11; and spend some time discussing the faith of the patriarchs.

Encourage those students who may be struggling with their faith, by pointing out the examples of faith in God's Word.

Principles of Sharing Your Faith

Volume 11

Lesson 38



Bible References

Proverbs 11:30

Psalms 22:22; 26:7

Daniel 12:3

Mark 16:15

Luke 22:32

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

2 Timothy 4:2



Theme

Sharing our faith in God with others.



2 Corinthians 5:17-21

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

18 "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21 "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."



Ephesians 6:19

"And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,"



Outline

- I. Evangelism Is Most Successful Within the Context of Relationships.
- A. Often, we must show non-believers that we care about them as people, before they will truly look into our faith.
 - 1. The best way to start off is by becoming their friend. This can happen by just being willing to associate with them, or by reaching out to meet their physical needs.
 - 2. Jesus often addressed social needs, right before meeting the spiritual need.
 - a. Jesus healed many, before giving the Beatitudes. (Matthew 4:24)
 - b. Jesus went around doing good. (Acts 10:38)
 - c. Jesus was called a "friend of sinners." (Matthew 11:19)

- 3. People are often very suspicious of the motives of others. We must earn their trust and prove to them that we are concerned about them.
- B. Non-believers must be able to relate to us in some sense, before what we say is valid to them.
 - When we know them as friends, it is easier for us to identify with them. They realize we are not "weirdos" or "oddballs."
 - 2. Jesus got on the level of the people he was ministering to.
 - a. Jesus talked with the Samaritan woman. (John 4)
 - b. Jesus went to the home of Zacchaeus. (Luke 19:5)

II. Our Lives Are an Important Aspect of Our Witness.

- A. What we do usually, if not always, means more than what we say.
 - 1. Our true beliefs always come out in our actions; and people will judge whether what we say is true or not by whether we live by what we say.
 - 2. People must see a difference in our lives.
 - a. What good is what we claim to be true, if it does not contain the power to enable us to live by it?
 - b. If we preach the truth without practicing the truth, it is worse than if we would not have said anything.
- B. The beauty of the Christian life will inevitably draw men to God.
 - 1. The world's idea of love, success, meaning, etc., is shallow; but, when a person sees two people truly in

- love with each other in a Christian marriage, or a Christian putting other people before himself, this is the greatest testimony for the Lord.
- People must be attracted to the lifestyle, before they will consider being a part of it.

III. We Should Prepare to Share Our Faith.

- A. We should know the essence and essentials of the gospel.
 - 1. We should memorize the "Romans Road."
 - a. All have sinned. (Romans 3:23)
 - b. The inevitable result of sin is eternal death. (Romans 6:23)
 - c. God loves us; and Christ died to bring us back to God. (Romans 5:8; 6:23)
 - d. Jesus can be our Savior, right now. (Romans 10:9-10)
 - 2. Practice sharing with other Christians.
- B. We should be able to share our testimony.
 - 1. We should be able and ready to share how we came to the Lord.
 - Every Christian has a testimony, whether raised in the church or not.
 - b. People cannot refute our own personal experiences.
 - 2. Our testimony will interest people, because it deals with real life.
- C. We must pray for God to use us.
 - 1. God will provide the opportunities.
 - 2. God will give us courage and wisdom, when the time comes.

3. God will do the necessary work in the heart of the individual, as we share with and pray for the person.

IV. "Do's" and "Do Not's" In Personal Evangelism.

A. In meeting a person.

- 1. Do believe that the experience could be life-changing.
- 2. Do not carry a monstrous Bible.
- 3. Do believe that everything hinges upon the first few minutes.
- 4. Do use mouthwash.
- 5. Do start at the level of spiritual knowledge of the person that you are dealing with.
- Do not set a person up to make the person look dumb or feel ignorant.

B. In presenting the gospel.

- Do make sure the listener has clarified his or her hope of heaven. How do they expect to get there?
- 2. Do not make a testimony too long.
- 3. Do be very positive.
- 4. Do not try to impress the person with knowledge of scripture, but be ready to go to chapter and verse, if challenged.
- 5. Do practice presenting with others.
- Do not move to the next point, until convinced that the person understands.
- 7. Illustrate each truth.
- 8. Do not be afraid to handle questions and objections. It is a sign of interest, on the part of the listener.
- 9. Do ask the listener to repeat back the truths that have been understood.
- 10. Do not ever apologize for the gospel. (Romans 1:16)

C. In pressing for a decision.

- 1. Do believe that salvation involves a decision.
- 2. Do not press for a decision, until you are sure that the person understands the gospel.
- 3. Do stress the fact that saving faith demands more than the knowledge of facts.
- 4. Do stress that the issue is not whether God accepts us, but whether we accept Him.
- 5. Do not use high pressure tactics. If a person is not ready to receive Christ, then forcing the issue will only be a turn-off.

D. In conveying assurance.

- 1. Do show the person scripture verses, until they have peace.
- 2. Do instruct the person that salvation is once, for all.
- 3. Do not allow the person to confuse faith and feelings.
- 4. Do not skim over anything that the person does not understand.
- 6. Do assure the person that salvation is not lost, when he or she falls. (1 John 1:9)

E. In closing.

- 1. Whether the person receives Christ or not, be sure to leave in a pleasant manner of friendship.
- 2. Do not walk away from a person who has just received Christ, without being willing to follow up on him or her.
- 3. Do be very conservative in what has taken place. Change comes slowly to new believers.
- 4. Do have some concrete suggestions for a new believer (i.e. prayer, Bible study, church, Christian fellowship).



Spiritual Truths

- The sharing of the Good News is what leads men to salvation.
- The Good News is shared, as the truth of Jesus Christ is manifested through the lives of Christians.



Lesson Material

Sharing the gospel is an essential (but not always a simple) thing to do. Each situation is different, and calls for discernment and wisdom on the part of the believer. To be successful, a person must prepare well, and have his or her spiritual life in order.

It must always be remembered that one-on-one evangelism is the most effective way to win a soul to Christ. Evangelism takes a lot of time and effort. A harvest is not brought in, unless it is prepared for. The fields must be planted, cultivated, fertilized, and watered for many days, before being reaped.

We must not allow ourselves to become discouraged from sharing, when we do not see the results that we wanted or expected to see. It is important to follow God's leading and be obedient. The results are in God's hands, and not ours. If we are obedient, then we have done our part. Perhaps we are the one that is doing the planting, or the one that is doing the

watering. Whatever the part God has chosen for us to do, it is sufficient, if done according to His leading. He will complete the work. That is His job. It is our job to be obedient and to be a witness.



Methods

Allow for questions and discussion as the lesson is taught. Encourage the sharing of personal experiences in evangelism. Have a few of the students share their testimony. Give them plenty of notice, before the class.

The teacher and youth leaders should also share their testimonies.

Have role-playing situations, in which one students tries to witness to another.

Sharing the Gospel

Volume 11

Lesson 39



Bible References

Daniel 12:3

Ezekiel 33:8

Acts 4:12

Romans 1:16; 10:14

2 Peter 3:9



Theme

Telling others what Christ has done for us is an essential aspect of Christian life.



Scripture Reading

Luke 19:10

10 "For the Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost."



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. Why Do We Need to Be Witnesses?

- A. It is our purpose, for which God has called us.
 - 1. God did not save us, just so that we could go to heaven. If that was the case, then He would take us immediately to heaven, once we are saved. Remember that someone had to tell us the Good News.
 - 2. We are not of this world, but we are here as ambassadors of heaven to proclaim God's redemptive plan. (2 Corinthians 5:18-20) We are but strangers and pilgrims to this planet. (1 Peter 2:11) We are passing through, on a mission from God.
 - 3. Leading others to the Savior gives us a special purpose in life. Personal fulfillment comes only to the degree that we see fruit being produced in others' lives, as a result of our work.
- B. God's greatest desire is that all men will come to Him.
 - 1. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)
 - 2. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting live. For God sent not his Son into

- the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." (John 3:16-17)
- C. We are God's hands and feet, to do His work. He has chosen men to be messengers of the gospel; and the world cannot be saved without us.
 - 1. "...And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?...."

 (Romans 10:14-15)
 - 2. "The spirit of the Lord GOD (is) upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to (them that are) bound;" (Isaiah 61:1)
- D. This world will die and go to hell, if someone does not tell them about Christ.
 - 1. "When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand." (Ezekiel 33:8)
 - 2. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)
 - 3. Christ's purpose in coming to this planet was to save the lost. (Luke 19:10)
 - 4. The gospel is the power of God for man's salvation. (Romans 1:16)

II. How Can We Be Witnesses?

- A. Know that God has given us the tools.
 - 1. Every born-again believer has the power of the Holy Spirit inside of them, which enables them to be witnesses. (Acts 1:8)
 - 2. The Holy Spirit will enable us to be bold. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (2 Timothy 1:7)
- B. We must develop a love for God, and a burden for souls.
- C. We must know our testimony.
 - l. We must be prepared to explain why we believe what we believe.
 - a. How did God prove Himself to us?
 - b. How do we know that He is real?
 - 2. People are interested in real-life examples.
- D. We must know the gospel message inside and out.
 - 1. Man has sinned against God, and therefore cannot enter into His perfect heaven. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;" (Romans 3:23)
 - 2. The ultimate result of that sin is eternal separation from God. "For the wages of sin is death;...."
 (Romans 6:23)
 - 3. But God sent His Son to pay our price by dying in our place, so that we could once again have a right relationship with God. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:" (Romans 3:24)

- 4. All who trust Him as their Savior will live forever.
 - a. "...But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)
 - b. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Romans 10:9)
- 5. Remember that each person is unique and needs a different approach.
 - a. There is no one set way to present the gospel.
 - b. Be wise and creative.



Spiritual Truths

- God wants us to be witnesses for Him.
- If we witness to others on earth, then we will receive great rewards in heaven. (Daniel 12:3)
- Witnessing gives us personal fulfillment.



Lesson Material

This will be a key lesson for the teenagers. A desire to see others come to Jesus is a great indicator as to whether we really understand what being a Christian is

all about. Also, the Christian life can become boring, if we are not challenged. Nothing can stir our faith more than seeing someone come to Christ through us.

The importance of being a witness is clear throughout the New Testament. The key is getting Christians to believe it, and then motivating them to do something about it.

The best motivation to witness is simply a love for God. A true love for God will always result in a love for people and a realization of their lost condition. Witnessing is often a scary thing; but, as we rely on God and prepare and practice, it gradually becomes a more comfortable experience.

It should be stressed that the best witnessing comes through personal relationships. People want to see truth acted out in real life. We can confirm that our words are true by our actions. We should not try to reach the whole world ourselves, but we should concentrate on the ripest harvest where we will slowly, but surely, reproduce ourselves.



Methods

Discuss the need for evangelism in the students' particular school, country, etc., and how evangelism will change peoples' lives.

Ask the students to write down the names of people that need the Lord; and encourage the students to pray and look for ways to witness to the people on their lists.

Fight the Good Fight

Volume 11

Lesson 40



Bible References

Acts 17:11

2 Timothy 2:24-25



Theme

The gospel of Jesus Christ is rational, logical, and able to be defended without shame.



Scripture Reading

Jude 3-4

- 3 "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.
- 4 "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."



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. Written Testimony.

A. Biblical evidence.

- 1. Harmony of scripture and lack of substantiated contradiction, despite variety of authors, at various dates, on different continents.
- 2. The Bible's uniqueness as a preserved work and its accuracy concerning names, dates, places, and events.

B. Extra-biblical evidence.

- 1. Archaeology (artifacts, ancient ruins, finds, etc.).
- 2. Non-Christian writers (Flavius Josephus, Cornelius Tacitus, Lucian of Samosata, etc.).

II. Scientific Testimony.

A. Astronomical Evidence.

- 1. Law of first cause or prime mover; or, who caused the first event in the universe?
- 2. Second Law of Thermodynamics: as energy is released, matter decays to more simple forms (thus, this universe will run out of energy -- it is not eternal).

B. Natural evidence.

1. Fossil record shows no pre-human man; and, so far, all previous attempts to do so have been

- erroneous and/or outright fabrications.
- 2. Biology shows the complexity and infinite detail of all life forms, which all point to a Creator.
- 3. All living things are subject to the curse of death, which demonstrates every day there is such a curse.

III. Other Arguments.

A. Philosophical argument.

- Good can exist independent of evil, but evil cannot exist without good. It is the standard of good by which we view evil.
- 2. Thus, good is eternal, but evil is not.

B. Traditional argument.

- 1. There are natural reasons for all aspects of the calendar -- years, months, and days. But the week is a tradition honored since the beginning of civilization, pointing to the creation week referred to in scripture.
- 2. An event in ancient history changed the traditional day of rest from Saturday to Sunday for the entire culture of modern civilization (the Resurrection).



Spiritual Truths

 All evidence and arguments considered, the case for the biblical world view is very convincing.

- God gives the believer sound reasons for biblical faith, and not an invitation to commit intellectual suicide.
- When the Christian begins to study the evidence, he or she will be more able to communicate the gospel to others.
- The believer will find great confidence knowing that the Word of God is faithful and true. (Revelation 19:11)



Lesson Material

In a day which is now called the "Post-Christian era," the church is finding little credibility. Many factors indeed have contributed to this, but none so insidious as the abuse of the prosperity and resources given to men by God's grace. This lack of need has caused man's idle minds to reason the God of Creation out of existence, or into the realm of vain philosophy. The famous Soviet dissident, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, when asked to identify the primary trait of mankind in the twentieth century, stated: "Men have forgotten God."

Now, we as Christians have the unique task of not only defending the gospel, but the additional task of defending the existence of God, as well. However, we should not be discouraged, but rather encouraged to go deeper into God's Word, in order to gain insight from other sources, as well to gain a full understanding of not only the biblical world view, but other views as well. This

will equip us to challenge those views, which rise up against the cross of Christ.

Therefore, it is vital that the believer be in Christian grounded firmly "apologetics," which comes from the Greek word apologia which means "to defend." If the church is going to effectively communicate the gospel to the culture and its individuals, then it must know why it believes what it believes. Today's young people are loathsome of phonies and charlatans; and they want proof that belief in Christianity is not in vain. As a teacher, one has the obligation to provide authentic Christianity in word and in behavior to the students, and to give well-grounded answers and reasons for biblical faith.



Methods

Try to encourage discussion over other possible proofs for biblical faith; but be sure to keep control of the direction in which the discussion is going.

If the teacher does not have an answer to a particular question, then he or she should admit it. Acknowledge it as a good question that will be researched; and then, get back to it at a later date. Respect will be gained from the students.

Remember, this lesson is an introduction to apologetics. It is an overview. Avoid going too deep into a specific area; but rather, show the various and diverse areas of study which confirm the existence of God and His truth.

The Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Part I)

Volume 11 Lesson 41



1 Corinthians 15

Revelation 1:18



Theme

The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ -- His physical death, burial, resurrection.

- 4 "And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:
- 5 "And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:
- 6 "After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.
- 7 "After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles."
- 17 "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."
- 20 "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."



1 Corinthians 15:3-7, 17, 20

3 "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;



Memory Verse

John 19:30

"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."



Outline

I. The Certainty of Christ's Death.

A. Five trials.

- 1. Annas, the High Priest. (John 18:13)
- 2. Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin. (Matthew 26:57-59)
- 3. Pilate. (Matthew 27:2)
- 4. Herod. (Luke 23:7)
- 5. Pilate. (Luke 23:11-25)

B. Christ's torture and crucifixion.

- 1. Crucifixion was a Roman custom acquired from the Carthaginians.
- 2. "The most cruel and hideous of tortures."-- Cicero.
- 3. "The most wretched deaths."-- Josephus.
- 4. Christ suffered numerous tortures.
 - a. Scourging, a brutal, violent practice, which laid open the back and turned its tissues to pulp.
 - b. Crown of thorns and a beating with a rod.
 - c. Carried Own crossbar, which was approximately 100 pounds.
 - d. Legs not broken, for it was determined by two Roman executioners to be not necessary. (John 19:32-33)
 - e. Spilling of blood and water, from the piercing of His side (heart) by the Roman soldiers after His death.

C. Christ's burial and entombment.

- 1. Tomb -- hewn or carved out of solid rock.
- 2. Jewish burial -- 75-100 pounds of spices.
 - a. Grave clothes --strips of soaked cloth.
 - b. Embalming -- total weight of 95-120 pounds covering the body.
- 3. Very large stone -- one study puts its weight at 3,000 to 4,000 pounds.
- Roman security -- military law included the death penalty for deserting of post, falling asleep, or failing on a mission.
- 5. Roman seal -- breaking of the seal meant death. Impossible for disciples to steal the body.

II. In Order For There to Be a Resurrection, There Had to Be a Death.

- A. The scripture clearly shows that Jesus died.
- B. This refutes the theories of some that He merely passed out and that His resurrection was staged.



Spiritual Truths

 The death and burial of Jesus Christ was witnessed and attested to by thousands of people, including the reliable accounts of the disciples, the Roman authorities, soldiers, and the Jewish leadership who most wanted Jesus destroyed.

- Unless we as Christians examine the evidence demonstrating the fact of Jesus' bodily death, we will never fully grasp the fact of His bodily resurrection, and its significance to the Christian faith.
- Virtually all heresy of biblical doctrine stems from a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the nature of the resurrection of the body of Jesus Christ.
- As Christians, it is essential to embrace the suffering Christ, and to realize that being God, He humbled Himself, even to death on a cross, so that He is able to be in fellowship with those Christians who suffer.



Lesson Material

"And if Christ be not raised, your faith (is) vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." (1 Corinthians 15:17-19)

The teacher has the privilege to adequately and faithfully instruct regarding the central doctrine of the Christian faith -- the bodily resurrection of the Person of Jesus Christ. It is life eternal for those who believe it and receive the living Savior. It was in this demonstration of power that Jesus showed himself to be the distinct, only-begotten Son of God. Therefore, it is vital in this exposition to demonstrate the humanity of Christ. This includes the fact of His bodily death, for if Jesus was not really dead, then He was not

really raised, either -- and Christianity is a sham. Thus, it is important when depicting the resurrection that the teacher demonstrates the fact that Jesus actually died -- His body was sapped of every bit of life, and His body was placed in a tomb with no chance open for anything other than a resurrection to account for His body's disappearance.

Jesus Himself said, in reference to His body, "...Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2:19) He also said that He had the power to lay down His life, and the power to take it up again. (John 10:17-18) Christ's death is a biblical fact; and it was not an accident, but His choice. Jesus was not anyone's victim -- He is the Victor!

Good study materials that are apologetic in content are available, such as Josh McDowell's <u>A Ready Defense</u>, and <u>Evidence That Demands a Verdict</u>, as well as Frank Morrison's, <u>Who Moved the Stone?</u> Also, books by Dr. Norman Geisler, Dr. Walter Martin, and others well versed in a balanced theology are good for the teacher who desires to do further research and study.



Methods

Ask the following discussion questions to the students:

Could Jesus have survived this tortuous death, embalming and entombment; and, if so, how?

How can we apply the suffering of Jesus to our lives today -- what does it mean to us that He suffered for us?

Why is the bodily resurrection of Jesus so important to Christianity? (See Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 15:17-19)

The Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Part II)

Volume 11

Lesson 42



Bible References

Matthew 28

Mark 16

Luke 24

John 20, 21



Theme

The resurrection of Jesus Christ -- His physical death, burial and resurrection.



1 Corinthians 15:3-8

- 3 "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;
- 4 "And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:
- 5 "And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:
- 6 "After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.
- 7 "After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.
- 8 "And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."



1 Corinthians 15:20

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, {and} become the firstfruits of them that slept."



Outline

I. Possible Explanations for the Resurrection.

A. Disciples stole the body.

- 1. In Matthew 28:11-15, Matthew does not bother to refute this explanation, probably due to its lack of substantial evidence.
- Stealing the body would be categorically uncharacteristic of the disciples.
 - a. They were not thieves.
 - b. They were not liars.
 - c. They were not bold. (John 20:19)
 - d. They were Jews, and so they respected burial customs. (John 19:38-42)
- 3. Could anyone really believe that the disciples would live and die for what they knew was a lie?
 - a. All but John were brutally martyred.

b. All endured lifelong suffering and hardship.

B. Roman security.

- 1. Sixteen armed, professional soldiers.
- 2. Four nightly watches, with all soldiers at tomb site.
- 3. The death penalty for:
 - a. Falling asleep.
 - b. Deserting post.
- C. Large stone moved (the stone that sealed the tomb).
 - 1. It is estimated to have weighed well over a ton.
 - 2. The Greek word for "away" is apokulio, which means "distance." (Mark 16:4)
 - 3. The Greek language from John 20 concerning the stone uses *airo*, meaning "to pick up and carry away."
- D. "Swoon" theory refuted. The Swoon theory states that Jesus did not really die on the cross. He only "swooned" into unconsciousness and then revived.
 - 1. What about the certainty of His death by the Roman soldiers when they pierced His heart? (John 19:33-34)
 - 2. Swoon assumptions:
 - a. Jesus did not die from scourging and crucifixion.
 - b. Jesus did not suffer from being three days without food or water.
 - c. Jesus removed 100 pounds of grave clothes that were bound in embalming spices.
 - d. Jesus rolled the stone away.
 - e. Jesus slipped by Roman guards.

- f. Jesus walked 2 to 4 miles on nailpierced feet to meet the disciples.
- g. The Swoon theory is ridiculous to the honest person.

E. Women saw Him first.

- 1. An embarrassment to the twelve disciples.
- 2. Ancient culture did not ascribe much credibility to the testimony of a woman, in court or otherwise.
- 3. The disciples thought the experience of the women were "idle tales."

F. The post-resurrection appearances of Christ.

- 1. For forty days, in ten separate episodes recorded in scripture, Jesus appeared to people.
 - a. He appeared to many different people in a variety of places.
 - b. As many as five hundred people saw Jesus at one time. (1 Corinthians 15:6)
 - c. The apostle Paul said that he was willing to testify in a court of law at any time about the validity of Christ's appearances.
- John 20 states Jesus gave many convincing proofs that He had risen bodily.

II. Why Is There Such Argument About Christ's Resurrection?

- A. If Jesus had not risen from the dead, then His death would have only been the result of His own sin, and He could not have been the sinless Sacrifice for our sin.
- B. If Jesus had not risen from the dead, we would have no hope of resurrection, either.



Spiritual Truths

- If Jesus rose from the dead, then He is Who He said He is; and, by knowing Him, we know with certainty what God is like.
- If we examine the evidence, we will find that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most documented, verifiable event in ancient history.
- As Christians, we can stand on the truth that Christianity is the only faith founded upon fact, rather than a myth or a philosophy.



Lesson Material

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a doctrine of essential importance to Christianity. It is the central doctrine of the

church. Therefore, it is vital that the factual evidence and scriptural truth of the resurrection be adequately communicated to all people. The church of Christ is a universal group of people who serve a risen Savior, and not One Who died with only His philosophy living on. Jesus died to be our Savior; and now He lives to be our Lord.

As observed in the outline, the evidences and testimonies, as well as the progression of events surrounding the resurrection of Christ, are convincing. It is interesting to note that in the gospels, all accounts are viewed from a slightly different perspective, which adds to their credibility -- for if all of the accounts of the testimonies of the disciples were exactly the same, then we might doubt their validity. So it is in a court of law. Therefore, we can trust the testimony of the gospels concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ.



Methods

Have a group discussion with the students, and ask the following questions:

How is an event examined in a court of law for evidence? Why is this important, concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

What does the resurrection of Christ mean to us?

List on a blackboard the scripture references that show evidence of Jesus' resurrection.

The Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Part III)

Volume 11

Lesson 43



Bible References

Matthew 28

Mark 16

Luke 24

John 20, 21

Acts 1



Theme

The demonstration of the Resurrection as the most significant event in human history.



Scripture Reading

Acts 1:1-11

- 1 "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,
- 2 "Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:
- 3 "To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:
- 4 "And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.
- 5 "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.
- 6 "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord,

wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

- 7 "And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.
- 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.
- 9 "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.
- 10 "And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;
- 11 "Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."



Acts 1:3

"To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."



Outline

I. Contemporary Evidences.

- A. The Christian church.
 - 1. Began in Palestine, in 32 A.D.
 - a. People converted by the thousands, through preaching and teaching.
 - b. Disciples sacrificed their lives and were martyred for their new faith.
 - 2. Turned the world upside down. (Acts 17:6)
- B. Sunday, the Christian day.
 - 1. Also began in Palestine, 32 A.D.
 - a. Superseded Jewish Sabbath, which was on Saturday, to acknowledge more significant event which took place on Sunday -- the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - b. Today, the entire Western culture recognizes Sunday as the Christian day.
 - 2. Called in scripture the "first day of the week." (Mark 16:9; Acts 20:7)
- C. The Christian Book (the New Testament).
 - 1. Written by contemporaries and eyewitnesses of the event.
 - a. Six independent, individual testimonies.
 - (1) Matthew.
 - (2) Mark.
 - (3) Luke.
 - (4) John.

- (5) Peter.
- (6) Paul.
- b. The apostle Paul, once a persecutor of the church, wrote most of the New Testament canon.
- Writings on the Resurrection at the time were not challenged; therefore, we can conclude that they were generally accepted as actual events.

II. Prophetic Evidences.

- A. Old Testament prophecies concerning Jesus.
 - 1. Sixty direct prophecies.
 - a. A mathematician calculated the probability of 48 of these prophecies being fulfilled by one man at 10 to the 157th power, or a number with 157 zeros behind it!
 - b. Jesus was the Messiah, Whom the Old Testament foretold would come.
 - 2. All of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the "suffering servant" (see Isaiah 53 and Psalms 22) were fulfilled in Jesus Christ.
- B. The Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, translated between 150-200 B.C.) contains all of the Messianic prophecies.
- C. The Dead Sea Scrolls.
 - 1. Found in Qumran, in 1948.
 - 2. They contain the entire book of Isaiah and portions of almost all of the books of the Old Testament.
 - 3. The Dead Sea Scrolls date around 200 to 400 years before Christ.

D. Various archaeological finds substantiates places and landmarks referred to in scripture.



Spiritual Truths

- God has given anyone who truly seeks after Christ more than ample evidence to merit the validity of a personal encounter with the risen Christ.
- These evidences are not to be kept to oneself, but are to be used in persuasive speech to the unbeliever, so that he or she will consider Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
- The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the single most important event in human history; and the impact it has had on the world clearly bears this out.



Lesson Material

The resurrection of the body of Jesus Christ is the focal point of Christianity. Without it, there is no substance to Christianity; and Christians are to be pitied for they have given their devotion and lives to a dead man. (1 Corinthians 15:17-19) However, if Christ did rise, the whole of scripture is fulfilled in one Man; and now salvation is given to all by grace, as the gift of God.

Christ not only died to be our Savior, but He now also lives to be our Lord. We may now come to the Father freely, knowing that the blood of Jesus has cleansed us from all unrighteousness. If Christ rose, we as believers can come to Him freely, knowing that He is able to identify with us as our Great High Priest. And we know that he stands ready to strengthen us in our weakness, when we call him. (Hebrews 2:17-18)

The teacher must make the students aware that their faith is founded on the historical fact of the Resurrection, and not on myth or speculative philosophy.



Methods

Have the students think of other ways we know that Jesus is our risen Lord. (Examples: God answering our prayers; the inner witness of salvation by the Holy Spirit; the Word of God.)

Encourage students to share the gospel with their friends and other people in their sphere of influence.

Psalms 120 & 121

Volume 11

Lesson 44



Bible References

Psalms 120, 121



Theme

God's deliverance in the midst of trouble.



Scripture Reading

Psalms 120:1-7

- 1 "In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me.
- 2 "Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.
- 3 "What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?

- 4 "Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.
- 5 "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!
- 6 "My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.
- 7 "I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war."

Psalms 121:1-8

- 1 "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.
- 2 "My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.
- 3 "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.
- 4 "Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.
- 5 "The Lord is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.
- 6 "The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.
- 7 "The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.
- 8 "The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore."



Psalms 121:1

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help."



Outline

- I. We Are On a Pilgrim Journey, Heading Toward the City of God.
- A. Psalms 120 begins what is called the "Song of Ascents, or Degrees."
- B. These Psalms were probably an old songbook sung by the Hebrew families, while on their way to Jerusalem for their religious feasts.
- II. Psalms 120 -- The Theme Is a Plea for Deliverance; and the Key Verse Is Verse 7.
- A. The psalm speaks of war, lies, trouble and distress.
 - 1. The author's opening words, "In my distress,..." speaks of despair.
 - 2. His last word is "war."
 - 3. Each of the seven verses contains trouble and evil. It is a psalm of the real world.

- a. The psalms are symbolic of our journey with the Lord.
- b. Our road with God is not a "drive-through" experience, or a quick and easy road.
- B. The Lord's Name is mentioned only in the beginning of Psalms 120.
 - 1. The writer prays while in distress, and calls out the Lord's name.
 - 2. The lie (that everything is okay) provokes the prayer for immediate deliverance. (verse 1)
- C. Repentance is the first step toward God and away from the world.
 - 1. It is a decision and not an emotion.
 - 2. Mesech was a far away town in southern Russia, desolate and uncivilized.
 - 3. The psalmist realizes that he has been "too long" a citizen of Mesheck and Kedar, and that now he is ready to move. (verses 5-6)
 - 4. The psalmist is ready to say "No" to the world and "Yes" to God.
- III. Psalms 121 -- The Theme Is God's Deliverance; and the Key Verse Is Verse 2.
- A. The psalmist seeks the Lord's help in his trouble. (verses 1-2)
 - 1. In spite of all of our troubles, the Lord will deliver us.
 - 2. God will never let us down, if we look to Him as our help in time of trouble.

- B. The Lord is our help. (verse 1)
 - 1. As long as we are looking at our circumstances, we will be overwhelmed by them.
 - 2. We must lift up our eyes unto the Lord.
- C. The promise of Psalms 121 is not that we will never have trouble, but that nothing can hinder us from God's deliverance.
 - 1. God is our help (verse 1); our keeper (verse 5); our shade (verse 5); and our preserver. (verses 7-8)
 - 2. God is not an impersonal guide, but a very present help. (Psalms 46:1)
 - 3. The Lord will preserve us and protect us forever. (verse 8)



Spiritual Truths

- Deliverance in any situation comes from the Lord.
- It is the Lord's desire to preserve us from all evil.
- God will deliver us who are godly and who put their trust in His protection.
- God will deliver us from distress both now and forever.
- We must lift up our eyes unto the Lord, in the midst of trial and affliction.



Lesson Material

Psalms 120:

We can cry to the Lord; and He will hear us and answer us, as He did the psalmist. (Psalms 120:1) In times of war and strife, we are instructed throughout God's Word to seek peace. Peace amidst war is the table we share with Jesus, as spoken of in Psalms 23:5. In other words, God prepares a spiritual feast for us right in the heat of our battle, among our worst enemies.

In Psalms 120, David was driven to live among strangers who loved the thoughts of war. We, too, may be driven to places by our enemies which are places of war, hatred and cruelty. But Jesus is still "The Prince of Peace," to Whom we must lift up our eyes, lest we stumble from the evil surrounding us. We must seek peace and pursue it. Our heart attitude is peace; and peace is given to us by Jesus. (Psalms 34:14; 119:165; Isaiah 9:6; 26:3; John 14:27; Romans 14:19) We must let the peace of God rule in our hearts, even though war surrounds us on all sides. We have a feast waiting for us in the middle of the battlefield (Psalms 23:5; Colossians 3:15)

Psalms 121:

Many teenagers are surrounded by harmful desires, pressures and substances. David assures us that it is God's purpose to protect our souls from any calamity which befalls us -- that is, if we are godly and put our trust in His protection. The fearful and unbelieving have no place in God's kingdom, but we who put our faith in Him are pleasing to Him. (Hebrews 11:6)

We are on a strange planet, sometimes among strange calamities; but, God is our help and salvation out of it all. Looking up in the midst of our distress, we see Him to be our only hope of escape. God does not sleep during our suffering or plight, whatever it may be. He is wide awake to hear and deliver us, when we look up and call out to Him. God put us here for a reason; and that is why He chooses to save us, when we turn to Him. It will bring glory to the Lord, when we learn that it is only through Him that we are able to make it through the battle each day. Encouragement can be gained through understanding this Psalms of David. God will deliver us out of all of our troubles!



Methods

Divide the students into two groups. Assign one group Psalms 120 and the other group Psalms 121; and then, have each group search as many spiritual truths in their psalm as they can find. Have the groups share their findings with each other. Make this a contest, to see who can find the most spiritual truths.

Discuss with the students the troubles that the teachers or youth workers have been through, and how the Lord delivered them out of those situations.

Have some of the students give testimonies of how the Lord has delivered them from a trial.

The Sin of Pride

Volume 11

Lesson 45



Proverbs 11:2; 16:18; 21:4

Isaiah 28:1

Ieremiah 49:16

Mark 7:22-23

Ephesians 6:4-18

2 Timothy 2:21; 3:2

1 John 2:16



Theme

The sin of pride.



Isaiah 14:12-14

- 12 "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!
- 13 "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:
- 14 "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High."

Luke 10:18-19

- 18 "And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.
- 19 "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you."



1 John 2:16

"For all that {is} in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the [pride of life], is not of the Father, but is of the world."



Outline

I. Satan Fell From His Ministry Before God, Because of His Pride.

- A. Satan was created as Lucifer, the "Covering Cherub." He was a beautiful creature, with a ministry of music before God.
 - 1. He was perfect, until pride entered his heart and he determined to be like God himself. (Ezekiel 28:12-19)
 - 2. Because of this sin, he was cast out of heaven and lost the position that he held. (Isaiah 14:12-15)
- B. Jesus was there and saw this happen, for he told his disciples, "...I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." (Luke 10:18)
 - When Satan fell, he took with him many of God's angels, whom he had persuaded to join him in his

- rebellion and pride against the holy God.
- 2. These fallen angels operate in the principalities of Satan.

II. The Earliest Pride of Man Recorded In the Bible.

- A. Adam and Eve were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- B. The serpent appealed to Eve's pride by saying, "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:5)
 - 1. The first lie in the Bible is recorded in Satan's temptation of Eve. "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:" (Genesis 3:4)
 - 2. Satan lied to Eve, knowing that the punishment of their disobedience was spiritual death and the eventual death of their physical bodies. (Genesis 2:17)
 - Satan, the serpent, appeals to areas of weakness and uses deception to make us want to join his ranks against God.
 - a. Subtly he tempts us, and we fall for reasons that appeal to our pride.
 - b. We are deceived to believe that we will have:
 - (1) Power.
 - (2) Popularity.
 - (3) Unlawful desires.
 - (4) Friends.
 - (5) Freedom from obeying parents and God.
 - (6) Freedom from rules or anything that appeals to us.
 - c. We must realize that Satan plays to our pride and appeals to our

- lusts, in order to draw us away from God.
- d. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7)

III. The Negative Results of Pride In Our Lives.

- A. Pride is a part of the sin nature of mana wordly attitude. (1 John 2:16)
 - 1. Arrogance is overbearing selfimportance.
 - 2. Haughtiness is exaltation of oneself and contempt for others.
- B. The Lord sees the proud, but only respects the lowly. (Psalms 138:6)
 - 1. Jesus does not honor a proud heart; in fact, He despises it.
 - 2. Pride is sin. (Proverbs 21:4)
- C. Rebellion and pride are heart conditions. (Jeremiah 49:16)
 - 1. Out of our hearts proceed evil thoughts, that in turn cause evil actions. (Matthew 15:19)
 - 2. Acts of sin have their roots in the thoughts and intents of our hearts.

D. Sin is an act.

- 1. "...Every sin that a man doeth is without the body;...." (1 Corinthians 6:18) Sin is conceived in our hearts and manifested by our actions. (James 1:15)
- 2. The Bible says that a good man with good things in his heart will bring good treasures out, while an evilhearted man will bring forth evil treasures. (Luke 6:45)

- E. Pride brings us under condemnation of the devil. (1 Timothy 3:6) When we think more highly of ourselves than we should, we fall into pride.
- F. The pitfalls of pride.
 - 1. The pride in our hearts deceives us. (Jeremiah 49:16)
 - 2. Pride turns us aside to believe lies, instead of the truth. (Genesis 3:4)
 - 3. When we have pride in our heart, we are on our way to destruction. (Proverbs 16:18)
 - 4. With pride, we deal perversely with others without cause. (Psalms 119:78)
 - 5. In pride, we set traps for people, which is contrary to God's laws. (Psalms 119:85)
 - 6. The proud have contempt (the state of mind of one who despises). (Psalms 123:4)

IV. What We Can Do about Pride In Our Lives.

- A. "...When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:...." (John 16:13) We can certainly put our trust in the Holy Spirit to lead us in the way that leads to life everlasting, and not the way of pride.
- B. "...Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7)
- C. We do not fight people in our struggle against pride; we fight the powers of Satan's army, and we fight our own sinful nature. (Ephesian 2:1; 6:12; 2 Corinthians 10:3-4)
 - 1. We fight spiritual forces and our own carnal nature, which tempt us

- with pride, by hiding the Word of God in our hearts. (Psalms 119:11)
- 2. By putting on the armor of God and taking it with us at all times, we can defeat pride in our lives. Truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the Word of God, praying, and watching is the armor that stops Satan's influence on us. (Ephesians 6:14-18)
- D. "...Because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:" (1 Peter 5:8)
 Simply being aware that the devil is out there and ready to get us to join him in rebellion against God is reason enough to be prepared, when he comes to tempt us with pride.
- E. We need not be befuddled, like Eve in the Garden. We can receive divine wisdom from the Holy Spirit; and He will bring all scripture and truth to our remembrance, when we need it the most.
- F. Prayer is our weapon against temptation to sin because of pride.
 - 1. Prayer keeps us in tune with God's ways, God's will and God's Word.
 - 2. As Jesus directed us in the Lord's prayer, we can pray, "...lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil." (Luke 11:4)

V. What Were the Results, When Jesus Was Tempted with Pride?

- A. He overcame temptation.
 - 1. The blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony are used to overcome in this life. (Rev. 12:11)

- 2. Jesus resisted pride and answered Satan with the Word of God, when Satan wanted Him to prove that He was God's Son.
 - a. Satan also used the Word of God.
 - b. We must use the Word of God, with wisdom and understanding. (2 Timothy 2:15)
- 3. Jesus reassures us when He tells us, "...But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)
- B. He did not act independently of the Father or of the Word of God, when tempted by pride from Satan.
 - 1. Jesus said, "I can of mine own self do nothing...because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." (John 5:30)
 - 2. When Satan asked Jesus to worship him, Jesus answered, "...Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (Luke 4:8)
- C. Jesus won the victory for us; and He gives us power over the serpent, to tread Him under our feet. (Luke 10:19)



Spiritual Truths

- Adam and Eve failed, when confronted with the temptation to fall into pride. It cost them everything.
- Pride is a part of our sin nature, and a sin against God.

- Jesus triumphed over pride, when tempted by Satan. He won the victory for us.
- Jesus has given us the tools of effective warfare; and we can triumph, as He did. We need not fear.



Lesson Material

Daily Bible reading is paramount in fighting pride. Through reading daily from God's word, we can feed on the hidden manna, directly from the Word of God. We can receive divine revelation from the Holy Spirit. As we are faithful to read the Word every day, God is faithful to feed us. When we are tempted by the enemy, the Holy Spirit will be faithful to reveal to us the things which He has taught us in the past, concerning God's Word.

In God's Word, we have so many precious promises that enable us to remain victorious over our enemy. Satan is powerless over the children of God, when we trust in Jesus to help us. When tempted to disobey parents, pursue our own lusts, oppose God-loving teachers and pastors, we must take the responsibility to place within our hearts the pure, unadulterated truth in God's Word. Memorization of God's Word can save us from taking serious risks, like Adam and Eve did.

Satan appealed to a weakness in Adam and Eve. Adam was the keeper of the Garden and ruler over everything on earth. By appealing to Adam and Eve's sense of pride, Satan planted a small seed in their hearts. He said they would not really die, but that they would be like God. In Adam's thinking, he decided that, besides ruling the whole earth, he wanted more. Pride and self-indulgence can easily contaminate our once pure and dedicated lives. These are the subtle traps of pride. Pride says that we want to have this or that, because it will make us well-liked, feel good, smarter, better or happier.

The progression of pride starts out as the lust of the flesh, by wanting something that will please us, even though it is wrong to have it. Then it precedes to the lust of our eyes, when we see something that will satisfy the sinful desire in our hearts. Then, the pride of life causes us to pursue hard after something dangerous, perhaps just for the cheap thrill of it. These fleshly, sinful desires that we feel are not of the father, but are of the world. (1 John 2:16) Whoever is a friend of the world is not a friend to God. We do not have to fall into the same trap as Adam and Eve. We can be smarter. We can memorize God's Word and hide it in our hearts, so that when the time comes to make the decision, we will not sin against our holy God. We know the consequences; we have been warned; and so, we can appropriate the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, and the mind of Christ, and have accountable relationships with those around us in Christ.

We can choose that we are not going to fall into pride and sin. It is our choice, for we have been created by God with a free will. It is written, "...Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (Matthew 4:10; Luke 4:8)



Methods

At the beginning of class, have four different students write the dictionary definitions for the following words on a chalk board or on posters: Pride, arrogance, haughtiness, contempt.

Discuss both good and evil kinds of pride.

For example: good pride is what we feel, after we have accomplished

something positive, like getting an "A" on our report card.

For example, evil pride is when we are mean, such as being insensitive to someone who has a handicap.

Assign an extra credit memory verse, such as Psalms 119:11 or 119:105.

A homework assignment would be for the students to read Genesis chapter 3, especially verses 4-6. Have them write in their own words what the Holy Spirit reveals to them through these verses.

When Loneliness Is a Way of Life

Volume 11.

Lesson 46



Psalms 51:17; 68:5-6; 84:5-7; 145:18

Hosea 2:14-15

Matthew 28:20

John 6:15

Romans 15:1

1 Thessalonians 5:18



Theme

Understanding loneliness and finding ways to deal constructively with it.



Scripture Reading

Psalms 146:5-10

- 5 "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God:
- 6 "Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever:
- 7 "Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The LORD looseth the prisoners:
- 8 "The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous:
- 9 "The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.
- 10 "The LORD shall reign forever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD."



1 Thessalonians 5:18

"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."



Outline

I. Good Aspects of Loneliness.

- A. Loneliness can cause us to get alone with God and get to know Him better.
 - 1. Jesus often was alone in prayer. (Mark 1:35, Luke 5:15-16; 6:12; 9:18; 22:41)
 - 2. Jesus hung alone on a cross. All of His followers deserted Him, except for His mother and John. (John 19:26-27) Even the Father had to turn His back on Him for a moment. (Matthew 27:46)
 - 3. Loneliness can cause us to turn to God in prayer.
 - a. It increases our prayer life.
 - b. It causes us to have fellowship with God, by ourselves.
 - c. We learn to "pray through" in situations that we find difficult to handle.
- B. It can cause us to be stronger Christians.

- C. It can cause us to be lifted up by God, when we are bowed down in our spirit.
- D. It can cause us to seek relief in God from our unpleasant feeling of loneliness.
- E. Loneliness causes us to find the will of God for our lives.
 - 1. Jonah spent three days and nights in the belly of a whale, because he was running from God's will.
 - 2. Jonah travailed in prayer during that dark time. (Jonah 2:1-9)
 - 3. He came through it changed, and willing to do God's will.

II. Bad Aspects of Loneliness.

- A. We can allow it to cause discouragement, rather than growth, in our lives.
 - 1. When we do not turn to God in our time of loneliness, we become discouraged.
 - 2. Discouragement is not a state of mind that God is pleased with. (Psalms 42:5, 11)
- B. We can give place to despair, rather than seeking God for the answers.
 - 1. Our goal in loneliness is not to reach the point of no return in despairing.
 - 2. Our goal is to find Christ at the bottom of our pit, and look up to Him for deliverance.
- C. Self-pity can get a hold on us; and we can feed it, instead of feeding ourselves with the truth in God's Word.
 - 1. Our eyes need not be on ourselves. (Hebrews 12:2)

- 2. Our eyes turned inward upon our own circumstances can only cause us harm.
- D. We start giving in to more negative feelings.
 - 1. When we allow the enemy to do his work in our loneliness, we open the door to other forces that will drag us down further and further.
 - 2. In our loneliness, we believe lies, such as:
 - a. No one cares.
 - b. No one would care, if we disappeared.
 - c. God does not care.
 - d. There is no way out.
 - e. We would be better off dead.

III. What To Do, When We Are Lonely.

- A. We should draw near to God. (James 4:8)
 - 1. Pray, sing, and thank Him. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)
 - 2. Worship and praise God, in times of loneliness.
- B. Think of the needs of others; and do something about reaching out to them.
- C. Call on someone who will lift us up and encourage us in Christ.
- D. Look up to God, believing in Him for deliverance. (Psalms 121:1-2)
- E. Stay in the will of God. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)
 - 1. Do not make rash decisions, while in a state of loneliness.

- 2. Talk to others, before making decisions about what we are going to do in our loneliness.
 - a. Do not venture off in unsafe areas, in order to try to escape loneliness.
 - b. In seeking the advice of God's people, we can find safety. (Proverbs 11:14)
- 3. Stay in prayer and in thanksgiving to God, until He shows you a way out.
 - a. Jonah ran from his problem, instead of seeking God.
 - b. He endangered himself and others by doing so. The ship's crew had to throw him overboard, because he was endangering them by his disobedience to God.
 - c. In loneliness, stay put and seek God. (Ephesians 6:13)

IV. Why Does God Take Us Through the Test of Loneliness?

- A. We may be running from God, as Jonah was.
- B. God may be chastising us, because of our stubborn self-will. (Jonah 1:1-3)
- C. God may want to take us deeper in our relationship with Him.
- D. God may want to speak to us and show us His will for our lives. We have the example of Jesus in the wilderness for forty days. After being alone, He was thrust forth into His ministry.
- E. God may want to strengthen us in our walk with Him.

- F. We may have sin in our lives that God can deal with only when we come to the end of our rope and cry out to God.
- G. We may need to learn obedience. (Jonah 3:3-4)

V. God's Promises to the Lonely.

- A. He makes homes for the lonely. (Psalms 68:6)
- B. He raises them up. (Psalms 146:8)
- C. He gives happiness to those who hope in Him. (Psalms 146:5)
- D. He does not despise us, when our heart is broken from loneliness. (Psalms 51:17)
- E. He remains near to us, when we call upon Him in truth. (Psalms 145:18)
- F. He sets us in families. (Psalms 68:5-6)
- G. He brings us through loneliness and makes us stronger. (Psalms 84:5-7)
- H. He comforts us and gives us hope; and He causes us to sing. (Hosea 2:14-15)



Spiritual Truths

- Loneliness is a tool of God to strengthen us and direct us into the perfect will of God.
- Jesus experienced loneliness many times; and He used these times to pray and draw near to God.

 Loneliness can be used as a tool for destruction, or as an instrument for our growth in Christ.



Lesson Material

Jesus went alone to pray many times. (Mark 1:35; Luke 5:15-16; 6:12; 9:18; 22:41) He expressed His concern, in times when all had forsaken Him. He felt alone and deserted, but He turned to God in prayer. After these times alone in prayer, He found strength to return and minister to people again. To "minister" means an act of serving and giving, as a nurse administers medicine to the sick. Jesus was alone in the wilderness for forty days, fasting and praying. This was preparation for His ministry.

On the other hand, Jonah chose to run from his call from God. God had to chastise Jonah, by putting him in a place all alone, away from the rest of the crowd. Jonah had to do his praying alone, from inside the fish's stomach. Sometimes, we have to experience loneliness. But we must be assured that when we are in times of loneliness, it is not in vain. God has a purpose in loneliness. God will bring us through the lonely times, if and when we chose to look to Him and discover His will.

When we try to escape loneliness by running away, we put our lives in danger, like Jonah. When we learn to stay put and face the loneliness, like Jesus did, we remain in the will of God. When we put ourselves in a position of obedience in the midst of the loneliness, God will

accomplish His perfect work and bring us through, happier and strengthened. After Jesus' time of loneliness in the wilderness, He was ready to begin His purpose for coming to earth -- to save people from sin. Stay in the center of the test; and believe that God will cause us great joy and give us wonderful victory over the problems that we have. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

When we allow God to bring us through and do not try in our own strength to act upon our loneliness, we find God's will waiting for us at the other end of the tunnel. We go into the dark tunnel alone; and we come out walking hand-in-hand with God.

If we are alone, God will set us in the family of God, where we can be ministered to and protected. We must accept the gift of the family of God into our lives, as a blessing from Him. If we reject God's solution to our loneliness, then we are using loneliness toward our own demise. God has set good shepherds and caring people in the body of Christ, to meet our needs and feed us from God's Word. We become strengthened, and growth occurs, when we place ourselves in the family of He gives us mothers, fathers, God. brothers and sisters in the body of Christ. He gives us guidance from caring, spiritual He takes us from our lonely, forsaken state and bountifully showers us with all of the pleasures of home in the family of God. We are wise to accept the family of God and allow them to minister to our loneliness and bind our wounds.

The Good Shepherd loves and cares for His sheep in the flock of God.



Methods

Have each student get alone. Give them the following scriptures to look up in their Bible: Matthew 6:5-6, Matthew 28:20 and Matthew 26:36-70. Have the students answer the following questions while alone, after reading the above scriptures:

What is the positive side to loneliness? (It strengthens us, deepens our prayer life, draws us closer to God, etc.)

How can God use loneliness to benefit us? (To show us His will, to place a calling on our lives, etc.)

List three constructive things to do when lonely. (Pray, sing, worship God, give thanks in every situation, etc.)

List three destructive ways to handle loneliness. (Run, endanger ourselves or others, self-pity, turning from God to ourselves, etc.)

Encourage the students to recognize others who may be struggling with loneliness, and reach out to minister to them.

Cool Dates On a Hot Night

Volume 11

Lesson 47



Bible References

Genesis 2:18

2 Corinthians 6:14



Theme

To give students the positive elements in dating and developing healthy relationships between sexes.



Scripture Reading

Genesis 2:18

18 "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

14 "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

15 "And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16 "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in {them}; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean {thing}; and I will receive you,

18 "And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."



2 Corinthians 6:14

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"



Outline

- I. A Date Is an Appointment by Two People to Spend Time Together.
- A. It is a time for developing a relationship.
- B. It is between opposite sexes, for the purpose of courtship.

II. What Are the Benefits of Dating?

- A. Dating can develop positive friendships between members of the opposite sex.
- B. Fun. Dating is a great way to have fun with a member of the opposite sex.
 - 1. Dating should be a good time.

- 2. Dating is to enjoy one another's company.
- C. Dating helps us develop social skills.
 - 1. Dating helps us to develop socially, and to learn to communicate with the opposite sex.
 - 2. We learn to feel comfortable in the company of the opposite sex, as we learn to relate to each other.
- D. Dating helps us determine the qualities that we are looking for in our future mate.
 - It is not profound, but it is true we most probably marry a person whom we have dated.
 - 2. Dating helps us evaluate the kind of person we want as a life-partner.

III. How Do We Develop Good Dating Relationships?

- A. We must let relationships develop naturally (slowly), and not try to force them.
- B. We must be trustworthy and honest in our relationships.
 - 1. Trust is one of the foundational qualities for any relationship to be successful.
 - 2. No relationship will survive long, without trust.
- C. We must become friends, and not lovers.
 - 1. Too often, couples get too close, too soon.
 - 2. Slow down with the physical expression, or be ready to crash and

burn.

- D. We must control our emotions. (Proverbs 4:23)
- E. We must learn to communicate with each other.
 - 1. In time, if we want the relationship to grow, then we must learn to communicate our values, feelings, and desires.
 - If we cannot talk about what is important to us, then we will not be able to truly get to know one another.
- F. We must not isolate ourselves from the rest of the world.
 - 1. We need to continue to develop other friendships.
 - We must continue to develop our other interests.
 - 3. If our boyfriend or girlfriend is the only reason for our existence, then we are in trouble.
- G. We must keep Christ in the center of our relationship, through prayer and fellowship with other believers.



Spiritual Truths

- The purpose of dating is to develop friendships with members of the opposite sex.
- Our relationships will be healthy, if Christ is at the center.

- Dating helps us to determine what we are looking for in a future mate.
- Good dating habits will help build good marriage habits.



Lesson Material

Dating is to develop friendships and to have fun. Dating allows us to sharpen our relational skills. It gives us opportunities to learn how to relate to people of the opposite sex. Dating relationships take a great deal of prayer, patience, time and work; but they can benefit us with lifetime rewards. Dating also helps to develop character in us, as we learn to handle life situations. But, remember dating is to be fun.

Marriage is God's first ordained institute. In many cultures, marriages are prearranged, and the bride and groom have no say in it. In American culture, however, courtship or dating is used to help men and women decide whom they are going to marry. The dating relationship assists in discovering who that someone special is.

God's Word gives us some important ground rules for dating. We are not to be "unequally yoked" with unbelievers. Indeed, this also applies to our other relationships in life, such as intimate friendships and business partnerships.

Paul told Timothy to "flee youthful lusts." (2 Timothy 2:22) We must be sure to never place ourselves in a situation in which sexual temptation can go

unchecked. It is wise to date in group situations, and not spend a great deal of time alone as a couple. When we stay under the covering of God's Word, our dating relationships can be very rewarding and satisfying.



Methods

Have the students split up into two groups -- guys and girls. Have them sit

opposite of each other. Have each group submit three questions regarding dating that they would like to ask the other; and then, hold an open forum and discuss the questions submitted.

Have the students list what they know to be God's guidelines for dating, as shown in the Word.

Sex, Dating & Marriage

Volume 11

Lesson 48



Bible References

Genesis 1:31

Psalms 139:14

Ephesians 5:22-33

1 Thessalonians 4:3

1 Corinthians 6:13, 15; 7:1



Scripture Reading

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

19 "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost 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."



Theme

Marriage, intimacy, and physical expression.



Memory Verse

2 Timothy 2:22

"Flee also [youthful lusts]: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."



Outline

I. Love, Intimacy and Sex Are Gifts from the Lord.

- A. God designed sex. (Genesis 1:27-28)
- B. God gives laws and guidelines for us to enjoy the maximum benefit of His creation.
- C. Marriage is exemplary of the relationship between Christ and the church. (Ephesians 5:22-27)
 - 1. Wives (as believers) are to submit to their husbands, as though they were submitting to Christ. (verse 22)
 - 2. Husbands are to love their wives, as Christ loved the church. (Christ gave Himself for us.) (verse 26)
 - 3. The result is a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish. This is what Christ desires for us in marriage. (verse 27)

II. Drawing the Line.

- A. Reasons to wait until marriage for sexual intimacy.
 - 1. God says to wait. (Thessalonians 4:3; 1 Corinthians 6:13)
 - 2. God has our best interests in mind, when He says to wait.
 - 3. Waiting proves love. Sex does not prove anything.
 - 4. Waiting keeps us from the negative consequences of premarital sex.
 - a. Pregnancy.

- b. Venereal Disease.
- c. Lack of trust.
- d. Loss of control.
- e. Fear.
- f. Guilt.
- g. Emotional hassles.
- B. Benefits of waiting until marriage.
 - 1. Relationships are much more than physical.
 - The physical union is the Goddesigned expression of the marriage relationship.
 - b. The ultimate emotional relationship is marriage, and the ultimate physical expression is sex; and God designed the two to go together.
 - 2. Waiting and self-control enhances our self-esteem and self worth.
 - Respecting each other in a relationship exhibits the right kind of love -- an unconditional love, not a performance-oriented love.
- C. Where to draw the line in our physical expression?
 - 1. Law of diminishing returns.
 - a. Standards set by others will simply give you the liberty to reach the limit quickly and without conviction.
 - b. Soon those outer limits will not bring the contentment that they once did.
 - 2. We must set limits.
 - a. Ask God for His help.
 - b. In 1 Corinthians 7:1, we receive some practical advice: "...It is good for a man not to touch a woman." The meaning of the word "touch" is not to light the fires of passion in a person.
 - 3. If we have a problem controlling ourselves physically, then we must

not put ourselves in tempting situations.

- a. Double-dating can remedy temptation.
- b. Creative dates, rather than nothing-to-do dates, need to be planned.
- c. Do not get together alone in the bedroom or couch or back seat.
 This is only inviting trouble.

III. Guys and Dating.

- A. Guys should follow the example of Christ in their relationships.
 - 1. Jesus poured out His life for others.
 - When guys use others as conquests, they defeat their purpose in Christ, which is to strengthen and encourage others.
- B. Guys should not be self-serving in relationships, by trying to satisfy their own lusts.

IV. Girls and Dating.

- A. Girls should give their hearts to Christ, before they give their hearts to guys.
- B. Girls spend a lot of time working on their outward beauty, but they should concentrate more on their inward beauty.

V. God and Dating.

- A. God wants us to have pure dating relationships. (1 Thessalonians 4:7)
- B. God wants us to have pure marriages. (Hebrews 13:4)

C. God wants our relationships to be a witness to the world. (Ephesians 5:24-33)



Spiritual Truths

- God wants our relationships with the opposite sex to be pure.
- God wants us to wait until we are married to have sex.
- God wants us to set standards in our relationships.
- God wants our relationships to be a witness to the world.



Lesson Material

It is very important that Christian young people seek God's direction in their relationships with the opposite sex. Nothing is more exhilarating and nothing is more exasperating than relationships between the sexes. There will be great joy or great sorrow, depending on how well relationships are managed.

Teenagers tend to get emotional in relationships, rather than think through the consequences. It is important that they progress slowly in their relationships with one another. Quick, torrid love affairs are not God's will.

The scripture makes it clear that teenagers will stay clear of many problems, if they refrain from sex before marriage. There are too many dangerous consequences that could "burn" them. It is even life-threatening to become physically involved, outside of a monogamous marriage. It is also God's will that Christian young people not marry an unbeliever; and so, teenagers need to be getting about involved emotionally with others who are not saved. (2 Corinthians 6:14)

If we work to develop genuine friendship and mutual respect in our relationships, then we will reap the benefits of good relationships. We must let the Lord lead us, by listening to the gentle voice of His Spirit, as He endeavors to guide us.



Methods

Discuss with the students how God draws the line for us in His Word, when it comes to relationships. What happens to our lives, when we do not obey the rules? What sorrows could we avoid, if we would follow God's guidelines?

Use the blackboard to write:

What are the qualities guys look for in girls?

What are the qualities girls look for in guys?

Have the students discuss these questions.

Walking in the Spirit

Volume 11

Lesson 49



Genesis 3:8-10

Luke 11:13

John 10:10; 15:5

Acts 20:28

Romans 6:11-13; 8:32; 14:23

Ephesians 5:18, 4:29-32

1 Thessalonians 5:16-19

Hebrews 11:6

1 John 1:9



Galatians 5:25

25 "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."



John 10:10

"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."



Theme

Overcoming the natural man through the Holy Spirit.



Outline

- I. To Be a Complete and Full Person, the Holy Spirit Must Empower Us. (John 15:56)
- A. We will bear much fruit, if we abide in Christ; but, apart from Christ, we can do nothing. (John 15:5)
- B. Overflowing, abundant life is what Jesus wants for us. (John 10:10)
- C. Jesus commands us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)
- II. Developing Our Relationship With the Holy Spirit.
- A. Self-examination. (Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 11:28)
- B. Confess all sin. (1 John 1:9)
 - 1. We must confess our weakness and sin.
 - 2. Until we do confess, God cannot fill us. (2 Timothy 2:21)
- C. Submit completely to Christ (Romans 6:1-13)
 - 1. We must be willing to make any sacrifice for Him. (Romans 12:1)
 - 2. Resisting the Lord stifles the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- D. Be filled with the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18-21)

- 1. Singing and making melody to the Lord.
- 2. Giving thanks to God.
- 3. Submitting to the Lord and to others (maintaining proper relationships).

III. We Must Walk in the Holy Spirit. (Galatians 5:25)

- A. We walk in the Holy Spirit, by not grieving Him. (Ephesians 4:29-32)
 - 1. Emotions that grieve the Holy Spirit are all forms of anger: bitterness, envy, criticism, jealousy, gossip, hatred, sarcasm, revenge, unforgiveness, and intolerance.
 - 2. The basic cause is selfishness.
 - 3. We will reap the emotions we sow. (Galatians 6:7)
- B. We walk in the Holy Spirit, by not quenching Him. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-19)
 - 1. Emotions that quench the Holy Spirit: doubt, fear, worry, hesitating, indecision, anxiety, suspicion, depression, inferiority, loneliness and withdrawal.
 - 2. Disobedience can cause some of these emotions. (Genesis 3:8-10)
 - 3. We must operate and walk in faith. (Hebrews 11:6; Romans 14:23)
- C. We walk in the Holy Spirit by not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16)
 - 1. We must choose to submit to the Holy Spirit on a daily basis.
 - 2. We must recognize that our natural man is at enmity with God. (Galatians 5:17)



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus commands us to be filled with the Spirit.
- When we walk in the Spirit, we can have an abundant, overflowing life through Him.
- When we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.
- We must be careful to never offend or quench the Holy Spirit.
- It is a matter of our will, whether or not we walk in the Spirit.
- Staying filled with the Spirit produces spiritual fruit in our lives.

times of trouble; and trouble will come, for this is one way in which we grow.

The Holy Spirit always points our lives toward Jesus. (John 15:26) He is at work, to produce the fruit of the Spirit in us, which is the character of Jesus Christ. (Galatians 5:22-23) The Holy Spirit promises to lead us into all truth. (John 14:26) The Holy Spirit helps us with our infirmities. What a marvelous Comforter He is!

We must practice being sensitive to the inner promptings of the Holy Spirit. God tells us to examine ourselves and to confess any sin that we may have. As we submit ourselves to Jesus, we can then be filled with the Holy Ghost. Each day we live, we must ask the Holy Ghost to fill us to overflowing, so that we can be ready for what the day brings, as we operate and walk in faith.



Lesson Material

Walking with the realization that we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us can be a very exciting experience; and the more that we acknowledge His presence, the more exciting His indwelling becomes. We have to keep in touch with Him, because He never intrudes, against our will. He will fill us continually, if we continually acknowledge His presence. We must learn to stay in an attitude of surrender and give Him full reign in all parts of our lives. He is able to use us, when we yield our wills to Him. He is always there to comfort us in



Methods

Have the students relate interesting stories of how the Holy Spirit has worked in their lives. Have prayer for those who want a deeper walk with Him.

Take a glass of water and fill it almost to the top. This will show what it is like to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Empty out half of the water; and explain that this is what happens to us as we spend a day walking in this world. Then fill the glass back up, in order to show how we can ask the Holy Spirit to fill us again for God's work.

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Volume 11

Lesson 50



Mark 1:9-10

Luke 3:16

John 7:38-39

Acts 1:5; 2:4, 33; 8:15-17; 19:1-6



Theme

The baptism in the Holy Spirit.



Acts 1:5

5 "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

Acts 2:1-4, 16-18, 21, 33, 38-39, 41

- 1 "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.
- 2 "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.
- 3 "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.
- 4 "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
- 16 "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;
- 17 "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:
- 18 "And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:"

- 21 "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."
- 33 "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."
- 38 "Then Peter said unto them, 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.
- 39 "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."
- 41 "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."



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. The Scripture Indicates that There Are Many Types of Baptisms.
- A. John's baptism of repentance. (Mark 1:4)
- B. The baptism of fire or suffering. (Luke 12:50; Mark 10:38-39)
- C. Baptism into the body of Christ. (Romans 6; 1 Corinthians 12:13)
 - 1. Baptizer -- the Holy Spirit.
 - 2. Baptized into -- the body of Christ.
- D. Christian water baptism. (Matthew 28:19)
 - 1. Baptizer -- The pastor or elders.
 - 2. Baptized into -- water.
- E. The baptism in the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 3:11)
 - 1. Baptizer -- Jesus Christ.
 - 2. Baptized into -- the Holy Spirit.

II. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit Was Given in the Upper Room, at Pentecost.

- A. After Jesus had risen from the dead, He appeared to the disciples and instructed them to tarry in Jerusalem, until they were endued with power.
- B. Having waited many days in Jerusalem, in an upper room, the day of Pentecost finally came.
 - 1. The Holy Ghost manifested Himself suddenly, when all 120 believers were in prayer and in one accord.
 - 2. This gathering of 120 men and women was the beginning of the church.
- C. The Holy Spirit is manifestations were as follows, according to Acts 2.
 - 1. As the 120 were assembled in one place a sound as a rushing, mighty wind came suddenly into the room.
 - 2. There appeared cloven tongues, which looked like fire and sat on each of them.
 - 3. They were all baptized "....with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:4)

III. Examples of Others in the Bible Who Received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

- A. Cornelius and his family accepted Christ as Savior; and they received the baptism in the Holy Ghost, as well. Peter knew this, because they spoke with tongues. (Acts 10:44-48)
 - Speaking to the disciples about Cornelius, Peter said that the Holy

- Ghost fell on the Italians (Cornelius and his family) the same way that He had on them, on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 11:15-17)
- 2. Speaking in tongues is an outward evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- B. Paul came to Ephesus and found some disciples, who had not yet received the Holy Ghost. (Acts 19:1-6)
 - 1. The believers at Ephesus said that they had not heard of the Holy Ghost.
 - 2. Paul found out that these disciples had received the baptism of repentance, which was John's baptism.
 - 3. Paul instructed them to believe in the One who came after John (Who was Jesus; and then, Paul laid hands upon them, and the Holy Ghost came on them. They began speaking with tongues and prophesying.
 - 4. These people first received the indwelling Holy Spirit (salvation) and then the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- C. Peter and John came to Samaria, after they had heard that the people had received the Word of God. (Acts 8:15-17)
 - 1. The believers there had been baptized in water in the Name of the Lord Jesus, but they had not yet received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
 - 2. Paul laid his hands upon them, and the Holy Spirit came on them.

IV. How to Receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

A. Laying on of hands -- Paul was used as a vessel to assist people in receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit in Acts 19:6. In this case, the laying on of hands was a channel, through which the Holy Spirit moved to transmit supernatural virtue or power of God to the spirit of the one on whom hands were laid. (Acts 8:14-17)

B. Ask for it. (Luke 11:9-13)

- 1. It is important that one is asking God for the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in a heavenly prayer language.
- God will baptize a believers in the Holy Spirit, after they have been obedient to receive the gift of salvation.
- 3. It is important to notice that in scripture, when a person received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, they first were saved.
 - a. By comparing scripture with scripture, we learn that these are requirements for receiving the baptism.
 - b. The scripture reveals that those who wanted it received it.
 - c. If a person does not want the baptism in the Holy Spirit, then God will not violate that person's will.

C. Receive it by faith. (Hebrews 11:6)

- 1. A relationship with God must be based on and exercised by faith.
- 2. "...For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6)

- D. Diligently seeking God to baptize us in His Holy Spirit is an important requirement. (Hebrews 11:1)
 - 1. Even if we do not feel that we have received the baptism (after the laying on of hands and prayer, or our simply asking for it), we must exercise our faith by believing what we have hoped for and knowing that God will do it.
 - We must open our mouths in faith, and yield to the Holy Spirit, as He gives us utterance.
 - One can receive the baptism while alone with God, or be prayed for by a believer who has already received the baptism.
 - 4. Many have received the gift at unexpected times in unexpected places.

V. What Is the Result of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

- A. The gift of tongues. New tongues are the evidence of having received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:4)
- B. Other gifts of the Spirit may now operate through us (called in scripture the "manifestation of the Spirit). (1 Corinthians 12:8-10)
 - 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. Divers kinds of tongues.
 - 9. Interpretation of tongues.

- C. Our new prayer language is the gift of tongues.
 - 1. When we pray in tongues, our spirits speak mysteries unto God. (1 Corinthians 14:2)
 - 2. We can pray in the Spirit. (Jude 20)
- D. We avail ourselves of:
 - 1. Power to witness. (Acts 1:8)
 - 2. Ability to pray beyond our natural understanding. (1 Corinthians 14:2)
 - 3. Exercising the gifts of the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:1-11)
 - Edifying and building up the spiritual, inner man in ourselves. (1 Corinthians 14:4)



Spiritual Truths

- The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is given to all who are saved and who are sincerely desirous of this work of God.
- Jesus Christ must be our Savior, before we can receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- Christians can benefit enormously in their walk with the Lord, by receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit and functioning in its power.



Lesson Material

As we study the Bible, we learn that there are different types of baptisms. Jesus experienced two of the baptisms mentioned in scripture. Luke 3:16 says, "John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:" Christian water baptism is symbolic of death, burial and resurrection; and it is symbolic of new birth and new life with Christ. A baptism of suffering is altogether a separate experience, which Jesus experienced when He was mocked, beaten and left to die on a cross. He then battled spiritual forces in hell. As Christians, we will also suffer for the cause of Christ. (2 Timothy 3:12)

After Jesus' resurrection, He imparted the Gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit to His disciples. (John 20:22) Note that it is the Holy Spirit Himself Who is the Gift, and not the result of His blessing in our lives. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a separate work, in that it is the act by which Jesus Himself immerses (baptizes) us in the Holy Spirit. With the evidence of speaking in tongues, which is termed our "prayer language," we enter into a newer, deeper realm of spiritual life; and we become empowered in our witness for Jesus Christ.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a supernatural infilling or immersion by God to us. It is an infilling of power to live victoriously with the risen Christ as His heir. We have the power to be greater

witnesses to all of the world. In Acts 2, we read that 3,000 souls were added to the 120 believers on the day of Pentecost, when the baptism in the Holy Spirit was given. The disciples entered into the supernatural, wonder-working ministry of the Holy Spirit.

We must demonstrate holiness in our hearts and lives, in order to be the dwelling place of a holy God. James 1:27 instructs us, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." However, we would be wrong to assume we would ever be "worthy" of Jesus' work in our lives of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Instead of our trying to be holy, we receive the gift by asking in faith, in the same manner as we received salvation. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17) He loves us. Jesus' blood cleanses us from all our unrighteousness. So it is not a question of our holiness, but it is only because of God's goodness, that we receive His gifts. Because of our faith in God's goodness, we can ask for the baptism in the Holy Spirit with confidence and expectation.



Methods

For the brave and the bold, challenge the students memorize Romans 8. (While this chapter does not refer to the baptism in the Holy Spirit, it is all about the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. It will help lay the groundwork for the students to understand the Holy Spirit and His ways, rather that fear Him.) It will take some diligence, but help them with the following tips:

Take 3" x 5" cards and write several verses consecutively. (4 verses per card)

Romans 8 is approximately 40 verses. Memorizing 8 verses will take 5 weeks to memorize the whole chapter, or 4 verses a week will take 10 weeks.

Team up with one or more friends to do this successfully. Do not do it alone, unless there is a genius in the class.

No less than once a day for the next 5 to 10 weeks, the student must call their partner(s) or get together in school, and go over the memorized verses. Continue on, until the entire chapter is memorized.

Note: The students may not totally understand what they are memorizing, but the Holy Spirit will help, along with the help of available teachers and peers. It may take years before the real meaning of some of the verses are totally understood.

If memorizing Romans 8 is not feasible, then have the class read the chapter and try to understand it as a group. Have a group feedback and discussion.

Pray for anyone who wants to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Have all those who have the baptism assist in prayer with the laying on of hands. Pray with authority. The teacher must pray aloud in his/her pray language, in order to assist others to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Finding Our Way

Volume 11 Lesson 51



Bible References

Psalms 143:10

Matthew 12:50

John 7:17

Romans 12:1-2

Ephesians 5:17; 6:6

James 4:15



Scripture Reading

Romans 12:1-2

- 1 "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.
- 2 "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."



Theme

Finding God's will starts with making right our relationship with the Lord.



Memory Verse

Psalms 143:10

"Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness."



Outline

I. Happiness Is Obeying God's Will for Our Lives.

- A. Maturing believers should be striving to obey God's will.
 - 1. God knows and wants what is best for us. (Jeremiah 29:11)
 - Staying in the will of God will lead to the most productive and fulfilling life.
 - a. We avoid wasted time and effort in unproductive projects and lifestyles. "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it:...." (Psalms 127:1)
 - b. We avoid correction from the Lord, because He allows trials to get us back on track when we stray. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,...."

 (Hebrews 12:6)
- B. The greatest satisfaction in life is fulfilling God's call, purpose and plan for our lives.

II. How Do We Find God's Will? (Romans 12:1-2)

- A. The formula for finding God's will is not difficult.
- B. God does not hide His will from us; on the contrary, He wants us to understand His will. (Ephesians 5:17)

- C. Romans 12:1-2 gives us insight into finding God's will.
 - 1. "...that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (verse 2) According to this verse, if we do certain things, we will be able to know whether we are in God's will or not. In other words, when different opportunities and situations come along, we will be able to "prove" which of these are the direction that God is taking us.
 - 2. "...Present your bodies a living sacrifice,...." (verse 1) The words "living" and "sacrifice" placed together seem to be a contradiction, but Paul is revealing a biblical truth. We are to live for God by dying to ourselves.
 - a. Our own wills and desires must submit (die) to God's will. (Galatians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 15:31)
 - b. We must first decide in our minds that we will submit to God's will; and then, we must tell God, "...Not my will, but thine, be done." (Luke 22:42)
- D. The majority of revelation of God's will for our lives will be found in the pages of the Bible.
 - 1. If what we are considering violates God's Word, then it is not God's will.
 - 2. In many areas, God is very specific about His will for us.
 - a. It is God's will for us to receive Jesus as our Savior. (1 Timothy 2:3-4)
 - b. It is God's will for us to obey our parents. (Ephesians 6:1-3)

- c. It is God's will for us not to marry an unbeliever. (2 Corinthians 6:14-15)
- d. t is God's will for us to go to church. (Hebrews 10:24-25)
- e. If what we want to do violates God's Word, do not do it. (Romans 14:23; James 4:17)
- 3. In some areas, God does not give specific instruction about His will for us; but He wants us to use our own judgment, as we follow His principles written in the Bible.
- E. Questions we need to consider when we ask, "Is it God's will?"
 - 1. Does it line up with common sense? (Isaiah 41:21)
 - a. God created our brain for us to use. (Matthew 22:37)
 - God wants us to use good reasoning and sound judgment.
 - c. The following are practical, common-sense questions to ask:
 - (1) Would Jesus do this?
 - (2) Would my parents like for me to do this?
 - (3) Is it worth my time and money?
 - (4) Will any good come out of it?
 - (5) Would I want others to know that I am doing it?
 - (6) Could I get hurt? Physically? Emotionally?
 - 2. Do we have doubts about what we are going to do, in the area of morals? (Romans 14:23)
 - a. Whatever is not of faith is sin.
 - b. If we doubt the moral integrity of something, then we should not do it. "If doubt, then do not."
 - 3. Will it be a stumbling block to someone else? (1 Corinthians 8:13)
 - a. Is it offensive to a brother?

- b. Will it cause division with another Christian?
- 4. Can we control it? (1 Corinthians 6:12)
 - a. If it is a direction, activity or decision that we must have at all costs, then we are not in control.
 - b. God wants us to be in control of our appetites, actions, and activities.
- 5. Does it edify?
 - a. We are to do everything for the building up of others. (Ephesians 4:29)
 - If it tears down, destroys or discourages, then it is not God's will.
- 6. How do respected adults and/or counselors, youth pastors, teachers, etc. feel about it? (Proverbs 11:14)
 - a. The experience of others is good counsel.
 - b. Others can often give us a better perspective.
- 7. Is it good stewardship?
 - a. Are we acting responsibly with the resources we have, or are we taking a big risk?
 - b. Is the possibility of loss as great or greater than the possibility of gain? If so, this is usually not a good situation.
- 8. Will it glorify God? (1 Corinthians 10:31)

III. It Is God's Promise to Direct Us When We Put Our Trust in Him. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

- A. He will teach us the way to go.
 - 1. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."
 (Psalms 32:8)

- 2. We must follow God willingly. "Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee." (Psalms 32:9)
- B. He desires us to be in right relationship with Him.
 - 1. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8)
 - 2. If we are in right relationship with Him, all of the rest of the details will fall into place.
- C. God wants us to do everything, as though we were doing it unto Him.
 - 1. Even if it is seemingly "unspiritual" things, such as physical labor, or learning in school, or going to the store.
 - 2. "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;" (Colossians 3:23)
- D. God does not reveal our entire future to us.
 - 1. God wants us to trust in Him on a daily basis. (Matthew 6:34)
 - 2. If He revealed everything to us, most of us could not handle it. (John 16:12)
 - 3. We need to wait on the Lord. (Psalms 27:14)
- E. God will give us His peace. (2 Thessalonians 3:16)
 - 1. God requires us to pray; and it is His promise that He will give us peace. (Philippians 4:6-7)

2. If we are involved in something, and we do not have God's peace, then we should be very careful. It is probably not God's will.



Spiritual Truths

- God has a will for our lives.
- God's will is revealed to us in the Bible.
- There is a set direction that God has for us individually. If we seek Him, we will find it.
- God wants us to use our brains in making decisions. If God had to make every decision for us, then we would be idiots.
- If God's Word is not specific in an area of direction, then we must look at the principles of God's Word and make our decision in accordance with biblical principles.
- God will give us His peace, when we are in His will.



Lesson Material

There are three types of Christians, when it comes to this subject: those who know that they are in God's will; those who do not know that they are in God's will; and those who are not willing to pay the price to be in God's will.

Most of us fall into one of the latter two categories.

God's will is not as difficult as we sometimes make it. Of course, we need wisdom in choosing education and careers; but, as in all areas of Christian life, the most important aspect is our relationship with the Lord. If our relationship with Him is well, then all is well; and He will direct us in His will.

God's will is fun, exciting, difficult, and rewarding. God has a plan for us! God's will is sometimes the "road less traveled," but those who are on it will not be disappointed.



Methods

After teaching from the Bible, have the students discuss the direction in which they are heading in life. Without asking directly, try and get them to think about whether they are actively pursuing the Lord's will, or if they are following their own way, without much thought of God.

Use real life examples of people who are doing the will of God.

Have some adults from the church or guest speakers share with the class on how the Lord directed them to where they are now. (Always ask your pastor's permission, before inviting a guest speaker to address the class.)

The Last Word

Volume 11 Lesson 52



Bible References

Job 17:9

Proverbs 4:27

Luke 9:62

Hebrews 12:1



Theme

This lesson is a summation of the year by the teacher and an evaluation of the class by the students.



Scripture Reading

2 Timothy 4:5-8

- 5 "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.
- 6 "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.
- 7 "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:
- 8 "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."



2 Timothy 4:7

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:"



Outline

I. The Teacher Should Review the Goals of the Class for the Year.

- A. The last class is "Judgment Day," in which it is determined whether or not the goals were met.
 - 1. A wise teacher will review the class goals frequently throughout the year.
 - If the goals are kept before the students, then they will not forget them over time.
- B. For some goals, the students may need to help determine whether or not they were met.

II. The Teacher Should Review Briefly the Topics that Were Discussed During the Year.

- A. The teacher may begin by mentioning the purpose of the class, which was discussed in the very first lesson.
 - 1. This can also be when the teacher is reviewing the class goals.
 - The purpose of the class was to increase in knowledge, understanding, love and appreciation for the Bible and Jesus Christ.
- B. The teacher should review the highlights of the year.
 - 1. This can be an enjoyable time of sharing together.

2. The teacher should highlight the character qualities of the students, as well as highlight the year's activities and experiences.

III. The Teacher Should Give His or Her Thoughts about the Class Year.

- A. The teacher may share what he or she liked best about the class, or what was the most memorable experience with the class.
- B. The youth leaders, if there are any, should share their thoughts of the year with the students.

IV. The Teacher Must Give an Evaluation to the Students, So that They Can Assess the Class.

- A. The following questions should be written on a piece of paper, with enough space between each question, so that the teenagers can write their answers. These questions are to be distributed to the students, with ample time to be completed. If a copy machine is not available, then the questions can be written on a blackboard or overhead projector, and the students can use blank paper. It is best that the evaluations remain anonymous, so that the students can be totally honest.
 - 1. What two things did you like best about the class?
 - 2. What two things did you like the least about the class?
 - 3. How could this class be improved?
 - 4. What two things did you like best about the teacher(s)?
 - 5. What two things did you like least about the teacher(s)?

- 6. On a scale from one to ten -- one being the worst and ten being the best -- where would the you rate this class, and what is the reason for their rating?
- 7. On a scale from one to ten -- one being "very little" and ten being "very much" -- how well did this class help you learn and appreciate the Bible? What is the reason for your rating?
- 8. In what ways has this class been beneficial?
- 9. What was your favorite class lesson(s), and why?
- 10. If there is a topic(s) that was not taught and you wish that it was discussed?
- 11. Are there any additional comments the you would like to make?
- B. The teacher may add more questions to the evaluation. It is important to give the students as much time as necessary, in order to fill out the questionnaire.
- V. The Teacher Should Give an Encouraging Word to the Students, as They Begin Their Senior Year.
- A. God wants us to be fighters. (2 Timothy 4:7)
 - 1. We are to endure affliction. (2 Timothy 4:5)
 - 2. We are to defend and contend for the faith. (1 Peter 3:15; Jude 3)
 - 3. We are not to give up or back down in our Christian walk.
- B. God wants us to be runners. (1 Corinthians 9:24)
 - 1. God has a race for each one of us.

- 2. We are to run the race that God has set for us, and not be spectators on the sidelines.
- C. God wants us to keep the faith. (2 Timothy 4:7)
 - 1. We are to be watchful in our faith. (2 Timothy 4:5)
 - 2. We are to workers in the faith. (2 Timothy 4:5)
- D. God wants us to be winners.
 - There is a crown of righteousness for those who fight the good fight, finish the race, and keep the faith.
 - 2. The Lord will award it to us.
 - 3. The Lord wants us to be ready, when He comes to receive us to Himself. (2 Timothy 4:6)



Spiritual Truths

- We must listen to others, if we are to grow.
- Evaluations are necessary, in order to get a fresh perspective on how we are progressing.
- God has a fight, a race, and a faith for all of us to participate in and win.

The Last Word Volume 11



Lesson Material

The last class meeting should be a time for review, evaluation, and if possible, refreshments. The teacher may want to throw a party; but whatever is done, it is absolutely critical that the students fill out the class evaluation. The teacher must allow enough time for this. The most important part of this last meeting is not the overview of the year, but it is the students' critique of the class.

A teacher may be reluctant to give an evaluation, because it is tough to deal with criticism, and some teenagers can be particularly insensitive and brutal. Yet, evaluations are necessary for growth and improvement. No one likes to be critiqued; but it is essential, if we are going to develop our calling and our class. We will never know how successful we are. unless we receive feedback. Evaluations are feedback. The best judges of our teaching abilities and classroom success are those who have to listen to us from week to week. The way to find out how well we are doing as teachers is to ask the students. The truth may hurt, but it will also sharpen our skills. We should prepare for stinging comments, as well as lavish praise. Someone has said that for everyone who has a dog that worships them, they also need a cat to ignore them. It keeps reality in perspective.

If the teacher is really bold, he or she may want to go over some of the questions, as part of a class discussion. This should be done after the students have already filled out the written evaluation. This will keep them honest. Many of the students' comments may be eye-opening.

The teacher's overview of the year should not be long. A quick summary of the teaching subjects and the class accomplishments will suffice.

The teacher should pray that the Holy Spirit gives him or her an encouraging word to share with the students, as they prepare to take the next step in their lives.



Methods

A party is always a good idea for the last class meeting. The teacher may want to give each student a gift.

The teacher and youth leaders may share their favorite class experiences; and the students may be given the opportunity to do the same.

The teacher may wish to have a testimony time, in which everyone is given a chance to share what God has done for them.

The teacher may want to have a special time of prayer with the students.