

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**

Table Of Contents

Section 1: Welcome to Our Ministry Team.....	1
To Our Co-Laborers in the Work of the Ministry.....	3
Our Calling.....	5
Our Charge.....	9
My Commitment.....	13
My Credibility.....	15
My Goals As a Worker In the School of the Bible.....	17
Section 2: Personnel Job Descriptions.....	19
Using the Personnel Job Descriptions.....	21
School of the Bible Flowchart.....	23
Junior High Department Flowchart.....	25
Administrator.....	27
Class Coordinator.....	29
Teacher.....	33
Musician.....	39
Worker.....	41
Secretary.....	43
Four Things Every Teacher Must Know.....	47
Three Requirements for Every Teacher.....	51
Responsibilities of a School of the Bible Worker.....	53

Section 3: Student Profiles	57
Understanding Your Students.....	59
A Profile of Seventh Grade Students	61
Children of the '90's.....	67
Why Do We Lose So Many of Our Children?.....	71
Do Not Send Them Away.....	79
Why Unsaved People Do Not Come to Church.....	83
The Importance of Repentance.....	87
Section 4: Sensational Sunday School Sessions	93
The Importance of Scheduling Your Class.....	95
Class Schedule	97
Preparation for Class	99
Singing with Joy	101
Offering and Prayer.....	103
Teaching with Purpose.....	105
Story-telling to Touch Hearts.....	107
Scripture Memorization.....	109
Catechism in Doctrine	111
Section 5: Life-related Stories.....	113
Using Life-related Stories.....	115
The Story of "All Hail the Power"	117
The Story of Francis Asbury	119
A Baptist Speaks in Tongues.....	121
The Story of Marguerite Black	123

The Story of William Branham	125
The Story of John Chrysostom.....	127
Ann Higgins Versus the Puritans	129
Terry Law: Behind the Iron Curtain.....	131
The Story of Stuart Hamblen	133
The Story of Handel's "Messiah"	135
The Persecution of Christians Under Emperor Nero.....	137
The Story of C. T. Studd.....	139
The Story of John Winthrop.....	141
The Story of Susanna Wesley	143
The Conversion of Smith Wigglesworth.....	145
The Story of Inomata Yoshiko.....	147
 Section 6: Promotions.....	 149
The Importance of Promotions	151
Link Up with Jesus	153
Fuel the Flame.....	175
Fall Fun Festival	193
Unlock the Treasure.....	207
 Section 7: Catechism in Doctrine.....	 219
Introduction to Catechism in Doctrine.....	221
Why Did Jesus Teach in Parables?	223
What Is the "Baptism of Fire"?.....	225
What Is the Tithe?.....	227
What Does "Stewardship" Mean?	229
What Is the Difference Between the Pounds and the Talents?	231

What Is an Offering?.....	233
What Is Almsgiving?.....	235
What Is a Covenant?.....	237
What Is the Difference Between a Covenant and a Contract?.....	239
What Is Sanctification?.....	241
What Is Genuine Repentance?.....	243
Is It a Sin to Drink Beer or Liquor?	245
What Is the Unpardonable Sin?.....	247
What Does It Mean to Be Justified by Faith?	249
Why Did God Create Diverse Languages at Babel?	251
Is the <u>Book of Mormon</u> the Inspired Word of God, as the Holy Bible Is?.....	253
Is It Wrong to Gamble?.....	255
What Is Secular Humanism?.....	257
What Is the New Age Movement?.....	259
 Section 8: Lessons	 261
Lesson 1: Go to Church.....	263
Faithful church attendance is a vital part of God's plan for our personal spiritual development as Christians.	
Lesson 2: Prayer and Worship.....	269
God's purpose in the earth is to have a people for Himself, who will love Him and will be His reflection to a lost world.	
Lesson 3: Christian Faith.....	277
Christian faith is having utter confidence that God will do what He promised, and placing the reins of our lives in His hands.	
Lesson 4: Christian Communion.....	283
Communion is an ongoing expression of the covenant between God and His redeemed people.	
Lesson 5: Why Study the Bible?.....	287
The Bible reveals God's character, His plan for mankind, and His will for our lives; and it provides comfort and hope to the believer.	

Lesson 6: Walking in Holiness	293
The Bible teaches us to live a holy life in this world, which means being dedicated and surrendered to God, and acting accordingly.	
Lesson 7: The Jehovah's Witnesses	299
Jehovah's Witnesses are deceived by a cult that denies the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ and enslaves them to a false trust in dead works.	
Lesson 8: Mormonism.....	305
Mormon doctrine and beliefs are in direct conflict with the inspired truth that God has revealed to us in His Word.	
Lesson 9: Understanding Islam.....	313
Islam is a false religion that controls millions of people. It is a man-made system of beliefs, which denies the deity of Jesus Christ and leads to destruction.	
Lesson 10: Hinduism.....	319
Hinduism has gained great influence over multitudes of people, deceiving them into a vain search for a "nirvana" that does not exist.	
Lesson 11: What Is the Bible?.....	325
The Holy Bible is the direct, inspired, inerrant revelation of God the Creator to His creation.	
Lesson 12: Dealing with Temptation.....	331
God's Word teaches us that we can overcome temptation through His grace.	
Lesson 13: Tempted by Drugs and Alcohol	337
How do we deal with temptations of drugs and alcohol?	
Lesson 14: Resist the Devil.....	345
How do we deal with the temptations that can hinder our relationship with Christ?	
Lesson 15: Honesty.....	351
Lying and dishonesty are part of Satan's kingdom of darkness, always resulting in evil consequences.	
Lesson 16: Failure.....	357
The difference between failing and becoming a failure depends upon the way we respond to our failures.	
Lesson 17: Halloween and the Occult.....	363
We must be wise and prepared, in order to overcome the occult influences around us and influence our world for Christ.	

Lesson 18: Satan the Accuser.....	371
Satan is a real, personal, and evil spirit being, who is active in our world today.	
Lesson 19: Do Not Follow the Crowd.....	377
Do not let the world's crowd define your behavior and beliefs.	
Lesson 20: Pride and Humility.....	383
God calls us to humble ourselves, recognizing our limitations and total dependence upon Him.	
Lesson 21: Witnessing.....	389
We are to share the good news of Jesus Christ with a hurting and dying world.	
Lesson 22: Thanksgiving.....	395
We should cultivate a heart of gratitude for all that our great God does for us.	
Lesson 23: Christ, the Eternal God.....	401
Jesus, Who is the eternally existent “Logos,” came to earth through the Incarnation, in order to become our Kinsman Redeemer.	
Lesson 24: The Birth of Jesus.....	407
Jesus Christ is Immanuel (“God with us”) -- God incarnate.	
Lesson 25: The Childhood of Jesus.....	411
Jesus came to earth as a baby. He lived a normal human life; and so, He understands our weakness.	
Lesson 26: The Power of Jesus.....	417
Jesus Christ has unlimited power; and He empowers those who are fully under His authority.	
Lesson 27: The Healing Touch of Jesus.....	423
Jesus is our Great Physician.	
Lesson 28: Wisdom.....	429
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.	
Lesson 29: The Trials of Jesus.....	435
Jesus understands all of our trials and temptations.	
Lesson 30: The Structure of the Church.....	441
The church is the body of born-again people, joined together by a common faith in, and devotion to, the Lord Jesus Christ.	

Lesson 31: The Charismatic Church	447
God's Word has provided instruction in the proper structure and functioning of His body of believers, according to His calling and appointment.	
Lesson 32: Water Baptism.....	455
Water baptism is an ordinance in which we testify to our covenant with God, by identifying with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.	
Lesson 33: Friendship.....	461
The way we choose and treat friends helps to determine our effectiveness for Christ and our fulfillment in life.	
Lesson 34: Interpersonal Relationships	467
Men and women are created in God's image.	
Lesson 35: Nebuchadnezzar's Dream.....	473
The Holy Spirit is the source of wisdom and knowledge.	
Lesson 36: The Heart of a Missionary	479
The Lord has called His people to the mission of preaching the gospel to every creature.	
Lesson 37: The Only Savior	485
Jesus came to save us from the power of sin, and not just from the consequences of sin.	
Lesson 38: God the Trinity	493
Jesus Christ is God the Son, the second Person of the Holy Trinity.	
Lesson 39: The Arrest and Trial of Jesus.....	499
Our Lord's betrayal, arrest and trial were among the darkest acts of man, in his rebellion against the living God.	
Lesson 40: The Crucifixion of Jesus.....	505
The cross of Christ is the key to God's plan for man's redemption and reconciliation to Himself.	
Lesson 41: Resurrection Power	511
Jesus Christ literally rose from the dead in a glorified, eternal body; and this is the basis for our hope of eternity as believers.	
Lesson 42: Rapture and Tribulation.....	517
Because we are living in the end times, we anticipate the imminent rapture of the church; and so, we should be ready.	

Lesson 43: The Final Judgment.....	525
Every one of us will be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ; and we will give an account of our lives.	
Lesson 44: Prayer	531
Prayer is the privilege of communing directly with God; and it is a prerequisite to appropriating God's power.	
Lesson 45: Mothers	539
Special blessings come into our lives, when we determine to honor our mothers.	
Lesson 46: The Adventure of Fasting.....	545
Fasting is a very good thing for Christians to do, not only for spiritual growth, but for physical health.	
Lesson 47: The Tithe.....	551
The practice of tithing is a universal principle of God's Word; and it is still for us, today.	
Lesson 48: Worship the Lord.....	557
True worship recognizes God's position, and responds to Him with adoration and affection.	
Lesson 49: Who Is the Holy Spirit?.....	563
The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity of God. He is working mightily in the church today.	
Lesson 50: God, Our Father.....	569
We can fully depend upon our heavenly Father to save us, care for us, stay with us and protect us forever.	
Lesson 51: The Holy Spirit in the Believer.....	575
God is pouring out His Spirit upon all flesh, in these last days.	

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Section 1

**Welcome
To Our
Ministry
Team**

To Our Co-Laborers in the Work of the Ministry

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

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

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

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

Our Calling

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

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

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

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

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

A HIGH CALLING.

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

A HOLY CALLING.

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

A HEAVENLY CALLING.

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

A HOPEFUL CALLING.

Paul's prayer:

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

A HUMBLE CALLING.

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

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

Questions To Be Considered As We Pursue A Teaching Ministry In The Local Church**Did God call me to teach?**

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

What group am I called to teach?

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

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

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

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

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

Am I a team player?

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

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

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

Our Charge

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

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

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

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

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

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

A good teacher will inspire more than inform.

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

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

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

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

Teams are more effective than individual efforts.

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

We are soldiers under authority.

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

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

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

The charge to Joshua was to love the Word.

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

Paul's charge to Timothy:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Comments: _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

My Commitment

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

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

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Signature _____ Date: _____

My Credibility

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Birthdate: _____ Check One: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Marital Status: _____ Ages of Children: _____

Employer: _____ Work Phone: _____

1. When were you born again? _____

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

3. When were you baptized in water? _____

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

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

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

7. What is your primary vocation? _____

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

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

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

10. What education or degrees do you have? _____

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

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

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

Write any additional comments or explanations here: _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

My Goals As a Worker In the School of the Bible

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Section 2

Personnel Job Descriptions

Using the Personnel Job Descriptions

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

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

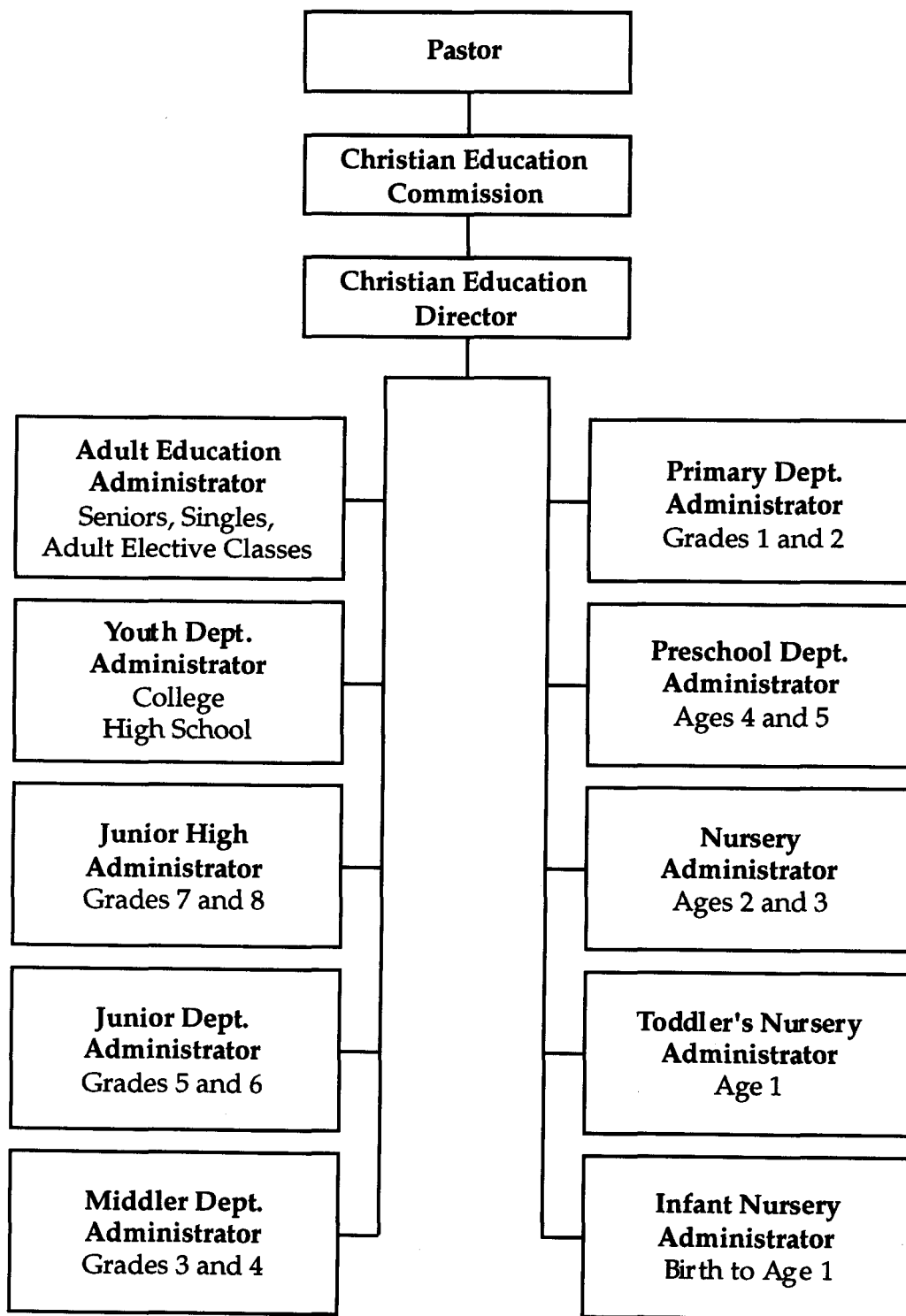
The job descriptions in this section define the responsibilities of the members of an effective ministry team. Sometimes, it may be necessary for a few people to fulfill several responsibilities in the class. However, as the class grows, these responsibilities can be delegated to new leaders as they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

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

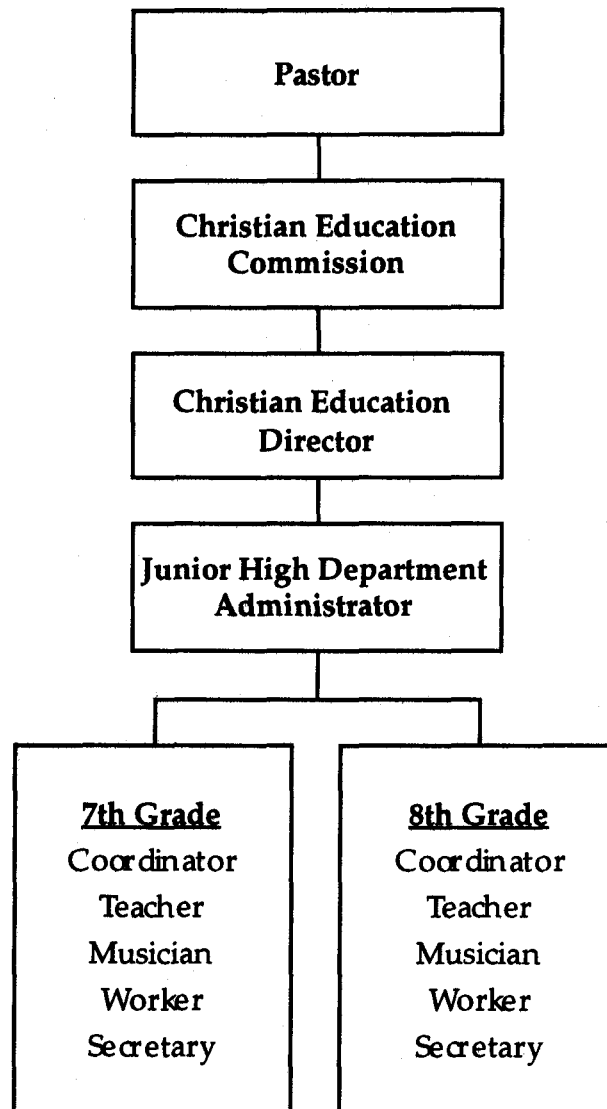
Confusion reigns when there is more than one person thinking they are in charge. The larger the body, the more responsibility needs to be delegated, and the more authority needs to be established on multiple levels. Everyone needs to know to whom they answer, and who has the responsibility to make the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

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

School of the Bible Flowchart



Junior High Department Flowchart



Administrator

(Department Head)
Job Description

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

A. Supervision.

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

B. Teacher Training.

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

C. Discipline.

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

Class Coordinator

(Class Leader) Job Description

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

A. Attend Special Meetings of Leaders.

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

B. Supervise Training of the Teaching Team.

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

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

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

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

D. Supervise the Care of the Classroom.

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

E. Storage Cabinet.

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

F. Classroom Discipline Problems.

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

G. Coordinate and Lead the Visitation Program.

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

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

Teacher

Job Description

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

1. Planning:

- a. Think ahead.
- b. What response do I want to stimulate in their hearts this week?
 - (1) What do I want them to know?
 - (2) What do I want them to feel?
 - (3) What do I want them to do?
- c. Suggested goals:
 - (1) Cultivate gratefulness to God as Creator, Provider, and Protector.
 - (2) Lead to repentance by awareness of sin, grace, faith.
 - (3) Combat the "me-centered" mentality of humanism and teach the joy of giving, serving, and preferring one another.
 - (4) Combat the temporal values system with an awareness of the second coming of Jesus, heaven, hell, eternity, and the judgment seat of Christ.
- d. Biblical goals (from 2 Peter 1:5-7 in order):
 - (1) Faith.
 - (2) Virtue (character).
 - (3) Knowledge.
 - (4) Self-control.
 - (5) Godliness.
 - (6) Brotherly kindness.
 - (7) Charity (selfless love).
- e. What are the curriculum goals this year?

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

- a. Read the lesson materials you have and all the related scriptures early in the week.
- b. Incorporate scriptures and materials from the lesson into your daily devotions through the week.
- c. Create an introduction that will stimulate curiosity and interest.

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

3. Prayer:

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

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

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

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

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

4. Personality:

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

5. Persuasiveness:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

D. Learn the Material in Advance:

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

E. Carry and Read Only a Bible:

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

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

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

H. Be Sensitive to Special Needs and Problems.

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

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

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

L. Be a Faithful Tither to this Local Church.

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

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

O. Attend Meetings and Training Sessions for the Sunday School Workers as Provided, to Develop and Enhance Your Skills and Team Spirit.

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

1. Always be aware that we need each other.
2. The goal of a true servant is to make others successful.

Q. Be an Example of Christian Purity and Love.

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

R. Always Contribute to the Offering, In Order to Set an Example.

S. Teach the Use of Offering Envelopes.

T. DO NOT USE SECULAR MATERIAL, Such As:

1. Secular music lyrics.
2. Secular films (even though they may seem so "nice").
3. Secular books. Expose the students to Christian heroes and stories which put God in the proper perspective.

U. Be Careful to Put Nothing on the Walls Except in Designated Areas.

V. Help Keep the Room and Closets Clean.

W. Turn Out the Lights When You Leave.

Musician

Job Description

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

1. Planning:

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

2. Preparation:

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

3. Prayer:

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

4. Playing:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

F. Be a Faithful Tither to this Local Church.

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

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

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

I. Be an Example of Christian Purity and Love.

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

Worker
(Assistant)
Job Description

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

A. Assist the Secretary.

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

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

C. Participate in the Visitation Program.

D. Attend the Training Sessions and Planning Meetings Scheduled.

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

F. Relate Personally to the Students Whenever Possible.

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

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

I. Honor the Class Coordinator as the Team Leader.

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

K. Be a Faithful Tither to this Local Church.

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

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

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

N. Be an Example of Christian Purity and Love.

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

Secretary Job Description

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

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

B. Keep Accurate Records of Each Class Session.

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

- e. Take the completed attendance folder and offering envelope to the Divisional Secretary's office and check it over with the Secretary.
- f. Be sure you have a permanent information card for each student on your attendance sheet.

2. Offering.

- a. The secretary is responsible for counting the School of the Bible offering and putting it in the envelope provided.
- b. Record the total amount for the day on the envelope.
- c. Record the total attendance on the envelope.
- d. Keep any specially designated offerings separate, and turn them in to the Divisional Secretary with a note of explanation.
- e. Take the completed attendance folder and offering envelope to the Divisional Secretary's office, and check it over with the Secretary.

3. Maintenance record keeping.

- a. Always check the computer visitation sheet for correct information. There may be a change of address or telephone number.
- b. If a student tells you of a change of address or telephone number, fill out the blue change sheet, put it inside your attendance sheet, and turn it in to the Divisional Secretary.
- c. Keep the visitation sheet each week for reference.
- d. Keep the birthday sheet, which you will receive monthly. Fill in any birthdays not listed, and report them on a blue change sheet.
- e. Be sure to have a white permanent information card for each student on your computer attendance sheet, and keep it in your file box. Do not forget to fill out a card for a visitor who becomes a regular attender. (Discard the yellow form used for visitors.)

4. Other records.

- a. During some promotions, records may be kept on separate forms relating to memory work, recruiting, or points for special efforts.
- b. Occasionally, you may need some assistance from another worker to keep these extra records straight.
- c. If an instruction sheet is delivered with additional paperwork, keep it in your attendance folder during the promotion and follow the instructions on the page.

C. Follow-Up.

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

Four Things Every Teacher Must Know

I. A Teacher Must Know the Student.

A. Background.

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

B. Environment.

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

C. Spiritual condition.

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

D. Comprehension ability.

E. Interest level.

F. Personality Problems.

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

2. Is the student belligerent or irritable?

3. Is the student hyperactive?

G. Family situation.

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

H. How can a teacher learn about the students?

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

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

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

III. A Teacher Must Know the Lesson.

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

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

E. Use illustrations.

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

F. Ask questions.

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

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

IV. A Teacher Must Know the Overall Church Program.

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

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

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

- E. Make church announcements in your class.

Three Requirements for Every Teacher

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Compassion. (Matthew 9:36-38)

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

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

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

Courage. (Joshua 1:1-16)

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

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

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

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

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

Responsibilities of a School of the Bible Worker

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

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

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

Be an Example.

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

Be Faithful to the Public Services of the Church.

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

Be a Tither.

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

Be Loyal to the Pastor and to the Church Program.

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

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

Be Faithful to the Class.

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

Be Willing to Seek Lost Souls.

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

students a chance to commit their lives to the Lord.

Be Willing to Become a Member of the Church.

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

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

Be Willing to Visit Absentees.

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

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

Be Properly Dressed.

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

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

Ten Qualifications for a School of the Bible Worker:

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

Section 3

Student Profiles

Understanding Your Students

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

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

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

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

A Profile of Seventh Grade Students

Physical Development

1. The growth rate of seventh graders is rapid. Boys may grow as much as 4" in height in a year.
2. Girls mature earlier than boys, both physically and emotionally. This results in times of embarrassment and awkwardness in their responses to one another.
3. They are going through puberty; the time their bodies make the transition from childhood to adulthood. This can have a traumatic effect on them emotionally, especially in a culture that flaunts sensuality and promotes a preoccupation with sex. They are extremely self-conscious, and they need to be challenged to focus on character and spiritual maturity.

Today, young people go through puberty at an earlier age than previous generations. Some health professionals have attributed this to our increased use of steroids and other stimulants in livestock, and to our high-fat and protein diet. Whatever the cause, the early development of adult bodies is not good for children's development. It shortens their childhood and thrusts them into pressures and temptations for which they are not ready. There is social pressure upon them to try to look like adults and get caught up in the emotionally devastating dating game. It is far wiser to encourage them to be active in sports, music,

academics, and group activities which do not emphasize their gender.

4. Unlike most previous generations, American young people usually have little demand placed on them for physical work. This sedentary lifestyle is a constant temptation; and, coupled with the American fat/sugar diet, can be very damaging to physical health and well-being. Teenagers need regular physical exercise, and they need to learn physical disciplines that will benefit them for life.

"For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things." (1 Timothy 4:8)

5. They are quick to become frustrated or dissatisfied with their physical appearance, because the world stimulates a focus on outward appearance and relates acceptance and acceptability to physical beauty. Teach them godly self-acceptance. Teach them to focus on inward character, not just outward beauty. It may be good to teach them to take care of their bodies, but not to the point of preoccupation with self.

"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning.... but let it be the hidden man of the heart...even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." (1 Peter 3:3-4)

Intellectual Development

1. Seventh graders have a keen mind, and they can retain information and memorize much more quickly than they will likely be able to when they have become adults. Do not underestimate their abilities. Challenge their minds, and do not talk down to them. They do not know as much as they think they do; but, they have clear minds (unless they have already damaged them with drugs). Remember that the humanist educators believe in evolution, and often tell students, "You are smarter than your parents." This is often implied, and sometimes directly stated. As Christian teachers, we need to reinforce the relationship with parents, and encourage respect for godly authority and the wisdom of years. It is amazing how Hollywood and the entertainment world consistently portray parents and teachers as wrong, stupid, and uncaring, while children are portrayed as intellectually superior. This is part of the humanist philosophy. The secular agenda is to encourage everyone to "be his own person" and reject authority, since "there is no absolute authority (God)."
2. They can memorize easily, so challenge them to fill their minds with wisdom and with that which has eternal value.
3. They are less inclined toward hero worship, and more involved with visualizing or fantasizing themselves as heroes. They greatly need self-esteem, and should have an abundance of hope for their future.

4. If they watch much secular television and attend a secular school, they will tend to have a mind-set that is focused on temporal values, with little thought for God and eternity. Some of the ideas being promoted by humanism are: "Be your own person." "Life just happens (evolution)." "The purpose of life is to be happy, successful, and free." "If it feels good, do it."

As a Christian teacher, be aware that you need to combat "the lie" and promote a Christian world view in your life and teaching. Let your students know that: "You are not your own; you are bought with a price." "God is in control, and He has a specific plan for your life." "The purpose of life is to respond and relate to God, and to please Him as a servant." "Real freedom is freedom from sin, not freedom from authority." "If it pleases God, do it."

5. They can daydream easily, so you are challenged to gain and hold their attention. Just because their eyes are pointed toward you does not mean their brains are anywhere in the same room, or planet. While imagination is healthy, fantasy can be extremely dangerous. When influenced with the secular "power" fantasies that are popular in the world, a fantasy dream world can contribute to depression, confusion, rebellion, mental suicide (drugs), moral suicide (promiscuity), and physical self-destruction.

Understand the difference between fantasy and vision. **Vision** relates to hope and faith. Without a (spiritual) vision people perish -- become wild and undisciplined. Children need to be stimulated toward a healthy

imagination. To "pretend" and play is a major part of their development. They are able to begin to understand that there is a supernatural realm in God's creation, and that angels and demons are real.

Fantasy is a satanic counterfeit of vision. Fantasy focuses on inaccessible and impossible dreams which exalt the dreamer and feed the selfish ego tendencies of the sin nature. There is much emphasis on "power" and self-glory. Today, there is an avalanche of fantasy material ready to pour into the minds of children through television, humanistic books, and movies. The characters seem "good" and "so cute;" but, the message is demonic. Fantasy opens the mind to the occult, and often leads to confusion, rebellion, depression, and suicide.

Social Development

1. This is a time for intense peer pressure toward conformity. Seventh graders have been involved in peer group training for years; and they are, therefore, naturally identifying more and more with their peers, and moving away from family loyalty and dependence. If they do not have a strong sense of self-esteem and purpose, which has developed in a strong, loving family structure, they will tend to be very insecure and desperate for peer acceptance. They will have a great fear of being different. There is a great focus on fads and temporal values.
2. If they are self-centered in their thinking, they will tend to be peer-centered in their quest for self-esteem. They need to develop a healthy sense of self-acceptance, by drawing their identity from their relationship to God and to their families.
3. This can be a time for great insecurity, as they make the transition from grade school to junior high. In their minds, it can be equated with moving from childhood to adulthood, with its increased demands and pressures. If they are in a traditional school setting, then they are no longer in the security of a one-classroom, one-teacher nest. They may see on television that people their age are portrayed as more mature and intelligent than adults, and that puts impossible expectations on them. It also tends to alienate them from authority figures, at a time when they need them the most. Be careful to avoid the adult expectation, "be your own person" mentality. Let them be a child who is growing and discovering naturally; not one who is thrust into an adult world overnight. Try to strengthen the bond with their parents; and emphasize the value and safety in being under authority.
4. Seventh graders will have a tendency to transfer their loyalties to their peer group, or to carnal "heroes," and away from parents and godly role models. As teachers, we want to reinforce the God-ordained bond of family, and help to "turn the hearts ofchildren to their fathers." Focus on Christian biographies, and teach them to look at the character and influence of their entertainment "heroes," and

not just at their beauty, wealth, and rhythm.

5. They will tend to "follow the crowd" and to form cliques. It is healthy to form close friendships with a few people and to have a "best friend," but only if those relationships influence the members positively toward God. A group with a sensual or rebellious focus will be devastating.

"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."
(Proverbs 13:20)

Spiritual Development

1. The seventh grade is a critical time to establish students in a spiritual foundation and a Christian world view. Many of them know the Word, and are able to understand spiritually almost as much as the adults; but, they usually have few opportunities for spiritual ministry. They need to realize that they still have much to learn, and they should respect and honor their parents and teachers. They should also be encouraged to take spiritual responsibility and to participate in the work of soul-winning, worship, and service.
2. **This is a time of spiritual warfare.** The world is making an intense effort to capture the minds and hearts of our children with the allure of temporal values. Many youth leaders today make the mistake of trying to communicate the message, "You can be saved ,and still party and have a

good time." That is close; but, remember that we can never compete with the world on the fleshly level. That is their turf. Our message should be, "You can enjoy the Lord and the things of the Spirit. When you delight yourself in the Lord, the phony, substitute pleasures of the world will not compare with genuine, spiritual joy." Proverbs 22:6 says,

"Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it."

In other words, cultivate a taste for the Spirit in a child ,and teach him to live for eternity, instead of for the moment. Then, as he grows, he will not have to "sow his wild oats" and then reap a harvest of heartache.

3. They need to minister to the Lord in worship and to minister to one another in prayer, exhorting, and service. Do not do all the ministering for them, and do not sing songs just to make music. Teach them to enter into God's presence, and teach them to share a good, edifying testimony. Encourage them to work together in ministry projects in which they give to people in need. Make sure their goals are not always centered in fun trips and parties.
4. Some of our most common mistakes with Junior High youth:
 - a. We try too hard to keep them with entertainment, and fail to adequately stimulate their spirits.
 - b. We fail to use or stimulate their ability to function in the spiritual realm.

- c. We allow them to delight themselves and love (worship) secular heroes, hoping that they will choose for themselves the right examples.
- d. We tend to allow too much exposure to evil. The Bible teaches

us to do as much good and as little evil as possible.

"For my people...are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge." (Jeremiah 4:22)

Children of the '90's

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

A. Education and Entertainment in America Today.

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

B. What Secular Education Cannot Do.

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

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

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

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

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

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

8. Avoid being too simplistic.
 - a. Many people who were raised in Sunday School programs have the impression that the gospel is juvenile, or "kid's stuff," because they heard the stories of Noah and the ark and Daniel in the lion's den over and over again, without much depth or application.
 - b. Children can comprehend more in their spirits than you may realize. Include less familiar illustrations in your lessons; present your material in creative ways; and emphasize the spiritual truths in each lesson. Your excitement about the Word and the lesson will be contagious.
9. Remember that children have been exposed to a lot of humanistic philosophy, which makes them the center of their world.
 - a. With that kind of mind-set, it is possible for them to "accept Jesus into their lives," along with a pack of Muppets, Ninja Turtles, and power fantasy characters. We need to emphasize the concept of **Jesus as the center** of our lives, and repentance and faith as essentials to Christianity.
 - b. The children of today have been overexposed to the occult and to fantasy heroes, and it is not their fault. Let us expose them to the Holy Spirit and to Christian heroes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Our culture promotes ungodly heroes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We cling to outdated methods and materials.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Do Not Send Them Away

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

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

"The day was now far spent"

(Mark 6:35)

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

"This is a desert place...."

(Mark 6:35)

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

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

"Send them away."

(Mark 6:36)

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

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

"Jesus saw much people."

(Mark 6:34)

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

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

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

(Mark 6:34)

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

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

(Mark 6:34)

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

who give themselves to the spiritual ministry of teaching.

"Give ye them to eat."

(Mark 6:37)

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

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

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

(Mark 6:40)

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

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

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

(Mark 6:41)

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

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

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

(Mark 6:43)

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

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

Why Unsaved People Do Not Come to Church

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

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

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

They are not invited.

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

interest by inviting them to their church services.

They are not welcomed.

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

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

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

They are embarrassed.

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

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

They are not made aware of the presence of Christ.

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

They are not attracted.

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

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

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

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

They see too much hypocrisy.

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

They do not see us excited about the Lord.

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

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

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

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

They do not feel that they are loved.

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

The Importance of Repentance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

John said,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is our Great Commission?

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

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

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

Section 4

Sensational Sunday School Sessions

The Importance of Scheduling Your Class

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

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

There are many advantages to scheduling your class:

1. It makes it easier for you to prepare for the class.
2. It helps you cover much more information in the allotted time.
3. It keeps the class moving and maintains the interest of the students.
4. It allows the leader of the class to involve others in helping with the class. This is one of the greatest advantages of having a schedule. When used effectively, it will help build a strong ministry team. It is also
- 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!

Seventh Grade Sunday School Class Schedule

- 8:35 a.m. Team Prayer, Greet Students, Fellowship.
- 9:05 a.m. Song Service.
- 9:18 a.m. Offering.
- Announcements, Birthdays, Promotions.
- 9:25 a.m. Bible Lesson.
- 9:40 a.m. Catechism in Doctrine.
- 9:55 a.m. Prayer and Closing.
- 10:00 a.m. Dismiss to General Service.

Preparation for Class

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

Singing with Joy

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

Focus: Lively, active songs.

Time Limit: 8 Minutes.

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

Offering and Prayer

Time Limit: 7 Minutes.

The Offering Time.

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

Prayer Time.

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

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

Teaching with Purpose

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

Key Principles of Good Teaching.

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

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

Story-telling to Touch Hearts

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

Key Principles of Good Story-Telling.

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

Scripture Memorization

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

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

Time Limit: 8 Minutes.

Key Principles of Scripture Memorization.

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

Catechism in Doctrine

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

Key Principles of Youth Catechism.

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

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

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

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

Section 5

Life-related Stories

Using Life-related Stories

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Story of "All Hail the Power"

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

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

John Wesley, a small man, seemed to be divinely protected through many dangers. While all three friends were preachers and musicians, John was the most prominent speaker, and Charles was most noted as a hymn writer.

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

It was Edward Perronet who wrote the hymn "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," in 1779. The powerful lyrics include:

"All hail the power of Jesus' name, let angels prostrate fall. Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown Him lord of all..."

"Ye seed of Israel's chosen race, ye ransomed from the fall. Hail him who saves you by His grace, and crown Him Lord of all."

For more than two centuries, this great anthem has endured and inspired the hearts of millions of Christians, as they anticipate the inevitable day that Christ is acknowledged as Lord of all -- when every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord. (Philippians 2:10-11)

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

The Story of Francis Asbury

Francis Asbury was born in Staffordshire, England, in 1745. His parents were gentle, hard-working Christians. They were considered a "middle-class" family. Because of the godly influence of his family, Francis was saved as a young boy and served the Lord faithfully all his life. He developed habits that built up his spirit, so he lived a fruitful life and never played the fool by "sowing wild oats."

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

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

Francis began to travel as an itinerant preacher. That means that he did not take a pastorate, but, instead, he traveled by horseback from place to place and preached in churches, home meetings, or open air meetings. Wherever he went,

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

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

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

A Baptist Speaks in Tongues

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

But William was a little worried, too. He had experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit; but his parents were skeptical. They were staunch Baptists, who did not believe in this experience. After all, William's grandfather had been a Baptist preacher, and his parents had raised their son in the same faith. Both parents were of Creek Indian descent.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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The Story of Marguerite Black

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Story of William Branham

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

In 1933, William conducted revival meetings in Jeffersonville, Indiana. They were so successful that he stayed and built a church there, which he called "Branham Tabernacle." In 1937, his wife and son died, despite his prayers; and he never remarried, choosing to focus all of his attention on his ministry.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

bear hunting. Branham died soon after that; and Bosworth died later.

William Branham's erroneous teachings eventually developed into heretical doctrines. Tragically, many

people still cling to the erroneous teachings of William Branham; and they make up the false "Branhamite" cult, which has led many people into false doctrines.

The Story of John Chrysostom

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ann Higgins Versus the Puritans

Modern historians tend to paint a very false picture of the Puritans who settled in New England in the 17th century. They 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. If you are serving God without joy, then you probably are not really serving God. Historians who like to portray Puritans as mean, witch-hunting bigots probably have a personal problem with these people who were submitted to God; and they tend to 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 who became rebellious was a woman named Ann Higgins. She had accused another 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 they testified that Mr. Davis had given her a very fair price. In fact, it was perhaps too low. Mrs. Higgins was humbled, and she confessed her wrong attitudes. But she continued to speak negatively about Mr. Davis. She was sowing discord in the church, which 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. Higgins 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 and jealousies...." She was cut off from worship and from all fellowship with the church, according to the Biblical pattern of 1 Corinthians 5.

The purpose of excommunication was not to hurt Ann, but to help her come to a place of repentance. It also diminished her evil influence of sowing discord and division. Unfortunately, Mrs. Higgins 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. Higgins 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" (1 Samuel 15:23), for it 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 and demon spirits during those dark days. History records that they were generally justified in their concerns.

Terry Law: Behind the Iron Curtain

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

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

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

them to be a rock band; and they wanted some violent music to entertain their people. It was a fund-raiser for the Party.

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

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

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

The Story of Stuart Hamblen

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

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

One day, Stuart heard about a young preacher who was conducting tent meetings in the area, and who was receiving favorable publicity in the newspapers. The preacher's name was Billy Graham.

Stuart went to one of the meetings. At the end of the service, he went up to the young evangelist and said, "Come on my radio show, and we will fill this tent." He did; and they did. Stuart went to another meeting, and Billy Graham said, "There is a person here, who is a phony." Stuart believed that he was talking about him. That night, at 2:00 in the morning, Stuart went to the preacher's motel room and said, "Preacher, I need you to pray for me." Billy Graham hesitated at first, saying, "No, this is between you and God." But he wound up talking with the big man until five o'clock in the morning. Stuart gave his heart to the Lord; and he made

the commitment to serve God for the rest of his life. Suzie was thrilled with the changes in her husband; and she became a Christian, too.

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

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

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

*"It is no secret what God can do.
What He's done for others, He'll do for
you. With arms wide open, He'll pardon
you. It is no secret what God can do."*

For years after that, Stuart Hamblen wrote songs; and he became one of the world's most beloved sacred songwriters. He wrote, "How Big is God," "This Old House," and many other great songs, which have encouraged other Christians around the world.

The Story of Handel's "Messiah"

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

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

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

Handel wrote some oratorios for choir and orchestra, most of which were based on Bible themes. He had a knowledge of God and the Bible; but he probably considered music as his first love in life --

that is, until music failed to bring him happiness and success, as in his younger days.

In 1741, a friend named Charles Jennens, who had provided the basic themes for Handel's oratorio "Saul," came to him with a new idea. He wanted Handel to write an oratorio about Jesus, the most sublime Subject of history, art, and music. It was to focus on scriptural themes relating to the basic purposes of God in redemption. It was not to be an narrative opera, which would focus on scenes and events from the life of Jesus. It would be a spiritual feast of the great Biblical concepts relating to the nature and work of Christ. It was to be an act of Biblical worship, praising Christ, the Messiah. Jennens wrote to Handel with the words from scripture, "*...Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*" (1 Timothy 3:16)

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

Handel, who had suffered rejection in London, wept openly as he wrote "*He is despised and rejected of men;....*" (Isaiah 53:3) In only 24 days, he had written 265

pages of the musical score, which has been recognized by many as the greatest musical masterpiece in all of history. The "Hallelujah Chorus" became the single most popular song in the history of the world. As he wrote that chorus, he said, "I did think I did see all heaven before me, and the great God Himself." It was here that he used the full orchestra.

For several years, this oratorio lay gathering dust on a shelf. When it was finally performed in Dublin, Ireland, it was for a charity benefit for the poor. Today, this great masterpiece is still sung every year by the great choirs of the world; and we are still thrilled by this music, which was so inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The Persecution of Christians Under Emperor Nero

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

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

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

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

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

Nero was an avid artist, poet, and singer; and he loved to perform in drama and opera. Of course, the exits were always closed when he performed. Nero was a young man who was in love with himself, and who never learned that there is actually pleasure in doing for others. His life was controlled by evil spirits, who took great delight in death and destruction.

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

The Story of C. T. Studd

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

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

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

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

One day, while Charles was studying law at Cambridge University, his father was reading the papers. He noticed several

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

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

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

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

The Story of John Winthrop

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

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

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

Fortunately, before the end of Parliament, the Puritans organized the Massachusetts Bay Company; and its charter was passed through Parliament without any mention of where their meetings were to be held. That charter gave them the legal freedom to settle in the New World, where they would be free to organize, and to worship God according to God's Word, without fear of persecution.

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

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

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

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

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

The Story of Susanna Wesley

Susanna Wesley was the beautiful and talented daughter of a preacher. She had 24 older brothers and sisters. She was born in England in 1699, and was a special delight to her father. While still a teenager, she could read and speak Latin, Greek, French, and English. She was a great thinker; and she loved God deeply. Susanna was a small and pretty young woman, with the even features and slight build that her son John inherited.

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

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

There would be confession, counsel, and personal instruction in spiritual matters. Susanna Wesley was a disciplinarian. Once a child was one year old, he was never granted anything for which he cried or whined. Each one was taught to work hard, without complaining.

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

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

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

The Conversion of Smith Wigglesworth

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Oh, the Lamb, the bleeding Lamb,

The Lamb of Calvary.

The Lamb that was slain,

That liveth again

To intercede for me."

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

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

The Story of Inomata Yoshiko

Jesus called the Holy Spirit "the Comforter"(John 14); and a little Japanese housewife found that it is indeed His ministry.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

From The Pentecostal Evangel
October 16, 1955
by Ralph W. Harris
Used by permission.

Section 6

Promotions

The Importance of Promotions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

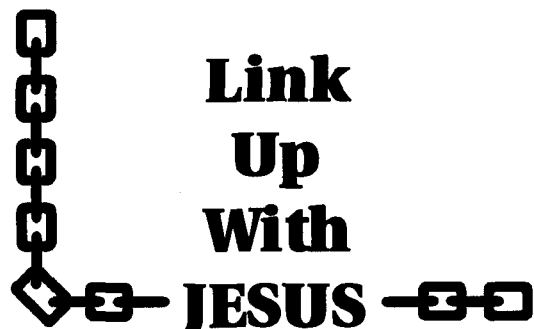
Our promotions are designed to motivate our young people to attend both church and the School of the Bible on a regular basis; to bring their Bibles with them; to bring their tithes and offerings faithfully; to bring their friends to Sunday School on a regular basis; to learn the importance of giving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

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

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

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

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



Link Up With JESUS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Specific Instructions:

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

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

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

prepared for some students to learn several verses per week!

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

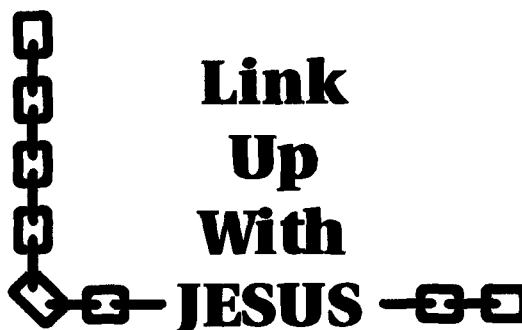
When a student brings his or her Bible, record the date in the appropriate section of the Point Chart, complete the information on the "Brought a Bible" link, and add it to the chain.

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

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

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

YOU CAN



CONTEST BEGINS:	CONTEST ENDS:

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

Bring a Friend to Sunday School

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

Earn 6 Links

Memorize a Scripture

Earn 2 Links

Attend Sunday School

Earn 1 Link

Bring Your Bible to Sunday School

Earn 1 Link

BONUS SUNDAY: _____

**Earn 5 Links When You Bring 5 Food Items To Help Us
Minister To Those Who Are In Need.**

7 Levels Of Prizes Are Available

**At The End Of The Contest,
You May Select One Prize From The Prize List.**

The Top Five Students Will Receive Grand Prizes.



**Link
Up
With**

JESUS

PRIZE LIST

LEVEL #1
24 Links

LEVEL #2
36 Links

LEVEL #3
52 Links

LEVEL #4
70 Links

LEVEL #5
100 Links

LEVEL #6
150 Links

LEVEL #7
200 Links

Grand Prize
Top 5 Students

Christ Commands Us

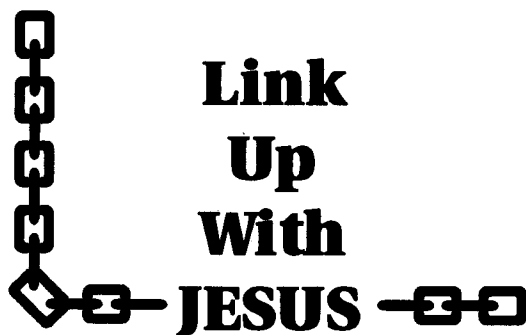
"... Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Matt. 25:40

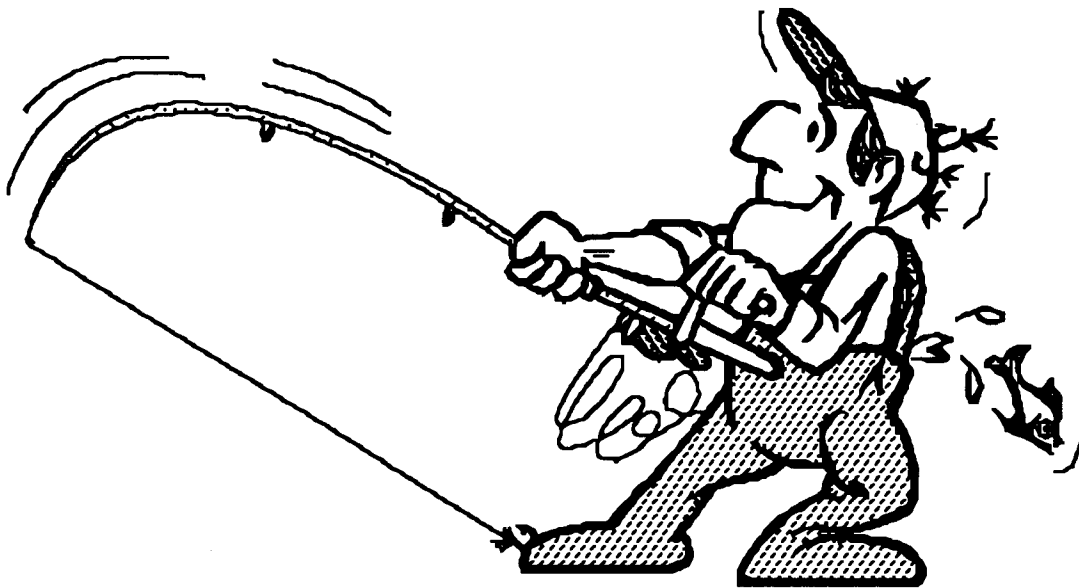
We can fulfill the command of our Lord by ministering to those who are in need.



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



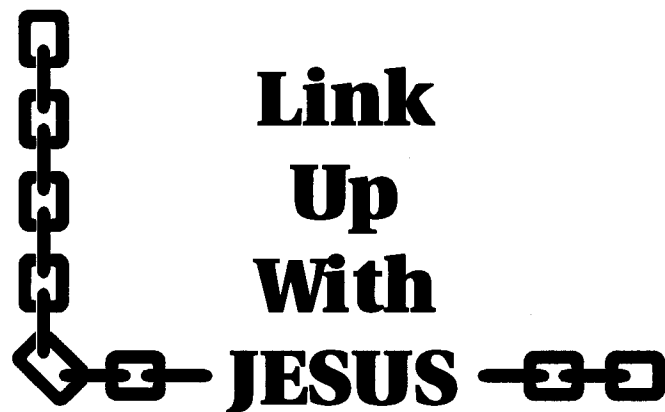
You can't catch fish unless you have the right bait



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

**Link
Up
With
JESUS**

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



**Link
Up
With**

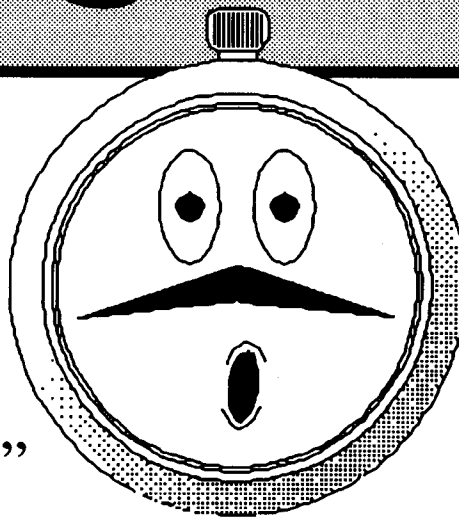
JESUS

**Time is
getting short**

There Are Only



Weeks Left
In The
“Link Up With Jesus”
Promotion!



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



**Link
Up
With
JESUS**

NAME _____

CLASS _____

Point Chart

Memory Verses Learned

Record the verse "address," below.

Award 2 links per verse.

Attendance

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

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

Brought the Bible

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

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

Brought a Friend

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

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

Qualified for Bonus Points?

Award 5 links.

☐

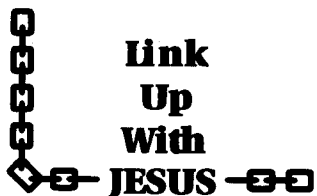


**Link
Up
With**

Brought a Visitor

Name _____

Date _____

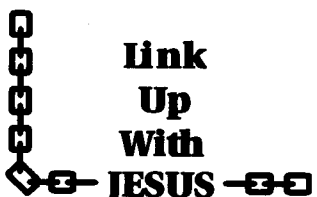


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Brought a Visitor

Name _____

Date _____

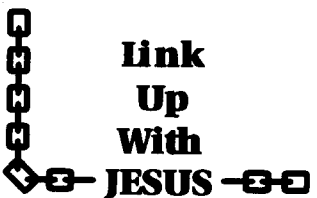


**Link
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With**

Brought a Visitor

Name _____

Date _____

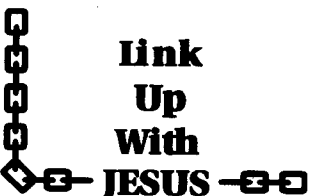


**Link
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Date _____

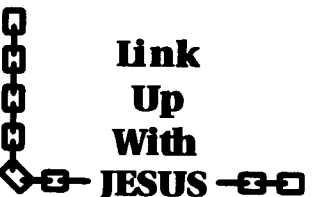


**Link
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With**

Brought a Visitor

Name _____

Date _____



**Link
Up
With**

Brought a Visitor

Name _____

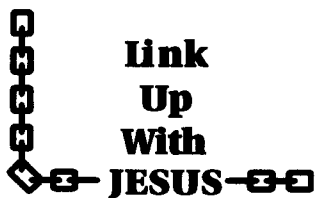
Date _____



Verse: _____

Name _____

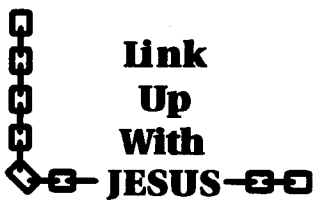
Date _____



Verse: _____

Name _____

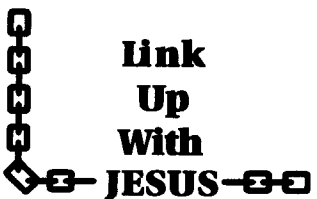
Date _____



Verse: _____

Name _____

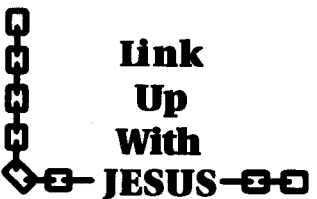
Date _____



Verse: _____

Name _____

Date _____



Verse: _____

Name _____

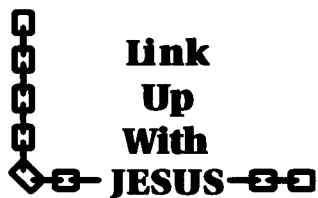
Date _____



Verse: _____

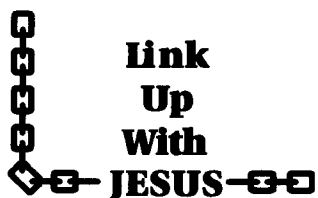
Name _____

Date _____

**Attendance**

Name _____

Date _____

**Attendance**

Name _____

Date _____

**Attendance**

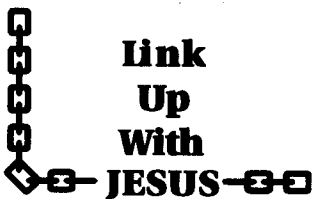
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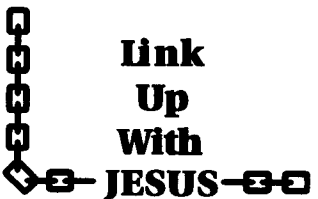
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**Attendance**

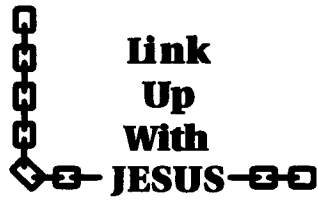
Name _____

Date _____

**Attendance**

Name _____

Date _____



**Link
Up
With**

JESUS

Brought a Bible

Name _____

Date _____



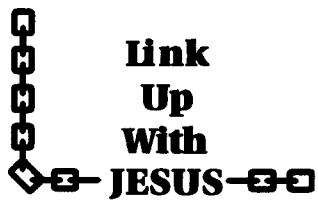
**Link
Up
With**

JESUS

Brought a Bible

Name _____

Date _____



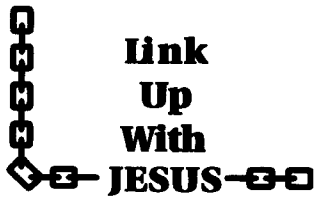
**Link
Up
With**

JESUS

Brought a Bible

Name _____

Date _____



**Link
Up
With**

JESUS

Brought a Bible

Name _____

Date _____



**Link
Up
With**

JESUS

Brought a Bible

Name _____

Date _____



**Link
Up
With**

JESUS

Brought a Bible

Name _____

Date _____

Fuel the Flame

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fuel the Flame

CONTEST BEGINS:	CONTEST ENDS:

Catch the Spirit of Pentecost

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

YOU RECEIVE POINTS FOR THE FOLLOWING

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

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

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

Fuel the Flame

Who Can I Invite?

Friends from School

Relatives

Neighborhood Friends

The Children of Your Parents' Friends

Friends from Outside Activities:

Scouting

Athletics

Camp Programs

Clubs



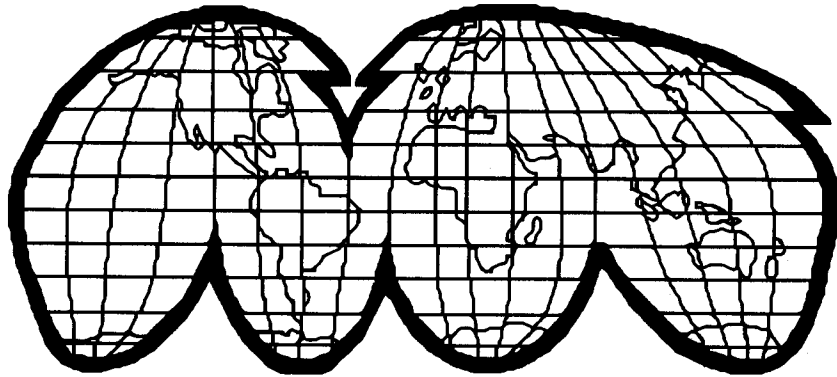
Anyone in the world who needs to know Jesus as their Savior.

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

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Fuel *the Flame*

Why Save the World?



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

Without Christ There Is NO Forgiveness Of Sins.

Without Christ There Is No True Joy.

Without Christ All Of Us Will Perish.

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

Fuel the Flame

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

GRAND PRIZE

**For the 5 Students
With The Highest
Point Totals**

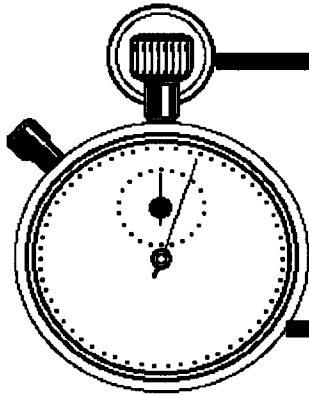
**Students Earning
120 Total
Points Receive:**

**Students Earning
80-119 Total
Points Receive:**

**Students Earning
55-79 Total
Points Receive:**

Invite a Friend Today and Help Us Fuel the Flame!

Fuel *the Flame*



**TIME IS
RUNNING OUT!**

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

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



Fuel *Flame*



Mother's Day

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

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

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



Fuel the Flame

Point Tally

Name _____

Class _____

Week #	1	2	3	4	5	6
Attendance 2 Points						
Bringing An Offering 2 Points						
Bible Memorization 2 Points						
Bringing A Bible 1 Point						
Bringing A Friend (1st Time) 10 Points						
Bringing A Friend (2nd Time) 15 Points						
Bringing A Friend (Addnl Times) 5 Points						
Bringing Mother on Mother's Day 10 Points						
Total Points For The Week						
Grand Total						

Fuel the Flame

Re-Cap Sheet

Name	Wk #1	Wk #2	Wk #3	Wk #4	Wk #5	Wk #6	Grand Total



The Fall Fun Festival is a very popular promotion, which is scheduled during the third quarter, usually in September. A variety of games, rides, contests, and concessions make this event a good one for the entire church family.

Prior to the Festival, a six-week promotion will be conducted in which children will be given an opportunity to earn tickets which can be used for the rides, games and various activities. Tickets are awarded for bringing friends: 10; for attendance: 2; bringing a Bible: 1; and memorizing the Bible verse: 1. Tickets will also be given for bringing food items for the church's emergency food pantry.

The Secretary of each class is responsible for keeping a record of the points each student earns each week. To help eliminate lost tickets, they will be distributed to the students at the ticket booth on the day of the Festival.

Each class will be responsible for operating a booth at the Festival. Booths may include games and contests such as:

- Bean bag toss;
- Basketball shoot;
- Cookie walk;

- Ring toss;
- Face painting;
- Fishing: player drops a line over a "wall," and a prize is attached to the line;
- Duck pond: player selects a plastic duck from a tub of water. Each duck is worth a prize.

Use your creativity in selecting the game for your booth. Make it fun and challenging, but not so difficult that students cannot "win." Everyone will receive a prize. Consolation prizes will be given to those who do not complete the game successfully. Prizes of higher value will be awarded to game "winners."

In addition to the booths operated by each class, arrangements can be made for rides, dunk tank, moon walk, etc. Concessions operated by one of the classes (perhaps the high school department) should also be available. A first-aid station, portable restrooms, and a booth for purchasing additional tickets (at a nominal charge) should be included.

The purpose of this promotion is to provide a fun day of fellowship for families. In doing this, we hope to acquaint others with our program, and

encourage other children and parents to join us in the School of the Bible.

Specific Instructions:

Each "point" a student earns is worth one ticket for the Fall Fun Festival. Tickets will be distributed to students at the ticket booth when they arrive for the Festival.

Secretaries will record the points each student earns on the Weekly Point Chart. Totals from this form will then be transferred to the "Re-Cap Sheet."

The Re-Cap Sheets will be used to determine the number of tickets to be awarded to each student. Keep these forms in the Secretary's folder, and double-check them for accuracy.

Fall Fun Festival

Contest begins: _____

The Fall Fun Festival will be held: _____

Earn Tickets For The Festival By:

Attending Sunday School: 3 tickets, Bringing Your Bible: 2 tickets,
Bringing an Offering: 2 tickets, Memorizing a Bible Verse: 2 tickets,
Bringing a food item for those in need: 2 tickets,
Bringing a friend: 10 tickets)

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

Games

Food

Prizes

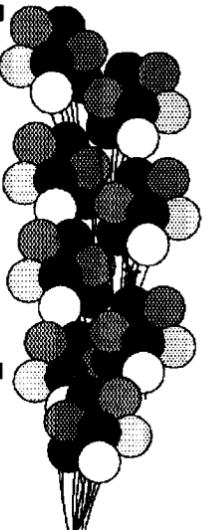
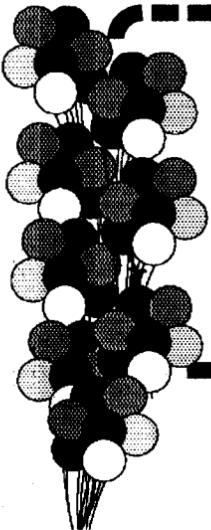
**Dunk
Tank**

Rides

Music

Tickets will be distributed to the students at the Festival.

Students will receive certificates each week, showing the number of tickets earned.



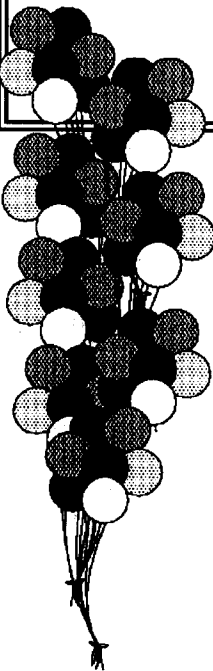
**GET
EXCITED**

**The
"FALL FUN FESTIVAL"**

Date:

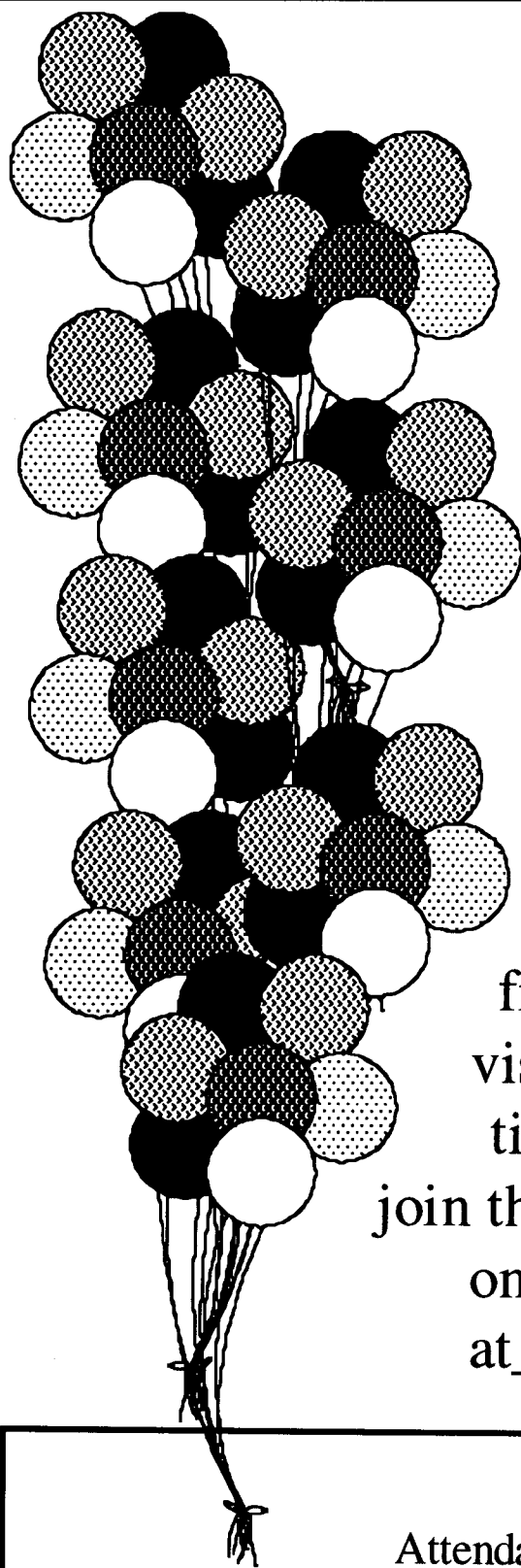
Time:

Place:



*Earn All the Tickets You Can
by Attending Sunday School!
Bring a Friend and Earn Extra Points!*

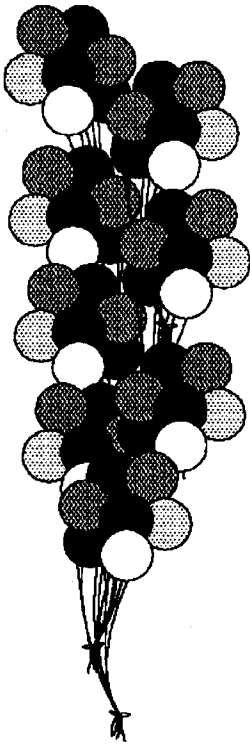
**GAMES PRIZES
MOONWALK
DUNK TANK
FOOD FUN**



Only Weeks to go in the Fall Fun Festival Contest

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

Points are awarded for:
Attendance • Memorizing Bible Verses
Bringing Your Bible • Bringing an Offering • Bringing a Visitor
Bringing a Food Item for Those in Need.



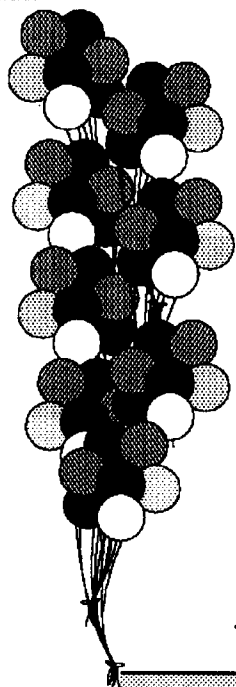
Fall Fun Festival Ticket Certificate

(Name)

*Has Earned a Total of _____ Tickets
for the Fall Fun Festival*

Class Secretary

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

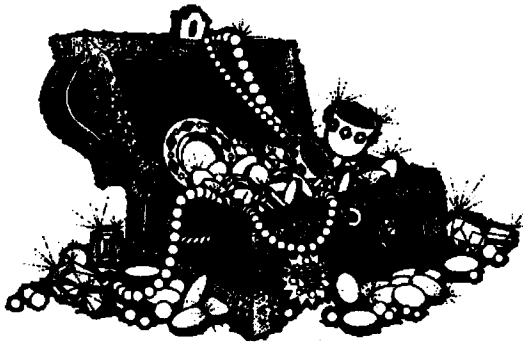


Weekly Point Chart: Week # _____

Date _____

Class

[illegible]



Unlock The Treasure

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Specific Instructions:

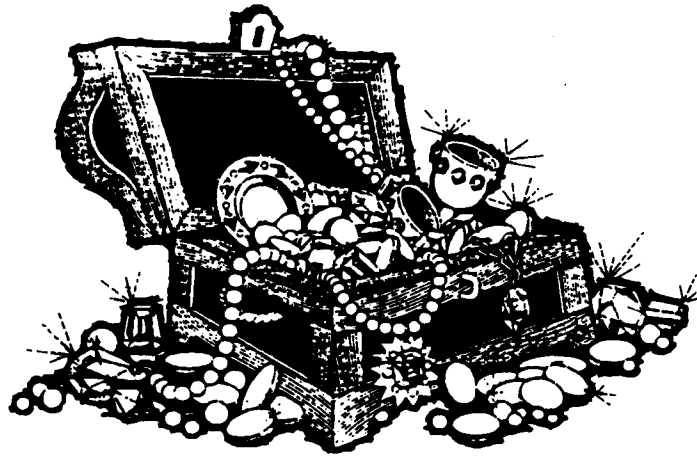
Each Secretary will have a Weekly Point Chart on which to record the points each student earns. A supply of coins will also be distributed to every class. Additional coins will be available in the Audio-Visual Room. Every time students

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

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

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

YOU CAN Unlock The



Treasure

Beginning: _____ and Ending: _____

How Can You Earn Points?

Attend Sunday School: 5 points • Bring Your Bible: 2 points
 Bring an Offering: 2 points • Learn the Bible Verse: 5 points
 Bring a Food Item for Those in Need: 5 points
 Bring a Friend: 20 points



For every 40 points you earn, you will receive a "Gold Coin."

Coins can be redeemed for prizes.

The student in each class, who earns the most points over 200, will win a special prize and will be given a key which may open the Treasure Chest.

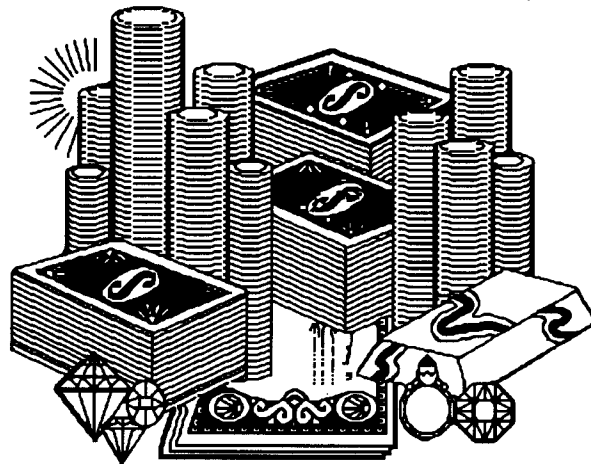
The Treasure Chest contains prizes valued at over \$_____.

The student whose key opens the Treasure Chest, will win its contents!

Invite Your Friends to Sunday School!

Unlock The Treasure

What Treasure is Inside the Chest?

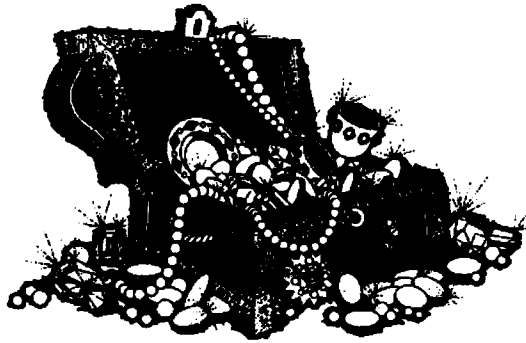


God says that He is worth more than Silver or Gold, and we are to treasure Him above all earthly riches!

You have the opportunity to win an earthly treasure, while helping others to find the treasure of knowing Jesus. Bring a friend to Sunday School between _____ and _____ and earn the opportunity to open the chest and claim the prize.



Weekly Point Chart



Total points for the week

Bringing a friend (20)

Bringing food item (5)

Memory Verse (5)

Bringing an offering (2)

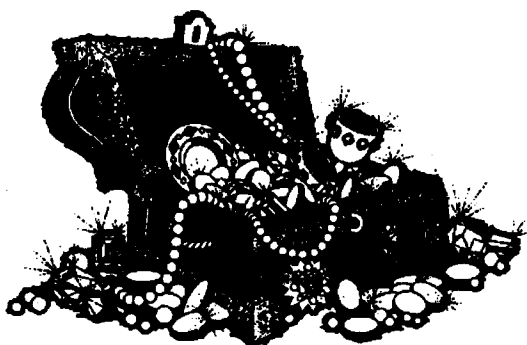
Bringing Bible (2)

Attendance (5)

Name

[illegible]

Unlock The



Re-Cap Sheet

Treasure

Class:

[illegible]

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.

Why Did Jesus Teach in Parables?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"...the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63)

Jesus was concerned that, if people understood concepts such as heaven, hell, and judgment, they would become religious and conform to His ethics without being born again and entering into a covenant relationship with God in love. Jesus was not looking for converts.

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

What Is the "Baptism of Fire"?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What Is the Tithe?

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

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

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

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

God said to bring all of the tithe into the storehouse. It is not ours to decide where it should be used as we "feel led." It belongs to our home church, and the responsibility for handling it belongs to the pastor.

This prophecy in Malachi was the most direct challenge God made to His people. He said, "prove me by tithing, and see if I do not pour you out a blessing." When we commit to tithing, we are constantly reminded of God's ownership of all things. We tend to become less possessive and less foolish with money.

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

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

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

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

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

What Does "Stewardship" Mean?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Basically, sin is the establishing of self as owner. It destroys our ability to have dominion over our bodies and over other aspects of life. When we respond to God's

Lordship in our lives by repentance and faith, we yield ourselves to Him; then we truly become free.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What Is an Offering?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jesus fulfilled the sin offering and became

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

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

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

God finances the ministry with tithes and finances buildings with offerings. God could have easily provided the materials for the tabernacle. Instead, He prompted the Egyptians to give gold and silver to the

children of Israel, and then He asked the Israelites to give Him an offering. God knows that it is good for our hearts when we become givers.

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

What Is Almsgiving?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What Is a Covenant?

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

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

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

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

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

those who have a valid covenant relationship with God.

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

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

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

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

Today, many marriages are broken by people, who do not understand the meaning of a covenant. They break their covenant by reacting to hurts and failing to

restore their partner. God never intended divorce for anyone, because it violates the covenant principle that is fundamental to Christianity. It is important that we make a solemn vow of covenant when we are joined in marriage, and that we realize that we must resolve our conflicts with each other.

What Is the Difference Between a Covenant and a Contract?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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.

Is the Book of Mormon the Inspired Word of God, as the Holy Bible Is?

No. The Book of Mormon is one of many false teachings, which seek to imitate or even supplant the Bible, which is the inspired Word of God.

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." (2 Peter 2:1)

One of Satan's most effective weapons against the gospel of Jesus Christ is the use of cults, or religious groups, which claim to preach truth and provide a way to God. Many cults even claim to be Christian and seek acceptance in the world by identifying with the genuine people of God. Peter said that,

"...many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." (2 Peter 2:2)

Since the world does not know the difference between a cult and a true Christian church, they sometimes will be blame Christians for the wrongs done by the cults.

One such cult was started by an illiterate farmer named Joseph Smith. He lived near Palmyra, New York, in the early 1800's. He and his family had a reputation for laziness and mischief. Young Joseph

had a vivid and wild imagination. He would sit by the hour in the hills, thinking up imaginary tales of lost civilizations and great battles. Later, he would tell his fiction to anyone who would listen.

As time went on, Joseph Smith believed that God appeared to him, telling him that all the churches were wrong, and that he had been chosen to be God's true prophet. Supposedly, he was given golden tablets by an angel named Moroni, who told the story of ancient peoples who came to America many centuries ago; built great cities; and then annihilated one another in great battles. Most of this happened -- an amazing coincidence -- right there near Palmyra, New York. It just so happened that the same kind of stories young Joseph had made up, later became the basis for the Book of Mormon.

Joseph attracted some followers; and he started what is now the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints." He did not believe in the Trinity; and he denied that we can be saved by the blood of Jesus Christ apart from our works. He believed that God was Adam, and that good Mormons can help earn their way to heaven and evolve into gods. He also practiced polygamy -- multiple wives.

A basic idea in the Mormon faith is that God is still giving divine scriptural revelation; and, thus, they deny the Bible as the complete Word of God. In fact, they place their Book of Mormon above the Bible, even though there has been no archaeological evidence ever found to substantiate any of the incredible stories in it. Also, there are many references to things that did not even exist at the time or the place described by the Mormons.

The Bible has stood the test of time. It is being continually reaffirmed by archaeological discoveries; by the fulfillment of its prophecies; and by signs and wonders.

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty." (2 Peter 1:16)

Is It Wrong to Gamble?

Gambling is wrong, because it violates God's plan for His people and His principles of love and work ethics.

"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Timothy 6:10)

The term "gamble" means to risk something of value in playing a game of chance. Nearly everyone recognizes that it is wrong to gamble and to take chances with the necessities of life. Many individuals have ruined their lives by an addiction to gambling. A compulsive gambler has a lack of self-acceptance and a disregard for the value of money.

While the Bible does not provide a direct discourse on the merits or evils of gambling, there are several clear principles which must be applied in determining whether any activity is acceptable in the Christian lifestyle. Consider these statements:

1. Gambling violates God's command that man must earn his living by work -- by the sweat of his face. (Genesis 3:19) When people gamble for money, they are seeking to increase their wealth by chance; by "getting lucky;" and by seeking an unearned reward. The Christian work ethic teaches that we should increase our wealth by work; and, if a man

does not work, he should not eat. (2 Thessalonians 3:10)

2. Gambling stirs up a heart of greed and covetousness by creating a focus on acquiring money.
3. Gambling is associated with many forms of evil; and, we are told to *"abstain from all appearance of evil."* (1 Thessalonians 5:22)
4. Gambling thrives on deception and illusion. The focus is always on winning: "Win instantly! Be a millionaire!" Everyone who gambles expects to win. Otherwise, they would not make the wager; and yet, the vast majority are losers.
5. The few who do gain their wealth by gambling instead of by working rarely benefit much in the long term. Their continued gambling usually results in losing all or most of their winnings.

"Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase." (Proverbs 13:11)
6. Gambling, especially impulse gambling, is a devourer of money and often results in financial bondage, poverty, and broken families.

7. Gambling violates the principle of *agape* love, because anyone who wins in gambling does so at the expense of others. Gambling never creates wealth as work does; it only redistributes it from many to a few. Christians should seek to bless others, and to work to produce goods and services which will benefit everyone.
8. Gambling has supplanted God's plan of support in many churches. Now they rely on "bingo" or other games

of chance to support the ministry, because the people do not tithe.

9. Gambling glorifies luck, rather than God, as our provider.

Money is not to be our focus, goal, or god in this life. Money should be a natural result of hard work; a reward for diligence; but not our master. Do not ever work for money. Work for God and for others and receive the pay as a natural response of those you serve, "*for the laborer is worthy of his hire.*" (Luke 10:7)

What Is Secular Humanism?

Secular humanism is a philosophy, or faith, based on the notion that man is supreme and self-sufficient; and, therefore, he is not in need of God.

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." (Romans 1:28)

Secular humanism is a form of the original lie and has become the greatest deception ever forced onto modern western civilization. "Secular" means "non-religious", or "non-spiritual". "Humanism" is the philosophy, based on the **theory of evolution**, that man is the supreme being -- self-existent and self-sufficient. The term must not be confused with a similar sounding term, "humanitarian," meaning "philanthropic".

Satan said to Eve in the garden, *"Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."* (Genesis 3:5) "You should rule your own lives; be your own persons; and morality should be determined by popular consensus -- majority opinion."

A fundamental part of the humanist faith is the rejection of the knowledge of God and the subsequent attempt to explain life as if there were no spiritual realities. The theory of evolution was developed as an attempt to explain creation without acknowledging the Creator. It still remains a weak theory, with no scientific verification. Nevertheless, the humanists staunchly defend it as if it were scientific,

because creation is the only alternative, and they have rejected the Creator.

"The fool has said in his heart, There is no God." Why? Because *"They are corrupt, they have done abominable works."* (Psalms 14:1) When there is guilt in your heart, you must deal with it either by repenting, or convincing yourself that there is no judge -- no God. Why do people still believe in evolution? Because they choose to believe that concept.

Humanism is diametrically opposed to biblical Christianity. Humanism seeks a one-world, socialist order, and rejects biblical morality. Humanism believes that, eventually, man will save himself through technology, diplomacy, and philosophy. Humanism seeks to gain control of nations by indoctrinating children through entertainment, mass media, and schools.

The Humanist Manifesto was written in 1933 by John Dewey, an educator and author of the Dewey Decimal System. Charles Francis Potter, former president of the National Education Association, said, "Education is the most powerful ally of humanism, and every American public school is a school of humanism." The deception was simple. They convinced the nation that government and education

should be "religiously neutral;" and so, God must be excluded.

To exclude God automatically establishes the religion of secularism. Every law and every doctrine must have a moral and religious basis. For example, the humanist teaching on values is basically the rejection of biblical and family authority. Each individual must set his own values, because each is his own god,

or judge. Rejecting God's ownership leads people to the political bondage of socialism, the destruction of the family, abortion, and suicide. (Galatians 6:7-8) Humanism has

"...changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.... "
(Romans 1:25)

What Is the New Age Movement?

The New Age Movement is an anti-Christian religion, based primarily on secular humanism, Hinduism, and witchcraft.

"For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error." (2 Peter 2:18)

The Apostle Paul warned that

"...in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron: forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats...." (1 Timothy 4:1-2)

Notice three clear steps that our culture has recently experienced:

1. We **departed from the faith**. In the middle of this century, America began a steady reversal of its Christian values. We took the Bible and prayer out of the schools, the courts, and most of our communications. We turned from a focus on God to a secularization of our thinking.
2. We **gave heed to seducing spirits**. In the moral vacuum that resulted, there came a great increase in

fornication, perversion, and lasciviousness. Sex became a recreational sport, and a national obsession.

3. We received **doctrines of devils**. The next step was a rapid rise in the occult and demonic religions. America opened its doors to the demented and demon-possessed gurus of Hinduism and the ancient religion of eastern mysticism -- the mother of satanic cults.

India, with her heart of idolatry, is a land of 3,300,000 gods, and each idol represents a demonic spirit. Many Hindus literally open their spirits to demons. Hindus believe in reincarnation, which is the idea that each person will return to earth many times in many different human or animal forms. They have been deceived, because

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

The New Age Movement is built on many deceptions, all designed to get man to focus on himself. This can open his spirit to human or demonic manipulation. People open their spirit to evil through transcendental meditation, drugs, video games, and rock music.

The New Age Movement promotes reincarnation, which leads to a fatalistic outlook on life. There is a strong belief in astrology, which seeks to control people's lives through suggestion and manipulation. This false religion focuses attention on the impersonal **force** of the universe instead of on a personal God. Because of the belief in reincarnation, they command *"...to abstain from meats,"* (1 Timothy 4:3) because that cow might really be grandma. Since they have rejected God and the Bible,

*"the god of this world hath blinded
the minds of them which believe*

*not, lest the light of the glorious
gospel of Christ...should shine onto
them."* (2 Corinthians 4:4)

The New Age movement promotes itself as compassionate and humanitarian. In fact, it is diabolically anti-Christian. Part of their agenda is the destruction, or at least the devaluation, of the family. New Age also promotes various forms of moral perversion, particularly homosexuality -- sodomy. The "new world order" is based on the idea that the world can achieve world peace through a socialistic, godless program of diplomacy. New Age is really a form of Satan's old lie.

Section 8

Lessons

Go to Church

Volume 7

Lesson 1



Bible References

Genesis 2:18

Matthew 16:18

Acts 4:32-35

Hebrews 10:25

42 *"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

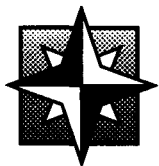
43 *"And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.*

44 *"And all that believed were together, and had all things common;*

45 *"And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all {men}, as every man had need.*

46 *"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,*

47 *"Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."*



Theme

Faithful church attendance is a vital part of God's plan for our personal spiritual development as Christians.

Acts 4:32-35

32 *"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any {of them} that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.*

33 *"And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.*

34 *"Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors*



Scripture Reading

Acts 2:42-47

of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

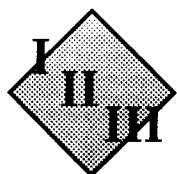
35 "And laid {them} down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."



Memory Verse

Hebrews 10:25

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some {is}; but exhorting {one another}: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."



Outline

I. God's Pattern Is Not Solitude.

A. God is One, but He is not solitary.

1. Genesis 1:26 -- *"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion...."*
2. Genesis 11:7 -- *"Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."*
3. God is a Trinity: one God, yet three Persons.

B. Adam's solitude was remedied.
(Genesis 2:18)

C. Israel's national identity was preserved by sacred assemblies. (Leviticus 23:4-6, 10b, 16, 24, 27, 34)

D. Separation was a punishment.
(Leviticus 23:29-30)

II. Christ's Body of Believers is to Function in Unity.

A. Jesus founded the church.

1. "Church" (Greek *ecclesia*) means "called out ones."
2. Matthew 16:18.
3. Christians are called out of the world to join together in a body.

B. Jesus is in authority over this group.

1. Colossians 1:18 -- *"And he is the head of the body, the church:...."*
2. Ephesians 1:22 -- *"And hath put all {things} under his feet, and gave him {to be} the head over all {things} to the church."*

C. He has assigned human authorities to govern this group. (Ephesians 4:11-16)

D. He expects His followers to honor and obey these authorities.

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13.
2. Hebrews 13:7, 17.

E. The manifestation of the Spirit is for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

III. Assemblies Were the Pattern of the Early Church.

A. The apostolic church gathered often.

1. Acts 2:42-47.
2. Acts 4:32-35.
3. Acts 20:7.

B. New Testament writers exhorted believers to assemble together.

1. Romans 14:7.
2. Ephesians 4:2-7, 11-16.

C. Jesus addressed Himself to churches in the Revelation. (Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18)

IV. The Corporate Body Serves Many Purposes in God's Economy.

A. Believers learn mutual submission and interdependence.

1. Matthew 20:25-28.
2. Romans 12:10.
3. Romans 12:12-16.
4. 1 Corinthians 12:12-31.
5. Hebrews 13:1.

B. Believers present corporate worship and praise.

1. Psalms 102:21-22.
2. Romans 12:5-8.

C. The local church is the center for financial giving to the ministry and to the needy.

1. Acts 2:45.
2. Acts 4:34-35.
3. 2 Corinthians 8:1-4.
4. 1 Corinthians 16:2.

D. Together, the believers activate the power of corporate prayer.

1. Acts 4:24-31.
2. Matthew 18:19-20.

E. The local church should provide sound and balanced doctrine.

1. Ephesians 4:11-15.
2. 2 Peter 3:17-18.

F. Together, we partake of communion. (1 Corinthians 11:23-31)

G. The local body enforces discipline and provides accountability.

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15.
2. Hebrews 3:12-13.
3. 1 Corinthians 5:4-5.

H. We can provide encouragement, comfort and a sense of belonging.

1. Hebrews 10:24.
2. Hebrews 3:12-13.
3. 1 Peter 2:9-10.
4. Jude 20-21.

I. We give hope and help to those in need.

1. Galatians 6:2, 10.
2. Romans 12:15.
3. Romans 14:19.
4. Romans 15:1-2.

J. The local body provides an avenue of service to our Lord.

1. 1 Peter 4:7-11.
2. 1 Peter 5:1-3.
3. 1 Corinthians 12.

K. The love in the church is a witness to unbelievers. (John 13:34-35)



Spiritual Truths

- God calls His people to assemble together.
- We need the nurturing fellowship of the local church, if we are to mature in our faith.
- We are not to be lone authorities to ourselves; we are to be under the authority of a local body, to which we are accountable.
- We should not be autonomous or independent in our Christian walk.
- We are to submit to those spiritual authorities placed over us by Christ.
- God calls us to a particular local church.
- Our attitude in the body should be one of cooperation, submission, love and service, rather than self-determination, pride and independence.
- Lack of commitment and faithfulness to a local body of believers is disobedience to God.
- We are each important to the local body that God calls us to join.
- Our faithfulness to attend church is a witness to unbelievers of God's reality.



Lesson Material

The purpose of this lesson is to bring the students to the recognition that church attendance and involvement are not merely niceties that can be taken or left in a Christian's life. Membership and activity in a local church body are imperative to a Christian's growth in the Lord. The church provides protection, correction, instruction, comfort, counsel, direction and purpose in our lives.

In this light, a major hurdle to overcome is the lackadaisical attitude toward church that is found in some church groups. Not only apathy and carelessness infect believers, but also the lie that we can be fruitful and pleasing to God, independent from the body. Though individualism is not in itself to be condemned (we have to be able to think for ourselves, in order to come to Christ in the first place), it can be dangerous when it becomes the dominant force in our lives. We are in danger of becoming an authority unto ourselves, with the attitude that says, "Only God tells me what to do -- I do not need any other men to tell me." We become self-serving, seeking a church where we are blessed and feel comfortable. The rebellious heart is the one which declares: "I can 'do my own thing,' and be left alone." This is the very antithesis of God's intentions for the believer.

The focus of the carnal mind is, "What is in it for me?" Though some try to draw young people to church this way, it really feeds the independent, "shopping around" mentality that seeks only what is "best for me, in my own eyes." We should not have to "sell" the church to those who believe.

God commands us to be under authority. God knows that we need fellowship, in order to keep our lives straight. We need accountability to others, to help us stay on His path. Stray sheep are especially prey to the wolves that abound in the world.

The attitude that we need to develop is one that recognizes that we are dependent beings. We need company, companionship, and a sense of belonging in our lives. Hermits and recluses tend to become eccentric and out of the norm, lacking the social feedback from personal relationships that is required to develop normally. The same is true in the faith. Those who stay to themselves are open to all sorts of deceptions and diversions from the sound doctrines of the faith, since they have no feedback or correction from other believers. When the ancient Israelites neglected the appointed feasts and each man did as he saw fit, the nation became fragmented, sinful and rebellious; and God overthrew it. (Judges 17:6)

We also must realize that we are subordinate beings, under God's authority; and we are intended to be under the authority of His anointed and chosen leadership. For Israel, it was the Levitical priesthood; for the church, it is Christ Himself, represented by the apostolic leadership He provides as gifts to the body. (Ephesians 4:11-12) There is a necessity to recognize Jesus as Head of the church, and not just as personal Savior. We need to bow to His authority and obey His Word, which is the very thing which tells us to belong to a body of believers and to function in it, under its appointed authorities. Again, we have to stop thinking, "What is in it for me?" and start thinking, "I am in this for God -- what does He want me to do?"

After recognizing the importance of being a part of a local body, this attitude must continue, in order to be molded into an active part of that body. Jesus does not call anyone to be a spectator. Every part of the body has a job to do; and, if it is neglected, the whole body suffers for that lack. (1 Corinthians 12:20-26) God has not given us abilities to be used wholly for our own profit. Our talents are intended to be used, not only to meet our own and our family's needs, but also to produce spiritual fruit, by touching others' lives and bringing praise to God, Who gave those talents to us.

1 Corinthians 12 is a key passage, along with Romans 12, in seeing the interdependence of the body and the desire of the Lord for us all to be actively participating in His service. None of us is unimportant. We all have a place to fill -- a job to do -- to keep the body going and functioning as it should. As in the human body, if even a toe should fail, the body can lose its balance and fall. An untended injury can result in disability or paralysis. We are to be at work; and we are to take care of each other, healing wounds, patching cuts, salving bruises and exercising, that the body may be strong and coordinated, fit and ready for action.

The third attitude to be developed, after one of humble dependence and commitment to a local body and one of commitment to action within that body, is what Paul called the greatest gift -- love. (1 Corinthians 13:13) We are called by Christ to be servants of one another. He told his disciples that leadership in His church would not be cold and dictatorial, but it would be humble, serving and seeking the best for those over whom they were given authority. (Mark 9:35; 10:44) He said that the world would recognize His true followers by their love for each other

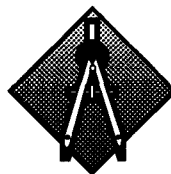
(John 13:35), rather than by their harsh discipline or even their awesome religious ceremonies. We should be marked by an attitude of selfless love and sacrifice -- both to the Lord and to our neighbor. There are causes and principles that are more important than our own comforts, and even our lives. We must entrust ourselves totally to God; and from the security of that relationship, we go out and love others with an openness that leaves us vulnerable to hurt and rejection. That is what we are called to as Christ's followers. It is not easy; but it is what is best for each of us.

This kind of love overlooks offenses from others, whether intentional or not (1 Peter 4:8), bears others' burdens (Galatians 6:2), recognizes that others will believe slightly differently in some areas of the faith, rejects competition and comparisons to others in giftings and callings, leaves room for the weaker ones, respects stronger ones without envy, and lets Jesus take care of everyone's needs. Romans 14 and 15 details how believers at different levels of faith are to respect and not offend one another in the same body.

Development of these attitudes will lead people to a fulfilling, fruitful commitment to the local body, recognizing God's will for him or her to be there. They will recognize God's desire for them to be active there and His overriding desire for Christ-like love to develop among His people. Emphasize these things; and help the class to think soberly of their level of commitment to these things.

Finally, remind the students that a believer who refuses to take part in a local church is much like a drowning man who catches the life-saver from a ship, but who refuses to get on board. He may be saved at

the moment; but he cannot really depend on his own grip on the life-saver to keep him safe in the coming storms, between this place and home port.



Methods

Lecture

Review the material presented in the commentary section and in the outline. Take only those portions that you can fit into the time span that you have allotted for this lesson. When lecturing, do not just stand and talk; but, bring the students into the lesson, through discussion, questions, and other such vehicles, in order to encourage their participation.

Survey Method

Have the students write on a slip of paper reasons why they should go to church and why they should not. Then go over the answers with the class; and test them on their knowledge of the scripture that deals with this topic.

Skit

Have two people portray individuals who have different opinions on going to church. Have one that loves to go and another who hates to go. Add to that mix, an individual who goes occasionally and one who goes only when his parents make him. Have them get into a discussion of church and what it means. Then, ask the students to discuss what they saw, and if any of those people fit into their feelings about going to church.

Prayer and Worship

Volume 7

Lesson 2



Bible References

Luke 18

James 5

Matthew 6

John 4

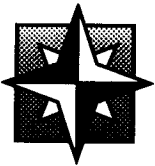
14 *"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:*

15 *"And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.*

16 *"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

17 *"Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.*

18 *"And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."*



Theme

God's purpose in the earth is to have a people for Himself, who will love Him and will be His reflection to a lost world.



Scripture Reading

James 5:13-18

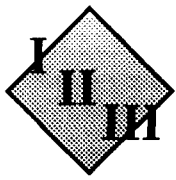
13 *"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.*



Memory Verse

Acts 4:31

"And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."



Outline

I. What Is Prayer?

A. Prayer is not:

1. Saying prayers.
 - a. Jesus said, *"...Use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do...."* (Matthew 6:7)
 - b. Do not just "say a prayer."
2. Meditating about spiritual things.
3. Just a way to get what we want from God.
 - a. We should not limit our praying to "foxhole prayers" -- thinking about God, only when we have a need.
 - b. Prayer should be an ongoing communication with our loving heavenly Father.

B. Prayer is:

1. Talking to God.
 - a. *"When ye pray, say Our Father...."*
 - b. Luke 11:2.
2. A response of your spirit to God, and not just your mind.
3. An ongoing spiritual interaction with God, in the Name of Jesus Christ. (John 14:14)

C. Prayer includes:

1. Praise.
2. Worship.
3. Petition (asking for our own needs to be met).
4. Intercession (praying for others).

5. Repentance (asking forgiveness for our sins).
6. Thanksgiving.
7. Communion with God.
8. Listening to God.

II. How Important Is Prayer to the Christian?

A. Daily prayer is essential for every Christian.

1. Prayer keeps us in touch and in tune with God.
2. Prayer keeps us spiritually alert.

B. The Bible commands us to *"pray without ceasing."* (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

1. Keep in an attitude of communing with and responding to God at all times.
2. Walk with the awareness of God's abiding presence.

C. Prayer is not a means to an end.

1. Prayer is God's plan for mankind.
2. God allows life to be difficult, and He allows Satan to tempt people, in order to motivate them to seek His face, and to pray.
3. God's motive with the human race is love.
 - a. *"...God so loved...that He gave...."* (John 3:16)
 - b. God made man for Himself. (Isaiah 43:21)
 - c. When you love someone, you want them to talk with you.

D. Prayer was the secret to the overcoming life of Jesus.

1. He gave Himself to prayer.
2. He often prayed all night. (Matthew 14:23)

3. He prayed diligently and often, so that His will was constantly being subjected to the will of the Father.
- E. Prayer generally does more to change our will than anything else.
- F. God has chosen to intervene in the affairs of the world, only in response to the prayers of His saints.
 1. John Wesley said, "God has chosen to do nothing in the earth except in response to believing prayer."
 2. God wants to teach us to look to Him as our source in life, and to trust Him with the results. (1 Chronicles 4:9-10)

III. How Should We Pray?

- A. Pray without ceasing.
 1. 1 Thessalonians 5:17.
 2. Do not give up on your praying.
 3. Do not quit.
- B. Pray to the Father, in the Name of Jesus. (John 16:23)
- C. Pray in faith. (Mark 11:24)
- D. Pray according to the will of God. (1 John 5:14)
- E. Pray in love, without bitterness or doubt. (1 Timothy 2:8)
- F. Pray privately, in a personal place, alone with God. (Matthew 6:6)
- G. Pray corporately, with other believers. (Acts 4:31)
- H. Pray in tongues. (1 Corinthians 14:15)
 1. This builds up your spirit. (1 Corinthians 14:4)

2. Only God understands your spirit language. (1 Corinthians 14:2)

I. Pray in the Holy Spirit. (Jude 20)

1. Praying as directed by the Holy Spirit.
2. Can be in the natural language, or in tongues.

J. Pray fervently. (James 5:16)

IV. Praise and Worship.

A. Praise.

1. Bragging on God.
2. Exalting and magnifying the Name of the Lord.
3. Speaking or singing about His greatness, His great works, and His goodness.

B. Worship.

1. Ministering to God with your spirit.
2. Spiritual intimacy with God. (John 4:23-24)
3. Adoration; expression of love; devotion; covenant.
4. Focusing on Who God is, rather than what He does.

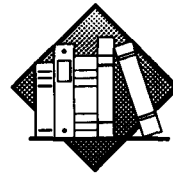
C. Worship is important.

1. God is seeking worshippers. (John 4:23)
2. Worship is the highest expression of a genuine covenant relationship with God.



Spiritual Truths

- Prayer is not a way to get what we want from God. It is God's plan to relate us to Himself, so that He can bring about His will in our lives.
- We do not pray to inform God of our situation, but to relate ourselves to Him as submitted vessels.
- Prayer is not designed to get our will accomplished, but to get God's will accomplished.
- Jesus taught that the practice of reciting prayers by rote was wrong, because God wants us to talk with Him in personal prayer.
- When godly people pray with zeal, faith, and persistence, God moves in power on their behalf.
- God wants us to pray often, because He wants us to walk and live in fellowship with Him.
- It is impossible for a Christian to pray too much. Most of the time, our problem is a lack of prayer.
- Praise and worship are both positive activities, because through them, we strengthen our perception of God, thus building faith and hope.
- Effective prayer should always involve thanksgiving and praise, as well as petition.



Lesson Material

Many people have the concept that God's purpose on the earth is to convince as many people as possible to be willing to go to heaven. While it is true that God is *"...not willing that any should perish..."*, it is also true that His purpose is that *"...all should come to repentance."* (2 Peter 3:9) God's purpose is relationship. "Repentance" means "turning around." When we enter into the family of God by the new birth, we turn from our self-seeking ways and give ourselves to God. We begin to live for Jesus, instead of being our own person. We make a covenant with God. A covenant is more than a contract. A covenant means that we give ourselves to Him. God initiated the covenant by giving His only begotten Son, Jesus, as the Sacrifice for the sins of the world. When we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, God forgives our sins; and He adopts us into His eternal family.

Christianity is not just a religion. The focus of religion is basically to somehow gain entrance into heaven, or obtain some form of eternal life. But Christianity is a relationship. The focus of true Christianity is a personal walk with the true and living God. God's purpose is to have a people (Isaiah 43:21) who love Him (Matthew 22:37) more than life itself (Revelation 12:11), and who worship Him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:23) Out of a world full of people who want for themselves eternal life, and heaven, and glory, God is looking for a people who want a personal relationship with Him.

God has always loved a praying people. God has chosen not to reveal Himself

openly in force to the world. He is present; but He operates quietly in the affairs of men. His goal is to have a people who believe Him, in spite of a world full of deception and secularism; who trust Him, in spite of circumstances that they do not understand; and who love Him, more than they love themselves. God has chosen to limit His supernatural intervention to His responding to the fervent prayers of believing Christians. God wants us to pray.

Prayer is not just a means to an end. Prayer is the key to God's purpose with man. Prayer is personal communication with God. Jesus told His disciples to pray "in His Name." (John 16:23) In other words, because they were "in Christ" by faith, they had, in a sense, "power of attorney." They had the legal right to go to God, the Father, and make their petitions, because their sins were pardoned, and they were "clothed" in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. They could approach a holy God on the merits of the cross, rather than their own works. They had a legal right to "...come boldly unto the throne of grace,...." (Hebrews 4:16)

Christians need to pray regularly and often. We need to build up our spirit. The more we face opposition, temptation, or trials, the more we need to pray. In fact, God allows life to be difficult at times, so that we will be motivated to pray. If life was easy, most of us would neglect our relationship with God and become spiritually complacent and lazy. Jesus taught His disciples to pray. Prayer was the secret to His life of excellence and power. The disciples realized that. They followed Him, so that they could become more like Him. Note that they did not say, "Lord, teach us to preach, administrate, and counsel." They said, "...Lord, teach us to pray,...." (Luke 11:1) Thus, they

acknowledged that prayer alone was the key to His ministry. Perhaps our Bible colleges would do well to follow this biblical example. How many courses on prayer do we teach, today?

When they asked Him to teach them to pray, Jesus gave them a straightforward answer, because it was an excellent request. He said, "*When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven,....*" (Luke 11:2) He had already taught them that it is wrong to recite prayer over and over, like the heathen do. (Matthew 6:7) When we pray, we should talk to God personally. Praying does not have to be out loud all of the time; but, audible praying does help us to keep on track. God can hear our thoughts; and so, it is possible to stay in a spirit of open communion and awareness of God, even when we are not talking and verbalizing petitions. We should never quit praying. Do not feel like it is wrong to keep praying for a need. Jesus taught in Luke 18 that we should keep on praying until the answer comes. God wants us to keep praying, and never give up.

Prayer is more than petition. God really does not need to be informed about our situation, because He knows all about it. (Matthew 6:32) God does want us to commune with Him, and to learn to go to Him in time of trouble. He is our perfect, loving Father. God also wants us to pray according to His will. (1 John 5:14)

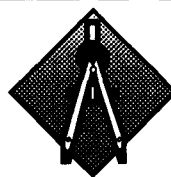
Some people make the mistake of thinking that, "if something is God's will, then there is no use praying for it, because the will of God will always be done." This is not true. Again, God does not will for anyone to go to hell; but most people will, because God allows man to make choices. (Matthew 7:13) If God's people do not pray, then God will allow humanity to take its natural course downward. The more we

pray, the more God works directly to dispatch angels, or to intervene directly by His power. Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "...Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth...." (Luke 11:2)

When Daniel learned that God's purpose was to end the bitter captivity of the Jews after seventy years, he immediately began praying fervently that it would be done that way. When we realize that something is indeed God's will, then it is time to begin praying, and not sitting back. God wants His children to learn to pray.

Prayer is not just telling God what we want. We are not just making a wish list for God to fill, like Santa Claus. We are involving ourselves in covenant communion with Him. We are humbling ourselves before His throne; and we are offering praise, worship, and thanksgiving, as well as petition. The more we pray, the more responsive we tend to be to His will. The more we pray, the more sensitive we will tend to be as His servants. Prayer does change things; but the thing that it changes the most is the one who is doing the praying. As we pray, our own attitudes and perceptions about life and about God are changed.

It is impossible to live a victorious, overcoming Christian life without prayer. Prayer is God's plan for man. Prayer teaches us to delight ourselves in our relationship with God. We should learn to pray privately and corporately, earnestly and often. Pray -- and do not give up praying.



Methods

Sing and Pray

Obviously, you will want to put into practice whatever you emphasize in this lesson. Take a few minutes at the end of the class to sing at least one faith-building scripture song; and then, move into a time of prayer.

Example

First, give an example of a good, well-balanced prayer. You might want to pattern it after the model prayer that Jesus gave; and include in it thanksgiving, praise, seeking God's will, and so on. Then have all of the students pray at the same time, for two minutes.

Requests

If you take prayer requests, be sure to emphasize that they should share with the group those needs with which the group can relate, or those for which they themselves have been praying diligently, and need support. We want to balance Galatians 6:5 ("*For every man shall bear his own burden.*") with Galatians 6:2 ("*Bear ye one another's [heavy] burdens,....*"). Sometimes we get into the habit of requesting prayer for relatives we know of who are sick, when we are not really interceding for them ourselves. Also, they are often people that no one else has ever met. We all have sick relatives on any given week. We should pray together for people that we can all somehow relate to (such as our pastor or government authorities); and each individual should pray for his own distant relatives and acquaintances.

Another problem with casual prayer requests is that so many people will ask for prayer for some distant relative, when they themselves have a major, personal need. These should come first. James 5:16 says, *"Confess {your} faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed...."* It is easier to draw attention to some other person's problem; but we need to pray for one another.

Whatever method you use, get your students to pray. As much as possible, encourage them to share their real needs with the group, or perhaps with one close friend. Allow time in later classes for reports on answers to specific prayer. The more you can motivate and inspire your students to be praying Christians, the more joy and victory you will experience as a group.

Christian Faith

Volume 7

Lesson 3



Bible References

Hebrews 11:1

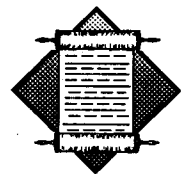
John 1:12

James 2:22



Theme

Christian faith is having utter confidence that God will do what He promised, and placing the reins of our lives in His hands.



Scripture Reading

James 2:14-26

14 "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and not have works? can faith save him?

15 "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

16 "And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

17 "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

18 "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.

19 "Thou believest that there is one God; and thou doest well: and the devils also believe, and tremble.

20 "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

21 "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

22 "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

23 "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

24 "Ye see then how that by works a man was justified, and not by faith only.

25 *"Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?"*

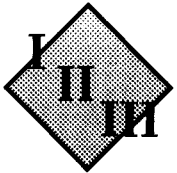
26 *"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."*



Memory Verse

Hebrews 11:6

"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."



Outline

I. Faith Defined.

A. What it is not.

1. Intellectual assent. (James 2:19)
2. Self-promoting profession and works. (Matthew 7:21-23)

B. What it is. (Hebrews 11:6)

1. Only way to please God.
2. Not just believing in God, but believing Him in what He has said and responding to it.

3. Faith is a reality, which builds our confidence in God. (Hebrews 11:1)
4. Basis of Christian life. (Galatians 2:20)

II. Faith's Evidences.

A. True faith will be manifested in works. (James 2:14-18, 22, 26)

B. True faith stays the course, despite the circumstances. (Hebrews 11:35-39)

C. Examples in the Bible.

1. Noah stood against his culture. (Hebrews 11:7)
2. Abraham stood against human logic. (Hebrews 11:8-12, 17-19)
3. Joseph trusted God's promise for the future. (Hebrews 11:22)
4. Moses gave up worldly position and power. (Hebrews 11:24-28)

III. Faith's Results.

A. Faith enables us to become sons of God. (John 1:12)

B. Results in legal justification before the Judge of the universe.

1. Acts 13:39.
2. Romans 3:28.

C. Faith is counted as righteousness. (Romans 4:5)

D. Faith is essential for eternal salvation. (Ephesians 2:8)

E. Faith brings healing. (Mark 10:52)

F. Faith can prompt the miraculous interventions of God. (Hebrews 11:33-34)

G. True faith results in eternal life.

1. John 3:16.
2. John 6:40.

IV. Faith's Call.

A. Recognize God's reality. (Hebrews 11:6)

B. Realize your true plight. (Romans 3:23)

C. Rejoice in God's provision. (Romans 3:24-25)

D. Respond by surrendering to Christ.

1. Romans 3:22.
2. Colossians 3:2-3.

E. Rejoice in obedience.

1. Matthew 7:24-25.
2. James 2:14-18.

F. Receive all that He has for you. (John 1:12)

- Faith gives us eternal hope and eternal life.



Lesson Material

Faith is more than intellectual belief. Many people believe that there is a God, and that Jesus is the Son of God; but they live their lives on their own terms, and they make decisions without even considering God at all. Their focus (and faith) is in themselves and the world. Their hearts are far from God; and they do not trust themselves to God.

There are many religious people who accept Jesus as the Savior, but they do not know Him as Lord. True saving faith not only agrees with the claims of the Bible, but it also surrenders to Christ as the Owner and Master of life. Faith is not a way to get God to do what you want. Faith is a way to yield, so that we will do whatever God wants. That response to His right to "call the shots" is called "obedience."

When God created the world and the human race, He established the essence of the relationship, and defined it. God had millions of angels who were in His presence in the heavenlies; but He created the race of man to live in a physical world, yet still aware of the spiritual. When man sinned, he lost his spiritual perception and sensitivity. Sin caused him to focus on self and the fleshly elements of the world. That is why Jesus said, "...Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (spiritual reality)." (John 3:3)



Spiritual Truths

- Faith is not an intellectual belief, but a response of the spirit to the faithfulness and lordship of Jesus Christ.
- Faith is the basis of true Christian life.
- True faith is manifested by works.
- True faith does not leave us, when our circumstances test us.
- Faith brings healing to our body.

Sin separates us from God, because sin establishes self on the throne of life. God is the Lord. He will not relate to a human who assumes the right to be his own lord (master). Sin is essentially rebellion against God; and the sins we commit reflect that. Sin is what we are. Sins are what we do, because of what we are.

When the Holy Spirit convicts our hearts about the seriousness and awfulness of sin, He also stirs up faith in our spirit. If we choose to allow that faith to take hold, we will repent. To "repent" means to "turn from" serving and seeking self. Instead, we begin to serve and seek God. Instead of living for the moment, we begin to live for eternity. Instead of focusing on the flesh, we begin to focus on God.

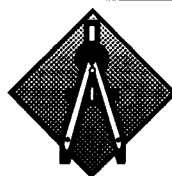
God could have designed the world with many obvious reminders of the spiritual world. For instance, He could have made a great open pit, from whence we could view and even smell the horrors of hell. He could have made angels and demon spirits visible. God could do many great miracles to make Himself known to all of humanity; but He chose to let men be blinded by their own sin, and to reveal His truth only to those who would repent and believe. God made it necessary for men to respond to Him with trusting faith, before He would reveal Himself and His truth.

In other words, man often says, "I will believe it, when I see it." But the great Architect of the universe says, "No, you will see it, only when you believe it." (John 20:29) True faith not only agrees mentally, but yields spiritually and volitionally. Faith causes us to resist the temptation to obey our fleshly appetites, in preference to doing His will. (Galatians 5:16) Faith recognizes the eternal and

spiritual aspects of life's decisions; and it looks at the "bigger picture," when making the choices which are a constant part of living.

How does faith "come by hearing the Word?" (Romans 10:17) In life, we are flooded with the images of the natural and physical world. When we read or hear the Word of God, we are reminded of God's works and His ways. We see many illustrations of the consequences both of faith and unbelief; and they are powerful and vivid. And the Holy Spirit illuminates the Word to our spirits and minds, which produces faith.

There are many examples in the scripture of how men and women overcame difficulties, because they trusted God's promises above what they could see with their natural understanding. People like Noah, Abraham, Ruth, Joseph, Moses, Job, and even Jesus Himself had to face times of testing. Yet, in their time of testing, they showed the true meaning of faith. They stood resolutely in their belief that God was in control of their lives and that He would not forsake them. They believed that God had a plan for their good, and not for their destruction. *"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."* (Jeremiah 29:11)



Methods

Obstacle Course

Divide the class into teams of two students each. One will lead his

blindfolded partner through an obstacle course of chairs set up in the room. He may lead by the hand, or with verbal directions.

After the exercise, ask each student how he felt, while being led through his

darkness. Discuss the fear that they may have experienced. Were any of the guides untrustworthy? Can we always trust people? Can we always trust God?

Christian Communion

Volume 7

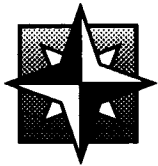
Lesson 4



Bible References

Matthew 26:19-29

Luke 22:17-27



Theme

Communion is an ongoing expression of the covenant between God and His redeemed people.



Scripture Reading

1 Corinthians 11:23-32

23 "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

24 "And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

25 "After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

26 "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

27 "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

28 "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

29 "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

30 "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

31 "For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.

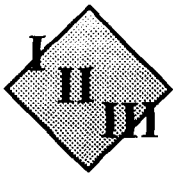
32. "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."



Memory Verse

1 Corinthians 11:26

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."



Outline

I. Origin of the "Lord's Table."

- A. Jesus and disciples were observing the Passover meal. (Matthew 26:17-20)
 1. The Jewish people had been celebrating the Passover for 1500 years.
 2. It commemorated the time that the death angel passed over the houses which had been sprinkled with the blood of the lamb. (Exodus 12)
 3. This was God's picture of the coming salvation from eternal death through the blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.
- B. Jesus told His disciples that the meal symbolized His sacrifice to come.
- C. Jesus used the meal to point out His final work. (Matthew 26:26-28)
- D. Jesus instructed them to continue the sacrament until He comes again. (Luke 22:19)

II. Related Events.

- A. Foot-washing symbolizes the servanthood of all believers.
 1. John 13:1-5, 12-17.
 2. Jesus led by example, as the humble Servant. (Philippians 2:5-8)
- B. Christ's betrayal by Judas illustrates the fact that not all who call Jesus "Lord" are true believers. (Matthew 7:21-23)
 1. Matthew 26:21-25.
 2. John 13:18-30.
- C. Jesus taught His disciples to have a servant's heart.
 1. Luke 22:24-30.
 2. They argued about which would be the greatest.
 3. Jesus taught that in God's kingdom, the one who served was the greatest, rather than the one being served.
 4. This is the opposite of most human thinking.
 5. We usually measure a man's greatness by his wealth, and by the number of people who work for him.
- D. Jesus told His followers to love one another. (John 13:33-35)

III. Declarations Made by Communion.

- A. We commemorate the truth that Jesus Christ died for us, providing a new covenant between God and man.
- B. We acknowledge that we believe in the gospel and have entered into eternal life, through repentance and faith in God.

- C. We affirm our unity with a local body of believers, who share our faith in Christ the Lord.
- D. We look forward to the second coming of our Lord and Savior.

IV. Importance.

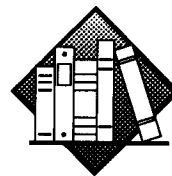
- A. God takes it seriously. (1 Corinthians 11:20-22)
- B. God will judge and deal with those who take it lightly. (1 Corinthians 22:27-30)

- We must remember that we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and that we are part of His body (the church) on the earth.
- To be in covenant means that we are not our own. We are bought with a price.
- "Covenant" means that we no longer live for ourselves, but for Jesus.



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus intends for the ordinance of communion to be a regular practice for believers.
- Communion expresses our covenant with God and with His people.
- God commands us to examine our motives and clear things up with one another, before we partake together.
- Communion is a time for judging ourselves, for restoring relationships, and for strengthening commitments.
- The bread, which must be crushed and brought through the fire, is a symbol of the body of Christ.
- The wine, which is the fruit of the vine, is a symbol of His blood.



Lesson Material

The nation of Israel in the Old Testament is a powerful picture of the New Testament Church. God created and led His people Israel in the same ways that He works in and through His people today. The Old Covenant is a clear picture of the New. In fact, the New Covenant is the fulfillment of the Old. God did not say, "Oops, that plan did not work. I will try plan B." God had His eternal covenant in mind, all through the first 4,000 years of human history before the cross. (Revelation 13:8) God commanded Abraham to offer his only son as a sacrifice on the same mountain on which His Son was sacrificed 2,000 years later for the sins of the world. (Genesis 22:2) God let the children of Jacob (Israel) go into Egypt for 400 years, where they became slaves to the Egyptian rulers. This is a picture of sin. When the people cried out to God, God sent Moses to lead them out of bondage through the Red Sea (blood of Christ). (Exodus 10)

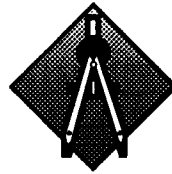
The Passover was particularly significant as a vivid picture of God's eternal redemption plan. The "death

angel" was to come to every house, killing the firstborn children. Every house sprinkled with the blood of a slain lamb was spared from the death sentence. (Exodus 12) The vicarious death of a pure lamb was the picture of God's redemption, which was fulfilled later through the death of Jesus. It was not a permanent price for sin; but it was a covering, which would be a protection, until Christ came to offer the eternal sacrifice of His own blood, thus redeeming all believers of all the ages. The Old Covenant believers looked forward with prophetic faith to the cross. Today, we look with historic faith to the same cross, trusting our lives to the same God Who made us all.

When Jesus was with His disciples, just before He was to become the eternal Passover Lamb, He began to show them the spiritual reality of the breaking of bread. Actually, it had been a practice since at least the days of Abraham, to express kinship and covenant through the breaking of bread and the common cup. To break bread together meant "I am part of you; and I am committed to your success and protection." Jesus linked this covenant principle with the Feast of Passover, which was the symbol of God's deliverance from the bondage of the world and sin through the shed blood.

Jesus told His disciples (and the message is for us today) to continue the practice of communion until His return. We need to remember His death, and the fact that we are His. We also need to be reminded that we are part of one another as the body of Christ; and so, we should forgive one another, heal offenses, and do all that we can to maintain the unity of the faith with fellow believers. This can only be expressed in practical ways in the local church, just as it was practiced in the days of the early church.

When we partake of the Lord's Table, we should examine our motives, as well as our relationships. It is a time for reflecting, for renewing, and for restoring. It is not just a ceremony to make us feel religious. God is able to do great things in our hearts and in our church, when we share the communion with the right spirit.



Methods

Participation

The best way to illustrate communion is to practice it at the end of the class time. Ask the pastor to administer it, or to delegate an elder to represent him. Prepare the class by reminding them that it is for all Christians -- those believers who have been born again through faith and repentance. If anyone is not born again, give them an opportunity to become a Christian before administering the communion.

Then, encourage the group to take a few moments to search their hearts concerning relationships with other believers or family members. (1 Corinthians 11:28) Give them an opportunity to ask forgiveness of each other, and to purpose before God that they will restore a broken relationship at the first opportunity. Teach them to examine their hearts and affirm their covenant with God, before expressing covenant through the Lord's table. Finally, encourage them to believe for spiritual blessing and healing, as they partake as a group with faith and pure motives.

Why Study the Bible?

Volume 7

Lesson 5



Bible References

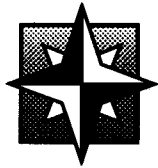
2 Timothy 2:15

2 Timothy 3:15-17

Psalms 119

Psalms 19

Ephesians 6:17



Theme

The Bible reveals God's character, His plan for mankind, and His will for our lives; and it provides comfort and hope to the believer.



Scripture Reading

Psalms 119:1-16

1 *"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.*

2 *"Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.*

3 *"They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.*

4 *"Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.*

5 *"O that my ways are directed to keep thy statutes!*

6 *"Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.*

7 *"I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.*

8 *"I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.*

9 *"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.*

10 *"With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.*

11 *"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

12 *"Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes.*

13 *"With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.*

14 *"I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.*

15 *"I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.*

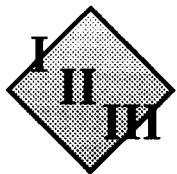
16 *"I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word."*



Memory Verse

Psalms 119:165-166

"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. LORD, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments."



Outline

I. Why Study the Bible?

A. It is essential spiritual food for the believer. (1 Peter 2:2; 1 Corinthians 3:2)

B. It is the source of truth and freedom.

1. John 8:31-32.
2. Psalms 119:30, 142.
3. John 17:17.

C. It reveals God's will.

1. Salvation.
 - a. 2 Peter 3:9.
 - b. 1 Timothy 2:4.
2. Fullness of the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18-21)
3. Sanctification. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4)
4. Submission. (1 Peter 2:16-17)
5. Suffering.
 - a. Philippians 1:29-30.
 - b. Philippians 3:8-11.

D. It helps us grow.

1. 1 Peter 2:2-3.
2. 2 Timothy 3:16.
3. Jeremiah 15:16.

E. It convicts and corrects us. (Hebrews 4:12)

F. It is our greatest weapon against temptation. (Ephesians 6:17)

II. Bible Study Tools.

A. Bible dictionary.

1. Explains words as used in the Bible.
2. Gives background and cultural information related to them.

B. Bible concordance.

1. Alphabetical index of words in the Bible.
2. Points to verses in which those words are used.
3. A great help in finding a verse, when you know its wording, but you cannot recall its specific location.
4. Some, such as "Strong's" and "Young's," also include Greek and

Hebrew dictionaries.

C. Cross-reference Bible.

1. Footnotes to relate one verse to others on the same subject.
2. Or, ones using the same word(s).

D. Various Bible types.

1. Versions -- word-by-word translations.
2. Modern translations -- updated terminology; removal of archaic terms.
3. Paraphrases -- not translations; commentary inserted into the text.
4. Amplified versions of the Bible -- expository commentary inserted into text.
5. All of these can lend deeper understanding to many passages of scripture.

E. Bible commentaries.

1. These are the study notes of Bible scholars.
2. They examine:
 - a. Proofs.
 - b. Doctrine.
 - c. History.
 - d. Meanings of Bible books, verses and stories.
3. The notes of Bible scholars should not be regarded as the inspired Word of God; they are merely commentaries, or interpretations of those scholars.

F. A Bible resource person.

1. Someone that you can trust, who has studied the scriptures.
2. Someone who will help you to understand the Bible.

G. We are commanded to study the Word.
(1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 3:16)

III. Bible Study Techniques.

A. Read the Word regularly, so that you know it. (1 Timothy 4:13)

B. Memorize the Word for quick recall. (Psalms 119:11-15)

C. Meditate on what you read. (Psalms 119:15, 23, 48, 97, 148)

1. Ask yourself "who, what, when, where, why, and how" questions about what you have read.
2. Seek the Holy Spirit's guidance and wisdom, in order to apply the Word. (John 16:13)
3. Learn to relate what you have read to everyday situations.

D. Obey what you have discovered. (Psalms 119:59-60)



Spiritual Truths

- The Bible is God's Word.
- God anointed special men to write His perfect Word for mankind. (2 Peter 1:21)
- The Bible was written by over 40 anointed men; but the Holy Ghost inspired them, so that it was accurate and perfect.
- The people spoken of in the Bible were real people who have lived on earth during the past 6,000 years.
- The Bible is perfect in the original text; but the translations may not be.

- We are commanded by God to study His Word daily and let it be a light to our hearts.
- When we study God's Word, we are better able to see life from the standpoint of wisdom, and more likely to make right decisions.
- The Bible reminds us that the highest purpose of life is to know and love God personally.
- There are many helps that are available to enable us to better understand the Word of God.
- The Holy Spirit will help us to understand the Word, as we place it in our hearts.



Lesson Material

About a century ago, the famous French atheist and philosopher Voltaire said, "In one hundred years, the Bible will be outdated and virtually forgotten by humanity; and everyone will be enlightened by atheism." Later, on his deathbed, he screamed in pain and terror, as he began to feel the flames of hell. Today, in the very room where he publicly denounced the Bible, large machines are printing thousands of Bibles each year.

Jesus said, *"Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away."* (Mark 13:31) Satan has possessed many wicked leaders throughout history, who have tried to destroy the Bible; but, God will never let that happen. During the days of Israel's divided kingdom, all of the

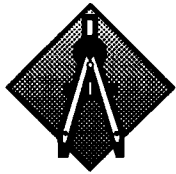
kings of Israel, and some of the kings of Judah, were wicked. King Mannasseh was extremely evil; and he tried to destroy all of the copies of God's Word. But one copy was preserved. Years later, under King Josiah, Hilkiah the priest found that one copy of the law of God; and he read it to the king and to the people. There was a great revival, and many copies were made. Today, there are some nations which outlaw the Word of God. Communist governments imprison, torture, and sometimes kill Christians, just for owning a Bible. Yet, thousands of Bibles are being smuggled into these nations each year; and thousands of people are becoming zealous and joyful Christians every day. Some of the world's greatest revivals are occurring in nations which hate and fear God's Word.

God's Word is not to be taken lightly. It is given to us as a light to shine in the darkness, so that we might see a glimpse of the power of God Himself and the glory of His Son, Jesus. As we read His Word, we are empowered with its wisdom and inspired with its historical accounts. The more we read and meditate on it, the more aware we are of the reality of the supernatural world. We see, repeatedly, that no matter how much the wicked prosper, they will always lose in the end. Also, no matter how much the righteous suffer, they are always winners in the end.

No matter how many times we may read a verse of scripture (or a chapter or a book of scripture), God will reveal new insights to us. Every time that we read it, we must be open to His Spirit to work in us. That is because the Bible is not written just to the mind of man. It is written to the spirit. (John 6:63) We may not understand everything with our minds, but the Word can still minister to our spirits. Conversely, ungodly intellectuals can

study it for a lifetime, and never comprehend it. As Paul said, they are *"ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."* (2 Timothy 3:7)

There are some marvelous helps that are available as we study God's Word, such as concordances, various translations, commentaries, Bible dictionaries, paraphrased versions, and many more. These helps allow us to gain from the insight that others have had revealed to them about what the scripture has to say. They are tools that we can use to better understand God's Word.



Methods

Read the Book

Select a passage from the Word and give a short background; and then read it as a dramatic reading. Note particularly

Psalms 119, which is not only the largest chapter in the Bible, but which also mentions the Word in some way, in every verse. It is a celebration of love for the scriptures. As time allows, read as much as you can. To make it even more effective, quote a section of scripture that relates to love for the Word.

Comment on Commentaries

Bring to class a commentary, a complete concordance, a Bible dictionary, and a couple of good translations. Talk about what they are for and how to use them. Talk about the need to study the Word of God, and the need to make it real in the lives of the students. Have someone give a personal testimony about a specific illustration of the benefits of prayerfully reading the Word daily.

Walking in Holiness

Volume 7

Lesson 6



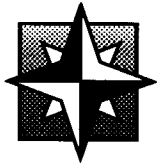
Bible References

Exodus 15:11

Isaiah 6:3

Leviticus 11:44-45

Romans 6:11-14



Theme

The Bible teaches us to live a holy life in this world, which means being dedicated and surrendered to God, and acting accordingly.



Scripture Reading

Psalms 15:1-5

1 "LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

2 "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.

3 "He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

4 "In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.

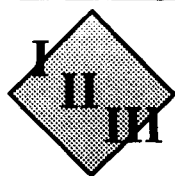
5 "He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved."



Memory Verse

1 Peter 1:15-16

"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, be ye holy; for I am holy."



Outline

I. What Is Holiness?

A. Holiness relates to the sanctification of believers.

1. To be "sanctified" means to be "set apart" for God.
2. 2 Corinthians 6:16-18.
3. A vessel which was "sanctified" was to be used only for God's purposes, and could not be used for anything secular.
4. To be "sanctified" means that we recognize that we do not have a right to defile our bodies with sin. (1 Corinthians 6:19)

B. Condition of the heart: Purity. (1 Thessalonians 3:13)

1. Thinking God's way.
2. Intent on living God's way.
3. Rejecting sin's alluring pleasures.
4. To be impure implies a mixture -- motives to serve God are mixed with selfish and sinful desires.

C. Character: In God's image.

1. Psalms 15.
2. Psalms 119:1-3.
3. Colossians 3:12-17.

II. Who Is Holy?

A. God, Who sets the standard.

1. He is perfectly holy.
 - a. Deuteronomy 32:4.
 - b. Isaiah 6:3.

- c. Isaiah 43:14-15.
- d. Revelation 4:8.
- e. Revelation 15:4.

2. His holiness is majestic and awesome.

- a. Exodus 15:11.
- b. 1 Samuel 6:19-20.

B. Jesus.

1. Jesus imparts holiness to His disciples.

- a. Hebrews 10:10.
- b. Hebrews 12:10.
- c. Luke 1:74-75.

2. It is the way wherein believers walk. (Isaiah 35:8)

3. Jesus never sinned. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

C. The Holy Spirit.

1. Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30.
2. Romans 8:13-15.

III. Why Should I Care?

A. God commands holiness in His creation.

1. Leviticus 11:44-45.
2. 1 Peter 1:16.

B. Holy living shows reverence for God. (2 Corinthians 7:1)

C. It is required, if we want to see God. (Hebrews 12:14)

D. It saves us from judgment. (2 Peter 3:11)

E. It is rewarded.

1. Exodus 19:5-6.
2. 2 Corinthians 6:16-18.

IV. How Do I Obtain Personal Holiness?

- A. Be prepared. (1 Peter 1:13-16)
- B. Submit to God. (Exodus 19:5-6)
- C. Read the Word, in order to determine God's requirements. (Psalms 119:105)
- D. Choose to make God's convictions your own.
 - 1. Psalms 15.
 - 2. Psalms 119:1-3.
 - 3. Colossians 3:12-17.
- E. Respond to God's discipline. (Hebrews 12:10)
- F. Let God help you.
 - 1. 1 Thessalonians 3:13.
 - 2. Luke 1:74-75.

V. When Does It Show?

- A. In heartfelt worship.
 - 1. Psalms 99:9.
 - 2. 1 Chronicles 16:29.
- B. In witness to the lost.
 - 1. 1 Peter 2:9.
 - 2. Philippians 2:14-15.
- C. In purity of life.
 - 1. 2 Corinthians 7:1.
 - 2. Philippians 1:27-28.
- D. In our value system.
 - 1. Ephesians 4:22-24.
 - 2. Romans 6:11-14.

- E. In works for God. (2 Timothy 2:21)



Spiritual Truths

- Holiness is a condition of the heart, and not just the mind.
- God alone is perfectly holy; and His holiness is majestic.
- Holiness is God's supreme attribute. The cherubim do not stand around His throne saying, "Love, love, love."
- Holiness is imparted to believers by the redemptive work of Jesus on the cross.
- God commands each of us to seek holiness.
- We do not become holy by trying to be good. We become holy by surrendering to the Lordship of Jesus.
- We obtain holiness both by the supernatural impartation of the Spirit and by seeking after God and His will.
- Holiness is more a matter of what we are than of what we do; but it will be clearly seen in our deeds and attitudes.



Lesson Material

Holiness does not consist of rigidly following a list of rules and regulations. True holiness is a condition of the heart -- the foundation of character in the person who is honestly seeking after God. A person truly committed to Christ will

demonstrate that commitment through thinking and living according to God's standards, in contrast to the worldly thoughts and actions around him.

Holiness is not a set of rules that man makes up. But God does have a set of rules that we need to follow. Those rules can be found in the scripture. The other way that we are able to exhibit the outward signs of holiness is to examine what those around us are doing and ask the question, "Is this what God would have me to do?" If the answer is "No," then we must come to the realization that this is not a way to exhibit holiness.

We must also come to terms with the concept that we cannot obtain holiness on our own. Only through the shed blood of Jesus can we obtain holiness in our lives. Only Jesus is truly holy. We can do good works, dress right, and say all of the right thing; but we will not obtain holiness, if our heart is not in the right place.

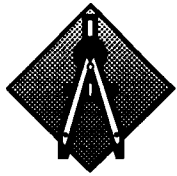
"Legalism" is the effort to become holy through works. We try to be good enough for God. But we are born sinners. It is not our nature to live in holiness, because we are sinners both by nature and by choice. Religion is basically men's efforts to find God and holiness. We can never be good enough, because our sin nature makes us selfish and rebellious. (Romans 3:23) We need Jesus to be Lord of our lives. By seeking Him, we realize that our world does not center on ourselves. We repent of sin. That is, we turn around. Instead of focusing life on what we want, we begin to live for Him. We see that we belong to Him.

When God established Israel's priesthood, He taught them to sanctify certain pots and other vessels. That is, they were set aside for the exclusive use of the priests in the temple. To sanctify a priest

meant to wash him and all of his garments, and to be sure that he was undefiled. He was to be clean and set apart exclusively for God.

Our human thinking tends to get things in reverse. We look at holiness in terms of standards of conduct, and try to live up to them. But holiness flows out of a pure relationship with God. When we see ourselves as His property and His servants, we are focused on the things that please Him. With this focus, we are not attracted to the defiling things of the world. It is only when we get our eyes on self and things that we are lured into defiling our minds and bodies with evil. The more we worship, read the Bible, pray, and fellowship with genuine believers, the more we can easily focus our thoughts on God -- and the more easily we can resist the temptations to sin.

God says that we are to be holy, just as He is holy. (1 Peter 1:16) That is, God is pure in the integrity of Who He is. He is always true to Himself and consistent with His Word. We need to be consistent in our speech, our actions and our thoughts. Then, as we walk in obedience, God will bless us by helping us to walk closer to Him, as we strive to obtain the holiness that He has for us. We can never live a righteous life by focusing on self. However, the more we keep God in our thinking, the easier it is to live right.



Methods

Example

Try this exercise. Tell the students to try to think for a whole minute without thinking about toads, warts, or yogurt. They can imagine any kind of animal or food; just do not picture toads, warts, or yogurt in their minds. Time them. Did anyone go a minute without visualizing the objects that you just created a focus on? No. In fact, they are more likely to visualize a cup of toad yogurt, or a toad eating yogurt.

That is why it is important for us to stay focused on God, and to deliberately include spiritual thoughts in our thinking process. We cannot live holy lives, unless our minds and hearts are focused on God and on eternal values.

Contrast

Read 1 Peter 3:3-4. Note that some people equate holiness with strict avoidance of wearing jewelry, make-up, or certain kinds of clothes. Yet the message of the apostle here is clearly that holiness is not a matter of what you do or do not wear, as much as it is a matter of the heart. Remind them that we are not to condemn those who are honestly seeking holiness; but we are to realize that the key is our relationship to God, and not our wardrobe.

The Jehovah's Witnesses

Volume 7

Lesson 7



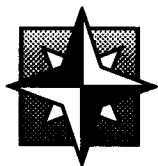
Bible References

John 10:30, 33

John 5:16-18

Matthew 5:29-30

John 20:24-29



Theme

Jehovah's Witnesses are deceived by a cult that denies the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ and enslaves them to a false trust in dead works.



Scripture Reading

Philippians 3:7-9

7 *"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.*

8 *"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,*

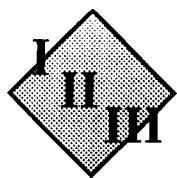
9 *"And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:"*



Memory Verse

John 2:1

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."



Outline

I. History.

A. Charles Taze Russell.

1. Born in 1852, in Pennsylvania.
2. At age 20, he began a home Bible study, although he had no formal religious training.
3. Charles disagreed with the biblical doctrines of hell and of the deity of Christ.
4. He founded the "Watchtower Bible and Tract Society," -- the name of his group of followers, to whom he was now "pastor."
5. His early teachings included:
 - a. Jesus Christ had already returned to earth invisibly in 1874.
 - b. The "times of the gentiles" would end in 1914, and the millennial kingdom of Christ would immediately begin.
6. After 1914 passed with no change in world conditions, the date was moved numerous times throughout the early-to-mid 1900s.

B. Today.

1. Dates are no longer (at least officially) set for the end of the world.
2. There are over 2.3 million (1981 numbers) Jehovah's Witnesses around the globe.
3. They are now called "Jehovah's Witnesses."

II. Sources of Authority.

A. Bible.

1. Accepted "in so far as it is correctly translated."
2. People are discouraged from reading it.

B. Studies in the Scriptures.

1. Written by Russell.
2. Essentially his version of the scriptures, arranged in topical sequence.
3. Members are instructed to study these works, as they provide all of Russell's insights into the Bible and "correct" or "clarify" difficult passages ("difficult" to the Jehovah's Witnesses, since the Bible disagrees with Russell's doctrines).

C. Watchtower publications.

1. Watchtower magazine.
2. Awake magazine.
3. Many books and pamphlets.

D. New World Translation.

1. Jehovah's Witnesses' own version of the Bible.
2. Translated by a secret committee from unknown manuscripts.
3. Printed for distribution in 1961.

III. Beliefs.

A. God.

1. Named "Jehovah" -- their only name for God.
2. No Trinity. They claim that Christianity has three gods, or that Christians claim that Jesus IS the Father, an illogical concept.

3. God is simple, logical, and easy to figure out.
4. God becomes a taskmaster, demanding obedience and perfection from His Witnesses.

B. Jesus Christ.

1. Jesus is a created being; a perfect man.
2. Jesus is the final personification of Michael the Archangel from the Old Testament.
3. He became a god -- they translate John 1:1 as "the Word was a god."
4. He died on the cross for our sins -- sins up to the point of "conversion."
5. Jesus did not rise bodily, but in spirit only.

C. Holy Spirit.

1. "God's active force."
2. Not God the Spirit.
3. Not a personal being.

D. Man.

1. Jesus died to enable man to be perfect, rather than to cover man with His own perfection.
2. Once a Witness falls, he/she is lost and unrecoverable.

E. Salvation.

1. Christ's ransom pays for sins up to the point of "conversion."
2. Those who become Witnesses must earn their own salvation.
3. The unrighteous dead merely cease to exist. No one goes to hell.
4. The righteous (Jehovah's Witnesses only) are recreated in spirit from Jehovah's memory at the resurrection.

5. 144,000 select Witnesses will be in Heaven.
6. Other Witnesses will remain on a renewed earth, to rule and enjoy its pleasures.

IV. Contrast with Biblical Christianity.

A. Bible's authority.

1. Proven by all methods available to be accurate and truer to its original than any other ancient work.
2. No other authority can supersede or add to the Bible. (Revelation 22:18-19)
3. Problems with the New World Translation.
 - a. Atrocious translation, according to true linguistic experts.
 - b. No one who served on the translating committee has been identified; and so their credentials are not verifiable.

B. God.

1. God is a Trinity -- three recognizable Persons in one indivisible Being.
 - a. Their works are the same.
 - b. Their power is the same.
 - 1) Galatians 1:1 -- The Father raised Jesus from the dead.
 - 2) John 2:19-21 -- Jesus raised Himself from the dead.
 - 3) Romans 8:11 -- The Spirit raised Jesus from the dead.
 - 4) Acts 2:32 -- God raised Jesus from the dead.
2. God is ONE.
 - a. Deuteronomy 6:4.
 - b. Mark 12:29.

C. Jesus Christ.

1. Jesus is God.

- a. John 1:1.
- b. John 5:16-18, 23.
- c. Hebrews 1:3.
- 2. Jesus is NOT an angel. (Hebrews 1:4)
- 3. Jesus is worshipped.
 - a. Hebrews 1:6.
 - b. Matthew 2:11; 8:2; 9:18; 14:13, etc.
- 3. Jesus is eternal.
 - a. John 1:1.
 - b. John 8:57-59.
- 4. Jesus rose bodily from the grave.
 - a. John 20:24-29.
 - b. Luke 24:39.

D. Holy Spirit.

- 1. The Holy Spirit is God.
 - a. Acts 5:3-4.
 - b. 1 John 5:7.
- 2. He is a Person.
 - a. He can be lied to. (Acts 5:1-3)
 - b. He speaks and calls to men. (Acts 13:1-2)

E. Man.

- 1. Man cannot be righteous on his own. (Romans 3:22-23)
- 2. Man can always be forgiven, if he admits his sin and brings it to the cross. (1 John 2:1-2)

F. Salvation.

- 1. Jesus died to pay for our sins once for all.
 - a. Hebrews 10:10.
 - b. Hebrews 9:25-28.
- 2. Salvation is by God's grace alone, apportioned to all who call on Him in faith.
 - a. Ephesians 2:8-9.
 - b. Acts 4:8-12.
 - c. Romans 10:13.
- 3. There is an eternal hell to be avoided.
 - a. Matthew 10:28.

- b. Matthew 5:29-30.
- c. Revelation 20:11-15.

V. Witnessing To a Witness.

A. Do not use the New World Translation.

- 1. Witnesses are taught to be logical.
- 2. Use their logic to encourage them to examine a "verifiable translation done by men whose names and credentials are well known" (their words), such as the New International Version or the King James Version.

B. Never pay for or take the publications they offer.

C. Be honest and loving -- Jesus died for them, too.

D. Jesus is unique -- the Only Begotten of God; God Incarnate; THE Truth and Life; the ONLY way of salvation.

E. God has fully provided for our salvation. We do not need to do anything to receive it, except to accept His Son as our Lord and Savior.



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus Christ is not a created being.
- Jesus is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father.
- Jesus Christ did rise bodily from the grave.

- Jesus is God the Son, as well as the Son of God.
- All revelation and inspiration that God gives to man must line up with the Word of God that we already have.
- Jesus told us that in the last days there would be those who claimed to know Jesus, but who would teach a perverted doctrine.
- God has fully provided for our salvation through the cross.
- We must repent and believe; we cannot earn our way to heaven by our works.
- Religions are birthed in the egos of men, rather than the heart of God.



Lesson Material

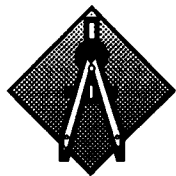
The most important difference between the Jehovah's Witnesses and biblical Christian faith is the doctrine of the deity of Christ. Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Jesus Christ is "The Son of God;" but Christians believe that Jesus is also "God the Son" -- and there is the conflict. If we do not embrace both of these in our understanding of Christ, we have missed the biblical teaching of Who He really is.

When a Jehovah's Witness says that Jesus is the "Son of God," he is declaring that He became a creation of God. Biblical Christianity stands on the belief that prior to Christ's conception within the womb of Mary, He was the second Member of the Godhead Who existed eternally as "God

the Word." It is at this juncture that conflict between the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Christians arises.

Perhaps using the terminology of "Eternal Son" introduces some confusion to the Jehovah Witness mind. This can be understood, especially since the Bible does not teach that Jesus is the "Eternal Son." Prior to coming to earth to be born of woman, Jesus was the "Logos" (John 1:1); and, when His earthly ministry was completed, He resumed His eternal title as stated in Revelation 19:13 -- *"...and his name is called the Word of God."* In John 17, Jesus foretold that He would take up the glory that He had voluntarily laid down; and we know that if Jesus did not share eternal glory with the Godhead, this part of His prayer would have been inappropriate. (Isaiah 48:11) The Jehovah's Witnesses miss the whole concept that is clearly explained by the apostle Paul in Philippians 2:5-11 -- that Jesus emptied Himself of His glory, in order to become our sacrifice for sin.

The Jehovah's Witnesses teach that the Trinity belief is making a "three-headed monster" out of God. We as Christians would agree that this biblical concept is "complicated;" but that does not give us permission to conclude that this means that the Godhead is a freak or a monster. 1 Corinthians 13:12 makes known to us that all is not clear to us now -- we "know in part," and so, some things are complicated to our finite mind. Hebrews 11:6 tells us that we must express faith to please God, and that faith helps us to accept what our minds find "complicated," but clearly defined by scripture.



Methods

Consider the Source

Discuss the information, using a blackboard or handout sheet so that the students can follow along with you. Whenever possible, display samples of materials that you have that have been distributed or printed by the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Take some time to demonstrate from historical records the kind of man Charles Taze Russell was. He was not a Greek scholar -- although he claimed to be, until he was exposed in court. He was not a

qualified pastor. He simply wanted wealth and power, which he obtained by developing his own religion. He had no idea that so many people would follow his teaching, because he taught that only 144,000 people on earth would be saved. This, along with many other ideas, had to be changed, because things did not happen as predicted.

Role-playing

Have two people play the roles of two Jehovah's Witnesses who come to convert a Christian. Have them really push the issues of the Jehovah's Witnesses; and then, have the Christian respond with the Word of God. In the end, have one of the two Witnesses stay and give his life to the Lord.

Mormonism

Volume 7

Lesson 8



Bible References

Genesis 3:4-5

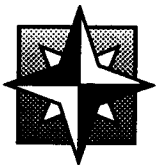
John 14:6

Isaiah 43:10-11; 44:6-8

Romans 1:22-25

2 Peter 2

1 John 4:1-6



Theme

Mormon doctrine and beliefs are in direct conflict with the inspired truth that God has revealed to us in His Word.



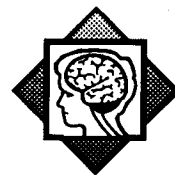
Scripture Reading

2 Peter 2:1-3

1 *"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that brought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.*

2 *"And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.*

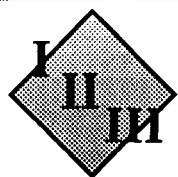
3 *"And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."*



Memory Verse

1 Timothy 2:5

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."



Outline

I. History.

A. Joseph Smith.

1. Born December 23, 1805, in Vermont.
2. His family moved to Palmyra, New York in 1817.
3. Joseph's first "vision."
 - a. Revival broke out in the churches of Palmyra in 1830.
 - b. Joseph, confused by infighting among Protestant denominations, asked "God" for guidance.
 - c. A "personage" appeared to Joseph and proclaimed all of the churches wrong, declaring that they had perverted the true gospel.
4. Joseph's second "vision."
 - a. The "angel" Moroni appeared to Joseph in 1823, to tell him that he had been chosen to restore the true gospel to the world.
 - b. Joseph was taken to a hill near his home' and there, he supposedly unearthed some golden plates. He also found some magic glasses, through which he could translate the writing on the plates.

B. Beginnings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

1. Joseph published the "translation" in 1830. This volume is now known as The Book of Mormon.

2. Joseph began his first congregation with six people who believed his story.
3. The congregation grew; and Joseph published a written account of his revelations in a volume, now called Doctrine and Covenants.
4. The group moved to Kirkland, Ohio -- near Cleveland.
5. Further persecution drove the group to Missouri, and then to a town called Nauvoo, Illinois.
6. A town newspaper there criticized Joseph; and so, he burned down the newspaper building and was promptly arrested.
7. While Joseph was in jail in Carthage, Illinois, a mob stormed the jail and killed Joseph and his brother, Hyrum.

C. Today.

1. The Mormon church numbers over 4 million people.
2. Their members include many entertainment figures and wealthy businessmen.
3. They have large financial holdings.
4. The Mormon Church holds large amounts of stock in various other interests in banking and news media.

II. Characteristics.

A. Structure.

1. The President is the single head over the Mormon Church; and he is considered more authoritative than any written or historical authorities in Mormonism.
2. The Twelve Apostles follow, similar to a board of directors.

3. Melchizedek Priests are the high spiritual leaders of the church.

B. Functions.

1. Family-oriented; close-knit.
2. Promotion of good moral values, similar to Christianity.
3. Security and provision for their own makes it very hard to leave.
4. Members just out of high school are often sent on evangelistic trips to other cities, to go door-to-door and spread Mormonism.
5. World-famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir.
6. Brigham Young University.

III. Sources of Authority.

- A. The Bible is accepted "in so far as it is correctly translated."

- B. The Book of Mormon.

1. Joseph's translation of the golden plates.
2. It tells stories of prophets and communities of displaced Jews in ancient North America that were visited by Christ, prior to His coming to Bethlehem.
3. "Mormon" was the name of the last of these prophets; and the book is named after him.

- C. Doctrine and Covenants.

1. A recording of 138 "revelations" that Joseph received.
2. Source of many of Mormonism's unusual doctrines, such as baptism for the dead.

- D. The Pearl of Great Price.

1. A collection of Joseph's writings.

2. Book of Moses -- much like the first six chapters of Genesis.
3. Book of Abraham -- another "translation" that Joseph made of a papyrus that he had purchased from a traveling sideshow, purporting it to be a record of Abraham's leadership in Egypt.
4. Portions from "History of Joseph Smith" -- an autobiography.
5. Articles of Faith -- known to every Mormon.

- E. Living Prophets.

1. Have power to supersede all former revelations, to assure the Church stays up-to-date.
2. 1890 -- received revelation (under United States government pressure) that polygamy was no longer needed.
3. 1978 -- received further revelation that black people could now join the Mormon priesthood.

IV. Beliefs.

- A. God.

1. No Trinity. Instead, there are many gods, because Mormon men can evolve into gods.
2. God is a glorified man.
3. God is still progressing and changing and learning.
4. Infinite regression: God is a "created" being Himself, created by a previous "god" who was created by a previous "god," and so on, to eternity past.
5. He has a body of flesh and bones.
6. God is not omnipresent.
7. God is essentially made in man's image.
8. God is large enough to provide an authority figure, but small enough to figure out and manipulate, as

need be.

B. Jesus Christ.

1. Jesus is a created being, who created all else that we know as reality.
2. Lucifer is Jesus' "spirit brother" -- the "second-born" of God.
3. Jesus achieved godhood by his obedience and devotion.
4. He was born of the Virgin Mary after intercourse with the Father (which would cause her to no longer be a virgin).
5. He died on the cross, rose from the dead, and will come back again to earth, to set up his kingdom.

C. Holy Spirit.

1. Personage with no body.
2. Not omnipresent.
3. Not indwelling anyone.
4. An emanation of Deity, like electricity.

D. Man.

1. Pre-existent spirits.
2. Eternal progression -- men can become gods.
3. Women must attach themselves to a man, in order to share in heaven.
4. "As man is, God was. As God is, man may become."

E. Salvation.

1. Man's sinful condition is due to his acts of sin, rather than Adam's fall.
2. Adam fell, in order to bless men with the ability to be gods.
3. General salvation.
 - a. Provided by Jesus' atonement at the cross.
 - b. Applies to all men -- no one is condemned to eternal punishment (no hell).

4. Individual salvation.

- a. Attained only by Mormons who obey all laws and ordinances of the church.
- b. Achieved only through Joseph Smith's intervention for the applicant.
- c. "If you will believe in your heart and confess with your mouth Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph was a prophet, and that Brigham is his successor, you shall be saved in the kingdom of God." (Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, 6:229).

5. Three divisions of heaven.

- a. The Celestial Kingdom, where Joseph and loyal Mormons will rule and be gods.
- b. The Terrestrial, where misguided religionists and fallen Mormons will be.
- c. The Telestial, where all unbelievers will be.

V. Contrast With Biblical Christianity.

A. The Bible's authority.

1. Proven by all methods available to be accurate and truer to its original than any other ancient work.
2. The only source of written authority from God. (Revelation 22:18-19)
3. Curse on any who would add to it. (Proverbs 30:5-6)
4. Problems with the Book of Mormon.
 - a. It has had over 3000 changes since its initial printing, because of mistakes and contradictions.
 - b. It often contradicts itself and other works of Mormonism.

- c. None of the cities listed in it has ever been found or even mentioned anywhere else.
- d. No genuine inscriptions of Hebrew have ever been found in North America.
- e. No Golden Plates are to be found.
- f. No artifact of any kind that would relate to this civilization has ever been found.

B. God.

- 1. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the only God.
 - a. Isaiah 43:10-11.
 - b. Isaiah 44:6-8.
- 2. God is a Trinity. (1 John 5:7)
- 3. God never changes. (Malachi 3:6)
- 4. God is Spirit. (John 4:24)

C. Jesus Christ.

- 1. Jesus is God.
 - a. John 1:1, 14.
 - b. Hebrews 1:3.
- 2. Jesus is the only means of salvation.
 - a. John 14:6.
 - b. John 20:31.
 - c. Acts 4:8-12.

VI. Witnessing to a Mormon.

A. Use the Bible.

- 1. It is well-proven, accepted, and historically accurate.
- 2. It is the Word of God.

B. Joseph Smith's claims and writings are non-verifiable and contradictory.

C. Godly faith is based on the unchanging Word and an unchanging God, and not on the continual upheavals and modifications of man.



Spiritual Truths

- God is a Trinity.
- God is not a man, that He should lie. (Numbers 23:19)
- Some cults are clearly the product of the vain imaginations and fantasies of deluded people, who have rebelled against God and His church.
- Pseudo-Christian cults claim to be (and think that they are) Christian.
- False prophets use religion to get power, wealth, or pleasure for themselves.
- Religions are man's attempts to find God and truth.
- The Bible is God's revelation to man; and it is perfectly true.
- God never changes -- He is eternally complete and perfect.
- Jesus is the only way to God. (John 14:6)
- There is only one God; and you are not Him.
- The Mormons exchange God's glory for man's; and they are lost. (Romans 1:21-23)
- Salvation is by God's grace alone.
- Jesus is the only begotten Son of God -- God Incarnate.



Lesson Material

To understand a movement, it is helpful to know something about the person who initiated it. Modern Mormons do not like to talk much about the movement's founder, because there is much historical evidence that he was lazy, immoral, illiterate, greedy, and rebellious. His "golden tablets" were never seen by anyone; and there is no shred of evidence that any of the battles or cultures he describes in his "Book of Mormon" tale ever existed. In fact, he describes many things which were either not invented yet or were not brought to America, until centuries later.

Joseph Smith came from a superstitious family, well-known for their zeal in hunting for buried treasure, and for their immoral living. He combined terms which he heard as a boy, such as "order of Melchizedek," with the fantasies of ancient battles envisioned as he gazed out over the family farm; and thus, he invented a religion. He eventually persuaded a few people to finance his book, which was basically a "new" Bible; and he used the power of the printed word to gain a large following. He became very wealthy; and he eventually had about 48 wives. He was shot by an angry mob while still a young man; but this only served to make him a "martyr" in the eyes of his followers.

The Mormon church today is one of the wealthiest corporations in America. Most of the tithe of its people goes to the organization, because the pastors work with no pay; and thousands of young people give two years of their lives as

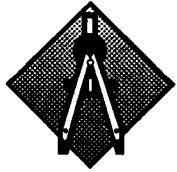
"missionaries," diligently spreading the cult at the expense of their families. The people are generally nice, sincere people with good moral values; but they have been deceived into a false religion, which denies the basic truths of the Bible and gives false hope of immortality and godhood.

The doctrinal beliefs of Mormonism are diametrically opposed to orthodox Christianity. These doctrines can best be summed up by two concepts that the Mormons have not fully considered or explained biblically.

The first conflict between Christianity and Mormonism is stated in Deuteronomy 6:4 -- "*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God {is} one LORD.*" Christians believe there is only one eternal God. That concept is known as "monotheism." Mormons will try to say that they are not "polytheists," because they worship only "one God." However, by definition, polytheism is the belief in the existence of more than one god. Since every male Mormon believes that through his priesthood he is destined to become a god, he is by definition polytheistic. This is a direct violation of the scriptural revelation of the one true eternal God. (Isaiah 44:8)

Another difficulty that we as Christians have with the Latter-Day Saints is one of elementary common sense. It is stated in the argument of infinite regression. The prophet of the Mormons, Joseph Smith, taught "God Himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man." Here we have the argument of infinite regression. If God was once as we now are, then someone had to bring Him into existence; and if that god was once a man, then someone had to bring him into existence; and thus, we infinitely regress. This could be true, unless we arrive at a "god" who

had no beginning and created all other things. This is the God revealed in scripture. (Psalms 90:2; Malachi 3:6)



Methods

Role-playing

Recruit a team to play Mormon missionaries for the class. Have them

familiarize themselves with Mormon doctrine enough to try to “convert” a single individual. (Note that the Mormons work in pairs, because this gives them a strong advantage in a debate.) Try to get as much debate as possible going, so that the students can see in action the need to defend their Christian faith. They also need to see how important it is to know the Word of God, so that they can defend it against the subtle attack of the cults.

Review 2 Corinthians 11:4. What is meant by the term, “another Jesus?”

Understanding Islam

Volume 7

Lesson 9



Bible References

Genesis 16:1-4

Genesis 16:8-12, 15

Romans 9:6-9

Matthew 17:1-2, 5

John 5:17-18

John 10:30



Theme

Islam is a false religion that controls millions of people. It is a man-made system of beliefs, which denies the deity of Jesus Christ and leads to destruction.



Scripture Reading

Genesis 17:18-21

18 *"And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!"*

19 *"And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him."*

20 *"And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation."*

21 *"But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year."*

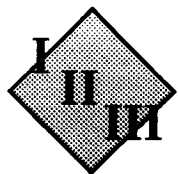


Memory Verse

Acts 4:12

"Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under

heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."



Outline

I. History.

A. Mohammed, the founder.

1. Born in 570 AD in Mecca, in what is now Saudi Arabia.
2. He was married to a wealthy, older woman; and he spent his time thinking and contemplating.
3. He never liked the pagan, polytheistic beliefs of fellow Arabs.
4. He was influenced by both the Jews and Christians, who had temples and churches in the area at the time. (His determination that there was one God probably came from this influence.)
5. He was generous, committed, intelligent, and a great leader; but he was also known for great cruelty, vengeance, and sexual lust.
6. At age 40, he received a "vision" of the angel Gabriel, who had him memorize a short poem. Fearing that he was possessed, he wanted to jump off a cliff; but he was stopped by another angel, who called him an "apostle of God."
7. His wife and other family members encouraged him in these visions, which he continued to have. Eventually, he shared these visions with others and began to draw a following among the Arabs. He

called this new faith "Islam."

B. Islam.

1. The word means, "Submission to Allah."
2. The religion grew and absorbed more and more Arab tribes. This caused fear among ruling Arab tribes, who made their fortunes from paganism.
3. Pressure from these leaders forced Mohammed to "The Flight," retreating from Mecca to Medina. It occurred on July 6, 622 A.D.; and all Islamic time now dates from that event.
4. As more followers came to Mohammed, he built an army large enough to return and conquer Mecca. He declared Allah as the only God among the Arabs; and he drew millions of them to follow him, uniting the tribes into a powerful force that would rule that area of the world and extend into Europe and North Africa, before subsiding in the Middle Ages.
5. Today, more than 500,000,000 people claim Islam as their religious faith -- nearly one-tenth of the earth's population.
6. Under Islam, a united culture developed among the Arabs, with arts, sciences and learning evolving around Mohammed's teachings.
7. The faith is now split into various factions.
 - a. Shi'ites are considered by Muslims to be a heretical Islamic group, which broke off over the succession process upon Mohammed's death.
 - b. Sufi's are the more mystical, experiential arm of Islam.
 - c. Sunni's are the main division of Islam, far outnumbering the

other sects. This group uses Mohammed's recorded words, along with group feelings and general wisdom, to determine their beliefs and actions.

II. Beliefs.

A. Allah.

1. Allah is the only god. This most important belief is summed up in the Ka'aba, which every Muslim knows and recites, "There is no god but Allah."
2. He is one god.
3. He is impersonal -- not personally knowable. He created the earth and let it go, leaving man on his own.
4. He will be the final judge at the end of time.
5. He is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent.

B. Jesus.

1. Great, sinless prophet; the Messiah.
2. Not sacrificed on the cross. God translated him to heaven, or someone else replaced him on the cross.
3. Virgin-born, but sired by an angel, and not by God.
4. Subordinate to Mohammed.
5. NOT a son or, especially, THE son of God. This idea of Allah having offspring is repulsive to Islam.
6. Neither can we be sons of God.
7. He is returning -- to establish Islam on the earth.

C. Spirit world.

1. "Jinn" is the term for spirits, both good and evil.
2. Angels each have a distinct job.
3. There is no Holy Spirit.

4. Satan is a spirit of evil.

D. Holy writing.

1. The Bible (and Jewish Torah) are incorrect, corrupted by the Jews and Christians to meet their own desires.
2. Koran.
 - a. Book of Mohammed's recorded visions.
 - b. This holds the basis of Islamic doctrine.
3. Hidith -- Mohammed's recorded traditions, actions, and laws to guide behavior and decisions.

E. Faith.

1. The Law (Shari'a).
 - a. This defines Islamic life, down to the proper use of a toothpick.
 - b. Controls all Muslim life.
2. Works (Tawhid).
 - a. A man is justified by his works.
 - b. This is the determining factor of his life.
3. Five Articles of Faith.
 - a. Allah's will cannot be prevented.
 - 1) Shows itself in "Kismet," or fate.
 - 2) Whatever happens is Allah's will (fatalism).
 - b. Scripture -- the holy writings are to be followed.
 - c. Prophets -- Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mohammed, with Mohammed being the last and greatest.
 - d. Last days -- judgment, with Muslims going to Paradise and infidels (non-Muslims) going to hell.
4. Five Pillars of Faith.
(Observances/duties)

- a. Kalima -- "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is the Prophet of Allah." This must be publicly voiced to become a Muslim; and it is repeated often.
- b. Salat -- Prayer is made five times a day toward Mecca.
- c. Zakat -- Alms giving. This is to be one-fortieth of a person's income.
- d. Ramadan -- Fasting from sunrise to sunset, during this holy month.
- e. Hadj -- The pilgrimage to Mecca.
- f. Jihad -- The holy war against infidels. Moslems are honored and promised eternal bliss if they fight infidels (usually Christians), or die fighting them.

F. Salvation.

- 1. Heaven is a paradise, filled with sensual delights.
- 2. Hell is eternal torment in fire for non-Muslims.
- 3. Man's actions determine his destination.
- 4. Man is considered sinful in acts, but not in nature.

G. Other beliefs.

- 1. No priests or religious hierarchy.
- 2. Marriage is required.
 - a. Four wives are allowed, along with unlimited concubines.
 - b. The wives are to be treated equally; but divorce is easy.
- 3. No animals or humans are depicted in Muslim art.
- 4. Each male is to be circumcised.
- 5. Gambling is forbidden.
- 6. Alcoholic beverages are forbidden.
- 7. Eating pork is forbidden.

III. Comparison.

- A. Christianity recognizes the sin nature of man.
 - 1. He cannot save himself by his own actions.
 - 2. Complete holiness is required by God (Hebrews 12:14); and our sin nature ruins forever man's ability to reach this goal himself.
- B. Christianity presents God as a personal, concerned, loving Being consisting of three Persons -- Each identifiable, yet indivisible as one God.
- C. Christianity presents Jesus Christ as a historical, literal Person Who came as God in the flesh, lived a sinless life, died a sacrificial death on a cross for our sins, and was raised to life again.
- D. Questions.
 - 1. If the words of Jesus were not recorded correctly (as Islam teaches), how can Islam determine what kind of Man he was?
 - 2. If they think so highly of Him (and Abraham and Moses, etc.), they should consider the numerous proofs of the inaccuracy of their statements, as recorded in the Bible.



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus is our Savior.
- God's Word says that many will come in the latter days to deceive, and that there will be many false prophets.

- Many people are attracted to the Moslem religion, because they think that they can work their way to eternal, sensual pleasure.
- Allah is not God.
- The God of the Bible is loving and merciful, as well as perfectly just and holy.
- God's Word said that the descendants of Ishmael would become a mighty nation. The Arab tribes, under the influence of Islam, became that great nation.
- We are saved by grace through faith, and not by works. (Ephesians 2:8-9)



Lesson Material

The purpose in studying the religion of Islam is to gain a better understanding of what other people believe. In so doing we can better equip ourselves to witness to them and bring them to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is dangerous to focus too much attention on false religions, because they always appeal to basic human desires, such as pride, lust, or greed. The humanist educators of our day promote "tolerance," because they do not believe that any of the religions are right; and they believe that religion is just the product of man's need for something beyond himself.

Christianity is not just another religion. It is based on the Bible, which is God's Word. It is God's revelation of His plan for mankind; and it shows us the way

to restore relationship with Him and live forever in heaven. It is not birthed out of the egotistic needs of a deluded man, but from God's own heart of love.

Mohammed was a very peculiar person. He was raised in a home, in which he had been exposed to the various religions of the day. There were many gods in his life, but he held the correct belief that there could not be more than one God. He studied Judaism and Christianity along with the others; but he did not find what he was seeking. He became somewhat of a recluse, and he spent much of his time meditating in a cave.

He married an older widow who took care of him financially, so that he could pursue his dreaming and meditating. When he first received his "vision," he was not certain as to its authenticity. He told his wife about it, and she encouraged him. Some scholars believe that she made a decision that it was better to be married to a man of god than to a man who was insane. Therefore, it was to her benefit to encourage him that these were indeed visions from God.

Mohammed never wrote down any of the things that he received in his visions. They were all written by his wife, or by one of his friends. Some contend that these writers added or subtracted words, according to their particular agenda. There is no proof of this; and the Muslim faith staunchly believes that the words are 100% accurate.

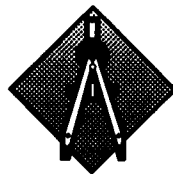
Much of the material on the growth of Islam is covered in the outline above. The only other area that is of significance to point out is the strife that has existed between the Sunni and the Shi'ite sects. This strife is basically over doctrine. As Christians, we are aware of how doctrinal differences can bring about dispute. (1

Timothy 1:4) If we study the differences between the two main sects, we will see that in many cases they are significant; and those differences can be used as a tool in gaining a foothold with them, as we talk to them about Jesus.

There are several common areas of belief between Islam and Christianity. Muslims believe that Abraham is the father of all nations and that the God of Abraham is the one true God. However, they wrongly believe that their god, Allah is the God of Abraham. They believe in the Bible; but they do not believe that our modern translations are correct. They believe that the deception began before Mohammed's time, and that he had all of the right beliefs.

It is important to realize that witnessing to a Muslim is not easy and should be done only with a great deal of prayer and preparation. Muslims are taught their faith from early infancy; and in many cases, they have a better grasp of their faith than we do of our Christian faith. Therefore, do not encourage wholesale witnessing by your students to the Muslims in your community. Instead,

encourage them to study the Word of God, the differences between the two faiths, what things they have in common, and why it is important to believe in Jesus. Only then can they ever hope to be able to properly witness to a person who follows Islam.



Methods

Group Prayer

Take some time to pray as a group for the millions of souls who are lost in the darkness of Islam. Show compassion for the people, because their minds have been darkened by a satanic deception. Pray that they can know the love of Jesus, instead of the harsh laws of Mohammed. Pray for the protection of Christian missionaries in Moslem lands, because they are severely persecuted and sometimes killed for their witness.

Hinduism

Volume 7

Lesson 10



Bible References

Hebrews 9:27-28

Matthew 12:43-45

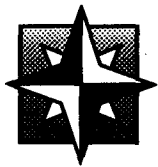
Genesis 1

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

Isaiah 43:11, 44:6; 45:5-6

Romans 1

1 Timothy 4:1-4



Theme

Hinduism has gained great influence over multitudes of people, deceiving them into a vain search for a "nirvana" that does not exist.



Scripture Reading

Romans 1:21-25

21 *"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

22 *"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,*

23 *"And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.*

24 *"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:*

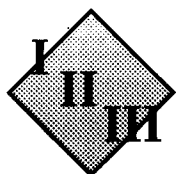
25 *"Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen."*



Memory Verse

Romans 1:28

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."



Outline

I. Origins of Hinduism.

- A. In 1500 B.C. in India, the ideas that became Hinduism were formed.
- B. Hinduism is a mix of Aryan culture (the basis of the Greek civilization) and ancient Indian mysticism.
- C. There is no central leader, or founder, or personality.
- D. It has divisions centered on various technicalities of belief.
 1. Buddhism is related closely to Hinduism.
 2. The people who moved to India and Asia after the tower of Babel division (Genesis 11) turned from God, and began to follow evil spirits and worship animals.
 3. This eventually developed into the Hindu religion.

II. Deities.

- A. Hinduism is a complex, confusing mix of beliefs that are extremely tolerant of any belief system. A Hindu may be:
 1. An atheist -- no deity.
 2. An agnostic -- a non-communicative superior force as creator/god.
 3. A polytheist -- belief in many gods.
 4. A pantheist -- everything is god, and everything contains god.
 5. A monotheist -- only one deity.
 6. India, with nearly a billion people, has about 330,000,000 gods.
- B. Brahma.
 1. Normally the main "god" -- the Creator to some.
 2. To most, he is the ultimate reality -- impersonal, yet made up of all that exists.
 3. Becoming one with Brahma is "nirvana" (salvation) for the Hindu.
- C. Vishnu -- A protector deity.
 1. Sometimes considered the second personality of a three-part "god" along with Brahma and Shiva.
 2. Vishnu manifests himself throughout history in "avatars" or incarnations.
 3. Krishna is an avatar of Vishnu.
- D. Shiva -- The Destroyer; violent and dark.
- E. All gods can be considered as one, or they can be considered as lesser emanations of the one, ultimate Universal Spirit, or Brahma.

III. Sacred Writings.

A. Vedas.

1. Ancient hymns (mantras), prayers and rituals recorded over 2000 years of Hindu history.
2. They are supposedly the recorded reflections of the ancient wise men who had achieved union with Brahma.

B. Various other books of mythology, ritual, and law.

IV. Basic Beliefs.

A. Creation.

1. Not an intentional act of a god, but an evolution of the Universal Spirit.
2. The world as we see it is unreal -- just a play or a shadow of the ultimate reality of Brahma.

B. The Wheel of Karma.

1. Reincarnation.
2. Also called transmigration of the soul, or "samsara."

C. Karma -- Fate or judgment based on each man's acts.

1. Each life's circumstance (human and animal) is the result of the soul's action in lives.
2. Thus, there is no need to help the poor, since that is their Karma.
3. Helping them would defy the judgment of the Universal Spirit.

D. Nirvana.

1. Salvation for the Hindu.

2. Release from this unending wheel of fate.

3. This release is called "moksha."

E. The key to salvation and release is to realize that the divine is within, but that individuality is a hoax and the only reality is union with the Divine.

F. There are generally three ways to moksha:

1. Works and religious duty.
2. Philosophical release, through renouncing earthly things in order to seek union with Brahma.
3. Devotion or commitment to a chosen deity.
 - a. This devotion is shown through yoga and meditation.
 - b. Physical, mental or spiritual exercise, promoting the journey to union with Brahma.

G. Caste.

1. Karma puts men in positions of life.
2. These positions have been codified in Hindu writings; and a man or woman born into a certain position, or caste, is relegated to that position for the rest of his or her life.
3. There is no cruelty or virtue to be shown, since everything that happens is Karma (fate) and is neither good or bad -- it just is.

H. No sin -- neither in act or nature; just ignorance of your unreality and need for union with Brahma.

V. Hinduism Vs. Christianity.

A. God.

1. Hindu god is impersonal, unknowable.

2. The God of the Bible is personal, caring and loving -- the Creator of all that exists.

B. Man.

1. Hinduism considers man unreal.
 - a. Self-consciousness is an illusion.
 - b. Each person is only a part of a greater whole.
 - c. There is no individual value or self-worth.
2. The Bible says that God created man in His own image with a free will to make meaningful choices in an objective, real world -- choices that have eternal consequence.

C. Sin.

1. Hinduism has no concept of sin -- only an idea of ignorance of the unreality of life that causes a person to grasp for things and experiences that are ultimately worthless and an illusion; a hopeless life.
2. God defines sin as rebellion against His rightful authority over man.

D. Salvation.

1. Hinduism offers no assurance of salvation -- only a vague promise of freedom from a never-ending cycle of lives lived, if a person proves to be worthy.
2. The God of the Bible offers the assurance that after this one life on earth, a man may live forever with Him in heaven, if he will repent of his sin and put his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.



Spiritual Truths

- When people reject God as unique and alone in His deity, they are given over to depraved minds and destruction.
- Hinduism was birthed in mysticism and animism, because some of Noah's descendants turned from the faith and rejected the Lord who made them.
- We can know the true God, because of Jesus Christ.
- Christians can pray to God at any time, and He will hear them.
- The Hindu religion tries to appease all people by having millions of gods to serve all of kinds needs, rather than one God Who is Lord and Master of all mankind.
- It is appointed unto man once to die, and after that the judgment. (Hebrews 9:27)
- Satan's lie of reincarnation encourages people to either give up on hope, or give up on living righteously.
- The caste system is a cruel form of prejudice that prevents people from rising above their position.



Lesson Material

The study of the Hindu religion cannot be thoroughly done in one hour. However, it should be beneficial for Christians to get a glimpse of this demonic force that has brought so many millions of people into hopelessness, starvation, and spiritual torment. There are thousands of false religions in the world, but only one way to God -- and that is Jesus Christ. We should have compassion for people, especially those who have been taught a false religion like Hinduism.

Christians need to understand that Satan is ultimately the author of all other religions, and that people who are deceived by them need to hear the gospel, or they will be eternally lost. How tragic to see so many millions who have a false hope based on a false religion. India is the center of Hinduism, and other eastern mystic cults. Hinduism not only reduces people to a fatalistic view of life, but it also destroys the nation economically, because they are not allowed to kill the animals that are eating up the food supply. Cows walk the streets and rats eat tons of grain, while people die every day of starvation.

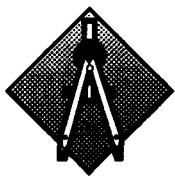
In witnessing to a Hindu, we must stress that God is one God, not many. This is foreign to the thinking of the Hindu. Unless the person is of high caste, you can make a point of the love of Jesus for all people. God is no respecter of persons. (Acts 10:34) He is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9); and these precious people are dying by the thousands, without hope and without God. Hindus need the hope that the Bible offers. They are taught that they must be

resigned to their fate, so that they will get the right karma and hopefully come back in a respected and honored god-like form (or not come back at all, having attained "nirvana").

Hinduism is similar to the voodoo religion, in that there is much demon activity involved. The Hindu "deities" are either the result of the imaginations of the people, or they are real demon spirits, which come into their lives to torment and destroy them. Hindus sometimes have all-night ceremonies, in which the priests invoke spirits into the people, not realizing that they are dealing with evil spirits. These spirits are very real; and Christians who are sensitive in the spirit can sense the oppressive darkness around the Hindu temples. The many fanciful and colorful statues in India are dangerous, because they are the expressions of real demons.

This lesson is not designed to prepare anyone to go out and begin witnessing to a Hindu. What this lesson should do is give the students a basic understanding of the differences between Christianity and the Hindu religion, so that they can better pray for the people who are caught up in this false and oppressive system; and this lesson is to enable the students to understand the need to communicate the light of the gospel to these souls in spiritual darkness.

It should also be noted that Hinduism is the mother of many cults, such as Hare Krishna, Transcendental Meditation, Buddhism, witchcraft, and even the New Age movement. The New Age is a mixture of eastern mysticism (witchcraft) and secular humanism. It is indeed a religion; and it is demonically inspired.



Methods

Blindfolds

Have all of the students blindfold themselves; and then, cover their eyes as completely as possible for a few minutes. Talk about blindness, and how difficult it is to relate to the physical world without sight. Then relate it to spiritual blindness. Hindus bump into demon spirits and think that the demons are gods. They cannot see God or truth or Jesus, because the "god of this world" has blinded their minds. (2 Corinthians 4:4)

There are two reasons that people cannot see. One is that they have no sight. No matter how much light is in the room,

they have no ability to receive or interpret the images. The other reason is that they have no light. Like us, they could see; but they need someone to shine the light of the gospel into their hearts. That comes by witnessing and preaching and teaching the Word.

Guest Lecture

If you know of a Christian who is a former Hindu, you may want to invite him to address the class (with your pastor's permission), to help expose the error of this massive cult. It would be ridiculous to invite a practicing Hindu or other cult practitioner to instruct your students, because they would do all that they could to attract them away from Jesus Christ. Always focus your students on the biblical perspective, when referring to cults.

What Is the Bible?

Volume 7

Lesson 11



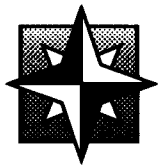
Bible References

Psalms 19:7

2 Timothy 3:16

Hebrews 4:12

Psalms 119:89



Theme

The Holy Bible is the direct, inspired, inerrant revelation of God the Creator to His creation.



Scripture Reading

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 *"Know this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.*

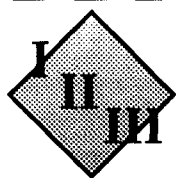
21 *"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."*



Memory Verse

2 Timothy 3:16-17

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."



Outline

I. The Bible's Uniqueness.

- A. The Bible was written over a 1500-year span, over 40 generations.
- B. Sixty-six books, with 1189 chapters.
- C. Forty different authors, from 20 different occupations.
- D. Written in 10 different countries.
- E. Originally written in three different languages.
- F. One theme -- God's redemption plan for men.
- G. By 1966, the entire Bible had been translated into 240 languages and dialects; and portions of it in 739 more.

II. The Bible's Reliability and Relevancy.

- A. What does God's Word really mean to us?
 1. God's Word is infallible, perfect.
 - a. Psalms 19:7.
 - b. Joshua 23:14.
 - c. Matthew 24:35.
 - d. Isaiah 40:8.
 2. God's Word is inerrant -- totally true and trustworthy.
 - a. Proverbs 30:5.
 - b. Psalms 119:151, 160.
 3. God's Word is authoritative.
 - a. James 2:10.
 - b. Psalms 119:4.

- c. 2 Timothy 3:16.
4. God's Word is effective.
 - a. Isaiah 55:10-11.
 - b. 1 Thessalonians 1:5.
 - c. Psalms 119:9, 104, 128.
 - d. Hebrews 4:12.
5. God's Word is inspired.
 - a. 2 Timothy 3:16.
 - b. 2 Peter 1:21.

B. Wrong views of inspiration.

1. Mechanical/Dictation -- the theory that God used human writers as automatons to write without conscious thought.
2. Concept Theory -- the principles and concepts in the Bible are inspired, but the wording was left to the human writers. This destroys word studies and casts real doubt on the validity of any translations. The words are inspired.
 - a. Matthew 5:18.
 - b. John 6:68.
 - c. John 10:34-35.
3. Partial theory.
 - a. That some portions are "more inspired" than others.
 - b. This leaves it up to us to determine which parts are inspired and which are not.
 - c. Jesus considered all of the scripture equally inspired, as did Peter.
 - 1) Luke 24:27, 44-45.
 - 2) 2 Peter 3:16.
4. Natural theory.
 - a. Exceptionally spiritual men (like exceptional artists, etc. who produce masterpieces), through their own genius and wisdom, completely produced the Bible.
 - b. This removes God from the picture.

C. Orthodox view of inspiration.

1. Verbal inspiration.
 - a. God worked supernaturally in each author to provide the words within each writers' style, vocabulary and uniqueness, to present His complete message with absolute accuracy.
 - b. The original writings' very words were inspired by God.
2. "Plenary inspiration" means that the entirety of the Bible is inspired, and not just parts.

D. Why do we consider the Bible reliable?

1. It provides the reality in experience that it claims it will provide.
2. It is scientifically accurate.
 - a. Isaiah 55:10.
 - b. Job 36:27.
 - c. Psalms 135:7.
 - d. Isaiah 40:22.
 - e. Job 26:7.
3. It has been proven accurate by history and archaeology.
 - a. Luke's history in Luke and Acts has proven completely reliable.
 - b. Nations and cities mentioned throughout the Bible have been discovered and excavated, although for long periods they were thought to be mythical.
 - c. Example: the Hittites were considered mythical, because no artifacts had been found, until recently.
 - d. Now we know of whole Hittite cities recently unearthed, with references to the leaders mentioned in the Bible.
4. Its prophecies have come true.
 - a. Ezekiel 26:3-16 is the prophecy of Tyre's overthrow by Babylon.
 - b. The odds have been figured at 400,000,000-to-1 for all of these

details to come true -- but they did.

- c. Nebuchadnezzar would take the city.
 - d. Other nations would help fulfill the prophecy.
 - e. Tyre would be flattened like the top of a rock.
 - f. The city would become a place where fishermen would spread their nets.
 - g. Tyre's stones and timbers would be laid in the sea.
 - h. Other cities would have great fear, because of Tyre's fall.
 - i. The old city would never be rebuilt.
5. It is consistent; and it maintains a continuity, despite having many writers.
 6. It claims its own place as God's Word.
 - a. 2 Timothy 3:16.
 - b. Matthew 24:35.
 - c. John 10:35.
 - d. 2 Peter 1:19-21.



Spiritual Truths

- God's Word is infallible.
- God's Word is inerrant -- totally true and trustworthy.
- God's Word, the Bible, is the most authoritative book in the world.
- God's Word is effective.
- God's Word is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

- God worked supernaturally in each author to provide wisdom and information, while using each writer's style to present His complete message with absolute accuracy.
- The Holy Spirit does not destroy our personality. He enhances it.
- The Bible's prophecies have proven to be 100% accurate. Only a few are yet to be fulfilled.



Lesson Material

Peter, James, and John accompanied their Master to the mountain one night for a late prayer meeting. They all fell asleep. When they awoke, they saw a sight that filled their hearts with awe, and perhaps terror. They saw their Lord standing and talking with two men, whom they recognized somehow as Moses and Elijah, two of the greatest men of history. These men had come from Paradise, the place in the earth reserved for the souls of the saints who had died in hope of the crucifixion. Moses and Elijah were talking with Jesus about His death, which was to come soon. (Matthew 17:1-9)

The three disciples marveled at the wondrous sight of their Lord and these Prophets shining in a glorious form. Then a supernatural cloud came down out of the sky, and a great voice spoke to them saying, "...*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;....*" (Matthew 17:5)

The apostle Peter, who later wrote an account of that great historical moment,

went on to make an astounding statement: "*We have also a more [sure word of prophecy]; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed,....*" (2 Peter 1:19) What could be more sure than prophets raised from the dead and the audible voice of God? The Bible. We can trust it more than we can trust any supernatural sign, or miracle, or angel.

The Bible is the inspired Word of God. We need to learn to treat the Bible as more than just a collection of wise sayings and historical records, or a book that we bring to church. The Bible is to be honored as God's holy Word, and then studied in that context.

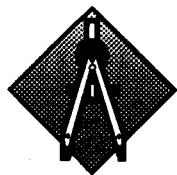
The Bible, as we know it, has gone through many translations over the centuries. Years of hand-copied editions that were scrutinized by scholars of the day for their accuracy left us with a heritage of exact copies of the words that were given to us by God. In later years, through a process known as canonization, the books and chapters as we know them today came together into the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.

There is a great deal of evidence to point to the Bible as being the inspired Word of God. Both archaeological and scientific evidence point to these books being written under divine inspiration. Man could not have prophesied all that was written, and had those prophecies come true with such an amazing accuracy. Truly this book that we call the Bible is the inspired Word of God.

The prophetic accuracy is amazing. Consider that Isaiah prophesied about King Cyrus, naming him by name, 400 years before he was to be. (Isaiah 44:28) Daniel prophesied that the Chaldeans would be conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire, who would in turn be conquered by the

Greeks, who would later be conquered by a fourth great world empire, Rome. (Daniel 2) He also accurately described each of the empires. Throughout the Old Testament, we see over 300 prophetic references about the Messiah, relating specific details -- even descriptions of crucifixion, which had not yet been invented. All of the prophecies came to pass in the life of Jesus.

Read the Bible on a daily basis. In fact, we need to go further than that in our love for God's Word. We need to take the time to study it and learn it, so that it resides in our heart. Treat the Word of God with reverence; and honor what it says.



Methods

Memorize the List

Encourage the students to memorize the names of the books of the Bible in

order. As you go through the list several times, point out the sections, and the reason for the order in the canon. Recite it several times, so that they will know the correct pronunciations.

Discussion Questions

If God is as great as the Bible says He is, can we expect Him to provide and preserve a perfect Word for us to follow with confidence?

If we believe that the Bible merely "contains" the Word of God, how are we to know what is accurate and what is not?

Can you accurately defend the Bible, if you are confronted by someone who does not believe?

Illustration

Bring copies of several different versions of the Bible, and show how they vary. Talk about and show examples of archaeological finds and pieces of scientific evidence that point to the accuracy of the Bible as God's inspired Word.

Dealing with Temptation

Volume 7

Lesson 12



Bible References

James 1:13-15

1 John 2:16

1 John 3:4

Hebrews 2:18



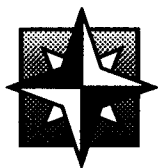
Scripture Reading

James 1:13-15

13 *"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:*

14 *"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*

15 *"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."*



Theme

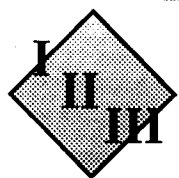
God's Word teaches us that we can overcome temptation through His grace.



Memory Verse

1 Corinthians 10:13

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."



Outline

I. What Is Sin?

- A. The nature to do wrong, based on selfish motives.
 - 1. Romans 7:18, 25b.
 - 2. Romans 8:5.
- B. A personal choice. (Romans 7:7-8)
- C. An act of rebellion against God's authority.
 - 1. 1 John 3:4.
 - 2. Galatians 5:19-21a.
- D. A destroyer of lives and relationships.
 - 1. Galatians 5:21b.
 - 2. Ephesians 2:1-3.
- E. A deadly condition of all human beings.
 - 1. Romans 3:23.
 - 2. Romans 6:23.
 - 3. 1 John 1:8.
- F. A deviation from God's will.

II. What Is Temptation?

- A. Temptations are situations designed by the devil to draw us away from God.
- B. A temptation is the impulse to do evil.

III. How Are We Tempted?

- A. Assailants. (1 John 2:15-16)
 - 1. World system (*kosmos*; secular environment).
 - 2. Flesh (natural desires, appetites, lusts).
 - a. Romans 7:17, 21-24, 25b.
 - b. James 1:14-15.
 - 3. The devil (satanic and demonic influences).
 - a. Matthew 4:1.
 - b. 1 Timothy 3:6.
 - 4. God never tempts us. (James 1:13)
- B. Satan's agenda.
 - 1. Satan seeks to prevent salvation. (Matthew 13:19-21)
 - 2. Destroy our witness. (2 Peter 2:19-21)
 - 3. Dishearten believers. (1 Peter 5:8)
 - 4. Nullify our ministry. (Matthew 13:22)
- C. Satan's arsenal.
 - 1. References.
 - a. 1 John 2:16.
 - b. Genesis 3:1-6.
 - 2. Sensuality over spirituality.
 - a. (Matthew 4:1-4)
 - b. Galatians 5:17.
 - 3. Self-sufficiency over submission.
 - a. Matthew 4:5-7.
 - b. Luke 9:23-25.
 - 4. Self-seeking over servility.
 - a. Matthew 4:8-11.
 - b. 1 Timothy 6:9-10.

IV. How Do We Overcome?

A. God's Word shows us the way. (Ephesians 6:10-13)

1. The Bible shows us the right way to live.
 - a. Matthew 13:23.
 - b. Ephesians 6:14-16.
2. It gives us a weapon against temptation. (Ephesians 6:17)
3. It promises His protection. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

B. Relationship with Christ. (Hebrews 2:18)

1. Changes our desires. (Romans 12:2)
2. Gives access to His help and power.
 - a. Luke 10:19-20.
 - b. 1 John 5:4-5.
3. Removes guilt through forgiveness. (Hebrews 10:22)
4. Encourages us by His work.
 - a. John 16:33.
 - b. Hebrews 2:18.

C. Indwelling of the Spirit. (1 John 4:4)

D. Prayer.

1. Ephesians 6:18.
2. Matthew 6:9-13.

E. Fellowship.

1. Exemplifies and encourages righteousness.
 - a. 1 Peter 5:8-10.
 - b. Hebrews 10:24.
2. Corrects our course.
 - a. 2 Timothy 3:16.
 - b. 1 Corinthians 5:3-5; 2 Corinthians 2:6-7.
3. Provides restoration. (Galatians 6:1-2)



Spiritual Truths

- The best and surest way to overcome temptation is to yield completely to God.
- We are not told to resist temptation, but to resist the devil.
- Satan wants us to yield to temptation, because when we sin we draw closer to Satan and further from God.
- The purpose of temptation is never to make us happy, but to use pleasure and selfish motives to destroy us.
- Temptations are designed by the devil to lure us away from God.
- God will allow us to be tempted; but He will not let it be more than we can bear.
- God will never allow us to face a temptation from which we have no escape.
- It is never necessary to sin.



Lesson Material

Sin results in death. (Romans 6:23) The basis of our temptation to sin (all authored by Satan through our sin nature) falls into three categories as defined by the apostle John: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. (1 John 2:16) That is, every temptation will involve either

the desire for sensual gratification, wealth, or ego satisfaction. He also defined three sources of temptation: the world, the flesh, and the devil. Our ability to resist these temptations determines our Christian maturity and fruitfulness.

Christians face many temptations, especially in affluent cultures. Our goal as Christian leaders is to encourage and train believers to become better equipped to overcome temptation. The first step in that process is understanding what temptation is and how to battle it. For the next two weeks, there will be more specific material covered that will detail some specific areas of temptation. The purpose of this lesson is to provide a foundation on which to teach the lessons over the next two weeks.

God's Word shows us that everyone will be tempted at some time. (1 Corinthians 10:13) It should not be a surprise to us when they come. Jesus was tempted, just as we are. (Hebrews 4:15) The key to His success in life was that He was able to overcome by using the Word of God. Jesus, in fact, faced the lust of the flesh ("Turn these stones into bread, because you are hungry..."); the lust of the eyes ("I will give you the kingdoms of the world, if you will worship me..."); and the pride of life ("Jump off this pinnacle, and make God protect you..."). (Matthew 4:1-10)

Notice that both James (James 4:7) and Peter (1 Peter 5:9) said to "resist the devil." They did not say, "resist temptation." They were very wise to phrase it the way they did. As human beings, we have a tendency to focus on the natural aspects of life. If we focus on the temptation, we will eventually fall. "I will not steal that money. I will not steal that money, even though it looks so easy. I will not steal it."

What will we do? We will steal the money. That is because if we focus on an action, we will eventually do it, because we are drawn to whatever we focus on.

Do not try to resist the temptation. See the temptation as the devil's enticement. You know that he is your enemy. (2 Corinthians 2:11) Whenever you associate the wrong desire with the one who seeks to destroy you, you diminish its influence on your heart. "Satan wants me to steal that money and sin against God. He wants to destroy my testimony and my sense of personal worth. I belong to God; therefore, I will choose to do the right thing. I do not have to steal that money."

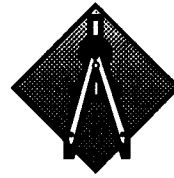
God has promised us that He will never ask us to face any temptation from which He has not provided an escape. (1 Corinthians 10:13) Adam and Eve were tempted in the garden, but they still had the choice of walking away. They chose, instead, to give in to their temptation; and the price that they paid was a heavy one. That first temptation, by the way, also included the same three factors. They had the lust of the flesh ("It was good for food..."); the lust of the eyes ("It was desired to make one wise..."); and the pride of life ("You will be as gods, knowing good and evil."). (Genesis 3:1-6)

The "escape hatch" that God provides is not always clear to see through physical eyes. Often, God provides the way of escape through the temptation, rather than pulling us out of it. It is only with our spiritual eyes that we can see many of the solutions to our temptations. That is why it is so important that we remain in prayer and in God's Word. Often, He will use a portion of scripture, or a divine revelation, to point us in the right direction.

Satan will continue to do all that he can to put temptation in front of us. He loves to see God's people fall into sin. Then he (Satan) puts us under such condemnation, that we feel that God will never love us again. But God has promised us that if we fall, He will be there to pick us back up again, as long as we turn to Him for help. (1 John 1:9; 2:1) Proverbs 24:16 says, *"For a just {man} [falleth seven times], and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief."* If you have succumbed to temptation, do not assume an attitude that "Now that I have fallen, I might as well keep on sinning." And do not let condemnation keep you from going to Jesus with your sin for His cleansing. (Romans 8:1)

Encourage your students to pray in the midst of temptation. Have them learn to lift one another up in prayer and to find others (their parents, their peers, etc.) to whom they make themselves accountable. Then, when temptation comes, there are others who promise to "stand in the gap" with prayer and counsel. Pray with your students about the issue of temptation; and tell them that over the next two weeks you will be going into more detail on specific temptations and sins.

Help your students to see the difference between temptation and sin. Temptation in itself is not sin. It is only when we allow the temptation to draw us away from righteousness that we sin. (James 1:14-15) As the saying goes, "You cannot stop a bird from landing on your head, but you do not have to let it build a nest there." As we fill our minds and hearts with God's Word, we more readily recognize temptation; and we more readily will flee from it. (2 Timothy 2:22)



Methods

List

Use a chalkboard; and ask the students to list the most common temptations that their peers face today. Do not ask anyone to embarrass himself by listing his own major area of temptation.

Examples:

- Temptation to experiment with marijuana, cocaine, or beer.
- Fornication.
- Homosexual urges.
- Gossip and slander.
- Cheating in school.
- Lying to parents.

After each entry, try to identify as a group the ways in which the world, the flesh, or the devil seek to stimulate and promote that wrong behavior.

Drugs:

- The world tries to make it socially acceptable; peer pressure.
- The flesh wants to feel "good."
- The devil wants to destroy our minds.

Fornication:

- The world seeks to make sex a spectator sport; benefits of marriage without covenant or commitment.
- The flesh desires self-gratification without covenant commitment.
- The devil wants to destroy bodies through diseases, and to destroy lives through bondage to sinful lifestyles.

Finally, list the possible consequences of sin. If we focus more on the consequences and less on the initial

pleasures, we will be more equipped to overcome the temptation to sin.

Tempted by Drugs and Alcohol

Volume 7

Lesson 13



Bible References

Ephesians 5:18

1 Peter 4:3-7

Galatians 5:16-21

Proverbs 20:1

Proverbs 23:20, 21

Proverbs 23:29-35

Proverbs 31:4-7

Romans 14:21



Scripture Reading

Ephesians 5:18

18 *"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."*

1 Peter 4:3-7

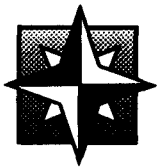
3 *"For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:*

4 *"Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them, to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:*

5 *"Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.*

6 *"For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.*

7 *"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."*



Theme

How do we deal with temptations of drugs and alcohol?

Galatians 5:16

16 *"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."*

Proverbs 20:1

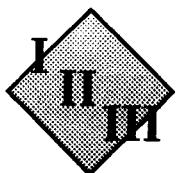
1 *"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."*



Memory Verse

Ephesians 5:18

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;"



Outline

I. What Is Temptation?

A. General definition:

1. Something that attempts to persuade you to do evil.
2. The enticement to do wrong.

B. Biblical definitions:

1. Putting a person to the test.
2. Or, solicitation to do evil.

II. Why Are Drug Abuse and Drunkenness Wrong?

A. God's Word says so.

1. Our bodies are the "temples of the Holy Spirit." (1 Corinthians 6:19)
 - a. We are not to defile the temple of God.
 - b. We are not to bring dishonor to the temple of God.
2. We cannot worship God under a drug influence.
 - a. When we drink or take drugs, we lose control of our ability to think rationally.
 - b. When we cannot think, we cannot exercise good judgment.
3. We were "...bought with a price...." (1 Corinthians 6:20)
 - a. We belong to God.
 - b. We cannot glorify God, if we cannot control our mind.
4. God is specific in His warnings to us against drunkenness.
 - a. Luke 21:34 -- *"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and [drunkenness], and cares of this life, and {so} that day come upon you unawares."*
 - b. 1 Corinthians 6:10 -- *"...nor drunkards, nor revilers...shall inherit the kingdom of God."*

B. Is drinking itself the unpardonable sin?

1. Paul said, *"All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."* (1 Corinthians 6:12)
2. Drinking alcohol itself is not a sin; but, drunkenness is a sin.

- a. It is evil and foolish to become drunk.
- b. The Bible says that we are not to be brought under the power of anything that might overtake us and interfere with our relationship with Him. (1 Corinthians 6:2)
- c. We cannot excuse drunkenness by misusing the statement of Paul that "everything is lawful."

C. Our actions affect others.

- 1. Romans 14:13, 21.
 - a. We must not do anything that might cause a brother to stumble.
 - b. We will be judged by God for our actions.
- 2. When we engage in any sinful activity, including drug abuse and drunkenness, we destroy our testimony before the world.
 - a. "If this is what Christians are like, then they are no different from anyone else."
 - b. "Drinking and drugs must be acceptable."

D. Drunkenness and drug abuse can lead to death.

- 1. People die every day from drunkenness and drug abuse.
 - a. Automobile accidents.
 - b. Overdoses.
 - c. Long term effects from drunkenness and drug abuse.
- 2. The death of relationships also takes place.
 - a. Marriages break up.
 - b. Friendships break up.
 - c. Jobs are lost.
 - d. Lives are ruined.

E. Drinking and drugs open our spirits to demonic influences.

- 1. Many young people have opened their spirits to a spirit of suicide through alcohol or drugs.
- 2. The Greek word for "witchcraft" is the root for our word "pharmacy."
- 3. Witchcraft is the practice of submitting to satanic authority.
- 4. Rebellion is like witchcraft, because it takes the rebel out from under God's protection, and makes him vulnerable to demons. (1 Samuel 15:23)

III. Satan Desires to Tempt Us.

A. He wants to destroy our relationship with God.

- 1. When we give in to temptation, we are telling God that our relationship with Him is not satisfying.
 - a. We are telling Him that Satan has more power over us than He does.
 - b. We are telling God that we desire more to have the pleasures of "the world" than the fellowship of God Himself.
- 2. We are telling God that the suffering that His Son endured on the cross means nothing to us.
 - a. Our pleasure is more important.
 - b. We want things our way -- not God's way.

B. Satan will always use the tool that is most effective.

- 1. A desire to "fit in" may make us more vulnerable to peer pressure.
- 2. Television or movies.
 - a. We will see drugs and alcohol glamorized on the screen.

- b. We will see our "heroes" and "role models" drink or use drugs.
 - c. We should not watch secular television programs or movies that focus on any kind of evil.
 - d. Television commercials always portray alcohol in the context of young, happy, fun people.
 - e. You never see beer commercials filmed in a hospital emergency room.
3. Feelings of insecurity.
- a. Satan will tell us that we need to drink or take drugs, in order to escape reality.
 - b. He will tell us that if we do so, people will feel sorry for us and reach out to help.

IV. God Is Watching Us.

A. He knows that we will be tempted.

- 1. Jesus understands temptation; and He is well able to help us, when we are tempted. (Hebrews 4:15)
- 2. How we handle the temptation will determine the blessings that He will bestow on us.

B. God provides for our protection.

- 1. God gives us parents for our safety.
 - a. Our parents are gifts from God, who are to train and nurture us.
 - b. A godly father-figure, such as your pastor, can make up for ungodly or missing parents.
- 2. The church.
 - a. We need the fellowship of godly people, in order to keep our focus on a good life.
 - b. "...A companion of fools shall be destroyed." (Proverbs 13:20)
- 3. The Bible is our guideline for life.

C. Some biblical guidelines.

- 1. Stay in right relationship with God through prayer, Bible study, worship, and fellowship with other believers.
- 2. Examine yourselves. (2 Corinthians 13:5)
 - a. Make sure that the only reason that you will ever take any kind of drugs is medical; and even then, be careful.
 - b. Make sure that your liberty does not become offensive to others.
- 3. Do not focus on resisting temptation -- resist the devil. (James 4:7)
- 4. Focus on the consequences, rather than on the immediate sensation.
- 5. "*Abstain from all appearance of evil.*" (1 Thessalonians 5:22)



Spiritual Truths

- The pleasures of sin are always immediate, but the consequences are eternal.
- We always suffer and hurt others, when we yield to sin.
- As Christians, we do not have to let sin rule over us.
- The Bible teaches that drunkenness is a sin.
- God can give us the grace to be free morally, but we must choose to do right. He will not force us to do right.

- God does not want us to do anything in excess (including drinking).
- We are the temple of the Holy Spirit; and when we defile the temple with drunkenness or drug abuse, we are denying that God can meet our needs.
- Satan will tempt us to break our relationship with God.
- Satan will use our yielding to temptation as a tool to hinder others in their Christian walk.
- Drugs and alcohol can open your spirit to demonic influence and torment.
- Most teen suicides involve drunkenness or drugs, and a demonic spirit of suicide.
- You never have a real need to sin.



Lesson Material

Why did God allow Adam and Eve to be tempted? When He cast Lucifer out of heaven, why did the rascal get sent to earth to do evil against God's beloved human race? Did God not know what would happen? He did. But God also knows that where there is no choice, there is no real expression of love or devotion. The angels served God in the spiritual realm, but they had a choice. A third of them chose to rebel and follow the devil.

We all have choices in life. The primary purpose of life is to determine our eternal relationship with God. There are many options. We can focus on the world

and serve the flesh and the devil; or, we can repent of our sins and decide to live for and worship God. God does not force us to love Him. If He did, it would not be genuine love. And so, He allows all of us to choose; and He is glorified when a person chooses to reject the values of the world, conquer the impulses of the flesh, and resist the devil.

When sin entered the world, death entered. Drunkenness is very damaging, both spiritually and physically. It deceives the mind into a false sense of confidence and well-being, making us think that we are happy. Thus the expression, "drowning our sorrows."

The wise mother of King Lemuel said,

"It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted. Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." (Proverbs 31:4-7)

In other words, "Drunkenness is for losers. They need to drown their sorrows. But it is not for winners. It is not for those who have purpose in life."

The apostle Paul said, *"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;"* (Ephesians 5:18) Drunkenness and drug abuse are carnal substitutes for the infilling of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can make us confident, joyful, and relaxed. When the early Christians were filled with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, they were accused of being drunk with wine. (Acts 2:15) They were full of joy and boldness. But it was not an illusion of joy. They

were not just thinking that they were happy. They were really happy. The Holy Ghost brings real happiness. Anything else is a cheap counterfeit.

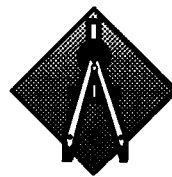
This brings us again to a very important principle about dealing with the peer pressure to defile ourselves. We should never focus on the evil. We should focus on the godly. How do we overcome the world? We overcome by faith. (1 John 5:4) Faith is a focus on God and His purposes. Paul said to the Galatians that *"...the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh:...."* (Galatians 5:17) In other words, they are opposite forces. The more of one you have in your heart, the less of the other you will have. The best way to overcome the flesh is not to try to resist the flesh. It is to be filled with the Spirit. The best way to avoid doing evil is to keep busy serving God. If you do not want to serve the devil, then serve God actively.

The sad truth is that many government and social agencies spend time saying to kids, "Do not do drugs. Do not do drugs." What happens? They do drugs. The focus is still on the evil. Whatever we focus on, we will respond to. Without God and His Word (and a personal relationship with Him), people naturally turn to the "works of the flesh" for their satisfaction. (Galatians 5:19-21) If you take God out, you leave a vacuum. If we do not have a godly society or a godly family to instill wisdom in us, we will easily become prey to temptation.

As you follow the outline, you will see an emphasis placed not only on the sin of drunkenness, but also on the effect that drinking or taking drugs can have on our lives. Giving in to this temptation can lead to death and destruction. It also can lead us to send a wrong signal to those around us,

as to our Christian testimony. We must be sure that in all things that we do, we do not cause someone else to stumble, whether or not they are believers. The church of Jesus Christ is to be a light to the world. (Matthew 5:14) Jesus said that we are to be "in the world, but not of it." (John 15:19) We must live among those that do not know Him; but that does not mean that we have to accept and participate in their sins.

We need to help each other, by lifting each other up in prayer and making ourselves accountable to others who are strong in the faith. Our brothers and sisters in the Lord will stand with us when we are tempted, and help us to overcome. That is the duty of the church; it is the command of God; and it is our responsibility to each other. Spend time with the class in discussing what temptations they have faced; and ask them to make themselves accountable to one another, to you, and to the Lord for how they handle those temptations.



Methods

Lecture method

This lesson works well with the lecture method, as long as it includes interaction with the students. Present your material in a concise manner. Use facts and statistics when available about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Relate personal testimonies of individuals who have died or been permanently injured from drugs or alcohol. Allow for prayer time, and a time of questions and answers afterward.

Guest Lecture or testimony

Have an individual that has won the battle in this area come into the class and share what happened to him in the midst of the battle. (Always ask your Pastor for his recommendation and permission.) Present all of the scripture and lesson

information prior to the guest sharing his testimony. You would also do well to balance that testimony with that of a person who has lived without ever having used drugs or alcohol; and let the students see that individual's freedom.

Resist the Devil

Volume 7

Lesson 14



Bible References

Matthew 6:13

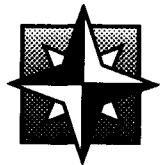
Mark 14:38

Luke 8:13

Luke 22:40

1 Corinthians 10:13

James 1



Theme

How do we deal with the temptations that can hinder our relationship with Christ?



Scripture Reading

James 1:2-4, 12-15

2 *"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.*

3 *"Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.*

4 *"But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."*

12 *"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

13 *"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:*

14 *"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*

15 *"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."*

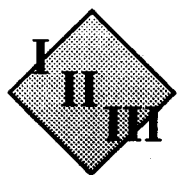


Memory Verse

2 Peter 2:9

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve

the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."



Outline

I. Why Do We Face Temptations?

A. Temptations "prove" our faith.

1. Temptations strengthen faith, by causing us to see our need for God.
2. They motivate us to draw closer to God.

B. Life is full of choices.

1. Will we follow God's way?
2. Will we follow our own way?
3. Will we follow Satan's way?
3. Only when we have a choice is God glorified when we love and serve Him.
4. God did not create us to be mindless robots.
5. We do not have to live for Him; we can choose to live for self.

C. God blesses us when we endure our temptations and choose His way. (James 1:12)

D. God warns us that many will not endure, but instead, will fall by the way.

II. How Does Temptation Work?

A. The world.

1. The "world" (Greek *kosmos*) means the "secular, godless environment."

- a. Unsaved people all around us.
- b. Evil people who seek to dominate others.
2. The wicked are convicted when they see others doing right; and so, they often seek to pull them down.
3. Noah "condemned the world" by obeying God. (Hebrews 11:7)
 - a. If Noah had been wicked, the rest of the people could have said, "God, it is impossible to be righteous."
 - b. Because Noah was righteous, he proved that they could also have been righteous; and so, they had no excuse in the judgment.
4. If someone tries to get you to sin, it is because your stand for right makes him feel guilty.

B. The flesh.

1. The "flesh" speaks of our physical appetites, needs, and desires.
2. Each person is tempted, when he is enticed by his own lust. (James 1:14)
 - a. This "lust" speaks of natural urges that all humans have.
 - b. It only becomes sin when we allow it to take control and then do things that are evil.
 - c. Example: God gave us sex as an expression of intimacy and covenant within the bonds of marriage.
 - d. But people who are controlled by sexual lust commit fornication or adultery, and thus pervert this God-given gift.
 - e. The dominant force in our lives should be God's Spirit, and not our lust.

C. The devil.

1. Satan, the devil, hates God; and he hates everyone who loves God.

2. He works with his demons to get everyone he can to turn away from God.
3. He seeks to kill, steal, and destroy. (John 10:10)

III. What Can We Do to Resist Temptations?

A. Prayer.

1. In the "Lord's Prayer," Jesus said, *"...Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:...."* (Matthew 6:13)
 - a. We are to pray that God will protect us from strong temptation.
 - b. We are to pray that God will deliver us from Satan and his tempting power.
2. In Matthew 26:41, Jesus said, *"[Watch and pray], that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed [is] willing, but the flesh [is] weak."*
 - a. When we are praying, we are less likely to enter into temptation.
 - b. We may have every desire to not enter into temptation.
 - 1) Our spirit wants the things of God.
 - 2) But the flesh wants to control us, and lead us to unrighteousness. (Galatians 5:17)
3. Luke 22:40 -- *"...Pray that ye enter not into temptation."*
 - a. Prayer helps us to keep our focus on God.
 - b. By the fear of the Lord, we depart from evil. (Proverbs 16:6)
4. Temptations are the strongest when we get focused on this physical life, and get our eyes off of spiritual

things. (Colossians 3:2)

B. Praise and Worship.

1. As we praise God for His greatness and for His works, our attention is drawn to Him, and away from evil.
2. When we praise God, we establish a stronger relationship with the One Who has the power over the world.

C. Reading the Word.

1. The more we hide it in our heart, the less influence Satan will have over us. (Psalms 119:11)
2. God's Word is alive and powerful; and it will help us to know the difference between that which comes from our own mind and that which is from God. (Hebrews 4:12)
3. When we study God's Word, we are not spending idle time that can be used against us by Satan to tempt us through things such as:
 - a. Television.
 - b. Movies.
 - c. Games.
 - d. Fantasies.

D. Church attendance and Christian fellowship.

1. *"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."* (Proverbs 13:20)
2. We are influenced by the people with whom we associate.
3. God puts us in local church "families," so that we can grow spiritually. (Hebrews 10:25)



Spiritual Truths

- Everyone in the world is tempted to sin.
- We do not have to live in continual moral defeat.
- Satan often tempts us by getting us to say, "Just one more time, and then I will quit." Every time we yield, we become weaker.
- We become stronger each time we overcome a temptation; and we are more able to resist the next one.
- God will never ask us to go through a test that we cannot endure.
- We will be rewarded for standing against temptation.
- Prayer is one of our greatest weapons against temptation.
- Staying in God's Word will also keep the enemy at bay and help us to avoid the snare of the tempter.
- The busier we are doing good, the easier it is to resist the devil.
- The Word of God commands us to resist the devil, rather than resist temptation.
- The only way to refrain from fulfilling the lusts of the flesh is to walk in the Spirit.



Lesson Material

There is a difference between trials and temptations. A trial is a test in life designed to make us stronger as we deal with it. Life is not easy. If we could have an easy life with no conflicts or pressure, we would be weak, spineless people; and we would not press into God spiritually. You cannot be an overcomer, if there is nothing to overcome. You cannot have a victory, if there is no battle.

Temptations are designed to lure us away from God by getting us focused on self, pleasure, or things. We are called and destined to live in heaven for eternity, but we do not have to go there. We can choose to turn away and live for self and the world. God will not force anyone to serve or love Him. In fact, the purpose of life is choice. We make choices every day. Satan loves it when a believer chooses to sin. The apostle Paul was talking to believers when he said, "*...God is not mocked...He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption;...*" (Galatians 6:7-8) There are many such warnings in scripture, which should motivate us to make our choices carefully and prayerfully.

There are three basic kinds of temptation: the lust of the flesh (pleasure); the lust of the eyes (greed); and the pride of life (ego). (1 John 2:16) All three are rooted in selfishness. God calls us to be His servants. When we repent, we are turning from a focus on self to a focus on the Lord. We stop living for self and begin to live for Jesus. We demonstrate this most effectively by the way we love other people, instead of ourselves. Conversely, when we are living life on our own terms,

we tend to use other people and put ourselves first. The only time we act responsibly is when we think there is a bigger payoff, or if we think we will be punished for "doing our own thing."

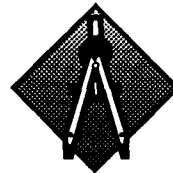
There are three sources of temptation: the world (the wickedness of non-believers which controls business, governments, entertainment, etc.); the flesh (our own appetites, lusts, and desires); and the devil (the kingdom of darkness). God allows these systems to tempt us, so that we will be motivated to pray and draw close to Him. He knows that many will choose the wrong path (Matthew 7:13); but He would not be glorified through our obedience, if we had no choice. If in this world of darkness and sin some of us choose to love and serve Him, He is greatly honored. Noah stood alone against the whole world; and Noah was the only one saved. Noah pleased God, because he believed when everyone else laughed and mocked. He believed God's Word more than the world; and he brought joy to the heart of his heavenly Father. (Genesis 6-8)

Prayer is the real key to keeping our relationship with our Savior. Through prayer, we can resist the temptations that Satan would bring against us. In "The Lord's Prayer," Jesus told us that when we pray, we should pray that the Lord would *"...lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:...."* (Matthew 6:13) Our prayers need to include a request such as this -- that God will give us the strength to resist the temptations that will come into our lives, and that He will help stop the advances of the enemy into our camp and protect us from evil.

When we focus on God's Word, we are able to withstand the temptations of the world. Satan cannot overcome us when

we are letting the Word of God into our hearts, unless we open the door for him. By having our spirit open to the things of God and continuing to focus on God's Word, we form a hedge of protection around our lives, which makes it more difficult for the enemy to come against us. God will use the Word that we hide away in our hearts to come against Satan, when he brings temptation to us. The more we know of God's Word, the stronger we are in our ability to resist the enemy.

We all face temptations in life. Of course, we do not all face the same temptations. Satan does not really care if your weakness is moral impurity, greed, or pride, as long as he can lure you away from God and spiritual thoughts. We need to understand the underlying purpose of temptation, which is to destroy us spiritually. We can so easily focus on the object of our temptation and think we need to "let off some steam," or "sow a few wild oats." However, those excuses are part of the deception of temptation. The fact is that we never have a need to sin. If we needed something, God would provide it. If God said not to do it, then He knows that there will be dangerous consequences.



Methods

Illustration

Write the words "Sin" and "Pride" on the board. Circle the middle letter. Note that the heart of sin, and especially the sin of pride, is "I." (This will only work in the English language, in which it is a good illustration.) Stress that the basic problem of sin is selfishness. The opposite of love is

not hate. The opposite of love is selfishness. The wicked are never altruistic. God's people are not as self-centered as the devil's crowd. That is why nations are so oppressed, when wicked people rule. (Proverbs 29:2)

Testing method

Pass out a list of situations that may happen in the students' lives; and ask them to write what they would do, if they were in those situations. Can you find any guidelines from the Bible for responding to them? In each situation, try to distinguish which of the three types of temptation is involved.

Example: You are taking a test; and you notice that you can easily see some of the answers of the smartest student in the class. You do not understand the material, but you would like to get a good grade.

Scripture: *"Thou shalt not steal."* (Exodus 20:15) *"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."* (Exodus 20:16) *"...Whatsoever things are honest...think on these things."* (Philippians 4:8)

Sin category: The pride of life.

Honesty

Volume 7

Lesson 15



Bible References

Exodus 23:1-8

Exodus 20:16

Leviticus 19:11-13

Mark 14:32-42

Philippians 4:8

Revelation 21:8



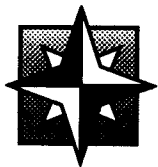
Scripture Reading

Leviticus 19:11-13

11 *"Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.*

12 *"And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord.*

13 *"Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning."*



Theme

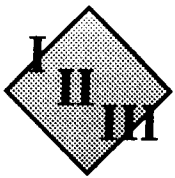
Lying and dishonesty are part of Satan's kingdom of darkness, always resulting in evil consequences.



Memory Verse

Romans 13:13

"Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envyings."



Outline

I. Honesty.

- A. Honesty implies a refusal to lie, steal or deceive in any way.
- B. Characteristics of an honest person.
 - 1. Honor.
 - a. Suggests an active regard for the standards of one's profession.
 - b. Values the importance of commitments.
 - 2. Integrity.
 - a. Implies trustworthiness.
 - b. Consistent. One kind of person, no matter where you are or who you are with.
 - 3. An honest person.
 - a. Free from fraud.
 - b. Genuine.
 - c. Reputable.
 - d. Credible.
 - e. Praiseworthy.
 - f. Sincere.
 - g. Real.
- C. What is a lie?
 - 1. Not necessarily an untrue statement.
 - a. If you been misinformed, you are not lying, if you repeat what you think is the right answer.
 - b. But you can lie without saying an untrue statement -- sometimes by not saying anything, when you know that people are getting the wrong impression.

- 2. A dishonest person wants to make people believe something that is not true.
 - a. He gives false impressions.
 - b. Such as: letting people think he has accomplished more than he has.
 - c. Taking credit for other people's work.

II. Bible Examples of Dishonesty.

A. Gehazi.

- 1. 2 Kings 5:20-27.
- 2. He followed after Naaman, and told him that Elisha wanted some of his expensive gifts, after all.
- 3. Result -- he was stricken with leprosy, and lost his job.
- 4. Problem -- he was so blinded by greed, that he did not realize that God saw what he did.

B. Ahab and Jezebel.

- 1. 1 Kings 21.
- 2. Jezebel hired wicked men to lie about Naboth, so that they could take the vineyard that he refused to sell to them.
- 3. Result -- they got the vineyard; but they died violent and shameful deaths.

C. Jacob.

- 1. He lied, in order to get his father's blessing.
- 2. Consequence -- His uncle Laban lied to him about getting his daughter, Rachel.
- 3. If he had waited, his parents would have gone to Laban to get him a wife.
 - a. Leah would have been given to Esau.

- b. He would not have had to work for Rachel at all.

III. Results of Dishonesty.

A. Broken relationships.

1. Suspicion.
2. Jealousy.

B. Guilt and shame.

C. Unforgiveness.

D. Fear of being found out.

E. Continued dishonesty.

1. We become addicted to dishonesty.
2. More lies become necessary to cover up the first ones.
3. Always tell the truth; and you will never have to remember what you said.

F. How do we make things right?

1. Confess our sin to God.
2. 1 John 1:9 -- *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*
3. Confess to the people we have wronged; and make restitution where possible. (Matthew 5:23-24)
4. Make yourself accountable to spiritual authority, such as your father, pastor, or an elder.



Spiritual Truths

- Truth eventually comes out.
- It is never necessary to tell a lie.
- God knows and sees everything.
- We will give an account for everything that we say and do.
- Dishonest people are the most suspicious of others.
- Giving people a false impression is lying, whether you speak an untruth or not.
- Dishonest people hurt themselves and others.



Lesson Material

Honesty is the best policy! We have heard that statement from childhood; and yet, we usually do not appreciate the full meaning of the saying. For many of us, learning to live honestly is a painful and sometimes long process. Because of our sin nature, deception is built into us. It is so easy to think that we can gain by shading the truth, or avoid the consequences of sin, by hiding our deeds in the darkness.

The Bible says that Satan is the father of lies. (John 8:44) His whole program is based on deception. Heaven is so

wonderful, hell is so horrible, and God is so good, that the only way that the devil can get people to choose sin and selfishness is to deceive them. He always overstates the benefits and pleasures of sin, while obscuring the consequences. He tries to make sin look glamorous; and he seeks to make people think that holiness is boring. Every statement of the devil recorded in scripture is a lie.

The most dangerous lies are the half-truths. Satan will even quote scripture -- but he will always twist its meaning. There are many pseudo-Christian cults which quote the Bible, but they use it to confuse people into thinking that they are Christian. They will all have some truth, such as good moral codes; but, it will be mixed in with error or deception. We can know truth, if we focus on Jesus and trust the whole Bible. Jesus is the Truth personified. (John 14:6) Satan always takes biblical phrases out of context, in order to blind the minds of people who are not sensitive in their spirits.

"Honest" is more than just saying the right words. Being honest is a matter of being real and being consistent. A "hypocrite" means "one who wears a mask." The word comes from ancient actors who played a part, instead of being themselves. Today, we honor and even idolize play-actors. But it takes a greater person to be real. Honesty means that you are in public exactly what you are in private. You do not pretend in church to be a victorious Christian, and then go off to some dark evil place to indulge yourself in evil pleasures. A dishonest person has things to hide about himself. He will also try to make people believe things about himself that are not true.

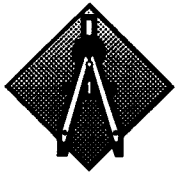
An honest person will be quick to confess his faults; and, therefore, he will be

more able to deal with them. *"He that covereth his sin shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."* (Proverbs 28:13) He will also tend to be humble; and he will always acknowledge the help that other people have given him, when he achieves in life. Dishonest people tend to magnify their images while hiding their failures. They always have something to hide; and, therefore, they are bound by the fear of exposure. But Jesus said, *"...Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* (John 8:32)

We start the changing process when Jesus Christ comes into our life. We put off the old nature and put on the new spiritual nature. (Ephesians 4:22-24) It is important to realize that just because Jesus Christ came into our lives, our old way of life will not disappear in an instant. For the balance of our life, we must submit ourselves to the power of the Holy Spirit. We must be as the clay pot in the book of Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 18:2-6) We must be placed back on the Potter's wheel, in order to be re-shaped and re-molded into what God wants us to be, as new creatures. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

How can I live the life that Jesus led? He was perfect in all areas. (Hebrews 4:15) We cannot be perfect; however, we can strive toward the goal. Paul says in the book of Philippians that we are to forget the things that are behind and that we are to press on toward the mark. (Philippians 3:13-14) We can rejoice in the fact that our past failures are now covered under the blood of Jesus Christ. They have been forgiven by our heavenly Father. We can do all things (Philippians 4:13); meaning that through His power and His strength, we can live an honest life, just as Jesus did.

Honesty means that we can walk in the light without shame, without guilt, and without fear of being found out. Honesty means that we do not have to keep looking over our shoulder, to see if someone has discovered our secret sin. Honesty is living without self-condemnation. The Bible says there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1) An honest life will allow us to hold our head high. We will be able to answer questions that man may pose, without fear of retribution or condemnation.



Methods

Playing the Movie Critic

If your group is one that has seen many television "situation comedies," encourage them at least to evaluate them. How many plays, movies, and programs are based on the premise that the lead character has told a lie, and spends the rest

of the time covering up with other lies? Much of secular humor, from Shakespeare on, is based on the fact that one lie leads to more lies. We should always encourage our students to avoid those programs that are based on evil, even when it seems innocent and light-hearted. Learn to detect the underlying motives and messages in all programs; and discuss the philosophy of the writers and producers.

Skit

Illustrate this concept by writing a short two-member play; and use either members of the teaching team or two students to act it out. Premise: A young man is trying to impress a female friend with his knowledge of a subject that he does not really understand, or a degree that he does not really have. Pick a field for which you have knowledge, such as computers, music aviation, or a foreign language. The female, unknown to the fellow, actually does know the topic. As she asks some intelligent questions, have him make up words and answers that expose his deception, making him become increasingly nervous.

Failure

Volume 7

Lesson 16



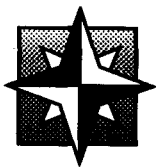
Bible References

Psalms 103:13-18

2 Corinthians 13:4-6

Hebrews 6:1-6

Hebrews 11



Theme

The difference between failing and becoming a failure depends upon the way we respond to our failures.



Scripture Reading

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

24 "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

25 "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

26 "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

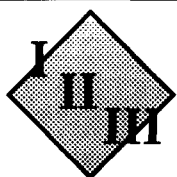
27 "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."



Memory Verse

2 John 8

"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."



Outline

I. Anyone Can Fail.

A. God knows that we will stumble, for we are human and finite.

1. Psalms 103:13-18.
2. 1 John 1:8, 10.
3. 2 Samuel 14:14.

B. Different kinds of failure.

1. In attempting a task that we are not equipped or qualified to do.
 - a. Then, recognize our limitations; and do what we can do.
 - b. If God called you to do it, get some training, so that you can do it well.
2. Mistakes.
 - a. Learn from mistakes, and try again.
 - b. Ask for forgiveness; and forgive yourself, too.
3. Falling into sin.
 - a. Ask for God's forgiveness.
 - b. Ask for grace to overcome, the next time.
 - c. Focus on the consequences, and not the pleasure of sin.
4. Failing, because you did not try.
 - a. Recognize that fear is the opposite of faith.
 - b. Do not let the fear of failure keep you from trying.
 - c. *"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."* (James 4:17)
5. Failing to receive God's grace.
 - a. Hebrews 12:15.

- b. Grace is God's enabling power working through human vessels.
- c. We fail to receive grace, when we try to overcome with our own strength.
- d. God resists the proud, but gives His grace to the humble. (1 Peter 5:5)

II. Good People Who Failed, but Who Were Not Failures.

A. David.

1. 2 Samuel 11:1-5.
 - a. David committed adultery with Bathsheba.
 - b. He later had her husband, Uriah murdered, in order to cover his sin.
 - c. Uriah was a faithful, loyal man.
2. 2 Samuel 12.
 - a. One year later, God sent Nathan the prophet to confront David.
 - b. David repented; and he wrote Psalms 51.
 - c. The baby still died, because of God's judgment.
 - d. There were still consequences, although God forgave him.

B. Abram.

1. Genesis 12:11-13.
 - a. Abram told Sarah to pretend that she was just his sister.
 - b. She was beautiful; and he feared the Egyptians might kill him, in order to get her.
2. Genesis 12:18-19.
 - a. His deception was discovered.
 - b. His son later followed his bad example. (Genesis 26:7)

C. Peter.

1. Matthew 26:69-75.
2. Peter denied knowing Jesus, when He was being tried.
3. He repented; and he was fully restored.
4. Later in life, Peter refused to deny the Lord when in Rome; and he was crucified.
5. He was honored to be a martyr for the faith.
6. In the end, he stood firm; and he was an overcomer.

D. John Mark.

1. Acts 15:37-38.
2. He gave up, and quit Paul's ministry team.
3. He could not make the commitment.
4. Later, Barnabas took him in and gave him another chance.
5. He was eventually forgiven and restored to Paul (2 Timothy 4:11); but he lost time from his calling.

III. God Encourages Us to Keep Trying -- Do Not Give Up!

A. If we sin -- He forgives, if we repent.

1. Psalms 103:10-12.
2. 1 John 1:9.
3. 1 John 2:1-2.
4. 1 Chronicles 28:20.

B. He still uses imperfect people.

1. David. (1 Chronicles 29:10-11, 16)
2. Abraham. (Genesis 15:4-6)
3. Peter. (Acts 2:14, 41)
4. Paul. (Acts 18:7-8)
5. John Mark. (2 Timothy 4:11)

C. Failure can be a great reminder that we desperately need God's grace, in order to be overcomers in life.

1. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.
2. Hebrews 12:10-11.

IV. Perseverance Will Bring Eventual Success.

A. Those who let failure stop them never develop into what God intended for them to be. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

B. Develop your talents and serve God with all your ability; and He will make you fruitful.

1. Train yourself in godly things.
 - a. 1 Timothy 4:7-8.
 - b. Hebrews 5:14.
 - c. Hebrews 12:1.
2. Invest your life in God's service.
3. Be patient -- God is not finished with you, yet.

**Spiritual Truths**

- Everyone fails at one time or another.
- God is the only One Who will never fail.
- A failure is not one who fails. A failure is one who quits.
- It is good to learn from our mistakes and failures. It is even better to learn from the mistakes and failures of others.

- The Bible records accurate accounts of many people who failed in life.
- We are to continue to try and do the best we can, and ask for God's help.
- Our failures will defeat us, only if we allow them to.
- Learn to forget the things that are behind; and reach for the prize.
- Not everyone who starts the race finishes.



Lesson Material

All of us fail at times. We miss the mark, not necessarily through sinful intent or rebellion, but due to our own human weakness or lack of experience and maturity. God does not intend these shortfalls to destroy or cripple us, but to motivate us to draw closer to Him. God does not put a stamp of failure on our foreheads when we are not perfect. God knows that we were born with a sin nature and that we, by our very nature, will fail at times. What is important to note is that God is there to pick us up when we fall, dust us off, and put us back into the race.

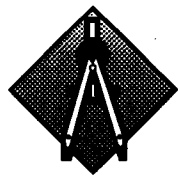
Many of the great men and women of the Bible failed. David slew Goliath, ruled Israel as their greatest king, was chosen as God's anointed one, and had a heart after God. Yet even David fell into sin. Moses sinned after the long trek through the wilderness, and it kept him from journeying into the promised land that he had long sought. There were consequences to his rash act. But because Moses

repented, he did not lose his eternal reward. He is still regarded as one of the greatest men who ever lived.

Peter denied Christ; and yet, he went on to be one of the great apostles of the church, and he died a victorious martyr in Rome. Failure, therefore, does not mean eternal condemnation. It means that we are human. What each of these men did in the scripture was to repent of their sin and get back into the race.

God does not want to return for a weak and crumbling church. Jesus is coming back for a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle. (Ephesians 5:27) To become that kind of church, we must respond to our mistakes and failures and learn from them. We need to learn to avoid committing the same mistakes, and also to learn from the mistakes of others, so that we do not duplicate their failures. We must also learn to not let our failures mark us for life, but turn to them over to God, and move on to better things.

Our students need to learn that the chances are good that they will fail again, and again, and again. But God will not forsake them. They must work to avoid failure; and, in so doing, they help in the perfecting of righteousness that God wants them to have. Our righteousness is a gift from Jesus (Philippians 3:9); and it covers our sins and failures. God simply wants us to turn our sin back over to Him, and to do our best at avoiding those same sins again.



Methods

Discussion

On the blackboard, make a list of Bible characters who failed, but who were restored and then won the race in life. Discuss how they each failed, and how they responded to their failure. Then, make a parallel list of people who failed and never overcame. Suggest ways that they could have responded, so that they would have ended their lives in victory. Note that it was not the seriousness of the crime or failure that determined the outcome, but rather the ways in which the

people dealt with the situations. See if the students can add to the lists; and put the additions on the correct side of the ledger.

Overcomers

King David
Moses
Noah
Jacob
John Mark
Peter
Jonah

Failures

King Saul
Pharaoh
Cain
Esau
Demas
Judas
The prophet of 1 Kings 13

Testimony

Share from your own life experience an example of restoration after failure. Also, you may briefly recount a situation in which God's grace kept you from failing; and give Him glory.

Halloween and the Occult

Volume 7

Lesson 17

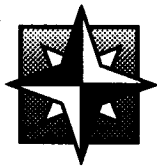


Bible References

Deuteronomy 18:9-15

1 Timothy 4:1

1 John 4:1-4



Theme

We must be wise and prepared, in order to overcome the occult influences around us and influence our world for Christ.



Scripture Reading

2 Timothy 4:3-4

3 *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;*

4 *"And they shall turn away {their} ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."*

Deuteronomy 18:9-15

9 *"When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.*

10 *"There shall not be found among you {any one} that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, {or} that useth divination, {or} an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,*

11 *"Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.*

12 *"For all that do these things {are} an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.*

13 *"Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.*

14 *"For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so {to do}.*

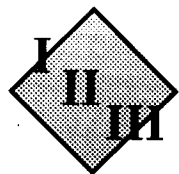
15 *"The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;"*



Memory Verse

1 John 4:4

"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. "



Outline

I. Definition of Occult.

A. Refers to things that are hidden, or mysterious.

1. The occult deals with things secret or hidden.
2. The occult deals with operations or events which seem to depend on human powers, that go beyond the five senses.
3. The occult deals with the supernatural -- the presence of demonic forces, which often claim to be angelic.

B. Collection of related practices and beliefs.

1. Usually not an organized, hierarchical religion.
2. Frequent use of symbols, hand signs; focus on death and darkness.
3. The promise of power is the lure to destruction and death.

C. Two common responses.

1. Disregard.
 - a. To deny the existence of such groups or practices.
 - b. To downplay the seriousness of them.
2. Infatuation.
 - a. To get wrapped up in them.
 - b. To be drawn by curiosity and intrigue, only to be trapped in them.

II. Development of the Occult.

A. Original life.

1. The thought that you can control the spirit realm and be God.
2. Note Genesis 3:4-5.

B. Egyptian magicians contended with Moses. (Exodus 7:11-12, 22)

C. The Canaanite people.

1. Destroyed, because of their wicked occult practices.
2. The Jews were forbidden to get involved with them.
3. Deuteronomy 18:9-15.

D. Saul sought mediums.

1. When he was backslidden.
2. He could not hear from God; and the prophet, Samuel was dead.
3. 1 Samuel 28:5-8.

E. The "Daughter of Babylon." (Psalms 137:8)

1. Called "Mystery Babylon" in the book of Revelation (Revelation 17:5); and symbolic of occult religion, as prophetically condemned in Isaiah.

2. Isaiah 47:3-15.

F. The apostle Paul contended with occultists during his ministry.

1. Acts 19:23-29.
2. Acts 16:16-18.

G. The early church recognized it as an enemy to be rejected. (Galatians 5:19-21)

H. We contend with it today. (Ephesians 6:11-12)

III. Dangers of the Occult.

A. Deception that can destroy us, by pulling us away from God.

1. 2 Corinthians 11:14-15.
2. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12.
3. 1 Timothy 4:1.

B. Entrapment.

1. Ephesians 5:11 -- *"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather [reprove {them}]."*
2. Do not even come near such activity, even for the purpose of "observing."

IV. Occult Groups Names and Forms.

A. The Craft.

B. Wicca; Wiccan Church.

C. Druids.

D. Gaia; Earth "god" or "goddess."

1. In the form of a "force" which controls nature.

2. The idea of a "living earth."

E. Nature worship; naturalism; some forms of ecology groups.

F. Animal worship.

G. Magick. With a "k," to differentiate from parlor slight-of-hand.

H. Paganism; neo-paganism; devotion to gods of the elements, heavens or mythology.

I. Goddess worship.

1. Artemis/Diana -- goddess of creation.
2. Aphrodite -- goddess of love, etc.

J. Coven; grove; circle -- names for gatherings/groupings.

K. Norse mythology.

V. Practices and Manifestations.

A. Astrology.

B. Magic and sorcery.

1. This is not slight-of-hand illusion.
2. These are people who use special (demonic) powers to accomplish the seemingly impossible.

C. Violent, perverse movies, music and literature and art.

D. Acid-rock and much hard-rock music.

1. Some rock groups get their inspiration from meetings with demon spirits (seances).
2. Satan seeks to infiltrate demonic, sensual music into the church.

E. Tarot cards/fortune telling.

F. Ouija Boards.

G. Dungeons and Dragons game.

H. Witchcraft -- both "white" and "black."

I. Satanism.

J. Psychic Phenomena. (Uri Geller, Kreskin, ESP.)

K. Spiritism; mediums; seances; necromancy.

L. Channelers of past, dead personages.

1. Note that these people only think that they are channeling dead people.
2. They are actually being deceived by demon spirits, who imitate the dead.
3. The wicked dead are in hell; and they cannot return to earth. (Luke 16:24-26)

M. Telepathy.

1. Movement or control of objects, supposedly "with the mind."
2. Also explained by the reality of demon spirits.

N. Parapsychology.

1. "Out of body" experiences.
2. Also demonic deceptions.

O. Voodoo; tribal religions.

1. Voodoo is supposedly a demonic mixture of Catholicism and witchcraft.
2. The nation of Haiti was beautiful and prosperous, until the people turned from Christianity and dedicated the island to Voodoo in

the 1830s.

P. Drug abuse as a mind-expanding, "spiritual" experience.

VI. Symbols/Terminology.

A. Horoscope symbols.

1. Originally designed to reflect biblical truth.
2. Signs of the Zodiac now used to promote pagan manipulation by astrologers.

B. Skull (often with flames, snakes, or knives through it).

C. Pentagram (inverted, five-pointed star).

D. "All-seeing Eye," as on the back of a one-dollar bill.

E. Peace symbol. -- actually upside-down, broken cross.

F. Unicorn.

G. Ankh. Egyptian symbol, like a "T" with a circle above it.

H. Horn-type ornaments, symbolizing power.

I. Goats.

1. a common hand signal, with extended thumb, index and small finger, is actually an ancient witchcraft symbol for the goat.
2. A horned goat's head is a popular symbol for the devil.

J. Magic circle. --normally around a pentagram, inside of which occult worshipers gather, to be safe from spirits.

- K. Spells, incantations, etc. --"magic" words, used to accomplish desired results.
- L. The "power within" (or, the "god within").
1. Witches do not usually believe in a personal, living God.
 2. They generally believe in an impersonal "force."
- M. Astral planes. Supposed dimension through which spirits travel, and to which man has access through occult rites.
- N. Basic Element.
1. Fire, water, earth and sky.
 2. Objects or utensils of worship for occult groups.
- O. Halloween.
1. "All Hollows Eve."
 2. High holiday of Satanic groups.

VII. Destiny.

- A. Satan and the occult world have been already defeated by Christ at the cross. (1 John 3:8)
- B. Satan is powerless against those who are under the blood of Christ.
1. Colossians 2:13-15.
 2. Hebrews 2:14-15.
 3. Satan's power is limited to illusion and deception.
- C. The devil is unable to destroy the Christian who is abiding in Christ. (2 Thessalonians 3:2-3)
- D. Hell.

1. Revelation 21:7-8.
2. Revelation 22:15.
3. Revelation 20:10, 14.



Spiritual Truths

- Occultists have existed almost from the time of Adam and Eve.
- There will always be men who will seek to get their way by their own power, or with the help of other, "secret" powers, which they think that they control.
- There is real power in the occult; but it is destructive and Satanic, degrading and damning its practitioners.
- Christians need not fear occult practitioners; but we do need to respect the reality of those powers and pray for those caught up in Satan's deception.
- Those in league with Satan and his forces will one day be condemned with him to hell, eternal torment, and separation from the God they resisted.
- Even dabbling for "fun" with occult activity is unsafe for people. It is habit-forming and spirit-damaging.
- You cannot "play" with the occult without getting burned.
- Goblins, ghosts, witches, demons, etc. are occult symbols perfectly in place with Halloween -- the high occult holiday.

- Christians should have no part of Halloween.
- Occultism deals with the secret, the fearsome, and the dark.
- Jesus is the Light of the world. He overcomes darkness.
- Jesus has all power in heaven and earth. That does not leave much for the devil.
- Many cartoons and movies are full of occult symbols, references, and influences.



Lesson Material

This lesson is not meant to perk the interest or curiosity of the young people, but to warn them of the dangers of dabbling with the occult and to assure them that Christ will protect and enable them to overcome its influences, if they stay close to Him. Jesus is in command over all created things, both earthly and spiritual. (Ephesians 1:22) He will supply our needs; and so, we need not seek out other "powers," in order to make our own way and fortune. Jesus gives true peace and eternal life. The occult holds depression, dementia and eternal death.

The occult is gaining popularity today. Its practices and symbols can be seen in more and more parts of all societies. There are Ouija Boards sold in great numbers, astrologers' charts in nearly every newspaper, occult games like Dungeons and Dragons, comic books filled with occult characters and activities, demon-

possession movies and books, Satanic art on display, and music groups using occult symbolism and actions in their albums and concerts.

The draw of the occult is the lust for power that seems unavailable any other way. Many people have a strong desire to know the future, to control their own or someone else's life, to assure the outcome of some activity, or to accomplish some seemingly unreachable desire. The lie is that we can accomplish these things without God, that He is not on our side, and that He is withholding from us our rightful place and godhood. It is the same lie that Eve fell for, in Eden. (Genesis 3:4-5) "Finding the god within" is a major theme today, with the emphasis on "within." Remember that it was the devil who said, "...Ye shall be as gods,...." (Genesis 3:5) The Bible tells us that we are filthy within. (Isaiah 64:6) There is no resident "godhood" within us -- only a fallen, sinful nature. Those lost in the occult deny this and seek to unlock an "inner deity," which, in truth, is often a demon-in-residence, which is given free room and board through the openness of the occult seeker.

Though some people enter the occult to do "good" for man and society, it is a false promise. In seeking to do their work through the occult, they deny God's ability and intent to do good to men; and they take it into their own hands to make up for His seeming deficiency.

Following the outline, we see that occult practices have plagued man since the Fall. God forbade Israel from partaking in such practices; and He went so far as to order them to completely destroy the Canaanites (Deuteronomy 7:2), who were steeped in the occult so deeply, that nothing would pull them out. Israel's

failure to obey in this command would haunt them throughout their history, as they time and again fell into the heathen practices of their neighbors and were, eventually, themselves expelled from the land. Today, we still are up against the same forces. Satan's lies and works do not change -- only the package he brings them in. (2 Corinthians 2:11) Today's New Age influence and Eastern mystic religions are saturated in occult themes and practices. Reincarnation, channeling, mystic meditation and "crystals" are all parts of these false spiritual groups.

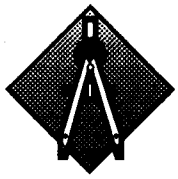
Satan does counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders; and he seems to give people power to do good works -- but, it is all deception. Those who fall to his lie are eventually sucked in to a world of darkness and depravity, as the allure of power and position and control overcome early leanings toward kindness and mercy. Young people caught up in "Dungeons and Dragons" have turned and killed friends and even parents, in order to please the "Dungeon Master." Playing with occult things is dangerous -- no one escapes unscathed. Even Christians can subject themselves to demonic oppression, if they dabble in these things and open their lives to demonic activity.

The occult takes numerous forms. Witchcraft, sorcery and magic, Norse mythology, paganism, voodoo, ESP and EST are just a few. Sexual immorality and rape, animal sacrifice, drug abuse and murder are but a few of the practices and results of occult activity. The creation is worshipped; and Satan is seen often as a false personification made up by Christians to control people and prevent them from discovering their innate powers.

For the Christian, the occult and its practices are dangerous. We neither need that power (we have the ultimate power from Christ, the Creator of the universe), nor do we need to seek knowledge of the future, since God cares for our future and meets all of our needs. (Philippians 4:19) Besides, devils cannot accurately predict the future. Only God can.

Turning to the occult shows a lack of trust and faith in Christ to work for our best and to care for and protect us. We can rest assured in Christ, knowing that in ourselves is nothing good, but that He died for us to enable the ultimate goodness of the Holy Spirit to dwell in us and qualify us for eternal life with God our Father.

In the end, those outside of Christ -- those who rejected or chose to ignore Him in this life -- will spend eternity without Him, in eternal agony in a fiery lake of fire. (Revelation 20:14) Satan cannot escape his appointment with hell. He wants to drag as many people as possible down with him, since he knows that each lost soul grieves the heart of God. Do not let your students be sucked into Satan's lies, merely because they lacked the information to recognize and resist his subtle allurements. Warn and exhort them to reject any belief system or activity which denies Christ or contains occultist, ungodly actions or beliefs. When we are walking in the Spirit, we can resist and defeat the spirits of darkness.



Methods

An Ephesian Bonfire

Ask the students to make a list of things in their homes or at school that they think may be satanic symbols or artifacts. Discuss the lists in light of the

material listed above. If they find satanic symbols, books, or music, strongly urge them to destroy them, and not sell them. You might even want to have an Acts 19:19 Ephesian bonfire, patterned after the early believers who burned up many occult books, statues, and symbols. It was one of the most expensive bonfires in history; and there was great rejoicing, as these new believers were set free from the powers of darkness.

Satan the Accuser

Volume 7

Lesson 18



Bible References

Matthew 4:1

1 Peter 5:8

Revelation 13

Revelation 20

12 *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high {places}."*

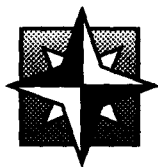
Isaiah 14:12-15

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.*

15 *"Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit."*



Theme

Satan is a real, personal, and evil spirit being, who is active in our world today.



Scripture Reading

Ephesians 6:11-12

11 *"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

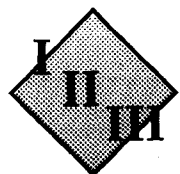


Memory Verse

1 Peter 5:8-9

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are

accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."



Outline

I. Satan Is Real.

A. Biblical proof.

1. He appeared to Eve. (Genesis 3:1)
2. He accused Joshua, the High Priest. (Zechariah 3:1-2)
3. He has a place in prophecy. (2 Thessalonians 2:9)

B. Evidence from the life of Jesus.

1. Jesus was tempted by a real and powerful evil being. (Matthew 4:1-11)
2. The Lord named Satan as head of all evil forces. (Matthew 12:25-26)
3. He verified Satan's activity. (Luke 22:31)

C. Satan is mentioned by every New Testament writer.

1. Matthew 4:1-4.
2. Mark 1:12-13.
3. Luke 10:17-18.
4. John 13:27.
5. Paul. (2 Corinthians 11:14)
6. Writer of Hebrews. (Hebrews 2:14)
7. James. (James 4:7)
8. Peter. (1 Peter 5:8)
9. Jude. (Jude 9)

II. Who Is Satan?

A. A created spirit being. (Ezekiel 28:12-15)

1. God created millions of angels to serve Him.
2. These spirits do not have physical bodies.
3. Satan was the worship leader in the spirit world.
4. "Lucifer" means "light-bearer."
5. He was beautiful.
6. He had music built into him.

B. A personal being.

1. Intelligence. (2 Corinthians 11:3)
2. Emotions. (Revelation 12:17)
3. Communication. (Matthew 4:3, 6, 9)
4. Will. (2 Timothy 2:26)

C. A fallen being.

1. Lucifer was lifted up with pride. (Ezekiel 28:17)
2. He was full of envy and jealousy. (Isaiah 14:13-14)
3. God, Who deserves all praise, had to cast him out.
 - a. Isaiah 14:12, 15.
 - b. Ezekiel 28:17.
4. Lucifer was cast out of heaven and sent to earth.

III. Satan's Position and Power.

A. He was an archangel (Lucifer).

1. He was called an anointed, covering cherub. (Ezekiel 28:14)
2. He dwelled in God's presence.
 - a. Ezekiel 28:14.
 - b. Job 1:6.

B. He has authority.

1. Prince of this world (*kosmos*, -- the earthly, carnal realm of men and demons). (John 12:31)
2. Prince of the power of the air (illusion, deception). (Ephesians 2:2)
3. Earthly kingdoms. (Luke 4:5-7)
4. False religions. (2 Corinthians 11:3-4)
5. Prince of demons. (Matthew 12:24)

C. He is under God's sovereign authority.

1. He is not omniscient. (Matthew 24:36; 1 Corinthians 2:7-8)
2. He is not omnipresent. (Revelation 20:1-3)
3. He is not omnipotent.
 - a. Revelation 20:10.
 - b. James 4:7.
4. He is limited by God. (Job 1:9-10; 2:4-6)

IV. Satan's Purposes.

A. He prevents souls from being saved.

1. He blinds unbelievers.
 - a. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4.
 - b. Ephesians 2:2.
2. He steals the Word from them. (Mark 4:15)

B. Satan tries to neutralize the influence of believers.

1. Deceives.
 - a. 2 Corinthians 11:3.
 - b. 1 Timothy 4:1.
2. Torments. (2 Corinthians 12:7)
3. Tempts.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 7:5.
 - b. Genesis 3:4-5.
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 3:5.
4. Contends.
 - a. Revelation 12:17.
 - b. Ephesians 6:11-12.
5. Accuses.

- a. Zechariah 3:1-2.
- b. Revelation 12:10.
6. Destroys. (1 Peter 5:8)

V. His Titles.

- A. Abaddon. (Revelation 9:11)
- B. Accuser. (Revelation 12:10)
- C. Adversary. (1 Peter 5:8)
- D. Angel of the abyss (bottomless pit). (Revelation 9:11)
- E. Apollyon. (Revelation 9:11)
- F. Beelzebub. (Matthew 12:24)
- G. Devil (slanderer). (Matthew 4:1)
- H. God of this world. (2 Corinthians 4:4)
- I. Murderer. (John 8:44)
- J. Liar. (John 8:44)
- K. Prince of devils. (Matthew 12:24)
- L. Prince of the power of the air. (Ephesians 2:2)
- M. Prince of this world. (John 12:31)
- N. Ruler of darkness. (Ephesians 6:12)
- O. Serpent. (Genesis 3:4; Revelation 20:2)
- P. Tempter.
 1. Matthew 4:3.
 2. 1 Thessalonians 3:5.
- Q. Evil one. (Matthew 13:19, 38)
- R. Satan (opposer). (Zechariah 3:1)
- S. Dragon. (Revelation 12:9)

T. Deceiver. (Revelation 20:3)

VI. Our Hope Over Satan.

A. The work of Jesus on the cross.

1. Christ overcame death, hell, and the grave. (Hebrews 2:14-15)
2. The Lord rules over Satan.
 - a. Colossians 2:15.
 - b. 1 Corinthians 15:24-25.
3. Jesus dwells in believers by His Spirit. (1 John 4:4; Romans 8:9))

B. We can stand against Satan.

1. We can resist. (1 Peter 5:9-10)
2. We have God's protection. (Luke 10:18-19)
3. God provides armor for our protection. (Ephesians 6:10-13)

C. Satan's doom is sure.

1. Total defeat. (Revelation 20:1-3, 7-10)
2. Eternal torment. (Matthew 25:41)

- He was a beautiful worship leader in heaven.
- Satan fell from his place with God through his own pride and envy.
- Satan attacks God's people; and he works to prevent unbelievers from calling on Christ for salvation.
- Satan has been completely defeated through Christ's death and resurrection.
- Satan's ongoing attacks can be overcome through Jesus' blood, the Holy Spirit, and God's armor.
- Satan will one day be sentenced to eternity in the lake of fire.
- All human souls who chose in this life not to serve and worship God will be in the lake of fire with Satan and his angels.



Spiritual Truths

- Satan is a real being, who leads other evil beings in rebellion against God.
- Satan always lies.
- Satan is cunning and deceptive.
- Satan is not equal to God in any way.
- Satan was originally an archangel, who dwelt in God's presence.



Lesson Material

The purpose of this lesson is not to glorify or elevate Satan and his abilities, but to assure that the students recognize his real personage and respect his power, as they seek to serve Christ in their lives. Primary is the fact that God is sovereign over Satan and the sublime truth that Christ provides weapons with which we can resist and defeat Satan's influence.

People who accept the world's idea that Satan is a myth are usually those who doubt God's Word and consider it a myth, as well. If they fall for the pagan idea of

dualism (the idea of one good and one evil god of equal power), they will be open to cult and occult influences. They may also fall prey to tremendous fear and doubt of God's willingness and ability to protect them.

It is important to understand the biblical reality of the devil. Most witches do not really believe in a personal devil, any more than they believe in a personal God. Satan's whole program is based on deception. He does not care if people are serving him, themselves, or other people, as long as they are not serving God. The power of witchcraft works only in darkness. The moment the light of truth hits it, it loses its hold on the victims. Satan deceives pagan people into thinking that they are the masters of their own destiny, and that they can have some form of eternal life other than biblical resurrection life.

Satan wants even Christians to think that he is like God. Some believers have the notion that Satan is everywhere; and they blame him for everything that they do not like. The truth is that he is a created being. He can only be in one place at one time. He moves quickly, and he never sleeps; but he is not omnipresent, and he does not know everything. The devil does not know the future, and he cannot read your thoughts. Only God can. The devil does have many helpers, because one-third of the angels fell with him; and they are the evil spirits which are operating in the world today. Satan also has millions of wicked people who do his bidding, although most of them do not believe that he even exists.

When Adam and Eve fell, many Bible scholars believe that they gave the dominion of the earth over to Satan. In Revelation 5:1-10, Jesus reclaims the

earth's title deed, having legal authority to do so, because He had redeemed the earth by His sacrifice on the cross. However, for now, Satan is called "the god of this world." (2 Corinthians 4:4) He had legal authority to offer Jesus the kingdoms of this world, when he tempted Jesus in the wilderness. (Matthew 4:8-9) But Satan does not have authority over believers, for Jesus has "...delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath [translated] (us) into the kingdom of his dear Son:" (Colossians 1:13) We are no longer Satan's subjects. As long as we are submitted to God, we can resist Satan. (James 4:7) Satan only has authority over those who are not under God's authority. Many times, Christians are mistaken in identifying as Satanic influence what the Bible calls the "works of the flesh." (Galatians 5:19-21) In so doing, Satan is credited for much more power than he actually has in the lives of believers; and believers tend to "blame the devil" for their own fleshliness. While Satan certainly takes advantage of our old, carnal nature, the works of the flesh must be crucified, and not cast out. (Galatians 5:24)

Having said that, we still recognize Satan's reality, purposes, and processes. This awareness prepares Christians to withstand his subtle, but destructive influences. Forewarned is forearmed. The understanding that we are in spiritual warfare motivates us to pray, to grow in holiness, to witness effectively, and to work in the midst of enemy territory. The assurance of Satan's certain demise encourages us to stand through any trial, confident in our hope in Christ and His protection. Following the outline, we first affirm the reality of Satan's existence by various proofs. Though it is unlikely that either you or any of your students have had, or ever will have, a direct confrontation with Satan himself, the

testimonies of the Bible and history should provide sufficient evidence of his personal existence.

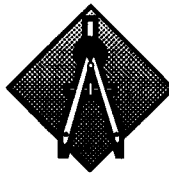
From that base, we move into his history. Originally created as Lucifer, the "son of the morning" (an archangel), he lost it all in a self-deceiving attempt to overthrow the very Creator of the universe. Having authority over at least a third of the angels, he lusted for the praise and worship he led, wanting his own authority to extend over all creation. After serving God for an undisclosed period in the spirit world, he turned to exalt his own position. Lucifer wanted to be equal with God. The worshipper wanted to be worshipped. He was cast out with a multitude of angels, who were also lifted up with pride.

Some Bible scholars believe that this rebellion caused the destruction of the "original" earth -- an earth with developed civilizations and beings; and that the earth then became "formless and empty." (Genesis 1:2; Isaiah 14:16-17) This would be more consistent with the parallels between the Word and human history. Would God have created a formless, dark world; or, would God have created a perfect world, with an opportunity for choice? (Isaiah 45:18)

Satan's purpose now is to usurp God's authority in the minds of everyone who will be deceived into rebelling against their Maker. He seeks to cast doubt on God's mercy, love, and faithfulness, and to prevent any of us from being reconciled to God. He tried to destroy the Jews, through whom the Christ would come. He also attempts to silence and shut down the church, Christ's bride. We, as Christians, are equipped and empowered to defeat Satan's attacks through God's protection, through prayer and intercession, honesty,

humility, fellowship with fellow believers, and through the truth of God's Word. We should be encouraged to grow in these areas and to seek God's help in resisting Satan.

Satan's end is sure. He will be cast into the lake of fire for all eternity, never again to tempt and attack the saints. For now, Jesus warns us to be on guard, that we might not be deceived or drawn away from Him. (Matthew 24:24) Impress this on the students. *"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of [his devices]."* (2 Corinthians 2:11) Be alert, be in prayer, be in the Word, and be in church -- and your life will be a beacon of light to those lost in darkness.



Methods

Art Class Time

Give each student a blank piece of paper and have them draw a picture on one side of what they think Satan looks like. On the other side of the paper, have them list characteristics of Satan. Discuss their lists in light of the material above; and discuss the right and wrong views of Satan.

Be sure to note the common picture of the devil in red leotards with horns and a tail. Compare that to 2 Corinthians 11:14, which states that he appears "as an angel of light." Does the devil want people to picture him as a mean-looking creature with horns, so that they will not recognize him when he does show up? Do people in witchcraft claim to have light?

Do Not Follow the Crowd

Volume 7

Lesson 19



Bible References

Psalms 64:2-6

Acts 14:11-19

Numbers 21:4-9

Numbers 14:6-10, 23-24, 30

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

Romans 12:2

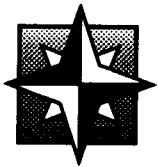
2 "Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity:

3 "Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words:

4 "That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.

5 "They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?

6 "They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep."



Theme

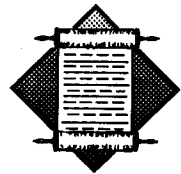
Do not let the world's crowd define your behavior and beliefs.



Memory Verse

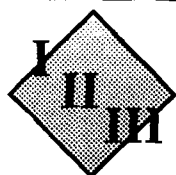
Romans 8:6

"For to be [carnally minded] {is} death; but to be spiritually minded {is} life and peace."



Scripture Reading

Psalms 64:2-6



Outline

I. What Are Characteristics of a Crowd?

- A. Crowds tend to lack convictions. (Acts 14:11-19)
- B. Emotional.
 - 1. Controlled by feelings of the moment.
 - 2. Numbers 21:4-6.
- C. A crowd tends to be driven by base instinct and fleshly desires. (Numbers 11:4-6, 10)
- D. Often prone to hysteria and illogical behavior.
 - 1. Numbers 20:2-5.
 - 2. Acts 6:10-15; 7:54-58.
- E. A crowd will push its will on the uncooperative, to force unanimity.
 - 1. Exodus 32:1-6.
 - 2. Matthew 27:22-26.
 - 3. Mark 15:15.
- F. Focus on outward appearances.
 - 1. Numbers 13:26-14:4.
 - 2. Matthew 9:6-8.
 - 3. Matthew 27:35, 39-44.
- G. Led by small group of rabble-rousers, who are too cowardly to stand up by themselves.
 - 1. Matthew 21:45-46.
 - 2. Matthew 27:20-21.

3. Acts 17:2-5, 12-13.

H. Complainers; whiners; usurpers of authority.

- 1. Exodus 14:10-12.
- 2. Exodus 15:22-24.
- 3. Numbers 16:1-7, 41.

I. Violent; unreasonable; noisy; uncontrolled.

- 1. Matthew 26:47.
- 2. Acts 7:54-58.
- 3. Acts 19:28-29, 32.
- 4. Acts 21:27-36.
- 5. Acts 22:22-24.

J. Broken easily by true authority.

- 1. Numbers 17:10-13.
- 2. Numbers 16:31-34.
- 3. John 18:4-6.
- 4. Acts 19:35-36, 40-41.
- 5. Acts 21:32.

II. The Price for Following the Wrong Crowd.

A. Judgment by God.

- 1. Numbers 11:31-33.
- 2. Numbers 21:4-9.

B. Eternal death.

- 1. Matthew 13:49-50.
- 2. Revelation 19:19-21, 11-15.
- 3. Revelation 21:8.

C. Loss of blessing. Numbers 14:26-35.

III. What Is a Christian to Do?**A. Stand alone -- do not follow the crowd.**

1. Romans 12:1-5.
2. Proverbs 1:10-19.
3. Hebrews 11:7, 24-27.

B. Be holy -- separated; different from the world.

1. Leviticus 18:3-5.
2. 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1.

C. Think from God's perspective. (1 Peter 1:13-16)**D. Be content with what God gives you. (Hebrews 13:5-6)****E. Trust God for all of your needs.**

1. Psalms 27:1-3.
2. Psalms 37:1-9.

IV. The Price for Standing for God.**A. Doing what is unpleasant for the sake of God. (Exodus 32:25-29)****B. Rejection and persecution by the world.**

1. 1 Peter 4:1-5.
2. John 15:20.
3. Hebrews 11:32-38.

C. Being misunderstood by others. (Jeremiah 43:1-4)**D. Martyrdom, in some cases.**

1. Matthew 24:9.
2. Acts 7:59-60.

E. Loneliness. (1 Kings 18:20-22; 19:14)**V. The Reward for Standing for God.****A. Salvation unto eternal life.**

1. James 1:12.
2. Hebrews 12:2-3.

B. Peace of mind, heart and spirit. (Isaiah 26:3)

Spiritual Truths

- We tend to become like whomever we focus our attention on in life.
- Moses could have been a "billionaire" if he had stayed in his Egyptian home; but he chose to suffer with the Hebrew people, and to follow God.
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego chose the furnace over following the crowd, because they feared God more than they feared death.
- Jesus taught that the crowded path of least resistance leads to hell.
- No one ever drifts toward God.
- The easy, soft choices in life are generally the wrong ones.
- "Emulation" is one of the works of the flesh, which shows that people are carnally minded.
- The darker the culture, the more brightly the light shines by contrast.

- Real Christians should not want to be accepted and admired by people who reject their Lord.
- We will never win the world by being like the world.
- We are called to be imitators of God.



Lesson Material

One of the fundamental truths of scripture is that God created man for Himself. When sin rules the heart, we avoid God and we avoid authority, because we do not like to be accountable to someone else for our actions. Sin causes us to look to other people as our source in life, rather than God. The Bible is full of stories about men and women who chose to trust and obey God, rather than follow the crowd. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were three among many who had to make that kind of choice. The whole nation worshipped a false image, by government decree. However, these young men decided that they feared God more than they feared the furnace; and God honored their choice. (Daniel 3:12-28)

When everyone on earth was living for pleasure and doing their own thing, Noah feared God, and he did what God said to do. (Hebrews 11:7) Elijah stood alone against 850 prophets and priests of Baal on Mount Carmel, declaring that one man plus God is a majority. (1 Kings 18:21-39) Jeremiah preached that Judah and Jerusalem were going to be defeated and brought into captivity by Babylon, when all of the other prophets were preaching

prosperity and blessing. (Jeremiah 20:4) God is honored by people who, in a world dominated by darkness, choose to follow the light, and become lights to the world. (Matthew 5:14)

When we are carnal, we get our focus off of God and onto ourselves and our physical world. It is a basic truth of human nature that we will tend to become like whomever we have our focus on. The more we focus on the temporal world, the more we will seek the approval of our peers, and the more we will tend to become like them. In fact, if we are bitter toward a person, we will develop an emotional focus on him. The more we think about him, even though negatively, the more we will tend to exhibit the very weakness that we dislike. That is a major motivation to forgive people who have wronged you, and to keep your focus on God and on positive things. (Isaiah 26:3; Philippians 4:8)

When we lose intimacy with God, we open ourselves to the carnal influences of man; and we become pressed into a lifestyle that is of a different slant than the biblical one. Paul said, "Do not let the world around you shape your life, by putting you into its own mold." (Romans 12:2, paraphrased) The world system has a character image that is basically against God. The less we consider spiritual things and eternity in our thinking, the less inclined we are to do that which is right. It is impossible to live a clean, moral life without the fear of the Lord and a right focus on eternal values. A temporal values system causes us to do what is convenient and popular for the moment. But wisdom causes us to see life from God's point of view, and to invest our lives into that which has eternal reward. Without a focus on God as our primary source of meaning and purpose in life, we

cannot motivate ourselves to right living. In other words, *"...The just shall live by faith."* (Romans 1:17)

When we look at the world and life through the perspective of scripture, we realize that God is far more important than people. The heroes of faith all had to choose to reject the crowd and fear God, more than they feared man. (Hebrews 11) When a person departs from faith, he will tend to give *"...heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;"* (be open to the occult, or to cults, or other forms of deception). (1 Timothy 4:1)

The crowd, according to Jesus, is going straight to hell. (Matthew 7:13-14) The flow of carnal humanity is always downward, just as the stream naturally flows downhill. Man never drifts toward God. We can only walk with God when we seek, and press toward the mark, and go against the flow.

Look in Galatians 5, where the apostle Paul makes a vivid contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the spirit. "Flesh" refers to the activities of man when he is left to live life by his own devices, following his natural inclinations. Notice that there is strife, envy, hatred, and all kinds of interpersonal conflicts. He also mentioned "emulations," which is a word describing a gang mentality, or a fad craze. It is not true that all young people are given to trying to be like the crowd all the time. It is true that all carnal people who lack wisdom tend to follow the crowd and seek constantly to be like "everybody else." The desire to emulate people is a direct result of a lack of spiritual focus on God. When we put our focus on God through Bible reading, prayer, Christian meetings and fellowship, giving, etc., we naturally build our faith; and we motivate ourselves to be like Jesus. The more we

fear God, the less we will fear people. We do not really care if it is popular with the crowd, as long as God is pleased.

All of us at various times in our lives have to make a choice between obeying God or following the crowd. We live in a world, like Noah, which is dominated by people who are deceived by darkness. The world is full of wickedness; and it is easy to get caught up in the mentality which seeks to justify it. When we stand alone for what is right, we bring honor and pleasure to God. Light is much more effective in a dark environment. A burning candle does not mean too much at high noon; but in the middle of a cave, it is as precious as gold.

The church is a body of believers, who have been called out of the "rat race" of carnal humanity to seek the living God; and they live for eternity, instead of for the moment. The Greek word for "church" means "called out ones." We are called to go against the flow of the social majority, and to pattern our lives after the eternal purposes of God.

In the cold Arctic Ocean, some researchers have noticed an amazing phenomenon, on occasion. They have watched the ice in broken sheets, floating along over the water. These ice floes would sometimes stretch for miles. The thing that so amazed them was that sometimes an iceberg would also be moving, but in the opposite direction. It would be breaking up a path through the floes, creating confusion in the observers. It does not make sense, until one realizes that the ice floe is floating on the surface and is moved by the winds, while the iceberg in 89% underneath the surface, and is being moved by the mighty ocean currents. People who are spiritually shallow will be *"...carried about with every*

wind of doctrine,..." (Ephesians 4:14); but, those who are rooted deeply in the things of God will be moved by His purposes in the earth. Paul spoke about the hope of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15; and in verse 58, he concluded with:

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."



Methods

Discussion questions:

Have you heard the phrase, "Everybody else is doing it?"

Have you ever used this phrase on your parents?

In light of what we have seen from God's Word, what is wrong with that attitude?

On what should we base our social decisions in life?

Should we consult our parents, when choosing friends?

Why do we feel so much pressure to be like the crowd?

Are Christian musicians missing it, when they try to look like the perverted, occult-oriented singers that dominate the secular music scene? Should they not, rather, reflect the joy of the Lord, and the beauty of holiness?

A million years from now, will it really matter, if you were popular with the secular crowd?

Pride and Humility

Volume 7

Lesson 20



Bible References

Luke 18:9-14

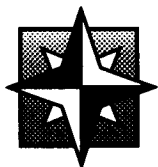
Matthew 6:2-6, 16-18

Isaiah 14:11-15

2 Chronicles 26:16-23

Proverbs 16:18

Psalms 138:6



Theme

God calls us to humble ourselves, recognizing our limitations and total dependence upon Him.



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;*

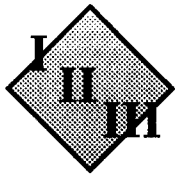
11 *"And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*



Memory Verse

Proverbs 29:23

"A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit."



Outline

I. Definitions.

A. Pride.

1. Conceit. (2 Timothy 3:1-2)
2. Disdain for others. (Luke 18:11)
3. Boastfulness. (Psalms 75:4-5)
4. Arrogance.
 - a. Romans 8:7-8.
 - b. Psalms 31:18.
5. Self-righteousness.
 - a. Romans 10:2-3.
 - b. Ephesians 2:8-9.
 - c. Luke 18:9-10.
6. Legalism.
 - a. Luke 18:12.
 - b. Matthew 15:8-9.
7. Concern with appearances. (1 Samuel 16:7)

B. Humility.

1. Awareness of shortcomings. (Luke 18:13)
2. Respect, reverence for others. (Philippians 2:3)

3. Dependence upon God.
 - a. Daniel 10:12.
 - b. James 4:10.
4. Not given to self-praise.
 - a. Proverbs 27:2.
 - b. Luke 14:7-11.
5. Focused on God's righteousness. (Philippians 3:9)
6. Empowered by grace.
 - a. Luke 18:14.
 - b. Ephesians 2:8-9.
7. Concerned with attitudes and the heart. (Psalms 139:23)

C. The heart.

1. The essence of who you are -- the center of your being and character. (Proverbs 17:3)
2. Pride clogs the arteries of love and obedience to God. (James 4:6)

D. Manifestations of humility.

1. Giving. (Matthew 6:1-4)
2. Praying. (Matthew 6:5-6)
3. Fasting. (Matthew 6:16-18)

E. The importance of motive.

1. The key to whether our works are acceptable to God. (1 Corinthians 3:11-15)
2. The proud will do good "to be seen of men." (Matthew 6:5)
3. The humble will serve, without seeking recognition or glory. (Psalms 115:1)

II. Results.

A. Pride.

1. Isolation from counsel and correction.
 - a. Job. 32:1.
 - b. Proverbs 15:32.

2. Unrepentance.
 - a. Psalms 36:2.
 - b. Matthew 13:15.
3. Self-deception. (Galatians 6:3)
4. Destruction.
 - a. Proverbs 16:18.
 - b. 2 Chronicles 26:16.
5. Slavery. (2 Peter 2:10, 18-19)

B. Humility.

1. Gains wisdom from others' counsel.
 - a. Proverbs 11:2.
 - b. Proverbs 15:32b.
2. Salvation.
 - a. Matthew 18:4.
 - b. 2 Samuel 22:28.
 - c. Psalms 18:27.
3. Sober self-evaluation. (Romans 12:3)
4. Blessing.
 - a. Proverbs 16:3.
 - b. Proverbs 15:33.
 - c. Matthew 23:12.
5. Freedom in Christ. (Romans 6:17-18)

III. God's Evaluation.

A. Christ's example.

1. Matthew 11:29.
2. Philippians 2:5-11.

B. His unit of measure.

1. Jeremiah 17:10.
2. Hebrews 4:12.

C. Verdict.

1. Proverbs 16:19, 25.
2. 1 Peter 5:5-6.
3. God is close to the humble, but He barely remembers the proud. (Psalms 138:6)

4. God resists the proud, but gives strength and power (grace) to the humble. (James 4:6)

IV. Our Responsibility.

A. Sober recognition of our true place. (Romans 12:3)

B. Seek God with all of your heart.

1. Romans 10:9-10.
2. Jeremiah 29:11-13.

C. Love God.

1. Deuteronomy 6:5.
2. Matthew 22:37.

D. Live for God, instead of for self.

1. Philippians 2:3-11.
2. Matthew 6:19-21.
3. 1 Corinthians 10:31.



Spiritual Truths

- The first sins of angels and of men were motivated by a spirit of pride.
- Pride is an undue focus on self, which places self in the place of pre-eminence, instead of God.
- Two great keys to success in life are humility and the fear of the Lord.
- False humility is the practice of putting yourself down to other people, with the expectation that they will react by

exalting you. It is still based on an excessive focus on self, which is pride.

- God's perfect sense of justice demands that the proud eventually be debased and diminished, while the humble are ultimately exalted.
- When we are proud, we cause God to resist us and to withhold His grace from our lives.
- Some people have the idea that God gives the most grace to those who are the most undeserving. The biblical criteria is that God gives grace to the humble.
- A man's pride causes a loss of spiritual intimacy with God, and a lack of spiritual power.
- One of the greatest concepts of wisdom is the realization that we desperately need God every moment of our lives, and that we are empty and powerless without Him.



Lesson Material

It is only when we have an understanding of the nature and purposes of God that we realize the seriousness of the sin of pride. Pride literally causes a man to live contrary to the purpose for which he was created. God made man for Himself. (Isaiah 43:21; Revelation 4:11) The highest purpose of the human race is to live for God in joyful, covenant intimacy as a worshipper. A worshipper lives for the sake of the One that he worships. He sees himself as existing for

the sake of the One that he adores. He sees his God as the Center of his world. This is the basis of the Christian world view: Jesus is Lord. He is the Center of our existence; and we live to please and worship Him. His honor and pleasure motivate us to do what we do. We are servants and stewards in this life; and we believe that if we will live for Him, He will do us good. Indeed, He already gave Himself for us, so that we could have eternal life. How could we offer anything less than our all to Him?

Pride is the essence of a secular world view. This world view sees self as the center of our life. The proud focuses his affection and attention on himself. He sees other people, and even God, as existing for his pleasure and honor. He may even be religious; but his motive is to use God to get him to heaven and to get what he wants in life. He tries to make deals with God; and he thinks that God is very pleased with him.

Saul, the first king of Israel, is an example both of humility and pride. He started out as the model of humility. He did not think too highly of himself. When told that he had been chosen to be king, he hid himself. (1 Samuel 10:21-22) He did not boast. He thought of other people as more important than himself. But when Saul became king and began to enjoy the wealth and power that came with the office, he began to take to heart all of the praise and honor that the people gave him. He took himself too seriously, and he began to take over the priestly function and make decisions he was not authorized by God to make. (1 Samuel 13:9-13) When he became proud, God withdrew His grace from his life; and he no longer had the spiritual protection from Satan that he had enjoyed when he was humble.

Peter later spoke about the fact that the devil is *"...as a roaring lion,...seeking whom he may devour."* (1 Peter 5:8) His advice was to *"humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God,...."* (1 Peter 5:6) When we are under God's authority, we are under God's protection. Satan loves to get sheep all alone, and away from the Shepherd. Then they are easy prey.

When Saul was lifted up with pride, he was out from under God's covering; and demons were able to get control of his life. He was tormented by them; and he was relieved only when a godly shepherd boy named David was commissioned to play his music for him. (1 Samuel 16:23) Saul had no power over the demons, because he was proud. However, the demons could not stand to be around David, as he worshipped the Lord with his music. David was humble; and so, he had great spiritual power.

There are many vivid examples of the consequences of pride in the Bible. Satan himself was a beautiful, worshipping angel, who decided that he wanted the glory for himself. (Isaiah 14) It is always dangerous for a musician to take the glory for himself and allow people to make him a "star." We need to be careful to give the glory to God, and make music a vehicle for a godly message. Lucifer was the great "light-bearer" angel; but his desire to be important caused him to be cast out of heaven. It destroyed him forever, for he was now a worshipper of himself, and he could never again be a joyful worshipper of God. He can never be restored. He can never be saved from the ultimate destiny of the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:10)

When the nation of Judah followed the path of carnality and idolatry, God raised up Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon,

and gave him great power and wealth. God used him as His "rod" to chasten the Jews, so that they would learn not to serve idols. But Nebuchadnezzar also got carried away with his own importance. His heart was puffed up with pride, and God withdrew His grace from his life; For seven years, he was an insane man, wandering about the countryside, eating grass and living in filth. Supernaturally, God restored his mind and even his kingdom, and let him know that it all belonged to God. (Daniel 4:31-37)

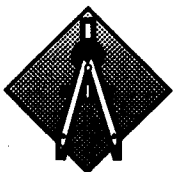
Pride is such a dangerous sin because we tend to think we are humble, when we are full of pride. It is a sin that is so hard to see. The Pharisees thought God was so pleased with them, when in fact, they were in worse shape than the prostitutes in God's sight. (Matthew 21:31) How do we guard ourselves from pride?

We first need to understand the nature of this sin. Pride results from a wrong focus. We look to self and concentrate our attention, and then our affections, on self. One of the signs of the last days is that men would be *"...lovers of their own selves...boasters, proud,...."* (2 Timothy 3:2) The best way to guard your heart is to cultivate love for, and faith in, God. The more you magnify God in your thinking, the more you meditate on wisdom; and the more you strengthen your world view.

The secular world, with its focus on consumerism, self-esteem, and self-assertiveness, is really against God. The more we read the Bible, pray, worship, and talk about the things of God with other believers, the more we strengthen our focus on God. When we see God as the center of life, we will tend to appreciate and even enjoy the covering and protection of authority; and we will seek the counsel of our parents and other

elders. Pride, of course, causes us to think that we know it all; and we focus on our independence. Pride and sin go hand in hand. Pride is the basis for a large part of our sin, which always results in bondage and destruction.

The more you can do to focus your affection and attention on God and righteousness, the more you will cultivate a right sense of humility. Humility, by the way, is not self-debasement. That is false humility, which is actually a form of pride. True humility is a right perspective on our place in the scope of things in God's world. Humility sees self as utterly dependent on God, and interdependent with other people. Humility is a decision to esteem others better than self; and it causes us to respect, as well as lean on, the wisdom of our elders and leaders. Humility sees Jesus as the Center of our world, and His will as the purpose of our existence. All real worshippers will grow in humility and in grace.



Methods

Praise and Worship Preparation

Talk to your class about the spirit of a worshipper -- particularly if they are too focused on themselves to worship freely. Many students in junior high are so peer-

conscious and self-conscious, that they are afraid to freely worship.

Let them know that this fear of their peers is motivated by an erroneous world view, and by an attitude of pride. Worship is one of the best ways to conquer pride, for it is an act of adoration and humility. The more we exalt God, the less we will tend to exalt self. Ultimately, the reason that some are afraid to worship, or unable to worship, is the sin and guilt in their lives. They are more worried about what other people think of them, than what God thinks of them. They have fallen into the fleshly trap of a wrong, selfish focus. You may need to lead your students in confession and repentance, before they can truly enter into worship.

Refute the myth that peers in the church will think that they are "sissies," if they worship God. Since the world is constantly exalting rebels as role models and heroes, counter that deception with biographies of great Christians. Talk about the end results in the lives of the world's popular rebels.

Define Terms

Show the difference between humility and humiliation. If we do not humble ourselves before God, we will eventually be humiliated. Many who are exalted and honored today will suffer the eternal humiliation of the lake of fire, while the righteous will be "in everlasting remembrance." (Psalms 112:6)

Witnessing

Volume 7

Lesson 21

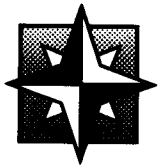


Bible References

Matthew 28:16-20

Ephesians 5:15-16

Colossians 4:5-6



Theme

We are to share the good news of Jesus Christ with a hurting and dying world.



Scripture Reading

Matthew 28:16-20

16 "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

17 "And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

18 "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

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:

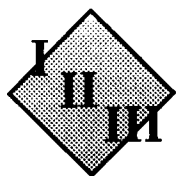
20 "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, {even} unto the end of the world. Amen."



Memory Verse

Acts 1:8

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."



Outline

I. Introductory Questions.

- A. Who told you about Jesus?
- B. Why did you give credence to what they told you?
- C. What about them or their presentation drew you to Jesus?

II. Why We Tell Others About Christ.

- A. It is the commission given us by Jesus. (Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:8)
- B. It is the only hope for a sinful world -- the only way to the real God.
 - 1. John 14:6.
 - 2. Isaiah 43:10-13.
 - 3. Isaiah 42:6-8.
 - 4. Romans 1:16.
- C. If you know the Lord, it will naturally show through your life. (2 Corinthians 5:17, 20-21)
- D. You can save them from eternity in hell. (Revelation 22:14-15; 17)

III. How to Prepare to Witness.

- A. Have a real relationship with Christ, yourself.
 - 1. John 15:4-5.
 - 2. 1 Timothy 4:16.

- B. Have a real concern for the lost, as God does.

- 1. They are headed for hell.
 - 2. Do we care?

- C. Have a working knowledge of God's Word.

- 1. Isaiah 55:10-11.
 - 2. Hebrews 4:12.

- D. Pray for the lost and for opportunities to reach them. (Colossians 4:2-4)

- E. Let the Holy Spirit lead you.

- 1. Mark 13:11.
 - 2. Luke 12:11-12.

IV. What Constitutes a Witness?

- A. A lifestyle that reflects Christ in you.

- 1. Practice what you preach.
 - a. 2 Timothy 4:17.
 - b. Colossians 4:5-6.
 - 2. Purity of your life. (1 Timothy 4:12)
 - 3. Love and acceptance of others. (John 13:34-35)
 - 4. Clean speech. (Ephesians 4:29)
 - 5. Even temper; self-control.
 - a. 2 Timothy 1:7.
 - b. Galatians 5:22-23.
 - 6. Confidence in Christ to reach them. (2 Timothy 1:8-9a, 12)

- B. Outreach.

- 1. Invite unsaved acquaintances to church, a youth group, Sunday School, or another Christian activity.
 - 2. Answer their honest questions. (1 Peter 3:15-16)
 - 3. Be involved in others' lives.

4. Listen closely for expressed needs or hurts in their lives, so that you may present Jesus as the One Who can meet those needs.

V. How to Share Christ.

- A. Do not get sidetracked on peripheral issues. (Titus 3:9)
- B. Stay calm and controlled, regardless of their initial responses. (2 Timothy 2:24)
- C. Let God do the converting -- you are just the vessel. (John 16:8)
- D. Stick to the basics of the Gospel.
 1. God created us to be with Him forever, in perfect creation. (Revelation 4:11)
 2. We fell into willful disobedience and sin, which separated us from God's presence. (Romans 3:23)
 3. Jesus made the full payment for our sin when He died on the Cross.
 - a. Romans 5:8.
 - b. 1 Peter 1:18.
 4. We must respond, by asking Him to take control of our lives. (John 1:12)
 - a. The sin problem is that we become "Lord."
 - b. Some people want Jesus to be Savior, but not Lord.
 - c. Heaven is for people who have made Jesus Lord of their lives through repentance and faith.

E. Lead them in, when they are ready.

1. They need to recognize their sinfulness and helplessness before a real and holy God.
2. They need to repent -- to determine to change direction in their lives -- and give God control.

3. They need to put their trust in God for their eternal destiny.
4. Encourage them to study the Word, to find a church, to pray, and to let Jesus do His work in them.



Spiritual Truths

- God has called us to take the message of His gospel to the world.
- The "world" includes those that are in our neighborhood and school, as well as people in distant lands.
- We need to be prepared to witness at any time.
- To be prepared to witness, we must be filled with the Word of God.
- To be prepared to witness, we must be in constant prayer for direction and guidance.
- God does the converting. We are simply the vehicles that He uses.
- We are called to reconcile lost people to the God Who loves them. (2 Corinthians 5:18)



Lesson Material

We need to be ready for the opportunities that we will have to share

the good news of salvation with those who have not yet heard or have not yet responded to God's call for their lives. Our job is to share and plant the seed of the Word into the lives of the people we meet. The Holy Spirit will take that effort and bring it to the hearts of those to whom we become witnesses of His provision.

The idea of witnessing can strike fear into the hearts of many Christians. We must first pray for God to give us a boldness, before we can make the first step in our goal of witnessing to a lost and dying world. Some will not want to witness to their friends for fear of, "What they will think, or say?" We must never be ashamed of His name or His gospel. (Romans 1:16) We must be willing to go out into the streets with a message of hope. (Luke 14:23)

The basis of this fear is a self-centered focus. It is the same reason that some have such trouble with praise and worship. They are so self-conscious that they cannot be God-conscious. John said, *"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear:...."* (1 John 4:18) Fear comes when we are thinking, "What will they think of me?" Love says, "They need to know about Jesus." Also, love focuses on God's desire, which is to save them from their sins. (2 Peter 3:9) If you saw a building on fire, you would not hesitate to break the door down, or to shout. You might even rush in to save someone who needed help, if you were able. God's perfect love in us (the focus on others) casts out fear.

Witnessing can take many forms. Sometimes, it is an organized activity, in which a group of individuals goes to a particular area or town and they approach people on the street about the message of Christ. This is an important tool in evangelization; and many have come to

know Christ as their personal Lord and Savior in this way.

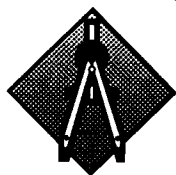
But the most important part of witnessing is being a godly example to those around us, daily. How we act can communicate a strong witness to others of the love of Christ, as it reflects in our lives. We must always be aware of others around us and the impact that our lifestyle may have on them. This works both in the positive and the negative. If someone knows that we profess to be a Christian, and then they see us doing things that are immoral or unkind, our witness to them says that being a Christian is no different from being in the world.

The form of witnessing that many of us will think of first is that of sharing the gospel message one-on-one with our friends and relatives. This can actually be one of the hardest forms of witnessing, because you are dealing with people that you know, and attempting to change them. People are resistant to change; and we are resistant to conflict. If we fear that our attempt to share the gospel will in any way hinder our relationship with another person, then we have a natural tendency to back off and not confront them with the message that Christ has commanded us to give to them.

We must proceed carefully in our witness to unsaved parents or authority figures, because our preaching may be regarded as usurping authority over them. The best way to witness to those in authority is to show them honor and respect, while always putting Christ first. When unsaved parents see that their Christian children are loving and obedient, it will do far more to win them than any amount of preaching. And never forget the value of praying for your unsaved loved ones. Your part is to

prepare the way with prayer, obedience, and respect.

We are to be strong and bold in our witness. We are called to live in such a manner that others will want to be more like us, and to have what we have. We must not be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus (Romans 1:16); and we should be willing to tell our peers that they need Jesus. The confrontation does not have to be harsh. It should be done in a loving and kind way. Very few people have ever come to the Lord because someone hit them over the head with the Bible. Tell those around you that Jesus loves them and that He died for them. Tell them about heaven, and about how you want to spend eternity with them. That decision cannot wait until tomorrow (2 Corinthians 6:2), because we do not know the day or the hour that Jesus is coming back. (Matthew 25:13) Today is the best time to tell your friends about Christ. There may not be a tomorrow.



Methods

Skit

This could be an effective comedy skit. Design a dialogue between an overzealous, Bible-thumping preacher and an innocent

passerby. Make sure the victim is unaware of the meaning of the barrage of religious jargon, such as "white as snow," "lost and undone," (he checks his shirt buttons), "splits the Eastern sky," "lost," "saved," "washed in the blood," and so on. Have another individual witness to the same person with love, and lead them to the Lord with kindness and understandable words.

Listing Types

Make a list of the types of witnessing that we can do. Refer to the list, as you discuss the outline and lesson material. Keep the students involved in the lesson through questions that prompt discussion. Have the students make a commitment to witness to at least one unsaved person in the next week and to report back next week to the class the results of their efforts.

- Street witnessing.
- Tent meetings.
- Alms distribution.
- Hospital visitation.
- Lifestyle evangelism.
- Door to door canvassing.
- Missions trips.
- Surveys.
- Cards and letters.

Thanksgiving

Volume 7

Lesson 22



Bible References

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Psalms 7:17

Hebrews 12:28

1 Timothy 1:12

Colossians 1:9-14



Scripture Reading

Psalms 107:20-22, 31-32, 36-38

20 "He sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.

21 "Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

22 "And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing."

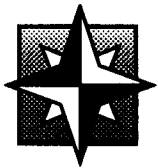
31 "Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

32 "Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders."

36 "And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation;

37 "And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase.

38 "He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease."



Theme

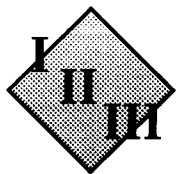
We should cultivate a heart of gratitude for all that our great God does for us.



Memory Verse

Colossians 3:17

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."



Outline

I. What Is Thanksgiving?

A. The expression of thanks.

1. Gratitude for kindness or help.
2. The most natural response of Christians, since God is so good.
3. Specific expressions of gratefulness.
 - a. Not, "Thanks."
 - b. But, "Thank you, God, for...."

B. Attitude of thanksgiving.

1. Joyfully.
2. God does not force us to express gratefulness.
3. Not coldly, as a rule or rite to appease a distant "god."

C. Motivations for thanksgiving.

1. We should want to please Him, as part of our living worship.

2. Jesus, as our Example, overflowed with thanks to the Father. (Luke 10:21)
3. The knowledge of His will.
 - a. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.
 - b. *"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God...."* (vs. 18)
 - c. We are also to give thanks for all things. (Ephesians 5:20)

II. Thanksgiving as a Lifestyle.

A. Our thanksgiving should be:

1. Overflowing.
2. The spontaneous response to every blessing.
3. Regular and habitual.

B. Prerequisites for true thanksgiving to God.

1. Receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
2. Faith in His work, reality, and total provision for you.

C. Results of thanksgiving.

1. Roots us in Christ -- constant reminder of His sacrifice for us.
2. Builds us up and encourages our faith.
 - a. David encouraged himself in the Lord, by recalling all of His mighty works. (1 Samuel 30:6)
 - b. When we remember all that God has done for us, we are thankful, and we strengthen our faith.
3. Keeps us focused on the positives in life.
4. Prevents a spirit of bitterness from springing up in our hearts.

III. Thanksgiving as a Celebration.

A. What produces an attitude of gratitude?

1. The peace of Christ within us. (Philippians 4:7)
2. The Word of Christ in our hearts. (Colossians 3:16)
3. True wisdom, which recognizes who we are and Who He is. (1 Corinthians 1:30)

B. Expressions of thanksgiving.

1. Singing with real gratitude and spirit. (Hebrews 13:15)
2. Obedience shows thanksgiving, as it exhibits our faith and commitment to Christ. (Romans 12:1)
3. Prayer.
 - a. We give God thanks. (Ephesians 5:20)
 - b. God speaks to us, bringing to mind His works in our lives.

C. The Thanksgiving holiday.

1. Remember that it is a Christian observance, even though the world sets the day aside for gluttony and pleasure.
2. If you are in a country that does not have a Christian Thanksgiving day, plan one of your own.
3. Take time to praise and thank God with your family.



Spiritual Truths

- We all love to be appreciated for the good that we do; and God does, too.
- We have much for which to be thankful to God.
- We need to have a right heart and motivation, when we give our thanksgiving offering unto the Lord.
- Bitter people focus on negatives; and they are neither grateful nor joyful.
- The Thanksgiving holiday was started in America, to be an occasion to thank God for life and for His blessings.
- We show a grateful spirit, when we express thanks to God and to people who help us in life.
- The monster of ingratitude always lives with the spirit of pride.



Lesson Material

Thanksgiving, as a holiday, is not celebrated worldwide. But the concept of Thanksgiving is universal; and, therefore, it needs to have its place in our lesson material. To many in the United States, Thanksgiving is a celebration of physical blessings; but, in truth, it was first a celebration of thanks to God by those who had fled injustice and a corrupt, oppressive government.

God's desire is to have a people who are joyful and grateful. Thanksgiving should be a part of our lives every day. The purpose of "saying grace" over our meals is not to "pray away" germs or calories. The primary purpose is to remind ourselves that it came from God. We learn to receive everything with thanksgiving. This is a protection from the subtle enemy of pride. It is so easy to get focused on things and blessings, forgetting that God is our Creator and Provider.

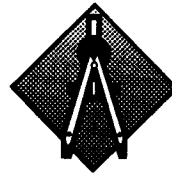
The practice of thanksgiving is very beneficial to us spiritually. It helps us stay in the presence of God, where we need to be. We *"enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise:...."* (Psalms 100:4) Praise is bragging on God. Praise means to express what we know about Who God is and what God has done. Thanksgiving is just as important. Thanksgiving is the expression of gratitude for those good things that He has done. It pleases the Father's heart of God.

Every father loves to be thanked when he blesses his children. Normally, he is motivated to do more for and get closer to the thankful kids. God is our heavenly Father. He loves to bless thankful people. God tends to respond to us "according to" our response to Him. (Psalms 18:20) When a person is loving and grateful, God is able to shower far more blessings upon him. When a person is selfish and stingy, God tends to withhold from him. The more thankful we are, the more God can bless us.

God has provided everything that we have. He made the ground we stand on, the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the water we drink. There is no good thing that cannot be traced back to God himself. (James 1:17) He made every element that

exists. No chemist or scientist can create something out of nothing. All of the things that they invent start with the material that God provides. We must, therefore, learn to give God the glory for all good things. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

We show our thanks to God by expressing thanks in prayer or song. We let Him know that we are grateful for what we have; and, that as long as we have Jesus, we will be content. (Philippians 4:11) There may be times of suffering, and times of lack. But God will never forsake us. (Hebrews 13:5) We need to give thanks to God, no matter what our situation and no matter what our circumstances. God is worthy of our praise!



Methods

Skit

Plan a double skit, with two scenes going on simultaneously. On one side of the room, have a couple dressed as elegantly as possible. The rich people are whining and complaining. It is 4 degrees too cool. The maid did not put enough starch in his shirts. The cook made the roast duck too dry. The skinny, poor kids down the street got fingerprints on the glass doors, when they looked into their kitchen and drooled. On the other side of the room, a poor couple is dressed in tattered clothing. The man is smiling; and they are cheerful. He is delighted. He found a fine loaf of bread in the store dumpster. It was nearly whole. He had already cut off all the mold. She was happy, because she had a wonderful talk

with the widow next door; and they were all thankful for their health.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Have the group gather in a circle for prayer. In turn, each should thank God for a specific answer to prayer from the past week or two. In addition, each should thank God for a specific blessing in their lives. The condition is that each one must

think of something different to mention in the prayer of thanksgiving. Write a song or poem of thanksgiving, and see how many students can add a verse in the same meter. Example:

Thank you God for sunny days,
And even for the rain.
Thank you for the love and grace
You have shown to us again.

Christ, the Eternal God

Volume 7

Lesson 23



Bible References

Micah 5:2

John 1

John 17:5

Isaiah 9:6

Colossians 1

2 "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."

John 1:1-5

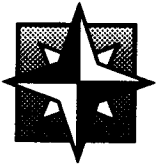
1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 "The same was in the beginning with God.

3 "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4 "In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5 "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."



Theme

Jesus, Who is the eternally existent "Logos," came to earth through the Incarnation, in order to become our Kinsman Redeemer.



Scripture Reading

Micah 5:2



Memory Verse

John 8:58

"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."

IV. His Own Claims of Deity.**A. Uniqueness; primacy.**

1. John 10:7-9, 11, 14-15.
2. John 14:6.

B. Authority.

1. Matthew 28:18.
2. John 10:17-18.

C. Giver of eternal life.

1. John 6:39-40.
2. John 5:21.

D. Resurrection power.

1. John 2:19.
2. John 11:25.

E. Source of light. (John 8:12)**F. Jesus exercised the right to judge.**

1. John 5:22.
2. Matthew 25:31-33.

G. His honor is equal to God's. (John 5:23)**H. He is equal with God.**

1. John 10:30.
2. John 5:18.

V. The Apostles Declared Him to be God.**A. Paul.**

1. Philippians 2:5-11.
2. Colossians 1:15-20; 2:9.

B. Peter. (2 Peter 1:1)**C. The writer of Hebrews. (Hebrews 1:3)****VI. The Importance of the Doctrine of the Deity of Jesus Christ.****A. Basis of Christianity.**

1. This doctrine sets Christianity apart from all other religions or cults.
2. Acceptance of the deity of Christ is the biblical basis for recognizing the true church. (1 John 4:1-3)

B. Provides the only basis for real salvation.

1. If Christ was not God, then His blood could not atone for the sins of the world.
2. If He was not a man, He could not be our Kinsman Redeemer.

C. Jesus reveals God to us, in a form we can understand.**D. Qualifies Him to judge humanity.**

Spiritual Truths

- Jesus has always existed. He is eternal -- past and future.
- Jesus Himself claimed to be God in the flesh.
- The deity of Christ is the foundation of the Christian faith.
- His followers understood and proclaimed His deity.
- His enemies understood His claim to deity -- and crucified Him for it.

discourse on Abraham (John 8:58), and also in His prayer regarding His prior estate in heavenly glory. (John 17:5)

Christ's eternal existence is but one of the proofs of His deity. He had creative and regenerative power; and the New Testament writers declared His hand in the very creation of all we know as reality. One of His titles was "Savior," a title claimed in the Old Testament by God's Word to be God's alone. Omnipresence is one of God's characteristics that is shared by Jesus. He is now everywhere at once, being with every believer and in the midst of every gathering of believers. (Matthew 28:20; 18:20) He is omniscient, knowing everything -- even the deepest, most secret thoughts of men. (Matthew 9:4) He is also omnipotent, being THE authority over all existence, the source of life itself, the sovereign Judge and Ruler over all creation. He has overcome the world and the devil; and He provides His all-powerful care and protection for us.

Although these characteristics of Jesus are shown in the Word, some would say that they are the subjective declarations of men with a vested interest in His being God. However, He also manifested these characteristics in overt, objective acts that proved His deity and could not be contested by the church's enemies at the time. Eye-witnesses had seen and could verify the works and abilities of Jesus as He controlled the weather, calming the storm instantaneously with only His verbal command. (Mark 4:39) He healed diseases such as leprosy, congenital blindness, uncontrolled hemorrhaging, and lameness. Every sickness and calamity that was brought to Him, He could cure and repair. (Matthew 4:23) That was why the crowds followed Him. He even raised the dead to life, in the very presence of the Pharisees who would have Him executed

as a heretic. (John 11) He forgave sins without qualm, and with power to validate His forgiveness. (Matthew 9:6) He accepted worship from men, which no angel or man would ever do without God's judgment falling upon him, as Herod found out in Acts 12. He could control demons and deliver men from the oppression and possession of evil spirits. (Luke 7:21) His works declared His deity. (John 14:11)

Some critics claim that Jesus' deity was only claimed by the disciples after His death. However, the Word leaves no doubt that Jesus knew Who He was and was not hesitant to claim and proclaim it. He declared that He stood alone as the way to eternal life, that He was unique and necessary for man to exist and have being, as only God can claim. He claimed authority equal to God the Father's. He gave eternal life, a gift that only God could give. (John 14:6) He had within Himself resurrection power -- the ability to give life to dead men and to come to life Himself, following His crucifixion. (John 11:25) He claimed complete equality with God in general statements and in His trial deposition. (John 5:18) That claim was the one that brought Him the death sentence. The Jews and religious leaders had no doubt what He was claiming. (Mark 14:61-64) He was nearly killed earlier in His ministry, due to this claim. (John 10:30-40)

After His death, resurrection and ascension, the deity of Jesus was proclaimed by His followers and held as a tenet of faith in the church that was founded on His work. It was not a late belief brought on by political power plays and mystical thought. If He was not believed to be God in the flesh by His earliest followers, why would they have spent their lives in poverty and dungeons,

The Birth of Jesus

Volume 7

Lesson 24



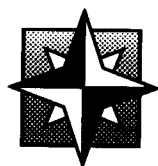
Bible References

John 1:14

Genesis 3:14-15

Matthew 1:18-23

Philippians 2



Theme

Jesus Christ is Immanuel ("God with us")
-- God incarnate.



Scripture Reading

Matthew 1:18-23

18 "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came

together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

19 "Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

20 "But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21 "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

22 "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 "Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

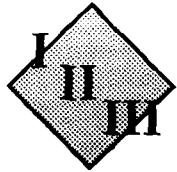


Memory Verse

Philippians 2:5-7

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of

God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:"



Outline

I. Mankind Needs Help.

A. Man's sin separates him from God. (Isaiah 59:2, 11)

1. God is perfectly holy.
2. God cannot look on sin.
3. Only perfection can dwell in God's presence.

B. All men are infected with sin. (Romans 3:9-12, 22b-23)

1. We inherited the sin nature from Adam.
2. Only Jesus was born without a sin nature, because His Father was God Himself.
3. Jesus had a human nature, because He inherited that from His mother, Mary.
4. Jesus was human, but not carnal.

C. Only Jesus can bridge the gap.

1. Isaiah 59:15-16.
2. Colossians 1:19-23.
3. Jesus, the God/Man, can reconcile lost people to their holy God.

II. Jesus: God In the Flesh.

A. His coming was prophesied.

1. To overcome the curse for man's sin. (Genesis 3:14-15)
2. To be the God/Man. (Isaiah 9:6)

B. Circumstances of His coming.

1. Born of a virgin. (Luke 1:26-34)
2. God would provide the means. (Luke 1:37, 45)
3. He would come humbly, as a servant. (Luke 2:6-7)
4. Creation would announce His coming.
 - a. Luke 2:8-14.
 - b. Matthew 2:1-2.

C. His full manhood.

1. He was born with both natures.
 - a. God and man.
 - b. Isaiah 9:6.
 - c. 1 John 4:2-3.
 - d. Hebrews 2:14.
2. He was not an angel. (Hebrews 1:3-5)
3. He was God from before birth.
 - a. John 1:1, 14.
 - b. Luke 2:21-22, 25-32, 36-38.
4. He had human needs.
 - a. Matthew 4:2; 8:24.
 - b. Luke 2:40.
 - c. John 19:28.

D. His uniqueness.

1. 1 Timothy 2:5.
2. Acts 4:12.

III. The Fruit of His Humanity.

A. Satan's work was destroyed. (Hebrews 2:14-15)

B. Atonement provided for man.

1. Hebrews 2:17.
 2. Romans 3:23-25; 8:3-4.
- C. Empathy of God enabled through Christ. (Hebrews 2:18; 4:15-16)
- D. He provided deliverance from the curse. (Romans 5:15-17)
- E. Jesus gives resurrection power. (1 Corinthians 15:21-23)
- F. Healing, peace, forgiveness.
1. Luke 2:13-14.
 2. Isaiah 53:4-6.

- Jesus was born as the God/Man -- He did not "evolve" to become a God.
- Jesus paid for our sins by His vicarious sacrifice.



Lesson Material

When Jesus was born, He was proclaimed "Immanuel" (which means, "God with us"), in numerous ways. Angels appeared to shepherds in the field, proclaiming the coming of the One Who would reconcile men to God. When He was a few days old and was taken to the Temple for the ceremonial sacrifices and circumcision, He was recognized as the coming Savior by two different people who were waiting and anointed by God to see and proclaim the coming King and Savior. (Luke 2) When He was about two years old, the Wise Men came bearing gifts. (Matthew 2:11)

Jesus' humanity accomplished all that man would need to be reconciled to God and to gain eternal life. (2 Corinthians 5:18) He destroyed Satan's original work in the Garden (1 John 3:8), when Satan enticed man to fall and be faced with the fear of physical death and eternal death -- separation from God. (Romans 6:23) Jesus now holds the keys of death and hell (Revelation 1:18), wherein Satan had ruled and reigned, freeing us from the fear of death with the promise of life eternal by His work. (John 3:16)

Jesus atoned for our sins, making the final, complete, all-encompassing payment for our debt owed to God for our rebellion. (Hebrews 10:10) He gives God an



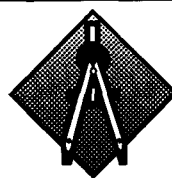
Spiritual Truths

- Mankind was lost in sin. We could not work our way back to God.
- God took on a human form (incarnation) in order to deliver man from sin.
- Jesus of Nazareth was God in the flesh.
- Jesus is able to understand our problems and cares, because He became like us in every way, except for sin.
- Jesus was fully human, and not just Deity using a bodily shell.
- Jesus inherited a human nature from His mother.
- Jesus did not inherit Adam's sin nature, because Joseph was not His father.

empathetic capability toward us, by enduring and fully experiencing human frailty and temptation and overcoming them. (Hebrews 4:15) He delivers us from the curse of eternal separation from God. He promises us resurrection at His second coming (John 6:40); and through all of these works, He holds out complete peace and assurance for us in this life, regardless of our circumstances or Satan's work here to destroy us. (John 14:27) We will have the final victory!

In conclusion, impress upon the class our need for a perfect, eternal sacrifice to overcome the abnormality that is attached to our lives by sin. Sin brings guilt, suffering, failure, and frustration to our lives. God's real historical, provable work in Jesus is available to us for the asking. We can know peace, assurance, the promise of eternal life and God's guidance in this life. We only need to give Jesus the reins of our lives. This decision has eternal consequences. We need to make a real decision for Christ, and not just mouth words or recite a prayer. We must recognize that we are turning our lives over to the God of the universe. Jesus surrendered His right to stay in heaven, and became a man. He suffered for us. We are giving Him authority to use us as He knows best. We are giving our all to please and praise Him the rest of our lives.

The birth of Jesus is much more than a legend about a special Baby. His birth meant that all that God had promised in the Old Testament was being fulfilled; and, as we look back to the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we find eternal life and relationship with our living God.



Methods

Celebration method

Have a Christmas celebration -- a time of praise and worship to the King of Glory. Have each of the students share the part of the story of the birth of Jesus that means the most to them. Make it a special time of giving to God, as they give of His Word and offer a special present to the Lord.

Examples:

1. I give my heart to the Lord; and so, I will commit to seeking His face through prayer and Bible reading every day.
2. I give the Lord my body; and so, I will commit to sexual purity (abstinence) until my marriage.
3. I earned some money; and I want to give it all to the Lord as an offering, and not just the ten per cent.

Lecture/Discussion method

Present the Christmas story to the students as if they had never heard it before. Get their response as to what they think went through the minds of Joseph, Mary, or the shepherds on that night.

Encourage the students to think of creative ways that they can be sure to remember the true meaning of Christmas as they celebrate.

The Childhood of Jesus

Volume 7

Lesson 25



Bible References

Deuteronomy 29:29

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Isaiah 53:1-2

Luke 2



Scripture Reading

Matthew 2:18-23

18 *"In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.*

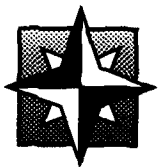
19 *"But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,*

20 *"Saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.*

21 *"And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.*

22 *"But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee:*

23 *"And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene."*



Theme

Jesus came to earth as a baby. He lived a normal human life; and so, He understands our weakness.



Memory Verse

Luke 2:52

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



Outline

I. The Early Life of Jesus.

A. Escape from Herod to Egypt.

1. Matthew 2:13-15.
2. King Herod wanted to kill the Messiah.
3. He was jealous (fearful of losing power).
4. Joseph was warned in a dream to escape.

B. Return and resettlement in Nazareth.

1. Joseph was going home to Bethlehem, when he heard from an angel that Herod was dead.
2. He then learned that Herod's son had inherited the job from his father.
3. He knew that Archelaus was wicked, too.
4. God warned him, in yet another dream, to move to the area of Galilee.

5. One Old Testament prophet foretold that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2); but another said that he would be called a "Nazarene." (Matthew 2:23)

- a. God used danger to move Joseph, so that all of the prophecies would be fulfilled.
- b. God used dreams to lead Joseph.

- C. Some cults teach that Jesus took a global excursion to visit all other peoples on earth.

1. There were Pacific Island and American Indian myths of a white visitor, who would return one day to them.
2. No proof of this exists in history; and such legends are not biblical.

- D. God has not chosen to make the details of Christ's earthly childhood known.

1. Apparently, Jesus worked with Joseph in the carpenter's shop, most of that time.
2. Joseph also appears to have died at some point, since he is never mentioned again after the move to Nazareth.
3. Jesus did have half-brothers, and possibly half-sisters.
 - a. Matthew 12:46-47; 13:55; John 7:2-5.
 - b. Mary and Joseph had a number of children.
 - c. Mary and Joseph did not have intimate relations, until after Jesus was born. (Matthew 1:24-25)

II. Jesus In His Adolescence.

A. The trip to the temple in Jerusalem. (Luke 2:41-50)

1. Jesus astounded the priests with His understanding.
2. Jesus, at age twelve, knew Who He was. He was God incarnate.
3. He limited Himself as a boy, and did not retain His full supernatural power.
 - a. He chose to become dependent upon the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Jesus spent much time in prayer, in order to learn from His heavenly Father.
 - c. Jesus submitted to his earthly parents, as unto God.
 - d. Jesus set an example for us.
 - e. Jesus did no miracles, until He was 30 years old.

B. Jesus grew.

1. In wisdom (intellectually).
2. In stature (physically).
3. In favor with God (spiritually).
4. In favor with man (socially).
5. The growth and development of Jesus was well-rounded and balanced.

C. Jesus lived a "normal" life.

1. Notice that when Jesus was discovered in the temple at twelve years of age, His parents did not let Him stay there.
2. He submitted to them, and He went on back to Nazareth.
3. Jesus did nothing until His baptism that would cause anyone to write anything about Him.
4. For thirty years, Jesus honored his earthly parents and prepared for the ministry.

III. The Public Ministry of Jesus.

A. Water baptism by John. (Matthew 3:13-17)

B. Jesus was 30 years old.

1. There is no record of His life, from the age of twelve to this time.
2. Jesus patiently waited until the Hebrew time for ministry to start.
3. Jewish priests were to serve in ministry leadership, from the age of 30 to the age of 50.



Spiritual Truths

- All I ever really needed to know, I learned from the Bible.
- The childhood of Jesus was not recorded, because it was not extraordinary.
- God became flesh, and dwelt among us.
- Only those with honest hearts before God really recognized Jesus as the Messiah.
- There are more than 300 prophecies in the Old Testament about the Messiah; and Jesus fulfilled all of them.
- Jesus Christ is the "Word" -- the communication of God to the world.
- God's purpose for His Word is to reveal Himself to man, that man may know Him in a real relationship.

- God designed the family and the church to help us grow physically, intellectually, spiritually, and socially.



Lesson Material

In studying the life of Jesus from His birth to the start of His ministry, we see God's inspired Word does not provide exhaustive information. It is intended to provide ample, accurate accounts and insights that are fully sufficient to convince man of God's reality, convict man of his sin, and reconcile man to God through Christ.

We know that Jesus grew up in a very normal fashion. His mother and Joseph knew that He was the incarnate God, but their neighbors did not. Jesus was not born in power and wealth, as the Jewish people probably expected of their Messiah. He was born to a humble young woman; and he grew up in a simple, ordinary family. The Jewish people were under the rule of a very oppressive socialist government. The fact that they were taxed by the Romans was an indication of their bondage and subservience. The free citizens were not taxed. The Jews were looking for a Messiah. That is, they had the Old Testament, which told that God would send to them a great leader -- a king from the dynasty of David -- to lead the nation to freedom and blessing in God. They were looking for a charismatic, brilliant leader, who would set them free from the bondage of Rome. But Jesus came as a servant, to set them free from the bondage of sin. (Matthew 20:28)

Jesus also did not have an extraordinary physical appearance. He wore a beard, as most Jewish men did; but He was very average-looking in His appearance. The prophet Isaiah told us much about Jesus, even though he lived hundreds of years before Jesus came to the earth. He said that He would have "...no beauty that we should desire him." (Isaiah 53:2) *"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief...and we esteemed him not."* (Isaiah 53:3) Jesus did not attract people to Him because of His physical appearance. He was not considered "good-looking." People did not esteem Him as a child. He did not turn heads. He was, as far as the externals, ordinary.

God saw to it that Jesus came to earth at a time when only the most powerful and important people had portraits or statues made of their likeness. He had also commanded the Israelites not to make graven images (Exodus 20:4); and so, they had very little art. God knew the carnal tendency of people to focus on images. If we had real pictures of Jesus, people would worship them. But God wants us to worship Him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24) There is almost nothing written in history about the early years of Jesus. The one thing we know of His boyhood is that He never sinned. (Hebrews 4:15) He probably cried as a baby, because that is the normal signal that a baby gives that he needs to be changed or fed. Babies also need to cry to develop their lungs and other muscles. But He never disobeyed his mother. He never did anything cruel. Jesus never played a "practical joke," or made fun of a weaker child. The young Jesus was kind and gentle, but strong and hard-working. He was also kind to His younger brothers and sisters.

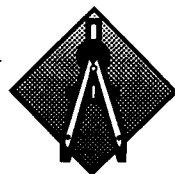
Jesus grew up in an ordinary Jewish family. Every year, they would make the trip to Jerusalem, to celebrate the Passover. This commemorated the miraculous deliverance from Egypt 1500 years earlier, when Moses was the leader. (Exodus 12) God had instructed the Israelites to sacrifice a lamb for each family, and to apply the blood to the door posts of the houses. When the death angel came to kill the firstborn, he passed over the families which were "under the blood." God designed this to be a picture of the sacrifice of Jesus for the sins of the whole world. When we repent and believe for salvation, we enter into a covenant with God through that blood. All Jews understood that sins had to be atoned for with blood. That is why John the Baptist said of Jesus, "...Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)

After the Passover feast, Mary and Joseph gathered their children, and headed back to Nazareth. (Luke 2:41-50) After three days, they realized that Jesus was not in the group. They went back to Jerusalem, and finally found Jesus in the temple. The leaders in the temple were astounded at the knowledge and wisdom shown by Jesus. They questioned Him for days, and they marveled at His answers. Jesus had great wisdom. That is, He understood life from God's point of view. He had more than just natural knowledge.

Sometimes we underestimate young people. While it is true that older people have greater knowledge and should teach the younger ones, the gospel is not just intellectual. The Bible was written to the spirit. Jesus said, "...The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63) We should be careful not to seek to make the Bible too simple. We work so hard to make it easy for young minds to understand, that it sometimes

comes across as simplistic. The plan of God is simple; but it is also so profound, that we can spend a lifetime studying it and never grasp half of it. The most brilliant scholars in the world cannot grasp it with their minds, because it is written to the spirit. Only those who are born again can see it. (John 3:3)

Jesus was young, but He was spiritually alive. He had a real relationship with His heavenly Father. He knew things through the Spirit that no one could know with mere intellect. We want our students to understand God; but we also want to inspire them with the unfathomable riches of the Word. We want them to be in awe of the Word, so that they will become lifetime students of the Word. It can also help to let them know occasionally that we as teachers are still learning about the Word every day, and that we do not know nearly enough. We are tempted to leave the impression with our students that we know it all. Let your students know that you are a Bible student, too; and that they can know God and truth in their spirits, no matter how young they are.



Methods

Skit

Scenario: Two or three adult church leaders are talking theology and ethics with a young student. The student speaks with the current jargon of modern youth, along a brash over-confidence and lack of respect. The elders turn to each other and say, "I do not think Jesus acted this way, when He was twelve."

Point out the difference between wisdom and street smarts. Look at the characteristics of wisdom in Proverbs, or the character qualities of the "blessed man" in Matthew 5 (the Beatitudes). Young Jesus impressed the temple leaders because of His wisdom, and not His worldly knowledge. He was kind and respectful; and yet, He loved to talk about

spiritual truths. He was focused on His Father's business. When His earthly parents came to take Him home, notice that He obeyed. He was just surprised that they did not realize that He was to "*...be about my Father's business.*" (Luke 2:49) He may have been surprised that they did not think to look in the temple right away.

The Power of Jesus

Volume 7

Lesson 26



Bible References

Colossians 1:15-18

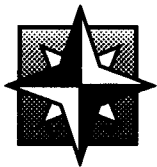
Matthew 24:30

Luke 8:22-25

Romans 1:2-4

Romans 12

1 Corinthians 12



Theme

Jesus Christ has unlimited power; and He empowers those who are fully under His authority.



Scripture Reading

Matthew 28:18

18 "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

Matthew 9:1-8

1 "And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city.

2 "And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

3 "And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.

4 "And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

5 "For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?

6 "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.

7 "And he arose, and departed to his house.

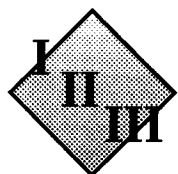
8 "But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men."



Memory Verse

1 Corinthians 1:23-24

"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness: But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."



Outline

I. Healing Palsy.

A. He "came into his own city." (Matthew 9:1)

1. Capernaum, of Galilee. (Matthew 4:13)
2. Christ's principle place of residence.
3. Jesus had just been on the other side of the sea of Galilee.
 - a. He had cast a host of demons out of two men. (Matthew 8:28-34)
 - b. The demons went into a herd of hogs.
 - c. The townspeople asked Him to leave.
 - d. The Lord will not dwell with people who do not want Him.

B. Palsy.

1. The word means "paralysis."
2. The man could not walk, or move most of his muscles.

3. He may have had a spinal injury, or a birth defect.

C. They brought him on a bed.

1. Friends let him down through the roof.
2. There was a great crowd around Jesus.

D. "Son, thy sins are forgiven."

1. Only God can forgive sins.
2. Jesus was claiming to be the Son of God.
3. Some leaders cried out, "Blasphemy."

E. Jesus healed the paralyzed man.

1. To show that He had the power (authority) to forgive sin.
2. He demonstrated His credentials through the working of miracles.
3. The first purpose of divine healing is to glorify God.
4. The people glorified God, when they saw the miracle.

II. Jesus Is Fully God.

A. In His being. (John 1:1)

B. In His character. (John 10:30)

C. In His power. (Colossians 1:15-19; 1 Corinthians 1:23-25)

III. Jesus Manifests God's Power.

A. In deliverance.

1. From man's attacks. (Daniel 3:12-15; 26-27)
2. From fear. (Hebrews 2:14-15)

3. From spiritual fatigue. (Matthew 11:28-30)
 4. From despair. (2 Corinthians 1:8-10)
- B. In physical healing.
1. Mark 5:30.
 2. Matthew 12:9-10, 13.
 3. Luke 5:17; 6:17-19.
- C. In control of creation.
1. Luke 8:22-25.
 2. John 2:5-11.
 3. Colossians 1:17.
- D. In supply.
1. John 6:1-13.
 2. Philippians 4:19.
- E. In forgiveness of sin. (Mark 2:4-12)
- F. Over Satan and his demons.
1. Colossians 2:15.
 2. Luke 4:35-36; 8:27-33.
 3. 1 Corinthians 15:24-27.
- G. Over death.
1. Luke 7:11-15.
 2. John 11:38-44.
 3. Revelation 1:18.
- H. In resurrection.
1. Philippians 3:10.
 2. Ephesians 1:19-23.
 3. John 6:40.

IV. Jesus Shares His Power.

- A. It is available to us.
1. Ephesians 1:18-19, 3:20-21, 6:10.
 2. 2 Timothy 1:7.
- B. It is to be used for His glory.
1. Acts 1:6-8.
 2. Colossians 1:10-12.
 3. 2 Peter 1:3.
- C. It is often exhibited in our weakness. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus has all power in heaven and earth.
- That does not leave a whole lot of power for the devil.
- Jesus has power over creation.
- Jesus has complete authority over demons and disease.
- Jesus still has the power to heal the sick.
- Jesus has resurrection power.
- Jesus is Lord.
- Jesus shares His power with us, for His glory.
- To do something "in Jesus' name" means that we are authorized by Him to act on His behalf.



Lesson Material

The people of the country of the Gadarenes saw the supernatural power of Jesus, when He cast a large number of demons out of two men and into a herd of swine. They also saw the deadly results of yielding to devils. What was their response? They came out from town as a large delegation, and asked Jesus to please leave them alone. Some people would rather have their pigs, than have the Lord with them. Some people do not want the power of God, because it might cost them something. Jesus is still a Gentleman. He will not dwell with anyone who prefers the world.

Jesus went back to what was then His home town of Capernaum. Apparently, there were many people there who wanted Him to be around, because the house was very full of people trying to get close to Him. That is just what we are doing here today. We are gathering, because we want to get close to Jesus.

Jesus loved to heal sick people, almost as much as He loved to lead sinners out of sin. Jesus loves people; but He will only manifest that love to those who seek Him and believe. (John 14:21) Everyone wants to go to heaven, but some people do not want to serve God. Heaven is for those who love God, and not just His wealth.

When some friends brought a paralyzed man to Jesus, He was moved with compassion. But Jesus dealt with first issues first; and so, He said, "Son...your sins are forgiven." (Matthew 9:2) The people around were perplexed, and some were disturbed. Did Jesus not see that the

man was an invalid? Did he need forgiveness? Did he not need healing, instead?

Jesus knew that the man needed a miracle, but that relationship was more important. Jesus dealt with the sin problem first. That disturbed some people who thought He was just a prophet, but who did not know that He was God the Son. So, they said, "He is blaspheming." It would have been blaspheming, if Jesus was not the divine Messiah. Then Jesus demonstrated His rights to divine authority by making the paralyzed man completely whole.

Jesus had power. No, it is not like the power that the world thinks of in its fantasy games, or its cartoons and movies. Satan tries to lure people with visions of ego-gratifying power: the weak dream of being supermen, or of having great and powerful positions. Wicked men sometimes seek political positions, so that they can have more and more power over others.

Jesus gives a different kind of power. His power sets us free from our selfish egos, and enables us to love and defer to others. His power is the power to be a servant, and to endure suffering as believers. Jesus never used power for His own selfish ambition. He always glorified the Father, and He used supernatural power to help others. Jesus never promoted His own ministry, or exalted Himself. When He gives power to His people, it is always to enable them to do good for each other, or to glorify God. Jesus is not looking to give spiritual gifts and power to proud, self-centered people. His power is always to enable us to serve.

Jesus promised that He would send the Holy Spirit to us when He left the earth. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit

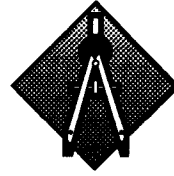
came. (Acts 2) He came with power; and He has offered that same power to us. When we were born again, we were given the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:9) But we had not yet received the manifestation of the power that can come into our lives. Only after we ask for God to move sovereignly in our lives, and we ask Jesus to baptize us in the Holy Spirit, can we see the supernatural manifestations of 1 Corinthians 12. We can function in the manifestation of tongues, or prophecy, or healings, as a direct result of receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is God. He is a part of the Trinity. (1 John 5:7) When you ask the Lord to baptize you in the Holy Spirit, you ask that the very power of God become real and alive in your life and in your spirit. When you are baptized in the Holy Spirit, there will be manifestations of His power. God will give you a prayer language that enables you to pray both with your own understanding and with your spirit. (1 Corinthians 14:14-15) Imagine the power that can take place, as you pray to God in the spirit.

God can and wants to use you as vessels on this earth. His power is awesome -- beyond anything that we can imagine. We are given a portion of that power. That power is a gift that comes only by God and only to those that name the Name of Jesus. It is not designed to bring glory to us, but rather to be used by us to bring glory to God.

This power is to be desired. If you have not felt the power of God in your life or seen it manifested, then this is the opportunity to draw closer in your relationship with the Lord and to turn your life wholly over to God. Pray that God will use you, and that His Holy Spirit

will manifest Himself through you with power.



Methods

Discussion Questions

In our culture, what do we think of when we think of power? What cartoon programs or movies or television series are based on some supernatural (or occult) power? Do rock musicians exercise power over the fans who idolize them? Does the devil give real power, or is it only temporary and illusionary?

What kind of people does Jesus give power to? Look at the spiritual gifts mentioned in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12; and notice that they all are given so that we can help others.

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

How many of your students have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit? Let your students know that this experience is for all believers, young and old. Ask your Pastor ahead of time if he or his representative can be available to lead the students into the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The concept of the baptism in the Holy Spirit may be new or frightening to your students. If they are not ready to receive, be sure that you continue to reinforce the concept that Jesus will baptize in the Holy Spirit anyone who sincerely desires for Him to do so; and believe God to create a hunger in the hearts of your students for the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The Healing Touch of Jesus

Volume 7

Lesson 27



Bible References

Isaiah 53:5

Matthew 9:35

Matthew 10:1

Mark 3:14, 15

James 5:14, 15

Acts 19:11, 12



Scripture Reading

Mark 1:29-35

29 *"And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.*

30 *"But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her.*

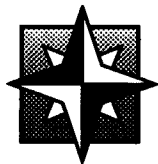
31 *"And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.*

32 *"And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.*

33 *"And all the city was gathered together at the door.*

34 *"And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.*

35 *"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and*



Theme

Jesus is our Great Physician.

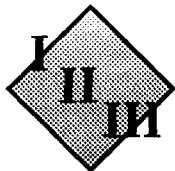
departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."



Memory Verse

Isaiah 53:5

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



Outline

I. Jesus Is the Great Physician.

A. Jesus has the ability to heal.

B. Jesus desires our healing.

1. He took 39 lashes on His back from the wicked Roman whip, that we might be healed. (Matthew 27:26)
 - a. Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 2:24.
 - b. The whip had many leather straps, imbedded with sharp metal bits.
 - c. A scourging of forty lashes could easily be fatal.
2. He took onto Himself our pain and suffering.

3. When Jesus lived on this earth, He healed many people. (Matthew 9:35)

C. God uses a touch of His resurrection power.

1. The power to resurrect from the dead is the power of total healing.
2. When God touches us to heal us of an infirmity, He is touching us with a small portion of His resurrection power.

II. God Is Still in the Healing Business.

A. God has called others to become instruments in our healing.

1. The disciples were called to go and heal the sick and cast out demons.
 - a. Mark 3:14, 15.
 - b. Acts 19:11, 12.
2. Elders are commanded to pray for the sick. (James 5:14, 15)

B. God can use any true believer as a vessel to pray for healing. (Matthew 16:17-18)

1. We are commanded to pray for one another.
2. We are to lift up the needs of one another.
3. As we pray, we need to believe that God is able to heal.
4. Often, God will answer our prayers for healing in a way that we would not have chosen.
5. For some, He will withhold physical healing:
 - a. So that they will be strengthened spiritually, by learning to put more trust in Him.
 - b. So that others may be strengthened by the courage that

- the individual is showing and the extent of their faith.
- c. So that when a healing does take place, it will be a more obvious miracle.

III. What Are We To Do, If We Need Healing?

A. Pray.

1. Pray that God will heal you.
2. Pray that God will sustain you in the midst of your circumstance.
3. Ask others to pray for you.
4. Pray for God's deliverance.
 - a. Sometimes, a physical symptom has a spiritual cause.
 - b. Jesus often dealt with "spirits of infirmity." (Luke 13:11)
 - c. We need for those in spiritual leadership to operate in discernment, in order to determine whether the problem is physical or spiritual. (1 Corinthians 12:10)
5. Have faith, and trust in God.

B. Call for the elders.

1. Follow the scriptural command of calling for the elders to pray. (James 5:14-15)
 - a. Do not wait for them to come to you.
 - b. We need to take a step of faith and go to them, and then believe for our healing.
2. Submit yourselves to them, and confess your sins.
 - a. Unconfessed sin hinders prayer. (Psalms 66:18)
 - b. We must stay in right relationship with God and with each other, in order to receive

blessing from God.

C. Stay in the Word.

1. God's Word is health to our flesh. (Proverbs 4:20-22).
2. Psalms 107:20.

D. Seek the Lord in fasting. (Isaiah 58:8)



Spiritual Truths

- God is still in the healing business!
- We need to pray the prayer of faith, when asking God for our healing.
- We need to trust for God's healing, even when we do not see the immediate manifestation of the healing itself.
- The ultimate healing is the death of this earthly shell and the putting on of the incorruptible body that we receive in the presence of God.
- We are to go to the elders and ask them to pray for us, and not wait for them to come to us.
- We need to pray for one another and ask God to help those around us.
- Healing is a manifestation of the Lord's resurrection power.



Lesson Material

Jesus, by the very nature of His character and being, is a Healer. There is no biblical reason to believe that healings are not happening today. Some might claim that supernatural healings were common in the days of Jesus, but are not today. This is not true at all. Jesus told His disciples, "Greater works than these shall you do." (John 5:20) The fact is that around the world, hundreds of people are being miraculously healed every day of all kinds of serious diseases. People are even being raised from the dead today, primarily in nations where the people are hungry for revival. The church is doing "greater" works than Jesus today, because there are so many more people being used by the Holy Spirit for ministry and healing.

The term "salvation" that is used in the New Testament means "healing." It does not mean a ticket to heaven. We are not so much saved from hell as we are saved from sin. Most of us are familiar with Peter's statement about salvation:

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ,...." (1 Peter 1:18-19)

We are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. We have heard that before. But what did Peter say we were redeemed from? We were redeemed from our "vain conversation." That means "empty lifestyle." We were saved from sin. God's purpose is to set us free from the dominion of sin, making us spiritually

whole and free, so that we can live joyfully for Him. The fact is that those people who are saved from sin also have the gift of eternal life as a result. (Romans 6:23) Those who are still bound by their selfishness and wickedness would not be comfortable in a place where Jesus is glorified constantly. Heaven is a holy place for holy people.

Jesus has the power to make people whole and free in every area of life. We are created spirit, soul and body. (1 Thessalonians 5:23) Jesus can heal your spirit, so that you can be reconciled to God and have sweet communion with Him. Jesus can heal your soul; that is, your mind, will, and emotions. We do not have to live in depression or misery. Jesus is also quite able to heal your body. He made you; and He can correct any physical problem.

The primary factor in receiving healing is faith. Jesus was always moved when He saw faith in people. Faith is a combination of belief and trust. While there were plenty of people around to debate and doubt, some touched Jesus with simple faith; and Jesus loved to heal those who exercised faith. Sometimes a parent or close friend can touch the Lord's heart with faith for another, even if the needy one cannot at that moment.

However, there are other factors involved. We need to understand that God has an eternal plan for each of us. Sometimes sickness is unto death. There is also sickness unto the glory of God. (John 11:4) At times, God intends to heal in order to stimulate people's faith, but He still waits for believing prayer before He will administer healing. Sometimes we are not healed, because we do not ask. (James 4:2b)

When James talked about healing, he connected it with confession of faults, as well as prayer from the elders. Many times we are sick because of our own actions. How many people are dying of cancer or heart disease, because they have abused their bodies for years, even though they knew it was deadly? How many people suffer from arthritis, because they kept bitterness in their hearts for years, and it dried up their bones?

God does not owe everyone healing. Besides, we do not know all the factors. We are sometimes surprised as much by whom God heals as by those He does not. Many of us have said, "If I were God, I would have healed that one who died; and I would not have healed that other one, who looks like he will live forever." All of the people whom Jesus healed or raised from the dead proceeded later to die physically. Healing actually means to be preserved from an early death.

Sometimes, it is time to die. When Hezekiah, the king learned that he was sick unto death, he cried out to God and begged for more years. (2 Kings 20) God answered his prayer; but in those 15 extra years, he had a son named Manasseh. Manasseh became one of the most wicked kings in history, who murdered many people in his idol worship and did great damage to the nation of Israel. It would have been better if Hezekiah had trusted God for His timing.

If we do need healing, we need to learn to go to God first. Another king of Judah named Asa was sick; and he turned to the physicians, instead of to God. (2 Chronicles 16:12) God let him die. Now, it is all right to go to the doctor when you need to. God can use doctors and hospitals to bring about healing. But when we focus on the arm of flesh and trust in man instead of in

God, we are not walking in faith. God should be the first One we cry out to, in time of need.

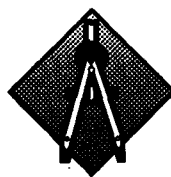
We also need to be careful that we do not get caught up in the doctrine that everyone who is not healed must have some hidden sin. The ultimate healing of God is that we put off this mortal body and put on the incorruptible body in heaven. (1 Corinthians 15:54) God also uses our infirmities to touch our lives and the lives of others in a positive and uplifting way. If you are sick, God might be trying to get your attention; or, perhaps you are not taking care of your body as a good steward; or, you may simply have been exposed to any of a number of viruses or diseases in this imperfect, fallen world. Sickness also can be the result of spiritual attack; and we need the discernment of those who are spiritually mature to determine whether a sickness has a spiritual cause.

We need to learn the importance of praying for one another. It is not just the Pastor or the elder that can pray and see a person healed. We, too, have the power that God has given to the church to pray for the sick. Remember that it is not the person who prays the prayer that is doing the healing, but God Himself Who is the Healer.

We are to call for the elders and have them anoint with oil and pray for the sick. We need to know that this is the pattern that was set in motion by God, and not just a "rule" of the church. We need to come forward in obedience to God's Word. We need to leave behind any sin or bitterness that we have, before we ask for our healing. If we are harboring any sin or bitterness, then we first need to ask the elder to pray that God will forgive us of our sins and take away the bitter feelings; and then we can pray for our healing.

Do not wait for an elder to come to you, if you are sick. The Word says that we are to go to the elders, and not that the elders are to go to us. If we are in the hospital, then we need to call for the elders to come and pray for us. The first step to healing is walking in obedience to God.

God wants us to be healed. Learn to pray boldly for God's resurrection power to touch the lives of those that need a healing touch. And always remember to give God the glory, as He confirms His Word through His healing power.



Methods

Demonstration

Ask the group if any of them has a need for physical healing; and pray for them as a group. If someone is suffering because of sin or neglect, encourage them to confess their fault, and to ask for prayer.

Testimonies

Bring in several individuals (with your Pastor's approval) who can share a brief testimony about how God has healed them. Have an elder of the church share from his perspective of calling the elders to pray.

Wisdom

Volume 7

Lesson 28



Bible References

Proverbs 1-3

Ecclesiastes 9:16-18

Colossians 2:1-3

Revelation 21

Luke 12:13-21



Scripture Reading

Proverbs 4:5-13

5 *"Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.*

6 *"Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee.*

7 *"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.*

8 *"Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.*

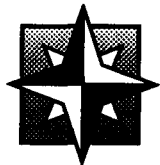
9 *"She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.*

10 *"Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.*

11 *"I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths.*

12 *"When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.*

13 *"Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life."*



Theme

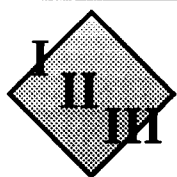
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.



Memory Verse

James 1:5

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



Outline

I. What Is Wisdom?

A. Secular world's definition.

1. Practical judgment; common sense.
2. A high degree of knowledge.

B. God's wisdom.

1. Seeing things from God's point of view.
2. Looking at life from the perspective of eternity.
3. Seeing the spiritual side, as well as the natural.
4. Focus on God and His purposes.

C. Worldly wisdom.

1. Thinking only of temporal values.
2. Seeing only the physical factors.
3. Focus on people and things.
4. Reacting to situations, rather than responding to God.

D. Scripture usage.

1. Hebrew.
 - a. *Chakam*.
 - b. "Wise-hearted."
 - c. To be wise.
 - d. Great understanding.
2. Greek.
 - a. *Sophia*.
 - b. Both intellectual and spiritual wisdom.

E. Specific qualities of wisdom.

1. Humility.
 - a. Understanding that the blessings in life come from God.
 - b. All of my achievements were the result of the help of God and others.
 - c. *"I can do all things through Christ...."* (Philippians 4:13)
2. The fear of the Lord.
 - a. The awareness that all of my words and deeds will be judged by God.
 - b. Being more concerned about pleasing God, than about pleasing people.
 - c. Knowing that I was not created just for this life, but for eternity.
 - d. Fearing the eternal judgment of hell.
 - e. *"By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life."* (Proverbs 22:4)
3. Spiritual perception. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

II. "Get Wisdom."

A. How do we get wisdom?

1. We listen to the words of God.
2. We determine to look at the spiritual side of the issues.

3. We pray for godly wisdom. (James 1:5)
4. Proverbs 4:5-13.

B. Why get wisdom?

1. *"...She shall preserve thee:...."* (Proverbs 4:6)
2. *"...Love her, and she shall keep thee."* (Proverbs 4:6)
 - a. *"A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil:...."* (Proverbs 14:16)
 - b. *"Scornful men bring a city into a snare: but wise men turn away wrath."* (Proverbs 29:8)
3. She will promote you. (Proverbs 4:8)
 - a. Wisdom brings honor. (Proverbs 3:35)
 - b. *"The wise in heart shall be called prudent:...."* (Proverbs 16:21)

III. Examples of Wisdom.

A. Solomon.

1. His first act as king was to offer to God an extravagant offering of worship, rather than throw a lavish party for himself. (1 Kings 3:4-14)
2. When God told him he could ask for anything, he asked for more wisdom to lead the people.
3. When two women were fighting over a baby, he ordered the child divided in half. (1 Kings 3:16-28)
 - a. The true mother would rather lose the baby, than see him killed.
 - b. The other was content with the idea.
 - c. Solomon was able to determine the real mother.

B. Daniel.

1. When he was taken captive and sent to Babylon, he refused to become bitter.
2. When required to eat from the pagan king's table, he appealed to the steward and asked to be tested for ten days. (Daniel 1:5-15)
 - a. He would eat only vegetables and drink water.
 - b. At the end, he and his friends looked and felt better than those who had eaten the rich food.
3. As a very old man, he refused to stop praying to God, no matter what. (Daniel 6:10-23)
 - a. It meant the death penalty, to disobey an order from the king.
 - b. Daniel feared God more than he feared the ruler.
 - c. He was not rebellious.
 - d. His first allegiance was to God.
 - e. Daniel's wisdom in obeying God spared his life and glorified God.

IV. Examples of Fools.

A. Psalms 14:1.

1. *"The fool hath said in his heart, {There is} no God...."*
2. A fool lives life and makes decisions, as if there was no God.
3. He looks at life as if there was nothing beyond the grave.
4. Result: *"...They are corrupt, they have done abominable works...."*

B. King Saul.

1. When he was successful, he became proud.
2. He became impressed with his own power and popularity.
3. He disobeyed God, and lost the anointing. (1 Samuel 15-16)

4. He turned to a witch for direction when he could not hear from God. (1 Samuel 28)
5. He committed suicide. (1 Samuel 31:4)

C. The rich man in Luke 12:16-21.

1. He said, "I am rich, and...have need of nothing."
2. He did not think about dying.
3. He looked to wealth as his security.
4. He lost it all.
5. He failed to value the more important things in life.

D. Demas.

1. 2 Timothy 4:10.
2. *"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world,...."*
3. Demas left the ministry team, because he loved money and pleasure.
4. He was so focused on himself, that he did not think about eternity.

- The world thinks that we are fools, for giving our lives to the Lord.
- A fool focuses on self, things, and people.
- A wise man focuses on God and eternity.
- A fool chooses to reject truth; and he is spiritually blind and deaf.
- Wisdom is better than riches.
- Wisdom protects us from wrong choices, that can destroy our lives.



Lesson Material

The Book of Proverbs is a study in wisdom. Solomon was considered the wisest man in history, second only to Jesus Christ. In the Proverbs, we see vivid contrasts between man's wisdom and true wisdom. We see profound word pictures of both the wise and good, and the foolish and weak.

It is important to understand the difference between wisdom and knowledge. If you look at a secular dictionary, it will probably define wisdom as intelligence and common sense. But there is nothing common about wisdom. It is impossible for an unsaved person to have real wisdom, because God's wisdom looks at life from the spiritual, as well as the natural point of view; and the unsaved cannot see spiritual things. (1 Corinthians 2:14)



Spiritual Truths

- Wisdom is seeing life from God's point of view.
- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
- Wisdom has nothing to do with intelligence or common sense.
- The world's wisdom is based on temporal values.

Knowledge is information. A person can have a vast amount of knowledge and still have no wisdom at all, because he is limited to that which is perceived by the natural mind. He is *"ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."* (2 Timothy 3:7) The truth is Jesus Christ. (John 14:6) He came to reveal the Father, and to impart spiritual light to a world darkened by the deception of sin.

Wisdom is the basis for righteousness. A fool looks at life as if there was no God. (Psalms 14 and 53) If there is no God, then we are not accountable for our actions. We will live, have a good time, get wealth, and then die. This desire fits well in the doctrine of evolution. There is no scientific proof of it, but people believe it by faith. They assume that there is no God; and therefore, everything evolved from nothing, and it is all improving. Science has, in fact, disproved every basic assumption of evolution; but it is still considered "science" by the people who do not want to acknowledge God as the Judge of the human race.

The opposite of the wise man is the fool. A fool, when exposed to light, chooses to live in darkness. He ignores the evidences of creation, because he does not want to believe in the Creator. *"...Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."* (John 3:19) If we consider God, then we must consider Him on His terms -- and God is holy. To feel comfortable with evil, we have to avoid thinking about the fear of the Lord.

How do we get wisdom? First, we study God's Word. Through our study time and through our listening to the Word of God in church and in Sunday School, we gain spiritual knowledge and thus increase in wisdom. In the Word, we see repeated examples of those who were wise and

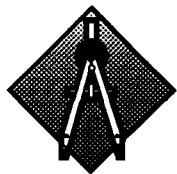
were blessed by God, and those who went their own way and lost out in the end. There are always consequences to sin. The more we read and hear God's Word, the more evidence we see of the importance of the supernatural. We realize more and more that *"...a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."* (Luke 12:15) We are reminded constantly of life from God's viewpoint; and we are less attracted to the world of darkness.

We can also pray for wisdom, particularly for specific situations. In James 1:5, we learn that if we ask God to give us wisdom, He will. The Word does not say that if we ask Him for wisdom He will think about it. It does not promise us that we will be the wisest person of all time, but that in our sincere asking, He will give us wisdom.

Solomon was told by God that he could ask of Him one thing. Solomon chose wisdom. For years, that wisdom allowed him to direct the proper building of the temple, the rightful judging and leading of the people, and the proper means of worshipping God. Solomon fell from the use of the wisdom that God gave him, when he began to allow his many wives the freedom to worship other gods. Solomon lost his wisdom because of sin. Through lust and pride, Solomon became focused on temporal values. He was more concerned about pleasing his many wives than about pleasing God. His glorious and fruitful life ended in tragedy, because he turned from wisdom to play the fool.

In 1 Corinthians 12, the apostle Paul mentions the manifestation of the Spirit which is called the "word of wisdom." That is, when the Holy Spirit is working in the life of a believer, that person may receive a specific word or impression from

the Spirit that will give wise direction or counsel to another believer. Jesus had the "spirit of wisdom." (Isaiah 11:1-2) That is, Jesus walked with a continual awareness of God's perspective. But a word of wisdom is a specific bit of God's opinion given for a specific need. We need to continually seek God, so that we are sensitive to hear His voice and receive His wisdom. We usually see the natural and physical side of things, but God sees it all, even from the future. Do not rely on your own understanding or knowledge. Get wisdom.



Methods

Wisdom Quiz

Ask the class to take a test on the subject of wisdom. Ask them to answer a series of questions that call for a judgment decision. Have the answers put in writing and turned in. Then, review the questions and answers with an eye toward discovering the insight that the students had, and the wisdom that they either did or did not show. Then, ask them to agree on a consensus answer that they believe would be the most pleasing to Jesus. In

that answer they will find wisdom. Lead them in a prayer at the end of class, helping them to ask God to put wisdom into their lives.

Sample Questions

1. A Christian businessman loaned some microphones to a Christian group, and they were somehow lost. He later saw some equipment owned by one of the members of the group, so he took it, because no one was around to see him. It seemed fair, but was it wise?
2. A Christian girl was invited to go out with a "popular" group of kids in her class. She was encouraged to wear something "sexy" and smoke a little pot. She felt that if she did a few things to be accepted by them, then she might be able to witness to them about the Lord. Was she wise? (Proverbs 13:20)
3. Josh and Sarah were members of the teen group in a Pentecostal church. They loved each other, and planned to marry when they were older. They were all alone; and they were tempted with fornication. They felt that it would be all right to do a little petting, as long as they did not "go all the way." Were they wise? (Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 1 Corinthians 6:18; 2 Timothy 2:22)

The Trials of Jesus

Volume 7

Lesson 29



Bible References

Isaiah 53:3-5

Job 5:7

1 Peter 4:12-17

Revelation 21:3-4

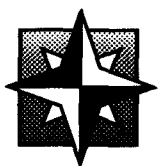
that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

15 "And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

16 "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham."

17 "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."

18 "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."



Theme

Jesus understands all of our trials and temptations.



Scripture Reading

Hebrews 2:14-18

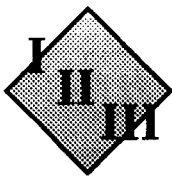
14 "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same;



Memory Verse

Isaiah 53:3

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."



Outline

I. Problems Endured by Jesus.

- A. He suffered more than any of us ever will.
 - 1. Isaiah 53:3-4, 7.
 - 2. Mark 8:31.
- B. He suffered for us; and He took our suffering upon Himself.
- C. Because He suffered, we can see His empathy and understanding for our suffering. (Hebrews 2:18)
- D. Those who follow Him will suffer as well, in a wicked world. (John 16:33)

II. Problems Are to be Expected.

- A. Everyone suffers through problems and trials.
 - 1. References.
 - a. 1 Peter 4:12-16.
 - b. 1 Thessalonians 3:3.
 - c. Job 5:7.
 - 2. They may be:
 - a. Physical.
 - b. Mental.
 - c. Emotional.
 - d. Financial.
 - e. Spiritual.
 - 3. The wicked suffer in life because of their sins.
 - 4. Christians suffer, too.
 - a. Sometimes because of our own fleshliness or foolishness.

- b. Sometimes to strengthen our character.
- c. Sometimes to develop patience or compassion.

B. Problems are never pleasant. (Hebrews 12:11)

C. Problems and suffering are never pointless.

- 1. God is not capricious (erratic), random, or mean. (Exodus 34:6-7)
- 2. God always works with a purpose, in all that happens to us. (Ephesians 1:9-10)
- 3. God's purposes for us are always loving and positive. (Romans 8:28)
- 4. God can work, even in imperfect bodies and circumstances.

D. We will not always understand His purposes -- but we can trust Him.

III. God Uses Problems and Conflicts to Train Us.

A. Problems can be disciplinary.

- 1. 1 Chronicles 21:1 - 22:1.
- 2. Numbers 32:10-15.
- 3. 1 Peter 4:1-2.

B. Problems can be protective, causing us to seek aid or treatment.

- 1. Physical pain points to the need for medical help.
- 2. God brings pain, to draw men back to Him. (Deuteronomy 4:15-31)

C. Problems can be preventive, to keep us from hazardous decisions and actions.

- 1. Problems can humble us.
 - a. Job 42:1-6.

- b. Daniel 4.
 - c. 2 Corinthians 12:7.
- 2. They can help bring us to repentance. (Luke 13:1-5)
- D. Problems can be preparatory, making us ready for God's use.
 - 1. Genesis 37-50.
 - 2. Hebrews 2:10.
 - 3. James 1:2-4, 12.
 - 4. 1 Peter 4:1-2.
 - 5. Romans 5:3-4.
- E. Problems can proclaim:
 - 1. God's glory and mercy.
 - a. John 9:1-3.
 - b. Hebrews 11:35b-39a.
 - 2. The gospel message.
 - a. 2 Corinthians 4:7-10.
 - b. Matthew 10:16-22.
 - c. Provoking men to follow God.
- F. Problems can be portraying -- becoming like Christ before others.
 - 1. Comforting other like-sufferers.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 12:26.
 - b. 2 Corinthians 1:3-5.
 - 2. Spurring others to help sufferers. (Matthew 25:34-40)

IV. Problems Have an End.

- A. The glory in heaven will remove all remembrance of suffering here. (Romans 8:18)
- B. God's eternal comfort will be ours. (Revelation 21:3-4)

V. Problems Can Bring Encouragement.

- A. Jesus understands all of our problems and suffering. (Hebrews 2:18, 4:15-16)
- B. Jesus is with us in all our problems.
 - 1. Psalms 23:4.
 - 2. John 16:33.
 - 3. Hebrews 12:2-3.
- C. Jesus builds us through our problems.
 - 1. Romans 5:3-5.
 - 2. James 1:2-4.
- D. Trials can mark us as God's. (Hebrews 12:4-12)
- E. Reproofs from God can show us that He loves us too much to leave us the way we are. (Proverbs 3:12)



Spiritual Truths

- Jesus suffered in His earthly life; and we know that He understands how we feel.
- Everyone suffers through problems and trials.
- Salvation means that you become a child of God; but it does not mean that your problems are over.
- We are not free from problems, but we do have the assurance that our problems will bring about eventual benefits.

- The way we respond to problems determines the results.
- We will not always understand God's purposes -- but we can trust Him.
- Christians have the assurance that our suffering will end one day.
- The wicked have the assurance that there will never be an end to their suffering.
- God's grace can bring you through any time of suffering, if you keep your focus on Him and have faith.
- The only way a human can become trained and equipped for effective ministry is through suffering.
- God is more interested in your character than in your comfort.
- If you pray for patience, expect tribulation -- because that is how we develop patience.



Lesson Material

Everyone, at some time, suffers through problems and trials. They may be physical, mental, emotional, financial, spiritual or some other type. We are not the first, nor will we be the last, to come up against the trial we are, or will be, facing. (1 Corinthians 10:13) We who love Christ can look beyond the immediate circumstances in which we find ourselves -- beyond the current trials and pains -- with confidence in a God Who loves us.

He is not out to destroy us, but to improve and prepare us for an eternity with Him. Because we know Him, we can hold on in the midst of trials, while gaining patience, endurance, character and trust, all of which well up into an unshakable hope and faith in Jesus. One of the greatest purposes for sorrow is to motivate us to repent. God loved mankind too much to let him go on and enjoy his sin. In His mercy and love, God allowed man to have it tough in life, and to suffer for his sins. Adam and Eve knew that life was perfect when they were obeying God; and they realized every day that they were suffering, because of their own rebellion.

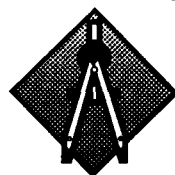
We generally do not come to God when life is pleasant. We tend to forget God until we go through serious adversity, or until we think that we might die. It is in the hard place that we are motivated to look for help; and so, we pray. Now, the Bible says that *"...the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance."* (Romans 2:4) This seems to imply that blessings and nice things will motivate people to be so grateful that they will repent, because they feel so good about God. But it does not happen. What Paul is really saying is that "God is so good, that He will allow the painful circumstances that lead us to repentance." When you pray for the salvation of a friend or family member, you can expect God to allow difficulties that will move them to their knees. Paul said to the Corinthian Christians, *"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation...but the sorrow of the world worketh death."* (2 Corinthians 7:9-10)

When a person has only worldly sorrow, it can lead to depression,

immorality, or suicide. It works death. However, when we have godly sorrow, it always works to turn us to God (repentance); and it can be the key to get us onto the path to an abundant life. No one in their right mind enjoys suffering and problems. We are, however, all tempted to seek sympathy from others; and we may want to wallow in our little pool of self-pity. We need to look to God to help us deal with our difficulties and with our attitudes. He can handle those feelings and bring His best to our lives, if we turn them over to Him. Be real -- it hurts, but it produces fruit in the end. We tend to be so accustomed to comfort and earthly pleasures, that we cannot deal with pain and suffering, particularly that which remains unmoved, unexplained, or unresolved. The world cannot recognize God's purpose in His conviction of sin, nor His character-building work in such circumstances.

We, as Christians, are often drawn into this deception, feeling that every inconvenience, setback, error or sickness is a time to question God in His competence and control. He suddenly becomes secondary to the circumstance. We may say to ourselves (and even to others), "Why did God do this to me (or others)?" Or, "Why has He not answered my prayers for healing (or deliverance, or finances, etc.) yet? Has He rejected me?" We limit His will to work in our lives, when we demand immediate deliverance merely for our own comfort. The purpose of Jesus' work is to conform us to His perfection -- a process which requires suffering. (Romans 8:29) We should respond in times of trial with faith and a full understanding of our loving, sovereign God, asking, "What do You want me to learn from this?" Or, "What good work will You accomplish through this? Let me be a part of it." This

is the mature, godly response to our problems -- and we will see God begin to do great and marvelous exploits through our lives, when we respond to Him in this way.



Methods

List on the Blackboard

A common form of suffering is physical sickness. List as a group some common reasons people become sick. Examples: 1.) Overindulgence in rich foods; 2.) Accidentally drinking, eating, or breathing toxic substances; 3.) Fornication; 4.) Using tobacco; 5.) Side-effects of ingesting drugs; 6.) Exposure to viruses or parasites; 7.) Old age; 8.) Inherited disorder.

Discussion Questions

How much of our suffering is the result of our own foolishness, or fleshliness?

How much suffering is the result of other people's sin?

While God allows sin and suffering, is He really the source of it?

Why should we confess our faults, before we get prayer for our sickness? (James 5:16)

Why did Jesus suffer so much, if He never sinned?

How do we know if it is God's will to heal a person right now?

Remind the students that Jesus truly understands how they feel; and encourage them to always go to Him with their every need, even in the midst of trial and suffering.

The Structure of the Church

Volume 7

Lesson 30



Bible References

1 Corinthians 12

Ephesians 2-4

1 Peter 2:9

12 *"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also (is) Christ.*

13 *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether (we be) Jews or Gentiles, whether (we be) bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."*

18 *"But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*

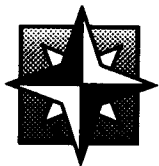
19 *"And if they were all one member, where (were) the body?"*

20 *"But now (are they) many members, yet but one body."*

1 Peter 2:9-10

9 *"But ye (are) a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

10 *"Which in time past (were) not a people, but (are) now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."*



Theme

The church is the body of born-again people, joined together by a common faith in, and devotion to, the Lord Jesus Christ.



Scripture Reading

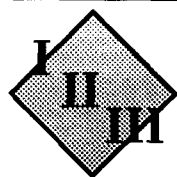
1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 18-20



Memory Verse

Ephesians 2:19-20

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;"



Outline

I. Characteristics of the Church.

A. The Foundation is Christ.

1. 1 Corinthians 3:11.
2. Matthew 16:18.
 - a. Peter was called *Petros* -- a "little stone."
 - b. "Upon this *Petra* (great stone), I will build my church."
 - c. The revelation of Who Jesus really is, is the stone that is the foundation of the church.
3. Colossian prerequisite.
 - a. Colossians 1:18.
 - b. Jesus is the Head of the body -- the church.
4. Entrance is not by human choice or ritual.
 - a. Acts 2:39.
 - b. Matthew 7:21-23.
 - c. John 3:3.
 - d. 1 Corinthians 2:4-5.

2. The Holy Spirit draws us and places us into the body. (1 Corinthians 12:3, 12-13)
3. The result is salvation and acceptance by God.
 - a. John 1:12.
 - b. John 3:16, 36.
4. Changed lives are evidence of real faith.
 - a. Matthew 7:21.
 - b. James 2:17-19, 26.
 - c. 2 Corinthians 5:17.

B. Love is evident in the church. (Romans 12:9-11; John 13:35)

1. In fellowship.
 - a. Hebrews 13:1.
 - b. John 13:34.
 - c. Galatians 6:10.
2. In forgiveness. (Ephesians 4:32)
3. In hospitality.
 - a. Hebrews 13:2.
 - b. Romans 12:13.
4. In generosity.
 - a. Romans 12:8.
 - b. Romans 12:13a.
5. In compassion.
 - a. Ephesians 4:32.
 - b. Hebrews 13:3.
6. In protection.
 - a. Hebrews 3:12-13.
 - b. Hebrews 10:24-25.

C. Unity is manifested.

1. In a common faith.
 - a. Ephesians 4:4-5.
 - b. Acts 4:32.
2. In relationships.
 - a. Romans 12:15-16.
 - b. Ephesians 4:2-3.
 - c. Acts 2:46.
3. In purpose.
 - a. Acts 4:29-31.
 - b. Philippians 2:1-5.

D. Godliness is the lifestyle.

1. Holiness.
 - a. Hebrews 13:4-5.
 - b. 1 Peter 2:9a.
 - c. Romans 12:21.
 - d. Colossians 3:1-3.
2. Worship.
 - a. 1 Peter 2:9b.
 - b. Romans 12:1-2.
 - c. Ephesians 3:20-21.
3. Service.
 - a. Romans 12:4-8.
 - b. Ephesians 2:10.
 - c. 1 Corinthians 12:4.

II. Commission of the Church.**A. Evangelism of the lost.**

1. Philippians 1:27-28.
2. Matthew 28:18-20.
3. Acts 1:8.
4. Philippians 2:15.

B. Training believers for service.

1. Ephesians 4:11-15.
2. Hebrews 10:24-25.
3. 2 Timothy 3:16.

C. Obedience to God.

1. Luke 17:7-10.
2. 1 John 1:5-7.
3. 1 Peter 1:14-16.

D. Worshipping the Lord.

1. Isaiah 43:21.
2. John 4:23-24.

**Spiritual Truths**

- The church is made up of all true believers in Jesus Christ.
- The local church is the practical expression of the Universal church, in which we develop and demonstrate love and forgiveness.
- The church is founded and headed by Jesus Christ Himself.
- The Holy Spirit alone calls men to faith and membership in the church.
- The defining characteristic of the church is love -- love between members, and love toward those that are not yet members, thus drawing them in.
- The church should be marked with holy living and purity.
- The true church will be active in ministry to the needs of the believers, and to those outside the church.
- The church is not perfect in itself; but it is being perfected by Christ, until He comes for it.
- The church will be in God's presence forever, in heaven.
- The local church is the place in which we are in training for the reigning.



Lesson Material

The purpose of this lesson is to bring the young people to an understanding that the church is not just the building in which worship and teaching take place a couple of times a week. It is not bound by titles such as Baptist, Lutheran, Catholic or Charismatic. It is not just an organization put together by men, in order to provide a structure in which to indoctrinate others in their philosophical leanings; nor is it a social club, providing clean entertainment and wholesome fellowship.

The church, as God has defined it in His Word, does indeed encompass many of these characteristics -- worship, fellowship, organization, and group identity. Yet, it also surpasses man's meager abilities and imaginations. The church is a supernatural, mystical union of the finite with the Infinite. We do not join it by human fate, or by signatures and dues, but by the calling of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men. Many claim to belong to a church, by being on its roster and sitting in its facilities for services. But the true church is the body and bride of Christ, whose members are partakers of His divine nature and indwelling presence.

The church is not an organization, but an organism, whether we speak of the local or global level. It is compared to a body in its definitions and workings, headed by Jesus himself. (1 Corinthians 12) As we see from the outline, the true church is founded, built and led by Jesus Christ, Who gave His life as a sacrifice for men, that they might be reconciled to God.

Only people who have recognized their lack of communion with God, have come to Christ for His reconciliation, and have put themselves under His authority are included in this body, the church. Those who discard His Word and deny His authority and deity may gather together and call themselves a church; but, in truth, they are only a human organization, sharing shortsighted philosophies and being overtaken by Satan's deception.

True members of the church have not merely given mental or philosophical assent to Christ's claims, but have gone the extra step of surrendering their lives, their control, their wills and their destiny to Him. They trust completely in Him for the rest of their lives here, and for eternal life in the hereafter. This is faith; and it is evidenced by changed lives.

Love, the all encompassing virtue, will be evident in the true church, manifesting itself in a multitude of ways, in fellowship, friendship, encouragement, forgiveness, hospitality, generosity, compassion and protection. The true church cares for the needs of its members, disciplines failures in humility and restorative spirit, provides acceptance and belonging, builds worth, and gives purpose to life.

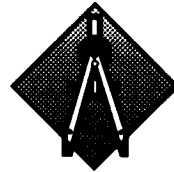
The true church, though differing in thought in some areas, is in full unity of spirit concerning the basic tenants of the faith. They are also in full unity of spirit concerning relationships to one another, and in vision and purpose for its ongoing work under Christ. To carry out Christ's commands, we must be together, coordinated, and cooperating as one body. Then we can impact our world for the gospel. The church's unity should stand out in direct contrast to the divisiveness and unrest in the world.

The church must also, if Christ is truly in it, display true holiness and sanctification -- being set apart, not in eccentricity, but in lives that reflect God's Spirit in worship, service, honesty, integrity, fidelity, purity, dependability, humility and devotion. We should stand out like the stars in the heavens against the black void of space -- a people with something solid and visible in the midst of the world's empty vacuum, which is devoid of absolutes or moral anchorage. Our lives are to be a drawing card to unbelievers, not through self-righteousness and finger-pointing, but by joy, peace, purpose and full lives derived from our relationship with Christ.

The church's commission is to go out and spread the good news of Christ and His free salvation to all men who will come to Him. For believers, it is to provide training, so that they may become fruitful in their lives for Him; and to produce obedience to what God has shown us as His best for our lives in His Word. Our highest priority is to reflect and radiate Christ to a dying world, that all who are willing may have the opportunity to gain the salvation that Christ offers. Our goal is not to influence political decisions or get involved in the world's power games. If we effectively share and live out Christ, man's desires and decisions will be changed and affected by the Spirit's work in their lives; and all areas of life will be changed, both what we consider spiritual and what we consider secular.

The final rest of the church will be with God. It will be drawn out of the world through the rapture, or the catching away of the believers. (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17) The church will not be left to see God's judgment poured out on the earth in the final years that the Bible calls the Tribulation. This removal of God's people

prior to His judgment is consistent with God's nature and history. Noah did not see the flood's effects; Lot was told not to look back to Sodom during its destruction; and scripture reinforces the theme in 1 Thessalonians 5. A special wedding feast is appointed for all who are called out to be His own. (Revelation 19:9) And so, we will live with our Lord for all eternity -- the church, triumphant and everlasting. Encourage the young people to be sure that they are a part of this church, by accepting Christ as their Lord and Savior today!



Methods

Define Catholic

Note that there is a distinction in the Bible between the local church and the universal church. The local church is mentioned most often in scripture. Jesus is the Head of the true church; and a genuine, Christian, local church should make it the supreme goal to submit to His headship in reality, and not just theoretically.

The Universal (Holy Catholic) church mentioned in the Apostle's Creed consists of all genuinely born-again Christians in the world, regardless of their language or affiliations.

Clarify Church Function

Use a picture or model of the tabernacle of Moses to illustrate the three basic functions of the church. The outer court represents evangelism (place of entrance; bronze altar). The inner court represents the fellowship, communion, and training

of the saints. And the Holy of Holies represents ministry to God in worship. Every strong local church should have the

vision to minister to God in praise and worship, to train and equip the believers for ministry, and win the lost to Christ.

The Charismatic Church

Volume 7

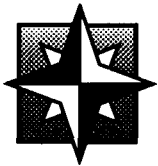
Lesson 31



Bible References

Ephesians 4:11-13

1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 18



Theme

God's Word has provided instruction in the proper structure and functioning of His body of believers, according to His calling and appointment.



Scripture Reading

Romans 12:6-8

6 "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, {let us prophesy} according to the proportion of faith;

7 "Or ministry, {let us wait} on {our} ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

8 "Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, {let him do it} with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness."

Ephesians 4:11-13

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:"

1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 18

4 "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 "And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

6 "And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

7 "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."

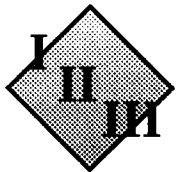
18 "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him."



Memory Verse

1 Peter 4:10

"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."



Outline

I. Different Gifts.

A. Gift -- Greek *charisma*. (1 Corinthians 12:4)

1. Specific abilities and motivations given to each believer.
2. No one has it all, except Jesus.
3. Each believer has at least one spiritual gift.
4. These are received from the Spirit.
5. Not earned or developed by self will.

B. Seven "grace gifts" listed in Romans 12.

1. Prophecy.
 - a. Perceiving and declaring the Word of God, as revealed by the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Always edifies, exhorts or comforts. (1 Corinthians 14:3)
2. Ministry.
 - a. Serving gift.
 - b. Desire and ability to meet practical needs.

C. Teaching.

1. Ability to research and study.
2. Desire to validate the *rhema* with the *logos* of the Word.
3. Interest in detail, facts.

D. Exhortation.

1. Desire to encourage others with specific instruction.
2. The apostle Paul was an exhorter.

E. Giving.

1. Desire and ability to earn, save, and give money to ministries.
2. Giving because of the prompting of the Spirit, rather than merely in response to big appeals.

F. Ruling.

1. Ability to organize and delegate.
2. Ability to focus on long-range plans.

G. Mercy.

1. Special sensitivity to people.
2. Compassion; expressing God's mercy.

II. Different Administrations.

A. Greek *diakonos* -- "ministries." (1 Corinthians 12:5)

1. Apostolic ministries are to lead the church.
2. Ephesians 4:11-13.

B. Positions.

1. Apostles.
 - a. Responsible for keeping doctrine pure.
 - b. Apostles are the pastors' pastors.
 - c. Pioneer, oversee, and confirm churches.
2. Prophets.
 - a. Contribute to the direction of the church.
 - b. Special gift for hearing from and speaking for God.
3. Evangelists.
 - a. Strong in soul-winning and preaching to sinners.
 - b. Signs and wonders validate their ministry to the world.
4. Pastors.
 - a. Responsible for oversight of a local church.
 - b. Feed and govern a flock.
 - c. Top authority on the local level.
5. Teachers.
 - a. Responsible for instruction in the Word.
 - b. Focus on specific areas of teaching.

C. Purposes. (Ephesians 4:12-13)

1. Equip and prepare the body for service.
2. Build up the body.
3. Produce unity.
4. Instill knowledge of Christ.
5. Produce maturity.

III. Different Manifestations.

A. Greek *phanerosis* -- means "exhibition; expression." (1 Corinthians 12:7-11)

1. Paul listed nine manifestations of the Spirit.
2. Often erroneously called "the nine spiritual gifts."

B. Operation of manifestations.

1. The power is resident in the Holy Ghost.
2. He has all knowledge, wisdom, power, etc.
3. He imparts a portion of information or power to specific believers, as He chooses.
4. All gifts and manifestations are given to edify the body.

C. Manifestation gifts.

1. Word of wisdom.
2. Word of knowledge.
3. Faith.
4. Gifts of healings.
5. Miracles.
6. Prophecy.
7. Discerning of spirits.
8. Tongues.
9. Interpretation of tongues.

IV. Local Church Offices Function Under Apostolic Leadership.

A. Local elders.

1. Help the Pastor to oversee and care for the flock.
2. Functions.
 - a. Pray for the sick. (James 5:14-15)
 - b. Anoint with oil.
 - c. Apt to teach the Word. (2 Timothy 2:24)

- d. Minister to the spiritual needs of the body of believers.
- e. Baptize believers in water.
- f. Serve as examples to the believers.
- g. Be willing to fill places of responsibility.
- h. Guard the flock against wolves, division, rebellion, and false doctrine.
- i. Stand with the Pastor in the work of the ministry of the church.

B. Deacons.

1. Servants of the Pastor and the body. (Acts 6:1-4)
2. Responsible for the physical and material needs of the membership.
 - a. Make sure that the facility is in order for each service.
 - b. Keep the grounds and properties maintained.
 - c. Assist the Pastor in every way possible during the service.
 - d. Prepare and minister communion.
 - e. Distribute food and other physical necessities to those in need.
2. Enable the Pastor to spend more time in the Word and in prayer. (Acts 6:4)
3. Prerequisites. (1 Timothy 3:8-13)

- We need to be aware that we think differently, because we are gifted and motivated differently.
- We should be encouraged by our different strengths, and patient with our different weaknesses.
- Paul listed three kinds of spiritual gifts: grace gifts, ministry gifts, and manifestations.
- The term "gift" does not refer to merit. It refers to spiritual function.
- God will hold us accountable for the way in which we handle and use our spiritual gifts.
- Local elders are called to free the pastors from having to personally relate to every member of the church.
- Deacons are chosen to take care of all of the physical needs of the people and the buildings.
- The Holy Spirit provides "gifts" to each believer, in the form of talents and abilities, to be used for the common good.
- Spiritual gifts are given to enable us to help others and to edify the church.
- Believers are to be mutually submissive to, and respectful of, one another.
- Every believer is important, in God's eyes, and in their local body of believers.
- If one member fails to function correctly in the body, the whole body suffers. (1 Corinthians 12:26-27)



Spiritual Truths

- Every member of the church has a spiritual gift.

- There is to be no comparison, criticism or competition concerning the gifts given to believers in the church.



Lesson Material

Men were not created to be alone, functioning in solitude and self-government. God created us as social beings, who thrive best in interaction and interdependency. We live in groups where communication, cooperation and collective action are the norm. Where these thrive, man becomes productive and purposeful under God's leading. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's families stayed together, as did the nation of Israel under Moses and Joshua. To be fruitful and accomplish anything of value, a community must have an organized structure with a well-defined line of authority, under which decisions can be made and direction can be determined. Where authority is missing or is ignored, chaos and anarchy result. After the time of Joshua, a void of leadership developed in Israel; and each man went his own way and did what he judged best for himself. (Judges 17:6) The nation nearly disintegrated; and it endured continuing harassment and domination by other peoples, who were more organized and disciplined.

God's intentions for structure were well-defined for Israel. The priests, workers and tribal authorities were appointed to keep the nation's direction straight, to provide arbitration for disputes, to pronounce judgment upon evil and crime, to meet social and physical needs as they arose, and to give

instruction, so that succeeding generations would continue to seek God and follow His commandments. Under the new covenant that Jesus brought, the need for structure is still present; but it is given in a different format -- the church, Christ's body and bride.

Jesus Himself is the Founder, Builder and Sustainer of the church. He is the supreme Authority and only true Foundation of a real church. In this capacity, He has identified for us His intentions for lines of authority and action within His church.

His first appointees are also considered His "gifts" to the church -- the apostolic ministries. These "gifts" are men and women called out with God's anointing into roles of authority that often supersede the boundaries of a local body, in order to give covering and direction to a region, or to the church as a whole. These callings cannot be developed or gained by means of man's determination or effort. They are a sovereign function of Christ alone, calling to the heart and soul of a person of His choosing.

This apostolic leadership must direct the local body. The church is not a democracy. It is to be led by divinely appointed leadership. Those under their authority must respond in submission and obedience to that direction. God will often speak to those under authority; but the instruction or revelation will always be within the bounds of the direction that apostolic ministry has revealed for the church. God's leading for an individual will never usurp or contend with the direction of His apostolic leadership. The individual must not distrust or impugn the motives of apostolic ministers; but he should pray for God's leading for them and His correction of them, if they should

stray. The individual is to be wholeheartedly loyal and encouraging to his leaders, without restraint. Apostolic leaders are also to exhort and correct each other as occasions of dispute or error arise, as Paul dealt with Peter over eating with Gentiles or Jews. (Acts 15)

Apostolic leaders are responsible to keep doctrine pure, so that instruction and decisions may come from the solid, holy foundation of God's Word. They are to equip the flock for service, keep and encourage unity in the body, instill the knowledge of Christ into each believer's heart, and lead the body into maturity, in preparation for Christ's return. There are five different kinds of apostolic gifts; and it is good that we realize that. The early church had the apostles, who had a strong personal relationship with Jesus. Alongside them were the prophets, who exhorted and provided direction for the church. These ministries generally had a trans-local influence on the church. Then the evangelists, pastors, and teachers also were involved in training the believers for their ministries. We are all called to some kind of ministry. But the apostolic ministers are the ones who are called to the leadership of the body.

Directly under the apostolic authorities are offices given to coordinate and reinforce their direction within a local body -- elders and deacons. Both are service-oriented and not glory-seeking, as are all offices in Christ's calling.

Local elders are called out for the spiritual welfare of the local body. They must be men of integrity, honesty, ability, discipline and holiness, committed wholly to Christ and His service. They must be knowledgeable; able to share the gospel and its truths; humble and not haughty; and lovers of the flock, tenderly caring for

it and protecting it against false teachers, divisive influences and outside attacks. Elders will define the spiritual tone of a church by their teaching and example. The local elders are always in submission to the spiritual authority of the Pastor.

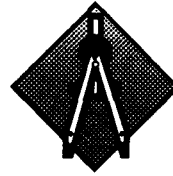
Deacons are called out to minister to physical, material needs of the flock. They must also be godly, honest, faithful, sober in the faith, dependable and humble. They help settle disputes, provide for needs in the body, and encourage the believers. They are a service arm to the Pastor. Both of these offices free apostolic ministries to function, without the concerns and hindrances of church mechanics, enabling them to concentrate wholeheartedly on God's leading and instruction for the church.

Under these authorities is the flock itself, each member of which is vitally important to the proper functioning of the body -- a fact that the anointed authorities must always keep in mind. Every person called to a local body has a divinely appointed purpose in that body. Each believer is given some ability, some means of ministry or manifestation of the Spirit meant for the common good, which is the edification of the body. These talents should flower and flourish actively under the encouraging, nourishing, protective canopy provided by the apostolic and local leadership. There are 26 such gifts of the Spirit mentioned in scripture; and each is necessary in a properly functioning local church. Each one is responsible to the Lord for the recognition, development and application of the gift or gifts God that has granted them.

In relation to each other, leaders and flock alike, there must be an atmosphere of love and acceptance, compassionate kindness and forbearance, and forgiveness

and restoration. We must respect and submit to one another in love (Ephesians 5:21), carrying no prejudice -- giving no favoritism to rich or poor; black, red, yellow, or white; physically whole or disabled. We are one body, meant to build each other up. Each person is to do all that he can to prevent division and keep the body intact. When one member suffers or falls, the body must respond -- not by amputation, but by healing and reconciliation. When one member gains blessing, the body must respond -- not with jealousy or self-pity for their own situations, but with joy and gladness at the victory of a brother or sister in Christ.

There should be no spirit of criticism, competition or comparison among the flock, but rather comfort, cooperation and coordination to accomplish all that God has for His church to do. We are each to please God in the place to which He has assigned us, and not complain about the assignment. In the end, it is not the pastor or people that we work for, but God alone. Let us go forward under His leading, that His perfect will can be done in our lives and in our church.



Methods

Manifold Grace

Write the words "manifold" and "grace" on the chalkboard. Study each of these words carefully; and explain them to the class. Note that "manifold" refers to the fact that there are "many kinds" of spiritual gifts and talents in the church. We need each other to be complete. Note that "grace" means "supernatural enablement" -- that which we receive from the Spirit, apart from natural ability.

Identify Ministries

List the various ministry gifts, including those listed in Ephesians 4:11 and 1 Corinthians 12:28, as well as the offices of elder and deacon. Ask the students if they know of a true, modern-day apostle. It may be someone that they have heard, or one of the people that they have learned about in their Life-related Stories from the Manual. Find out from them who they consider to best exemplify the offices of elder and deacon.

Water Baptism

Volume 7

Lesson 32



Bible References

Matthew 28:19

Mark 16:16

Acts 2:38

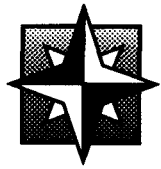
Acts 10:48

Acts 22:16

Galatians 3:27

Colossians 2:12

1 Peter 3:21



Theme

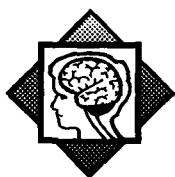
Water baptism is an ordinance in which we testify to our covenant with God, by identifying with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.



Scripture Reading

Romans 6:1-6

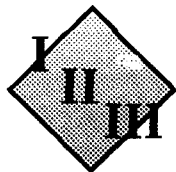
1. *"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?"*
2. *"God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"*
3. *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"*
4. *"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."*
5. *"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:"*
6. *"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."*



Memory Verse

Romans 6:5

"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."



Outline

I. Baptisms.

A. Baptism into the body of Christ.

1. 1 Corinthians 12:13.
2. This refers to our salvation.

B. Baptism in water.

1. Matthew 28:19.
2. This is the sign of our covenant with God.
3. Jesus was baptized by John. (Matthew 3:13-17)

C. Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

1. Matthew 3:11.
2. Immersion in the Spirit.
3. Initial evidence -- speaking with other tongues. (Acts 2:4)

D. Baptism of suffering.

1. Luke 12:50.
2. Necessary for our growth and development.
3. Identifying with Christ's sufferings.

II. Examples of Water Baptism.

A. Jesus. (Matthew 3:13; Mark 1:9; Luke 3:21)

B. The believers at Pentecost. (Acts 2:41)

C. The believers in Corinth. (Acts 18:8)

D. The believers in Ephesus. (Acts 19:5)

E. The Ethiopian Eunuch. (Acts 8:38)

F. Saul of Tarsus. (Acts 9:18)

G. Lydia of Thyatira. (Acts 16:15)

H. Philippian Jailer and his household. (Acts 16:33)

III. What Is Water Baptism?

A. "Baptize" means "to completely cover over," or "to immerse."

1. Very simply, water baptism is to be entirely immersed in water.
2. There is no biblical basis for substituting sprinkling for baptism.
3. Baptism is a burial in water, reflecting the burial and resurrection of Christ.

B. Baptism is a profession or proclamation of our faith in Christ.

1. Water baptism is symbolic of our identifying with Christ in His death,

burial, and resurrection. (Romans 6:3-6)

- a. We have died to our old self. (Romans 6:6)
 - (1) We recognize our fleshly (sinful, self-gratifying) nature as dead.
 - (2) We testify that we are no longer willing to live in bondage to sin.
 - (3) We forsake the influence of the world.
- b. We have buried our sins.
 - (1) We are free from the bondage and destruction of sin. (Romans 6:7)
 - (2) We are no longer servants of sin. (Romans 6:6)
- c. We have become new creatures in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17); and we *"...should walk in newness of life."* (Romans 6:4)
 - (1) We are acknowledging Christ as our Savior before men.
 - (2) We are acknowledging that we are going to live for Him.
2. Water baptism is a picture of our sins being washed away by the blood of Christ. (Acts 22:16)
3. When we are baptized "in the name of...", we affirm that we are the property of the one in whose name we are baptized. (Matthew 28:19)
 - a. In some religions, if a person converts to Christianity, this may be tolerated, because Christ is considered one of many prophets or deities. (i.e. In Islam, Jesus is a prophet. In Hinduism, Jesus is considered a god.)
 - b. However, if the person who converts to Christianity is baptized, then he or she may be disowned or even killed, because in baptism, he is renouncing his

old life.

C. Baptism is an outward expression of our salvation. (Acts 8:36-40)

1. Baptism is "an outward expression of an inward experience."
2. We are testifying before others that we have made a covenant with God, through the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. We are being obedient to the command of the Lord.

IV. What We Do Not Believe About Baptism.

A. We do not believe in regenerative water baptism.

1. "Regenerative baptism" means that in order to be saved, we must be baptized in water.
 - a. This is why some denominations within Christendom baptize babies.
 - b. Some teach that you are not born again by repentance and faith, until you have been buried in the water.
2. Galatians 3:27.
 - a. *"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."*
 - b. This can only be true of someone who has willfully acknowledged Christ as Savior.
 - c. To "put on" Christ is to have been placed into Him by the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:13)
 - d. If a person does not first receive Christ as Savior, then baptism is only a ritual.
 - e. To believe that baptism alone can save a person is a false hope.
3. The thief on the cross whom Jesus said would be with Him in Paradise

was not baptized; and yet, because of the thief's confession, Jesus promised him heaven. (Luke 23:43)

- a. There are countless "near-death" confessions of Christ by soldiers, the elderly, the sick, and others who acknowledge Christ and die, before they have the opportunity to be baptized in water.
- b. The Bible teaches that it is our confession of Christ that removes our sins and makes us clean before God.
 - (1) Mark 16:16.
 - (2) Damnation comes from not believing, rather than from not being baptized.

4. When little children were brought to Jesus, the disciples attempted to keep them away. (Mark 10:14)
 - a. Would they have done so, if they believed in infant baptism?
 - b. Jesus received the children and blessed them; and He declared, "...of such is the kingdom of God."
 - c. Baptism is not needed for children's salvation.

B. We do not believe in being sprinkled with water.

1. John the Baptist baptized people in the Jordan river. (Matthew 3:6; Mark 1:5)
2. John 3:23.
 - a. John was baptizing near Salim because "there was *much* water there."
 - b. If *much* water is the reason for choosing a particular place to baptize, then surely John was not sprinkling people, or only pouring water over them.
3. "Baptism" mean "immersion."

V. The Bible Commands Us to Be Baptized.

A. Baptism is not an option. (Acts 10:48)

1. Although baptism is not a requirement for salvation, it is a requirement for all believers, once they are saved. (Acts 16:30-33)
2. The scripture is filled with examples of believers who are baptized; and if we want to please the Lord, then we must be baptized also.
3. Once we believe, the first command that we need to obey is the command to be baptized. (Acts 2:38)



Spiritual Truths

- Water baptism is an ordinance of the church for all believers.
- Water baptism is an expression of our putting away of our old life and receiving new life in Christ.
- "Baptism" means "to be buried; to be completely immersed."
- If you were sprinkled as a baby, then you need to be baptized as a believer.
- In the New Testament, only professing believers were baptized.
- Water baptism is a commandment of scripture; and it is one of the first commandments that a new Christian should obey.

- Water baptism is an outward sign of an inward work.
- Water baptism in and of itself does not save us.



Lesson Material

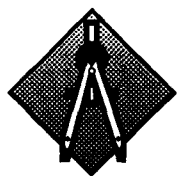
Water baptism is an ordinance of the church. We as believers are commanded by God to be baptized in water. It is an expression of our faith in Christ. Our old ways of sin are forsaken; the old man is dead; and a new way of life in Christ is our mandate. Water baptism is a celebration -- a happy event, which symbolizes our new life in Christ. The Bible indicates that with baptism we will enter into a new dimension of victory in our Christian experience.

An interesting illustration is the Exodus from Egypt. The children of Israel were delivered from death when they applied the blood to their door posts. This is symbolic of the blood of Christ, which saves us. (Hebrews 9:22) However, the children of Israel were not delivered from the Egyptians (who typify the world), until they passed through the Red Sea and were "...baptized unto Moses...." (1 Corinthians 10:1-2) There is merit to the belief that the experience of baptism and what it represents will enable us to be more victorious over the influence of the flesh and the world. We will be stronger Christians, when we obey God's word and are baptized. God will honor our obedience to Him. He will give us strength to do His work and will.

The sixth chapter of Romans provides us with a description of the Holy Spirit's work of baptizing (placing) us into the body of Christ at the time of our regeneration. Water baptism is a picture of this work, and not the means to it. We do not have to live under the dominion of sin as slaves to the old nature, because we are now believers. The "old man" has been buried; and we do not have to sin. We should reckon ourselves as dead to sin, but as alive to God. (Romans 6:11) We should view baptism as the testimonial point of departure from our old carnal lives, and the beginning of our lives of moral freedom and spiritual victory.

It is important that we point out to the students that although water baptism is not a condition for salvation, it is a commandment for all believers. Those who are not baptized cannot expect the full blessings of God, when they are not obeying a relatively simple commandment. This is important. Some teenagers who are newly saved do not wish to be baptized, because they think that it might be embarrassing, or that it is "not a big deal." The teacher must communicate the importance of water baptism. If we disobey God in this important act, then we will miss the grace and blessing that comes with it.

Water baptism is not an option; and if we refuse or ignore it, then we are in disobedience to God's Word. Water baptism is a declaration, among other things, that we are not ashamed of our Christianity and our Lord. It is an experience of strength, joy, obedience and blessing. All of us, as Christians, need to be baptized. God always honors and blesses obedience.



Methods

Survey

Ask a few of the students at the beginning of the class to share their understanding of water baptism.

Ask a few others to share their experiences, when they were baptized.

At the close of the lesson time, find out if any student needs to be baptized. If so, then try to arrange it so that the entire class can attend the baptism.

Friendship

Volume 7

Lesson 33



Bible References

Proverbs 1

1 John 4:7-8

Proverbs 27:17

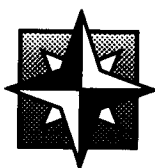
Matthew 11:28-30

14 *"Ye are my 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.*

16 *"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

17 *"These things I command you, that ye love one another."*



Theme

The way we choose and treat friends helps to determine our effectiveness for Christ and our fulfillment in life.



Memory Verse

Proverbs 17:17

"A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."



Scripture Reading

John 15:14-17



Outline

I. Choosing Friends.

A. Results of our choices.

1. The wrong friends will pull us down to their level.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 15:33.
 - b. Proverbs 22:24-25.
 - c. Proverbs 23:20-21.
2. The wrong friends will cause us great loss and sorrow.
 - a. 1 Kings 12:1-17.
 - b. Proverbs 21:16-17.
 - c. Proverbs 25:26.
3. The right friends will pull us up to greater things.
 - a. Proverbs 4:10-13.
 - b. Proverbs 12:26.
 - c. Proverbs 27:17.
4. The right friends will help us develop insight and wisdom.
 - a. Proverbs 13:20.
 - b. Proverbs 15:7.

B. Criteria for the right friends.

1. Self-controlled; stable. (Proverbs 14:16-18)
2. Pure in heart and word.
 - a. Proverbs 21:3.
 - b. Proverbs 22:11.
3. Cooperative with others. (Proverbs 10:8)
4. Faithful to their friends.
 - a. Proverbs 20:19.
 - b. Proverbs 25:19.
5. Unselfish. (Proverbs 18:1)
6. Having integrity/trustworthiness. (Proverbs 10:9)

7. Hard working -- not lazy or complaining.

- a. Proverbs 15:19.
- b. Proverbs 18:9.

C. Action for you.

1. Pray for God to lead them to you, and you to them; and watch for Him to do so.
2. Prepare yourself by developing these same qualities, that you may be a good friend in return. (Proverbs 18:24)
3. Avoid the crowd that gets in trouble or leads you astray.

II. Characteristics of Good Friendship.

A. Love.

1. Matthew 22:37-39.
2. Ephesians 5:2.
3. John 13:34.
4. 1 Corinthians 13.

B. Selflessness. (Proverbs 27:6)

C. Loyalty.

1. No backbiting or gossiping (or listening to gossip about them).
2. Defending them before those who would try to tear them down.
3. Proverbs 3:3-4.
4. 1 Corinthians 12:26-27.
5. Proverbs 17:17.

D. Encouragement.

1. Ephesians 4:29.
2. 1 Thessalonians 5:14.
3. Proverbs 12:18.

E. Mercy/forgiveness.

1. Ephesians 4:32.
2. Colossians 3:13.

F. Patience.

1. Ephesians 4:26.
2. Ephesians 4:2.
3. Proverbs 16:32.
4. Proverbs 19:11.

G. Honesty. (Ephesians 4:15, 25)

H. Availability. (Proverbs 17:17)

I. Confidentiality. (Proverbs 11:13)

J. Comfort.

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:11.
2. Proverbs 12:25.

K. Respect. (Philippians 2:3)

L. Prayer. (James 5:16)

M. Correction.

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:14.
2. Proverbs 9:9.

N. Willingness to be corrected.

1. Proverbs 10:17.
2. Proverbs 12:1.
3. Proverbs 15:31-32.

O. Kindness. (Galatians 6:10)

III. Levels of Friendship.

A. Casual acquaintance.

1. Share general information.
2. Basis for witnessing.

B. Casual friend.

1. Able to relate around common interests.
2. Co-workers, classmates, etc.

C. Close friend.

1. Able to share feelings, dreams.
2. Should be Christians.
3. Share the same destiny (heaven).
4. Should be able to witness to the lost and worship together.
5. Able to resolve misunderstandings or conflicts.
6. Basis for fellowship.

D. Intimate friend.

1. Basis for covenant.
2. Able to counsel and correct (rebuke in love) one another.
3. Able to make lifelong commitments.

IV. Jesus: The Perfect Friend.

A. What He has done for us.

1. Jesus died for our sins. (John 15:13)
2. He has called us His friends and chosen us for His purposes. (John 15:15-17)
3. He comforts us. (Matthew 11:28-30)

B. Prerequisite to being His friend.

1. John 15:14.
2. Do what He says.

C. Choose Him to be your best friend.

1. The world's friendship only destroys.
2. James 4:4.



Spiritual Truths

- We are greatly influenced by the friends that we have in life.
- It is dangerous to make close friendships with people who do not love God.
- If a person does not love God, he will be incapable of really loving you.
- Love is seeking the best for someone else.
- The opposite of love is selfishness; and the basis of sin is selfishness.
- Everyone who really loves is born of God, and knows God. (1 John 4:7)
- We need to have casual friends who are unsaved, because that is the basis for winning them to the Lord.
- It is important to allow ourselves to be influenced only by godly people.



Lesson Material

We all need friends. God created us as social creatures who flock together. We are of necessity interdependent. That is, no one has it all. We each have gifts and abilities that enable us to edify others, but we also all have weaknesses that make it necessary for us to receive teaching,

encouragement, and sometimes correction from others. God gives us all parents, leaders, teachers, and other authorities, in order to give us direction and correction in life. Beyond that, we also need peers to stand beside us, in a mutual relationship of help. True friends will be willing both to give and to receive correction from time to time. Solomon said that *"two are better than one;...."* (Ecclesiastes 4:9) When one is down, the other can lift him up.

A true friend is one who knows you well, and still loves you. There is a sense in which our parents can be our real friends. In fact, they can and should be closer to us, than the world will admit. We are also going to establish peer friendships -- and we need them. It is good for each of us to develop genuine friendships with both male and female peers, without the focus and pressure of single dating. The problem with dating is that it becomes a competition. Each person is seeking to attract and keep the "best" or "cutest" member of the opposite sex. There is much defrauding and much rejection. Everyone is trying to become popular -- to "sell" himself as a desirable companion. There is also great pressure to indulge in sexually stimulating activities. This is promoted by sensual music and suggestive images in entertainment. But the Bible teaches the principle that the young men should treat the young women as sisters. This changes the whole scene. If the boys treat the girls as sisters, they no longer become objects to pursue. They are not in a game to win prizes. They are friends to encourage. The young people relate in mixed groups; and they get to know one another on an intellectual and emotional level. They become friends. Eventually, God will knit the right hearts together, and a couple will find their hearts knit together. They will make a covenant, get married, and then give physical expression

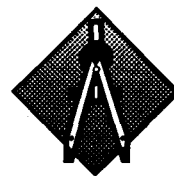
to their spiritual union within the context of marriage. Then, it is beautiful.

God's plan of virginity until marriage is so much better than the world's plan of promiscuity and heartbreak. Satan loves to use our natural desires for intimacy and friendship to destroy our potential for a happy marriage. We need to recognize that he is a destroyer. When God warns us against fornication (sex before marriage), He is not a mean God, Who wants to keep us from having a good time. He knows the misery and guilt and heartache that always result from going away from His design. God made us; and He knows exactly what we need in life.

We need to understand the levels of friendship. We should have casual friends among the unsaved, because that gives us a basis for leading them to the Lord. You show that you care about their souls, and that you are interested in them. You seek to have a positive influence in their lives. But you do not let them have an influence on your life. The real influence comes from close friends. In order to be close friends, you must have the same goals. Unsaved people are on a road to hell. They have not given their lives to the Lord, because self is still on the throne of their hearts. They cannot love in the sense that Christians can, or give themselves in preferring others. They cannot make real covenants, because their hearts are concerned with only their own interests and needs. Unsaved people are all wrapped up in themselves. They love things, and use people. But Christians love people and use things, because, in Christ, we have a true capacity to love, and to express our love in holy ways.

The most important relationship in anyone's life is his relationship with the Lord. Our relationship with Him will

determine what we will be, and where we will be, for eternity. This life is temporary. The primary purpose of this earthly life is to determine the way we will respond to Jesus and to the gospel. Since life is so short and eternity is so long, it is really foolish to love the world and reject the Holy Spirit. Christians need one another to help us focus on eternal values. We need to be encouraged to seek the Lord and His kingdom. That is what real friends are for.



Methods

Skit

Illustrate both the casual friend and the intimate friend with a brief skit. This will involve at least three people. The main character first meets someone, and then exchanges general information. He (or she) will ask him about his work, or a hobby. He invites the person to church and to a game of tennis; and they part. The next scene is a dialogue between intimate friends. It may be the main character, or a different actor, along with his or her best friend. The conversation is much different. They already know each other well. One is going through a difficult time, and the other senses it immediately. They can obviously be very honest with each other, even to the point of saying, "I think you were wrong. Go to him and apologize." Or, the person can confess a fault, knowing that the friend will never use it against him, or gossip about it. There is trust and openness; and they conclude by agreeing in prayer.

Interpersonal Relationships

Volume 7

Lesson 34

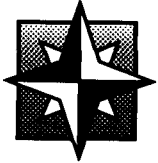


Bible References

Genesis 1:26-31

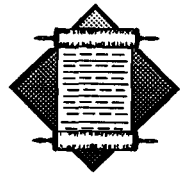
1 Timothy 5:1-2

Galatians 3:26-29



Theme

Men and women are created in God's image; and He has given instructions for proper relationships between them.



Scripture Reading

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

12 "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

13 "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.

14 "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.

15 "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.

16 "What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.

17 "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

18 "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

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?

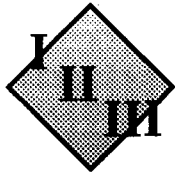
20 "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."



Memory Verse

Hebrews 13:4

"Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."



Outline

I. Men and Women Are Different.

A. Biologically.

1. Body shape and build.
2. Reproductive organs and functions.
3. Voice.
4. Physical strength.

B. Emotionally/intellectually.

1. Men normally are not as sensitive as women.
2. Men normally think and respond with more focus on logical.
3. Women tend to be more emotionally oriented.
4. Women often take situations more personally.
5. Men often need to be reminded of special occasions.
6. Men normally respond most to what they see; women respond to what they hear.
7. Men normally desire admiration, appreciation and loyalty.

8. Women desire love and security.

II. God Values Both Equally.

A. Created in His likeness.

1. Genesis 1:26-31.
2. Matthew 19:4.

B. His children, His Church.

1. Galatians 3:26-29.
2. 1 Corinthians 11:11-12.

III. God Ordained Each to Specific Roles.

A. Man.

1. Leadership. (Ephesians 5:22-24)
2. Provider. (1 Timothy 5:8)
3. Headship/covering. (Ephesians 5:23)
4. Protection/sacrifice. (Ephesians 5:25)
5. Responsibility/accountability. (1 Timothy 3:4-5, 12)
6. Prayer covering.

B. Woman.

1. Help and encouragement.
 - a. Genesis 2:18.
 - b. Proverbs 31:15, 23.
2. Advice and counsel to man.
3. Nurture family.
 - a. 1 Timothy 5:14.
 - b. 2 Timothy 1:5.
 - c. Proverbs 31:27-28.
4. Instruction. (Proverbs 31:26)
5. Balance for man.
6. Prayer intercession.

C. The Bride of Christ is composed of males and females. (Galatians 3:28)

1. Worship is a bridal response.

2. *"Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old men together:...."* (Jeremiah 31:13)

IV. God Provided Instruction on Relationships.

A. Mutual respect.

1. Luke 6:31.
2. 1 Corinthians 3:16.
3. 1 Corinthians 6:12-20.

B. Purity. (1 Timothy 5:1-2)

C. Self-control. (Titus 2:4-6)

D. Intimacy with only one partner for life.

1. Marriage was designed by God for commitment and unity.
 - a. Genesis 2:23-25.
 - b. Hebrews 13:4.
 - c. Malachi 2:13-16.
 - d. Matthew 19:3-9.
2. Sex is valued as far more than physical pleasure and procreation -- it is a spiritual joining. (1 Corinthians 6:9-20)
3. The sexual union in marriage is designed to be a beautiful expression of covenant love.
4. Outside of heterosexual marriage, sexual gratification is a form of selfish, immature behavior.

E. Consequences of sexual immorality.

1. Sexually transmitted diseases.
2. Guilt.
3. Fear.
4. Shame.
5. Distrust, because a partner cannot be trusted later to limit sex to marriage.
6. Pregnancies and abortions.

7. Concupiscence: an extreme appetite for illicit gratification. (Colossians 3:5)

8. A tendency to be unsatisfied with only one partner.

V. Sodomy.

- ##### A. God created us "male and female." (Genesis 5:2)

B. Sodomites reject God's plan.

1. Some male homosexuals claim, "God made a mistake. He made me a woman in a man's body."
2. This is not true.
3. God designed them male; but they have chosen to become effeminate.
4. They have *"...burned in their lust one toward another:...."* (Romans 1:27)
5. It is not genetic, because it is a choice.
6. Sodomites forsake their sexual sin, when they are genuinely saved.
7. Any kind of sin can be forgiven by Jesus; and any kind of bondage can be broken by Jesus.



Spiritual Truths

- God made us what we are -- emotionally and sexually -- for a purpose.
- We need to understand the differences between men and women -- physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

- God wants us to view our sexual union as a monogamous, covenant union for life.
- Any sexual union outside a biblical marriage is destructive to everyone involved.
- God has assigned the role that each person is to play in the relationships between the sexes.
- God created male and female equal in value, but different in function.
- In order to maintain a lasting relationship, men and women need to be committed to the covenant of marriage.



Lesson Material

Men and women are created in God's image; and He has given instructions for proper interrelationship between them. Though their intended roles are different, they are to mark all of their relationships with recognition and appreciation for their differences. They are to have mutual respect, moral purity and fidelity.

We live in a time of rampant social change. Images and words which were considered obscene by society twenty years ago are now viewed as acceptable. The church needs to take a stand for righteousness, and fight against the trend toward acceptance of perversion as normal. God has warned us in His Word that the world would come to such a time as this. "As in the days of Noah," there is sexual promiscuity taking place all around

us. (Matthew 24:37-39) "As in the days of Lot," we are seeing homosexuality promoted as an "alternate but acceptable" lifestyle, rather than as the moral abomination God says it is. (Luke 17:28-29; Leviticus 18:22)

Many would point a finger at the younger generation and make it the scapegoat. But how are they learning about all of this moral filth? Today, there are out volumes of television shows, movies, magazines, and even newspapers that promote indecency and immorality. Young people are being influenced; but the images are coming from wicked adults, who are seeking to merchandise evil at the expense of the young. We understand that it is difficult to be in the world but not of it. (John 15:19) We understand that they face daily pressure to conform to a low standard of living. We understand; but we cannot stand idly by and accept it.

God's Word is clear on the subject of sexual relations. When a man and a woman (or boy and a girl) enter into a sexual union, they are doing more than using each other for their own gratification. They are making a physical union. God designed the intimate, physical union to strengthen and beautify the marriage covenant. It is to be something special, which is shared privately between a man and his wife. And one of the greatest gifts that prospective marriage partners can give to each other is the gift of their own virginity.

Today, that image of lifelong monogamy has been distorted and perverted by a lascivious focus on recreational sex. What God designed for strong marriage has become a dirty spectator sport. Many people in our society have been so involved with multiple

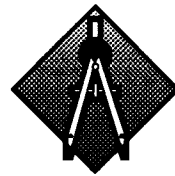
partners and loveless gratification, that they do not realize what a beautiful gift the marriage union can be. They have become so full of lust, that they cannot imagine living life with only one sexual partner. But God's way is the best. It not only is more pleasing to God, it is also more fun for the married couple. It is also safer.

We can point to the rise of sexually transmitted disease. We can point to the rise of unplanned pregnancies, and the holocaust of the abortion industry. We can point to the emotional scars caused by entering into sin. Yet, the best reason for waiting until marriage to enter into a sexual union is that this is what God has commanded. God created us; and He knows how to give us the most abundant life possible. Moral impurity is the surest way to a life of fear, pain, guilt, and misery. Satan would have us believe that it is the "good life." Who are you going to believe?

We are tempted frequently to sin. We cannot stop people from all sin; but it is our responsibility as teachers of God's Word to give "instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16), and to remind others that sexual sin grieves the Holy Spirit. God had to destroy the human race because of widespread moral perversion, saving only Noah's family from the devastating flood. God burned up the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah as a holy response to the homosexual perversions of the people. God does judge nations and cities. As Christians, we should stand up against moral perversion, even when it is not politically correct to "discriminate" against sodomites and fornicators. ("Fornication" is the biblical term for any sexual activity outside of marriage.)

Christians need to be challenged to remain chaste. We must help our students

to understand the importance of this issue. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:18-20) You cannot defile it through sin, without paying a price. To a teenager, the price may not seem that bad. As teachers, we need to magnify the consequences, because Satan never does. He only shows the illusion of pleasure. If we are wise, we will focus on the eternal things, and not be lured to our destruction by a moment of perverted pleasure.



Methods

Guest Testimony

Invite an adult or two who have a personal testimony of sexual purity before marriage; and let them give their testimony (with your pastor's permission). We often seek out the negative testimonies, and then we produce a focus on negatives. We want to focus on godly role models. People who have a history of moral impurity are the most prone to infidelity later. God's ideal is one partner for life, except in the case of the death of a partner. Let your students see that it is not only right, but it also results in greater joy and pleasure in the marriage relationship.

Discussion

You may prefer to separate the boys from the girls for this session, with a woman leading the girls and a man leading the boys. As a group, list the dangers and disadvantages of premarital sexual activity. Encourage everyone to make a commitment with God and with their parents that they will remain virgins until marriage.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Volume 7

Lesson 35

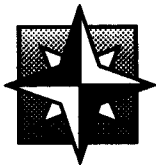


Bible References

Daniel 2

1 Corinthians 12

Revelation 17



Theme

The Holy Spirit is the source of wisdom and knowledge.



Scripture Reading

Daniel 2:1-6

1 *"And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.*

2 *"Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.*

3 *"And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream.*

4 *"Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriac, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation.*

5 *"The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.*

6 *"But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof."*

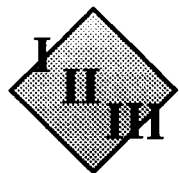


Memory Verse

Revelation 11:15

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying,

The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."



Outline

I. Daniel.

A. Daniel's name meant "God is my judge."

1. Daniel never forgot that God was still in control.
2. Daniel feared God; and so, he did not fear men.
3. He trusted God; and so, he did not become bitter.
4. Daniel was from the upper class nobility in Jerusalem.

B. Daniel's suffering.

1. He was taken to be a slave, as a teenager.
2. His parents were probably murdered by his Chaldean captors.
3. He was made a palace slave, never to return to his own land.

C. Daniel's friends.

1. Hananiah, Mechael, and Azariah.
2. The Babylonians renamed all of them.
3. They were named according to the gods of the heathens.
4. The world wants to change your identity.

5. Romans 12:2 -- Do not let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold.
6. Daniel's new name was "Belteshazzar."
7. The others were renamed Shadrack, Meshack, and Abednego.

II. King Nebuchadnezzar.

A. Babylon.

1. A massive, powerful city, in what is now Iran.
2. It was a great city of wealth.
3. The center of world conquest.
4. It contained the great hanging gardens, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.
5. A great wall circled the city.
 - a. It was so huge, that chariot races could be held on the top.
 - b. The city was impregnable.
6. A great river ran through the city.

B. The king of the Chaldeans.

1. Nebuchadnezzar conquered the known world.
2. He destroyed whole nations.
3. He killed hundreds of thousands of people, and took the wealth of nations.
4. He had great power.

III. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream.

A. Nightmare.

1. He could not remember the frightening dream.
2. He was greatly disturbed.
3. God gave him the dream; and then, He would not let him remember it.
4. God had a divine purpose.

5. *"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD,...."* (Proverbs 21:1)

B. "Call the wise men."

1. The intellectual leaders of the nation.
2. Also, the astrologers and sorcerers.
3. Adolf Hitler had staff astrologers.
 - a. He also was a mass murderer and conqueror.
 - b. He looked to witchcraft and astrology for guidance, because he did not know God.

C. God used this incident to show Nebuchadnezzar that God was God.

D. Embarrassing the wise men.

1. King: "I want the interpretation, but I forgot the dream."
2. Astrologers: "Tell us the dream, and we will figure it out."
3. King: "If you really have psychic powers, you can tell me what I dreamed."
4. Astrologers: "No one can do that."

E. King: "Kill all of the wise men."

1. The soldiers came to execute Daniel, who was considered a wise man, too.
2. Daniel appealed for time to pray about it.
3. God gave Daniel a vision of the king's dream.
4. Daniel praised the Lord.

IV. The Interpretation.

A. The dream.

1. The king saw a great statue.
 - a. Head of gold.
 - b. Silver torso.
 - c. Belly and thighs of brass.
 - d. Legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay.
2. A great stone would come down and smash the image.
3. Daniel received the information about the dream as a Word of knowledge from the Holy Spirit.

B. Interpretation.

1. This was a prophecy about the future of the world.
 - a. Gold head was Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian kingdom.
 - b. Silver torso was the Medo-Persian Empire.
 - c. Brass belly and thighs was the Greek Empire.
 - d. Iron legs and feet was the Roman Empire.
2. The great stone was Jesus, Who would become the final Ruler of the world.
 - a. Some Jewish scholars were expecting the Messiah to overthrow Rome in their day.
 - b. They did not see that Jesus would come first as the Lamb.
2. God showed the king a picture of the four great world empires, and named them.
3. There has not been a one-world empire since the fall of the Roman Empire.
4. This took hundreds of years to fulfill; but it came to pass.



Spiritual Truths

- God can use dreams and difficulties to be a witness to the lost.
- The Holy Spirit can give both words of knowledge and words of wisdom, as He did to Daniel.
- Satan cannot read minds; but God can.
- Satan does not know the future; but God does.
- *"The earth {is} the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."* (Psalms 24:1)
- The leader's heart is in the hand of the Lord.
- When you do not know the answer, pray for wisdom.
- When God gives you the answer, praise and thank Him.



Lesson Material

Nebuchadnezzar had done that which no other man in history had done, but which many have tried since. He conquered the whole known world. He gathered most of the world's wealth in the fabulous city of Babylon; and he was highly exalted. Nebuchadnezzar had the kind of power and wealth that men only dream of. He had built the most fabulous

city in the history of the world. People came from all over to see the fabled hanging gardens, and to wonder at the mammoth wall which completely encircled the great city.

The city of Jerusalem had once been the center of world power and wealth. Under King Solomon, the nation had built the great temple to the God of Israel. No expense was spared. Tons of gold and silver were used in the construction, along with many jewels and great amounts of bronze. All of the gold and silver in the temple and in the city of Jerusalem was now added to the great treasures now collected in this center of wealth and glory; and Nebuchadnezzar had it all. He was not an elected president who led the nation. He was king for life. He owned it all.

But God had a faithful man in Babylon. Although Daniel was just a young slave, God intended him to have a great position of influence in this center of world power. God gave the king a dream about a great statue, and a stone which came rolling down out of the mountain. He was greatly disturbed by it, but he could not remember the dream at all. He was driven by a desire to understand the dream; and so, he called in the astrologers and wise men of the kingdom to give him the information he needed.

Now the sorcerers and astrologers had access to some information, because they were often possessed, or at least influenced, by demons from Satan's kingdom of darkness. Some of them had psychic powers. That is, they could get information from evil spirits, although they thought that they had extra-sensory perception.

The king promised great riches to the one who could interpret the dream; and he swore to kill all of the wise men, if they

could not give him the answer that he wanted. The astrologers were perplexed. They were clever, but they had no way of knowing what was in the king's thoughts. None of their demonic sources had that kind of information. Not even the devil himself could read the thoughts of men. That would take God. He alone knows everything.

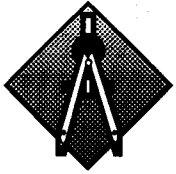
The king was enraged; and he ordered the execution of all of the wise men of the city. That included Daniel and some of his friends. By this time, the young Hebrew men had been promoted to leadership positions. They were not astrologers, but they were scholars.

When Daniel found out what was going on, he appealed for a little time for prayer. He knew that God had the answer. Perhaps he realized that God was actually up to something good, and working His purposes through this strange dream. As he prayed, Daniel saw a vision; and he knew that it was exactly what the king had dreamed. This divinely imparted information is called a "word of knowledge." Paul spoke about this as one of the nine manifestations of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12. A word of knowledge is a bit of information received from the Spirit, which could not have been gained by human means. The Holy Spirit has all knowledge; and He can impart any information to anyone who is open to hear Him.

Daniel received the word of knowledge; and he received a word of wisdom. That is, the Spirit also gave him insight as to what it meant; and he could see the truth from God's point of view. It was a prophetic picture of the future history of the world. Satan does not know the future; but God knows, because there is no time with God. There is nothing that

God does not know. That is why psychics are so poor at predicting the future, even for the coming year. Only God knows the future and everything about it.

The vision of Nebuchadnezzar portrayed him as the head of gold. Gold is a symbol of glory. Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom was the most glorious world empire in history. Daniel saw that in the vision, the torso of silver represented the Medo-Persian Empire. During the reign of Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, Belshazzar, the Medes and Persians allied against Babylon; and they took the city overnight. They immediately became the world power, and they ruled for years. Later, Alexander the Great became the third world empire, defeating the Medes and Persians and every other nation in the known world. His kingdom was later divided into four parts; and it was eventually conquered by the Romans. All four kingdoms were characterized by wicked and cruel leaders; and people were slaughtered by each of them. The Romans were especially cruel. They invented the vicious system of execution called "crucifixion." They ruled the world when God sent His Son, Jesus to the earth, to the poor, oppressed Jews. However, the language of the world was still Greek; and that was the language of the New Testament.



Methods

Discussion Questions

Name some historical figures from the Bible who were led by God through dreams.

Distinguish between a word of knowledge and a word of wisdom.

How did God use Nebuchadnezzar's dream to promote His servant, Daniel?

What did Daniel do, when faced with danger?

Who will be the next ruler of a one-world government?

The Heart of a Missionary

Volume 7

Lesson 36



Bible References

Acts 18-19

Ephesians 6

Matthew 28:19

25 "This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

26 "And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

27 "And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:

28 "For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ."

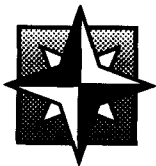
Acts 19:1-12

1 "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

2 "He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

3 "And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

4 "Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying



Theme

The Lord has called His people to the mission of preaching the gospel to every creature.



Scripture Reading

Acts 18:24-28

24 "And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

5 "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

7 "And all the men were about twelve.

8 "And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

9 "But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

10 "And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

11 "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:

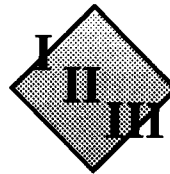
12 "So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them."



Memory Verse

2 Corinthians 5:20

"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."



Outline

I. Teaming.

- A. Paul was a team player. (Acts 18:24-19:1)
- B. God wants to use our lives in harmony with others.
- C. There are many members of the body; and all of the members have a function and purpose. (1 Corinthians 12)
- D. God owns and operates the team through the Son, and by the Holy Spirit.

II. Teaching.

- A. Paul taught about Jesus Christ.
 - 1. Acts 19:2-7.
 - 2. He did not just promote his philosophy on life.

B. The Holy Spirit has come to teach us all things. (John 14:26)

1. The Holy Spirit always lifts up Jesus Christ. (John 16:13-14)
2. The Spirit never exalts Himself.

C. Paul taught them to be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

1. He was surprised that they had not heard about the baptism in the Spirit.
2. "What kind of baptism did you receive?"
3. "We received John's baptism."
4. "Oh, that is it. You need Christian baptism."
5. They were baptized; and they also received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
6. When they received, they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

III. Reaching.

A. Miracles were a part of reaching the lost. (Acts 19:8-41)

1. The miracles brought a breakthrough in the demonic strongholds of Ephesus.
2. Miracles are not magic or toys.
3. Miracles are not for the entertainment of the saints.
4. Miracles confirm the preaching of the Word.

B. Paul could reach people with Jesus, because he knew Jesus.

1. You cannot lead a person any further than you are.
2. Example: The sons of Sceva. (Acts 19:14-16)

C. Once there was a breakthrough in the spirit realm, the harvest was reaped. (Acts 19:20)

IV. Standing.

A. Every step of faith will stir up the powers of hell. (Acts 19:23-41)

B. Satan stirs up the flesh, in order to hinder the gospel. (Acts 19:24-29)

C. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (John 10:11)

1. A hireling will flee.
2. Thieves slip in and steal.
3. God's man stands steady to protect the flock.

D. God wants every Christian to stand alone for the truth, and not go with the crowd.

1. The crowd always leads astray.
2. God wants to deal with peer pressure in all of our lives.

V. Confirming.

A. Paul stopped to strengthen the saints. (Acts 20:17-38)

1. God's Spirit always builds up and encourages.
2. Paul used his testimony to bless them.
3. He reminded them of the Word, to confirm them.
4. Paul used his presence to lift them up.

B. God wants each Christian to strengthen the church. (Ephesians 4:15-16)

VI. Commending.

A. He commended them to God. (Acts 20:32)

1. He knew when it was time to trust God to use those that were capable leaders. He knew that God could deal with them and lead them.
2. God wants us to trust Him for all things.

B. He commended them to God's grace.

1. Grace is God's undeserved favor.
2. God saves us by His grace and keeps us by His grace.

C. Paul commended them through prayer.

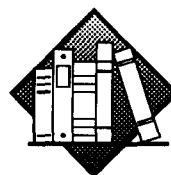
1. Prayer is the privilege of every child of God.
2. God hears us when we pray. (James 5:16)
3. God desires that we pray often; and we should pray for one another.

- The Holy Spirit gives us power over demons and over sickness.
- The baptism in the Holy Spirit is needed for power to witness and to overcome in a wicked world.
- The baptism in the Holy Spirit is not necessary for salvation.
- Tongues is the initial physical evidence that a person has been baptized in the Holy Spirit.
- Do not follow the crowd. Follow the Lord.
- God works and speaks through His church today, just as in the days of the New Testament believers.



Spiritual Truths

- God has called the church to win the lost and to disciple believers in the faith.
- God still moves in supernatural ways, in the lives of believers.
- Signs and wonders are for the purpose of confirming the preaching of the Word.



Lesson Material

Paul was a great man of God. It is not the outward appearance that makes us great, but the heart. (1 Samuel 16:7) In these verses, we can see the heart of a missionary. This heart is a good example for us as believers today. When a person comes to Christ, the Holy Spirit makes him alive (Ephesians 2:1) and places him in the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:13) This process of regeneration gives a person a distinct place and function for God's plan and purpose. The church is God's greatest vehicle for the preaching of the gospel. There should be no superstars or "Lone Rangers" in God's church. Everyone is to be a team player.

The emphasis of the church's teaching must be Jesus Christ. We see this in the

life of Paul, the apostle (which means "sent one"). Paul kept his emphasis on Jesus Christ as Savior, Healer, Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, and coming King. Today, the emphasis remains the same. There is only one Name and message whereby men might be saved -- Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, resurrected, and glorified. (Acts 4:12)

The apostles maintained a threefold emphasis to new converts: salvation, water baptism, and Holy Spirit baptism. The evidence that a person is saved is that he confesses with his mouth that Jesus Christ is their Lord and Savior. (Romans 10:9) This faith also produces joy. Water baptism testifies to the fact that the "old man" of sin is buried, and we have risen to walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4) We confirm that we are in a covenant with God -- that we are not our own. When Jesus baptizes believers in the Holy Spirit, they are submerged in the presence and power of the Spirit, and they receive supernatural power. The initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is speaking in unknown tongues, as the Spirit gives the utterance. (Acts 10:45-46)

Paul's ministry was characterized with signs and wonders, as was the ministry of all the apostles. Why were signs necessary for evangelism? Signs and wonders confirmed the preaching of the gospel. The people needed to see that they were not just hearing the words from another religion, but that this was indeed the power of God unto salvation. The miracle in this story broke down the stronghold of unbelief in the minds of the Ephesians, so they would believe the gospel and be saved. Though miracles are a blessing, their purpose is to confirm God's Word.

We cannot produce miracles by our own power; they are produced by the

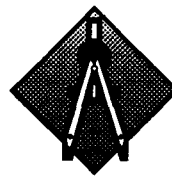
power of the Lord working through us. That anointing cannot be bought or cultivated. We position ourselves to be used of God by living close to the Lord through prayer and fasting, study of the Word, and faithful fellowship. Paul was a powerful vessel, because he was submitted to the Holy Spirit on a daily basis. Even demon power recognized that truth. (Acts 19:15)

The more that we walk with the Lord and make ourselves available to Him, the more He will use us. God does not use us all in the same way, but He will use anyone who is available. Talent is not necessary. Willingness is the key. David was a teenager and a shepherd boy; but God used David to defeat Goliath, when David's made himself available. Every young person needs to know that his life can be important and exciting, if he will make himself available to the Lord.

You can never take a step of faith, without a battle. Have you ever made a commitment to the Lord in an area of your life, and then all kinds of trouble broke out? Ephesians 6:12 says, *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."* This is normal. Satan and his emissaries often use people to create conflict and discouragement. Many times those who are used by the devil are the ones that we love the most. God's answer to this stress is the whole armor of God. Ephesians 6:11 says, *"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."* When resistance to the gospel came, Paul stood his ground, in the love and power of the Spirit of God. Because he did not react in fear and anger, God's Spirit moved and vindicated the man of God.

Have you ever known a believer that needed to be encouraged? All of us need to be built up in the faith by others. Paul's concern was for the people of God -- so much so, that he made an extra effort to return to the Ephesians and strengthen their faith. His method was to attend the services, share his testimony, and share God's Word. *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."* (Hebrews 10:25)

Every believer can use this same method to be an encouragement to other believers. When you faithfully attend services, share your testimony with others, and speak God's Word in a loving manner, you strengthen the saints (sanctified people) of God. Sometimes, people do not respond to God's plan for their lives. Paul understood that he could plant the seeds, but that he could not control the outcome. That is why he commended the Ephesians to the Lord. There is a wonderful peace that comes in knowing that the Lord is bigger than all of our problems and circumstances.



Methods

Musical Illustration

Ask a musician to play a melody on an instrument. Then ask him to play the song again with full harmony. This illustrates the power of team work. Teams accomplish more -- with greater quality and less effort. God calls all of us to play on His team. Then, ask the musician to play with one hand in one key, and the other hand in an adjacent key. Listen to the dissonance. When we are not tuned together, we are in discord. Discord comes when we speak negatively about one another, or have unresolved personal conflicts. God hates those who sow discord among the brethren. (Proverbs 6:19)

Object Lesson

Use a glass of water to demonstrate that a person can have water in a glass, a full glass of water, and an overflowing glass of water. Explain that this shows the difference between being saved, full of the Spirit, and baptized in the Holy Spirit. The word "baptized" means "to be immersed, or overflowed." Jesus is the One Who baptizes us in the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 3:11)

Laying on of Hands

Ask your pastor for instruction to pray with your students to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. You will know that they have received, when you hear them speak in unknown tongues.

The Only Savior

Volume 7

Lesson 37



Bible References

Ephesians 2:1-3

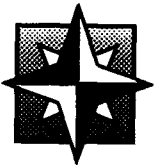
Romans 3:23-24

Romans 7:17-18

Romans 8:1-4

Revelation 22:17

Genesis 1-3



Theme

Jesus came to save us from the power of sin, and not just from the consequences of sin.



Scripture Reading

Romans 5:15-21

15 "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

16 "And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

17 "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one: much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

18 "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

19 "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

20 "Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

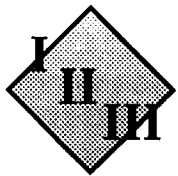
21 "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."



Memory Verse

Romans 5:8

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."



Outline

I. Man's Need for Salvation.

A. Man's original created position.

1. Perfection in God's image. (Genesis 1:26-31)
2. Direct relationship; contact with God. (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:8-9)
3. Innocence; blamelessness -- destined for eternity in God's presence.

B. The Fall.

1. Man was tempted to exalt himself and disobey God. (Genesis 3:1-5)
2. Man rebelled; and sin entered his heart. (Genesis 3:6)
3. Man hid from God, denied, and blamed, in order to cover his guilt before God. (Genesis 3:7-13)
4. Man was separated from God by his sin. (Genesis 3:16-19, 22-24)

C. Current Position.

1. Man is sinful by nature.

- a. Romans 3:23.
- b. Romans 7:17-18.
2. Man is an enemy of God.
 - a. Ephesians 2:11-12.
 - b. Colossians 1:21.
3. Man is trapped, helpless, and destined for eternity without God.
 - a. Romans 5:12.
 - b. Romans 3:9-20, 23.
 - c. Ephesians 2:1-3.

II. God's Provision for Salvation.

A. The foundation is grace.

1. Romans 5:8.
2. Romans 6:23.
3. Ephesians 2:1-10.
4. "Grace" refers to that which God does for us and in us, apart from our own merit or ability.

B. Atonement for sin is by blood.

1. Adam and Eve were clothed in the skins of sacrificed animals. (Genesis 3:21)
2. The Mosaic law called for sins to be atoned only by blood. (Hebrews 9:22)
3. Prophecy spoke of an ultimate Sacrifice. (Genesis 3:15)

C. Jesus -- the Final Solution. (Acts 4:12)

1. God-in-Flesh -- took our form, to pay our penalty. (Hebrews 2:14-17)
2. Jesus was the perfect sin offering.
 - a. He alone was sinless -- able to pay the debt. (2 Corinthians 5:21)
 - b. He owed nothing Himself. (Hebrews 7:22-28)
3. He died in our place on the cross.
 - a. Romans 5:6.
 - b. Hebrews 9:15.
4. His blood provides ultimate, final atonement. (Hebrews 9:18-28)
5. His resurrection assures our own.

- a. Romans 8:11.
- b. Colossians 3:4.
- c. Ephesians 2:6-7.

D. Results of Jesus' work.

1. Availability of forgiveness by God.
 - a. Colossians 1:22.
 - b. Romans 8:1-2.
2. Availability of reconciliation to God.
 - a. Romans 5:11.
 - b. Ephesians 2:13-18.
 - c. Colossians 1:22.
3. Availability of peace.
 - a. John 14:27.
 - b. Ephesians 2:14.
 - c. Philippians 4:7.
4. Availability of eternal life with God.
 - a. John 3:15-16.
 - b. John 10:27-28
 - c. 1 John 5:13.
5. Availability of power over sin.
 - a. Galatians 5:16-18.
 - b. Romans 8:2.
 - c. Romans 6:11-16.
6. Availability of indwelling Holy Spirit.
 - a. Romans 8:9-11.
 - b. 1 Corinthians 6:19.
 - c. Ephesians 1:13-14.

III. Appropriation of Salvation.

A. God calls people to come to Him.

1. John 6:44.
2. 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12.
3. Romans 8:30.

B. God wants all men to repent and be saved.

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:9.
2. John 6:37, 40.
3. 1 Peter 3:9.

C. God accepts any who come to Him.

1. Acts 2:21.
2. Romans 10:11-13.

D. God condemns any who deny His gift.

1. John 3:18, 19, 36.
2. Mark 6:16.
- c. 2 Thessalonians 2:12.

IV. Genuine Salvation.

A. We are saved from:

1. Sin.
 - a. Romans 8:2.
 - b. Matthew 1:21.
2. Death. (Romans 6:23)
3. From our vain conversation (selfish lifestyle), by the precious blood of Christ. (1 Peter 1:18-19)
4. Saved from an eternity of torment in hell.

B. The Old Testament type (prophetic symbol) of sin was leprosy.

1. Sin is a terminal disease that makes us insensitive.
2. Sin destroys and kills.
3. Sin can only be cleansed by a miracle from God.



Spiritual Truths

- God created man in His own image.
- Sin was not God's invention. God allowed His creation to make choices,

so that they would be able to serve Him out of love.

- There were no problems, storms, or conflicts in the human race, until sin began.
- Adam and Eve had a perfect life, as long as they acknowledged God's ownership of everything and had a personal relationship with Him.
- When man sinned, he was actually declaring his independence in life, and asserting his own will through one act of disobedience.
- Christianity is essentially a relationship with God, which is based on the transfer of ownership back to the Father.
- Sin says, "I want to be my own person, and live my own life."
- Christianity says, "I am not my own. I am bought with a price. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live." (Galatians 2:20)
- Our sin nature, which we inherited from our father, Adam, causes us to be alienated from God; and it produces the sins that we have willfully committed against God.
- We are restored to relationship with God, when we are "in Christ" by grace through faith.
- The primary purpose of this earthly life is to make the choices that will determine our eternal destiny.
- The most important choice in life involves our response to the cross of Christ, and whether we will repent of our sins and give ourselves to Him.



Lesson Material

There are many kinds of religions in the world. All religions involve some kind of "salvation," in the sense of blissful, eternal life. Religions invented by the mind of man almost universally reject the idea of an eternal hell; but God made that truth very clear throughout scripture. Most religions deal with the wise statements of prophets and teachers; and they involve obedience to creeds and laws of morality. Salvation is seen as something earned. We gain eternal existence by appeasing God (or gods); and some even suggest that we will evolve into gods, if we are good enough.

But the Bible is unique in a number of ways. Essentially, Christianity is distinct from religion, in that it is not man's attempt to know and understand and appease God. Christianity is God's revelation of Himself and His plan of salvation to man. It is written to the spirit of man, and not just to the mind. That is why carnally-minded people have, through the centuries, studied the Bible and then developed an amazing variety of false teachings, which seem quite plausible to them. Jesus said, *"...Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* (John 3:3) People who are not born again cannot see how God works, because the things of God are "spiritually discerned." (1 Corinthians 2:14)

To understand biblical salvation, we need to see the human race from God's point of view. First of all, according to Him, He made man as a unique and special creation. God did not just speak man into existence. God took the dust of

the ground and formed a man "in His own image." (Genesis 1:27; 2:7) That is, God made man in His character image, with a spirit, a soul, and a body. Animals have a body, but no eternal spirit. Angels are spirits, but they have no bodies. Man was uniquely formed to walk with God in fellowship, and to have dominion over all of the creatures of the earth. (Genesis 1:26)

God formed the woman from man (Genesis 2:22); and, together, they enjoyed a perfectly happy life. They were busy, contented, and joyful. Every evening, God walked with them in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:8) They realized that they were God's children, and that everything belonged to their heavenly Father.

In Genesis chapter 3, when Satan tempted Eve, he beguiled her into focusing on her "rights." He began to lead her into a wrong line of thinking, with self as the center. He suggested that God was not entirely honest with her -- that the way to fulfillment was to disobey, and thus declare her independence. It should be noted that Adam was possibly right there at the time. She was deceived, or tricked; but he knew better. His pride was stirred, and he lusted after that heady feeling of self-sufficiency. They both thought that if they could run their own lives, they would somehow be more fulfilled.

They were wrong. When they broke the one rule that God had given them, they violated their covenant with God. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was God's mark of ownership. When they sinned, they immediately learned a new word: "fear." They also saw that they were naked, because they now saw themselves through carnal eyes; and they were no longer clothed with God's glory.

God, in His holiness, cannot look upon sin. Sin cannot abide in His presence. Just

as Lucifer and one-third of the angels of heaven were cast out when they yielded to the temptation of pride (Isaiah 14), so also man was cast out of the garden, and away from the fellowship of God. This time, God made a provision. Unlike the angels, who can never be restored to God, man was given an opportunity to be "justified," or "made right" before a holy God. God provided the provision of a blood offering for sin. Man could transfer the guilt of his sin to a spotless lamb, and offer that life as an atonement for his sin.

The blood of animals, while it could cover the sins of the people, could not permanently atone for them. (Hebrews 9:13-14) The sin offering for the human race had to be perfect (God), and yet be related to man (kinsman redeemer -- man). The only hope for man was that Jesus, God the Word, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, would come to earth as the "*...Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*" (John 1:29) When an individual now repents of his sin and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ as His Savior, Redeemer, and Lord of his life, he is appropriating that blood that was spilled at the cross; and he is restored to relationship with God (sonship) by grace, through faith.

Grace is a unique concept to Christianity. Religion seeks to earn some kind of eternal life; but true salvation is a gift from God to those who believe and receive the gospel of Christ. We do not earn this life by works. (Ephesians 2:8-9) We do respond to our new life in Christ with obedience and love for God, if there is a genuine spiritual birth; but, we enter in by faith.

Repentance involves ownership. The word literally means "to turn around." Sin says, "I am my own person. I will do what

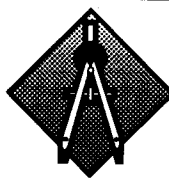
I want." Sin always promises freedom, and always results in bondage. When we repent from dead works, we are saying, "I am no longer my own person. I belong to Christ. I will live for Him, from now on." Amazingly, when we give our life to Jesus, we find the satisfaction that we previously had thought that only sin could satisfy. When we die to self and become alive to God, we begin to really live. 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)

When we are spiritually born again (John 3), we are restored to relationship with God. Our sins are forgiven, and we are adopted into God's eternal family. We bear witness to that covenant with the act of water baptism; and God does an ongoing work in our heart, as we walk in the light of His Word. (1 John 1:7) As God's children, we grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:18) We develop a deepening love for God; and we encourage each other to keep our focus on eternal things, because we still have a bitter enemy who *"...as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."* (1 Peter 5:8)

This is a basic, Christian salvation lesson. So much of what your students may have heard has probably been bits and pieces of the story. Try to communicate the scope of the whole picture, so that they can get a glimpse of the purposes of God in the earth. Many have a simplistic idea that God and the devil are in a contest to see how many they can get into heaven or hell, respectively. God's purpose is not to get a crowd, but to have a people for Himself. God wants a people who love Him with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength. (Deuteronomy 6:5; Mark 12:30)

If we can understand the relationship between God and man before the fall, we can have a good idea of God's purpose in redemption. God is restoring those who believe to that same life purpose and that same world view. Satan deceives all of us into thinking that freedom comes from independence. But true freedom is being set free from the bondage, as well as the consequences, of sin.

Why was there perfect harmony before sin came? Man saw himself as God's property; and he recognized God's sovereignty over everything. As long as man was under God's rule, he had complete freedom and full dominion over the earth. When man took possession of his own life, he lost dominion; and he established the pattern of death for his race. But when Jesus came in perfect obedience, He established a provision for life. We all sinned "in Adam" (1 Corinthians 15:22); but, when we are born again, we are "in Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:30), and we are partakers of everlasting life, because of His blood.



Methods

Altar Call

The Bible says to *"examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith;...."* (2 Corinthians 13:5) If we "accept Jesus as Savior," are we really yielding our lives to Him as Lord? If we acknowledge that we believe in Him, is that really exercising faith, in our spirit?

True conversion involves both repentance and faith. "Repentance" means

to "turn around" -- to turn from living for self, and to turn to living for the Lord. Faith means to trust God with my life. We are not to judge one another, but we are to judge ourselves. Examine yourself. Do you see in your own life that the Holy Spirit is in charge? Do you genuinely love God and His Word, or is your heart still centered on the pleasures of this world? Do you really live by faith, or do you trust in money and things for your life?

There are many people in the Bible who thought that they were right with

God, but who were not. However, there are no cases in scripture in which a person was right with God, but did not know it. We are not saved by works; but we are saved unto good works. (Ephesians 2:8-10) If we do not see the fruit of spiritual character in our lives, then we need to come to the Lord in sincerity, and establish a good foundation of repentance and faith. Today would be an excellent day to confess Jesus Christ as Lord, and to dedicate our lives to Him forever. (Hebrews 3:7-8)

God the Trinity

Volume 7

Lesson 38



Bible References

Matthew 3

2 Peter 1

John 1

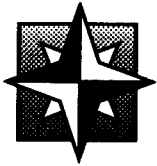
1 John 5:7

14 *"But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?"*

15 *"And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him."*

16 *"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:"*

17 *"And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*



Theme

Jesus Christ is God the Son, the second Person of the Holy Trinity.



Memory Verse

Colossians 2:9-10

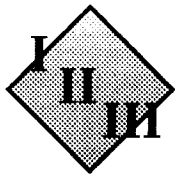
"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"



Scripture Reading

Matthew 3:13-17

13 *"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him."*



Outline

I. What Is the Trinity?

- A. The infinite God Who rules the universe is one God, Who is three distinct Persons:
 1. The Father.
 2. The Son.
 3. The Holy Spirit.
- B. Man cannot comprehend this, nor could he invent it.
 1. Carnal minds say, "Either God is one person, or there are three gods."
 2. "How can God be three and one, at the same time?"
- C. How do we know that God is Three, if we cannot understand it?
 1. The Bible reveals God as three Persons, yet one God.
 2. It is a doctrine of revelation; and it must be received by faith.
- D. There is only one true God.
 1. Isaiah 44:6.
 2. Deuteronomy 6:4.
 3. Isaiah 45:21.
 4. Isaiah 43:10-11.
- E. *Elohim*.
 1. The Hebrew name for "God," used 2500 times in the Bible.
 2. It is a plural word; but, when used of Jehovah God, it is always used with a singular verb.

D. "Let us make man in our own image,...." (Genesis 1:26)

II. Is Jesus Called "God" in the Bible?

A. Yes.

1. "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever:...." (Hebrews 1:8)
2. "...the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;" (Titus 2:13)
3. "...the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1)
4. "...God was manifest in the flesh,...." (1 Timothy 3:16)

B. Jesus referred to Himself with divine titles, which were used only of God.

1. "I am...the first and the last:...." (Revelation 1:11-13; Isaiah 44:6)
2. "...Before Abraham was, I am." (John 8:58; Exodus 3:14)
 - a. "I Am" is the name God that used for Himself.
 - b. When the Jews heard this, they tried to kill Jesus, because He was saying that He was God.
3. "Why callest thou me good? none {is} good, save one, {that is}, God." (Luke 18:19)
 - a. Jesus was not saying, "I am not God."
 - b. He was saying, "How can you see that I have the attributes of God, and not recognize that I am God?"

C. Jesus received worship, as only God can.

1. Angels never allowed people to worship them.
2. Thomas said to Him, "...My Lord and my God." (John 20:28)

- a. Jesus did not rebuke him.
- b. Greek *Kurios* and *Theos* -- names of Jehovah God.
- 3. Only God can receive worship. (Isaiah 48:11)

III. Are the Members of the Trinity Equal?

- A. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal in power and glory.
 - 1. Philippians 2:6 -- Jesus, "*...being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*"
 - 2. The divine Father/Son relationship is not exactly like a human father and son, because:
 - a. Neither had a beginning.
 - b. They are both eternal and infinite.
 - c. Father/Son does not refer to superiority, but to order.
 - d. Jesus was eternally pre-existent as the *Logos* -- the Word -- before His incarnation. (John 1:1)
 - 3. These are terms that give us an idea of the perfect love between the members of the Trinity.
 - 4. Equal in glory; distinct in office.
- B. The order of the Godhead.
 - 1. The Father is the first Person.
 - 2. Jesus Christ was sent by the Father to the world. (John 3:16)
 - 3. He became incarnated as a man; and He subjected Himself to the Father in all things.
 - a. Jesus said, "*I can of mine own self do nothing:....*" (John 5:30)
 - b. As a Man, Jesus showed us how to be a servant.

C. Esteem.

- 1. The Bible teaches us that we should esteem others better than ourselves. (Philippians 2:3)
- 2. Each member of the Trinity is constantly exalting the others.
- 3. The Trinity functions in perfect love and unity.

D. One God; one substance; one accord; three Persons.

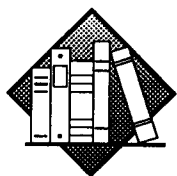
IV. The Work of the Trinity.

- A. The Trinity in the resurrection of Christ.
 - 1. The Father raised Jesus from the dead. (Galatians 1:1)
 - 2. Jesus raised Himself from the dead. (John 2:19)
 - 3. The Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead. (Romans 8:11)
- B. The Trinity was involved in the baptism of Christ. (Matthew 3:13-17)
 - 1. The Father spoke out of heaven.
 - 2. The Spirit descended like a dove.
 - 3. The Son submitted to baptism, as an act of dedication.
- C. Creation.
 - 1. God created all things. (Genesis 1)
 - 2. Jesus created all things. (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:17)
 - 3. The Holy Spirit created all things. (Genesis 1:2)
- D. All three are shown in heaven, as One. (1 John 5:7)



Spiritual Truths

- Jehovah God is one Lord, Who is three co-equal Persons.
- Man did not and could not invent the doctrine of the Trinity.
- We accept the doctrine of the Trinity by faith, because that is how the divine nature of God is revealed in the scripture.
- The Jewish leaders often felt justified in trying to execute Jesus, because He claimed to be God.
- Jesus Christ is "Immanuel" -- "God with us" -- the expression of the fullness of the Godhead.
- The term "Trinity" is not in the Bible; but the reality of the doctrine is evident throughout the Bible.
- Jesus Christ was sent from the Father; and He, in turn, sent the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus Christ is the only Member of the Holy Trinity Who has a physical body.



Lesson Material

The doctrine of the Trinity is not one that is favored by the religions invented by man. In fact, it is one of the first signs of true Christianity, because the natural mind of man always rejects concepts that

are foreign to human experience or understanding; and there is no way that we can grasp fully the idea that God can be one God, and yet be three Persons. Now, God is not a man; and He is not limited like we are, either in His infinite power and knowledge, or in His nature as the Divine Being. The Bible is not man's attempt to find or understand God, but it is God's revelation of Himself to man. If we believe it by faith, we will receive the doctrine of the Trinity. If we reject this revelation because of our pride in our human reasoning, we will likely have problems with God in other areas of life.

When carnal men invent religions, they see God as either one single person, like they are, or as three (or more) gods, such as they perceive with their human understanding. Every conceivable theory about the nature and reality of God has been promoted throughout the history of man. Satan does not care what you believe, as long as it is not the true Jesus of the Bible.

Throughout scripture, we see references to the reality of the Godhead, or Trinity of God. The very word used of the true God in the Old Testament strongly supports this doctrine. Like Spanish and many other languages, Hebrew verbs agree with the nouns. A singular noun is used with a singular verb form. But when the word for "God" is used to denote Jehovah God, we see the plural noun *Elohim* (literally, "the Ones Who judge"), used with a singular verb. This unusual pattern is used over 2500 times, just to make sure we do not miss the point. God, Who is one God, said "*Let us make man in our own image,....*" (Genesis 1:26)

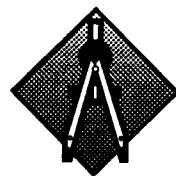
In the account of the baptism of Christ, we see each member of the Godhead mentioned specifically. Jesus, the Son of

God, was baptized as an expression of His complete dedication to the will of the Father, even to the point of death and burial. Baptism is a symbolic burial. When He did this, the Holy Spirit descended on Him like a dove, and an audible voice came out of heaven, saying, *"...This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* (Matthew 3:17) Jesus constantly honored the Father with total obedience and unwavering devotion; and He also subjected Himself to the Holy Spirit, when He was a Man on earth. This is not an indication that Jesus was less significant or glorious than the Father. It merely shows us the pattern of God that we should follow in submitting ourselves one to another *"...in the fear of God."* (Ephesians 5:21) As a man on earth, Jesus *"...made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself,...."* (Philippians 2:7-8) In His "incarnation" ("to become human"), Jesus was able to be a "kinsman redeemer," thus satisfying God's divine principle of redemption for a lost inheritance. (See the Book of Ruth.) Jesus also became a Man, so that He could identify with man in his suffering and temptation. Although Jesus never yielded to temptation, He was *"...in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."* (Hebrews 4:15)

When Jesus said, *"...My Father is greater than I"* (John 14:28), He was speaking of the order of the office. There is an entirely different word for "greater in nature, or substance." He clearly stated that He was the physical expression of the Father, and that *"I and my Father are One."* (John 10:30) They are one in substance and nature, and not just in one accord.

The nature of the Divine Trinity is certainly one of the great doctrines of the Bible. In order to please God and have a relationship with Him, we must have faith in Him, and in His Word. (Hebrews 11:6) Faith is a confident trust and a sure belief, which is a response to the character and Spirit of God. Faith is also the *"...evidence of things not seen"* (Hebrews 11:1); and we certainly cannot really see how God could be one God and three Persons at the same time. The biblical evidence is very solid, so that orthodox ("orthodox" literally means "true teaching") Christians have agreed on this basic revelation from the beginning. "Trinity" was a term coined by early theologians to express the biblical concept that there is only one God, and yet, God is three distinct Persons.

The members of the Trinity give us a glimpse of what we should be like in character. You will notice that whenever Jesus was speaking, He was constantly giving honor to the Father. When He went to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit, we see the Holy Spirit constantly glorifying Jesus. One sure evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our own lives is the desire and power to glorify the Name of Jesus. We also will bless and honor our fellow believers, rather than selfishly seek our own prestige and success.



Methods

The Apostle's Creed

Give to each student a copy of "The Apostle's Creed," which has been an expression of the basic doctrines of

orthodox Christianity for centuries; and note the strong emphasis on the Trinity. Assure the class that genuine Christians have many different opinions on many concepts of biblical thought, but it is all right to differ on ideas. Diversity helps us grow and learn, if we have a respect and love for one another, as Jesus taught. But we must agree on the basics. Those who reject the basic doctrines of the Bible, particularly in their Christology, cannot be considered to be true Christian brothers. We consider Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, for example, to be pseudo-Christian cults, because they both deny the doctrine of the Trinity, and reject the true deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. They preach "another Jesus" (2 Corinthians 11:4); and they need to be led to Him Who is the

"...way, the truth, and the life:...." (John 14:6)

Compare With Cults

Explain that all cults are birthed in the minds of people who were deceived into thinking that they had the right answers, but who were also generally motivated by ego, greed, or even lust. Can you see how the natural mind would reject the doctrine of the Trinity, since it cannot be fully understood or explained in human terms? (1 Corinthians 2:14)

It all boils down to deciding whether to believe what God said about Himself, or what the mind of man has conceived, in his search for religious truth.

The Arrest and Trial of Jesus

Volume 7

Lesson 39



Bible References

Matthew 26:20-27:33

John 13:1-17

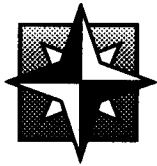
John 17:1-19:17

Luke 22:47-23:26

which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?

53 *"When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.*

54 *"Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off."*



Theme

Our Lord's betrayal, arrest and trial were among the darkest acts of man, in his rebellion against the living God.



Memory Verse

Isaiah 53:3, 7

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

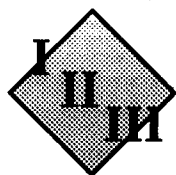
"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."



Scripture Reading

Luke 22:52-54

52 *"Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders,*



Outline

I. Events of Thursday Evening.

A. The Passover meal was prepared, after the miraculous provision of a room (about 7:00 p.m.).

1. Luke 22:7-16.
2. Matthew 26:17-20.

B. Jesus washed the disciples' feet.

1. He demonstrated the way that we should serve one another in humility.
2. John 13:1-17.

C. Jesus showed Judas that He knew his plan.

1. Judas left to betray Jesus.
2. Matthew 26:21-25.
3. John 13:18-30.

D. The famous "last supper" was served.

1. The bread.
 - a. The breaking of bread is a symbol of covenant.
 - b. Jesus was showing His disciples that He would suffer as the Lamb of God.
2. The wine.
 - a. This represented His blood, the price paid for the sins of the world.
 - b. Mark 14:23-25.

E. Our Lord's final teachings to His disciples.

1. Just before His execution.
2. John 13:31-16:33.
3. He let them know that He would have to die.
4. They did not understand, until later. (Luke 24:45)

F. Jesus and the disciples walked to Gethsemane, where the Lord prayed.

1. Luke 22:39-46.
2. Mark 14:32-40.

G. Judas and the guards arrived to arrest Jesus (about 11:00 p.m.).

1. His disciples deserted Him.
2. Mark 14:41-52.
3. Matthew 26:45-56.

II. Events of the Early Morning: Friday.

A. Numerous Jewish traditions and rules were broken in order to question, try and convict Jesus through the night.

1. He appeared before Annas.
 - a. Annas was not the high priest; and he had no legal right to question Him.
 - b. John 18:12-13.
2. Jesus appeared before Caiaphas, the High Priest, and the Sanhedrin Court.
 - a. It was the middle of the night.
 - b. All trials were to be by day, according to law.
3. A defendant was considered innocent, until witnesses could prove his guilt.
 - a. The Sanhedrin had already made up its mind.
 - b. Matthew 26:57, 59-60.

- c. Mark 14:53, 55-56.
 - d. It was a mock trial.
 - 4. Jesus should have been released, since no testimony was found to convict Him.
 - a. The false witnesses should have been stoned; but they were not.
 - b. Instead, they falsified charges, to press for His conviction.
 - c. The judge was now being both judge and prosecutor.
 - d. Matthew 26:60-63; Mark 14:57-61.
 - 5. The defendant was not normally required to testify.
 - a. Jesus was forced to incriminate Himself by declaring His Deity.
 - b. Matthew 26:63-65; Mark 14:61-63.
 - 6. The Sanhedrin was required to withhold judgments in such cases for a one-day waiting period.
 - a. Here, guilt was declared immediately.
 - b. Matthew 26:66; Mark 14:64.
 - 7. Jesus was beaten and abused in the midst of the court -- a flagrant violation, which was not allowed against any criminal in a Jewish court.
 - 8. After trying Him most of the night, the Sanhedrin took a short recess.
 - a. They reconvened at daybreak, to complete their vindictive attack on Jesus.
 - b. Matthew 27:1.
- B. Peter denied Jesus three times.
- 1. Luke 22:54-62.
 - 2. About 6:30 - 8:00 a.m.
- C. Jesus was handed over to Pilate.
- 1. Matthew 27:1-2; Luke 23:1.
 - 2. Roman government.
 - 3. The Jews were under the control of Rome; a world empire.
- D. Judas realized his error and committed suicide. (Matthew 27:3-5)
- 1. He did not think Jesus would be executed.
 - 2. His motive was money, and not hatred.
 - 3. He should have repented.
 - 4. He could have been forgiven, as Peter had.
- E. Pilate questioned Jesus the first time. (John 18:28-40)
- F. Jesus was sent to Herod for further questioning. (Luke 23:7-12)
- 1. Again, no evidence of guilt was found.
 - 2. Rather than releasing Him, Herod returned Him to Pilate.
 - 3. About 8:00- 8:45 a.m.
- G. Pilate questioned Jesus more closely.
- H. Though Pilate found no guilt in Jesus, he did not release Him. (Luke 23:13-23)
- 1. He attempted to get the people to ask for His release.
 - 2. This would have thwarted the Jewish hierarchy.
 - 3. And it would build his popularity.
 - 4. He did not succeed.
- I. Pilate had Jesus beaten by his soldiers.
- 1. Matthew 27:24-30.
 - 2. This was a whip with many leather straps, imbedded with sharp bits of metal.
 - 3. Forty lashes was often fatal.
- J. Pilate tried one last time to release Jesus. (John 19:5-16)
- K. Jesus, though never found guilty by the Roman judge, was sentenced to be

crucified, in order to please the mostly Jewish crowd.

III. Questions:

A. Why did Judas betray Jesus?

1. Perhaps he was trying to force Him to use His power to conquer the Romans.
2. He may have wanted to cover up his own dishonesty in handling the group's money.
3. We do know that he was primarily motivated by greed.

B. Why were the priests so intent on killing Jesus?

1. He threatened their position and power over the people.
2. They felt that He threatened their livelihood.

C. How could Pilate crucify a Man, Whom he himself had declared innocent?

1. He ignored all of the signs around him and his own heart's calling.
2. He feared the people more than he feared God.
3. He would not listen to his wife's counsel. (Matthew 27:19)

E. What would you have done, if you had been one of His disciples in that situation?

- Judas could have been forgiven; but, he committed suicide.
- Suicide is the coward's way out; and it is rebellion against God.
- The Jewish religious leaders felt threatened by this beloved Messiah.
- Instead of checking to see if Jesus really was the Messiah, they sought for a way to kill Him.
- The Jewish people at that time were under the authority of the Roman Empire; and they were not free to govern themselves.
- The priests and Pharisees wanted the Romans to execute Jesus for them.
- Caiaphas and the other leaders feared the people; but they should have feared God.
- God's warning to Pilate through his wife was an act of kindness.
- Pilate tried to wash his hands, because he did not want to be responsible for his wrong decision.
- God used the Romans and even the Jewish leaders to bring about the sacrifice of His Son, which would result in the salvation of millions of souls.



Spiritual Truths

- Judas betrayed Jesus because of greed, and not hatred.



Lesson Material

On the night in which He was betrayed, the eve of His crucifixion, our Lord met with His disciples. He had been training

them for over three years; and He was ready to be offered as a sacrifice for the sins of the world as the Lamb of God. He was aware of the suffering which was necessary for our salvation; but the disciples could not receive the concept, even though Jesus tried to prepare them. (Mark 9:31) When Jesus said, "One of you will betray Me," the disciples could not imagine Judas being the one. Some even asked, "Lord, is it I?" Jesus said, "It is the one who dips sop with Me." When Judas dipped with Him, the others passed it off. They just would not believe that this trusted treasurer would do such a thing.

Judas had taken care of the money for the group for years. It must have taken some amount to support all of them, even though they did not live extravagantly. The Bible does mention certain friends who supported their ministry on a regular basis. Judas was more and more focused on the money; and his heart became distracted by it. By this time, Judas was so focused on money that he was willing to earn a little extra from the priests, who were trying to capture Jesus.

Judas probably did not expect things to go as they did. He had seen Jesus escape from angry mobs before. (Luke 4:28-30) He thought that he could make a little money, and that would be the end of it. He was horrified to see that Jesus was actually captured and taken to court. When he realized what he had done, he killed himself. Suddenly, the money meant nothing to him. He threw it on the temple steps; and he gave up, in despair. His last act on earth was one of rebellion and unbelief, in spite of all the teaching he had heard from the Lord Himself. Judas killed himself.

In the darkness of night, Jesus was taken by the angry mob to the temple, to

stand before the priests. He was first taken to Annas, who had no real authority to try anyone. Then He was taken to Caiaphas, the high priest. The religious leaders were so eager to deal with Him that they would not wait until morning. They were driven by a jealous passion and by demon spirits, who gleefully encouraged their sadistic cruelty against this One, Who had only gone about doing good. The Jewish leaders did many unethical things that night, in their mad zeal to destroy this "blasphemer" Who claimed to be the Messiah. Some of the Pharisees had looked at the facts and realized that He really was their Messiah; but, most did not.

The Pharisees and priests had always had a problem with Jesus. They rejected His claims and resented His popularity; but they were afraid of the people, who regarded Him as a prophet. Now they saw their chance to do away with Him quickly; but, they still needed the Romans. They did not want to kill Jesus themselves. Besides, they were under the rule of the Romans. They were a conquered people, and they could not legally execute anyone. Only Pilate, the Roman governor, had that power.

When Jesus was taken before Pilate, it was Friday morning. The mob was angry, and growing. Pilate had been warned by his wife about Jesus. God, in His mercy, had given her a dream about this Man; and she knew that Jesus was innocent. Pilate knew it, too. He tried to persuade the people to let Him go, but he was too weak in his own character to stand for right. Although he had the legal power to set Jesus free, he did not have the strength to resist the angry crowd. He thought that he had a sure solution. Knowing their custom of releasing one prisoner in honor of the Passover, He told them that he would release either Jesus or Barabbas, a

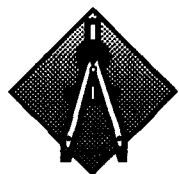
hardened criminal. To his horror, the people cried for the release of Barabbas. (Matthew 27:16-24)

Pilate was faced with a horrible dilemma. He knew that Jesus was a good Man. He did not want the responsibility for condemning Him; and so, he publicly washed his hands, in order to demonstrate that he had nothing to do with it. He let the people decide. But it is not that easy. We all have to decide what to do with this Man, Jesus. To refuse to make a choice is to make a choice. If you do not accept His claims and receive His gospel, you are rejecting the Word of the Holy Spirit. Once you are confronted with the claims of the gospel, you are accountable before God. Because Pilate did not publicly affirm what he knew to be right, he condemned the Lord to the cruel death of Roman crucifixion; and he remained responsible before God for the decision that he had made.

heard a crowd at the judgment hall. You could not tell what was going on, but you knew there was some excitement. You did not hear Pilate, but you could hear the crowd. You could make out the chant, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" A few moments later, you hear, to your horror, "Barabbas! Barabbas!" Then, the dreaded words, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Would you not have thought that your time was up? This is a good example of listening to the crowd. We can often get the wrong ideas from the world.

Remind the students that, in spite of the Jewish leaders and the Roman authorities, Jesus remained in full control of all that happened to Him. (John 10:17-18) Jesus willingly laid down His life and took it up again, for the salvation of every one of us.

Emphasize to the class the importance of the cross of Jesus Christ to their own lives. No matter how many times your students have "heard the story," today may well be the day in which the Holy Spirit's conviction touches a heart and makes it ready to receive salvation.



Methods

Discussion

Suppose you were the criminal, Barabbas. It was early in the morning. You

The Crucifixion of Jesus

Volume 7

Lesson 40



Bible References

Psalms 22

Isaiah 53

Matthew 27:34-66

18 *"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."*

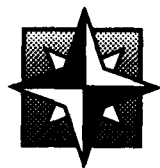
22 *"For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:*

23 *"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;*

24 *"But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."*

1 Corinthians 2:2

2 *"For I am determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."*



Theme

The cross of Christ is the key to God's plan for man's redemption and reconciliation to Himself.



Scripture Reading

1 Corinthians 1:17-18, 22-24

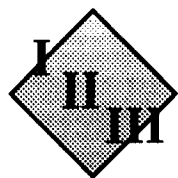
17 *"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.*



Memory Verse

Isaiah 53:5-6

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."



Outline

I. Why Did Jesus Have to Die?

A. God is a holy and just God.

1. God could not arbitrarily forgive man's sins.
2. God had to satisfy the demands of His own perfect justice.
3. Only by the shedding of blood can there be remission of sins. (Hebrews 9:22)

B. The penalty for sin is death. (Romans 6:23)

C. Every descendant of Adam was born with a sin nature.

1. We have all followed that nature; and we have all committed sins. (Romans 3:23)
2. Sin separates from God, because God is holy.

D. God provided a covering for sin with the blood of lambs, in the Old Covenant.

1. This was only a temporary covering. (Hebrews 9:13-14)
2. No one under the Old Covenant could get into heaven, on the basis of animal sacrifices.
3. Even Abraham and Moses went to Paradise, a place in the earth for the righteous dead.
4. They had to be redeemed by a Kinsman Redeemer, before they could go to heaven.

E. The Perfect Sin Offering had to be a man. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

1. God required a kinsman redeemer.
2. Redemption involved relationship.

F. The Perfect Sin Offering had to be God.

1. Only God is holy and perfect.
2. Only sinless, perfect blood could atone for the sins of the whole human race.

G. Only Jesus could fulfill the requirements of God's divine law as the sin offering.

1. He came from heaven to become a man.
 - a. He was born of a virgin by the Holy Ghost. (Matthew 1:18, 24-25)
 - b. He received a human nature, but not a carnal sin nature. (2 Corinthians 5:21)
 - c. He emptied Himself of His omniscience and omnipotence; and became dependent upon the Spirit, as a Man. (Philippians 2:5-8)
2. Jesus Christ is God.
 - a. He is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit.
 - b. *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,...."* (John 1:14)
 - c. He is Jehovah, the Creator. (John 1:3; Colossians 1:17)
 - d. He was with God, and He was God. (John 1:1)

II. Why Did Jesus Die On the Cross?

A. He demonstrated the love of God. (Romans 5:8)

1. God so loved, that He gave.
2. John 3:16.

B. He offered Himself as the sin offering for the world.

1. He is the Great High Priest. (Hebrews 4:14)
2. He purchased us with His own blood. (1 Peter 1:18-19)

C. He is now able to justify us. (Romans 3:26)

1. Save us from the legal penalty of sin.
2. Made legally just before a holy God.
3. Covered the redeemed believers with His own righteousness. (1 Corinthians 1:30)

D. He is also able to cleanse us from all sin. (1 John 1:7, 9)

1. He can set us free from the bondage of sin. (John 8:34-36)
2. Believers do not have to live under the power of sin. (Romans 6:14)
3. We need to reckon ourselves dead to sin, but alive to God. (Romans 6:11)

III. The Jews and Greeks.

A. The Jews seek a sign. (1 Corinthians 1:22)

1. The Jewish people were under the oppressive rule of Rome.
2. They were looking for a Messiah, to save them from Caesar.

3. Jesus came to save them from sin.
4. Generally, the Jews were moved by signs.
 - a. They were impressed with His miracles.
 - b. Many believed on Him, because of the power of God.
 - c. But most rejected Him, because He refused to establish an earthly kingdom for the Jewish people.

B. The Greeks seek wisdom. (1 Corinthians 1:22)

1. The Greeks were generally the intellectuals of the day.
2. They wanted a god whom they could understand and see.
3. They wanted a god who could be reduced to their level of thinking.
4. "Give me a religion that I can comprehend."

C. The preaching of the cross. (1 Corinthians 1:18)

1. It did not make sense to the Jewish mind.
 - a. How could their Messiah be so humiliated?
 - b. The cross seemed to be a defeat.
2. It did not make sense to the Greeks, either.
 - a. No Greek god would plan his own suffering.
 - b. It was foolish in their minds.

IV. God's Wisdom. (1 Corinthians 1:24)

A. "...Unto them which are called..."

1. In order to believe the gospel, the Holy Spirit must do a work in our hearts.
2. God shines His truth in our hearts.

3. God's ways are higher than our ways. (Isaiah 55:9)

B. "...Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

1. Even the devils thought that they were winning, when Christ was crucified. (1 Corinthians 2:7-8)
2. Satan did not understand that Jesus was redeeming mankind on the cross.



Spiritual Truths

- God's holiness is the reason that Jesus had to die on the cross.
- God's love is the reason that He came to die.
- Jesus came to earth as a great Teacher; but His primary purpose was to be the Lamb of God.
- The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the central point of human history.
- Jesus Christ is uniquely the God-man -- the eternal High Priest of the redeemed of the earth.
- The Jews misunderstood the prophecies about the Messiah; and most of them missed His appearing.
- The Greeks were too analytical; and they demanded a god whom they could comprehend.

- God is too great a God, to be fully understood by any human being.
- If we respond to the message of the cross with humility, repentance, and faith, we can receive the life that was purchased there.
- Jesus became a Man, so that we could be redeemed back to God.
- Jesus suffered, so that we might be healed.
- Jesus became poor, so that we could be rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9)
- Jesus died, so that we might have everlasting life.



Lesson Material

Jesus was exhausted. He had spent Thursday with His disciples, trying to prepare them for this great climax of human history. He had been in the garden; and He was arrested at midnight. Throughout the night He was mocked, tormented, and tried in one court after another. Finally, He was sentenced to immediate execution on the cruel Roman cross. He was beaten so fiercely that His tormentors were held back, lest He expire from loss of blood. His back was a massive open wound, covered with blood.

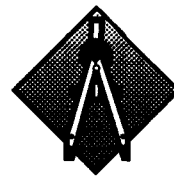
The soldiers, in mockery, put a purple robe around Him, and gave Him a frail reed as a scepter. Purple was the color of royalty; and the scepter was the instrument of a king. Adding to the insult, they made a crude crown out of thorny

vines, and shoved it forcefully onto His head. The sharp thorns dug into His skin, sending searing pain, to add to the torture of His bleeding back.

The gentle Shepherd was led through the streets to the outskirts of the city, to a hill called "Golgotha" -- the "place of the skull." He was forced to carry the heavy cross beam. When they found that He was too weak from loss of blood, they required a man named Simon of Cyrene to carry it for Him. (Matthew 27:32) At Golgotha, the soldiers nailed Jesus to the beam with long, rough iron spikes, which were driven through His wrists, so that His weight could be supported. Again, the agonizing pain came, because the spikes were driven through sensitive nerves which controlled the hands. A third, long spike was driven through His crossed feet, after He had been lifted up and fastened to the vertical beam which was already planted in the ground.

Our Lord was weak from loss of blood and dehydration. When He said, "I thirst," they mockingly soaked a sponge in vinegar and gall (a bitter, foul liquid), and touched it to His lips. (Matthew 27:34) In order to breathe, He had to push himself up, forcing the weight of His body onto the iron spike in his feet, and sending fresh waves of pain shooting through His body. When the soldiers decided to mercifully put their victims out of their misery, they would break their legs, so that they could no longer raise their bodies to take in a breath. When they came to Jesus to break His legs, they saw that He was already dead. (John 19:32-33) They did not realize that they were fulfilling scripture which prophesied that not one of His bones would be broken. (Psalms 34:20) This was also a requirement for a Passover lamb. (Exodus 12:9)

There are many other details of the crucifixion, including the words which Jesus spoke, the supernatural darkness, and the reactions of various people. The teacher should read the accounts in each of the gospels and share some of them, in order to illustrate that great and infamous day of human cruelty and divine sacrifice. It was all necessary to fulfill God's eternal plan for redemption. Only the divine blood of the Son of God could be great enough to atone for the sins of the human race, making it possible for "whosoever will" to come to God and be reconciled. Only a perfect Man could satisfy the requirement for a "kinsman redeemer" and buy back what man had lost in the fall nearly 4,000 years before. "...We preach [Christ crucified], unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;" (1 Corinthians 1:23)



Methods

Telling the Story

In relating the crucifixion account, you may use a video or visual aid; but the most important method is storytelling, as illustrated in the lesson material. The teacher needs to know the details, and perhaps use brief notes to assure the accuracy of the sequence of events. Do not read the story. Tell it. Practice it. Tell it with detail, in order to convey the pain and grief felt by Jesus. Make it clear that this shows what Almighty God thinks of sin; and it also shows the depth of His love for us. In light of the stark reality of the cross, who could resist an appeal to surrender all to this Great Savior?

Resurrection Power

Volume 7

Lesson 41



Bible References

Matthew 28:1-10

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

Colossians 1:18

Revelation 1:17-18

21 *"Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."*

22 *"But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee."*

23 *"Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again."*

24 *"Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."*

25 *"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:"*

26 *"And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."*



Theme

Jesus Christ literally rose from the dead in a glorified, eternal body; and this is the basis for our hope of eternity as believers.



Scripture Reading

John 11:20-26

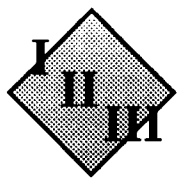
20 *"Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house."*



Memory Verse

1 Corinthians 6:14

"And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power."



Outline

I. If Jesus Did Not Rise From the Dead...

A. Then He was a liar.

1. His claim to authority and deity was based on it.
2. Matthew 16:21.
3. Matthew 17:22-23.
4. John 2:18-22.
5. Romans 1:1-4.

B. Then His life and death were pointless and pathetic. (1 Corinthians 15:13-16)

C. Then He cannot intercede for us with God.

1. Romans 8:34.
2. Hebrews 7:23-25.

D. Then death is supreme over man.

1. Romans 6:8-10.
2. Acts 2:24.
3. Revelation 1:17-18.

E. Then there is no salvation, no hope, no faith, no eternal life.

1. 1 Corinthians 15:12-19, 32.
2. Acts 4:10-12.

F. Then Christianity becomes a cruel hoax, not a historical, real faith.

1. 1 Corinthians 15:14.
2. Acts 2:31-36.

II. Proof of the Resurrection.

A. An empty tomb.

1. Roman guards reported it empty. (Matthew 28:11-15)
2. The women who came saw Him alive. (Matthew 28:1-10)
3. The stone was rolled away without human intervention.
4. The disciples were too afraid to do it.
5. The Jews would have quickly produced the body, if there had been one to show.

B. Witnesses saw Him alive.

1. Peter.
 - a. Acts 2:32.
 - b. 1 Corinthians 15:5.
2. The disciples.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 15:5.
 - b. Luke 24:15-33, 36-40.
3. The men on road to Emmaus. (Luke 24:33-35)
4. Paul. (Acts 9:4-6)

C. People were changed, with no other explanation.

1. The disciples became bold; and they spread His story around the world.
2. Paul carried His message to all of Asia and Europe.

D. Historical writing of contemporaries records it.

1. The Jewish historian Josephus.
2. Luke, the doctor who has proved a reliable historian.
3. The other gospel writers.
4. Paul, in his epistles.

E. The early church fathers proclaimed it.

1. Ignatius (ca. 50-115 AD).
2. Polycarp (ca. 110 AD).
3. Justin Martyr (ca. 100-165 AD).
4. Tertullian (ca. 160-220 AD).

F. Researchers today proclaim its truth.

III. Precepts Christians Believe About the Resurrection.

A. Jesus rose bodily as He prophesied.

1. John 20:19-20, 26-29.
2. It was a "glorified body."
3. The life is in the spirit, and not the blood.
4. Jesus could miraculously transport from place to place, and travel to heaven.

B. All of His claims are verified by this act.

C. He is alive today, and relevant to our lives. (Romans 14:9)

D. We can also be raised by His power.

1. John 6:39-40.
2. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.
3. We will be like Him, for we will see Him as He is. (1 John 3:1-3)

IV. Response.

A. We must respond to His provision, in order to receive His offer of resurrection life. (John 20:30-31)

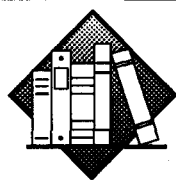
1. We should die to self, and receive resurrection life.
2. We do this by repentance and faith in Him, and confessing Him as our Savior, thereby being born again.

B. What will you do? (John 11:25-26)



Spiritual Truths

- The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is an historical and verifiable fact.
- The fact that Jesus is a resurrected Lord enables Him to restore the people who believe in Him to the Father, and provide for them everlasting life.
- The foundation of the Christian faith is the fact that Jesus died for our sins, and that He rose from the dead.
- Jesus spent forty days appearing to different groups of people, to verify beyond any doubt that He was alive. (Acts 1:3)
- The eternal hope of millions of believers rests solely on the fact of the literal resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- The same resurrection power which raised Jesus from the dead can dwell in us, and raise us, also. (Romans 8:11)
- The resurrected body of Jesus was the same physical body, but it was transformed and glorified -- an incorruptible body of flesh and bone.
- The life of our resurrected body will not be in the blood, but in the Spirit.



Lesson Material

There are a number of sublime doctrines that are unique to biblical Christianity. Among them is the doctrine of the literal bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. Some cults accept the historical Jesus, but claim that He experienced only a spiritual resurrection. Others claim that he was merely resuscitated, and did not really die on the cross. Others suggest that the resurrection was a clever hoax, primarily because they do not really want to believe the account of scripture.

Jesus did die on the cross. His body was emptied of the precious blood that would be the price to atone for the sins of the human race forever. His death was necessary, so that God could justify the demands of His own holy character. Sin could not just be passed over. The penalty had to be paid. Only Jesus could be the perfect "Lamb of God." (John 1:29)

Jesus died. Death involves separation. Physical death is separation from the body. Spiritual death means separation from God. A non-regenerate man is born once (natural birth), but dies twice (physical death and the Second Death -- Revelation 20:6, 12-14). But the regenerate man is born twice (natural and spiritual birth -- John 3:3; Ephesians 2:1) and dies only once (physical death). Even as the death of Jesus Christ has provided the sacrifice for our sin, so also the resurrection of Christ has made provision for our own resurrection unto eternal life. (Romans 8:11)

After Jesus died, He went into the earth and met with the souls of all the righteous dead who had died in faith during the

preceding 4,000 years of human history. (Ephesians 4:8-10) They had looked forward with prophetic faith to the event that would satisfy God's justice and open to them the gates of heaven. After Jesus died, He led all of the souls out of that place, called "Paradise;" and He took them to heaven, where He offered His own blood on the mercy seat of heaven's throne. (Hebrews 9:12) He established His authority on earth, both as Head and High Priest of the church (all of the redeemed among men), and Lord of heaven and earth. (Ephesians 1:22)

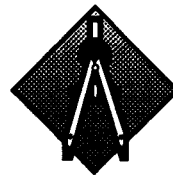
On the third day, Sunday morning, some women who were close to Jesus during His earthly ministry went to the tomb, where they were confronted by a strange sight. The Roman guards had fainted. The stone was rolled away; and the body of their beloved Messiah was gone. (Matthew 28:1-10) At first, they were troubled, thinking that someone had stolen the body. (John 20:11-18) It should be noted that the stone had been rolled away, not to let Jesus out, but to let them in. Jesus was now in a glorified, resurrected body of flesh and bone. (Luke 24:39) Jesus was able to move from one dimension to another at will. He could travel at the speed of thought; and He did not have the physical limitations of a corruptible, earthly body.

Jesus was called the "Firstfruits of the resurrection." (1 Corinthians 15:20) That is to say, as He is, we will become. John said, *"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."* (1 John 3:2) What a glorious hope! How do you respond to such an idea? John went on to say, *"And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."* (1 John 3:3) If you really

believe in the resurrection, it will cause you to live a pure life and run from immorality. This is good motivation for us to stir up this hope in one another, and to keep our vision on eternal things.

Who raised Jesus from the dead? We have already seen that God raised Him from the dead. (Acts 2:32) But Jesus Himself promised, "...Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2:19) We are also told that the Holy Spirit raised up Jesus from the dead. (Romans 8:11) This was such a momentous event in history that all three Members of the Godhead were involved in it.

Skeptics can still question the historical evidence of the resurrection. After all, the hundreds of witnesses are long dead. But the great evidence of the resurrection of Jesus is the fact that He has built His church, which is alive and well in the earth. Millions of joyful followers have found resurrection life; and they are walking a victorious life, by the power of the Holy Spirit. They have found the faith worth dying for. They will not begin eternal life when they die, as some suppose. Eternal life began when they surrendered their lives to the Lord Jesus, and made Him Lord of their own hearts. (1 John 5:13) And the undeniable inner witness of the indwelling Holy Spirit makes us know that we indeed have a new life as the children of God. (Romans 8:16)



Methods

Discussion

Imagine what it would be like for a Moslem, who is still looking for his leader, Mohammed to rise from the dead.

Think of the poor people who are deceived by the Hindu religion, expecting an endless cycle of reincarnations, with no lasting hope for eternity.

Consider the humanist, who thinks that he will just die like a dog, because he does not think he has a spirit at all.

Because of the resurrection, we have an eternal hope. Paul said, "*If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*" (1 Corinthians 15:19) Discuss the meaning of this.

Reinforce the truth that we now have eternal life; it is not something we obtain only after we die. Make sure that each of your students has the assurance of eternal life and the inner witness of the Holy Spirit, Who comes to indwell believers when we are born again.

Rapture and Tribulation

Volume 7

Lesson 42



Bible References

Revelation 4:1-2

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Isaiah 26:20-21

Daniel 9:25-27

draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

9 *"But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by.*

10 *"Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:*

11 *"And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven."*

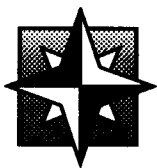
25 *"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;*

26 *"Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.*

27 *"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*

28 *"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.*

29 *"And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees;*



Theme

Because we are living in the end times, we anticipate the imminent rapture of the church; and so, we should be ready.



Scripture Reading

Luke 21:8-11, 25-32

8 *"And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time*

30 *"When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.*

31 *"So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.*

32 *"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled."*

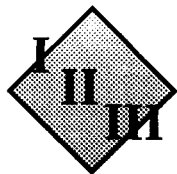


Memory Verse

1 Thessalonians 5:4, 6

"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."

"Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."



Outline

I. The Rapture.

A. The "catching away" of the church to meet Jesus in the air.

1. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.
2. This is the glorious hope of Christians in the end times.

B. The timing is debated by Bible scholars.

1. Some expect a pre-tribulation rapture (the church removed prior to the Great Tribulation).
2. Some look for a mid-tribulation rapture (the church removed after three and one half years of Tribulation).
3. Some believe in a post-tribulation rapture (the church removed at the end of the Tribulation).

C. Why we hold to the Pre-Tribulation Rapture.

1. We expect God to shield His people from the world's punishment. (Isaiah 26:20-21)
 - a. Noah did not see the people drown and be destroyed. (2 Peter 2:4-9)
 - b. Abraham and Lot did not see the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. (2 Peter 3:3-14)
 - c. Moses and the Israelites did not see the death angel; but they had to stay in their homes throughout the night. (Exodus 12:12-13)
2. The Great Tribulation relates to Israel and the world, and not the church.
 - a. Daniel 9:24-27.
 - b. Jeremiah 30:7.
 - c. Luke 21:20-24.
3. The church, with its indwelling Holy Spirit, is currently preventing the rise of the Anti-Christ.
 - a. This is a precursor to the Tribulation.
 - b. 2 Thessalonians 2:5-7.
4. God keeps the church from wrath.
 - a. Revelation 3:10.
 - b. 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10.

5. The early church writers looked for an imminent return of Christ, but not an existing tribulation period.
 - a. John 14:1-3.
 - b. Acts 1:6-11.
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10.
 - d. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.
 - e. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3.
 6. After the letters to the churches and John's request to "Come up here!" there is no further mention of the church as such in Revelation. (Revelation 4:1)
- D. No one knows it all, when it comes to eschatology.
1. We "...see through a glass, darkly;..." (1 Corinthians 13:12)
 2. We should respect the view of other honest believers.
 3. We need to guard our hearts from pride.
 4. All true Christians do agree that Jesus is coming again, and that He is coming to judge the earth in righteousness.
 5. Even if we are not here for the Great Tribulation, we may be persecuted, martyred, or afflicted for the sake of the gospel. (John 15:20; 2 Timothy 3:12)
 6. "...Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Revelation 22:20)
3. Tribulation saints raised. (Revelation 7:9-17)
 4. The trumpet judgments. (Revelation 8:6-9:21; 11:15-19)
 5. God's two witnesses. (Revelation 11:1-14)
 6. Reaping of the wrath of God. (Revelation 14:6-7)
 7. Reaping of the harvest of the earth. (Revelation 14:14-16)
- C. The last half of the tribulation.
1. The great tribulation.
 - a. Daniel 9:27.
 - b. Matthew 24:21-22.
 2. The bowl judgments. (Revelation 15:1-16:21)
 3. The fall of the false religion and the world economic system. (Revelation 17-18)
- D. Christ's physical return to earth. (Revelation 19:11-26)
- E. Armageddon -- the last battle. (Revelation 19:17-21)
- F. Millennial kingdom of Christ on earth. (Revelation 20:1-6)
- G. Satan's final rebellion. (Revelation 20:7-10)

II. The Last Days.

A. The revealing of the Antichrist.

1. Daniel 9:25-27.
2. 2 Thessalonians 2:3.
3. Revelation 13:1-10.

B. Tribulation: First half. (Daniel 9:27)

1. Seal judgments. (Revelation 6:1-17)
2. Jewish believers called out. (Revelation 7:1-8)



Spiritual Truths

- No one knows all of the details of the end times; but we do know that Jesus Christ is coming again in power and glory.

- The purpose of the study of eschatology is to motivate us to be right with God, and to be ready, no matter what happens.
- John prophesied a blessing on those that read the Revelation, even if they do not fully understand it all.
- Reading the Revelation is a blessing, because we are impressed with the reality that those who are in Christ have a glorious future.
- The human race has experienced much suffering and persecution through the centuries; but nothing has equaled the scope of suffering and death that is soon to come.
- If you know Christ, these prophecies do not need to alarm you. You will be safely with Christ and out of God's wrath.
- If you do not have a personal relationship with Christ, you do have something to fear. Get right with Him today!



Lesson Material

The Bible is very clear that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, will come again to the earth in power and great glory. All of Christianity expects a literal, physical return of the Messiah to planet earth; and we believe that He will rule and reign with His saints.

However, when it comes to the specific details and chronology of the second

coming, we are not given such a clear picture. As always, God has given prophetic glimpses into the future, but they are usually veiled in symbols and images. When we read the book of Revelation, we are blessed with the realization that Jesus is Lord, and that His ultimate triumph is inevitable; but we are not blessed with perfect revelation ourselves. God has given us what we need to know. The most important information has already been given. Whenever He comes, in whatever precise fashion, it will be a glorious day for the "bride" -- the believers who are ready, faithful, watching, and occupying on the earth, in anticipation of His return. It will also be a dark day for those who neglect spiritual matters -- who are found "sleeping" and ill-prepared for the greatest moment in history, since the resurrection of Christ. (Revelation 13:11)

Since the two witnesses first told the disciples "...*This same Jesus...shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven,*" (Acts 1:11) people have sought to set dates for the rapture of the saints. All of them, so far, have been wrong. These prophecies have yet to be fulfilled. Jesus assured us that no man knows the day or the hour. (Matthew 24:36, 42) So many have vainly responded, "But I know the month (or the year)." No, we do not even know that. But we can know the season (Matthew 24:32-33); and we are almost all agreed that this is the season for our "blessed hope." (Titus 2:13) This does not mean that we should quit working and sit on a hill, or in a cave. Jesus clearly taught that we should be found faithfully working, and in a lifelong state of readiness. If we knew the exact date of His return, we would probably all be acting very "spiritual" near that time, and we would overflow the churches with pious prayer meetings. Jesus is looking for

a bride of spiritual beauty (holiness) and character. He is not looking for a big bride; but He is looking for a pure bride. And so, God carefully conceals the date of the rapture of the church; and we are motivated to live, so as to be ready. (Hebrews 10:25)

The Bible teaches that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years. (2 Peter 3:8) It seems clearly significant to most Bible scholars that God designed a seven day week for mankind, ending in a seventh day rest. This was the pattern of creation, as well as for the God-ordained division of days. From Adam to Abraham, we have a 2,000 year period of history which seems to emphasize the work of the Father. From Abraham to Christ, we have a second 2,000 years, in which the Son culminates His involvement with man by becoming a Man and giving His life for mankind. The last two millenniums (the last "days") have been characterized by the work of the Holy Spirit, Who is preparing the "bride" for Christ, and the "Marriage Supper of the Lamb." (Revelation 19:9) It is almost universally believed among Christians that the Millennial reign of Christ on the earth will begin at the end of 6,000 years of human history. However, that does not necessarily mean the year 2,000 A.D. by our calendars. The year that we live in, called "Anno Domino" (A.D., the "year of our Lord") is supposedly a measure of the years from the time of Christ. We do not know the exact dates. Also, we do not know if Jesus measured from the time of His birth, ministry, or resurrection to begin the sixth Millennium. All of that means that we cannot know the day or the hour.

But Jesus gave some clear signs. Whether you believe in a pre- or post-millennial rapture, you have to agree that there will be troubles and tribulations on

the earth before He comes again. Just review the text in Luke 21, or Matthew 24. The signs of international warfare, increased earthquakes, famines, and pestilences are being dramatically fulfilled today. Generally, more people are dying from these events than at any period of history. Today, people are being martyred for the Christian faith. Millions are dying of starvation. Wars and rumors of wars rage around the world. A "New World Order" is forming, setting the stage for a dramatic one-world government, to be ruled by the Antichrist. Some key words that describe the times are "deception," and "fear." Some will lose heart and give up (men's hearts failing -- Luke 21:26), because of fear. Paul called the last days "perilous times." (2 Timothy 3:1)

Jesus spoke an amazing prophecy in Luke 21:32 that is worthy of special note. He said, "...*This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.*" Most Bible scholars believe that Jesus was referring to the generation that sees the beginnings of the signs of the end times come to pass. Another school of thought involves the translation of the word, "generation." In our modern language, we usually use the word "generation" to relate to the distinction between a group of parents and their children; and we think of a time between twenty and forty years. However, the Greek word *genea*, or "generation," literally means "that which generates from;" and it more often refers to a specific people. All of the people today who are descended from Abraham, for instance, are the "generation of Abraham." Jesus said "this generation." He did not say, "the linear generation that begins in 1948." He was talking to a group of Jews, who were physically descended from Abraham. It is significant that, in spite of Hitler's regime and others who have tried to destroy the Jewish people, they still have a national

identity. Even though they have been scattered over the earth for centuries, they have never been assimilated into the other nations. They are still a defined people, who can trace their roots back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And that generation Jesus which was speaking to will still be a people, when it is all fulfilled.

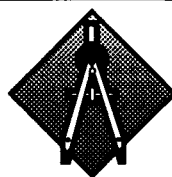
While we respect other views of eschatology, we believe that we should expect the rapture of the true church before the Great Tribulation. We look for "that blessed hope." (Titus 2:13) We believe that the coming of the Lord will involve two stages. First, Jesus will come "in the clouds." (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17) The dead and living saints will rise to meet Him; and He will take them on to heaven, while His wrath is poured out on the earth for a period of seven years. Then, He will come to the earth with His saints, and establish His rule on earth from the city of Jerusalem for one thousand years of great peace, while the devil is bound in a bottomless pit. (Revelation 20:1-3) All in all, it means wonderful news for those who are in Christ, and terrifying news for those who do not serve Him.

However, that does not mean that we will not suffer persecution, or even death. Throughout history, many of the most faithful believers have endured great hardship, rejection, and agonizing deaths because of their faith in Jesus Christ. (2 Timothy 3:12; Hebrews 11:33-40) Even in this century, millions of Christians have been killed.

How can we know that we are ready? Jesus gave many illustrations of people who thought that they were ready, but who were not. He spoke of the unfaithful servant, who said, "my Lord delays his coming," mistreated his fellow-servants,

and indulged himself in sin with the wicked. (Matthew 24:45-51) He spoke of five foolish virgins, who did not have their lamps filled with fresh oil (a type of the anointing of the Spirit). (Matthew 25:1-13) He spoke of a servant who buried his talent in the earth, because he was afraid to fail. (Matthew 25:14-30) And he spoke of "goats," who failed to love hurting people. (Matthew 25:31-46)

There is one chapter specifically devoted to instruction for getting ready for the coming of the Lord. That chapter is 1 Thessalonians 5. It is full of excellent advice for those who look for Him with faith. First of all, the Lord's coming will not take by surprise those who are watching and waiting for Him. (verse 4). We are admonished not to be "sleeping" (verse 6), but to be sober and to be watching. And we are instructed to comfort, edify and submit to one another, continue in prayer, and abstain from every form of evil. (verses 11-22) If we know Jesus as our Savior and Lord and do these things, we will be ready for His return.



Methods

Teachers' Notes

Check with your pastor as to the exact position of your church on the timing of the rapture; and respect his views. As Sunday School teachers, we want to "speak the same thing" (1 Corinthians 1:10), and not cause division on this matter. Remember that there are fine Christian theologians in each school of thought here; and we should not be presumptuous or contentious.

Go through 1 Thessalonians 5; and, as a class, list the specific instructions for preparation that are included.

Can we hold differing views on eschatology, and still be in one accord? (Yes!)

Discussion:

How does faith in the second coming of Christ affect your lifestyle? (Note 1 John 3:3)

The Final Judgment

Volume 7

Lesson 43



Bible References

Revelation 20:11-15

2 Corinthians 5:8-11

Matthew 25:31-46

2 Peter 3

1 Corinthians 6:9-10



Scripture Reading

Revelation 20:11-15

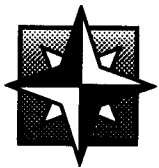
11 *"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.*

12 *"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.*

13 *"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

14 *"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

15 *"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."*



Theme

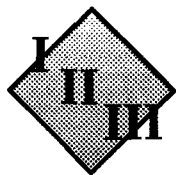
Every one of us will be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ; and we will give an account of our lives.



Memory Verse

2 Peter 3:9

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."



Outline

I. There Will Be a Day of Final Accounting and Judgment.

- A. The righteous need not fret, even though the wicked now seem to prosper.
 - 1. Psalms 73:3-20.
 - 2. Psalms 37:1-2, 7-10, 12-15.
- B. God cannot be mocked or fooled -- He sees everything clearly and truly.
 - 1. Galatians 6:7-8.
 - 2. Hebrews 4:13.
- C. Jesus promised a time of judgment and separation.
 - 1. Differentiating between the righteous and the wicked.
 - 2. Matthew 13:40-43.
 - 3. Matthew 13:47-50.

II. The Final Days.

- A. Satan has his final rebellion, following Christ's millennial kingdom. (Revelation 20:7-10)
- B. Angels will be judged. (Jude 6)
- C. The Great White Throne Judgment. (Revelation 20:11-15)
- D. Jesus separates goats from sheep. (Matthew 25:31-46)

III. The Reality of Hell.

- A. Hell's purpose -- a place created for the devil and his angels.
 - 1. 2 Peter 2:4.
 - 2. Matthew 25:41.
- B. Hell's characteristics:
 - 1. Described as a place of unquenchable fire and burning.
 - a. Matthew 5:22.
 - b. Matthew 13:42, 50.
 - c. Matthew 18:9.
 - d. Mark 9:43-48.
 - e. Revelation 21:8.
 - 2. A place of torment and regret.
 - a. Matthew 8:12.
 - b. Matthew 13:42, 50.
 - c. Luke 16:27-28.
 - d. Revelation 20:10.
 - 3. A place of darkness. (Matthew 22:13)
 - 4. A place of separation from God.
 - a. Matthew 8:12.
 - b. Luke 16:22-26.
 - c. Revelation 22:15.
 - 5. A place of weeping.
 - a. Matthew 8:12.
 - b. Matthew 13:42, 50.
 - 6. A place of unfulfilled cravings. (Luke 16:22-24)

C. Who will go there, and how?

1. The Lord Jesus Christ determines the eternal estate of every member of the human race.
 - a. Matthew 10:28.
 - b. Matthew 13:36-43.
 - c. John 5:21.
2. Those who refuse Jesus' sacrifice for their sin will be there.
 - a. John 3:18-19, 36.
 - b. Matthew 22:10-14 -- the man was tossed out, for not having the wedding clothes (righteousness) that only Jesus can provide.
3. Those who ignore others' needs will be there.
 - a. Luke 16:22-25.
 - b. Matthew 25:32-46.
4. Those who are fearful, or lazy. (Matthew 25:26-30)
5. Those who entice others to sin.
 - a. 2 Peter 2:17-18.
 - b. Matthew 13:40-41.
6. Hypocrites.
 - a. Jude 12-13.
 - b. Matthew 24:50-51.
7. Occultists.
 - a. Revelation 21:8.
 - b. Revelation 22:15.
8. The sexually immoral.
 - a. Revelation 21:8.
 - b. Revelation 22:15.

IV. God's Desire.**A. Jesus warned us to do anything to avoid hell.**

1. Matthew 5:29-30.
2. Matthew 18:8-9.

B. God does not want anyone be there; and He provides Jesus as the only Way of escape.

1. Ezekiel 18:23.

2. Matthew 18:11-14.
3. John 14:6.
4. 2 Peter 3:9.
5. Revelation 22:17.

V. What Should You Do?**A. Turn to God, and leave your sin behind.**

1. Ezekiel 18:30-32.
2. Psalms 37:3-7a, 11, 27-29.
3. Acts 3:19; 17:30.

B. Live the rest of your life in obedience to Him. (Colossians 1:10-14)

Spiritual Truths

- Heaven is a real place of indescribable joy, and eternal delight, in the presence of the Lord.
- Hell is a real place of eternal, unspeakably horrible torments.
- It is good and healthy to fear the Lord, and to fear an awful hell.
- We will be granted eternal life by grace through faith; but we will still be judged for eternity, according to our works on earth.
- To whom much is given, of him will much be required. (Luke 12:48)
- Our opportunities and situations in life may be affected by the actions and sins of other people; but, ultimately, our

eternal destiny will be determined by our own choices in this life.

- All Christians who die in Christ will be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ (the Bema throne), before the Millennial reign of Christ.
- All of the wicked dead will be resurrected and judged at the Great White Throne, after the final Millennium.



Lesson Material

The purpose of God through the ages for mankind has never changed. God has always sought to have a people for Himself -- a people who will worship Him and serve Him out of love. God has always allowed people to make their own choices in life, from Adam until now. He has allowed evil as an option; and most of Adam's race have persisted in that route. God allows the kingdom of darkness to flourish, knowing that He will bring everything into judgment in the end.

People who do not understand the purposes and plan of God become confused with the issue of God's character. They confuse fairness with justice; and they confuse love with mercy. If God is so good, then why is there so much suffering in the world? Why do the innocent often suffer for the sins of others? Why are some people "lucky" in life, enjoying great comfort and blessing, while others live a difficult life of suffering, and die in obscurity?

The Hindu tries to explain the inequities of life with the idea of reincarnation. People who are born in a low "caste" are those who were evil in their past lives, and who are suffering for past sins. There is a major drawback to the doctrine of reincarnation. It is false. It is a fatalistic lie, designed by Satan to distract people from seeking God.

While life is not at all fair, God is perfectly just. In eternity, God will make it right. He will bring down the proud, and exalt the humble. (James 4:6) God does not give everyone the same opportunities or abilities; but He knows exactly what each of us has received, and what each of us could have done in life. This is seen in Matthew 25:14-30, in the parable of the talents. Not everyone is given the same amount of opportunity. However, *"...Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required:...."* (Luke 12:48)

Brass is a prophetic symbol of judgment in the Bible. Jesus Christ is pictured with *"...feet like unto fine brass,..."* (Revelation 1:15); and He will judge the nations of the world. *"Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth."* (Psalms 96:11-13)

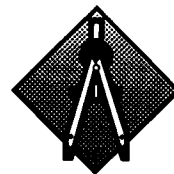
There will be two great judgments that will cover all of the billions of human souls who have lived during the nearly 6,000 years of human history. The first is called "The Judgment Seat of Christ." (Romans 14:10-12; 1 Corinthians 4:4-5; 2 Corinthians 5:10) There, all Christians will give an account of their stewardship of life. (1 Corinthians 3:9-15) They will be

judged on whether they built with gold, silver, and precious stones (symbols of spiritual glory and values), or with wood, hay, and stubble (symbols of humanity, fleshly effort, and carnality). There will be weeping and regret, for the Lord is absolutely just. But, God will wipe those tears from their eyes, because they are the children of God. (Revelation 21:4) Their eternal destiny is to reign with Christ in heaven; and they have eternal life -- not because of their works, but because they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and are eternally covered by His robe of righteousness. They are the redeemed of the Lord -- kings and priests unto God forever. (Revelation 1:6) There are many indications in scripture that there will be degrees of reward in heaven, and degrees of authority and responsibility in God's eternal kingdom. At this "Bema" seat of Christ, all Christians will be assigned their eternal position. The children of God will not sit around on clouds, playing harps. They will have much to do. They will also be involved in worship, forever. Those who love God find this an exciting prospect. People who do not love Jesus would be very uncomfortable in heaven, because Jesus is the Star, and the Center of adoration.

After the Millennium, there will be another resurrection and judgment. It will be the "Great White Throne Judgment," where billions of human beings will stand before the Lord Whom they rejected -- naked, ashamed, and alone. They will have no one to blame for their wickedness, for they will be judged according to their own works, and condemned by their own guilt. Those who had opportunities to serve Christ, but chose the path of self-will, will be in a horrible position. The dead will be resurrected out of the torments of hell, where they have agonized for centuries,

only to be judged according to God's holy standard and cast into the eternal lake of fire, which God originally designed for Satan and his fallen angels long ago. (Matthew 25:41) This is an unspeakably horrible fate, because there is no light, no joy, and no hope of ever getting out. It will be the one place in the universe that is void of God's infinite presence. This is called the "second death." (Revelation 20:11-14)

Jesus spoke of hell as a real place, many times. He spoke of hell, much more than He did of heaven. All cults deny the existence of hell, because the very notion is unthinkable. No man would invent such a doctrine. We only know about it, because God's Word clearly teaches it. There will be no second chance for anyone on earth. *"...It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:"* (Hebrews 9:27) Be sure that you are found "in Him" on that great and final day. In eternity, it will not matter how many people knew you, or how much money you had in life. All that will matter is your relationship with Jesus Christ.



Methods

Teachers' Notes

The greatest deterrent to evil is the fear of the Lord. (Proverbs 16:6) Do not apologize for teaching the graphic reality of hell. Jesus taught it. He loved people enough to warn them in strong terms that they were lost, and that they were damned, if they did not repent. Jude said, *"And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted*

by the flesh." (Jude 23) Some people who reject the message of God's love might be won to the gospel by a good "hell-fire" message. It is good and healthy to fear hell; but it is not good to be afraid to teach the reality of hell. Satan loves to propagate the lie that "...*Ye shall not surely die.*" (Genesis 3:4)

Discussion Questions

Have you heard jokes about heaven or hell? Do you hear unsaved people mention hell, in their daily conversation?

Why do you think people make references to hell and damnation (cursing,

or calling for the damnation of something or someone)?

Do you understand why we should avoid cursing? Do you know the difference between cursing and profanity? Ephesians 4:29 says, "Let no [corrupt communication] proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

Do your students have the assurance of eternal life in heaven?

Prayer

Volume 7

Lesson 44



Bible References

Matthew 7:7-8

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Luke 18:1-8

James 5:16

5 "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

6 "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

7 "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 "Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

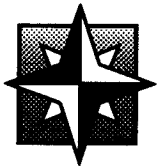
9 "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

11 "Give us this day our daily bread.

12 "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."



Theme

Prayer is the privilege of communing directly with God; and it is a prerequisite to appropriating God's power.



Scripture Reading

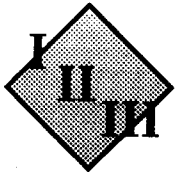
Matthew 6:5-13



Memory Verse

Hebrews 4:16

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."



Outline

I. Why Pray?

A. If God already knows everything that is going to happen, what good does praying do?

1. Prayer does not inform God.
2. Prayer is our time to spend time with God.
3. God wants us to talk with Him.
4. God wants to talk to us.
5. God wants us to learn to go to Him, as our source in life.
6. Matthew 6:6-8, 32-33.
7. Matthew 7:7-11.

B. Prayer is effectual.

1. James 5:15-18.
2. Jeremiah 33:2-3.

C. Jesus, God in the flesh, prayed as an example for us.

1. John 17:1-26.
2. Matthew 26:36, 39.

3. Matthew 6:9.
4. Jesus prayed often, long, and intensely to His Father.

II. What Is Prayer?

A. A privilege.

1. Psalms 5:1-7.
2. Romans 5:1-2.

B. Fellowship.

1. Jeremiah 29:11-13.
2. Proverbs 15:8.

C. A weapon against the forces of evil.

1. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.
2. James 5:16.

D. A sanctuary from danger.

1. Psalms 4:3.
2. Philippians 4:6-7.

E. Ministry to God.

1. Revelation 5:8.
2. Romans 12:11-12.
3. Acts 13:2.

F. Prayer is purposeful.

1. Salvation.
 - a. Acts 2:21.
 - b. Romans 10:12-13.
2. Forgiveness. (1 John 1:9)
3. Provision. (Matthew 7:7-11)
4. Direction.
 - a. Jeremiah 42:1-4, 9.
 - b. James 1:5.
5. Preparation.
 - a. Acts 13:2-3.
 - b. Ephesians 6:10-18.
 - c. Matthew 15:36-38.
6. Intercession.

- a. Ephesians 6:18.
 - b. 2 Corinthians 1:10-11.
 - c. Philippians 4:1.
 - d. "Intercession" means "prayer for others and their needs."
7. Thanksgiving.
- a. Psalms 100:4.
 - b. Matthew 14:19.
 - c. Ephesians 5:20.
 - d. Colossians 3:16-17.
8. Worship.
- a. Matthew 6:9.
 - b. 2 Chronicles 29:28-30.

III. How Do We Pray?

A. Attitude.

- 1. Humility.
 - a. 2 Chronicles 7:14.
 - b. Luke 18:9-14.
 - c. The praying Christian realizes his desperate need for God's help.
- 2. Honesty.
 - a. Psalms 139:23.
 - b. Psalms 51:6.
 - c. 1 Samuel 12:24.
 - d. Psalms 145:18.
 - e. God knows us; and so, we cannot hide anything from Him.
- 3. Unselfish purpose and direction.
 - a. 2 Thessalonians 3:1.
 - b. John 14:12-14.
- 4. Expectation (faith).
 - a. John 16:23-24.
 - b. Hebrews 4:16.
 - c. James 1:6-7.
 - d. Exodus 33:17.
 - e. Faith is the key to effective prayer.
- 5. Sincerity.
 - a. Isaiah 29:13.
 - b. Matthew 6:5.

B. Persistence.

- 1. Luke 18:1-8.
 - a. Keep on praying.
 - b. God does not want us to limit our prayer to one time only for each request.
- 2. 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

C. Pray with the Holy Spirit's assistance.

- 1. Romans 8:26-27.
- 2. Ephesians 6:18.
- 3. Jude 20.

D. Pray according to the Word of God.

- 1. John 15:7.
- 2. Numbers 14:11-13, 17-20.
- 3. Daniel 9:2-4, 20-23.

E. Pray in Jesus' Name.

- 1. Matthew 18:20.
- 2. John 14:13.

F. Be ready to act according to your prayer.

- 1. Prayer reveals our responsibility before God..
- 2. Exodus 14:15.
- 3. Joshua 7:6-7, 10-11, 13.
- 4. Acts 13:2-3.

F. God is not bound to answer:

- 1. When we cherish sin in our heart. (Psalms 66:18)
- 2. When we ignore the poor and needy. (Proverbs 21:13)
- 3. When we live in unrepented sin. (Isaiah 59:1-2)
- 4. When we create discord in our homes. (1 Peter 3:7)
- 5. When we doubt God's ability. (James 1:6-7)

6. When we pray for selfish goals.
(James 4:3)
7. When we pray insincerely.
(Matthew 6:5-6)

IV. When Do We Pray?

A. We should be in a continual attitude of prayer.

1. "Pray without ceasing."
2. 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

B. It is good to start our day with prayer.

1. Psalms 5:3.
2. Mark 1:35.

C. Anytime.

1. When we have a need.
2. When we intercede for someone else.
3. When we remember to praise God for what He has already done.
4. When we are in danger.

V. Where Can We Pray?

A. Alone. (Matthew 6:6)

B. In public.

1. Acts 4:24, 29-31.
2. Acts 12:11-12.

C. Anywhere. (John 4:19-24)



Spiritual Truths

- Prayer is one of the greatest privileges we can have as human beings.
- Jesus was a great Overcomer in life, because He prayed.
- There were no truly great men or women of history who were not men and women of prayer.
- Man is at his most magnificent best when he is on his knees before God.
- God has chosen not to intervene in the affairs of this world, except in response to the prayers of His saints.
- It is impossible to be a joyful, victorious Christian, without a lifestyle that is given to much praying.
- We should learn to pray privately, corporately, fervently, and sincerely, with faith, meekness, and delight.
- Jesus is always making intercession for us, as our Great High Priest.
- The Holy Spirit makes intercession for the saints of God.
- When we pray in the Spirit, He helps us by praying in the perfect will of the Father, even if we do not understand the prayer with our minds.



Lesson Material

A century ago, England was the home of one of God's great prayer warriors, named George Müller. During his lifetime of faithful service to the Lord, this humble pastor exercised himself in fervent, daily prayer. It is said that when he died, two deep grooves were found in the wooden floor where his knees had been during thousands of hours of prayer. Pastor Müller had learned the secret of a successful, joyful life. He really learned to pray.

Pastor and Mrs. Müller were people of great compassion. There was no government welfare program in those days; and many children were left as orphans to beg on the streets, or work as virtual slaves in the mines or "sweat shops" of the day. During his lifetime, Pastor Müller founded and supported five separate homes for orphans and other needy people. It is said that he "raised" five million dollars in his life -- a prodigious sum in those days. He fed and housed thousands of people, and influenced their lives greatly for the Lord. The significant part of all of this is that he never once took an offering for the missions. He made it a point never to tell anyone of a financial need. He simply prayed whenever a need arose; and God sovereignly moved on the hearts of people to give -- often, unsaved business people. Pastor Müller wanted to show that God has power, and that God can answer prayer. This was his great life message. God answers prayer; and He is well able to provide. (Ephesians 3:20)

Prayer is our link with the eternal God of the universe. The more we pray, the more we will learn to delight in those times of intimate fellowship with God. When we pray according to the Word of God, we pray effectively.

We have already looked at the importance of prayer, as well as some basic principles of prayer. Our purpose in this study is to examine some basic concepts about effective prayer. James said that the *"...effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."* (James 5:16) Let us look at effectual prayer.

First of all, effective prayer is the response of a righteous person. When we are in harmony and fellowship with God, and we come with a servant's heart, we can *"...ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."* (John 15:7) James said, *"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."* (James 4:3) "Righteous" means "in right standing, or relationship." People who have sin controlling their lives tend to be selfishly motivated; and they will not get far with God. God is not a Santa Claus, whose goal in life is to give out things to anyone who asks. God is our Father, Whose goal is to develop our character and maturity. (Romans 8:28-30) He looks at our heart; and He loves to give to givers.

Jesus taught a great secret about prayer, when He taught the mustard seed principle. (Matthew 17:20) He said, *"...If ye have faith as a [grain of mustard] seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."* The mustard seed, although the smallest of herbal seeds, can push its way up through a huge mound of earth, in

order to produce a plant. When Jesus said that our faith is to be as the mustard seed, he was referring to the quality of our faith, rather than the quantity. Only a small amount of faith can remove great obstacles ("mountains"). The very faith we have to come to God in the first place is a gift from God Himself. (Romans 12:3) We live our Christian lives by the "faith of the Son of God." (Galatians 2:20) And when there is a great task to do, the Holy Spirit operates through us a manifestation of supernatural faith. (1 Corinthians 12:9) How do we "get" faith? By "[looking unto Jesus] the author and finisher of {our} faith;...." (Hebrews 12:4)

It is important that we pray according to God's will. Sin is essentially an "I" problem. The central letter of the words "sin" and "pride" in the English language is "I". The heart of sin is self-will. We assume ownership of our lives. When we become Christians, we become His; and we see ourselves as stewards (servants who take care of the Master's property) of all of life. We are not our own. (1 Corinthians 6:19) In all four gospels, Jesus is quoted with a version of the concept, "If a man will seek his life to save it, he will lose it. But if he loses his life for my sake, he will keep it unto life eternal." (e.g., Matthew 16:25) The way to really live in the kingdom of God is to die to self. (Colossians 3:3) When we pray according to the will of God, we will have enough spiritual power to move a mountain. But when there is a trace of pride, ambition, or selfishness in us -- "They will be impressed, if I move a mountain." -- the "mountain" will just sit there, because God sees our motives. Jesus was so powerful in His prayers, because He prayed with such a perfectly unselfish heart. He only wanted to please the Father. He never did anything for the sake of His own ego, or for personal gratification. When we

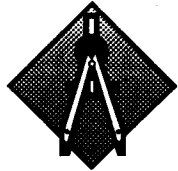
pray according to the will of God, we have the assurance that He will hear and answer us. (1 John 5:14-15)

Again, the purpose of prayer is not to inform God of the situation, because He already knows that. (Matthew 6:7-8) He is waiting for someone to pray in faith. When God does a great work in answer to prayer, He gets the glory; and everyone around sees that God is good. If He blessed or provided when no one prayed, then we would tend to take the credit for what happened, and go on our way, neglecting our relationship with Him. As the old saying goes, "Without God's power, we cannot; and without our prayers, God will not."

James mentioned the fact that Elijah was an ordinary man, who achieved extraordinary results with prayer. He prayed, and the whole earth had a three-year famine. There was no rain anywhere. The worst drought in the planet's history came as the result of the prayers of one man. Note again that this was an unselfish prayer. Why did Elijah pray for drought? He had nothing personally to gain from it. He prayed, because God had prompted him to pray that way. He was praying God's will, and not his own. Prayer is not a method to get God to do what we want. That would make God our servant. Absolutely not. Prayer is a means of relating and responding to God, which bends our will to His. More than anything else, prayer changes us.

One other principle of effective prayer is prayer in the Spirit. When we pray in the Spirit, we pray in a language that we do not know. We are praying "as the Spirit gives utterance." (Acts 2:4) Our understanding is "unfruitful." (1 Corinthians 14:14) Praying in the Spirit builds up our faith, and helps us to be

mighty in spirit. If we practice daily, consistent, and unselfish prayer, we will discover that prayer becomes a delight, and a real time of fellowship with our wonderful God, rather than a mandatory religious exercise.



Methods

There is obviously more material in this outline than you can possibly cover in one class period. Use the part which most directly speaks to your spirit as you pray for your class; and allow the Holy Spirit to add insights, as needed.

Of course, you will want to close with prayer. Encourage and inspire the class by praying with them, and for them. Lead by example; and then, challenge them to lead

out in praying the will of the Father. Challenge your students to seek the will of God.

One quick way to know whether you are praying in the will of God is to examine your requests by the Word of God. If you are praying for the salvation of someone who is lost, remind yourself that God is *"...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."* (2 Peter 3:9) Since it is God's will to save that person, then you should be stimulated to pray in faith, so that God will work in his life with convicting power.

Pray that God will give you specific insights to share with this class; and plan to take time in subsequent classes to share specific answers to prayer. Avoid vague prayers ("Bless all the missionaries"). Target specific needs, and believe for the supernatural. Develop an attitude of gratitude; and encourage faith in God.

Mothers

Volume 7

Lesson 45



Bible References

Genesis 2:18, 24

Exodus 20:12

Luke 4:38, 39

Ephesians 6:2

Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her.

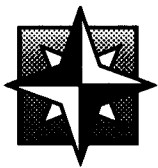
39 "And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them."



Memory Verse

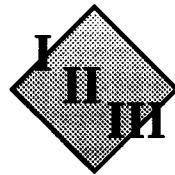
Exodus 20:12

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



Theme

Special blessings come into our lives, when we determine to honor our mothers.



Outline



Scripture Reading

Luke 4:38, 39

38 "And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And

I. God Made Mothers.

A. God created woman. (Genesis 2:18)

1. So that Adam would not be alone.
2. So that Adam would have a helper.
3. So that they could have children.

4. At Calvary, some faithful women stayed with Jesus, whereas the men scattered in fear and confusion.

IV. The Miracle of Motherhood.

A. God designed us so that only females can bear children.

1. Birth is a miracle and gift from God.
2. Childbearing is a wonderful privilege.
3. God's plan is that we join in physical unions only in the holy and joyful context of marriage.

B. Abortion.

1. When people engage in sexual relations outside of marriage, they sometimes cause the conception of a baby.
2. It is not right to kill an unborn baby, even if it is "unwanted" or "inconvenient."
3. God will judge the killing of millions of babies through abortion.
4. Biblically, abortion is murder.
5. Life begins at conception.
 - a. Exodus 21:22-23.
 - b. Luke 1:44.
 - c. Psalms 139.
6. We should protect the unborn children who are being slaughtered. (Proverbs 24:11-12)

- God uses mothers and fathers to protect us morally, emotionally, and physically.

- We are commanded to honor our mothers.

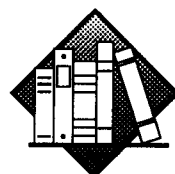
- Children are under the authority of their parents.

Children are commanded in the Word to obey their parents "in the Lord."

- Babies are miraculous gifts from God.

- Abortion is murder.

- We are to do all that we can, to show expressions of love and care to our mothers.



Lesson Material

Simon Peter had a brother named Andrew, and a mother-in-law. That is a good indication that he also had a wife, despite the traditions of some that state that he was celibate all his life. Historians tell us that Peter's wife was crucified with him, when he was executed in Rome.

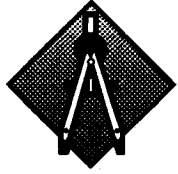
The Bible does not mention a great deal about the women who were part of the ministry of Jesus. In those days, the men were the ones involved in the business of academics. Jewish women did not even go to school. All of the scribes and writers were men; and so, the gospels were written from the man's point of view. Still, there are numerous mentions of women. While the emphasis is on the men, we know that it was primarily



Spiritual Truths

- Motherhood is a gift from God.

am, and ever hope to be, I owe to my mother."



Methods

Discussion

Conduct a round-table discussion on the importance of mothers, and what we should do to honor them.

Ask each member of the group to share one special or outstanding trait about their mother, for which they are grateful.

Emphasize the importance of motherhood, as shown in the Bible. Rather than a career choice, motherhood is a unique privilege and lifelong calling.

Close by corporately praying for the mothers represented in the room.

The Adventure of Fasting

Volume 7

Lesson 46



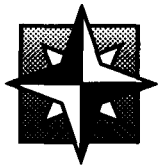
Bible References

Isaiah 58

Matthew 6

Psalms 109:24

Psalms 35:13



Theme

Fasting is a very good thing for Christians to do, not only for spiritual growth, but for physical health.



Scripture Reading

Isaiah 58:5-12

5 "Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread

sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?

6 "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?

7 "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

8 "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward.

9 "Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

10 "And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day:

11 "And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

12 "And they that be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the

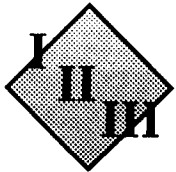
foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in."



Memory Verse

Isaiah 58:6

"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?"



Outline

I. The Purpose of Fasting.

- A. There are times when Christians need to "afflict their souls" by abstaining from food.
- B. A fast helps to center the attention on spiritual things, and to establish spiritual priorities in life.
 - 1. To humble the heart in supplication before the Lord. (Isaiah 58:5)
 - 2. To build up spiritual strength and help overcome sin. (Isaiah 58:6)
 - 3. To fight spiritual battles, or overcome spiritual burdens. (Isaiah 58:6; Matthew 17:21)
 - 4. To enable us to give to the needy. (Isaiah 58:7)

C. To set aside time to devote to prayer.

- 1. Fasting should always be combined with prayer.
- 2. It should have spiritual, as well as physical value.

II. The Principle of Fasting.

A. "...When ye fast,...." (Matthew 6:16-18)

- 1. Not "if," but "when" you fast.
- 2. Jesus expected His disciples to fast on occasion.
- 3. It was normal for the Jews to fast once or twice a week.

B. "...Be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance:...."

- 1. The Pharisees often let people know that they were fasting.
- 2. They wanted everyone to think that they were very spiritual.
- 3. They even made themselves look bad, so that people would think that they had been fasting for a long time.
- 4. The problem was not their fasting; it was their motive.

C. "...Fast...in secret:...."

- 1. It is not a sin to let someone know you are fasting, unless you are broadcasting it, to look spiritual.
- 2. It is all right to say, "I am fasting today. That is why I am not going to lunch with you."
- 3. The key is motive.

III. The Practice of Fasting.

A. Kinds of fasts:

1. Complete fast.
 - a. No food or drink.
 - b. Not even water.
2. Regular fast.
 - a. Abstain from food, but drink water.
 - b. On an extended fast, many people include fruit juice, along with water.
3. Daniel's fast. (Daniel 1:8-15)
 - a. Abstaining from meat, desserts, and sweet drinks.
 - b. Eating only vegetables and breads, and drinking only water.
4. Partial fast.
 - a. Abstaining from certain foods.
 - b. Usually from the less beneficial, such as desserts, snacks, etc.

B. Length of a fast.

1. At least one meal time, waiting until the next meal time to eat.
2. For a complete fast, avoid trying it for more than three days.
3. A water-only fast: seven to ten days is very good; 30 days maximum.
4. Daniel's fast: for long periods.

C. Problems with fasting:

1. "I get too hungry."
 - a. A natural result.
 - b. The flesh does not want to be disciplined.
 - c. Paul said, "I keep my body under subjection." (1 Corinthians 9:27)
2. Headaches.
 - a. Often related to the presence of caffeine, sugar, or drugs in the body.
 - b. You may want to avoid these for several days, before you fast.

- c. Many people get a headache, if they do not drink enough water.

IV. The Benefits of Fasting.

A. Fasting is good for the spirit.

1. It makes us more sensitive to the Spirit.
2. It builds the spirit, and helps overcome the flesh. (Galatians 5:17)

B. Fasting is good for the soul.

1. Clears the mind.
2. Helps the emotions.
3. Helps control the will.

C. Fasting is good for the body.

1. Your health will "spring forth speedily." (Isaiah 58:8)
2. Fasting causes the system to clean out toxins that have accumulated.
3. Fasting also causes the body to decrease the fat, which is a reserve of energy.
4. Fasting helps cleanse the blood and gastrointestinal system.

D. Fasting enables us to be more free to help and benefit others.



Spiritual Truths

- God established the practice of fasting, for the benefit of His people.
- It is beneficially physically as well and spiritually to fast.

- There are many promises in God's Word relating to fasting and prayer.
- Fasting helps us to keep our body under the control of our spirit.
- Fasting should always be accompanied by prayer.
- It is always easier to fast, when you agree with others to fast for a specific purpose.
- There are several different ways of fasting.



Lesson Material

Jesus expected His disciples to fast on occasion. Some of the Pharisees rebuked Him, because His disciples were not fasting like those of John. He assured them that they would do much fasting later, after the Bridegroom was taken. (Matthew 9:14-15) While they were with Him in that way, it was a time of rejoicing. Jesus went to various feasts. God instituted times for Israel to feast together before the Lord. It is good and proper, in the right context.

But there are also times when fasting is very appropriate, and even necessary. God did not design our bodies to have a constant intake of food without some relief. It is actually good for the body to fast on occasion, particularly with a regular fast. (See "Kinds of fasts" in outline.) When we fast, we usually abstain from all solid food, and take only water. Usually, a regular fast goes for one to three days; but it can be any length of time.

The problem that Isaiah dealt with in the text was that the Hebrew people were fasting, but with wrong motives. They were upset with God, because they did not seem to be benefiting from it. He gave them some guidelines for spiritual fasting; and He dealt with the motive question. We should not fast "for strife and debate," but rather, for the purpose of seeking God in humility. Pride and overindulgence go so well together. David is mentioned several times in the Bible as having fasted on occasion, in humility before the Lord. It helped him stay spiritually sensitive and mentally alert.

The eagle, a biblical symbol of spiritual freedom, is a good natural example. The bald eagle will go to a rock and literally break off its beak. While it grows a new beak, it cannot eat anything. During that time, its body is cleansed and rejuvenated, and its health improves. This is how the eagle "renews its strength." (Isaiah 40:31)

The prophet Isaiah did not deal with the physical aspects of fasting, because the people of Judah were very familiar with how to fast. But they had lost the right reasons to fast; and they needed instruction. We should fast in response to God's prompting; and He can prompt a group, as well as an individual. We should fast with pure motives and with a desire to help others, as well as the desire to be healthy and alert.

Fasting should always be accompanied by prayer, if it is to benefit the whole man. Fasting not only cleanses the body, but also can have a great effect on the soul and spirit of a person. Paul said that our flesh (our natural, physical man) is at war with the spiritual part of our being. (Galatians 5:17) Our spirit longs for God; but the flesh wants pleasure and immediate gratification. Fasting is a way to strengthen

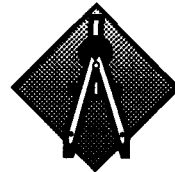
the spiritual focus, and to bring the natural man under subjection. Some people have odd ideas about what constitutes spirituality; but, basically, it is this: A spiritual person is primarily motivated in life by the things of the Spirit, while a carnal person is focused on the flesh. The carnal person seeks his own happiness; and he values most those things which gratify immediately. The spiritual person seeks God and His kingdom; and he values most those things which have eternal value. (Matthew 6:33; Colossians 3:2)

When we "chasten our soul with fastings" and "just say no" to food for a time, we are telling our appetite that it is under the dominion of our spirit. Our hunger for God is greater than our hunger for natural food; and we will keep our body under control. The key to freedom is not assertiveness, but discipline. The one who disciplines his flesh the most will have the most freedom.

The spiritual person is the one who does what is right, and not what he feels like doing. The motto of the carnal man is "If it feels good, do it." Fasting does not feel good. Most of us can easily talk ourselves out of a fast, once we get hungry. The interesting thing is, that once you fast for a day or two, it becomes easier. The body realizes that no food is coming; and so, it stops complaining. It adjusts to the fast; and it does not get hungry again, until it really needs food. Notice that when Jesus fasted, it was for forty days. This is a maximum fast. Few people could survive

without food for a longer period of time. Matthew said that *"...when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered."* (Matthew 4:2) After the fast, He got hungry.

Most people can and should fast, on occasion. Unless there is some rare medical problem, you should try it. There are benefits in every aspect of life, if we fast the right way -- and for the right reasons. When you are faced with a spiritual battle or a special need, ask God if you should fast, and for how long. Remember to pray when you fast. It can be the key to a great spiritual adventure.



Methods

After discussing the aspects and techniques of fasting, plan to have the whole group, or as many as will voluntarily agree together, go on a fast. Plan to start with fasting one meal; and devote that time to prayer (together, if possible). Try later to fast a whole day. Afterward, take an offering of the money that would have been spent on food, and give it to a Christian organization that distributes food to the hungry. Try to inspire your students with the benefits of fasting; and encourage them to make it a part of their Christian lives.

The Tithe

Volume 7

Lesson 47

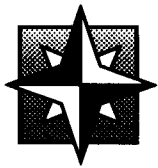


Bible References

Hebrews 7

Malachi 3

Matthew 23:23



Theme

The practice of tithing is a universal principle of God's Word; and it is still for us, today.



Scripture Reading

Hebrews 7:1-10

1 *"For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;*

2 *"To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;*

3 *"Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.*

4 *"Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.*

5 *"And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:*

6 *"But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.*

7 *"And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.*

8 *"And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.*

9 *"And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham.*

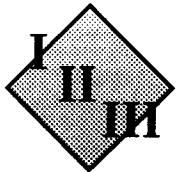
10 *"For ye was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.*



Memory Verse

Malachi 3:10

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



Outline

I. What Is a Tithe?

A. The term literally means "tenth" or "ten percent."

1. God established the principle that men who sought to obey Him must pay a tenth of their income to the support of the ministry.
2. It is not an offering. God requires it.

B. How should we calculate the tithe?

1. As individuals, we tithe on our gross income, rather than our net income.
 - a. All financial and material increase.
 - (1) From wages or salaries.
 - (2) Inheritance.
 - (3) Any other income.

b. Give the tithe before deducting the taxes.

- (1) Pay God, before you pay your government.
- (2) Always put God first.

2. Businesses tithe on "increase."

- a. A business requires a great percentage to cover expenses.
- b. Gross business income must cover these expenses.
- c. Tithe on increase, or profit.

C. To the storehouse. (Malachi 3:10)

1. Not your own house, or your own ministry.
2. The local church.
3. Where do you receive most of your spiritual food, and spiritual covering?

II. Why Did God Initiate the Tithe?

A. He was not in need of funds for His ministers.

B. God commands man to tithe, primarily as a reminder of His ownership.

1. God had given Adam and Eve the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil as a reminder that it all belonged to Him. (Genesis 2:9)
2. The tithe serves a similar function.
3. It is not the part that belongs to God, because God owns everything we have.
 - a. We are only stewards of money, time, grace, and even our bodies.
 - b. We will be held accountable for what we did in this life, with what God gave us.
 - c. God provides money and the ability to get wealth; and He then commands us to give back a tenth.

4. *"...That thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always."*
(Deuteronomy 14:23)

C. God established the tithe, to encourage and measure the level of our obedience.

1. We could take it for ourselves, just as Adam and Eve were able to eat of the tree.
2. But there are consequences if we "rob God." (Malachi 3:8)
3. What we do with God's ten percent indicates our level of obedience.
 - a. Sometimes we are tempted to spend it on ourselves.
 - b. Some people are tempted to give it wherever they wish to give it, rather than to the storehouse.
4. The offering is a test of our faith.
5. Alms (giving to the poor) is a test of our love.

D. God uses the tithe to support those who serve in full-time Christian work.

1. But, He established the offerings primarily to support the buildings and facilities needed for the church.
2. If all Christians were faithful in tithing, most churches would have no financial problems.

III. The Benefits of Tithing.

A. We learn the fear of the Lord.

1. We have a weekly reminder that it all belongs to God.
2. We remember that we will give an account to God.

B. God will "rebuke the devourer" for our sake. (Malachi 3:11)

1. When we have the mentality of a steward, we are more likely to be wise in the use of money.
2. Some "devourers" of money:
 - a. Impulse spending.
 - b. Credit buying.
 - c. Persuasive salesmen.
 - d. Sickness.
 - e. Get-rich-quick schemes.
 - f. Deceptive advertising.
 - g. Sin (especially the love of pleasure).

C. God will "pour you out a blessing." (Malachi 3:10)

1. God blesses a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:7)
2. God honors faith and obedience. (Hebrews 11:6)
3. Both God and other people tend to be more generous toward givers.

D. Your church and leadership will be blessed and enabled to provide for your spiritual edification.

IV. Is Not the Tithe a Part of the Old Covenant Law, Which Was Done Away With?

A. It is included in the Levitical law of Israel; but it predates and precedes it by centuries.

1. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob affirmed their covenant with God by tithing their income.
2. Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec, a type (at least) of Christ. (Hebrews 7)

3. It is not a Mosaic statute, but a principle of spiritual life.

B. New Testament.

1. Jesus affirmed the importance and necessity of tithing. (Matthew 23:23)
2. The early Christians went far beyond tithing, often giving all of their income to the church. (Acts 4:34-37, 2:45)
3. If you reject the practice of tithing as "Old Testament" only, then you would be ethically obligated to follow the New Testament fulfillment, which was the giving of up to 100%.

will prosper much more than they would have, if they had withheld the tithe.

- Christians who do not tithe tend to be dishonest about other things, too.
- We are not really giving an offering to God's work, until we have paid the tithe that already belongs to the storehouse.
- Tithing is not only an expression of obedience, but also of faith in God as our Provider.
- The tither tends to see God as his source of finances, rather than man.



Spiritual Truths

- God established the principle of tithing as a weekly reminder that it all belongs to Him, and that we will give an account for our lives.
- The "tithe" simply means "a tenth;" and it relates to the first tenth of the increase of our material wealth.
- We tithe to the "storehouse" when we tithe to our local church, and entrust the handling of the money to our pastor.
- When we tithe, our attitude about money changes to that of a steward; and we tend to be much wiser in handling the remaining 90%.
- Those who practice tithing are generally far better handlers of money; and God's Word promises that they



Lesson Material

A man was about to be baptized in water when the pastor noticed that he had neglected to take his wallet out of his pocket. When he mentioned it, the man replied, "Sir, I want to make sure my money gets baptized, too. That is where I need it the most."

This is a good insight for a new believer. Jesus said, *"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."* (Matthew 6:21) God knows that the way in which we relate ourselves to money has a great bearing on the way we relate to spiritual things. Jesus taught more about money than He did about any other subject -- not because He needed it, but because it so affects our attitudes and relationships for eternity. Paul said that *"...the love of money is the root of all evil:...."* (1 Timothy 6:10) If a man is selfish

and ungodly, it will be most quickly and universally manifested in his desire to get and keep things for himself.

Jesus said, "...Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matthew 6:24) What is our motivation in life? What do we live for? We will either live for Jesus and see ourselves as servants, or we will "be our own person," and live for temporal values. If we are ruled by the sin nature, we will be primarily motivated by the desire for things, or money. Sin is basically the nature to seek for self; and it is the opposite of love, which seeks the best for God and for others. If we are servants to mammon (temporal values; money), then we cannot be servants to God (motivated in life to seek His pleasure and honor).

Many people gladly receive the gospel, when they hear of the free gift of grace through the cross. They delight to call heaven their home; and they appreciate the fact that salvation is a free gift. Then they come to the principle of tithing, and say, "Now wait just a minute. God is the One Who is doing the giving -- not me!" They come to a part that is a little hard for them to swallow, if their motives are not pure.

The fact is that Christianity is not just a means for us to get what we want from God. Christianity is first of all a means of God changing us, including our attitudes and values. God does not exist to make us happy. Ultimately, God created us to bring Him pleasure. (Revelation 4:11) God is more interested in teaching us to be givers than He is in teaching us to be receivers. One of the first things we learn is that our first purpose in a covenant with God is to be a giver. Real conversion involves giving our hearts and lives to God. Living for Jesus means just that. We should live with a view to benefit Him and His

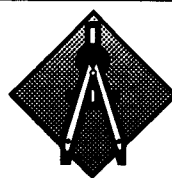
kingdom, rather than seek to use God as our ticket to wealth and happiness.

We know that God is a loving heavenly Father; and so, naturally, He loves to give to His children. However, God wants to teach His children to be givers. Giving starts with tithing; and tithing starts with money. God demands the first tenth of all our increase. This is a wonderful reminder that it all belongs to God; and that is the basis of the fear of the Lord. The first purpose of tithing is not the support of the ministry, but to teach us the fear of the Lord. It serves a similar function to the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam and Eve had the tree in the garden -- right in the middle -- but they were not allowed to eat of the fruit. In this way, they were given a constant reminder that they were stewards of God's garden. As long as they were stewards of God's wealth, they could enjoy it all; and they had perfect peace and joy. The moment that they took possession of the fruit of that tree, they lost dominion, and they lost their joy.

When we take possession of God's tithe, we develop similar problems. We reflect the basic sin attitude that alienates us from God in the first place: the concept that we are our own property. Sin involves ownership. Becoming a Christian is not just saying that we want to go to heaven. Becoming a Christian is primarily a matter of giving ourselves to God. We trust God to forgive our sins because of the blood Jesus shed for us, and we repent. To "repent" means to "turn around;" and we turn from living for self to living for Christ. We demonstrate that recognition of ownership by giving the tithe. People who have a hard time tithing are indicating either that they do not understand tithing, or that they simply do not really want God to rule their lives.

They are struggling with the same heart attitudes of temporal values that plunged the whole human race into this predicament, in the first place.

When we practice tithing, we are naturally setting ourselves up for spiritual and natural blessings -- spiritual blessings, because God loves a cheerful giver, and will pour out from the windows of heaven; natural blessings, because God will "rebuke the devourer" of our money. Satan loves to destroy the wealth of God's people, because it damages their joy and testimony. Tithing is really the first step to financial freedom, because it establishes the mind set of a steward. We are not so free to throw money away with impulse spending when we realize that it belongs to God. We will make better investments; and we will prosper, in the long run. We will be far less likely to borrow money, because we will see God as our financial source. We will realize that, if God wants us to have it, He can provide the funds to pay for it.



Methods

Communicate the difference between the tithe, offerings, and alms.

Show that the tithe is a part of God's overall plan for mankind, and not just an ordinance for the Hebrew people under the Old Covenant.

Show that tithing is actually a part of God's plan to financially bless the people of faith.

Why does it take faith, in order to practice tithing consistently?

Remember, God does not guarantee financial wealth for everyone who tithes, because there are many other factors involved in determining who is wealthy and who is not in our world. But tithing does contribute toward greater financial freedom, for those who apply the principle consistently. Help your class see the difference.

Ask each student to calculate their "increase" for the week; and give them an opportunity in class to give a tithe, as well as an offering.

Worship the Lord

Volume 7

Lesson 48



Bible References

Exodus 34:14

2 Chronicles 20:18-19

Revelation 5:11-14

Luke 2:37

Psalms 150

Psalms 96

John 12



Scripture Reading

Revelation 19:4-8

4 *"And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.*

5 *"And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.*

6 *"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*

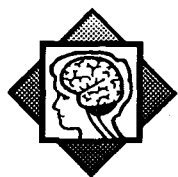
7 *"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.*

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."*



Theme

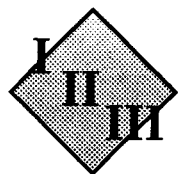
True worship recognizes God's position, and responds to Him with adoration and affection.



Memory Verse

Psalms 96:8-9

"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth."



Outline

I. What Is Worship?

- A. Expressed adoration of God.
- B. Reverent love, which results in faithful obedience.
- C. Singing and heart-felt devotion, in His presence.
- D. A spirit response of covenant love.
- E. The intimate response of the bride (church) to the Bridegroom (Christ).
 - 1. The Greek word for worship is *proskunio* -- to "kiss toward."
 - 2. True worship is an act of covenant love to the Lord; and it blesses God.
 - 3. Music is one vehicle to express worship to God.
- F. Praise is magnifying and boasting on God's works.

G. But worship is blessing Him, for Who He is.

II. Only God Is Worthy to Receive Worship.

- A. No other "gods" or priorities above Him.
 - 1. Exodus 34:14.
 - 2. Deuteronomy 13:1-4.
 - 3. 2 Kings 17:35-39.
- B. Not Satan or his powers.
 - 1. Matthew 4:10.
 - 2. Luke 4:8.
- C. Not angels or spirit beings. (Revelation 22:8-9)

III. Examples of Worship.

- A. Men close to God.
 - 1. Genesis 22:5-14 -- Abraham.
 - 2. Exodus 15:1-18 -- Moses.
 - 3. Job 1:20 -- Job.
- B. Prophets.
 - 1. Daniel 6:10 -- Daniel.
 - 2. Jonah 1:9 -- Jonah.
- C. Kings.
 - 1. 1 Kings 1:47-48 -- David.
 - 2. 2 Chronicles 20:18-19 -- Jehoshaphat.
 - 3. 2 Chronicles 29:27-28 -- Hezekiah.
- D. Angels. (Revelation 5:11-12)
- E. Spirit beings. (Revelation 19:4)
- F. All creatures. (Revelation 5:13)

IV. Why Worship?

A. God is worthy.

1. Revelation 4:11.
2. Revelation 5:11-14.
3. Nehemiah 9:5.

B. God made us. (Psalms 95:6-7)

C. God requires it, in our relationship to Him.

1. Deuteronomy 6:4-5.
2. Matthew 4:10.

D. To thank Him for His grace. (2 Samuel 6:14, 21)

E. To express our reverence. (Philippians 2:9-11)

F. To express our love. (Revelation 19:4-8)

C. Living for God faithfully is an act of worship. (Romans 12:1)

D. Praise and thanksgiving. (Psalms 103:1)

E. Worship in anointed song unto the Lord. (Psalms 96:1-2)

VI. Benefits of Worship.

A. God hears and acts in our behalf. (John 9:31)

B. It perfects (matures) us, spiritually.

C. It humbles us before our Creator.

D. It focuses us on the eternal, rather than the temporal. (Colossians 3:1-4)

E. True worship ministers to God; and it is pleasing to Him.

V. How Can We Worship Him?

A. In spirit and in truth. (John 4:24)

1. In spirit.

- a. Our spirits are "quickenened" ("made alive") unto God, when we are born again. (Ephesians 2:1)
- b. Not worshipping only with the mind and emotion, but in communion with God, as born-again believers.

2. In truth.

- a. Not mere "lip service." (Matthew 15:8)
- b. According to our heartfelt relationship with God.
- c. Worshipping with true submission to Him.

B. Fasting and prayer. (Luke 2:37)



Spiritual Truths

- God does not seek to be appeased, or to be worshipped. God seeks worshippers.
- We can praise and worship God with our bodies, souls and spirits.
- Worship is the response of the bride to her heavenly Bridegroom.
- Praise and thanksgiving are vehicles that bring us into the presence of Almighty God, so that we can worship Him.
- Worship is the activity of heaven, and the high calling of every child of God.

- Worship involves the expression of adoration, devotion, and submission toward God.
- We will worship whomever (or whatever) we most trust in and focus on.
- Idolatry is the practice of giving to someone else that kind of zeal, love, and trust that should only go to God (i.e., giving the pre-eminence to someone or something else).



Lesson Material

There is a great difference between praise and worship. All of creation can praise God. The heavens declare His glory. (Psalms 19:1) Even the trees of the field clap their hands before the Lord. (Isaiah 55:12) The earth is full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:9) Praise is declaring His greatness, and the glory of His works. Praise is bragging on God. It is essential that we both praise God and offer thanksgiving, because these two activities bring us into His presence. (Psalms 100). Proper court etiquette requires a gift and a humble attitude, in order to approach the throne of a great king; and our Lord is the King of kings. We should *"...offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."* (Hebrews 13:15)

We praise God with our mind, our surrendered will, our obedience, our song, our instruments, our dance before Him, and with our joy and rejoicing. We praise God by telling of all His wonderful works,

and by magnifying His name. Let all flesh praise the Lord. *"Let everything that hath breath praise the LORD...."* (Psalms 150:6)

While praise is our response to God for what He has done, worship is our response to God for Who He is. We exalt the character and nature of God, rather than recalling only His works. We can worship God by presenting our bodies to Him as "living sacrifices." (Romans 12:1) We can worship the Lord with our souls -- our minds and emotions. (Psalms 103:1) And we worship God with our spirits, which have been "quickened" -- "made alive" -- unto Him. (John 4:24; Ephesians 2:1)

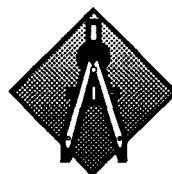
Worship is the response of the bride of Christ ministering in intimacy to her Bridegroom. When men are focused on themselves in pride, they cannot worship God. It takes humility and spiritual power to be able to worship God. David was a mighty man of valor, who openly worshipped God in the dance with all of his heart, even when his wife scorned him, for looking so foolish and common. (2 Samuel 6:14-21) David loved God intensely; and God took particular delight in David. He was a great hero, and God often identified with him. (Acts 13:22) David was a man's man; and he absolutely adored God, and delighted to be in God's presence. In return, God enjoyed blessing David with the kind of success in life which most men only fantasize about.

One beautiful New Testament picture of worship is the account of the woman who anointed the feet of Jesus with the ointment from the alabaster box. (Luke 7:37-48) Jesus said that she was forgiven much, because she had loved much. When she saw Jesus in a meeting with the men, she came in and anointed His feet with the costly perfume. It was extremely

valuable, for it was carefully blended and sealed in a precious container, which had to be broken, in order to be used. Unless we are broken by humility and repentance, God cannot use us, either. Only when we are broken can the sweet savor of Christ come forth from our lives. (2 Corinthians 2:15)

The woman poured out this expensive treasure upon the feet of Jesus, as an act of both honor and adoration. This was sacrificial love. This was worship of the highest order. She bathed His feet with the most precious substance that she possessed -- something to be saved for her wedding, or her funeral. She gave it all, as a sacrifice to the Lord. She washed His feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. Judas complained about the extravagance. He asked why the ointment was "wasted" on Jesus -- could not the money from its sale have been given to the poor? But all of the apostles recognized that Judas' motive was not to bless the poor. His focus was on money; and so, he complained. Jesus rebuked him, because this woman had

discovered the greatest calling in life. She was a worshipper. Others were accepting Him, but she was adoring Him. Others were seeking Him, but she was giving her all to Him. Others had religion, but she had a relationship.



Methods

Teach the difference between praise and worship; and try to lead your group into worshipping in spirit and in truth. Note that worship is also expressed in a devoted lifestyle, as well as in song.

Encourage your students to worship God every day, whether alone or in church. Worshipping alone will help the students to become more God-conscious and less self-conscious; and they will more likely enter into corporate worship.

Who Is the Holy Spirit?

Volume 7

Lesson 49



Bible References

John 15-17

Joel 2

Acts 1-2

8 "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 "Of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 "Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

11 "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

12 "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

13 "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he will not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

14 "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."



Theme

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity of God. He is working mightily in the church today.



Scripture Reading

John 16:7-14

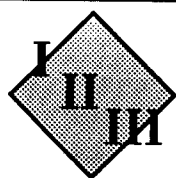
7 "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.



Memory Verse

John 15:26

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."



Outline

I. The Person of the Holy Spirit.

A. Not an impersonal "force."

1. That is the concept of most people in the occult.
2. Most cults reject the Person of the Holy Spirit.
3. He is a Person, Who can be grieved. (Ephesians 4:30)
4. Ananias and Sapphira lied to Him. (Acts 5:3-4)

B. He is the third Person of the Holy Trinity.

1. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
2. 1 John 5:7.
3. Co-equal, and co-eternal.
4. The Holy Spirit has no beginning. He always was, from eternity past.

C. He is holy.

1. No fault or imperfection.
2. He is grieved by sin.

D. He is an infinite Spirit.

1. He does not have a physical body; but He is very real.
2. He has no limitations to His power or knowledge.
3. He was actively involved in creation, along with the Father and the Son. (Genesis 1:2; Job 33:4)

E. The Holy Spirit is God.

1. Acts 5:3-4.
2. There is One God, Who is Three Persons:
 - a. The Father.
 - b. The Son.
 - c. The Holy Spirit.
 - d. 1 John 5:7.
 - e. Matthew 28:19.

II. The Ministry of the Holy Spirit To Believers.

A. Jesus was dependent upon the Holy Spirit during His earthly ministry.

1. The Holy Spirit moved upon Mary; and she conceived the Son of God. (Luke 1:35)
2. Jesus emptied Himself of His omnipotence (Philippians 2:5-8); and He was dependent upon the Holy Spirit to guide Him and to empower Him. (Luke 4:1, Acts 10:38)
3. The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness for forty days of fasting. (Matthew 4:1-11)

B. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to fill and empower the believers in the church.

1. Jesus breathed on His disciples and imparted the Holy Spirit. (John 20:22)
2. All believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 1:22)
3. The Holy Spirit quickens our spirits when we are born again (regeneration). (Ephesians 2:1)
4. The Holy Spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:13)
5. Jesus baptizes us in the Holy Spirit, for the purpose of empowering our witness. (Matthew 3:11; Acts 2)

6. The Holy Spirit is the source of supernatural power to the believers. (Acts 1:8)
 7. The infilling of the Holy Spirit produces the fruit of Christ-like character in believers. (Galatians 5:22-23)
 8. The Holy Spirit operates through believers in "spirituals" or the manifestation of the Spirit, to edify the body. (1 Corinthians 12:7-10)
 9. The Holy Spirit anoints believers in their service for God.
- C. The Holy Spirit is the source of joy to the believers. (Romans 14:17)
- D. The Holy Spirit gave us the Bible. (2 Peter 1:21)
- E. The Holy Spirit is our Teacher, leading us into all truth. (1 Corinthians 2:13; 1 John 2:27)
- F. The Holy Spirit can give direction to the Church through His prophets. (Acts 13:2)
- G. The Holy Spirit sanctifies believers. (Romans 15:16)
- H. The Holy Spirit Himself intercedes for us. (Romans 8:26-27)
- I. The Holy Spirit seals us. (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13-14)
- J. The Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. (Romans 8:16)
- B. He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. (John 16:8)
1. "Reprove" means "to admonish; to rebuke; to tell a fault."
 2. He brings conviction of sin to unbelievers. (Hebrews 3:7)
 3. We cannot be born again, until the Holy Spirit makes us conscious of our wickedness.
 4. The Holy Spirit works conviction in the heart, in order to lead us to repentance.
- C. The Holy Spirit works through believers, on the behalf of sinners. (1 Thessalonians 1:5)
1. He prompts us to pray for them.
 2. He empowers us to witness; and He confirms the Word with supernatural signs. (Acts 1:8; Mark 16:17-18)



Spiritual Truths

- The Holy Spirit is invisible, but not impersonal.
 - There is no difference between the use of "Holy Ghost" and "Holy Spirit" in the Bible.
 - The Holy Spirit is infinite in His power, and perfect in His motives.
 - The Holy Spirit seeks continually to glorify the Name of Jesus Christ.
 - When the Holy Spirit is in the life of a believer, His presence is manifested
- ### III. The Ministry of the Holy Spirit To the World.
- A. He will exalt Jesus, and bear witness that Jesus is the Savior of the world. (John 16:14)

both by supernatural power, and by the fruit of godly character.

- The Holy Spirit is the One Who reproves the world of sin, so that people can realize their need for salvation.
- The Holy Spirit gave us the Bible, so that we could understand God's plan for our lives.
- The Holy Spirit leads us into all truth.



Lesson Material

In Genesis 24, the story of Abraham includes a beautiful spiritual allegory of the work of the Holy Spirit, through the person of a faithful (unnamed) servant. Abraham sought the perfect bride for his beloved son, Isaac. He sent the servant to his kinsmen, in order to find a bride of character and beauty to please the heart of the son. The servant found Rebekah, who was a beautiful, faithful, hard-working, virgin, the granddaughter of Abraham's brother, Nahor. She was adorned with gifts, and then taken to the promised land (Canaan), where she was given to Isaac, whom she had never seen face to face. She had to receive the word of the servant, and believe his promise by faith.

What a powerful illustration of the Trinity and the church. Abraham is a type of the Father, Who seeks a bride for His Son. Jesus, Who is God the Son, will be the Bridegroom of the church, also called the bride of Christ. (Ephesians 5) God even designed the marriage relationship to be a prophetic picture of the relationship

between Christ and the church. The Holy Spirit is seen in the character of the servant. He is never named, because the Holy Spirit never seeks to glorify Himself. The servant went from the Promised Land to the "old country," where he sought for the perfect bride. Rebekah was a girl of virtue, purity, love, and faithfulness. The servant tested her, in order to see if she had the heart of a servant; and she did. She willingly sought to bless the stranger, even though it was not required. The very word "hospitality" in the Greek means "love of strangers."

The greatest work of the Holy Spirit in the earth today is to prepare the bride of Christ. One day, there will be the "Marriage Supper of the Lamb" in heaven. (Revelation 19:7) Jesus will be the Groom; and the redeemed saints of all the ages will be a beautiful corporate bride, adorned with the "beauty of holiness," and worshipping her Lord in the intimacy of the spirit.

Soon after Jesus left the earth physically, He sent the Holy Spirit to pour out over the church, and fill the believers with supernatural power and joy. He told His disciples that it was necessary for Him to go away, so that the "Comforter" could come. (John 16:7) The Greek word for "Comforter" is *Paraklete*, or "One Who stands beside." "Comforter" is really not a very accurate translation, because it implies that He is there primarily to make us comfortable; and that is not the case. He is there to strengthen, encourage, and guide us, but not to make life easy. His motive is consistent with the Father's. He wants to give us the strength to overcome in life, and not merely remove difficulty from our lives.

The Holy Spirit is infinite -- that is to say, He has no beginning or ending. He is

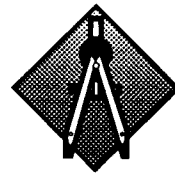
God eternal. He is omnipresent (present everywhere at once), omnipotent (all-powerful), and omniscient (all-knowing). All other spirits, including the devil and his demons, are finite, created spirits. That is, although they have no body, they do have limitations. They can only be in one place at one time. The Holy Spirit can attend and even direct believers' meetings all over the world at the same time, and never get confused. He is awesome.

One work of the Holy Spirit is to reprove the world of sin. Before anyone can become a Christian, he must know that he is lost. The Holy Spirit speaks through anointed preachers, teachers, and other believers, to instruct people about the plan of salvation; but, ultimately, only the Holy Spirit can make a person's conscience sensitive to the point of spiritual conviction over sin. He must do a work in their spirits, so that they will be led to repent. He does not condemn. (John 3:17) Satan is the one who condemns (makes people feel hopeless and worthless). The Holy Spirit convicts (makes people aware of the seriousness and wickedness of sin).

The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin. When we repent, He baptizes -- places us into -- the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13); and we become Christians by grace, through faith. Water baptism is an outward picturing and testimonial to this inward work of the Holy Spirit. We cannot come to God on our own. We can only approach God, when we are invited by the Holy Spirit. Salvation is not "turning over a new leaf;" and it is not just feeling good about Jesus. Salvation is a supernatural birth (John 3:3); and it is a miracle performed by the Holy Spirit.

As believers, the Holy Spirit is the One Who "guides us into all truth." (John

16:13) As He works in our lives, He always exalts Jesus. Some people try to find truth within their own minds or fields of experience, thinking that truth will lead them to spiritual reality. But this is not so. Fleshly meditation will lead away from truth, and toward one of countless paths of error. But when we honestly seek God, the Holy Spirit is able to bring us into a personal relationship with God, through the Lord Jesus Christ. We relate to every member of the Godhead. We pray to the Father in Jesus' Name, empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit. It is wise to learn to relate to the Holy Spirit as a real Person -- the third Person of the Trinity.



Methods

Discussion Questions:

What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the church today? How have you seen the Holy Spirit work in your own life?

How does Satan hinder the purposes of God, in casting doubt about the reality and work of the Holy Spirit today?

Chalkboard:

On the chalkboard, list the four major divisions of the ministry of the Holy spirit in our lives, and the results of each of those ministries.

Regeneration -- New birth
 Infilling -- Fruit of the Spirit
 Anointing -- Enabled in service to God
 Baptism -- Nine "spirituals" of 1 Corinthians 12

God, Our Father

Volume 7

Lesson 50



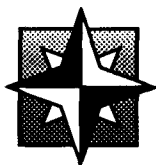
Bible References

Ephesians 3:14-15

1 John 4:14

2 Corinthians 6:17-18

Romans 8:15



Theme

We can fully depend upon our heavenly Father to save us, care for us, stay with us and protect us forever.



Scripture Reading

Romans 8:14-19

14 *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."*

15 *"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."*

16 *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:"*

17 *"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."*

18 *"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."*

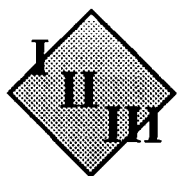
19 *"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."*



Memory Verse

1 John 3:1

"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."



Outline

I. Characteristics of a Good Father.

- A. Caring.
- B. Loving.
- C. Attentive.
- D. Protective.
- E. Supportive.
- F. Providing.
- G. Committed.
- H. Faithful.
- I. Spiritual Leader.
- J. Praying.
- K. Honest.

II. God As Our Father.

- A. He created us.
 - 1. Genesis 2:7.
 - 2. Deuteronomy 32:6.
 - 3. Isaiah 64:8.
- B. He accepts anyone who will come to Him with an honest heart.
 - 1. Psalms 68:5.
 - 2. John 1:12-13.
 - 3. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17.

C. His love is fatherly.

- 1. Psalms 27:10.
- 2. Matthew 5:45.
- 3. Matthew 18:14.
- 4. 1 John 3:1.
- 5. Romans 1:7.

D. God is attentive to the cries of His children.

- 1. Matthew 6:9-13.
- 2. Matthew 7:7-11.
- 3. Matthew 18:19-20.

E. Instructive.

- 1. Matthew 11:25-26.
- 2. Matthew 16:17.
- 3. Luke 10:21.

F. God is faithful to reward those who serve Him.

- 1. Matthew 6:3-4, 6, 18.
- 2. James 1:17.

G. God is a faithful provider. (Matthew 6:25-33)

H. He faithfully and wisely disciplines us in love.

- 1. Hebrews 12:5-11.
- 2. 1 Peter 1:17.

I. God is compassionate.

- 1. Psalms 103:13.
- 2. Luke 6:35-36.

J. He is patient.

- 1. 2 Peter 3:9.
- 2. Psalms 86:15.

K. Forgiving.

- 1. Matthew 6:14.

2. Mark 11:25.

L. Trustworthy.

1. Proverbs 3:5-6.
2. Psalms 125:1.

M. Protective.

1. Deuteronomy 1:30.
2. Matthew 10:28-31.

N. God gives His children a goodly inheritance.

1. John 14:2.
2. Matthew 13:43.
3. Matthew 25:34.
4. Colossians 1:12.

III. Our Part As Children.

A. Recognize that He is our heavenly Father. (Ephesians 4:4-6)

B. Realize that He sent Jesus to save us. (1 John 4:14)

C. Return in repentance to His care. (2 Corinthians 6:17-18)

D. Receive His Holy Spirit.

1. Acts 1:4.
2. Acts 2:33.
3. Romans 8:15.



Spiritual Truths

- God is characterized as the epitome of love and faithfulness.
- Sin has caused the human race to be alienated from the family of God; but God provided a way for us to be reconciled to Himself, through Jesus Christ.
- God is the Creator of all men; but He is Father only to those who have been born again.
- God will manifest His character and blessings as a Father to those who turn to Him with repentance and faith.
- Jesus came to earth and revealed the Father's heart of God.
- God not only created us and gave us life, but He also purchased us with the blood of Christ, and made a way to adopt us into His heavenly family forever.
- We are children of God by both adoption and regeneration.
- Our natural fathers reflect the image of our heavenly Father; but, the more sin they have in their lives, the more that image is marred.
- God gives special grace to those who are not under the care and protection of a natural father. He will be their Father in a special way.



Lesson Material

The purpose of the Bible is the revelation of God and God's kingdom to His children. The fact that there is a God is evident in all of life. (Romans 1:20) A design presupposes a designer. Creation demands a Creator. Order does not arise spontaneously out of chaos. *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork."* (Psalms 19:1)

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by {his} Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;" (Hebrews 1:1-2)

The greatest revelation of God the Father is Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 1:3) God revealed His power and glory through angelic messengers, prophets, miracles, the law, covenants, and through all of creation in general; but the most complete revelation of His heart and character is the Person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Word, or expression of the Father. (John 1:1, 14)

Jesus delighted to remind people of the father's heart of God. He taught His disciples to pray, *"...Our Father which art in. heaven,...."* (Matthew 6:9) One great thing about our heavenly Father is that He is always available. We can pray at any time; and He is able to hear our prayer. He delights to hear us call; and He loves to answer specific, unselfish requests from those who love Him.

There are many wonderful aspects of God. He is infinite; and the mind of man is incapable of fully comprehending the vastness and perfection of God. God is perfect in holiness and justice, but He is also a God of love and mercy, Who is quick to forgive and to heal.

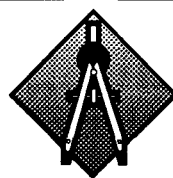
When a man becomes a natural father, he is awed by the miracle of life, and sometimes overwhelmed by the responsibility of this new life that is entrusted to his care. He wants to be a good protector and provider. It is a desire that comes from the heart of his heavenly Father. It is the father's seed that determines the blood type of the baby. It is also the father who determines the sex, and many other characteristics. Each of us is born with some of the physical characteristics of our father. We are born in his image; and he has a strong desire to see us grow to be happy and fruitful in life.

Of course, we also inherit our sin nature from our father. Jesus was the only human ever born Who did not inherit a sin nature, because His Father was God Himself. (John 1:14; 2 Corinthians 5:21) He is the only one "begotten" of the Father; and so, His blood type was unique and perfect. His blood was the only blood precious enough to pay for the sins of the world. (1 Peter 1:18-19) Jesus had a natural mother, but no natural father. Joseph was the father of all of the other children of Mary; but Jesus was born to a virgin, and was conceived by the Holy Ghost. (Luke 1:35)

Our natural fathers have a God-given role that is similar to that of the heavenly Father. They are called to be providers, protectors, counselors, guides, and intimate friends. Tragically, since sin came to the human race, no father has been perfect. To the degree that our fathers have

sin in their lives, they mar that image of the heavenly Father. Some fathers are so bound by some sins that they are incapable of demonstrating the love that they should give. They are too driven or hindered by alcohol, lust, or greed to be the kind of unselfish person that God designed them to be. It is very important for young people with absent or weak fathers to forgive and love them, and to look to God as their perfect Father. (Psalms 68:5) Do not let the weaknesses of people lead you to a false image of your Father in heaven. He is perfect; but He does not force people to be.

The Bible teaches us to love and honor our fathers. (Exodus 20:12) Listen to your father's counsel. Let God protect and bless you through him. Look to God as your perfect source in life. Bless your father; and encourage him all you can. Talk to him. Most fathers want to relate to their teenagers, but just do not know how. Sometimes they are even afraid that they will say the wrong thing. You can be an encourager. Your responsibility in the Lord is to honor your father, and thereby God, with your obedience. (Ephesians 6:1)



Methods

Discussion:

Have you ever considered what an awesome responsibility it would be to actually be a parent? Try to mentally put yourself in their shoes; and relate to how they must feel.

We all want to be encouraged and praised by our fathers. Do you know that fathers long to be encouraged and praised by their children? Make it a point to brag on your father, or to compliment him this week in a special way.

Consider both the comparisons and the contrasts between our natural fathers and our heavenly Father.

Make it a point to talk to your heavenly Father every day. He loves to hear you pray, because He loves you.

The Holy Spirit in the Believer

Volume 7

Lesson 51



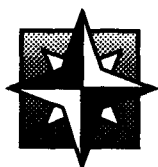
Bible References

Jude 20

Acts 2

Acts 13

1 Corinthians 12-14



Theme

God is pouring out His Spirit upon all flesh, in these last days.



Scripture Reading

Corinthians 14: 1-5, 13-15, 18

1 "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

2 "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

3 "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

4 "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

5 "I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying."

13 "Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.

14 "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

15 "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."

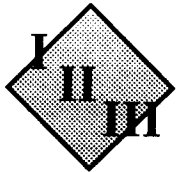
18 "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all. "



Memory Verse

Jude vs. 20-21

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."



Outline

I. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

A. Greek baptizo.

1. "To be immersed completely; to be buried; covered over."
2. Jesus Christ is the One Who baptizes believers in the Holy Spirit.
 - a. Luke 3:16.
 - b. Acts 11:16.

B. Acts 2.

1. The Day of Pentecost.
2. 120 faithful disciples had tarried in Jerusalem for about ten days, after Jesus ascended to heaven.

3. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues.
4. "Cloven tongues of fire sat upon each of them" in this initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the church.
 - a. In every succeeding instance of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, they spoke in tongues, and sometimes prophesied.
 - b. But the wind and fire came only on the day of Pentecost.

D. Purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

1. Power to witness. (Acts 1:8)
2. Spiritual power for spiritual warfare.
3. Beginning of the operation of manifestation gifts. (1 Corinthians 12)
4. Edification of the believer and the body of believers. (1 Corinthians 12)

II. Be Filled With the Holy Spirit.

A. As opposed to:

1. Being filled with self, and fleshly effort. (Galatians 5:19-21)
2. Being drunk with wine. (Ephesians 5:18)
 - a. Drunkenness causes the mind and senses to be weaker, creating a false sense of peace and boldness.
 - b. On the day of Pentecost, the believers seemed to be drunk.
 - c. They were not drunk with wine, but they were filled with the Spirit.

B. *"...Be filled with the Spirit."* (Ephesians 5:18)

1. Literally, "Keep on being filled with the Spirit."
2. Greek present progressive tense.
3. Continually being refilled.

C. One Baptism, many fillings.

1. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a one-time experience with lifetime results.
2. However, we must be "continually being filled" with the Spirit.
 - a. Being filled with the Spirit produces the character of Christ in our lives.
 - b. This character is called the "fruit" of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23)
 - c. The fruit of the Spirit is cultivated in our lives by the Holy Spirit.

III. Speaking in Tongues.

A. Glossolalia.

1. Speaking a language you have not learned, and do not understand. (1 Corinthians 14:15)
2. Speaking by the Spirit, speaking mysteries, not unto man, but to God. (1 Corinthians 14:2)
3. The initial, physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:4)

B. *"...As the Spirit gave them utterance."* (Acts 2:4)

1. The Spirit does not control your tongue.
2. He gives voice to our spirit, which is praying (1 Corinthians 14:15).
3. They spoke with tongues themselves.

4. It was an act of faith and humility.
 - a. Believing that it was really the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Speaking by the spirit, rather than with their minds.

C. An act of faith and humility.

1. Believe that when you open your spirit to Jesus, He will not give you an unholy spirit. (Luke 11:13)
2. Faith to surrender, and speak out.

D. Why tongues?

1. The mouth confesses unto salvation. (Romans 10:9-10)
2. The tongue is the most unruly member of the body. (James 3:8)
3. If God has the tongue, He can easily lead the whole person. (James 3:3-4)

IV. Praying and Singing With the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 14:15)

A. "With the spirit" means "in tongues."

1. Because *"...my understanding is unfruitful."* (1 Corinthians 14:14)
2. "With the spirit" as opposed to "with the mind (understanding)."

B. The spirit speaks *"...not unto men, but unto God....mysteries."* (1 Corinthians 14:2)

C. This is not speaking of silent prayer, because that would be "in the mind."

1. "With the spirit" is praying or singing audibly, in response to the prompting and direction of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:4)
2. A response of worship and obedience to the Holy Spirit.

D. Speaking in tongues builds up the believer spiritually.

1. 1 Corinthians 14:4.
2. When we pray in tongues, our flesh is yielding to the Spirit.

E. Praying in the Holy Ghost. (Jude 20)

1. Praying Spirit-directed prayers.
2. Can be either tongues, or Spirit-inspired prayer in the natural language.

V. Gifts and Operations of the Spirit.

A. "Gift" (Greek -- *charisma*).

1. That which we receive apart from human ability or merit.
2. God's gifts are always to enable us edify the body of believers, and not just to benefit ourselves.
3. Basis of spiritual gifts is love (the capacity and desire to seek to benefit others).

B. Prophecy is better than tongues in believers' meetings. (1 Corinthians 14)

1. Paul clearly teaches that it is good for us to pray and speak in tongues.
2. But we should not take time in a meeting to speak out in a tongue (solo), unless someone interprets the tongue.
3. When someone speaks in tongues, his spirit is built up; but the other believers are built up by prophecy in their own tongue.

C. God did not intend for the believer's meetings to be just a function of minds, but to be a time to allow for the working and the control of the Holy Spirit in the church.



Spiritual Truths

- The Holy Spirit indwells all believers.
- Speaking with tongues is the initial, physical evidence of the supernatural baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- Spiritual "gifts" are the result of the baptism in the Holy Spirit; spiritual fruit (godly character) is the result of the infilling of the Holy Spirit.
- The more we yield to the leading and influence of the Holy Spirit, the more spiritual power and joy we will have in life.
- The apostle Paul strongly urged Christians to pray in their heavenly language often, because it builds up the spirit.
- Prophecy operates in a similar way to speaking in tongues, except that the utterance given is in the known tongue.
- The Holy Spirit is still able to do mighty things, in response to believing prayer.



Lesson Material

Christianity is not a set of ideas and creeds based on the ideas of a dead teacher, as most of the world's religions are today. We serve a risen Savior. God did not

intend for His church to operate in the strength of human personality, ability, or marketing strategy. He intended for His people to learn to live and love by the power of His Holy Spirit. Jesus came to earth and became a Man. He became a servant, and He showed us that life could be lived best in dependent obedience to God.

Jesus taught His disciples about the way life ought to be lived; but then, before He ascended, He breathed on them, and said, "...Receive ye the Holy Ghost." (John 20:22) At that time, the believers received the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit indwells all believers. (Romans 8:9) After Jesus ascended to heaven, He baptized them in the same Holy Spirit. There is a difference between the impartation of the Holy Spirit, and a baptism. "Baptism" literally means "an immersion; a burial." The 120 disciples of Jesus in Jerusalem were overwhelmed, saturated, and immersed in an outpouring of the Spirit; and they all spoke in tongues, as the Spirit gave them the words to utter. Peter said, "They are not drunken, like you think that they are. This is that which the prophet Joel spoke about." He went on to quote from Joel 2 about the fact that God would pour His Spirit out on all flesh in the last days, and there would be supernatural ministry through the people.

It is important for the church to be a "Spirit-filled" church, particularly in these last days when evil abounds, seeking to deceive us and turn our hearts from God. We cannot expect to live overcoming lives without the help of the Holy Spirit; and this baptism that the early church received is still available "to your children, and to those that are afar off." (Acts 2:39) We are among those "far off" people, because we came along a lot later than this first outpouring; and we are more surely in

"the last days" than they were, because we are in the last of the last days.

There are many fine Christians who have never spoken in tongues, but who have the Holy Spirit living and working in their lives. As we see in Scripture, it is possible to have an impartation of the Holy Spirit without experiencing the baptism. Indeed, we believe that every person who is born again through grace by faith in the blood of Christ, has the Holy Spirit in his or her life, and will go to heaven. Cults all have some form of salvation which includes some kind of works; but every legitimate Christian church teaches salvation by grace -- that heaven is gained only by faith in the completed work of Christ on the cross.

Among true Christians, many have been taught that it is wrong to speak with tongues -- that this manifestation was only for the early, transitional church. Throughout the Reformation (1500-1740 A.D.) and the Great Awakening (1740-1900 A.D.) revivals in Great Britain, America, and other nations, the emphasis was on salvation and holiness. When the great Pentecostal revival began in the early 20th century, many of the leaders of the evangelical movement resisted this move of the Spirit, because they had not received this manifestation. Rather than open themselves to this new move, they argued against it. For decades, Pentecostal people were ridiculed and rejected by the fundamentalists, just as the fundamentalists had been rejected by the religious community before them.

Today, God is pouring out His Spirit, even in many churches that were once the strongest opponents of Pentecostalism. In the Charismatic revival of the 1960's in America, a further expression of this same Holy Spirit move was seen; and it reached

millions of people in "mainline" denominations. Today, there are even strong Spirit-baptized preachers and churches among Episcopalians, Lutherans, Baptists, and other denominations; and the numbers are growing. In most third-world countries which are experiencing revival and explosive growth, tongues and Pentecostalism are almost universal among Christians. In America, the number of Christians who speak in tongues has apparently risen to more than half of the nation's Christians; and it is growing.

We are living in the "perilous times" that Paul spoke about (2 Timothy 3:1); and we need the Holy Spirit's manifestations of power in our lives. The more the Holy Spirit is poured out in our lives, the more we will tend to live with spiritual perception and spiritual power. According to Paul, there is great personal benefit to speaking in tongues. As we yield our "most unruly member" to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, He flows through our spirits and strengthens us. The book of Galatians (chapter 5) speaks of the conflict between the spirit and the flesh. Our flesh wants to focus on pleasure, things, and temporal values, while our spirit longs for God's presence. Obviously, if we "edify" (build up) our spirit by speaking in tongues, we will tend to have more control over our flesh. In fact, this is a secret to overcoming temptation. Rather than focus on what we are tempted to do, we should focus on God, and seek spiritual things. The more active we are spiritually, the less likely we are to focus on the flesh. Praying and singing with the spirit is a great way to overcome wrong habits and fleshly preoccupations.

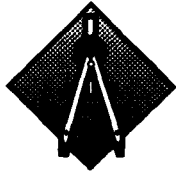
Not only should we seek the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the manifestation of speaking in tongues, but we also should

seek the "best gifts." (1 Corinthians 12:31) It is important to understand that this "gift" from God is not like our natural concept of "gift." When we think of "gift," we think of something we received for our own personal benefit. We tend to think only in terms of a unmerited favor, or blessing. But notice that God's gifts are not like that. Every gift of God is an enablement to bless or help others -- to edify the body of Christ. God's grace enables us not only to live right, but to help other people. When you receive a gift from the Holy Spirit, you have something that you can give away to others. You will also be held accountable for how you used it, because we are "stewards of the grace of God." (1 Peter 4:10)

The infilling of the Holy Spirit is not the same as the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The infilling is that continual process by which the Holy Spirit produces the character of Christ in us. This is called the "fruit of the Spirit." (Galatians 5:22-23) We are commanded to stay filled with the Spirit -- it is not a sovereign act of God, such as is the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but a matter of our submitting our lives and wills to God's. We stay filled (and re-filled) with the Spirit by speaking and singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; by submitting to God and to one another (right relationships); and by giving thanks. (Ephesians 5:19-21) The result in our lives is that the character of Christ is formed in us -- love, joy, peace, etc. (Galatians 5:22-23)

God is pouring out His Spirit on all flesh. That is, all around the world, wherever there are people who will open their hearts and lives to the blessed Holy Spirit, there is a Pentecostal revival. Jesus wants to baptize you in the Holy Spirit; and He wants you to continually be filled with the Holy Spirit. You do not have to

just try to live the Christian life in your own strength. In fact, you cannot. You need to have a steady prayer and devotional life; and you really do need all of the Holy Spirit's work in your life that you can get.



Methods

Have several students share their personal testimony about receiving the

baptism in the Holy Spirit; and then, offer to lay hands on others to receive this baptism from Jesus. Be sure to have your team pray diligently, in preparation for the class. Remember that you are not just to talk about the Holy Spirit, but to teach and encourage your students to relate to Him in a personal way.

Jesus desires to baptize your students in the Holy Spirit -- young or old, great or small. Believe Him for it.