# The Complete School of the Bible Manual

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# THIS CHRISTIAN EDUCATIONAL TOOL IS DEDICATED...

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dr. Paul C. Paino General Overseer-CMI

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# Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Section 1

# Welcome To Our Ministry Team

# To Our Co-Laborers in the Work of the Ministry

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

**CALLING:** Who we are in relation to where God has placed

us in teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

**CHARGE:** Our response to the call of God on our lives.

**COMMITMENT:** Our resolve to give our whole heart to obeying

that charge.

**CREDIBILITY:** Our personal and ethical qualifications to fulfill

our assigned task "as unto the Lord."

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

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

# Our Calling

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

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

As God's church we are called and commissioned, both individually and corporately. Each of us must know God personally and individually and be accountable to Him as 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 spirit of wisdom and revelation...the eyes of 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 whobelieve,...." (Ephesians 1:17-19)

### A HUMBLE CALLING.

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

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

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

### Did God call me to teach?

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

# What group am I called to teach?

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

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

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

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

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

# Am I a team player?

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

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

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

# Our Charge

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

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

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

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

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

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

# A good teacher will inspire more than inform.

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

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

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

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

# Teams are more effective than individual efforts.

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

# We are soldiers under authority.

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

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

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

# The charge to Joshua was to love the Word.

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

(Joshua 1:8)

# Paul's charge to Timothy:

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

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

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

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

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

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

 Pray for those in authority over you. (1 Timothy 2:1-2) • Make a supreme effort to show yourself approved unto God. (2 Timothy 2:15)

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

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

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

- in the overall scheme of life. Our purpose is to communicate the truth that God is the center of our life, our hope, our purpose, and our daily walk.
- There are three basic character goals to keep in mind when you teach: (1 Timothy 1:5)
  - (1) Charity -- selfless love -- out of a pure heart, which is a heart that is not polluted with selfishness and willfulness.
  - (2) A good conscience, which is a spirit that is sensitive to motives or actions that are not pleasing to God.
  - (3) Unfeigned faith. This is honest faith that is not just "faith in the faith message," but wholehearted trust in God, even when we do not understand the process. Job said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:...." (Job 13:15)

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

Comments:
Signature Date:

# My Commitment

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

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

# My Credibility

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

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

# My Goals As a Worker In the School of the Bible

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# Section 2

# Personnel Job Descriptions

# Using the Personnel Job Descriptions

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

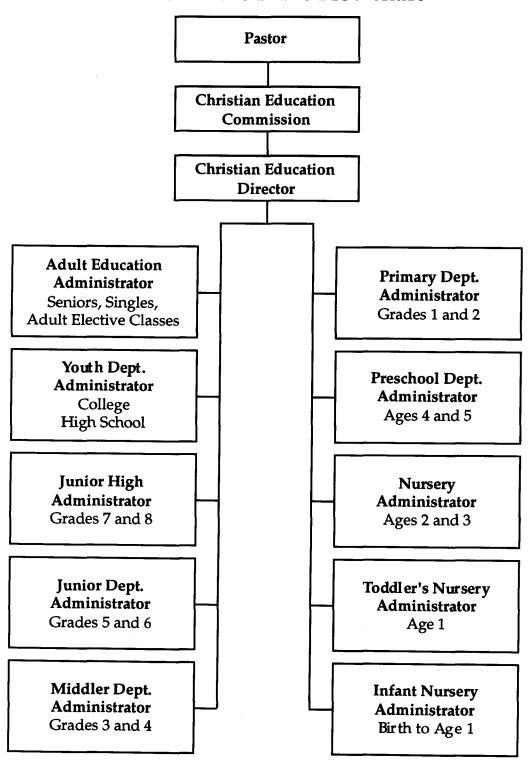
We strongly encourage developing ministry teams, rather than having a single teacher in the class. Every Bible class should have at least two members on the teaching team, even if the class is small. A team is able to generate more excitement, pray more effectively, and minister more comprehensively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

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

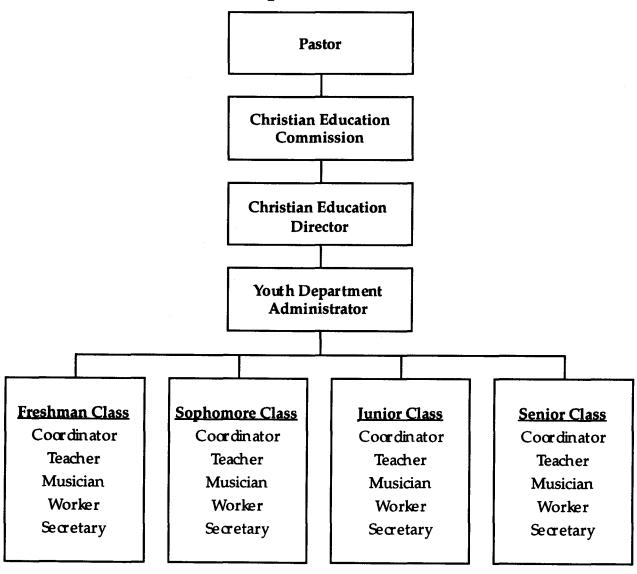
It is also important to establish a clear line of authority in the School of the Bible. Confusion reigns when there is more than one person thinking they are in charge. The larger the body, the more responsibility needs to be delegated, and the more authority needs to be established on multiple levels.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

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

# School of the Bible Flowchart



# Youth Department Flowchart



# Administrator

(Department Head)
Job Description

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

# A. Supervision.

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

# B. Teacher Training.

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

# C. Discipline.

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

# Class Coordinator

(Class Leader)
Job Description

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

# A. Attend Special Meetings of Leaders.

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

# B. Supervise Training of the Teaching Team.

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

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

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

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

### D. Supervise the Care of the Classroom.

- 1. Never use tape, thumbtacks or nails on the walls or tape on windows. Use stick-tack.
- 2. In rooms with drop ceilings, light-weight objects may be hung from the ceiling grids.
- Remove outdated decorations.
- 4. Turn off lights after class.
- 5. Make sure trash is picked up and put in the wastebasket.
- 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.

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

#### 3. Prayer:

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

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

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

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

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

#### 4. Personality:

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

#### 5. Persuasiveness:

- a. Know what this church believes.
- b. Be able to overcome the mental roadblocks that have been established in the students' minds by the world.
- 6. Punctuality: Arrive 30 minutes early, so you can quiet your spirit and help greet the students.

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

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

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

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

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

#### D. Learn the Material in Advance:

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

#### E. Carry and Read Only a Bible:

- 1. Make the Bible visible.
- 2. Encourage the students to bring their Bibles with them and read them.
- 3. Always teach a lesson or tell a story in your own words.
- F. Pray Daily for the Students and for the Sunday Class Session.
- G. Greet the Students. Make Them Feel Welcome and Loved.
- H. Be Sensitive to Special Needs and Problems.
- I. Honor the Class Coordinator as the Team Leader. Give that Leader Your Full Support and Cooperation.
- J. Be Ready to Substitute for the Class Coordinator When Called Upon to Do So.
- K. Attend at Least 48 Sunday School Sessions Each Year.
- L. Be a Faithful Tither to this Local Church.
- M. Attend at Least Two Other Regular Services at this Church Each Week to Strengthen Your Own Spirit.
- N. Participate in the Visitation Ministry Program for Your Class. Realize That the Students' Parents Are Very Important to the Success of Your Ministry.

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

### Musician

### Job Description

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

#### 1. Planning:

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

### 2. Preparation:

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

### 3. Prayer:

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

### 4. Playing:

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

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- B. Support the Teaching Team with Your Presence and Help During the Entire Class Time.
  - 1. Be ready to play at other times during the class as needed for an altar call, special song, etc.
  - 2. Smile.
- C. If You Must Be Absent, Contact a Substitute During the Week and Notify the Class Coordinator.
  - 1. Be sure the substitute is approved by the Administrator and Class Coordinator.
  - 2. Make sure the Coordinator has the phone number of at least one substitute available in the event an unforeseen circumstance keeps you out of the class.
- D. Honor the Class Coordinator as the Team Leader by Giving Him or Her Your Full Support and Cooperation.
- E. Attend at Least 48 Sunday School Sessions Each Year.
- F. Be a Faithful Tither to this Local Church.
- G. Attend at Least Two Other Regular Services at this Church Each Week to Build Up Your Own Spirit.
- H. Be Supportive of the Overall Vision and Ministry of this Church.
  - 1. Always be aware that we need each other, and that the goal of a true servant is to make others successful.
  - 2. We are a team!
- I. Be an Example of Christian Purity and Love.
  - 1. Live the lifestyle you teach others to live.
  - 2. Be quick to forgive and resolve offenses and misunderstandings, especially with brothers and sisters in the church.

### Worker

(Assistant)
Job Description

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

#### A. Assist the Secretary.

- 1. Know the records procedures, and be able to handle the work when needed.
- 2. Help with attendance, offering, etc.
- 3. Assist the Coordinator and Teachers. Be available and willing to teach and to assist with special promotions and events.
- B. Help Maintain Discipline in the Class with Firm but Loving Sensitivity, in the Event of Any Disruptions.
- C. Participate in the Visitation Program.
- D. Attend the Training Sessions and Planning Meetings Scheduled.
- E. Be Active in Praying for the Class, the Individual Students, and for the Ministry Team.
- F. Relate Personally to the Students Whenever Possible.
- G. Come 30 Minutes Before the Class Begins; Stay Through the Dismissal Time; Participate in the Singing, Praying, and Activities; and Support Each of the Team Members.
- H. If You Must Be Absent, Notify the Class Coordinator as Soon as Possible.
- L. Honor the Class Coordinator as the Team Leader.
- J. Attend at Least 48 Sunday School Sessions Each Year.
- K. Be a Faithful Tither to this Local Church.

- L. Attend at Least Two Other Regular Services at this Church Each Week to Build Up Your Own Spirit.
- M. Be Supportive of the Overall Vision and Ministry of the Church.
  - 1. Always be aware that we need each other, and the goal of a true servant is to make others successful.
  - 2. We are a team!
- N. Be an Example of Christian Purity and Love.
  - 1. Live the lifestyle you teach others to live.
  - 2. Be quick to forgive and resolve offenses and misunderstandings, especially with brothers and sisters in the church.

### **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.)

#### Other records.

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

#### C. Follow-Up.

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

### Four Things Every Teacher Must Know

### I. A Teacher Must Know the Student.

### A. Background.

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

#### B. Environment.

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

### C. Spiritual condition.

- 1. Is the student born again?
- 2. Has the student received the baptism in the Holy Spirit?
- D. Comprehension ability.
- E. Interest level.
- F. Personality Problems.
  - 1. Is the student shy, introverted, or antisocial?

- 2. Is the student belligerent or irritable?
- 3. Is the student hyperactive?

### G. Family situation.

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

### H. How can a teacher learn about the students?

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

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

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

### III. A Teacher Must Know the Lesson.

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

- D. Use visual aids. Students will remember far more when the idea is reinforced by what they see.
- E. Use illustrations.
  - 1. From the Bible.
  - 2. From your own life.
  - 3. From the lives of others.
  - 4. From Christian literature.
  - 5. From nature.
  - 6. Allegories.
- F. Ask questions.
- G. Leave the students with a desire for more. Do not overdo singing or any one segment.
- H. Be sure the lesson relates to the pupils on their level. Do the insights you are sharing affect the situations they are facing in their lives?

### IV. A Teacher Must Know the Overall Church Program.

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

- D. Share in the promotion of special days and general activities.
- E. Make church announcements in your class.

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

### Three Requirements for Every Teacher

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

- 11 "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;"
- 12 "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"
- 13 "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:"
- 14 That we {henceforth} be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, {and} cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;"
- 15 "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, {even} Christ:"
- 16 "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

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

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

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

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

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

### Compassion. (Matthew 9:36-38)

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

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

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

### Courage. (Joshua 1:1-16)

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

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

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

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

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

### Responsibilities of a School of the Bible Worker

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

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

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

### Be an Example.

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

### Be Faithful to the Public Services of the Church.

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

#### Be a Tither.

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

### Be Loyal to the Pastor and to the Church Program.

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

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

#### Be Faithful to the Class.

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

### Be Willing to Seek Lost Souls.

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

students a chance to commit their lives to the Lord.

### Be Willing to Become a Member of the Church.

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

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

### Be Willing to Visit Absentees.

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

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

### Be Properly Dressed.

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

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

### Ten Qualifications for a School of the Bible Worker:

- 1. Love God supremely.
- 2. Love people and be concerned with the spiritual needs of the community.
- 3. Develop a pleasant personality.
- 4. Have a real desire to work for the Lord.

- 5. Do not be easily discouraged.
- 6. Be a good follower as well as a capable leader.
- 7. Believe in the absolute necessity of personal salvation through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 8. Have a sincere desire to serve Christ in the church.
- 9. Have clear spiritual perception.
- Be willing to sacrifice time, money, comfort, and energy for the work of the Lord.

# Section 3

# Student Profiles

### Understanding Your Students

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

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

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

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

Student Profiles

### A Profile of Ninth and Tenth Grade Students

### **Physical Development**

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

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

### Intellectual Development

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

We must challenge teenagers to think!

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

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

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

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

possibilities and consider the consequences.

### Social Development

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

questionable party away from home rarely excites the parents; and a quiet evening with the the folks rarely excites the teenagers. Often, we must encourage youth to communicate with their parents; and we have the responsibility to share the importance of parental obedience.

3. The teenager's interest in the opposite sex is high. It is a time when boys and girls begin to communicate their interest in one another. Boys become "girl scouts" and vice versa. We need to provide a positive social atmosphere, so that healthy friendships between the sexes can develop. Too often in our society, teenagers become lovers before they become friends. We need to emphasize the importance of Biblical friendship (1 Timothy 5:2); and we need to provide opportunities for social interaction.

### Spiritual Development

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

is true? It is important to understand that doubt does not necessarily mean danger. We are to love the Lord with all our "mind" (Matthew 22:37), and we cannot love the Lord with all our mind if we do not use it. Doubt can lead to a careful examination of beliefs, which often leads to a more personal, firsthand acceptance of the tenets of faith. Although this experience can give parents an anxiety attack, ("Lord! Save my child!"), with patience and prayer, it may ultimately strengthen the teenager's faith. Remember, the challenge of the Bible is: "Taste and see that the Lord is good ..." (Psalms 34:8). At this stage in their development, teenagers need more than being told; they need to taste.

- 2. Teenagers are open to spiritual concerns. Although teenagers may question what they believe, this does not mean they are uninterested in God or religious matters. It is critical that we give a clear presentation of the gospel. Teenagers will respond to the claims of Christ!
- 3. We must show teenagers how their faith can relate to their daily living. Church becomes irrelevant when the teenager sees no connection between what happens during the week and what is taught in church on Sunday. We must show how living by Biblical principles will lead to a satisfying and rewarding life (1 Peter 3:10).

### Children of the '90's

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

#### A. Education and Entertainment in America Today.

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

#### B. What Secular Education Cannot Do.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section 3 Student Profiles

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

You do not win the battle over temptation by focusing on it and struggling with it. You gain victory over temptation when you live for God, obey His commandments, and pursue good on a daily basis. The key is found in Galatians 5:16:

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

### Our culture promotes ungodly heroes.

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

### How Can We Develop a Taste for Spiritual Things?

- 1. Lead the students to genuine conversion through repentance and faith.
- 2. Be excited about the Word, godly character, and serving others.
- 3. Promote good, melodious music.
- 4. Read about and discuss the godly heroes of the Bible.
- 5. Teach the children, by example, to "delight themselves in the Lord" and to really enjoy praise and worship.
- 6. Help the family make God an integral part of daily life.
- 7. Make a covenant to put God first in your life, and be committed to three church services a week.
- 8. Make prayer exciting by documenting answers to prayer.
- 9. Become skilled in areas of service. Study about God and godly people.
- 10. Honor parents, pastors, and other leaders as God's servants for our benefit, and pray for them.

### How Are Carnal Appetites Developed?

- 1. Teach the doctrine of evolution and the basic goodness of man.
- 2. Focus on physical characteristics, appearance, and entertainment.
- 3. Allow sensual and carnal music.
- 4. Keep up with new movies, TV stars, and music idols.
- 5. Separate "fun" times from "spiritual" times, and treat church attendance as drudgery.
- 6. Try to take care of all the "spiritual stuff" at church.
- 7. Practice going to church only when you have time and when it is convenient in your schedule.
- 8. Try to work things out by talking or meditating.
- 9. Study drugs, rock music, and sex to create a mental focus on them.
- 10. Be critical of authority figures, and let your children hear you complain about them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In genuine conversion WE become part of HIS life. We are accepted and adopted, and we become part of His world, His domain, His body, and His army. He is the center of it all, and we become excited about pleasing and glorifying Him. In trying to make the gospel so appealing that all we have to do is accept Jesus, we have produced many who see Jesus as another source of their pleasure, happiness, and success. Humanism makes self the center of our world and allows for religion, as long as it is not a "radical" transfer of affection and allegiance from self to Jesus.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To reach and influence the children of the '90's effectively, we must develop a working relationship with those parents who at least care enough to send their children to Sunday School, even if they do not bring them. We need to visit, motivate, encourage, and use written communications to get them to work with us as co-laborers with Christ, and let them know that we are supporting them in the minds and hearts of their children.

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

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

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

### We cling to outdated methods and materials.

We must realize that we are in a battle for the minds and affections of children. We are up against a world system which has at its disposal incredible, innovative, sophisticated technology, with massive budgets and manpower, producing an alluring enticement to sensuality, humanistic values, and the occult. We need to know that we have the Holy Spirit, God's love, and His creative power.

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

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

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

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

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

#### Do Not Send Them Away

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

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

#### "The day was now far spent ...."

(Mark 6:35)

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

#### "This is a desert place...."

(Mark 6:35)

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

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

#### "Send them away."

(Mark 6:36)

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

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

#### "Jesus saw much people."

(Mark 6:34)

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

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

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

(Mark 6:34)

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

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

(Mark 6:34)

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

who give themselves to the spiritual ministry of teaching.

#### "Give ye them to eat."

(Mark 6:37)

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

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

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

(Mark 6:40)

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

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

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

(Mark 6:41)

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

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

(Mark 6:43)

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

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

#### Why Unsaved People Do Not Come to Church

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

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

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

#### They are not invited.

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

interest by inviting them to their church services.

#### They are not welcomed.

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

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

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

#### They are embarrassed.

We often embarrass people, who come to church or to a class for the first time, by the way we introduce them or insist that they stand or talk. We need to be sensitive to their personal response to that. Most people like to be welcomed and blessed by individuals in one-on-one conversation, as in a greeting time, or after the service. However, they are very uncomfortable about being put "on display" in front of a group of people whom they do not know.

# They are not made aware of the presence of Christ.

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

#### They are not attracted.

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

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

We would also do well to examine our mannerisms carefully and our "worship calisthenics." We are often guilty of doing things because of habit rather than participating in praise and worship as a true reflection of the heart.

#### They see too much hypocrisy.

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

### They do not see us excited about the Lord.

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

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

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

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

#### They do not feel that they are loved.

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

#### The Importance of Repentance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

John said,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is our **Great Commission**?

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

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

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

# Section 4

# Sensational Sunday School Sessions

#### The Importance of Scheduling Your Class

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

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

There are many advantages to scheduling your class:

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

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

- 5. A well-scheduled class will minimize discipline problems.
- 6. Keeping a schedule will protect the teacher from spending too much time in one area of class activity.

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

#### Youth Ministry Freshman Class Schedule

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

8:55 a.m. Opening Prayer.

9:00 a.m. Praise and Worship.

9:10 a.m. Offering.

Announcements, Special Music.

9:15 a.m. Closing Prayer.

9:17 a.m. Dismiss to Classes.

9:20 a.m. Freshman Class Announcements.

9:23 a.m. Crowdbreaker, Current Events, Teen Testimonies.

9:32 a.m. Prayer Requests.

9:35 a.m. Lesson.

9:55 a.m. Closing Challenge and Prayer.

10:00 a.m. Dismiss to General Service.

#### Preparation for Class

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

#### Singing with Joy

Goal:

To create an atmosphere of joy and to prepare young hearts to

receive the Word of God.

Focus:

Lively, active songs.

Time Limit: 8 Minutes.

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

#### Offering and Prayer

#### Time Limit: 7 Minutes.

#### The Offering Time.

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

#### Prayer Time.

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

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

#### Teaching with Purpose

Goal:

To communicate the Word of God with skill and excitement.

Focus:

One major biblical principle concerning doctrine or Christian

character.

Time Limit:

8 Minutes.

#### **Key Principles of Good Teaching.**

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

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

#### Story-telling to Touch Hearts

Goal:

To reinforce the central theme of the lesson with a related story.

Focus:

A true or true-to-life story that will help create a focus on God and

on godly heroes.

**Time Limit:** 

8 Minutes.

#### Key Principles of Good Story-Telling.

1. Always know the story well, and tell it in your own words.

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

#### Scripture Memorization

Goal: "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against

thee." (Psalms 119:11)

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

in the hearts of students.

Time Limit: 8 Minutes.

#### **Key Principles of Scripture Memorization.**

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

#### Catechism in Doctrine

Goal: To build a foundation of wisdom and understanding of the Word of

God, "line upon line, precept upon precept."

Focus: A clear and concise answer to a basic question on Scriptural truth.

Time Limit: 8 Minutes.

Catechism: One of the Greek words in the Bible for "teach " is "katechéo,"

which means "to sound down into the ear; to indoctrinate." Our word "catechism" means "to teach systematically with questions

and answers."

#### **Key Principles of Youth Catechism.**

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

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

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

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

# Section 5

# Life-related Stories

#### Using Life-related Stories

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### The Story of the Children's Crusade

During the Dark Ages, ignorance and superstition were the order of the day. The Dark Ages were dark, because the spiritual light of the Gospel had few outlets. The Church had been polluted and corrupted by politicians and religious leaders, who were motivated by desire for their own power and wealth. The people did not have Bibles; and they were told to rely strictly on the pope and religious leaders for their doctrine.

Between the years of 1096 and 1270 A.D., a total of eight crusades were launched from Europe against the Moslem Turks, who had conquered Jerusalem and Palestine. It was considered the Holy Land, because this was the location where Jesus walked on earth. The word "Crusade" means "for the cross." and religious leaders stirred people with tales of the desecration of the land of Christ by pagans; and armies marched and sailed out to the sounds of cheering crowds, seeking glory and perhaps a little plunder on the side. Ultimately, they all failed. After the loss of thousands of lives, the Turks were still in control, although there were some temporary gains.

The saddest case of blind religious optimism began in the year 1212 A.D. with a 12-year-old boy named Stephen of Cloyes. He took a letter to King Philip of France, claiming to be directed by Christ Himself to march to Jerusalem. He declared that if he was to lead a group of children, that the sea would dry up, and they would march through on dry land to conquer the Moslem hordes in Jerusalem. Pope Innocent III, who was busy persecuting born-again Christians, went along with the plan. Word got around; and, by June, 300,000 children were

gathered to march from France to Palestine. They had little food, no supplies, and no maps. They also had amazingly foolish parents. The army of unarmed children marched off in the general direction of Jerusalem. Only one who completed the march returned; and it took him eighteen years to make it back.

That summer was hot and dry. Many children died during the journey, and some turned back to try to make it back home. When they arrived at the Mediterranean Sea, it did not part, as Stephen had predicted. However, they did find two merchants (Hugh the Iron and William the Pig) who offered to take them across the sea on seven ships. They happily climbed aboard. Out to sea, a storm capsized two of the ships, and the children on them drowned.

But the other five ships sailed south, instead of west, as promised. The evil merchants were slave traders; and they had made a deal with the Saracens to take the children to Algiers, where they made a huge profit on their hapless cargo. The children became slaves in various parts of Africa and the Middle East. Some were taken west to Baghdad (now in Iraq), where eighteen of them were beheaded for refusing to become Moslems.

About the same time, a ten-year-old German boy raised a group of 20,000 children to march to Jerusalem. They crossed the Alps, suffering many casualties along the way. When they reached Rome, Pope Innocent III persuaded them to wait until they grew up. About 2,000 of them made it back home.

The Children's Crusades show us the problem of vain religious zeal without knowledge. Being led by emotion is not the same as being led by the Spirit. It is

possible to be very religious and sincere, and still be wrong. When God guides, He provides.

#### The Story of Adam Clark

Adam Clark was born in Ireland, in 1762. His parents were Presbyterian and Episcopalian. As a child, Adam was not very bright, intellectually. He was at the very bottom of his class in school. One day a classmate mocked him for being "dumb." Instead of becoming bitter, Adam became determined to learn. He started reading; and he became a good student, out of sheer determination. In fact, Adam Clark became one of the most learned scholars in history.

In those days, there were many Methodist preachers who conducted meetings all over the British isles. They preached fiery sermons with great zeal and anointing. Adam went to hear these holy men of God, and he was deeply convicted of sin. He was gloriously saved; and he became a dedicated Christian. As a youth, he sought to be influenced by the greatest preachers and Bible teachers of his day. He prayed fervently, and he read every book he could. He studied all of the languages of the Bible, and he eventually became skilled in the use of 20 languages, including Greek, Hebrew, Samaritan, Chaldee, and the languages of Europe. John Wesley himself laid hands on the young man, and commissioned him to go out and preach the gospel.

People were sometimes surprised to see such a young boy get up into the pulpit; but, they heard him explain the Bible with great skill and logic. He certainly did not seem to be the class "dummy." The secret was simple: hard work. While other young people were trying to have a good time and avoid work, Adam read, and prayed, and worked. While his peers slept,

Adam was reading Scriptures in ancient languages, and thirsting to know more of God.

Adam went out to preach. His first year, he preached 450 times. He had to walk to most of the places in which he preached, carrying all of his belongings on his back. He fervently wanted to take everyone he could to heaven with him. He deeply desired to live a life without sin; and he sought the Lord earnestly for sanctification. He was filled with the Holy Spirit; and he lived a very godly life by the grace of God, which he so loved.

Adam Clark did not seek a wife -- he sought the Lord. God, in return, blessed him with a wonderful wife, and they enjoyed a long and very happy marriage. They had twelve children. Adam Clark did missionary and evangelistic work; and so, he did some traveling. But his home was a happy, Christian home.

In 1798, Rev. Clark began to write a detailed commentary on the entire Bible. He spent 47 years on the project. Thousands of preachers for many years draw rich insights understanding of the Word, as the result of the scholarship of this humble preacher. When John Wesley died, Adam Clark was asked to lead the Methodists. He was so humble, that the preachers had to carry him bodily to his chairman's seat; but he led them very well for years. In 1832, he was out preaching ,when he contracted the disease of cholera. He died at the age of seventy, having lived one of the most productive and joyful lives a man could live.

Life-related Stories

#### The Story of Thomas á Kempis

Thomas Haemmerlein was born in 1380, in the town of Kempen, on the Rhine River in Germany. His father was a poor man. Young Thomas was studious and quiet; and he seemed to have a heart for God from an early age. Apparently he never developed a taste for the luxuries of life, because he quickly chose the simple life of the monastery.

He lived for ninety-one years. He lived simply and quietly. Thomas never sought to make a name for himself; and yet, he is remembered in history as a good man, while almost all of the people of his age have been long forgotten.

Today, we look back to those dark ages and shudder at the ignorance and suffering that prevailed. There were many men who chose the strict discipline and self-denial of the monasteries in an effort to appease the guilt of their own consciences, and to somehow earn the favor of God. We recognize that Jesus did not call his disciples to shut themselves off from civilization into dark cells of loneliness, but to "go into the world and preach the gospel." Jesus did not insist that His followers become celibate or make vows of poverty, either. Indeed, God wants most of His servants to marry and have Christian families; and He does not bestow greater rewards upon people, simply because they are poor.

Some of the monks and religious leaders of the dark ages were involved in various vices and secret sins. But there were some that were genuine in their quest for God's presence and their desire for true holiness.

From the writings and teachings of Thomas á Kempis (or "Thomas from the town of Kempen"), we catch glimpses of his heart, which seemed to burn with a desire for God. When we examine his writings in the perfect lamp of God's Word, we discover a treasury of rich spiritual insights that reflect the purity of His Lord, Jesus Christ. Thomas á Kempis wrote "Imitation of Christ;" and this work became one of the most influential pieces of literature in history, next to the Bible itself. It includes such gems of wisdom as:

"He who knows himself well becomes vile in his own sight, and can take no delight in the praises of men."

"Learned men are apt to wish to make a display of their learning, and to be spoken of as talented."

"It is vanity to seek honors, and to strive for high positions."

"Strive, therefore, to withdraw your heart from the love of visible things, and to transfer your affections to things invisible; for if you follow your sensual inclinations, you will stain your conscience and lose the grace of God."

"The Bible ought always to be read with the assistance of the same Spirit by whose agency it was written."

"If you keep up the habit of retiring for prayer, you will find it sweet; but if it is irregularly done, a distaste for it will be the result."

"A spiritually minded man puts the care of his own soul before all other

concerns. And he who diligently attends to himself is easily silent about others."

"God walks with the simple; He reveals Himself to the lowly; He gives understanding to little ones; He discloses His meaning to pure minds, and hides His grace from the curious and proud."

#### The Story of Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln was born in Illinois, in a log cabin. His mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, was a very godly Christian who instilled in him Biblical values, with loving diligence. She had Abe memorize the Ten Commandments at a very young She took him to church every Sunday, and she read to him from the Word of God daily. Sadly, she became ill; and she died when Abe was only nine years old. As she lay dying, she had Abe stand by her bedside; and she said, "Abe, I am going to leave you now, and I shall not return. But I want you to be kind to your father, and to live as I have taught you. Love your heavenly Father; and keep His commandments." With those words on her lips, the young mother died. Later, President Abraham Lincoln said, "All that I am, or ever hope to be, I owe to my mother."

Due to this influence, Abe Lincoln became known as the most honest lawyer east of China. He was called "Honest Abe." He once walked many miles to return the extra money a client had paid him. Young Abe Lincoln lived by the morality and work ethics instilled by his good mother. He worked hard; and he became a highly skilled rail splitter, cutting logs into large boards with an axe, at an amazing speed. He was a strong runner and a remarkable wrestler, in spite of the fact that he was 6'4" tall.

Abraham Lincoln was very humble. He considered himself very ugly; and he always esteemed others better than himself. It was probably this humility which caused him to say in an interview, "I am not a Christian," when he thought of the seemingly godly men who opposed him politically. But his life gave much

evidence to the contrary. As president of the United States through the tragic Civil War, he was known to spend much time in prayer; and he would not hesitate to call the leadership of the nation to prayer with him. His compassion and abiding sense of humor gave evidence that he knew God intimately and personally. Lincoln memorized many, many chapters of the Bible; and he rarely made a speech without making reference to it.

When rebuked, Abe had learned to seek wisdom, rather than revenge or pity. When he was young, a young woman said to him, "You are illiterate, selfopinionated, overbearing, and illmannered." In response, he went to the Scriptures and studied the Sermon on the Mount, in order to seek God's view of what a man should be like. He molded his life by the Word of God; and he studied books at every possible opportunity, since he did not have much opportunity for formal education. Rather than feel sorry for himself over this rejection, he changed. He became one of the most literate scholars in the world. Gettysburg Address is considered to be the most perfect speech ever composed outside of divine inspiration. He became very meek; and he listened carefully to the opinions of others. He was the humblest president America ever had.

Lincoln's life was filled with tragedy. Both his mother and his sister died early. Unable to marry the woman he loved, he married Mary Todd, who was a miserable hag. She cut him down constantly; and she could see nothing good in him. His only peace came in protracted travels. His beloved son Willie died, causing further grief; and then he guided his country

through the bloody Civil War, which almost destroyed the Union. But through it all, Abe Lincoln maintained a quick wit; and he was best known as an encourager and a healer -- and the president who made the Emancipation Proclamation. His tragic life drove him to his knees, and into the Word. He is remembered by millions as one of the greatest leaders in

history. Late in life, Abraham Lincoln did make a strong public confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Abraham Lincoln, the Christian, was assassinated in 1863; and he went to see Jesus, Whom he loved. He now enjoys great peace and joy, after faithfully enduring a tragic, but fruitful life. Section 5 Life-related Stories

#### The Holy Spirit Translates

The missionaries in Northern Ghana were involved in discussion over the proper way to translate the name of Jesus into Dagbani. It was understandable that the Bible Society wanted the missionaries to refrain from using the name Yisa, because that is the name used by the Muslims for the "son of Mary," who was a "prophet" but not the "Son of God." On the other hand, the African Christians did not want to change and start using the English name for Jesus. They loved the name Yisa; and they knew it to be the One Who is the Son of God, and their Lord and Savior.

Something that happened at Trinity Tabernacle, in Baytown, Texas, thousands of miles away, settled the problem.

W. Franklin McCorkle has spent most of his time since 1952 with the Dagomba tribe, whose language is Dagbani. He taught in Bible school, beginning in 1952; and, until 1968, the students were taught in the Dagbani language. McCorkle has also proven his expertise in the Dagbani language in other ways. He translated into that language the books of Daniel and Revelation, as well as various songs, Bible school lesson materials, and similar material. He does all of his village preaching in the Dagbani language; and he needs no interpreter to repeat it in the vernacular for the village people. They say to interpreters, "You do not have to repeat his words, for we understand what the white man says. He speaks our language, like us."

Missionary McCorkle and his wife were attending revival services at Trinity Tabernacle, where Rev. W. S. Graham was

pastoring. One night, as the missionary was kneeling in prayer by the front row of seats, suddenly he heard a familiar language -- Dagbani.

Turning, McCorkle saw a young woman of the church, Shirley Young (now Mrs. Stanley Holzaepfel), standing with her hands raised and her eyes closed and saying, "Yisa Masia, Yisa Masia, Oh N Yisa Masia, Yisa, Yisa," meaning "Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, Oh, my Jesus Christ, Jesus, Jesus," and other praises to the Lord in Dagbani.

According to McCorkle, not only were the words clear and distinct, but the intonation was of the kind that showed devotion and worship. The young woman continued for several minutes worshipping the Lord and calling Him the Son of God, "Naawun' Bia." It was affirmed that she had never heard the language in her life. She was speaking in tongues under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. This was a supernatural "gift of tongues," as mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12.

The next day, Franklin McCorkle wrote his fellow missionary H. S. Lehmann in Ghana, who was also doing translation work, and told him, "If 'Yisa' is good enough for the Holy Spirit to use, let us continue using it also in our Dagbani language work." And this has been done.

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#### The Story of Alice Luce

Alice Eveline Luce was born in 1873 in England, the daughter of an Anglican pastor, Rev. J. J. Luce. She grew up hearing the Word of God, although her church was formal and did not believe in the baptism in the Holy Spirit. When she was ten years old, the Holy Spirit convinced her of her sin; and she repented before the Lord, receiving His forgiveness and salvation. From that time on, she felt a strong desire to serve her Lord in full-time ministry. She wanted to help people in practical as well as spiritual ways; and so, she studied both nursing and theology in college.

In 1896, when she was a 23-year-old college graduate, she had an opportunity to travel to India as a missionary. She went to Azimgarh, where she worked in a school for women who lived in harems. These women were isolated from society, generally living only for the pleasure of a rich and powerful master. Alice found great joy in teaching these hopeless young women about Jesus.

At the turn of the century, many people experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit. For centuries, there were only small and scattered groups which spoke in tongues; but now there was a great Pentecostal revival that even reached to India. Alice heard that there were two women there who had received this glorious experience; and so, she made the hot and difficult trip to visit them. Since she was very familiar with her Bible, it did not take them long to point out the Scriptures dealing with Pentecost and tongues, and show her that it was of God. She knew in her spirit that it was right; and she began to seek God for this

wonderful empowering. She received the baptism in the Holy Ghost in 1910.

Later, Alice became very ill after drinking contaminated water; and she was eventually sent back to England. She then obtained work in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, in 1914. But she again felt the strong desire to work as a missionary -- this time, in Mexico. She moved to Texas, where she became a member of a new Pentecostal group called the Assemblies of God. She learned the Spanish language; and then, she moved with another lady to Monterrey, Mexico, in order to start a mission.

However, they were in great danger there because of the Mexican Revolution; and they were forced to move back to the United States. They discovered that the best way to evangelize a nation was to train native people and send many of them back to their homeland. Alice founded the Berean Bible Institute in 1926. in Los Angeles. The school is still in existence today, under the name of Latin American Bible Institute. Through the years, this school has trained and sent out many strong believers, who have carried the full gospel throughout the Spanish-speaking world.

Alice Luce also wrote books and lessons for others to use in teaching the Bible. She was a prolific educator. She also helped the world by promoting a better plan for evangelism. Her plan was to establish self-supporting churches led by native pastors.

Alice never married. Like the Apostle Paul, she labored as a single person, devoting her whole life to the gospel.

#### The Story of W. Stillman Martin

W. Stillman Martin was a preacher and a songwriter, who ministered many years ago. He had a wife and one son. They all loved the Lord. In 1904, when Rev. Martin's son was nine years old, the family was visiting in New York City. Brother Martin was asked to preach for a local church, and he agreed to do so. But Mrs. Martin, who was not in good health, took a turn for the worse on the morning in which he was scheduled to speak. Rev. Martin was just about to go and notify the people at the church that he would be unable to come, when his son said, "Father, do you not think that if God wanted you to preach today, He will take care of mother while you are away?"

Rev. Martin felt embarrassed for his lack of faith, for he realized that the boy was right. He knew that God had called him to preach; and he knew that God was well able to take care of his family. It was a fruitful message, for several people received salvation that day through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

When Mrs. Martin heard her son's declaration of faith that morning, she was moved; and she felt inspired to write a poem. When her husband arrived at the

place in which they were staying, the boy handed him the sheet of paper with the poem. Mr. Martin read the words; and he realized that this was a great message which should be set to music. He went to the organ, and he began to sing the words with a new melody. Soon, he had written out the song, which would be a source of comfort and encouragement to millions of people around the world for many years to come:

"Be not dismayed whate're betide,

God will take care of you.

Beneath His wings of love abide,

God will take care of you.

God will take care of you.

Through every day,

O're all the way.

God will take care of you.

God will take care of you."

Life-related Stories

#### The Story of the Mayflower

When King James became the king of England in 1603, the nation was in great religious turmoil. England was controlled by the Church of England, which was led by a group of powerful bishops who had little interest in seeking God. There were two groups in England who were spiritually alive: the Puritans, who sought to influence the church by staying in it, and the Separatists, who felt that the church was so corrupt, that they had their own worship services. The church, working with the Crown, initiated persecution against the born-again believers, even having some executed. Christians who wanted to worship in spirit and truth often lost their jobs.

Section 5

By 1620, a group of Separatists decided that the only hope for freedom would be to emigrate to the New World, in order to establish a Christian community in America, where they could worship freely. Pastor John Robinson and Elder William Brewster were the principle leaders of this courageous church, who decided to follow the example of Abraham of the Bible.

The congregation numbered over 600. After seeking financing, it was decided that only a third of the group could go, because they only had the use of two ships: the "Speedwell," and the "Mayflower." Pastor Robinson would stay in England, while William Brewster would be the acting pastor in America. Eventually, only the "Mayflower" was able to make the voyage; and many of the 102 passengers who made the crossing were "strangers," who were motivated by financial gain.

For 66 days, the brave pilgrims sat in the hold of the 70-ton "Mayflower,"

suffering in the dark, smelly, and depressing room, which was barely the size of a volleyball court. They subsisted on dried pork and other cheap foods that they were able to obtain; and they endured the rocking of the ship and constant storms at sea. They also endured the harassment of the sailors, who saw Christianity as a joke. One seaman was especially cruel. He delighted in mocking the believers, and in laughing when they became seasick. He told them how much he looked forward to sewing their corpses in shrouds and feeding them to the sharks. At the peak of his sport of tormenting, the sailor suddenly took ill; and he died with a mysterious fever. He was the one who was fed to the sharks. After that, the other sailors treated their guests with much more respect. The only other death recorded on the trip was that of William Butten, a non-Christian who refused his daily ration of lemon juice, and then succumbed to scurvy.

One day, in a violent storm, the large cross beam supporting the main mast broke, and it was sagging. The Christians prayed; and suddenly Mr. Brewster remembered that he had a large screw for his printing press. They rigged it to the beam, and it worked to hold it together.

Finally, they landed in Cape Cod to begin a Christian covenant community. The "Mayflower Compact," their legal agreement for a Christian democratic government, was part of the basis for the eventual structure of the nation that would become, a century and a half later, the United States of America.

#### The Story of Jerry McAuley

Jeremiah McAuley was born in Ireland, in 1839. He did not have the privilege of growing up in a Christian home. In fact, his father was a notorious counterfeiter. When Jerry was a young boy, his dad left town suddenly. The law was after him. He did not see the old man again. Jerry's mother was unable to provide for her children; and so, it was decided that Jerry should go to America, to live with his older sister and her family in New York.

Without the guidance of a good father, and now without the care of a kind mother, Jerry began to look to the streets for fulfillment. He was drawn to the artificial family of the street gangs. There he found what seemed like a measure of acceptance, and a sense of belonging. But it was an unhappy life, for they preyed upon other people, and were drawn deeper and deeper into wickedness. Jerry was caught up in a life of stealing; and his crimes became more and more serious.

Eventually, Jerry was arrested and sentenced to fifteen years in Sing Sing Prison. While in prison, he began to read the Bible. He felt remorse and guilt because of all of the people he had hurt; but he did not know what to do about it. He read the Bible through completely twice. Then, a woman evangelist came to the prison and preached salvation. Jerry was ready. He quickly repented with a flood of tears; and he gave his heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ.

After that, Jerry was such a cooperative prisoner that he was released after serving only seven of the fifteen years that he had been sentenced to. He rejoiced, for he was free -- not only from prison, but free from the sin that had bound him even more surely in its grasp. He soon found honest work; and he became part of a Biblebelieving church. He also fell in love, and married a fine Christian woman.

In 1872, Jerry and his wife started the Water Street Mission in the heart of the worst part of New York City. He did not have a college degree, but he could certainly relate to the "down and out" who inhabited the streets with which he was so familiar. He frequently gave his own testimony, which moved many a drunk, prostitute, and thief to the Lord Jesus Christ. He readily dispensed the hope and love that God had so freely given to him. It was dangerous, and not financially rewarding; but the joy that he and his faithful wife shared was delightful.

The mission accepted anyone, regardless of how they looked or smelled. The meetings at the mission were characterized by joyful singing, fervent preaching, and the accompanying shouts of praise and joy to the Lord. Many thousands of hurting people heard the gospel at the Water Street Mission, and many responded to the altar calls. Jerry McAuley died in 1884, but his influence continues to this day through the ministry that he began so long ago.

#### The Story of Cloyd McCleery

Cloyd McCleery, of Alton, Illinois, was a man utterly devoted to God. According to a former pastor, Owen Carr, he was much-beloved by the children of the junior high school in which he served as a custodian. Because of his godly kindheartedness, when they were sick or had problems, they found it easy to come to him and ask for prayer. Even the principal of the school had benefited from his prayers, on occasion. Unlettered, but with a simple trust in God, he was used by God in a remarkable way in February, 1960.

The Illinois District Council of the Assemblies of God was conducting a minister's institute in nearby Granite City, Illinois. During the evening service, after the congregation had been worshipping God, Cloyd McCleery began speaking in another tongue, unknown to him. When he had finished, Thomas F. Zimmerman, recently elected to the post of general superintendent of the Assemblies of God, rose to his feet. Inspired by the Spirit of God, he stated in English the meaning of the utterance given by McCleery.

In the audience was a little lady who, as her son wrote, "was thrilled to hear and understand the man as he spoke." Anna Richards Scoble had spent many years in South Africa as a missionary, after a remarkable healing of damaged vertebrae that increased her height by two and three-quarter inches by exact measurement.

Securing permission to speak, Mrs. Scoble told the amazed congregation of the miracle that they had just witnessed.

Cloyd McCleery had spoken in the language of a South African tribe -- Shangaan. Especially remarkable was the fact, Mrs. Scoble said, that this language is very hard to speak, containing sounds almost impossible to duplicate, unless one had been born and raised up in the tribe. McCleery had spoken the language perfectly.

The message of the Holy Spirit mainly stressed the famous revival text of 2 Chronicles 7:14: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." The Spirit then called on the people to look to God for revival. She also noted that T. F. Zimmerman had conveyed this same thought in the interpretation that he gave.

It is reported that as a result of this incident, the host church began a 24-houra-day prayer chain that lasted for over three months, bringing great blessing to the congregation.

Cloyd McCleery has now passed away to be with God; but the incident remains to testify how God can use a humble, sincere, godly man for His glory.

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#### The Story of Jonas Miller, M.D.

Several factors tended to prejudice Jonas Miller, M.D. against what was happening in the first Pentecostal meeting he attended. Having grown up in an Amish home, he was not used to the informal atmosphere. Besides, the evangelist was a female preacher; and women have no part in the public services of the Amish. However, he attended the service at the church where Harry Collier was pastor, partly out of curiosity, and also at the suggestion of a patient. Miller had to admit, however, that he had never before been in a service where there was so much joy and freedom of worship.

The manifestation of the glossolalia Dr. Miller heard during the altar service was particularly obnoxious to him. He considered it gibberish, and he noted that many of those so speaking were women. He commented to his associate, Mr. Mennon Yoder, that they were probably people who were unhappy at home and were giving vent to suppressed emotions.

Dr. Miller and his friend at first vowed never to return; but, they decided to attend once more, because there was to be prayer for the sick. He had heard about this, but he had never witnessed it. With his medical mind at work, he positioned himself to watch the prayer line and make an objective diagnosis of each case, as the individual walked by.

Miller was extremely critical of what was happening, as he noted that none of the people had been examined by a physician either before or after they passed through the line. He was particularly perturbed when a woman with congestive heart disease fell as she was prayed for. He arose to offer his services, but they were

refused. To his relief, the woman finally revived and walked away without assistance.

Going back to his seat, just as he passed a small man who was standing with both hands raised, the doctor heard the man speaking in German. Since Dr. Miller had been raised in a German-speaking home, he understood when the man said in quiet tones, "Almighty God, we love You, we praise You, we will follow You." He repeated the phrase a number of times.

Jonas Miller stood transfixed, for the night before he had said to his friend, "Should I ever hear a man speak a language I could understand when he did not know what he was saying, I would believe that this was of God." God had honored his honesty.

Walking to his seat, the doctor bowed his head and prayed: "Lord, if I have been wrong, it was with honesty; and so, if this is really from You, please let this man come to where I am, so that I can talk to him." As he raised his head after praying, the man who had spoken in German stood before him, shook his hand, and said, "God bless you."

"What is your name?" Dr. Miller asked.

"They calls me Cap'n Green," the man replied.

Dr. Miller found also that he was of Scotch-Irish descent, and that he worked with a pick and shovel for the railroad. He went on to ask if he could speak any language besides English.

The little man slapped his knee and said, "Cap'n, they say I don't even know that very good. I ain't never gone to school but two weeks in my life. My daddy died, and I had to help raise my brothers and sisters."

Dr. Miller spent weeks studying the Pentecostal experience. When he met a

man who had been a terrible sinner, but was now a faithful member of the church, he believed. He also received the baptism in the Holy Spirit; and he went on to pioneer five churches in his lifetime.

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#### The Story of Lottie Moon

Lottie Moon was born in 1840. Her southern American family was strongly committed to God and the Bible; and she was blessed with a good upbringing and a college education. She was one of many daughters in the family. Her sisters were becoming successful in various fields of work, as business executives and a doctor; and her sister, Edmonia was one of the first single woman missionaries to be sent out by the Southern Baptist Convention.

While in college, Lottie attended a campus revival meeting which changed her life. She had gone to scoff; but the Spirit of God moved in her heart, and she went back to her room to pray all night long. From that night on, she was utterly committed to the Lord Jesus Christ; and she was determined to serve Him without reservation.

Although she strongly desired to be a missionary like her sister, Lottie went back to the plantation where she grew up, in order to help with the operation there. She then became a school teacher in Georgia. Her former boyfriend proposed marriage, but she refused to enter into a marriage covenant with a man who believed the doctrine of evolution, even though he was now a successful college professor, and she had strong feelings for him. But Jesus came first in her life, and she never looked back.

In 1873, at the age of 33, Lottie sailed for China. She was stationed in the north part of the vast nation; and she eventually established a church. Unlike most missionaries of that day, Lottie Moon

sought to make her church as self-supporting as possible. She taught the people to tithe and to do their own building. Over the next twenty years, she led more than one thousand souls to Christ, despite strong opposition from the Buddhist religion which dominated the culture. As a pastor, Lottie wrote much to inspire people back in America to become involved in missions. She wrote, "Surely there can be no deeper joy than that of saving souls."

Lottie Moon developed one technique which was effectively used by many churches and groups for evangelism. She encouraged people to set aside a week of prayer and fasting for missionaries, and to set aside a Christmas offering for all of the churches in her denomination. Since her death, the Lottie Moon Christmas offering has generated millions of dollars each year for missions around the world.

In 1900, China was torn apart by the Boxer Rebellion, which cost many thousands of lives, and caused horrible destruction. Many crops were destroyed, and many people could not work because of the conflict. The famine also brought epidemics of smallpox and other diseases to China. Lottie worked tirelessly to help the suffering people; and she used up all of her savings for the needy.

With her health greatly diminished, the 72-year-old missionary was finally convinced that she should sail back to America for rest and treatment. On the voyage home, she died on Christmas Eve, 1912.

#### The Story of Robert Morrison

Robert Morrison was born in England, in 1792. His father made wooden forms used by shoemakers; and he learned the trade from him. Robert was saved at the age of 15, and he became a fervent Christian. As a new believer, he felt a strong desire for the mission field --particularly for China. China had been a very closed nation to the Gospel; and it had rejected all Western influence for many centuries.

Robert's mother died when he was about 20 years old. After her death, he went to London to get missionary training. After two years, the London Missionary Society decided to certify him as a missionary. But his father and the rest of the family opposed his chosen profession; and they gave him no support. In fact, during his first year in China, he received only one letter from home.

In those days, the British influence in the East came through the British East India Company, which controlled great commercial endeavors and sought to avoid influencing the nation's culture and religion. While there was opposition to Christianity from the Chinese Buddhists, there was even stronger opposition from the East India Company to any evangelization.

Robert had to study the Chinese language in secret. He was tutored by two Chinese Catholics, who helped him develop a dictionary, as well as translate

the Bible. When the leaders of the East India Company saw the dictionary, they gave Robert a job as a translator; and he became a valuable employee. When he published the Bible in Chinese, some of the company officials sought to have him fired; but they needed his abilities too much to do so.

While this was progressing, Robert married Mary Morton. Because the Chinese did not permit Western women in Canton, Robert's family lived in the colony of Macao, and he commuted back and forth. The Morrisons had two children. But Mary's health failed; and, after years of struggle, she died in 1821.

Robert published the Bible in Chinese in 1824. That same year, he took his two children home to England for his first furlough. He was kept very busy as a speaker, teaching other potential missionaries the Chinese language. He married again, and returned to China with his children and new wife. He was able to support his family with his language skills, as he was increasingly in demand by international companies. He sometimes wondered if he had not been a failure in the ministry. After 25 years of labor, he could account for only 12 converts to the Christian faith. But he had been a pioneer missionary; and he had given China the Bible, which was to touch the lives of millions long after his death. Morrison died in China, in 1834.

Section 5 Life-related Stories

#### The Story of George Müller

George Müller was born in Prussia, in 1805. His father was a wealthy tax collector, who decided to teach his young son the value of money by giving him large sums, with the order that he was not to spend any of it. Apparently, this was a foolish idea. George spent it wildly, and merely tried to falsify the records. He was often discovered, but he continued his sin. On the day of his mother's funeral, he was drinking and gambling in a pub. When he was 16, his father left him at home to study and to collect some of the taxes. He took the tax money and went to Brunswick, where he went to expensive hotel and spent it lavishly on wickedness.

When his money ran out, he continued to charge for hotel bills; and he landed in prison for a month. He was often punished by his father, but he continued to live a wild, selfish life of sin. In an effort to "turn over a new leaf," he went to Bible school. But even there, he lived an immoral life, along with most of the other ministry students. Finally, he befriended an godly student named Beta, who took him to a home prayer meeting, where he gave his heart to the Lord and was genuinely saved. From then on, he loved to spend time with God in prayer. George Müller is remembered today as a great man of prayer.

George moved to England, hoping to get support from the London Missionary Society as a missionary to the Orient; but, he was rejected. He preached the gospel wherever he had the opportunity; and, in 1834, he settled in Bristol, where he became a pastor. He supported his family by charging rent for the pews in the church services; but he felt convicted about

charging people to attend church. He decided to live by faith, and to trust God to move on people's hearts to give freely. His heart was moved by the hundreds of children who had to work long hours in factories or coal mines, either because they were very poor, or because they were orphaned and would starve to death if they did not work. Children who worked in the coal mines would struggle all day digging in the dangerous mine shafts, filling their lungs with coal dust, and receiving severe beatings if the foremen thought that they were not working hard George and his wife started enough. sharing bread with hungry children; and soon, they had 50 or 60 orphans at their door every morning.

When he shared his desire to help the starving children, the people in the church opposed the idea. They were doing well to take care of their own children; and they felt that he should give all of his time to pastoring them. But God led him to a time of intense prayer; and people in the town began to bring him supplies, furniture, food, and money. He began with an orphanage for 30 girls; and it soon expanded to three homes for 97 children.

In his lifetime, George Müller established five homes for the needy and destitute. Many of these people would have died, or turned to a life of crime to survive, because there were no government relief agencies or programs, as we have today. But Mr. Müller's desire was primarily to show people the power of prayer. He took special joy in asking only God for provision, and in seeing God bountifully and miraculously provide for their daily needs. In an outstanding way, George Müller was a great man of faith.

#### The Story of John Newton

"Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me." We are all familiar with these words; but what kind of man wrote them, and why did he call himself a "wretch?"

This song was written by John Newton, an English sailor who was best remembered as a slave trader in the 1700's, who later became a preacher. He was born the son of a sea captain in 1725. His mother was a godly woman, who diligently taught her only child, pouring the Word of God into his life while his father was out to sea most of the time. She had him reading at the age of 3, and learning Latin as a 6-year-old.

Two weeks before John's seventh birthday, his sweet but sickly mother died; and his father did not return from the sea until the next year. Soon after his return, he married again; but this stepmother was nothing like his mother. She generally neglected him, and finally sent him off to boarding school, where he was under the teaching of a harsh and inept teacher, who almost destroyed his spirit.

As John grew, he became increasingly influenced by other children who had little adult care; and he became more and more rebellious. Several times, he very narrowly escaped death; and each time, he was reminded that God must have a special purpose for him. But invariably, he would get caught up in mischief and forget the serious lesson that God was teaching him about life.

As a teenager he went to sea; but he soon became known as a troublemaker -- and he was constantly in trouble. He entered the British navy, where he was

arrested and severely beaten and imprisoned for desertion. He eventually joined a slave-trader, who lived off the coast of Africa. He became extremely ill, and was left in the care of his master's African wife, who for some reason took an extreme disliking to him.

He suffered for months, lying on a grass mat, almost totally neglected. The woman would occasionally let him eat the scraps off her plate, even though there was food in abundance on the table. He found that he often had to dig up roots and eat them raw to survive. Because of his father's reputation among sailing men, he was eventually given a chance to go back to England. While still a young man, he became a slave trader himself.

As he had been a very unpopular young man because of his wickedness, so he was an unpopular captain. One night during a storm he was drunk, and he fell into the sea. Instead of swimming out to rescue him, his men threw a harpoon into him and pulled him back into the ship. He survived, but he walked with a limp for the rest of his life. It was a constant reminder of the "wretch" that he had been for so much of his life.

But through it all, the influence of his mother in those intense early years of training stayed with him. He knew better; and he would often weep and feel sorry for his sins. He went through a period where he renounced all pleasure and fasted often. He became extremely religious, doing the things he thought he should do to keep from going to hell. But he kept falling back into sin, because that was what was in his heart.

At the age of 25, John Newton repented of his sins and began to walk with the Lord. But unfortunately, he kept on with the vile business of slavery for five more years. Finally he surrendered his life fully to the Lord; and he began to pursue the gospel ministry. He became a fruitful and effective preacher, who never forgot that he had been saved from a wretched life by God's amazing grace.

#### No One Ever Told Me

In 1977, an American evangelist named Euley Hudson was on a preaching trip around the world. He stopped in Hawaii for a few days. He sat for some time in the motel lobby, writing and reading. The manager noticed him, and engaged him in polite conversation. He said, "You are not like other people who come here." The preacher said, "How is that?" "Well, you have been writing for a long time, and I have not seen you smoke, or go into the bar."

Brother Hudson explained that he was a Christian evangelist, and that he was not on vacation. As he spoke about the Lord, the man became amazed about the fact that he thought that Jesus was so great. They talked for hours, and the preacher told him about the plan of salvation. As his taxi arrived to take him to the airport, the manager said, "Sir, please tell me one thing. I am 66 years old. I have seen hundreds of thousands of people pass through here. Why is it that no one has told me about Jesus before?"

A few days later, he was in Hong Kong, giving some bread to a very old Chinese woman who spoke excellent English. As he told her about the love of Jesus and the plan of salvation, she began to cry. She said, "Why has no one ever told me about Jesus before?"

Next, he went to Bombay, India. A man came to him and said, "Sir, my daughter is very sick with a fever. Will you come and pray for her?" The family was Hindu, and they were too poor to send the girl to a hospital. In India, life is

devalued. The people take far better care of cows than they do of children; and many die of starvation every day, while the cows are fat and pampered. The 13-year-old girl had been sick for some time; and she was dying. But the man had seen the preacher pray for the sick, and he said, "If your God can heal my girl, we will believe that He is the God Whom we should serve."

The preacher had everyone in the room join hands as he prayed. Suddenly, the girl, who had been unconscious, rose up and asked for her clothes. Everyone left the room so that she could dress; and then, she walked out herself. Everyone there said, "The missionary has brought us the real God." The mother, who was a nurse, said, "I must go to the hospital and get back to work." With tears streaming down her face, she kissed the preacher on the cheek, and said, "Why did no one ever tell us about your God before?" They too had lived their whole lives without hearing the story of Jesus even once. When they heard, and saw the power of God, they quickly and gladly believed.

In his travels to 56 countries of the world, evangelist Hudson has heard that question many times. Why do most Christians go about their daily lives, mingling with all of the unsaved people around them, and never ask them if they know Jesus, or if they have heard the Gospel? There are many who would believe, if they could only hear the Gospel and see the love and power of God demonstrated in the life of a genuine Christian.

#### The Story of Origen

During the days of the early church, many thousands of Christians were tortured and executed by the Roman Empire, often by the direct order of the emperor himself. Many vain and wicked men ruled, and the empire was the last of the world empires. There were ten major periods of persecution against Christians under various Roman emperors, over a period of about one hundred years.

During the second century, it was a matter of great concern to pagan leaders that Christianity was flourishing and the heathen temples were becoming deserted. One day, a good man named Leonidus was arrested for the crime of believing in Jesus. He was an honest and kind man; but there was great hatred against Christians among the ungodly of the land, who resented those who lived a pure life. Satan was also at work, stirring up the selfish hearts of his children of darkness against those who walked in the light.

Leonidus had a seventeen-year-old son named Origen, who was also fully committed to Christ. When the authorities came to take Leonidus, Origen wanted to stay by his father's side and make a stand for the gospel. But his mother, realizing what was about to happen, hid his clothes, so he was embarrassed to appear. He had to stay at home, while his father was quickly tried and condemned. But he sent a message to his father, saying, "Take heed to yourself, that you turn not your thought and purpose for our sake." steadfastly refused to renounce his faith in Christ; and he was executed, as a public example.

The emperor had all of the property and wealth of Leonidus confiscated, and his family was left in abject poverty. The teenaged Origen was left with the responsibility to care for his mother and six younger brothers. But he was a wise young man, who had a reputation as a fine, dedicated Christian. He started a little school; and many families decided to place their children under his care, to be influenced by this good young man.

For many years, Origen taught the Christian faith, and served as a leader in the church. He won many people to the Lord, and honored the memory of his martyred father with integrity and a fruitful life. He served his Lord by helping other people; and he was widely known as a good and loving man. He was the greatest Bible teacher of Alexandria, Egypt.

When Origen was 64 years old, he was arrested for his faith and thrown into a dark, cold, insect-infested dungeon. He was chained, and his feet were put in stocks for several days. He was tortured for days, and threatened repeatedly with fire and other means of intimidation. The authorities were unable to break his spirit, because of his commitment to Christ. He knew that the riches of Christ and the joys of heaven were too valuable to lose for the sake of a moment's respite from pain.

His tormentors were ordered to make his death as painful and as lingering as possible. But when the emperor Decius died, and his successor, Gallus, began a war with the Goths, they lost interest in the Christians; and Origen was set free. He went to Tyre, where he died at the age of sixty-nine. Section 5 Life-related Stories

#### The Story of Paul E. Paino

Dr. Paul E. Paino was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, on April 15, 1923. He is the son of two outstanding Pentecostal preachers: Thomas and Lyda Paino. As a youngster, he spent many nights sleeping on the sawdust floors of the tents which were erected for the revivals conducted by his parents. As a boy, he was tormented and taunted by ruffians, who mocked the "holy rollers." He saw people throw vegetables at his father while he preached the Gospel; and he witnessed vandals cutting down the tent. He even saw their church burned down by an arsonist. Young Paul Paino grew up surrounded by the ministry.

Thomas Paino insisted that his son Paul said the word "power" when he was only six months old. When he was a small boy, he joined with his brother in baptizing a number of chickens. They were both spanked soundly, because nineteen of the chickens drowned. The Paino children were taught the strict holiness approach to church. They were not allowed to wear gold jewelry, play cards, drink coffee, or go to movie theaters.

As a young man, he wanted to distance himself from the ministry. He decided to study engineering at Purdue University, although he knew the call of God was on his life for the ministry. He had seen the hardships relating to fervent Christianity, but he had also been exposed to the bright side. He had seen miracles of healing and deliverance. He had been in "tarrying" services that often lasted well past midnight. He saw parishioners and even strangers bless his family with food and financial gifts, in order to help the Paino family through the Depression. He heard life-changing testimonies from visiting

ministers at the large family dinner table; and he witnessed many powerful Holy Ghost revivals.

Thomas Paino was a loving but strict father, who insisted that his son practice both the piano and trombone five days a week. Music continues to be an important part of the ministry of Dr. Paul Paino. To Paul Paino, his father was his hero. It was out of respect and admiration for this godly man that he agreed to go for one year to Central Bible Institute in Springfield, Missouri. He went on to graduate from the college in 1944; and he went immediately into full-time ministry as a pastor, evangelist, educator, and, eventually, a bishop.

On Christmas night in 1944, Paul Paino married his high school sweetheart, Mary Lascu, whom he describes as "a very strong person." Their early relationship was hindered because Mary, whose parents were born and raised in Romania, had not been born again. But, in 1942, while attending Ball State Teacher's College in Muncie, Indiana, she was saved. Mary and Paul's mother, Lyda, waited for his return on school vacation to surprise him with the glorious news of her conversion.

With a godly wife and the heritage of his great minister parents, Paul E. Paino went on to excel in the ministry. In 1956 he pioneered Calvary Temple, which is one of America's great Pentecostal churches. Many notable ministries have been birthed out of this strong church, all as a result of the vision and drive of Dr. Paino, who is a pastor to many pastors, and who is in demand as a conference speaker all over the world.

It is through his leadership abilities and vision that we now have the <u>Complete School of the Bible Manual</u>. Under his direction and guidance, skilled Bible teachers and youth workers worked

diligently to develop a comprehensive curriculum which is being used in many churches today, giving a balanced, fullgospel presentation of truth to live by. Section 5 Life-related Stories

#### The Story of Perpetua

In the year 192 A.D., Severus became the emperor of Rome. When he became deathly ill, a Christian helped him recover his health. He therefore became favorable toward Christians in general. But there were still many in the empire who hated Christians, and who were angry at the great growth of the faith in the world.

Many who professed faith in Jesus Christ were burned, imprisoned, cut apart with swords, beheaded, or thrown to the wild beasts. It seemed quite acceptable for courts to execute people for the "crime" of believing in Christ, since the empire was officially pagan and was forced to deify the emperor. Irenaeus, the godly Bishop of Lyons, wrote a popular tract about heresy; and the emperor resented his fame. He had the preacher beheaded in 202 A.D.

The persecution extended even to Africa. This was the home of Perpetua, a lovely young wife and mother, who loved the Lord. She was arrested for being a Christian at the age of 26. Her father, who loved her deeply, went to her prison cell and begged her to renounce Christianity, in order to save her life. She loved her father; but she loved God more, and she refused to give up her faith in Christ. Her father became so angry that he beat her severely; and he refused to see her for several days.

In the meantime, some new believers were baptized in the prison, and a fervent prayer meeting continued in the midst of the danger. Perpetua was taken before the pro-consul Minutius, and commanded to sacrifice to the idols. When she refused, she was placed in a dark, isolated dungeon, and her baby was taken from her. Her father again came to try to talk her into

surrendering her will to the pagans; but she was steadfast, and she said, "God's will must be done."

At her trial, she continued to show great courage and faithfulness to the gospel, in spite of her father's pleadings and her baby's cries. They tried to convince her that they were kind and reasonable, while this Christianity was a dangerous form of fanaticism. Still, she considered the joys of heaven far more precious than her own life; and she refused to deny her Lord. She was taken back to prison, where she and several others awaited torture and execution. Among the condemned Christians was another fine lady named Felicitas.

Some days later, a group of believers were led to an amphitheater. Saturninus, and Revocatus were forced to run between lines of hunters, who lashed them severely with weapons, to the delight of the pagan crowd of spectators. Perpetua and Felicitas were then put in the arena with a hungry lion. The beast attacked and seriously wounded them both. Then an executioner came and slew them both with his sword. Revocatus and Satur were also put to the sword, and Saturninus was beheaded. Secundulus was taken, wounded, back to the prison, where he died.

If you were put on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Is your faith strong enough to withstand persecution, or the threat of torture and death? Do you fear man, or God? Throughout history, millions of Christians have been martyred for their faith. In fact, many are being killed in the world, even today.

#### The Story of Charles and Florence Personeus

Charles and Florence Personeus had a long and fruitful ministry in Alaska, after going there in 1917. There are many Indian tribes in Alaska, with their own dialects: Tsimpseans, Thlingkets, Hydas, Aleuts, Athabaskans, and Eskimos. Mr. and Mrs. Personeus labored in Juneau, where they opened the first Assembly of God in Alaska. The Thlingkets were centered there.

A Thlingket man from Klukwan attended their service in Juneau. After listening to the testimonies from the small band of workers, he rose and said in broken English: "You people can read. My people cannot read. We need preacher."

Touched by what seemed to them "a Macedonian call" such as Paul received, a couple of the workers offered to assume leadership of the church in Juneau, so that the Personeus' could go to Klukwan.

It was difficult to minister at Klukwan, since they did not know the Thlingket language and had to speak through an interpreter -- the uneducated man who had come to them at Juneau. The day before any service was conducted, the man would come to the Personeus home, where Mr. Personeus would read and explain the meaning of the words he planned to use, so that he could interpret correctly. (Interpreting can be risky. One man, while trying to interpret the twentythird Psalm, said, "The Lord is my goathunter; He knocks me down on the mountain and drags me down to the beach.")

During an altar service one evening, a woman began to cry. She seemed to be in great pain. There was no doctor in the village; and so, Brother Personeus began to pray for her. Soon, in the Spirit, he was praying in other tongues. An Indian woman, kneeling at the other end of the bench from Mrs. Personeus, became so excited that she crawled across the floor on her knees to say to her, "He is talking in our language!"

A strange hush came over the people as they listened in amazement, for the Thlingket language is a strange and difficult one. How could this missionary, who before this time had to talk through an interpreter, now speak in their language?

When Mrs. Personeus asked what her husband was saying in his prayer, the answer came in solemn tones: "He is saying, 'God loves you, but not your bad life. God wants to heal you and take away your pain, but you must repent and ask God to take your sin away.""

"He will convict of sin," Jesus said of the Holy Spirit; and that is what He was doing. The woman confessed her sin of adultery, which many in the village already knew about, but which the missionaries had not suspected. The incident put the fear of God into many hearts.

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

Section 5 Life-related Stories

#### God's Providence in Protecting the American Settlers

Many Americans today are unaware that the United States of America was founded by Christians seeking to establish a nation based on the Bible. In the early days of the developing nation "under God," most of the settlers from England were very aware of the importance of God and the Bible. The church was the center of the social, cultural, and political life of the towns; and the pastors were the most respected and influential members of the community. The people gathered often to worship and hear God's Word; and the sermons were normally about two hours long.

There were many dangers establishing communities in the new land, and prayer was regarded as their greatest source of protection. People were aware of the providence of God. Providence is the quiet working of God in overseeing and protecting people with seemingly natural means. For example, in the winter of 1632, the Puritan governor of Massachusetts was John Winthrop. He noted in his diary that one day his two young daughters were playing under a huge pile of logs. When their mother called them to come into the house, they got up immediately and obeyed. The moment they stepped out from under the pile, it collapsed. If they had not been quick to respond to their mother's command, they would have been crushed to death under tons of wood.

In another town, a carpenter was working on a roof where a group of eight children were playing on the floor below. Suddenly, a large piece of timber fell toward the children. The man could only

cry out in anguish, "Oh, Lord, direct it." He watched with amazement and gratitude as the beam fell on its end in the middle of the group, and then bounced on the floor between two of them. No one was even touched by the beam.

There were many Indian tribes, who were given to pagan and occult religions. The medicine men were given to witchcraft; and their "Great Spirit" was not the true God. But as long as the pilgrims prayed, God protected them, primarily by keeping the hostile tribes in conflict with one another.

In 1639, a group of Indians from one tribe decided to steal the food and supplies that were kept in a Plymouth trading house. They would kill any English people who were there. The man who was keeping the store that day was named Mr. Willet. Mr. Willet was a happy Christian man, who spent much of his time reading the Bible. He was thus engaged when a small group of Indians entered his storehouse. Whatever he was reading from God's Word that day must have been serious, because he was so deep in serious thought that he was frowning. The Indians had seen him many times; and he was usually smiling and friendly. The Indians left the store immediately, reporting to the rest of their group of conspirators that their plan to murder the English people must have been discovered. Mr. Willet must have known their evil intent; and they reasoned that it was the reason that he was not smiling as usual. They agreed to give up their plan. Once again, God's providence prevailed.

Section 5 Life-related Stories

#### The Story of Evan Roberts

Evan Roberts was born in 1878, in Wales. Wales is a small nation that is a part of Great Britain, along with England and Scotland. People and things that relate to Wales are referred to as "Welsh." Shortly after the turn of the twentieth century, there was a great Pentecostal move of the Spirit, known as the great Welsh revival; and Evan Roberts was considered the primary leader of this famous event.

Evan Roberts was a miner and blacksmith, who had a deep longing for revival. Great Britain had, during her long history, experienced periods of spiritual renewal and national zeal for God. The great expansion of the British Empire was due largely to God's hand of blessing on the land, because of spiritual fervor and national prayer. More than once, England had been miraculously saved from the powerful Spanish naval forces, because God responded to national prayer and repentance.

But Britain was now almost spiritually dead. Taverns and crime abounded; and the churches were nearly empty. Evan prayed diligently for revival in his homeland. When he was 26, he quit his mining job and went to Bible school. For eleven years he prayed for revival. With a handful of people, he would hold all-night prayer meetings every Friday. For years, he was faithful in these prayer meetings; but nothing happened.

Then, in the fall of 1903, the Holy Spirit moved on him to go back to his home town. He went to the Methodist church and gave his testimony. God began to move in the meeting; and a great revival

broke out, that was to last more than a year. There was very little preaching; but the meetings would last for many hours, or even days at a time. There would be singing in the Spirit, spontaneous praise, healings, and other amazing supernatural manifestations. Sinners who walked into the church would fall immediately to the floor, sobbing in repentance. Churches all around filled up and overflowed with anointed revival. At the same time, taverns began to close down, for lack of business.

Drunkards by the hundreds quit drinking. Prostitutes were saved. Whole towns were mightily converted. It was noted that people crossing the bridge into the county where they were praying were smitten by the power of God, and they would fall off of their horses and onto their knees, crying out to God. God was moving by His Spirit. People came from all around. This revival influenced many people to seek the baptism in the Holy Spirit; and it helped to launch Pentecostal revivals in other nations, such as the United States.

But the great Welsh revival died out after that glorious year of 1904. For many people, life went back to business as usual. Evan Roberts, with his prayers answered, seemed to ease up on his prayer life; and nothing else notable occurred in his lifetime, although he lived another 50 years. Today, the Prince of Wales is most known for his marriage troubles, and the royal family consults astrologers, instead of the Holy Spirit. But if another praying Evan Roberts comes along again, there may yet be another great Welsh revival.

#### The Story of Two Ships at Sea

One of the Puritan leaders in seventeenth century America was Cotton Mather. He was a dedicated pastor, and the son and grandson of prominent preachers in early New England. The early Christian settlers in America saw many supernatural answers to prayer; and Pastor Mather kept a record of many of the miracles in a book called Magnalia.

One of these true accounts involved two ships in distress, and the lesson in giving that God taught them, through adversity. One New England ship was on its way to the island of Barbados, in the West Indies. The captain was William Laiton. When the ship was about one thousand miles out in the Atlantic, it was damaged; and it began to sink into the The crew quickly loaded the longboat and got in; but they soon discovered that, while they had an abundance of bread, they had very little water. The water in the ocean is so salty and contaminated that a man would become violently ill and die from drinking it. After eighteen days on the small boat, they were rationing the precious water at a teaspoon a day per man.

Meanwhile, Captain Samuel Scarlet was in a very different situation. His ship was in good condition; but, after a long period at sea, they were almost completely out of food. They had plenty of fresh water, but they were becoming faint from hunger. The lookout spotted the lifeboat full of men, waving frantically to the ship's crew. Immediately, the ship's crew began to argue. If they took any more men on the ship, they would surely die of hunger. How could they possibly afford to share what little they had?

But the kind captain simply could not see turning away from his fellow men. He told the crew, "It may be that these distressed creatures are our countrymen, and (anyway) they are distressed creatures. I am resolved that I will take them in, and I will trust in God, Who is able to deliver us all."

Of course, his act of compassion had an immediate reward, and provided the means of their salvation. Captain Scarlet had the water Captain Laiton needed; and Captain Laiton had the bread and fish needed by the men on the ship.

It was also significant that one of the chief mariners on Captain Scarlet's ship had been very strongly against the idea of taking in the stranded men from the longboat. Some time later, he was in a similar plight at sea, and there was no one to take him in. He died of thirst and hunger, adrift on the wide ocean.

#### The Story of "Silent Night"

The small European country called Austria is known as "the land of mountains," because it is located in the Alps mountain range. It was the winter of 1918. In one of the many villages that dot the snowy countryside lived two faithful Christians: a young priest named Joseph Mohr, and a schoolmaster and organist named Franz Gruber.

The two men dreamed of writing the perfect Christmas song, for they had decided than none yet had fully described their concept of this most blessed event in human history. This Christmas eve found Joseph meditating in his study. In the quiet stillness of the snowy evening, Joseph's heart was filled, as he thought of that first Christmas eve and the message that "Jesus, the Savior is born."

Quickly but steadily, the words formed in his mind. "Silent night, holy night. All is calm, all is bright. Round yon' virgin, mother and child. Holy infant, so tender and mild. Sleep in heavenly peace."

The next morning was Christmas day. Joseph hurried to Franz Gruber's home to share his special song. Franz was delighted; and he quickly composed a melody for the words. "God be praised, friend Mohr, you have found it! It sings itself, your song!"

The tune expressed the sublime lyrics perfectly. The two practiced the song, in order to share it with the small church congregation that evening. The villagers who attended that night were delighted to hear a beautiful new song about Jesus. Many thanked the two men, as they filed out into the cold night after the service.

But the song was soon forgotten, as they placed it away in a desk drawer for almost a year. The following November, as the church organ was being repaired, the technician asked Franz to play it. He played his Christmas song. The repairman begged him for a copy of the music, which he took home to his own village.

There, a quartet of sisters learned the song, and it became one of their favorites. They sang "The Tyrolese Song" (as it was originally called) in the great Leipzig Cathedral in Germany. The song was passed around in this fashion, until it was finally printed in 1842. In 1854, the choir of the Imperial church in Berlin, Germany, sang it for Emperor Frederick Wilhelm IV. He ordered the song placed in all Christmas programs in the nation. From there the song was translated into many languages, and used around the world.

#### The Story of Gypsy Smith

Rodney Smith was born in 1860 in England, near London. He was born in a Gypsy tent; and he lived the strange life of a traveling Gypsy. He never had the opportunity of going to school. The Gypsies roamed around, living out of their wagons. They made their living by selling baskets, tinware, and clothespegs. They had no home, other than their old wagon.

When Rodney was 6 years old, his mother died of smallpox. She was buried by the side of the road by lantern light. Her last words were, "I know God can take care of my children." We are not sure if she was a believer; but, nine years later, Rodney's father became a Christian, and he quickly led his son to the Lord. The father became a stern and dedicated believer, who was careful never to travel on Sunday.

At the age of 17, Rodney was already beginning to preach the Gospel. He was not educated, but he was bold; and he never missed an opportunity to tell someone about Jesus Christ. He was asked by General William Booth to be an evangelist for the Salvation Army, which was already doing a great work for God in England. He readily accepted; and, as a teenager, he preached to crowds ranging from 100 to 1500 people nightly. seventy years, Rodney Smith preached the Gospel. He preached many thousands of sermons to millions of people. It is said that he never, in all those 70 years of preaching, preached a sermon in which no one was born again.

In 1879, the teenaged preacher married Annie Pennock. Leaving the Salvation

Army, he went out preaching everywhere he could. He was such a traveler, that he became known as Gypsy Smith. He also frequently preached to the Gypsies through his Gypsy Gospel Wagon Mission, which was started in 1892. From 1886 to 1947, he made thirty trips to North America. All over England, Scotland, Europe, and America, he carried the Gospel with great crusades, winning hundreds of thousands to the Lord through his passionate and exciting preaching. In the Paris Opera House, he saw 150 of the elite from Paris society come weeping to the altar for salvation. Everywhere he went, tents and buildings would overflow, as thousands thronged to see this fiery preacher burn for God. He often preached to 10,000 or more at a time. Although he was identified as a Methodist preacher, he was loved by everyone. Gypsy Smith was full of the joy of the Lord. He had an excellent voice; and he would often burst into song at any point during a sermon.

In 1937, his dear wife Annie died. The following year, the 78-year-old evangelist married Mary Alice Shaw on her 27th birthday. This "robbing the cradle" created quite a stir among the church gossips; but Smith still had boundless energy, and Mary was a great help to him in his ministry. They had a good marriage; and she was able to care for him later, when his health began to fail. In 1947, the 87year-old Smith was traveling by ship to preach again in America, when his great heart gave out during the voyage. Constantly on the road, and then dying on the road, he was the world's greatest Gypsy.

#### The Story of C. H. Spurgeon

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was born in England, in 1835. He started preaching when he was 16. By the time he was twenty-five years old, he had built the famous Metropolitan Tabernacle, which could seat 5,000 people. But there was never enough room to contain all of the people who wanted to hear him. He was called for many years the "Prince of preachers." Members of royalty and other dignitaries attended his church, along with many washerwomen and factory workers.

Wherever he went, the crowds came. He was not only a gifted and brilliant speaker, he was also a man who demonstrated a passion for souls. His sermons were transcribed by various secretaries, so that there are volumes of his sermons still widely used today, even though he died over a century ago (1892). Everywhere he went, he was winning people to the Lord. To the lady at the bakery, he would ask, "Have you tried the Bread of Life?" To the carpenter he passed by, he might call out, "Do not build your life on the sand. Build on the Rock!"

One day the great preacher was called to visit an old and poor woman. He stepped into the musty, dark shack, and he felt great pity for the poor woman who had lived for so many years in such dire poverty. She was clad in worn and faded garments; and she seldom had enough simple food to eat. Now, she lay on her bed, barely able to move around, and entirely unable to afford a doctor's care.

As the pastor was preparing to pray for the poor woman, he noticed a piece of paper pinned to the wall. The walls were nearly bare, so it was noticeable, even in the dim light. He looked closely at the document, and his eyes opened wide with surprise. He turned to the lady and said, "Madam, do you know how to read?" She replied, "No, sir. I have had to work all of my life, and I was never able to go to school."

He said, "Tell me about this document on the wall."

She replied, "I worked for many years as a housekeeper for a wealthy man in town. He had no wife or family, and kept to himself. As he was dying, he called me to his bedside. He wrote something on that piece of paper, and gave it to me. I have treasured that note, because it was kind of him to give me recognition for the years of service I gave him."

Spurgeon said, "Madam, the paper you have on your wall is a check for a very large sum of money. For years, you have lived in poverty, and you have had great wealth available to you, just for the asking. You could have had lived in the finest house in London, and eaten the finest foods in the land, but you never read the note."

The next Sunday, Pastor Spurgeon related the story to the thousands in his congregation, reminding them that they have great power and opportunity in the Name of Jesus. As believers, we are told to pray in His Name, and to believe that our heavenly Father has provided great blessing, healing, and strength through the blood of Jesus Christ. We have not, because we ask not.

#### The Story of Young Billy Sunday

Billy Sunday never saw his father. He was born in Iowa on November 19, 1862; and his father died from pneumonia one month later, while serving in the Civil War. Billy's mother was left with three young sons to raise, without the help of a provider. In addition, it fell to her to raise another orphaned group of children, in addition to her own. Needless to say, they struggled in dire poverty.

Billy's mother finally gave him up to an orphanage when he was ten years old. He had little formal education, although he was able to attend some high school classes. When he was fourteen years old, he applied for the job of school janitor. He had to keep the floors clean; but, in the cold Iowa winter, it was most important to keep the furnaces stoked with coal. His salary was a hefty \$25.00 per month. One day, he picked up his paycheck and went to the local bank to cash it. The teller inadvertently gave him \$40.00. A friend advised him to keep the money. He did, and he bought a new suit with the extra income.

He became a professional baseball player, and he joined the Chicago White Sox. In Chicago, he heard the gospel at a street meeting sponsored by the Pacific Garden Mission. As a new Christian, he prayed and sought the Lord for direction for his life. The Lord reminded him of the \$15 he had taken, and that he owed the bank the money plus the interest. He struggled with the idea for several years. He had enough money; but the bank was unaware of the error, and he was embarrassed to admit his lack of honesty. Finally, he wrote to the bank, explaining the situation, and he enclosed enough

money to cover the difference with interest. When it was done, a great sense of peace came over his soul; and from that day, Billy Sunday was faithful to be completely honest with money.

In 1897, Billy was traded to Pittsburgh, but he went back to Chicago to preach in the off season. In 1890, he turned down an offer of \$500 per month to play for Philadelphia, and took a job preaching for the Chicago YMCA for \$83 per month.

Whether it was scrubbing floors or preaching to 20,000 people in a great stadium, Billy did everything with all of his might, "heartily, as unto the Lord." He was famous for his zeal and energetic sermon delivery. He was one of America's most popular preachers. He preached to 100 million people in 39 years. Billy Sunday and Billy Graham are considered by many to be the most influential preachers of the twentieth century.

One Indiana woman, who sat under his ministry as a young girl, said, "You could not take your eyes off that man. He would get worked up preaching and stand on top of the pulpit and take off his coat. Then he would pull off his necktie. Pretty soon he would pull off his shirt without missing a word, and preach in his undershirt."

In 1920, Billy established a thriving Christian resort on Winona Lake in Indiana; and it became his home base. The Billy Sunday Tabernacle seated 7,500 people, and it featured the sawdust floor for which he was famous. Billy Sunday died in 1935.

#### The Story of Graham Truscott

Graham Truscott is a "Kiwi." He is from the land of New Zealand, a large island nation located north of the island continent of Australia. New Zealand is a nation where the sheep vastly outnumber the people, and where God has raised up some dedicated Bible teachers. As a youth, Graham was aggressive and energetic. He worked hard to develop himself, and he was an outstanding scholar. He was a member of New Zealand's Olympic swimming team, and a great clarinet player. He was the leader of his own dance band; and he planned to become wealthy with his skills and personality.

Graham was not raised in a Christian home, and he did not bother himself with going to church. Church to him seemed to be a rather boring place where hopeless people went to think about heaven. But one day he went to a church, because he heard that an attractive young lady was to sing there. The Lord began to move in his heart; and he was soon a born-again Christian. He began to pursue his new faith with zeal, and he quickly grew in the Word. In church, he met a beautiful blonde named Pamela; and, while still very young, they were married and happily served the Lord together.

They felt a strong call to the mission field in India; but, they were rejected by the mission board of their church, because they were too young and had no experience in the ministry. As they sought the Lord in prayer, the conviction became stronger than ever in their hearts; and, before the ship sailed to India, a man came to them and gave them enough money for their passage.

When the Truscotts arrived in India with almost no money and no contacts, they confronted great hardships. knew none of the many languages of India; and they were treated as a threat and an enemy by the people, who were controlled by the Hindu religion. India is a land of great poverty. In India, there are over 500 people per square mile. America, we have 57 people per square mile of land.) India grows plenty of food and has much cattle, but the religion of Hinduism forbids the killing of animals, because of their belief in reincarnation -that the spirits of their ancestors come back as animals. The Truscotts had never lived in poverty; and they now found themselves sweeping the dirt floor of their hut and struggling to find a banana for baby Steven. When Pamela would walk to the river for water, she would try to talk with one of the women. Sometimes an Indian woman would spit in her face and turn away. Graham and Pamela became even more earnest in their prayers. instead of asking for God to defend them or give them more food, they asked the Lord to give them a deep love for the people of India.

God answered their prayer; and soon the people began to respond to the love they saw from these foreign strangers. In Poona, India, where mission societies had sent missionaries for 100 years with not a single convert to Christianity, a church began to grow. In 18 years, the Truscotts established 9 new churches, and also a Bible school to train preachers and church workers. Today, these churches are all growing under the leadership of native pastors.

Life-related Stories

#### The Story of Debbie Truscott

In the late 1950's, a very young couple by the name of Truscott from the nation of New Zealand felt the call of God to the mission field of India; but, they found no missions organization to send or support them. With simple faith in God, they sailed for India, anyway. For several years they endured great hardships as pioneer missionaries; but God blessed their faithfulness, and in 18 years they started nine full-gospel Bible-believing churches, in a land that is the world's center of pagan, anti-Christian religion.

During those years in India, the Truscotts had to send their 4 children to boarding school in another part of the country for 10 months out of the year; but they determined that all of them would become strong Christians, good scholars, athletes, and musicians. Remarkably, all of their children grew strong in the Lord and in these areas.

In 1975, they moved to San Diego, California as a family; and they started a church in 1978 in La Jolla, an elite residential area of San Diego on the Pacific coast. Today, that church is also thriving, even after a tragic loss in 1985.

Debbie Truscott, their oldest daughter, a stunningly attractive and dedicated Christian, was killed by the negligence of a young man who was drunk. At age 24, she was a faithful part of the ministry team. She was a worshipper, Bible teacher, missionary, and registered nurse. When her brothers needed help in starting their karate and fitness gym, she taught their aerobics classes for them; and she was considered one of the best exercise leaders in California. She gave herself to others;

and she was preparing a missionary trip back to India, when her life was taken because a young man wanted to "party" and drive his truck while intoxicated.

While she lingered in a coma for two weeks, Christians around the world were praying diligently for her; and yet, she slipped away from this life at what seemed to be just the beginning of a joyful and fruitful life of serving others. Why did God allow this tragedy? Why did God not heal her and raise her up out of the hospital bed?

We do not understand all of the answers; but we know that through such tragedies, we are all drawn closer to God, and we learn to stand together in unity. We learn compassion; and we are all reminded that none of us has a guarantee of a tomorrow, and so we should live each day ready to meet the Lord. We also are strengthened in our resolve to oppose sin, and particularly support lawmakers who are tough against those who are so irresponsible that they are willing to risk the lives of others while they drink and drive. As is often the case, the judge who heard the case of the man who killed Debbie gave him a "slap on the wrist" non-punishment, thus freeing him to kill again, and diminishing the ability of law enforcers to prevent such things from reoccurring.

The Truscotts know that Debbie is in heaven; and, with faith in God, they continue to serve the Lord. At this writing, they are in the process of turning that church over to the church staff and returning to India, in order to minister to the people that they love.

Section 5 Life-related Stories

#### The Story of Booker T. Washington

Booker was born in 1858 or 1859 (he was not sure), the son of a slave woman and a white man that he never met. He seemed to have no advantages or potential in life; and yet, he would rise to achieve greatness in spite of the adversity.

As a boy, Booker knew only hardship. He did not play. He was forced to work all day, as soon as he was able. His mother was a praying black slave, who loved Jesus and prayed for freedom. But she had little time for her children, because of her duties as a Virginia plantation cook. The children slept on a dirt floor, usually without enough rags to cover themselves. They had no stove. A cooking fire in the yard was all that they could use. Booker never had a bed, or ate from a table. Of course, school was out of the question. Slaves were to work, not read books.

When Booker was 7 or 8 years old, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring that slavery was abolished in America. His mother kissed each child and told them that they were free. He now had a stepfather; and the family moved to West Virginia. Booker was put to work in a salt mine, where he worked from 4:00 in the morning until late at night.

Booker longed for an education. One day someone gave him a Webster's speller, and someone else found a dictionary for him. He was finally allowed to go to school, if it did not hinder his work at the mine. He had no last name; and so, during roll call, he gave the name Booker T. Washington.

Later, in the pursuit of learning, Booker walked 500 miles to attend Hampton Normal and Agricultural School in South Carolina. At first he was not allowed in; but he persisted, and he stayed three years. He studied many things, including the Bible. While there, the public speaking teacher tutored him, and he became a skilled speaker. He returned to Malden, West Virginia, where he opened a school for black working children to study at night. But he was asked to return to Hampton to teach at the college. From there, he was selected to be the director of a new Negro college in Tuskegee, Alabama.

Under his skilled leadership, the college grew rapidly. He started with only an old barn, hen house, cabin, and kitchen. He called it the "barnyard college." But people all around helped out. He also eloquently appealed to William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, Andrew Carnegie, and others, who donated large grants to the school. Roosevelt himself served on the board of directors, and he became a close friend.

In 1893, Washington addressed the National Education Association, and also an international council on Christian workers in Atlanta. His goal was to educate black people and lift them to achieve and excel academically and socially, as he had. His school became known as the renowned Tuskegee Institute, which carried on the rich heritage of the man who rose from a hopeless life, by the grace of God, to excellence and honor.

Section 5 Life-related Stories

#### The Story of George Washington

George Washington, the first president of the United States, was born on February 11, 1731. Since his birth, the calendar has been changed; and so, the date was changed to the 22nd. He was born into a family with a long tradition of Christian heritage. His great-great-grandfather was a preacher in the Church of England. His great-grandfather, John Washington, emigrated to America in 1657, and founded a church in Virginia. His grandfather and father were also devout Christians, as were the ancestors of his godly mother, Mary Ball Washington.

George's father died when he was eleven years old, leaving his mother to be the primary influence in his life for many years. She instilled in him a love for the Lord, and for the Word, which he read faithfully.

There are many unfounded myths about the "father of America," such as the story about chopping down the cherry tree, having wooden teeth, or of his habit of profane swearing. Actually, the cheery tree story was fabricated; he had false teeth fashioned from calf's teeth; and he was very committed to clean language, having issued a number of orders to ban profane language from the military. General Washington, soldiers would receive 50 lashes with a whip for profanity, and 100 for a second offense. He required all of his soldiers to attend church every Sunday. For the first two years of the French and Indian war, there was no chaplain; and so, General Washington himself served as the chaplain, preaching every Sunday morning to the troops.

Those who knew George Washington knew that he was devoted to his God. For

most of his life, he faithfully spent an hour each morning and another full hour in the evening in prayer. He would go to a room alone to meet with God. He prayed alone, but he always prayed aloud. Every Sunday, President Washington faithfully attended church, both morning and evening. He never accepted visitors on the Lord's day, with one exception. On many Sunday nights, after the evening service, he would meet with the speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr. Trumble, to talk about the things of God and pray until late into the night. President Washington recommended to all the states to set aside a day each year for corporate prayer. He said, "He is no patriot, in this nation, who seeks to undermine religion."

God sovereignly protected George Washington through many fierce battles. He often had horses shot out from under him, and bullet holes in his coat; but he was never wounded. God performed miracles for this man of prayer; and He preserved him to lead the new nation spiritually. George Washington knew that his strength came from the Lord; and he always gave God the glory. One nephew who had lived with him remarked that after leading a nation through the Revolutionary War, serving two terms as president, and having been elected unanimously, he never heard George Washington say anything about his own accomplishments. He was a humble, godly man, and he is still honored today, although some humanist historians seek to mar the name of every Christian leader, both past and present. Washington always knew that God was truly the Father of all.

#### The Story of George Washington: Protected By God

Early American literature, including school textbooks and newspapers, were filled with quotations and references from the Bible; and God was mentioned often. Indeed, America was founded primarily by Christians, for the purpose of gaining freedom to pursue their Christian faith. 52 of the 55 signers of the Declaration of Independence were devout believers; and most of them wrote for the American Bible and Tract Society.

One story which appeared in the Maryland history textbook (1856), as well as in most other history books, has been omitted from our modern school texts, for obvious reasons. It is the welldocumented story of young George Washington, who served his country as an officer in the French and Indian War. This was about twenty years before the Revolutionary War. Washington was only 23 years old. The British and the Americans fought against the French, who were allied with the American Indians. The French claimed ownership of the American colonies; and they were attacking settlements. The British sent over 2,300 troops under General Braddock.

They arrived in Virginia, where Washington was the Colonel of the Virginia militia. General Braddock and Colonel Washington took 1300 troops to attack a French fort. On the way, they were ambushed by the French and Indians in a wooded ravine, where they were being fired on from both sides. The British soldiers were accustomed to European warfare, which involved open fields. Each army would stand shoulder to shoulder, and fire on the enemy. So they bravely stood in groups, firing blindly into the

trees, while the French and Indians continued to cut them down at will. After a few hours, 714 of the British soldiers lay dead, while the enemy forces suffered only a few casualties. Of the 86 officers in the British force, George Washington was the only one who was still alive and on a horse. Finally, after two hours of carnage, they retreated; and they traveled back to Fort Cumberland in Maryland (July, 1755). George wrote to his family about the battle. He remarked, "When I took off my coat, I found that I had four bullet holes in it, but I was not touched. I had bullet fragments in my hair, but did not receive a scratch. I had several horses shot out from under me, but I was not harmed. God protected me."

Fifteen years later, in a time of peace, George Washington and a friend returned to the same Pennsylvania woods where the battle had occurred. One old Indian chief heard that they were going to the scene. He traveled many miles to see Washington. When they met, the chief said, "You do not know me, but we were in these woods together. I was a chief of the group that attacked you. I ordered my braves to single you out, because we knew that if we killed you, the troops would scatter. I personally fired at you 17 times, at close range. When saw that the bullets had no effect on you, I told the men to stop shooting at you. I have traveled all this way to see the man that God would not let us kill."

Throughout the Revolutionary War, General Washington led the army from the front lines, encouraging his troops. He knew that God was his protection; and he was never harmed.

# Section 6

## **Promotions**

#### The Importance of Promotions

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

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

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

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

Because of our love for our children and our desire to offer them the kinds of incentives necessary to motivate them to do greater things, we are involved in several promotions throughout the year. Certainly, we would hope that our children would be spiritual enough not to need such motivations to spur them into action. However, we cannot expect them to be any more motivated than we are.

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

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

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

With these goals in mind, we have designed a set of programs which we plan to promote each year. These programs are explained on the following pages. They are subject to change and revision; but, the concept of the programs and the basic time of the year during which they will be promoted will remain somewhat constant.

Each class is encouraged to use internal promotions in order to motivate the students to become greater participants in God's work. Bible memory verse contests, attendance awards, and special projects all add to the overall effectiveness of our program. Special events, such as Christmas and Easter parties, are also encouraged. The church will also hold a "Hallelujah Party" near Halloween in order to provide an alternative to "Trick or Treating" for the children of the church. Change Sunday, when students are promoted to the next grade, is another time to plan special activities in order to say good-bye to one group of students and to welcome the new.

### Q Link Q Up Q With ♦ JESUS - □ •

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Three weeks prior to the beginning of the promotion, prepared lists of Bible verses will be sent home with the students. These lists will also be mailed to the parents, along with a letter explaining the promotion and asking them to help their child(ren) memorize the verses.

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

#### **Specific Instructions:**

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

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

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

prepared for some students to learn several verses per week!

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

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

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

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

If you need additional space to record verses or visitors on a student's Point Chart, attach a second sheet to the original sheet for that student. YOU CAN C Link
C Up
C With
S-G-JESUS -G-E

CONTEST BEGINS:	CONTEST ENDS:

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

Bring a Friend to Sunday School

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

Memorize a Scripture

Attend Sunday School

Bring Your Bible to Sunday School

BONUS SUNDAY:

Earn 6 Links

Earn 2 Links

Earn 1 Link

Earn 1 Link

Earn 5 Links When You Bring 5 Food Items To Help Us

Minister To Those Who Are In Need.

#### 7 Levels Of Prizes Are Available

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

The Top Five Students Will Receive Grand Prizes.



Link Up With

## PRIZE LIST

S-G-JESUS-G-G

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

## **Christ Commands Us**

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

Matt. 25:40

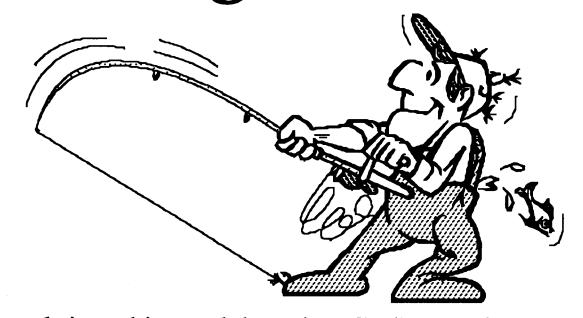
We can fulfill the command of our Lord by ministering to those who are in need.



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



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



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



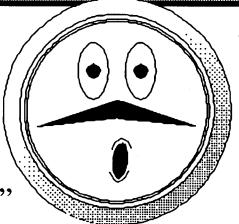
You can earn valuable prizes by learning God's Word and by bringing your friends to Sunday School. Start today, and together we can become "fishers of men". Charles Link
Charles Up
Charles With
Charles JESUS — 3-63

# Time is getting short

There Are Only



Weeks Left
In The
"Link Up With Jesus"
Promotion!



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

Sectio	n 6													Pror	notior
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Link Up With SE-JESUS					Po	i	nt	<b>C</b>	ha	ar	t				
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Qualified for Bonus Points?

Award 5 links.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

You may also use a Re-Cap Sheet to keep a running total of the points earned by the students in your class. Keep this Re-Cap Sheet in your Secretary's folder.

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

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



CONTEST BEGINS:	CONTEST ENDS:

#### **Catch the Spirit of Pentecost**

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

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

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

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



# Who Can I Invite?

Friends from School Relatives

Neighborhood Friends
The Children of Your Parents' Friends



Friends from Outside Activities:
Scouting
Athletics
Camp Programs



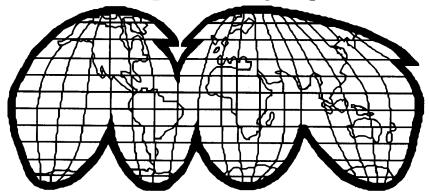
Anyone in the world who needs to know Jesus as their Savior.

Clubs

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



# Why Save the World?



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

Without Christ There Is NO Forgiveness Of Sins. Without Christ There Is No True Joy. Without Christ All Of Us Will Perish.

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



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

#### GRAND PRIZE

For the 5 Students With The Highest Point Totals

Students Earning 120 Total

Points Receive:

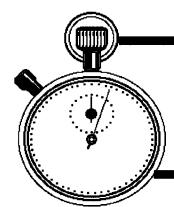
Students Earning 80-119 Total

Points Receive:

Students Earning 55-79 Total Points Receive:

Invite a Friend Today and Help Us Fuel the Flame!





#### TIME IS RUNNING OUT!

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

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







# Mother's Day

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

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

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





-1	P	oint	Tal	ly
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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

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



#### **Re-Cap Sheet**

Name	Wk #1	Wk #2	Wk #3	Wk #4	Wk #5	Wk #6	Grand Total		
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The Fall Fun Festival is a very popular promotion, which is scheduled during the third quarter, usually in September. A variety of games, rides, contests, and concessions make this event a good one for the entire church family.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The purpose of this promotion is to provide a fun day of fellowship for families. In doing this, we hope to acquaint others with our program, and Fall Fun Festival Volume 7

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

#### **Specific Instructions:**

Each "point" a student earns is worth one ticket for the Fall Fun Festival. Tickets will be distibuted to students at the ticket booth when they arrive for the Festival. Secretaries will record the points each student earns on the Weekly Point Chart. Totals from this form will then be transferred to the "Re-Cap Sheet."

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

# Fall Fun Festival

Contest begins:\_\_\_\_

The Fall Fun Festival will be held:

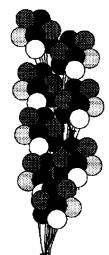
Earn Tickets For The Festival By:

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

Bringing a friend: 10 tickets)

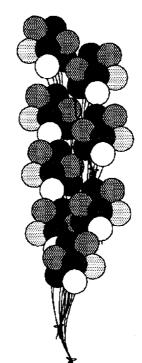
(Friends who have attended Sunday School during the last 4 months, do not qualify.)

Games



Prizes

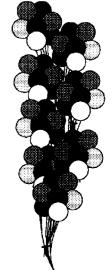
Rides



**Food** 

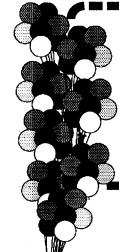
Dunk Tank

Music



Tickets will be distributed to the students at the Festival.

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



# GET EXCITED

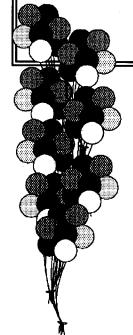




Date:

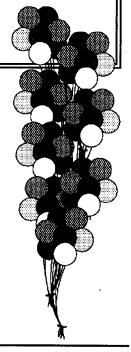
Time:

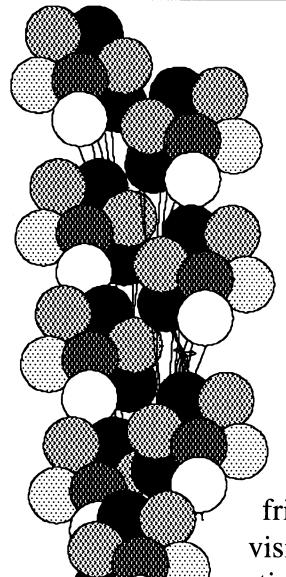
Place:



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

GAMES PRIZES
MOONWALK
DUNK TANK
FOOD FUN





# Only Weeks to go in the Fall Fun Festival Contest

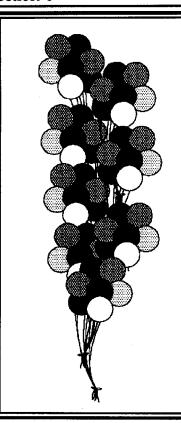
Remember to bring your friends -- especially first-time visitors -- and join us for a great time in Sunday School. Then, join the fun at The Fall Fun Festival

on _	<del> </del>	 		 
at				

#### Points are awarded for:

Attendance • Memorizing Bible Verses

Bringing Your Bible • Bringing an Offering • Bringing a Visitor Bringing a Food Item for Those in Need.

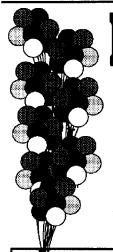


# Fall Fun Festival Ticket Certificate

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

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

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



# Fall Fun Festival

#### **Re-Cap Sheet**

Class:

Name	\A/L #	14	/V/L #0	\A/L #3	\A/L #/	\A/L #5	Wk #6	Miss	GRAND
Name	VVK #	-	VVK #Z	VVK #3	VVK #2	WK #5	VVK #O	MISC.	TOTAL
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# Unlock The Treasure

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Specific Instructions:**

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

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

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

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

# YOU CAN Unlock The



## Treasure

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

#### How Can You Earn Points?

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

For every 40 points you earn, you willreceive a "Gold Coin." Coins can be redeemed for prizes.

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

The Treaure Chest contains prizes valued at over \$\_\_\_\_\_.

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

# Invite Your Friends to Sunday School!

#### **Unlock The**



# What Treasure is Inside the Chest?



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

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

#### Treasure Coin

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

Authorized Signature

#### Treasure Coin

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

Authorized Signature

## Treasure Coin

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

Authorized Signature

#### Treasure Coin

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

**Authorized Signature** 

## Treasure Coin

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

Authorized Signature

#### Treasure Coin

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

Authorized Signature

#### **Unlock The**



#### Weekly Point Chart

A COMPANDO	Total							
Treasure_	g a friend (20)							
nreasure		nging food itel	m (5)					
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	Memo	ory Verse (5)	] [					
Bringin	g an offerir	ng (2)						
Bringing	Bible (2)	] ]						
Attendance (5	)							
Name								

#### **Unlock The**



## Re-Cap Sheet

#### **Treasure**

#### Class:

Name	Wk i	#1	Wk #:	2 Wk	#3	Wk	#4	Wk #5	Wk⊧	ŧ6	Misc.	TOTAL
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## Section 7

# Catechism In Doctrine

#### Introduction to Catechism in Doctrine

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### How Big Is God?

God is so big, that He has no limits and He cannot be measured.

(God) "hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure,...." (Isaiah 40:12)

The planet earth is a great ball, which is 25,000 miles in circumference and nearly 8,000 miles in diameter. It spins around on its axis once every day and revolves around the sun. One revolution around the sun is one year. The earth does not revolve around the sun in a perfect circle. It is always at least 91,400,000 miles away. The sun is more than 320,000 times as large as the earth. At its center, its temperature is 18 million degrees Fahrenheit. Scientists tell us that the sun is burning up, losing over 200,000 tons per second; but, it is expected to last another ten billion years.

There are billions of other suns, which are much larger. They are called "stars". Some stars are more than a billion miles in diameter. They are so hot, that a piece of their sun the size of a match head would burn up everything within 100 miles. They seem small, because they are so far away. The light from them takes many years to reach us. In our galaxy, the "Milky Way," there are more than 100 billion stars. There are thousands of such galaxies—clusters of stars—in the universe. Our galaxy alone is so large, that it takes light

100,000 years to travel from one end to the other. It takes light 4 years to travel from the nearest star, called "Proxima Centauri," because it is 24 trillion miles away.

The entire earth is just a tiny speck in the universe; yet, Isaiah said that God "meted out heaven with the span...." A "span" is the distance between your thumb and little finger, when you stretch out your hand. When God measures galaxies, He stretches His hand out from one to another. God is not limited to a physical body as we are, because He is Spirit. (John 4:24) He is big enough to fill the universe. More than 75 percent of the earth is covered with water; and, in places, the oceans are as deep as six miles. Yet the Bible says that God

"...measured the waters in the hollow of His hand...." (Isaiah 40:12)

That means that God can hold the Pacific Ocean in His cupped hand.

God, who has always existed, created all of the stars and the planets that revolve around them. He created everything on the planets and knows everything about every creature in the universe. God is so big that it is not possible for us to comprehend it with our minds. God is in full control of the world. He allows men to

make their choices to test and learn whether they will choose to obey Him, or choose to do evil. God knows everything that happens; and He keeps very good records.

It is impossible for any human mind to comprehend the vastness of God, because He is infinite. That means He has no limits and no end, neither in time nor in space. God is everywhere at once; and yet, He specifically lives with and in His children, the born-again believers. There is nothing too difficult for God to do, because there are no limitations to His power.

"Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:" (Jeremiah 32:17)

## How Did God Create the World?

God spoke everything into existence by the power of His Word.

"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." (John 1:3)

God created all matter and formed the physical things by using atoms -- tiny bits of matter that are the building blocks of everything. Atoms are so small that we cannot see them with our eyes.

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." (Hebrews 11:3)

Atoms are tiny particles of matter that have a center, or "nucleus," with tiny "electrons" spinning around them. There is a great amount of empty space between the nucleus and the electrons, and also between atoms themselves, much like the planets spinning around the suns in the galaxies. Scientists tell us that, if all the space between the atoms was taken out and the earth was reduced to solid matter, it would be about the size of a basketball. What holds it all together? Jesus does.

"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible,.... all things were created by him, and for him; And he is before all things, and by him all things consist," (hold together). (Colossians 1:16-17)

God created the stars, the planets, the plants, and the animals. To "create" means to "bring into existence," to "make something out of nothing." God spoke the Word, and the physical matter in the universe came into existence. When God spoke, spiritual beings became alive and functioned instantly.

However, God took clay, or the "dust of the ground," and formed man. Then, He formed the woman from one of Adam's ribs. Human beings are not just animals. They are special creations that God formed with His hands to live forever with Him as His children. God made mankind out of existing material. Then, God breathed His life into him, so that man became a physical creature with a body and brain, as well as a spiritual being with an eternal spirit. Man was made a "living soul". (Genesis 2:7)

Some people spend their lifetimes seeking the secret of origins; but, we have the account from God -- the only One who was there at the time. Anything beyond what He has told us is vain conjecture.

Charles Darwin wrote his thesis, titled "The Origin of the Species." His theories have had far-reaching effects on the lives of the people in our society. Christians readily agree that what Darwin proposed is simply a theory.

Charles Darwin (1809-1882) was a theorist, who reinforced the doctrine of positivism. He proposed that all forms of life developed gradually from a common ancestry over millions and millions of years. He also suggested the idea which is called the "survival of the fittest." This idea was developed as a basis for the reasoning behind the theory of evolution. These teachings cannot be taken lightly, because they strike at the very heart of biblical Christianity. Our children can be taught the Bible truth of creationism; but, their minds are being filled with the theory of evolution.

There are at least five major statements proposed by this humanistic philosophy:

- 1. Evolutionists teach that heredity and environment are the determining factors of existence.
- 2. Evolutionists teach that character traits and actions are explained by heredity and environment. It is said that since behavior is determined by factors beyond the individual's control, he cannot be blamed for his behavior. A born-again Christian understands that man is not controlled by his environment. Man is responsible for his behavior and for his sins.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Romans 5:12)

- 3. The teaching of the "survival of the fittest" casts doubt upon the existence of God. Darwin stated that, if there was a God, He was merely a totally indifferent and impersonal force.
- 4. Darwin's theory proclaims that things are continuing to get better and better. The humanists teach that one day all men will be as God. This idea is not new. Satan tempted Eve in the garden of Eden with the same plan.

Perhaps the best description of man's condition is found in Isaiah 64:6:

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

5. Finally, Darwin's theory teaches that man is subject to the same laws and conditions as all other matter in nature. Christians understand that man has been given dominion over all creation. Man was created in the likeness and image of God. (Genesis 1:26-27)

Evolutionism is nothing more than a theory. It can never change the unalterable fact that God created man in His likeness; and, therefore, man is accountable to God for his life and his actions.

# Why Did God Make Man?

God made man to love, worship, and bless Him and to live with Him forever.

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

God made the angels in the spirit world to worship Him and to serve Him. He created the universe, the earth, and all the plants and animals. But, God wanted to make creatures who would belong to Him in a very special way. They would be His children, and they would reflect His nature, character, and affections. "...Let us make man in our image...." (Genesis 1:26)

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit decided in the council of heaven to make man unique. Man would not only have an eternal spirit, but he would also have a physical body. Animals do not have a spirit, but people do. Every baby born is a special creation of God, designed to live for God and to enjoy Him. The word "human" means "in God's image."

"I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: ...." (Psalms 139:14)

God made man to love Him and worship Him; but, He does not force man to do these things. By giving each of us a choice, God receives honor and blessing, knowing that our love for Him is voluntary. God chose to reveal Himself to

men through His Word, as expressed through Jesus Christ and through His people. God is looking for those people on earth who will choose to turn from their selfish lives of sin to worship and serve Him out of love.

"...true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." (John 4:23)

God formed man in His character image and not in His physical image, because God is not limited to a physical body as we are. God is an infinite, eternal Spirit.

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

We know that each of us is a special creation of God and not the product of chance. We also know that God had a specific and personal purpose in mind when He formed each of us. We should view our lives as precious gifts, not to be wasted on selfish pleasures. Each of us has a work in life to do for God. We should be diligent to discover and develop our gifts and talents for God.

## What Was the Garden of Eden?

God created the Garden of Eden to be the first home of man on the earth.

"And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil." (Genesis 2:8-9)

When God made man, He gave man "dominion" over all of the animals and over everything in the garden. This means that everything was subject to man, because man was God's representative; and everything belonged to God. Apparently, all of the animals were vegetarians. Also, there were apparently no dangers, weather problems, or problems of any kind on the planet. Everything was in perfect harmony, and it is even possible that many of the animals could talk, because Eve was not surprised when the serpent spoke to her.

There were two special trees in the garden. The first special tree was the tree of life, which produced fruit which gave eternal, or at least prolonged, physical life.

The second special tree was the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It was God's reminder that everything belonged to Him. God commanded Adam and Eve not to eat of the fruit of this tree. If they disobeyed, the pride and selfishness in their hearts would be manifested.

God had provided everything Adam and Eve needed; but, in order to serve God out of love, man had to have a choice. So, God gave them the opportunity to disobey. We do not know how long Adam and Eve lived in the garden before they sinned; but, eventually, they yielded to the temptation to become "independent" and to be "their own persons." They rebelled against the rule which God had given to them. The Bible does not tell us what kind of fruit they ate, because that is not significant. Instead, the Bible tells us the more important matter -- the motive of their hearts.

God gave Adam and Eve perfect bodies and minds. Adam was so intelligent that he named each creature God had created. Adam and Eve lived in perfect harmony and joy as long as they obeyed their Heavenly Father. They also had pure minds and saw each other with the glory of God upon them. When they sinned, their perception was changed. They saw that they were naked, and they became ashamed.

## Who is Satan?

"Satan" is another name for the devil, an angel who rebelled against God and who works to try to keep us from serving God.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: ...." (1 Peter 5:8)

Satan is a wicked angel, who was the worship leader in heaven thousands of years ago. His real name was "Lucifer," which means "light-bearer." He became proud of his beauty and musical skills and decided that he wanted to "be like God." He caused one third of the angels to fall with him in his rebellion. They were all cast out of heaven.

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will .... be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell...." (Isaiah 14:12-15)

Some Bible scholars have suggested that, since there were three archangels mentioned in the Bible, perhaps the angels under the leadership of Lucifer were the ones most likely to follow him in his rebellion against God.

God prepared an eternal lake of fire for Satan and his angels; but, now, they work

in the world to deceive and turn people away from the Lord who loves them.

In the Garden of Eden, Satan worked through a beautiful serpent to deceive Eve into disobeying God. He convinced her that she would not really die if she ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He lied. Disobedience to God is called sin; and sin separates us from our loving Heavenly Father, because God is holy and just. Satan is called "the father of lies," "the deceiver," "the accuser of the brethren," "that old dragon," and other descriptive names in the Bible. The name "Satan" means "accuser," or "adversary." Since we have an enemy, we are reminded of our need to stay close to God, where we are safe.

The devil is an enemy; but, many people are deceived by him, because he appeals to their pride and selfishness. He convinces people that they can be free by rejecting the authority of parents, teachers, and God. He is a liar. Freedom comes by obeying God and those in authority. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they thought they would be free to do as they pleased. Instead, they were cast out of the beautiful garden, and death began.

### What is Sin?

Sin is our willful disobedience against God. It causes us to be separated from God's presence.

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John 3:4)

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

God is good and perfect in all He does. God has never been unjust or wrong in His treatment of anyone. He has never made a mistake. All of the problems in the world have come from the disobedience and selfishness of those created by God.

All sin starts with selfishness. When we do something that is wrong, it always hurts us as well as those around us. When God commands us not to do something, it is because He loves us. He knows that in the end it will harm us. God gave ten commandments to Moses for the children of Israel. The first four were about their relationship with God and the importance of loving and honoring God. The other six were about how we should treat other people. When we are selfish and care only about making ourselves happy, we will hurt others.

The opposite of selfishness is love, which seeks to make other people happy.

"Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." (Romans 13:10)

Sin works against relationships and against our bodies, which were made to be temples for the Holy Spirit and not for sin. There is "pleasure in sin for a season", but, that pleasure in sin robs us of our joy, which is a function of our spirit when our lives are flowing in harmony with God.

God hates sin, because He loves the sinner and knows that sin always damages our joy and potential in life. God gave us a conscience -- His law written on our hearts -- the Bible, and the Holy Spirit to teach us right from wrong. God also shows us that the way to deal with sin is not to cover it up or make excuses for it. Instead, we should be honest with God, ask His forgiveness, and ask Him to give to us the freedom to do right.

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

# Why Are There No Dinosaurs Today?

The fact that many prehistoric species of reptiles are extinct today is scientific evidence of recreation and of a great flood. It does not support the doctrine of evolution, as some suppose.

The doctrine of "secular humanism" is the belief that life just happened. It holds that man is just another animal; he evolved from nothing; and he will become nothing again when he dies. Therefore, there is no need for man to answer to God.

"The fool has said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works,...." (Psalms 14:1)

One of the problems that the ungodly have with their theory of evolution is creation. How can there be a creation and order in the earth without a creator? Charles Darwin developed a "Theory of Evolution," which is the idea that life evolved by chance, and that one form of life accidentally develops into a superior form over millions of years. This has been disproved by science; but, many people still believe it.

Evolutionists believe that life evolved in stages, and that 65 or 100 million years ago (numbers made up by "educated" guessing) the large reptiles ruled the earth and became extinct long before men had tails and swung from trees. But more and more evidence points to the fact that dinosaurs existed with man in the last 6,000 years of history, and they have

become extinct just as a matter of chance. In fact, in our time, species of plants or animals become extinct almost every day.

Job described dinosaurs in the Bible. They were called "Behemoth" and "Leviathan." Scientists have found fossil records of men's footprints along with those of dinosaurs. Cave-dwellers left pictures of dinosaurs painted on their walls. In ancient writings, there are records of encounters with huge "dragons," and even pterodactyls -- flying reptiles -- were sighted as late as the 1800 A.D. It is possible that Noah had young dinosaurs of different species on the ark. After the flood, the earth's climate was much different, and many large reptile species died because of the lack of vegetation and more extreme climates.

The fact that there are so many fossils today is proof of a great flood, because, normally, animals would be eaten or would decay, unless they were suddenly covered with water and their bodies settled in the mud under the pressure of the water. Some creatures, like the woolly mammoths, were drowned. The water then froze over them; and, today, their bodies are preserved in ice.

The Genesis account indicates that God first created the earth long ago, and then

the planet became void before the creation or "re-creation" described in Genesis 1:1. The Hebrew words for "was" and "became" are the same: "The earth was without form, and void." Note also that God commanded Adam and Eve to "...replenish the earth,...." (Genesis 1:28) Satan's fall from heaven to the earth could have caused great destruction; and many

species may have been destroyed and were not a part of the Genesis in Adam's time. Some Bible scholars believe that all dinosaurs became extinct before the time of Adam. We are not sure; but, we are given volumes of scientific evidence that there was a great flood and that life does not just happen.

## What Was the Earth Like Before the Great Flood?

Before the flood, there was a great vapor canopy in the atmosphere; and the climate was much milder than it is today.

God created the world in six days, and said, "It is good." Everything He made was good. He even made man perfect; but, He allowed man to make choices. When man sinned, he damaged not only himself, but also, the things around him.

After Adam and Eve sinned, they were cast out of the Garden of Eden so they would not eat of the tree of life and live forever in their fallen condition. They had children; then grandchildren; and the family of man grew. After about 1,000 years, the wickedness of man became so great that God decided to destroy mankind with a great flood. Noah and his family were saved, because they obeyed the Lord and built a large ship, called the "Ark," to protect them and the animals from drowning.

Before the flood, people ordinarily lived for hundreds of years. The earth was covered by a great vapor canopy. That is, most of the moisture was in the atmosphere. It shielded the earth from harsh sun rays, diffusing the light and heat from the sun so that it was warm and comfortable all over the world. There was lush vegetation even in the extreme northern and southern parts of the world, where today it is frozen over with ice and snow. Before the flood, huge reptiles could live on the vast amounts of plant life in

these areas; whereas today, only penguins and walruses can survive.

Many scientists and Bible scholars believe that there was no rain before the flood, citing Genesis 2:5-6:

"...God had not caused it to rain upon the earth...but there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the...ground."

No rain is mentioned until the flood. The heavier protective atmosphere was probably a factor in allowing people to live much longer. Apparently, Adam lived 930 years after his fall from grace, and Noah's grandfather, Methuselah, lived for 969 years.

Before the flood, there were no huge oceans as we know them, because most of the water was in the atmosphere. The earth was able to support much more plant and animal life than it can today. After God judged the world with the great flood, He sent a rainbow as his promise to Noah that He would never again flood the whole earth. Later, His prophets said that God would judge the earth "by fire." Peter and John spoke of great fire on the earth, and a "renewed heaven" -- or atmosphere -- "and earth."

After seeing the great judgment of God, John said,

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." (Revelation 21:1)

It would appear that God is going to restore the earth to its condition before the great flood. (Perhaps all of the mosquitoes will die in the fire.)

The importance of this lesson is the principle that sin has consequences. God restored the earth after the judgment; but, it suffered permanent damage. The temple in Jerusalem was restored; but, the new temple was very inferior. When we rebel against God and turn to sin, we can be forgiven; but, we will not have as fruitful and joyful a life as we could have known if we had remained faithful. Sin does have consequences. Sin always makes life worse and never better.

# Why Did God Send the Great Flood?

When mankind became extremely wicked, God judged the world by sending a flood to cover the earth and to drown the people.

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD." (Genesis 6:5-8)

God is not only a God of love and kindness, but He is also a perfectly just and holy God. God is so holy that "He cannot look upon sin;" and sin cannot enter into heaven. God is the perfect judge. At the end of time, He will judge every individual for eternity. He also judges people as nations or "people groups." When mankind became so wicked that all people became totally preoccupied with evil and selfish desires, He sent destruction on the earth, so that all would know that "...the wages of sin is death,...." (Romans 6:23)

In the story of Sodom and Lot, we learn that the righteous citizens of a city or nation are the key to its preservation. God told Abraham that, if there were ten righteous people in the city, He would spare the city for their sake. Since there was only one righteous family, God removed them and sent fire and brimstone to destroy the two cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The righteous in the land are like "salt," or the preservative of the nation. The more righteous people there are in the land, the safer and more blessed that nation becomes. When sodomites and perverted people dominate the culture, the nation is in great danger.

Jesus later taught that God will apply this same principle in the end times:

"But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (Matthew 24:37-39)

The Bible says that, in the last days, men will become more and more wicked; and they will be fighting wars and doing more and more wicked things to one another. As God removed Lot and his family and then destroyed the cities, and as He preserved Noah and his family in order to bring judgment on the earth, so, in the last days, very soon we believe from scripture, He will take His people who are righteous; He will preserve their lives; and He will send a great judgment of fire on the earth to destroy the wicked and demonstrate that He is a holy and a righteous God. Remember that judgment means to make things right. For the righteous who are "in Christ," judgment is a positive term, because their Lord is going to bring down the wicked and exalt the humble.

# What Are Angels?

Angels are spirit beings, which God created before the world began to work for Him as His messengers and servants.

God "maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire...." (Psalms 104:4)

Before God created the physical world, He had a "host" of millions of spirits that He created to be His servants. The Greek word for angel is "angelos," which means, "messenger." There are different kinds of angels, who do different jobs. We see angels in the Bible accounts fighting wars, praising and worshipping God, and giving messages to men as God's servants. Angels have different ranks and degrees of power.

The greatest messenger angel is the archangel, Gabriel.

The greatest worshipping angel was the angel, Lucifer, ("Light-bearer"). However, he became proud of his beauty and was cast out of heaven. He is now the leader of the fallen, wicked angels who assist him in his rebellion against God's kingdom of light. We believe that these fallen angels are the principalities and powers of spiritual darkness, who work to corrupt people today.

The greatest warrior angel is named, "Michael." Warrior angels are sent by God to fight against demonic powers and human evils in response to the prayers of the believers on the earth.

The Bible tells us about different kinds of angels, such as "seraphim" and "cherubim." Only the seraphim are pictured with wings, but this is prophetic language. Remember, they are spirits, not physical creatures. No warrior or messenger angel mentioned in the Bible had wings; but, that is how artists like to picture them. Angels are not male or female. Apparently, they could take on the appearance of either when they make an appearance to men. Sometimes, angels will appear as people and help people without ever making their identity known.

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." (Hebrews 13:2)

There are millions of angels; but, there are no more today than there were 5,000 or 6,000 years ago. They cannot reproduce themselves. When Lucifer (Satan) fell from heaven, he attracted one third of the angels to his side, and they were cast out with him. That means that, for every evil angel working in the earth, there are two good angels. Besides, God has all power, and the demons are subject to His authority.

As long as we are under God's protective authority, we are very safe, because demons cannot control our minds.

"....he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked

one toucheth him not." (1 John 5:18)

## What is a Priest?

A priest is a person who represents the people before God. He helps them to know and to obey God.

"...the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:" (Hebrews 9:6-7)

There were three major spiritual offices in the Old Testament:

- 1. Prophet: Also called a "seer," or one who is able to hear clearly from God and speak to the people for the Lord.
- 2. Priest: One who represents the people before God. He would intercede and offer the sacrifices for them. He was also involved in worship and in the care of the temple.
- **3. King:** One who rules the people with authority given by God.

It was very important that no one man take any more than one of these offices, because only Jesus Christ was to fulfill all of these leadership positions. That is why it was so serious for King Saul and King Uzziah to usurp the role of the priest.

## Jesus is the Great **Prophet**:

"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;" (Deuteronomy 18:15)

### Jesus is the Great High Priest:

"....Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec...." (Hebrews 5:6)

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

### Jesus is the Great King:

"And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." (Revelation 19:16)

Each of these leaders had a great responsibility to be close to God and give himself to prayer. God wanted the people of Israel under Moses to be a nation of priests, to reach out to all nations as God's servants; but, they rejected that. One of the twelve tribes was chosen instead: the descendants of Levi. Moses and Aaron came from that tribe. The Levites took care of the tabernacle, and the priests and high priests administered the sacrifices for the people. Aaron was the first high priest

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from the Levitical order. The third book of the Bible, Leviticus, focuses on the laws and responsibilities of the priests of Levi.

Jesus was from the tribe of Judah. He is the High Priest of a new covenant, which is eternal. Under the old covenant, the high priest would offer the blood of a perfect lamb on the "mercy seat" of the ark in the holy of holies once a year. This blood sacrifice would atone, or cover, the sins of the people for one year. But, Jesus came, and He became both the perfect sacrificial Lamb and the priest who would offer the blood on the mercy seat of God's throne. This sacrifice would not only cover the sins of those who are part of the covenant, but would also wash them away forever.

# How Does God Speak to Us Today?

God speaks to us today through His Word, the Bible, and He uses preachers and other teachers to help make it clear to us.

"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...." (Hebrews 1:1)

Since Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden because of their sin, God has been giving people opportunities to be restored to fellowship with Him. God revealed Himself in different ways. He showed men His power through miracles. He spoke to the people through angels and, especially, through prophets. Prophets were men and women who were especially anointed by the Holy Spirit to hear from God and to tell the people what God said to them.

The greatest revelation of God to man is Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (John 14:9) Jesus showed us what God is like. God is holy and just, and that is why Jesus died on the cross for our sins. God could not just overlook our sin without the death penalty; the price had to be paid. God is love, and Jesus showed us that love by giving His life on the cross for us.

God can also speak directly to us. God is not off at the north pole or on some other planet. He is able to speak into our lives and apply the truths of His Word to our situations. Here are some ways God can speak to us today:

### 1. Through The Bible (2 Timothy 3:16)

The Bible is God's Holy Word. The Bible deals with every human situation, and the Holy Spirit is able to "quicken" our hearts and make a scripture verse or passage come alive. We can know that, while all of God's Word is true, God can speak a specific word to us as we read it. It is important to read the Bible every day.

# 2. Through Preachers and Teachers (Amos 3:7, Ephesians 4:11)

God has anointed some people to be proclaimers of the Word. God gives direction to them, and they tell the congregation what they are hearing from God through preaching, teaching, or prophesying.

#### 3. Through Parents (Proverbs 4:1-4)

Sometimes God gives insights and wisdom to our parents for us. He wants to teach us to listen and to learn from those He has placed in authority over us. Proverbs teaches us to learn wisdom (God's point of view) from our parents.

# 4. Through Gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7-12)

At times, God uses sensitive Christians to communicate a "word of knowledge" or a "word of wisdom" to others. We do not always have the information or wisdom we need; but, God will use believers to tell us what we need to hear. God wants to teach us to depend on His Holy Spirit and on one another as brothers and sisters.

### 5. Through Prayer (Matthew 6:5-13)

Prayer is not just a way of getting what we want from God. Prayer is talking to God and listening to Him. It would be impolite to have a conversation with someone and do all the talking and no listening. Prayer makes us sensitive in our spirit so we can hear God speaking to our spirit.

# What Is the Difference Between People and Animals?

God created every living creature on the earth; but, He made man in His own image, with a spirit, soul, and body.

"...God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Genesis 1:27)

"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis 2:7)

There are two extreme -- and extremely ignorant -- ideas that men have when they think that animals and people are basically the same. There is the idea that people are merely animals whose whole existence is in this physical life. This idea is called "secular humanism." The other extreme believes that every creature has an eternal soul; that, ultimately, the animals are merely recycled people, waiting to go around again in a, hopefully, higher form. That is called "reincarnation."

Those who do not want to believe that they have to give an account to God promote the doctrine of evolution, which is the basis of the religion of humanism. Those who teach that doctrine believe that man was not created, but that he gradually evolved from lower forms of life. Therefore, man was not created "a little lower than the angels" but made himself "a little higher than the monkeys." They gleefully point out the physical similarities

between species, especially those between apes and humans, to prove that we are "cousins," from the same family tree. But, the similarities between species do not prove that we have the same ancestors. They merely indicate that we have the same designer.

Since no species in history has ever evolved into another; and, since there are no "missing links" between any species which have ever been conclusive, the evolutionists decided that everything had to happen over millions and millions of years. Since none of them were around then, they feel safe. Who could dispute them?

But, we do have an account from the One who was there. God tells us in His Word that He created the earth and the universe. He formed the first man out of clay in one day. He breathed life into him and made man a living soul. God also gave man dominion over the birds and fowl of the air, the fish, the plants, and the animals. Man is not violating a cow's civil rights by eating it. It is still wrong for man to abuse and cruelly treat animals, because cruelty is not godly. However, it is not murder to kill a deer for food or to step on a cricket.

The people of India are bound by the Hindu religion, and they believe that

animals have souls. So, the rats and cows eat in style, while the poor people starve to death. On the other hand, the humanist believes that neither animals nor humans have souls. They think that when a person dies, he dies like a dog; and that is all there is.

This deception keeps him from preparing for eternity. In Luke 16:22-31,

Jesus spoke of a rich man who died unexpectedly. He was not ready to die. His spirit went to hell, where he suffered torment. It was too late. He was not born again before his death, so he had no hope for eternity.

# What Is the Difference Between People and Angels?

God created man with a spirit, soul, and body; but, angels do not have a physical body, and they are neither male nor female.

"But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:13-14)

Since angels are spirit beings, they never die. They also do not marry and cannot have baby angels. They are neither male nor female. However, when they do appear to men, they tend to look like men. When angels appear to people, note the number of times they say, "do not be afraid." Obviously, they do not have petite female shapes and long golden hair.

People are born one, or very few, at a time and are born into a physical family. **Angels were not born.** All of them were created, probably all at one time, by the creative word of the Lord.

Jesus died for the sins of people, so that, if they repent of their sins, God has the power to forgive and pardon them from the death sentence. However, there is no plan of salvation for angels. Those who have sinned are eternally lost, and they have no hope. God created a great "lake of fire" for the devil and the angels who

followed him. It is true that millions of sinners will be cast into the lake of fire with them; but, it really was not designed for sinners. They should repent and serve God.

### Angels are more powerful than people.

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him....? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels...." (Psalms 8:4-5)

It is interesting to note that, when Satan will be brought to God for account, only one angel will be sent to arrest him. When Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, besieged Jerusalem after conquering Israel, God sent one angel, who killed 185,000 of his soldiers in one night. Not even Samson could match that performance.

When the **people** who are faithful to God are given their eternal reward and responsibilities, they will have a great place of sonship with God and authority in heaven. They are the redeemed children of God, and they will sing the song of the redeemed, which angels cannot sing.

"Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Corinthians 6:3)

# Why Is Our Body Called a "Temple?"

The Bible calls our body a "temple," or "tabernacle," because it is a dwelling where we live in this present world and a place for the Holy Spirit to dwell with us.

"Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle...." (2 Peter 1:13-14)

"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" (1 Corinthians 6:19)

The Bible clearly teaches us that "the real you" involves more than just your body and your mind. You live in a body. It is still important to take good care of your body. You need to be active and be careful not to stuff your body too full of junk food or harmful things. Because we express ourselves through and serve the Lord with our body, we want to do the most we can with the one life we are to live on earth. When we leave this body, we call that separation "death." That is not the end of our existence, because our soul and spirit last forever.

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Corinthians 5:1)

The word "tabernacle" is another word for "tent," a temporary dwelling. It is important for us to remember that we are "pilgrims and strangers" here on earth (Hebrews 11:13), and "have no continuing city." (Hebrews 13:14) All the things we have in the physical world are temporary; but, spiritual values and character will be forever. "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:18)

It is not wise to concentrate all your affections and hopes on the things that will "pass away." The basis of security is having your hope and trust in eternal things and not on the temporary. "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away." (Mark 13:31)

The word "temple" means "house," or "dwelling place." When we are born again, our bodies become the temple of the Holy Spirit. He lives in us and works through us as we yield ourselves to Him. He convicts us when we are wrong, because He is holy and will not live in an unclean place. The apostle Paul reminds us to "cleanse ourselves" (2 Corinthians 7:1) and take good care of the temple.

### What Is Praise to the Lord?

Scriptural praise involves boasting and speaking positively about the Lord, about what He has done and is able to do.

"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." (Hebrews 13:15)

It is very important for all of God's children to make it a habit to praise Him. Praise is bragging on God. We sing praise songs that remind us of God's great power and love. When we see the things He has made and done, we realize that God can do anything.

"Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee." (Jeremiah 32:17)

When we praise God, and remember that every good thing in our life came from Him, we learn to be humble and to depend upon Him. It is dangerous to think only about ourselves all of the time and try to live our lives for self. We were created for God's pleasure. It is right and good to praise God.

"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High..." (Psalms 92:1) There are more chapters in the Book of Psalms than in any other Book of the Bible. It is frequently referred to as the "Song Book of the Bible." Praise helps us to come closer to God. In Psalms 100:4, we are told to "enter into his courts with praise." We are also told in Psalms 22:3 that God lives in the praises of His people.

The Bible says that we praise God with what we say about Him, with songs, and with actions. There are at least seven Hebrew words for "praise," and they involve different movements or vocal expressions. We are told to praise the Lord with "shouting" and "applauding" (Psalms 47:1), with many kinds of musical instruments, (Psalms 150) and even with the dance. David rejoiced and danced before the Lord; but, it was not like most of the dancing people in the world do today. It involved leaping, and twirling, and stepping to celebrate God's victory over His enemies. The principle features were the movement of the feet and hands, and there was nothing suggestive in the movements.

Our word "hallelujah" comes from two Hebrew words: "halal," and "Jehovah." "Halal" was a word used for a joyful celebration time. It means "to boast, to celebrate, to be clamorously foolish, to be vigorously joyful." So "hallelujah" means to "be very expressive and clamorously

foolish in celebrating God." In simple terms, "hallelujah" means "praise the Lord." It is interesting to note that the word "hallelujah" is the one word that is the same in any language today.

We are encouraged in the Psalms to praise, extol, magnify, and honor the Lord every day. Praise is a blessing to God, and it benefits us even more by stimulating our faith, hope, and trust in God. We should also be careful to avoid praising ourselves, for that leads to pride.

Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely." (Psalms 147:1)

# Who Is the Lord Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, our Savior and Lord.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....All things were made by him...." (John 1:1-3)

The Bible teaches us that God in His fullness is three Persons: the Father; the Son (Jesus); and the Holy Spirit. Jesus has always existed. He has no beginning nor end. He is eternal. Jesus is called "the only begotten" Son of God, because He was miraculously conceived in Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit. While we may become sons of God when we are born again, we can never become gods.

Jesus is God. He is infinite and eternal. He created the world. He also paid for the sins of the world with His own blood. Jesus was called Rabbi, Teacher, Messiah, Wonderful, Counselor, Prince of Peace, the Lamb of God, the Lion of Judah, the Mighty God, Son of man, the Angel of the Lord, the Bread of Life, and many other names which describe Him and what He does.

"Lord" means "owner and master." Jesus created us. He purchased us with His blood. He is the one who has the right to make the final decisions in our lives. We belong to Him.

"...know ye not 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)

"Jesus" means "savior", or, "one who saves." In the Hebrew language, the same name was "Joshua". The angel told Joseph that his name was to be called "Jesus",

"...for he shall save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

"Christ" means "the anointed one". Jesus came to earth; but, He did not depend upon His own power and wisdom. He allowed the Holy Spirit to fill Him and to direct Him in His work. When Jesus was in the temple in Nazareth, He quoted from Isaiah and told the people that the prophet was speaking about Him when Isaiah said:

"The Spirit of the LORD God is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek...." (Isaiah 61:1)

Jesus is called the "Word", because He is the most complete expression to the world of God and His nature. Jesus said, "...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father...." (John 14:9)

That is to say, He revealed the Father. Jesus is equal with the Father and with the Holy Spirit; but, He took the place of a servant, humbling Himself to be sent by the Father as the "...Lamb of God, which

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

He is coming again to the earth, as the judge of all mankind and the sovereign King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

## What Is a Biblical Local Church?

A biblical local church is a group of Christians, who meet together regularly to worship and serve God, under the leadership of a pastor and the lordship of Jesus Christ.

"...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18)

"...And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily." (Acts 16:5)

The Greek word for church is "ecclesía," which means, "called out ones." Every born-again believer is called out of the world of sinful humanity and darkness to walk with God in the light of His Word. We are to be "in but not of the world." (John 17:14) We belong to God as His purchased possession. Everyone who has genuinely been "born again" (according to John 3) is a member of the "universal church," the whole body of believers who will reign with Christ forever, regardless of which Christian denomination or congregation they are a member.

But, when the Bible speaks of the word, "church," it almost always refers to the local church, where people gather, relate, worship God, and share their faith, struggles, and joys together. It is in the local church that we are equipped for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:12), and where we obey and submit to those who

have the rule over us, and where we "call for the elders" (James 5:14) to anoint us with oil for healing.

A true local church is much like a large family, where the pastor and ministry leaders -- elders -- are like parents, who teach and nurture and provide for the young ones of the "flock."

To be a legitimate church, a congregation must be initiated by the Holy Spirit and under the headship of Jesus Christ, who, as the Chief Shepherd, anoints and appoints an undershepherd — pastor — to lead and feed the flock. A true pastor will be related and submitted to other proven ministries, and will not be a "lone ranger." He will respect and love those under his care; but, he must be the leader of the flock.

When a family leader commits himself and his family to a local church, he is stating, "Pastor, I believe God has sent you to this community to lead and feed us. I trust Him to speak through you to us; and, if I have problems or misunderstandings with you, I'll go to you privately to resolve them. I am committed to your success, because I identify with you as your brother in the Lord. If you're blessed, we're blessed."

Our ability to get along with each other in a local church is the greatest test of the validity of our commitment to God (John 13:35) and our greatest witness to the unsaved that Jesus is really Lord (John 17:23). The local church is the "storehouse," where we pay the tithe of

our income to the Lord. The local church is the place, where, as we work through the practical reality of the Christian lifestyle in the real world of flesh and blood people, we prepare to live with God for eternity.

# What Does "Incarnation" Mean?

"Incarnation" means "to become a human being," which Jesus Christ did for us 2,000 years ago.

### Christ Jesus:

"...made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:" (Philippians 2:7)

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." (Matthew 1:23)

Jesus Christ is God, co-equal and coeternal with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. He is revealed in scripture as the Son of God -- showing His deity -- and as the Son of Man -- showing His humanity. He is not "half God and half man." He is "very God and very man." Jesus was not created, and He did not begin life in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago. He always has been.

As part of the Godhead (the Holy Trinity), Jesus became a man and lived among men in order to become the "kinsman redeemer," which God's holiness required for the restoration of man's lost inheritance. Only by becoming a man could He identify with man and give His life as the eternal sacrifice for the sins of the world. It was also necessary for Him

to live a life without any sin, because God's holiness required that the sacrifice be a "lamb without spot or blemish."

Jesus was human. He endured every kind of temptation. He suffered pain, sorrow, and rejection as a man. He was human; but, He was not carnal. He was born to a young woman, named "Mary;" but, He was conceived by the Holy Ghost. He did not inherit the sin of Adam which all of us received from our natural fathers. Since we also inherit our blood type from our fathers, we know that the blood of Jesus was unique. It is that holy blood that saves and cleanses us when we are born again by the Spirit of God. He was not born in sin; and, because He was faithful, He never yielded to the temptation to sin. He was human; but. He was not carnal. Jesus could have failed as a man; but, because He did not, He maintained His purity and integrity and was able to go to the cross as a perfect sin offering, taking on Himself the penalty for all our sins.

Jesus was known by many titles, but He seemed to like the name, "Son of Man," because of His great love for people and His desire to identify with us as His own. He was not the son of a man, but as the incarnate God He was THE Son of Man.

## Who Wrote the Bible?

The Bible is the written Word of God. It was recorded by men of God who were inspired and anointed by the Holy Spirit.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...." (2 Timothy 3:16)

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1:21)

The Bible is the inspired Word of God, a revelation of Himself and His eternal purposes to His children among the nations of men. The Old Testament began with the writing of Moses, who lived about 1500 years before Christ. It ended with the prophet Malachi, about 445-432 B.C. The New Testament was written after the death and resurrection of Jesus, and it concludes with the "Revelation" which the Apostle John received from the Lord while he was imprisoned on Patmos Island for his faith. The Holy Spirit did not "dictate" the manuscripts word for word, but, rather, inspired (which literally means, "breathe in") godly writers to speak for God, using their vocabulary and expressions to communicate the heart and wisdom of God to the people.

The Bible is amazingly accurate, and its consistency is astounding when we realize that it was given to at least 33 identified

men and many others whose names are not known, over a period of nearly 1600 years. The Bible is a collection of 66 different "books," but the thematic flow and internal consistency reflect clearly that there is one supreme author.

The Bible has been attacked over the centuries, and Satan has tried repeatedly to destroy or to dilute its message; but, to no avail. Every single year, it is still the best-selling book in the world and it has been translated into more than 1,200 languages.

The central theme of the whole Bible is Jesus. The Old Testament (or, "covenant") gives the background and historical setting for the coming of Christ, the Messiah, and the New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old. The Bible also gives us clear directions in how to relate and respond to God, as well as to one another. The Old Testament was written primarily in the Hebrew language, while the New Testament was written mostly in Greek, the most accurate and universal language in the time of Jesus.

In 1607 A.D. a group of 54 language scholars began to translate the Word of God into the English language of that day. They were commissioned by James, the King of England. Their work was completed in 1610, and the King James Version of the Bible was published in 1611

A.D. It is a widely respected and used translation and is known as the "authorized version." It is good to understand that, while the Bible is perfect in its original writing, every translation has some flaws. But, most of them are honest and reasonably accurate.

As Christians, we believe in the Bible. As our God is perfect, He is able to create and preserve those writings which we need to have as a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our paths. (Psalms 119:105)

Every condition of man's heart and life is expressed and illustrated in the Bible, and there is an answer to every human need in its pages. For Christians, the Bible is the final court of appeal for all doctrine. Just as we need to feed our bodies to grow strong and healthy, we need to feed our spirit daily with the Bible, God's holy Word.

# What Is the Trinity?

The one and only true God and ruler of the universe is an eternal Spirit, who is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD." (Deuteronomy 6:4)

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." (1 John 5:7)

"And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." (Luke 3:22)

The doctrine of the Trinity is one that is especially pure and unique to Christianity, because it is not a concept that could have been invented by the mind of a man, trying to develop a religion or a philosophy. None of the religious cults believe in the Trinity. We understand it only in part, and only by revelation from God. The term "Trinity" is used by Bible teachers to describe God as revealed in the scriptures, because God is spoken of as three distinct persons, yet one God.

There is only one self-existent eternal God. He is a plurality of three co-equal persons, yet one in His being. When referring to God, the Old Testament uses the plural word Elohim (El-o-heem) with

a verb form always in the singular. This occurs 2500 times in scripture.

Jesus, who is the Word of God (John 1:1, 14) and has always been, is the Son of God. That sonship is not exactly like a human relationship of father and son, because they are equal (Philippians 2:6). Yet, the Son proceeds from the Father. In His incarnation, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost and spoke of God as "Father." As a man, Jesus made Himself of "no reputation," and He took on the form of a servant to identify with man and become our faithful high priest and kinsman redeemer.

God is a Spirit (John 4:24), and of course the Holy Spirit is a Spirit. Jesus is a Spirit, but He also has a glorified body, as the "firstfruits of the resurrection." The fact that God is a Spirit does not make Him any less real or personable. It is simply that He is everywhere in the universe, and His power has no limits.

It is interesting that each of us, as a human being, has three parts. We are created with a body, a soul, and a spirit, although each of us is only one person. We can see only our physical bodies with our eyes; but, our souls and spirits are just as real. We can only express ourselves through our bodies. God chose to reveal

Himself to us through Jesus, the "fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Colossians 2:9)

Do not be distressed if you cannot fully comprehend how God could be three persons, and yet, still be one God. Nobody can understand it with their limited human mind, not even the smartest genius on earth. God is greater than we can explain or understand; and, come to think about it, it is good that He is not as limited as our minds.

## What Is God Like?

The one true, self-existent, triune God is holy, just, good, kind, and loving.

"God is love." (1 John 4:8)

"Our God is a consuming fire." (Hebrews 12:29)

"God is a Spirit." (John 4:24)

"Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." (Isaiah 6:3)

"Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised...." (Psalms 48:1)

It is important to realize that the Bible, as God's revelation of Himself to man, does not focus on the physical or philosophical aspects of God's being. It emphasizes the character qualities of God. There are poetic and prophetic references to His arms, hands, and eyes. These references are anthropomorphisms, or words to illustrate something by using human terms. Note that there are also references to His wings and feathers. God is not a man, and never has been.

God is so great that it is difficult to try to describe Him with mere words. He is everywhere; He is all-powerful; and, yet, He knows and cares about the smallest details in the lives of His creation. He is always perfect and just. He cannot make a mistake, although we make mistakes all the time. He is the absolute sovereign Master of the universe. He is so sovereign that He can allow His creatures to make

their own choice -- to rebel and disobey, or to trust Him and obey; and He is still Lord.

The greatest revelation of what God is like is Jesus. He came to reveal the Father. In fact, He emphasized the fatherly heart of God in teaching people to relate and respond to their Creator. As our Heavenly Father, God loves us. He loves us enough to chasten us when our attitudes are wrong. His desire is always for our eternal good. As a Father, God loves to gather and unite His children. He is grieved when we split up and cannot get along with each other.

God is holy. He is absolute in the integrity of His being, and no sin can stand in His presence. He is so holy that He could not pardon the sins of the world arbitrarily. Sin demands the death penalty. The necessity for the sacrificial lamb to atone for sins illustrates God's perfect holiness. The fact that He sent His only begotten Son to die on the cross as the "Lamb of God" is the greatest evidence of His love. Since the penalty for sin was paid, the choice now is up to each of us.

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

God is faithful and legally justified to forgive our sins.

It is interesting to note that when men invent gods (as in Greek and Roman mythology), the gods are often mean, or angry, or unstable. Men who do not know God are always trying to "make God in their image." The true God is never mean, or fickle, or unfaithful. Our God never

changes. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He always keeps His Word, and He never fails. Our God is a good God. He is awesome. God is not like us. Our goal is to seek to be like Him.

## How Do the Members of the Godhead Relate to Each Other?

The three Persons of the Trinity are one in substance and purpose. They have perfect love and harmony, and They work as one.

"And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." (Luke 3:22)

Christ taught a distinction of Persons in the Godhead, which He expressed in specific terms of relationship as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The mode of this distinction and relationship is not fully comprehensible to us, because it is not clearly explained to us. It is sufficient to understand that there is a distinction of three Persons; yet, there is one God who rules the universe of creation perfectly.

When Jesus was incarnated as a man to live among men and to become the sacrificial offering for the sin of man, He humbled Himself under the hand of the Father; that is, He made Himself subject to the Father and to the Holy Spirit. He became as "a servant," who sought only to do the will of the Father and not His own. (Luke 22:42) Even in His miraculous conception, we see the work of the Godhead. The angel said to the teenage Jewish girl, Mary:

"The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:35)

It is significant that the members of the Holy Trinity have a perfect spirit of mutual admiration and honor. Jesus constantly glorified the Father and honored the Holy Spirit. The Father glorified the Son, and the Holy Spirit always glorified the Father and the Son. A sublime evidence of the presence and work of the Holy Spirit is that the name of Jesus Christ is constantly magnified in those through whom He works and speaks. Scripture indicates that all three members of the Trinity are equally God, and co-eternal. Therefore, the parallel of a "father and son" relationship is not exactly like our natural one; but, it gives us an idea that is partially illustrated in the natural.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1)

Jesus is "with God," while at the same time He "is God." This is the mystery of the Trinity, which the natural mind cannot fully grasp. Notice that every time men invent a religion (man-made religions are called "cults"), they reject the idea of the Trinity, because it is not a concept which the mind of man can grasp or understand. Therefore, men would never invent the idea. Man in his intellectual ego says, "Give me a God I can comprehend with my mind; bring God to my mental level." But, we can no more fully comprehend God than a coffee cup can contain the Pacific Ocean. God is God; and as finite humans, we must accept what He says about Himself.

#### What Is a Spirit?

A spirit is a being with intelligence and personality, but not a physical body.

"...a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." (Luke 24:39)

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

Christians need to understand that there are millions of non-corporeal -- not possessing a physical body -- beings in the world and in the universe, and they are no less real than any physical being. The Bible speaks of the "natural man," who cannot see or understand anything in the spirit realm. His own spirit is dead, because of his sin. (1 Corinthians 2:14) In his spiritual blindness, man will try to explain any supernatural (non-physical) occurrence in fleshly or carnal terms. He will try to explain things as "extra-sensory perception," "psychic powers," "aliens from outer space," or whatever he can imagine. All of these can be understood if we realize that the Bible is right and plainly talks about angels, demons, and other occupants of the very real spirit world.

God created a large number of spiritbeings long before He created the earth. They are called angels. The word means, "messenger; a spirit being subordinate to God," and is used in the Bible to describe these spirit messengers, or pastors. (Revelation 2-3) One-third of the mighty host of angels in heaven rebelled against God and followed the archangel Lucifer. They were cast down to the earth, and he is now called Satan, or the devil.

Many Bible scholars also believe that, long before the days of Adam and Eve, God had on the earth a race of beings who became rebellious and wicked along with Satan and his angels. After the

"earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep," (Genesis 1:2)

These now disembodied spirits were able to move about in the earth to create mischief and even inhabit the minds of rebellious humans. They are called "demons," or "evil spirits", in the Bible, and will eventually be cast into hell with Satan and his angels, along with those humans who are not right with God when they die. There are many accounts of demonic activity in the Bible, and demons are still active today. Be sure to note that God has a host of mighty angels, who are able to defend the saints in spiritual conflict as they pray.

Evil spirits love to imitate dead people and fuel the superstitions of ghosts, reincarnation, and witchcraft. We know from the Bible that the spirits of dead humans are not allowed to roam around the earth after leaving the body. They must go either to heaven -- born-again

saints -- or to hell -- those who are lost. (Luke 16:19-31)

Only God is omnipresent. The Holy Spirit can live in a billion believers and speak in ten thousand churches at the same moment. But Satan cannot be in more than one place at a time. He is a created being. He is called the "god of this world" because he was cast out of heaven onto the earth and given authority over

the earth (for a limited time) when Adam sinned. He is an angel, not God. Every evil spirit being is subject to the authority of Jesus Christ and must leave at the command of any true child of God who speaks in Jesus' name. (Mark 16:17)

#### What Is Worship?

Worship is ministering to God with our spirit, with singing and with adoration in His presence.

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

"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.,.." (Ephesians 5:19)

The most important thing in all of life is to know God personally, to know how to enter into His presence, and to relate to Him as His child. One activity which believers will do forever is to praise and worship God. His purpose for man is intimate fellowship with Him, not just service. In praise, we make our "boast in the LORD," (Psalms 34:2) and know that God dwells in the midst of the praises of His people. (Psalms 22:3)

As we magnify God, sing of His greatness, and recount His works with thanksgiving, we actually "enter into his courts" (Psalms 100:4) with the sacrifice of praise. While God is omnipresent -- everywhere -- He dwells particularly in the hearts of worshippers, just as He had His dwelling in the tabernacle in the Holy of Holies among His chosen people, the children of Israel.

The Greek word used most often in the Bible is "proskunio," which means, "to kiss toward." Worship to God in the spirit is really illustrated in the natural world by the response of a loving bride with her husband in an intimate relationship. We take God's name, find our glory and identity in Him, and delight to be with Him and read correspondence from Him (the Bible).

We praise the Lord with songs, instruments, clapping our hands, rejoicing, sacrifices, shouting, and joy; but, we worship Him in spirit. To worship Him in truth simply means to worship Him according to the directions given in the Bible, rather than according to our taste and personality. Note also that God does not seek to "be worshipped." He seeks "worshippers." He is looking for a covenant people who will delight themselves in Him and rejoice in His presence. God's goal is an intimate relationship, not oblations and religious ceremonies.

"....in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore." (Psalms 16:11)

### What Is the Biblical Pattern for Praise and Worship?

Guiding principles for praising and worshipping the Lord can be found in the Old Testament, especially in the book of Psalms.

"But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:..." (Acts 24:14)

The Apostle Paul was in court, defending his faith. He was accused of heresy by some because of his style of worship. He did not go into detail, other than to say that "...herein do I exercise myself...." (Acts 24:16) He said that he worshipped according to the law and the prophets. In other words, he followed the Old Testament pattern for worshipping God.

Today some believers argue that, since music and instruments are rarely mentioned in the New Testament, to be a New Testament church, we must eliminate instrumental music. God must have changed His mind and does not like music anymore. No. God does not change.

The reason musical instruments are not mentioned in the New Testament is that the topic was already settled in the Old Testament. The largest and central book of the Bible is the songbook -- the Book of Psalms -- where God tells us precisely what He likes. It speaks of singing with instruments, clapping the hands,

celebrating, even dancing with joy before the Lord.

The New Testament takes the old covenant and brings forth the new. It puts light on the types and shadows and corrects many misunderstandings people had. For example, the New Testament takes away the blood sacrifices of animals, because our sins are now washed away eternally by the blood of Christ. The old law of the Sabbath is fulfilled in Christ, who is our Sabbath rest. But, God never changed the songbook. The fact that the New Testament does not deal with music and worship style shows us two things:

- 1. Nothing needed to be changed.
- 2. The early Christians clearly understood praise and worship.

It was not necessary to correct errors in their thinking on that topic. Notice that most of the Epistles were written to correct errors in the church.

To learn what expressions of worship are pleasing to God, read the Bible. God delights in our praise and thanksgiving in great congregations, with joyful song and many kinds of instruments. We do not worship according to our own tastes and personalities, but according to His Word. We do not worship to please people. Our

goal is to be pleasing to God. The emphasis in praise and worship is the attitude of the heart and the expression of a valid relationship with God. But, there are physical expressions which the Psalmists encourage us to use regularly. These include bowing, raising the hands (as the evening sacrifice), singing, shouting with joy, clapping the hands, playing on instruments, using tambourines and expressive movements, celebrating with

hilarity, prostrating, and giving offerings to the Lord.

It is scriptural to gather in large congregations in one accord to bless and seek God. We should "enter in," or begin with praise, and then move into worship together. Under anointed leadership, we worship and prepare our hearts to receive a word from God.

#### What Is the "Rapture?"

The "rapture" is the blessed hope of the Christians, when the dead in Christ and the living saints will be "caught up" to meet the Lord in the air at His return.

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18)

The term "rapture" is not in the Bible per se, but it is a biblical event. Paul spoke of it as the "blessed hope" of the Christians. "Rapture" means "a thrill, ecstasy, a glorious joy." The word also means, literally, "to seize, to carry off, to transport," as in the rapture of Elijah the prophet. Christians have looked forward with prophetic faith to this supernatural moment of "rapture" that God clearly promises in His Word.

After Jesus rose from the dead, He made numerous appearances among His disciples for 40 days; and then, before a large crowd, He ascended up to heaven in a cloud. Then,

"while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye

men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:10-11)

Since Jesus ascended in a cloud, His return will be "in the air," and the saints will go up to meet Him.

At a moment in time, which only God knows, the trumpet of God will sound, and Jesus will return. The souls of the saints who died in Christ will come with Him and will go to their graves (1 Thessalonians 4:14) to be restored to their physical bodies. These bodies, no matter how much they have decomposed, will be restored, transformed, and brought to life. The graves will open, and they will rise to meet Jesus in an incorruptible body of "flesh and bone." This renewed body will never grow old or die, but it will be like Christ's glorified body. John said that

"...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)

Note also that John continues by saying,

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

In other words, if you really believe it, you will change your lifestyle, realizing that the temporal pleasures of sin cannot compare with the joy that will be revealed at His coming.

"Glorified" is the term we use for the change from "corruptible" -- capacity for decay and death -- to "incorruptible" -- cannot decay. This "mortal" -- able to die -- will put on immortality -- life eternal. The living saints will suddenly experience the

same change in their bodies and will rise together to meet the Lord in the air. Those who are not ready to meet Him will be left with all the rest of the world to experience the greatest tribulation ever known by mankind.

Therefore be ye also ready: for at such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." (Matthew 24:44)

#### What Is Resurrection?

Resurrection means the restoration of life to a person who has died and the return of his spirit to his physical body.

"I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." (John 11:25)

A friend of Jesus from Bethany, named Lazarus, died. His body ceased to function, and his spirit had gone to "Paradise," also called "Abraham's Bosom," where the souls of the righteous went before Jesus died on the cross. When Jesus arrived four days after the death of Lazarus, He called the spirit of Lazarus back, and Lazarus rose from the dead. There are several cases of resurrection from the dead in the Bible, but the most important is the resurrection of Jesus. All of the others eventually died again; but, Jesus was raised "incorruptible" -- "glorified." He is called the "firstfruits of the resurrection." (1 Corinthians 15:20, 23)

When Jesus returns to the earth, there will be a mass resurrection of all the saints who have died, whose spirits are now in heaven. In the case of extreme decomposition, God can take even a molecule of the original body as a "seed", restore the body, and make it perfect and eternal. It will be the "same" body, only "new and improved." Notice from the Bible accounts that after Jesus was resurrected from the dead, He could suddenly appear and disappear at will.

"We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2)

Jesus did not get a brand new body when He was resurrected; rather, the body He had on earth was transformed and glorified. We speak of our "new" body; but, it is probably more correct to use the term "renewed body." In eternity, we will still know and recognize one another. It is similar to the transformation of earth in the day of judgment by fire. John speaks of a "new heaven and a new earth." (Revelation 21:1) They will actually be the same earth and atmosphere, but they will be changed and restored to their pre-flood beauty.

Almost every religion has some form of doctrine relating to "eternal life," or at least some form of ongoing existence. The Hindu religion and the mystic cults which developed from it teach the false doctrine of "reincarnation," or the idea that the soul just gets involved in another birth and becomes one creature after another, a form of "eternal life." This is a tactic of Satan to deceive men into thinking that this life is not very important; that it is not "appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:..." (Hebrews 9:27) Many other religions teach that people will just become spirits, or ghosts, or gods, or angels, or get different bodies.

Christianity is unique in the doctrine of a bodily resurrection. Men can invent all sorts of ideas about eternity; but, God is the one who really knows, and His Word clearly teaches a bodily resurrection. There will be other mass resurrections after the thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth, notably the resurrection of all the unrighteous dead. The book of Revelation

says that they will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ, who will pronounce righteous eternal judgment upon their lives, based upon their rejection of Him as their Lord and Savior, and He will assign them to the eternal lake of fire with Satan and his angels. (Revelation 20:11-15)

## Who Will Go in the First Resurrection with the Dead in Christ?

The Lord is the judge. But, scripture indicates that not all believers will be ready to meet the Lord when He comes again.

"Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." (Matthew 24:40-42)

In Matthew 24 and 25, Jesus spoke of many things about the last days and His second coming. He exhorted His disciples to "be ready...." He taught them about four kinds of people who, at best, would be in a very poor position at the "day of the Lord." We believe that these are referring to born again people, because they are the Lord's servants, virgins, stewards, and the Lord's flock. Each one of them lacked something essential to be included in the company of the faithful saints.

- 1. Servants. (Matthew 24:45-51) This seems to speak particularly of preachers and teachers in the church, who say in their hearts, "my Lord delays His coming." They lack vision, and lack the fear of the Lord, so they have two general responses in life.
  - a. They "smite their fellow servants," -- have you ever seen Christian leaders who cut each other down? -- and they

- b. Indulge themselves in worldly pleasures with the wicked. Jesus said that when He comes, He will "cut him off"; "appoint him his portion with the hypocrites," and "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
- 2. Foolish Virgins. (Matthew 25:1-13) The kingdom of heaven is like ten virgins -- pure ones. This could hardly mean lost people, yet five of them were "foolish," because they ran out of oil and could not light their lamps. They portray believers who lack spiritual anointing. They are spiritually dried up. The Holy Spirit is not flowing through them, so their light cannot shine. When the bridegroom comes, they miss the wedding festivities. The "door was shut."
- 3. **Stewards** with the Master's talents. (Matthew 25:14-30) Each faithful servant who invested the Master's money wisely received a reward; but, the one who hid his talent in the earth, because he was lazy, was severely rebuked by the Lord and cast into "outer darkness." He was the Lord's servant; he was entrusted with a gift; but, he lacked integrity.

4. Goats in the flock. (Matthew 25:31-46) Jesus differentiates between His sheep and goats by their responses to hurting people. If they cared about and helped people in their times of distress and need, Jesus responded to them as if they had done it to Him. He judged some of the flock to be "goats," because they lacked compassion for people in trouble. Those goats on His "left" were assigned to "everlasting fire."

We see in the book of Revelation that there will be many Christians in the Great Tribulation. There is no guarantee that all church members or all believers will be in the number of those who are ready when Jesus comes. We do not know exactly who will be ready; but, we know that we can be ready to meet the Lord as we "watch and pray" and encourage one another to "occupy" until He comes.

"He which testifieth of these things saith, 'Surely I come quickly.' Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Revelation 22:20)

#### What Is the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is the supernatural immersion into the Holy Spirit by the Lord Jesus Christ, with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues.

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me....shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." (Matthew 3:11)

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

Everyone who is born again by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is "born of the Spirit." Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost:" (John 20:22) and yet, before He ascended to heaven, He told those same men to wait in Jerusalem, and "ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost...." (Acts 1:5)

The New Testament teaches that God has a gift to give to any believer who will receive it. The progression in Acts 2:38 is,

"Repent, and be baptized... for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

God uses this term "baptidzo" for this spiritual impartation, as well as for the sacrament of water baptism. This baptism is more than a "filling" of the Spirit. It is a time where the believer, in his pursuit of more of God's presence and power in his life, surrenders to the Lord as a cleansed

vessel. He responds to the Spirit, who overwhelms and washes his soul in a flood of power-producing joy. This baptism is also a free gift, given to every believer who will seek and receive it.

The Apostle Paul said to a group of "Baptists" in Ephesus:

"Have ye received the Holy Ghost since you believed?" (Acts 19:2)

They were believers; but, they had not heard about this gift that God had available for them. They received Christian water baptism; and then they began to speak in unknown tongues as they were baptized in the Holy Ghost.

In the accounts in the book of Acts, there always was a supernatural manifestation that accompanied the baptism; and the one "sign" mentioned in Acts is speaking in tongues. When Peter heard Cornelius speaking in tongues, he was instantly convinced that Gentiles could be saved, even though, up until that moment, he thought salvation was for Jews only. (Acts 10:44-48) The tongue is spoken of in the Bible as our most "unruly member." (James 3:8) If our tongue becomes yielded to the Holy Spirit, it is a good "sign" that our whole heart is surrendered to the Lord.

# Section 8

## Lessons

## **Promotion Sunday**

Volume 9

Lesson 1



## Bible References

Jeremiah 29:11

**Isaiah 43:19** 

James 3:1



#### Theme

This is an introduction for the new class -- an opportunity for the youth leaders and students to get acquainted.



## Scripture Reading

Ecclesiastes 11:9-10, 12:1

9 "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee unto judgment.

10 "Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity."

#### Ecclesiastes 12:1

1 "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."



#### **Psalms 90:12**

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."



### **Outline**

## I. Introduction and General Overview of New Class.

- A. The teacher of the class is introduced. (Also youth leaders, if applicable.)
- B. The subject matter (teaching topics) and activities for the year are briefly introduced.
- C. The students are introduced.

## II. What the Students Can Expect From the Class.

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

2. The purpose of the class is to build strong friendships between the youth leaders, students, and the Lord.

## III. What the Teacher Expects From the Students.

- A. The Bible is the textbook for the class; therefore, every student needs to bring a Bible.
  - 1. The students are to bring a notebook and pencil to class.
  - 2. If a teenager does not have a Bible, then an attempt will be made to provide the teenagers with one.
- B. The students need to be sensitive to the atmosphere of the class.
  - 1. There is a time for everything. (Ecclesiastes 3:1)
    - a. There is a time to keep silent, and a time to speak. (Ecclesiastes 3:7)
    - b. There is a time to talk and laugh, and there is a time to be still. It is important that the students are able to discern between the two.
  - 2. A teacher cannot make a student listen; this is a right the teacher must earn. However, the teacher does have the right and responsibility to make a distracting, disrespectful student cease from disrupting the class.
- C. The students are expected to be on time for class each week.



## Spiritual Truths

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



## Lesson Material

Every teacher must remember that it is a crime to bore teenagers with the Gospel. Isaiah 55:11 is often quoted as saying the Word of God will never return void. This is not a correct interpretation of the context. The verse says the Word of God will never return void when the Lord speaks it or sends it forth. There is a infinite difference between the Lord speaking His Word and us speaking it. If the Bible is handled unskillfully or with selfish motives, then it can harm as well as heal, bore as well as bless, and confuse as well as convert. The Lord will hold teachers accountable. (James 3:1) God will

not excuse our lazy, sloppy, or half-hearted efforts. We must prepare to make each class an exciting and interesting study in God's Word, so that the students will come to understand and appreciate the wisdom of the Bible. In the process, students will come to class with high energy and expectations.

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

The teacher should explain his or her specific goals for the class. There is a difference between a purpose and a goal. A purpose is a general mission statement. A goal is a specific mission statement. The purpose of the class is to get teenagers to understand and appreciate the Bible. A goal for the class may be to have the students memorize all fifty-two Bible memory verses for the year. The teacher must decide exactly what he or she desires to accomplish with the teenagers. Goals, as well as the general expectations, should be expressed to the students in the first meeting. Remember, teenagers love a challenge.

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

Some teachers have a very loose teaching style with lots of questions, discussions, group dynamics, and unstructured structure -- the place is "buzzing." Other teachers hold the more traditional classroom and blackboard approach. Every style has its pros and cons. It is hard to say one style is better than another; but, one truth must be remembered by the teacher -- predictability breeds boredom. The cliché "variety is the spice of life" is particularly true with teenagers. The teacher should continually try new things, and not allow ruts to develop. Remember, if teenagers are not listening, then the teacher is not teaching.



### **Methods**

Have a "crowd-breaker" to allow the students to feel at ease in the new class:

Have every student find someone they do not know and gather as much information about each other as possible; and then, everyone must introduce their new acquaintance to the class.

Or, have each student introduce themselves to the class by telling what animal best describes their personality; or have each student give a most embarrassing moment or favorite music group, etc.

If possible, serve refreshments for the first class.

# Why Bother With the Bible?

Volume 9

Lesson 2



Psalms 119



#### Theme

This is a study in Psalms 119 on the wonder and power of God's Word.



Psalms 119:1-8

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 were 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 statues: O forsake me not utterly."



Psalms 119:89

"For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."



### **Outline**

- I. The Bible Can Give Us
  Happiness. (The Word
  "Blessed" is the Bible Word for
  "Happiness.")
- A. We must walk according to the "law of the Lord," which is God's Word. (verse 1)
  - 1. We must keep ourselves "undefiled" or clean. (verse 1)
    - a. If we do not indulge in evil practices such as sexual immorality, stealing, lying, etc., then we can anticipate God's blessings.
    - b. If we conduct ourselves in the "way" of God by following His directives, then we will be happy.
  - We must do what the Bible says, in order to experience God's blessing. (verse 2)
    - a. When we obey or keep "His testimonies," we will enjoy His blessings.
    - b. If we only listen to the Word, but do not obey it, then we are fooling ourselves; and we should not expect anything from God. (James 1:22)
- B. We must seek the Lord. (verse 2)
  - 1. The Bible promises that if we seek God, we will find Him. (Jeremiah 29:11-13; Acts 17:27)

2. We must be sincere in our seeking, and do it with our whole heart. (verse 2)

## II. The Bible Can Help Us Overcome Temptation.

- A. We must take heed to God's Word. (verse 9)
- B. We must hide the Word in our hearts. (verse 11)
  - 1. The way to hide the Word in our hearts is to memorize it.
  - 2. Jesus conquered the devil's temptations by quoting scriptures. (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13)
    - a. Jesus memorized the Word.
    - b. If we want victory over the temptation, then we should memorize the Word.

#### III. The Bible Can Give Us Joy.

- A. The Bible can give us as much rejoicing as riches. (verse 14)
  - 1. Wealth brings convenience and material comforts; but it cannot bring contentment and inner calm, which are the characteristics of joy.
  - 2. Wealth is dependent upon outward circumstances; joy is dependent upon inward qualities of peace and contentment.
- B. Seven times the psalmist says he delighted in God's Word. (verse 16, 24, 35, 47, 70, 77, 174) It is a joyful experience to read, study and obey God's book. (verse 16)

#### IV. The Bible Can Renew Us.

- A. The word "quicken" literally means "to make alive."
  - 1. God has the ability to empower us with new life through His Word. (Ephesians 2:1)
  - 2. God will refresh and rejuvenate us through His Word. (verse 25, 107)
- B. The psalmist prays nine times for this renewal of spiritual life. (verse 25, 37, 40, 88, 107, 149, 154, 156, 159)
- C. The psalmist declares that the Word has quickened him. (verse 50, 93)

## V. The Bible Can Reveal Truth to Us.

- A. The Bible is called the "way of truth" (verse 30) and the "Word of truth." (verse 43)
  - 1. The Bible is truth. The teachings of the Bible are all true. (verse 160) We do not have to guess or wonder. God said it, and that settles it. (verse 89)
  - 2. If we want to know the meaning and purpose of life, we will find it in the pages of the Bible. The Bible is man's answer book to life's questions.
    - a. Is there a God? Yes! (Psalms 14:1; 53:1)
    - b. Why are we here? For God's pleasure. (Revelation 4:11)
    - c. What is life all about? To know God through Jesus Christ. (John 17:3)

- B. God's laws and commandments are truth. (verse 142, 151)
  - 1. God's commandments are not suggestions. If we want to have fulfillment in life, then we must obey God's Word.
  - 2. The truth about successful living is found in the commandments of God.
- C. When we obey the truth of God's Word, it will give us freedom and liberty. (verse 45; John 8:31, 32)

## VI. The Bible Can Show Us the Way of Salvation. (verse 41)

- A. The wicked are far from God's salvation. (verse 155)
  - 1. They do not seek God's statutes.
  - 2. They do not seek God.
- B. The psalmist sought God's salvation.
  - 1. The psalmist's soul faints for salvation. (verse 81)
  - 2. The psalmist's eyes fail for salvation. (verse 123)
  - 3. The psalmist hopes for salvation. (verse 166)
  - 4. The psalmist longs for salvation. (verse 174)
- C. God reveals His salvation plan to men in the Bible. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

#### VII. The Bible Can Give Us Hope.

- A. Hope, as a Bible word, is not wishful expectations; but, it is a patient assurance in the certainty of God's Word.
- B. Hope in God's judgments, that they are right. (verse 43, 75)
- C. Hope in affliction, that God will comfort and renew. (verse 49, 50)
- D. Hope in God's Word, that it is true. (verse 74, 81, 114, 116, 147)
- E. Hope in God's salvation, that it will given. (verse 166)

## VIII. The Bible Can Teach Us Good Judgment and Knowledge.

- A. The Bible can give us common sense and discernment, in order to make wise decisions. (verse 66)
- B. The Bible can give us understanding, regardless of our intellectual capacity. (verse 130)
  - 1. The Bible can make us wiser than our enemies. (verse 98)
  - 2. The Bible can give us more understanding than our teachers. (verse 99)

## IX. The Bible Can Guide and Direct Us.

- A. The Bible is a light to our path. (verse 105)
  - 1. It will give us direction in the decisions we must make in life.
  - 2. We need to know what the Bible says, in order to know which

direction to go.

- B. God will order our steps. (verse 133)
  - 1. When we live according to God's Word, God will see that we are stepping in the right direction.
  - We do not need to worry about our future, when we follow the principles of the Bible and trust God.

## X. The Bible Can Give Us Great Peace.

- A. Those who love God's laws will have "great" peace. (verse 165)
  - 1. It will be an exceedingly abundant peace.
  - 2. It will be a continuing life of peace.
  - 3. This does not mean that we will be free from struggles in life; but it means that we can have peace in the midst of the pressures of life.
- B. Many people fill their days with pleasure, in an attempt to enjoy life. The pleasure of this world is a shallow substitute for the peace that God can give.
  - 1. Pleasure never satisfies for very long; and it often has a price to pay, after the enjoyment is over.
  - 2. The best way to enjoy life is to have the peace of God. If our actions are according to His Word, then we will have His peace.



## Spiritual Truths

- The Bible is God's Word to men.
- The Bible is God's treasure chest, blueprint and lighthouse for happiness, purpose, and direction in life.
- We must become familiar with the Word of God, in order to discover its treasures.
- We must obey the Word of God, in order to enjoy its promises.
- All of the wisdom that we need for successful living is found in the Bible.



## Lesson Material

The purpose of this lesson is to show young people the value and benefits of the Bible, and to encourage teenagers to listen and learn from the Book of books. It is an attempt to stir interest and create thirst.

What is so special about it? Why should we have to listen to it, read it, and study it? The answer to these questions is the purpose of the outline. If we want teenagers to read the Bible or listen to us teach it, then we must create a hunger for it. We must show that the Bible is the greatest of all treasures that man can acquire. (Psalms 119: 72)

Psalms 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible. It is longer than all of the epistles of the New Testament, except for Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Hebrews. Psalms 119 is divided into twenty-two stanzas of eight verses. Each stanza begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The great theme of the psalm is the Word of God, which is mentioned in almost every verse. Psalms 119 is the great chapter on the beauty, wonder, and power of the Bible.

It is doubtful that the teacher will be able to cover adequately all ten points of the outline in a typical class period. The teacher may want to concentrate on four or five truths and drive them home; or, after reading the psalm, the teacher may find new discoveries and want to share them with the class. Remember, the aim of the class is to show teenagers the significance and the blessings of the Word of God. It is to stir within them an appreciation and love for the Bible, and a desire to search the scriptures.

For each of the truths addressed by the teacher, it is important to illuminate how these truths have effected the teacher's or someone else's life. For instance, God's Word can help us overcome temptation. What is an example of this from the teacher's life? Do we have an experience to validate the statement, or can we find someone to illustrate the fact? Jesus, Who fought the devil with the Word, is a good example.

Another example: God's Word can guide and direct us. What is an example of this in the life of the teacher? How can this be demonstrated to the teenager?

Another example: The Bible shows us the way of salvation. This is a great opportunity for the teacher to share how he or she became a Christian. Another example: We all want happiness, joy and peace. These can be ours, if we obey the precepts of the Bible. One way to find out if the Bible is true is to do what it says. This is the challenge of the Bible!

Each one of the ten points in this lesson says that the Bible "can" do something for us. The Bible has the ability to give us great and precious promises; but this does not mean that the Bible "will" provide us with all of these blessings. It is only as we hear, read, study and obey the Word of God that we will reap its benefits.

The truth and treasures of life are found in the pages of the Bible; but it does us no good, if we do not open the book. We must urge the teenagers to look to the Word of God for the answers to life and living; and we must challenge teenagers to obey the precepts and principles of the Word, in order to enjoy life to the fullest. (John 10:10)



### **Methods**

Divide the students into groups, and ask them to find as many truths about the Bible as they can from Psalms 119; and then, have them share their findings with the class.

Ask students, ahead of time, to share in class on what the Bible means to them; or, have them give a testimony on how the Bible has helped them.

Take a Bible I.Q. test with the students. This is a fun exercise. Think up your own questions, or use some of the following:

- 1. What are the four books in the Bible called the Gospels? (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.)
- 2. What is the second book of the Bible? (Exodus.)
- 3. Who was the apostle Peter's brother? (Andrew.)
- 4. What is the longest chapter in the Bible? (Psalms 119.)
- 5. In what city was Jesus born? (Bethlehem.)
- 6. In which testament, Old or New, is the book of Hezekiah located? (There is no book of Hezekiah.)
- 7. What is considered the Love chapter of the Bible? (1 Corinthians 13.)
- 8. In what Bible book is the story of Joseph and his brothers told? (Genesis.)
- 9. Who denied with curses that he ever knew Jesus? (Peter.)
- 10. What was Luke's occupation? (Doctor.)

#### Grades:

9 to 10 correct: Bible Genius

7 to 8 correct: Bible Scholar

5 to 6 correct: Bible Student

3 to 4 correct: Bible Beginner

1 to 2 correct: Bible Toddler

0 correct: Sunday School Dropout

## **How To Read the Bible**

Volume 9

Lesson 3



## Bible References

Psalms 119:18, 89, 160

Acts 17:11

Matthew 24:35

John 8:31, 32

2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16

2 Thessalonians 2:13

2 Peter 1:20, 21; 3:15, 16



## Scripture Reading

2 Timothy 2:15

15 "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

2 Timothy 3:16

16 "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."



#### **Theme**

This lesson is about challenging students to read the Bible effectively and consistently.



Psalms 119:18

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."



#### **Outline**

- I. We Need to Learn the Background of What We Are Reading.
- A. This is the "who, what, where, when, and why."
  - 1. Who wrote the book, and to whom was it written?
  - 2. What were the circumstances for writing the book?
  - 3. Where was the book written?
  - 4. When was the book written?
  - 5. Why was the book written?
- B. If we do not understand the background, then we will miss much of the context.
  - 1. Jonathan Swift wrote the famous classic "Gulliver's Travels." It has been portrayed on cartoons and in children's books as a cute fantasy about a young man's adventures. What most people do not realize is that the book was a blistering satire on the British political system.
  - 2. Only if we know the background of British politics in Swift's day, can we fully appreciate and understand the story. The same is true with the Bible.
  - Only as we understand the background in which the books of the Bible were written, can we appreciate and understand the Bible.
    - a. The book of 2 Timothy is a wonderful example of this need to know background.

- (1) Who? The book is written by the apostle Paul to his beloved missionary companion, Timothy.
- (2) What? Paul was writing to encourage, counsel and instruct young Timothy in the pastoral work of the ministry.
- (3) Where? Paul was writing from a prison in Rome.
- (4) When? Paul wrote to Timothy a few months before he (Paul) was to be executed. The book penned the last words ever spoken by the church's greatest Christian missionary.
- (5) Why? Paul knew that he might not live much longer. He wanted to encourage Timothy in the work, and he desperately wanted to be encouraged by Timothy.
- b. When we know the "who, what, when, where, and why" of 2
  Timothy, the book becomes alive.
  - (1) Paul was writing from prison in Rome during the time that the Roman emperor, Nero had gone insane and was killing Christians. Nero had captured Paul, the ringleader and chief spokesman of the Christians; and Paul's execution was imminent.
  - (2) Paul knew that he was soon to depart from this life. (4:6,7)
  - (3) Paul addressed Timothy as "my dearly beloved son." (1:2)

- (4) Paul expressed to Timothy that he was "greatly desiring" to see him. (1:4)
- (5) Paul explained that he had been deserted and forsaken. (1:15;4:10,16)
- (6) Paul earnestly requested Timothy to come to him quickly, so that Paul could be encouraged by him. (1:4; 4:9,21)
- (7) Paul, the great apostle who gave his life for the gospel, instead of enjoying his latter years in honor and comfort as the heralded Christian scholar, missionary, and evangelist, was spending his last days in a prison -deserted by the church in Asia (1:15) and forsaken by his friends (4:10,16). His pleas for Timothy not to be ashamed of him (1:8) and to hurry to his side are heartrending. Yet, instead of being angry at God or falling into self-pity, Paul ends his letter and his life with a shout of triumph and victory (4:17,18).
- C. In order to understand the Bible, we should invest in a good study Bible or Bible handbook. If these are unavailable, then ask a pastor or Christian leader for background information.
  - In America, there are many good study Bibles for students to purchase.
  - 2. In America, two excellent Bible handbooks are <u>Halley's Bible</u>
    <u>Handbook</u> by Henry H. Halley, and <u>What The Bible Is All About</u> by Henrietta Mears.

## II. We Need to Have a Plan for Reading the Bible.

- A. A plan is a systematic way to read the Bible.
  - 1. Many people pick up the Bible and start at the beginning, with the high hopes of reading through the entire book.
  - 2. This is fine for the mature Christian; but often, for young Christians, it is like running into the water at full speed from the beach. It starts out fun, but eventually slows down with a splat -- especially when they reach Leviticus!
  - 3. It may be better to start reading with Psalms or Proverbs, or one of the Gospels.
- B. There are many different plans for reading the Bible.
  - 1. A person may want to read a chapter from the Old Testament and a chapter from the New Testament.
  - 2. A person may want to read a chapter in the Proverbs, and two chapters in the Gospels.
  - 3. Organizations, like the Gideons, have mapped out plans to read through the Bible in a year.
- C. We should experiment, until we find the plan that suits us.

## III. We Need to Have a Schedule for Bible Reading.

- A. We must set aside a specific time each day to read the Bible.
  - If we do not, then it will be hard to stay consistent in our reading.

- When we first get up in the morning, or before we go to bed in the evening, are usually good times for Bible reading.
- B. We will never find the time to read the Bible -- we must make the time!
- IV. We Must Make the Commitment to Read the Bible Daily.
- A. This is important, because many times we do not feel like reading the Bible; and we need a commitment to keep us faithful.
- B. God honors commitment.
- V. We Need to Ask the Lord to
  Make At Least One Scriptural
  Truth Real to Us, Each Time We
  Read the Bible.
- A. God will open our spiritual eyes, as we read His Word. (Psalms 119:18)
- B. We should look for principles in our reading that we can apply to our lives.



## Spiritual Truths

- The Bible is written by men, but inspired by God. It is God's Word.
- The Bible is not a simple book; it must be studied to be understood.

- If we are to grow in our Christian walk, then we must become Bible readers and students of the Word.
- When we become familiar with the history of the books of the Bible, we will understand them better and glean more truth from them.
- We will never consistently find time to read the Bible -- we must make time.



## Lesson Material

Christians believe that the Bible is the infallible Word of God. It is written by men who were inspired by the Creator of the universe, God Almighty. (2 Peter 1:21) Yet, knowing the incredible truth that the Bible is God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16), it is amazing that many Christians are not avid Bible readers. The fact is that many Christians struggle with Bible reading; and more than a few do not read the Bible at all. It is ironic that Christians love the Lord and believe that the Bible is the Word of God, and yet many are not big fans of the Bible, as evidenced by their use of it.

Why is this so? Perhaps the biggest reason that the Bible is not read is that it is hard to understand. Yes, the Holy Spirit will quicken it to our minds when we are born again (1 Corinthians 2:12-16); but the Holy Spirit still expects us to study. (2 Timothy 2:15) The Old Testament, with its feasts and festivals and sacrifices, is filled with complex customs and laws. In the New Testament, even Peter, the great apostle, said that Paul's letters were hard

to understand. (2 Peter 3:15-16) And we would not need pastors and teachers, if the Bible was simple and easy to comprehend.

When something is hard to understand, it is easy to get discouraged or bored. This is the case with many of us. We believe that the Bible is God's Word to men; and we know that we should read it. But it is difficult and discouraging, when we do not understand what is going on between its pages.

The Bible has been compared to a telescope. It is not until we learn how to use it, that we are able to see the treasures and mysteries of heaven that it can reveal to us. We must learn how to read the Bible.

The first important step is to realize that we cannot always expect to turn to a page in the Bible and automatically understand what is happening. We must become familiar with the background of what we are reading, in order to make it meaningful. If we do not, then the chance of becoming confused, discouraged or bored is more than probable. If we want our Bible reading to be enjoyable and beneficial, then we must become students of the Word.

This is why it is important to come to church and hear the Word of God taught by knowledgeable men who are educated in Bible background. Even then, we are challenged to do our own study. (Acts 17:11) Sometimes, we think that we will never learn it. But God is faithful, and He will direct us to what we need to know. We must be faithful to continue in His Word. (John 8:31,32)

We must be faithful (or consistent) in our Bible reading. In order to do this, we must have a plan, a schedule, and a commitment. We must set aside time each day to read the Word. There will always be things to keep us away from Bible reading; but, if we set a time and are committed to it, we will be faithful. Of course, there will be exceptions when situations come up that we must attend to; but make these the exceptions, and not the rule. Also, it is very helpful to have a specific reading plan. We need a plan to read so many chapters each day, or we can get a readthrough-the-Bible-in-a-year chart. Starting with one chapter in the Old Testament and one chapter in the New Testament is a good recommendation for beginning readers -- or thirty minutes a day, for the steadfast. The goal is that Bible reading becomes a habit.

Finally, the teacher's challenge to the students is to start reading the Bible on a regular basis; and the students' challenge to the Lord is that He gives them something from the Word that they can understand and apply to their lives. (Psalms 119:18)



## **Methods**

Take a survey with the students, and ask them how often they read their Bible, on a scale from one to ten.

9-10: Three or more chapters every day.

7-8: One or two chapters every day.

5-6: Read at least a passage or a verse every day.

4: Three times a week.

- 3: Once a week.
- 2: Once a month.
- 1: Rarely ever.
- 0: Never.

Do not have the students sign their name to the survey. Record the results on

a blackboard. The findings should be interesting.

Have a discussion with the students on why Christians do not read the Bible.

Ask the students to give examples of passages from the scripture that have greatly helped them in their lives.

# How to Memorize the Bible

Volume 9

Lesson 4



Deuteronomy 6:6-9

Psalms 1:2-3

Proverbs 25:11

Proverbs 16:24

Matthew 4:1-11

Luke 4:1-13

1 Peter 1:13



#### **Theme**

This lesson is about the importance of Bible memorization and how to do it.



Psalms 119:9-16

- 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."



#### Psalms 119:11

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."



### **Outline**

## I. Why Is It Important to Memorize Bible Verses?

- A. It helps us fight against temptation. (Psalms 119:11)
  - 1. When Jesus faced the temptations of Satan, he quoted scripture. (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13)
  - 2. When we have hidden the Word in our hearts, the Holy Spirit can bring it to our remembrance as we struggle with temptation.
- B. It teaches us discipline and sharpens our minds.
  - 1. It teaches us to concentrate. If we have a hard time memorizing scripture, it is because we have not learned to concentrate. Bible memorization will help us to learn.
  - 2. Peter said to "gird up the loins" of our mind. (1 Peter 1:13) How do we strengthen our minds? One way is Bible memorization.

- a. Some people say that Bible memorization is too difficult.
- b. It is hard; but, like anything else, the more we work at it, the easier it becomes. The more we practice, the better we will be at it.
- C. It will help us in our school studies.
  - As already stated, students who memorize scripture find their ability to concentrate becomes sharper.
  - 2. A wonderful by-product is that school studies improve.
- D. It will help us minister to others. (Isaiah 50:4)
  - 1. It will help us to comfort others as, the Holy Spirit brings to mind the verses we have learned. (2 Corinthians 1:4)
  - 2. A good word is a treasure. (Proverbs 25:11)
  - 3. A good word brings healing. (Proverbs 16:24)
- E. It increases our knowledge of the Bible.
- F. It builds our self-esteem.
  - 1. It is an achievement.
  - 2. We will feel good about ourselves.

#### II. How to Memorize Bible Verses.

- A. We can write the verse on a small card and carry it in a pocket. (Deuteronomy 6:6-9)
  - 1. When we are concentrating on the verse, we can pull out the card and check our progress.

- In the spare moments of the day, we can use our time wisely by pulling out the card and working on memorization.
- B. We must memorize each verse one phrase (or clause) at a time.
  - 1. Break the verse down into phrases, and concentrate on the meaning of each phrase. Let us take John 3:16 for an example:
    - a. "For God so loved the world..."
       Memorize this first, and concentrate on what it means.
       God loves us.
    - b. "...that he gave his only begotten Son..." God gave his Son to us.
    - c. "...that whosoever believeth in him..." We must believe in him.
    - d. "...should not perish..." We will not perish.
    - e. "...but have everlasting life." We can have eternal life.
  - 2. The verse has five phrases that must be memorized. We need to take them one at a time and not hurry to the next phrase, until the previous ones are memorized and recalled without difficulty.
    - a. We need to pace ourselves and work slowly.
    - b. We will get faster and better, the more we practice.
  - 3. When we consider and concentrate on the meaning of each phrase, this is meditation. (Psalms 1:2, 3; 119:97, 99)
- C. We should memorize each verse "word perfect" and also include the scripture reference.
  - 1. We must not get sloppy and start to paraphrase in our own words.
  - 2. The Bible reference is the name of the book, the chapter, and the verse.

- The name of the book will not be a problem (hopefully), but the chapter and verse can be easily forgotten.
- D. We must have a system of review for the verses that we have memorized.
  - 1. Unless we continue with drill and review, we will eventually forget what we have memorized.
  - When a large number of scriptures are memorized, set aside a specific time each week to review old verses.
  - We should check each verse, to make sure we have not made a mistake.
    - a. When mistakes are realized, we should not continue, until we are correct.
    - b. This will keep each verse fresh in our mind.
  - 4. After a while, memorization will get easier, and it will take longer to review. A person could spend well over an hour reviewing old verses. When this becomes the case, the student should start tackling whole chapters in the Bible; and, at the end of each night or at the beginning of each morning, review a chapter. This can keep a person sharp in review and sharp in the Word!
- E. We must pace ourselves and not try to memorize too much, too quickly.
  - 1. We should not try to memorize long passages of scripture too quickly.
  - 2. We want to pace ourselves, or we may "burn out."
  - 3. We want to make Bible memorization a lifelong habit!



## Spiritual Truths

- Bible memorization is a powerful way to fight temptation.
- Bible memorization will increase our knowledge of the Word.
- God will honor us, when we memorize His word.
- Our brain power will increase, when we memorize scripture.



## Lesson Material

It is interesting that in drug rehabilitation centers in America, one of the techniques or tools to help teenagers who have weakened ("fried") their brains is to memorize scripture. It is a powerful exercise that can help restore a confused mind. God says that He will bless us, if we meditate on His Word; and the first step toward meditation is memorization.

The teacher should not be surprised if teenagers are not exactly excited about this lesson. The students may groan and complain and say they cannot do it; but the teacher should not surrender to their indolence. The teacher should address their laziness and challenge them to turn their jellied brains into minds of steel. Every teenager has the capacity to memorize scripture, but most do not have the desire. They are mentally lazy, and

they must be dared to get mentally tough. Of course, if the teacher is not good at memorizing Bible verses, then the challenge should be tackled by the teacher, too. The class and the teacher can work together on memorization; and the teacher will be a good example, in the process.

At the start, Bible memorization will be difficult -- but this is true of anything. No one picks up a musical instrument for the first time and plays like a virtuoso. In the beginning, it may be hard and frustrating; but, the more practice that is put into it, the better the results become. Again, this is true of anything, including Bible memorization. The more we work at it, the easier it is to do, and the sharper our minds become. The rewards are tremendous. All of us need to be challenged in the area of Bible memorization.



#### Methods

At the beginning of class, ask the students to write down all of the verses they presently have memorized.

Ask the students to stand up and quote Bible verses that they have memorized.

Give the students time to memorize a verse in class.

The teacher should set a goal for the class to memorize the curriculum lesson memory verses.

For the students who are really working hard at memorization through the year, the teacher should set a goal for them to memorize a four-chapter book of the Bible.

The teacher should create rewards for the students who memorize the most verses through the year.

## Self-esteem: God's Secret To Happiness

Volume 9

Lesson 5



## Bible References

Luke 10:27

1 Thessalonians 3:12

Proverbs 31:30

Psalms 139:13-14

1 Corinthians 2:9



## Scripture Reading

Psalms 139:13-14

13 "For thou has possessed my reins: thou has covered me in my mother's womb.

14 "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully {and} wonderfully made: marvellous {are} thy works; and {that} my soul knoweth right well."



#### **Theme**

We must have of a healthy self-image, in order to have true contentment and fulfillment in life.



## Memory Verse

#### 1 Corinthians 2:9

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."



## **Outline**

## I. We Must Learn to Love Ourselves.

- A. Jesus assumes that we love ourselves. (Luke 10:27)
- B. God wants us to love others. (1 Thessalonians 3:12) We cannot love others, until we love ourselves.
- C. Many young people do not love themselves. There is an epidemic of low self-esteem.
- D. When we realize how much God loves us, we are able to achieve a balanced perspective on self-esteem.

## II. We Must Accept Ourselves for Who We Are.

- A. Avoid negative comparisons (television, magazines, classmates).
  - 1. Charm is deceitful and beauty is fleeting. (Proverbs 31:30)
  - We must not put our worth and value in outward appearance. It is fleeting. It will some day be gone, and then we will have nothing.
- B. It is the inner qualities that matter. (1 Samuel 16:7)
  - 1. A woman who fears the Lord will be praised. (Proverbs 31:30)
  - This should be our focus. Our bodies are just a shell. What is inside of us, and our love for the

Lord, is what will last forever.

- C. We must practice positive comparison, by letting positive personalities, attitudes and examples challenge and inspire us.
- D. We must learn to laugh at ourselves, and not take ourselves too seriously.

## III. We Must Treasure Our Uniqueness. (Psalms 139:13-14)

- A. We are unique in body and spirit. Out of all of the billions of people that God has created, each one of us is different. We are not an accident or a product of evolution (a hairless monkey). We are created in the image of God. (Genesis 1:27)
- B. If God was concerned about great looks and great minds, then He would have made all of us with lovely looks and perfect bodies.
- C When we get down on ourselves, we are telling God that He did not know what He was doing when He created us.
- D. God wants us to be ourselves.

## IV. We Must Find Something That We Can Achieve, and Go For It!

- A. We all have gifts and talents that God has given us. We must exercise ourselves in them. The more we achieve in a particular area, the better we feel about ourselves.
- B. We should not be afraid to take on new challenges. We must believe in

- ourselves, and in God's ability to do great things through us and for us.
- C. We must dream. Nobody gets to where they are, without dreaming about it first.
- D. We must set goals, in order to accomplish our dreams. It will take work but we can do it.
- E. Never give up!

#### V. We Must Focus on Others.

- A. We must force ourselves to take the focus off of us and to concentrate on others.
- B. The more we encourage and support others, then the less critical of our own shortcomings we will be, and the more others will accept us. We live in a selfish society. Everything pertains to self-absorption.
- C. There are four great things we can do to focus on others:
  - 1. Smile.
  - 2. Look people in the eyes.
  - 3. Be a good listener.
  - 4. Say "Thanks,' when complimented.

#### VI. We Need to Be Free From Guilt.

- A. Guilt and condemnation will destroy our sense of worth. This is one of Satan's greatest weapons and greatest lies. He can keep us from being effective for God, if he can make us feel worthless. God will never make us feel condemned.
- B. God accepts us. God proved His love and acceptance, when Jesus died on the

- cross for us. It is not His will that we suffer from guilt. Jesus came to take away our guilt. (Romans 8:1, 5:8)
- C. God loves us, but we have to receive His love. We will never love ourselves, until we first receive His love and acceptance. (Ephesians 1:6)



## Spiritual Truths

- God has good things prepared for those who love Him.
- God expects us as His people to accept and to like ourselves. We are of great value to Him. God proved this, when He sent His Son to die for us.
- God created us as unique individuals in body, soul and spirit. There is only one of each of us. We are created in the image of God. We each have a specific purpose and destiny in life that can only be found in Christ.
- God is not concerned about physical appearance. We should strive to look our best, but we should not get hung up over physical imperfections. In fact, there are pitfalls to beauty and charm. They can be deceitful and fleeting. What is on the inside is what really matters, because it is the inside that is eternal.
- Those who are in Christ have reason to feel good about themselves and their future. He has great and wonderful things in store for us.



## Lesson Material

Low self-esteem plagues thousands of our youth today. It is the cause of suicide, promiscuity, drug and alcohol abuse, and countless other teenage tragedies. Feelings of low self-esteem are not limited to teenagers. We all know what it is like to feel rejected, to not get a job, or to feel unhappy about our physical appearance. The teenage years are a time of searching and trying to find one's place and purpose in life. As a result, there is a tremendous amount of self-focus and scrutiny. This, combined with the many biological changes and peer influence, produces an extremely sensitive and often painful period of life. Adults can forget the impact that a face full of zits can have on yearbook picture day; or what it is like to try to do gymnastics in gym class with a body that cannot get down the hall without tripping over something.

Even with all of the trials of adolescence, however, young people can get through this time without having their self-image shattered. Most importantly, young people must know that God, their Creator, loves and accepts them, just as they are. They need to know that they are special and unique in God's sight.

God went to great care to make us the way we are. When we truly understand that God accepts us, then we can begin to accept ourselves. After all, if we are important enough for Christ to die for us, then we must be pretty special.

Teenagers also need to be encouraged to focus on inward qualities, rather than

outward beauty. A young lady or young man can become so focused on their outward beauty that they fail to develop inward character and integrity. Someday, that beauty will fade; and all that will matter will be the internal. Youth leaders should be careful not to give special attention to the beautiful and charming in their group. They must treat all youth with love and respect.

Young people should be encouraged and challenged to find and pursue their God-given gifts and talents. In order for a teenager to feel unique, they must find their uniqueness. Each one of us has gifts and abilities that no one else has. When we find our gifting, we must work to excel in it; and then, our sense of self-worth and purpose increases. Teenagers should be encouraged to demonstrate and exercise their giftings in the service of others. When we focus on others, we are finally free from self-criticism and self-judgment. Those who are most involved in ministry to others almost always have the best selfimage.

Finally, youth need to be free from guilt. Christian young people are often consumed with feelings of guilt and condemnation. They need to know that God does not condemn them. There is forgiveness in Christ. He will help them through every trial and temptation. (1 Corinthians 10:13) God will convict us and give us a desire and longing to be please Him; but He will never make us feel worthless and helpless. Condemnation is the work of the enemy. Conviction is the work of our loving Father. Teenagers need to be taught the difference.



## Methods

The teacher should be sure to use personal illustrations of his or her teenage years throughout this message. The teacher should share about personal feelings of low self-image and insecurity. Teenagers need to know that their teacher relates to them and understands what they go through. With a little creativity, these stories can be quite humorous and add spice to the message.

Many other illustrations of people who overcame great obstacles can be used, as well. The story of Tony Melendez, who was born with no arms and yet became a gifted guitarist, is a good illustration. Also, the story of Abraham Lincoln can be used for the point, "Never give up." Lincoln was a political failure before becoming president; but, he did not give up.

The teacher should never underestimate the value of encouragement, but always look for opportunities to praise and encourage the youth. The teacher may be the only source of encouragement they receive. A little praise goes a long way.

## Fired Up for God

Volume 9

Lesson 6



## Bible References

1 & 2 Timothy



#### Theme

This lesson is a character study on Timothy; and the challenge is to stir up and stay on fire for God.



## Scripture Reading

#### 2 Timothy 1:1-8

1 "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

- 2 "To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.
- 3 "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;
- 4 "Greatly desiring to see thee being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;
- 5 "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.
- 6 "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.
- 7 "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power and of love, and of a sound mind.
- 8 "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;"



## Memory Verse

#### 2 Timothy 1:6,7

"Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."



## **Outline**

## I. Timothy Was Raised in Church.(2 Timothy 1:5)

- A. Timothy's grandmother and mother taught him the scriptures. (2 Timothy 3:15)
- B. Timothy did not have a razzle-dazzle testimony of salvation.
  - 1. Timothy was not gloriously saved like Saul of Tarsus.
    - a. Saul was a murderer and a violent man. (Acts 9:1; 1 Timothy 1:12-15)
    - b. On the road to Damascus for the purpose of persecuting Christians, Saul was struck down by a light from heaven.
    - c. Saul heard the audible voice of God and was dramatically converted.

- d. Saul, who became Paul, shared this conversion experience many times. (Acts 22)
- 2. Timothy was a "church kid."
  - a. He could not speak of an incredible conversion experience.
  - b. Paul could say that he was struck by lightning from heaven and heard the voice of God.
  - c. Timothy could say that his mother and grandmother taught him the Word.

## II. Timothy Was Mightily Used by the Lord.

- A. Timothy was one of Paul's most faithful missionary companions.
  - Timothy was included in the introduction of six of Paul's letters.
     (2 Corinthians 1:1; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; Philemon 1)
  - 2. Paul expressed he had "no man like-minded" who gave as unselfishly as Timothy. (Philippians 2:19-22)
  - 3. Paul called Timothy a minister of God and fellow laborer. (1 Thessalonians 3:2; Romans 16:21)
  - 4. Timothy preached alongside Paul. (2 Corinthians 1:19)
  - 5. Paul referred to Timothy as his son. (Philippians 2:22; 1 Timothy 1:2,18; 2 Timothy 1:2; 2:1)
    - a. Timothy being referred to as a son was a testimony of his great faithfulness.
    - b. Timothy being referred to as a son was a testimony of Paul's great affection for him. (2 Timothy 2:1)
  - 6. Paul, at the end of his life, greatly desired for Timothy to come to him.

(2 Timothy 1:4; 4:6-9, 21)

- B. Two books of the Bible were written to Timothy. (1 Timothy; 2 Timothy)
  - 1. The last letter and the last words penned by the apostle Paul, the greatest missionary evangelist in history, were written to Timothy.
  - 2. God honored Timothy by having his name as the title of two books of the Bible.
- C. Timothy apparently spent time in prison for his faith. (2 Timothy 2:3)
  - 1. Timothy knew what it was to suffer for the Lord.
  - 2. Timothy was a strong, committed Christian.

## III. Timothy Had Struggles With His Faith.

- A. Paul encouraged Timothy to stir up the gift in him.
  - 1. Timothy had let his gifting begin to die.
  - 2. We do not know what the "gift" was that Timothy was neglecting. (1 Timothy 4:14)
  - We can assume it was a "gift" of some type of ministry service.
- B. Paul urged Timothy not to be fearful. (2 Timothy 1:6, 7)
  - 1. Timothy was probably not a very robust individual. He was often sick. (1 Timothy 5:23)
  - 2. Timothy may have been intimidated by people, because of his youth. (1 Timothy 4:12)

- C. Paul exhorted Timothy not to be ashamed. (2 Timothy 1:8)
  - 1. Timothy was not to be ashamed of the gospel.
    - a. Paul instructed Timothy that the gospel included afflictions. (2
       Timothy 1:8)
    - b. Paul told Timothy why he (Paul) was not ashamed of the gospel.(2 Timothy 1:12)
      - (1) Paul knew in Whom he had believed.
      - (2) Paul knew that Jesus would reward him accordingly.
      - (3) Certainly, Timothy knew these things, too; but Paul was reminding him, in an effort to motivate Timothy to stay strong.
    - c. Timothy was not a coward, but he struggled with timidity. He probably did not have a very bold or aggressive personality.
  - 2. Timothy was not to be ashamed that Paul was in prison. (2 Timothy 1:8)
- D. Paul challenged Timothy to be strong in his Christian faith. (2 Timothy 2:1)
  - 1. Timothy was to endure hardship, like a soldier. (2 Timothy 2:3,4)
  - 2. Timothy was to strive for victory, like an athlete. (2 Timothy 2:5)
  - 3. Timothy was to work for fruit, like a farmer. (2 Timothy 2:6)
  - 4. Timothy was to study for truth, like a teacher. (2 Timothy 2:15)
  - 5. Timothy was to flee youthful lust, like a man of God. (2 Timothy 2:22)

## IV. Timothy Was an Example for Us to Follow. (Romans 15:4)

- A. Timothy did not have a dynamic testimony of conversion; but, he had a testimony of service to the Lord.
  - 1. God honored Timothy for his faithfulness.
  - 2. We do not need to have a powerful conversion testimony to be used by God. God requires that we be faithful; and He will honor us.
- B. Timothy did not have a dynamic, charismatic personality, but God used him in a mighty way.
  - 1. We do not need a supercharged personality for God to use us in a mighty way.
  - 2. God requires that we be faithful; and He will use us.
- C. Timothy struggled with his Christian walk.
  - 1. We are not inferior Christians, when we struggle with our faith.
  - 2. Timothy, one of the great Bible characters, also struggled.
- D. Paul challenged Timothy to "stir up the gift;" and we must do the same.



## Spiritual Truths

• If we are raised in church, we need to be proud of our great heritage.

- It is not unusual or sinful for Christians to struggle with their faith.
- When a Christian is struggling, he or she needs to be encouraged and challenged -- and not condemned.
- God does not need "superstars" to accomplish His work.
- God can mightily use anyone who will faithfully serve Him.



## Lesson Material

For the teenager who has been raised in church, this lesson should be encouraging. Many church youth are tempted to believe that since they do not have a powerful testimony of evil turned good, then they do not have a testimony. Not true! The best and most powerful testimony is faithfulness! It is ironic that some Christian teenagers feel second-rate, because they are raised in church. The teacher should use this lesson to instruct them (church youth) that God does not need powerful testimonies -- God needs faithfulness. Being raised in church is a great heritage in the Lord; and God does not need "superstar" converts, in order to accomplish His work. God only needs faithfulness and a willing heart.

Timothy is a great example of how a church youth can be used by God. All Christian teenagers should take note of his life. He is the Bible's first "church kid." He was greatly used by the Lord. He may have been the apostle Paul's best missionary helper. In the Epistles, Paul refers to

Timothy more than any other missionary helper. And, of course, two Epistles are written specifically to Timothy. Paul had great appreciation and affection for this young man; and, when Paul was near the end of his earthly life, it was Timothy that he desperately wanted by his side. Timothy was a man of God.

What should also be encouraging to teenagers is that Timothy was a church youth of "like passions" (James 5:17), just like many of them. He knew what it was to grow up in church. He was not perfect. He had struggles with his Christianity, just like they do. There were times when he was hesitant to be a witness for the Lord; and he may have questioned his usefulness and abilities. There were times when he felt intimidated and fearful. Paul even tells Timothy not to be ashamed of the gospel or of Paul's being in prison. (2 Timothy 1:6-8) Timothy was struggling. Paul challenges Timothy to stir up the gift. Paul tells Timothy to fan into flame the gifting that God had given him. Do not let the fire die out. Stir it up, and fan it into flame. Paul's challenge to Timothy is that he stay on fire for God. The same challenge is true for us. There are times when our fire or enthusiasm for the Lord may begin to die. This can be especially true for teenagers who have been raised in church. The message to them should not be one of rebuke and condemnation; but it should be to stir up the fire! We must stay on fire and keep our zeal for the Lord. (Romans 12:11)

The teacher must instruct teenagers not to get discouraged when they struggle with their faith. There is nothing unspiritual or unholy about them. Timothy struggled. We will have our struggles, too. Yet, God will still use us, just like He used Timothy -- if we remain faithful. This must be the teacher's challenge to teenagers. God understands our struggles; and He will see us through, if we stay faithful.

The teenagers who are raised in church have a great heritage in the Lord. They may not have an incredible conversion experience, and they may have to stir up the fire at times; but, if they stay faithful, God will use them in mighty ways.



### Methods

Find out how many young people in class have been raised in church and how many have not. Discuss with the students the advantages and disadvantages of being raised in church.

Ask the students to write on a piece of paper their biggest difficulties and biggest blessings about being raised in church. Discuss their answers in class.

For the boldest of teachers, ask the students to write on a piece of paper if they would attend class, if their parents did not come to church. Have them explain their answers. This may be very enlightening for the teacher.

# Fighting Sexual Temptation

Volume 9

Lesson 7



## Bible References

1 Corinthians 7:1-2; 10:13

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

1 Timothy 2:9

2 Timothy 2:22

James 1:12-15



#### **Theme**

Sexual temptation is a struggle that everyone encounters; and God wants us to be victorious in this battle against the flesh.



Genesis 39:7-13

- 7 "And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.
- 8 "But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand:
- 9 "There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?
- 10 "And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.
- 11 "And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within.
- 12 "And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his

garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.

13 "And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth,"

#### Judges 16:1; 4-6; 19-21

- 1 "Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her."
- 4 "And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.
- 5 "And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him: and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver.
- 6 "And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee."
- 19 "And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven lock of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him.
- 20 "And she said, The Philistines {be} upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.
- 21 "But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house."



#### 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. Joseph Struggled With Sexual Temptation. (Genesis 39:7-13)

- A. Joseph had to face temptation.
  - 1. Potiphar's wife tried to tempt Joseph into having sex with her. (verse 7)
  - 2. After Joseph's first refusal, she did not give up; but she attempted to entice him "day by day." (verse 10)
  - 3. Joseph was caught alone with Potiphar's wife. The temptation came when he did not expect it. (verse 11)
    - a. We may not face temptation as straightforward as Potiphar's wife's continuous seduction; but, we too face daily temptations. (The teacher should use appropriate illustrations of tempting situations.)

- b. Temptation often comes when we are not ready for it; therefore, it is important that we walk close to God. (Matthew 26:41)
- B. Joseph had to fight temptation.
  - 1. Joseph realized that to give into temptation would be a sin against God. (verse 9)
  - 2. Joseph realized that to give into temptation would effect others. (verse 9)
  - 3. Joseph resisted her advances. (verse 10)
- C. Joseph had to flee temptation.
  - 1. Joseph did his best to stay away from the tempting situations. (verse 10)
  - 2. He did not ask Potiphar's wife to sit down and discuss her lust with him. He fled. (verse 12)

## II. Samson's Seduction by Sexual Temptation. (Judges 16)

- A. Samson had to face temptation.
  - 1. Samson saw a prostitute in the city of Gaza. (verse 1)
  - 2. Samson did not refuse her; and he probably sought her out.
- B. Samson did not fight temptation.
  - 1. There is no indication that Samson was concerned about displeasing God. In fact, he was careless with the special gift that God had given him. (verse 3,17)
  - 2. Delilah was probably a Philistine; and Samson should have known better than to be with her.
    - a. The Philistines were enemies with Israel.

- b. The Philistine leaders had easy access to see her. (verses 5, 8, 18)
- c. Samson had already been with a Philistine prostitute; and so, this was not out of character for him. (verse 1)
- C. Samson did not flee temptation.
  - 1. Delilah was trying to destroy
    Samson's life. This should have
    been obvious to him; and yet,
    Samson did not stay away from her
    -- probably because he was enjoying
    sex with her. Delilah may have
    prodded him for the secret of his
    strength, before or after sex with
    him.
  - 2. Samson was betrayed by Delilah and destroyed by his unwillingness to flee temptation.
    - a. Samson may have known that she was up to no good; but his lust for her kept him from leaving.
    - b. Samson did not realize the danger he was in by flirting with Delilah.
- D. Samson fell to temptation.
  - 1. He paid terrible consequences for being seduced by Delilah.
    - a. He became a slave.
    - b. He lost his eyesight.
    - c. His life was shortened.
  - Samson was used by God; but his impact could have been much greater, if he would not have fallen to temptation.

## III. God Rewards Those Who Are Victorious Over Temptation.

- A. Although Joseph was unjustly cast into prison, God eventually honored Joseph by making him second only to Pharaoh. Joseph was rewarded.
- B. Samson gave into temptation. His life was cut short.
- C. God will reward us, if we are faithful to resist the temptations in our lives. (James 1:12)

## IV. How Do We Fight Sexual Temptation? (James 1:12-15)

- A. We must control what we put into our minds.
  - 1. Temptation starts in the mind. Lust (verse 13) is a desire -- it is not an action. It is an emotional feeling (a thought) of the mind.
  - 2. If we do not control our thought life, then lust will "conceive" (verse 15) an action. If we are going to be victorious over temptation, the first battle we must win is with our thought life.
    - a. We need to stay away from the sexual stimuli that is so prevalent in our culture: explicit magazines, books, movies, videos, etc.
    - b. We cannot fill our minds with sexual images and expect to control our lustful desires (thoughts).
- B. We must control our actions.
  - 1. In our relationships with the opposite sex, we need to avoid tempting situations. It is not wise to

- be alone together, with nothing to do: 1 guy + 1 girl + time alone + nothing to do = trouble (sexual temptation).
- 2. Time spent between young men and women should be creatively and carefully planned.
- 3. If we are not careful, we can tempt others by our actions.
  - a. Girls wearing clothing that draws attention to their bodies.
     Women should dress in "modest apparel." (1 Timothy 2:9)
  - b. Boys getting too physically close with girls. (1 Corinthians 7:1)
- C. We must control our standards.
  - 1. A standard is a boundary that we will not cross. It is setting certain rules in our lives that we will not break.
  - 2. Young men and women need to set standards for physical involvement before marriage.
  - 3. Young men should set a standard like Job. (Job 31:1)
  - 4. Young women should set a standard like Paul gave. (1 Timothy 2:9)



- Temptation alone is not sin. It is when we fall to temptation that we sin.
- God will not allow any temptation to be more than we can handle.

- If we stay close in our relationship with God, then temptation will not be as difficult to fight.
- God will honor us, when we are victorious over temptation.
- If we fall to temptation, then we limit God's ability to fulfill the plan that He has for our lives.



## Lesson Material

This lesson begins with a contrast between two Bible characters who are exposed to sexual temptation. Joseph is successful in his battle with enticement; and Samson is not fighting the battle at all. Someone has said, "The fastest way to fight temptation is to give in;" and this was the character of Samson.

as a youth, suffered Joseph, tremendously from his jealous brothers, who sold him into slavery. He had every reason to question God and become bitter; and yet, he remained faithful. In the tempting ordeal with Potiphar's wife, who was probably very attractive, he was successful in resisting her continuous advances. This would not have been easy, especially given Joseph's unjust slavery. Why not enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season? But Joseph had respect for Potiphar and the fear of God. Joseph reminded Potiphar's wife of both her husband and God; but she did not listen, and she continued to proposition him. Joseph did not allow time to elapse. He did not ask Potiphar's wife to sit down and discuss the situation. He immediately fled when she became seductive; and he tried to avoid being around her. When facing temptation, it is important not to linger around it, but to deal with it immediately, even if that means running. (2 Timothy 2:22) Joseph's desire to please God enabled him to be victorious over sexual temptation.

Samson was also born with a special calling on his life. He was to be the deliverer of Israel from the hands of the Philistines. (Judges 13:5) Samson had great abilities and a great destiny; but he was careless, and he gave into his lustful desires. Instead of using his special gift to deliver Israel, he involved himself with Philistine women. It was only through the providence of God that Samson was used to defeat the Philistines. Eventually, his imprudence caused him great suffering and death by the hands of the Philistines. There is no question that God used Samson. He is mentioned in the Hebrews 11 "Hall of Faith." Like Joseph, he had faith in God. Yet, one wonders how different Samson's life could have been, if he would have resisted temptation and lived according to the plan that the Lord had for him.

The stories of Joseph and Samson are two powerful lessons for teenagers. For Joseph, whose walk was righteous, God raised him out of slavery and made him a powerful ruler in a foreign land. For Samson, whose walk was sinful, God allowed him to become a slave in a foreign land. These two Bible stories represent both a wonderful promise and a solemn warning.

It is difficult for teenagers to keep themselves pure, in light of all of the sexual temptation they face; and so, practical insight for conquering temptation must be given. God wants us to learn self-control. We must challenge teenagers to set standards for godly living. Young people are asking for trouble, if they fill their minds with sexual stimuli. A person cannot diet in the kitchen, and a drunk cannot stay sober in the liquor store; likewise, a person cannot control sensuality, if he is filling his mind with it.

If teenagers want to stay pure, then they must avoid tempting situations. They cannot expect to "park" at the park and keep their bodies parked. They cannot expect to be entangled in each other's arms and not risk sexual involvement. When sexual temptation comes unexpectedly, the Bible says that it is time to flee.

God rewards us, when we do not give into temptation. The closer we walk with Him, the easier it will be to resist.



### **Methods**

Have the students write on a blank piece of paper what they consider to be tempting situations with a member of the opposite sex.

Have the students role play. Have someone act as the devil (or conscience) and try to tempt another person. Give a few different tempting scenarios.

Ask the students to make a commitment to the Lord that they will keep themselves pure by setting godly standards. The teacher may want to give the students time to write down some standards that they will set.

## Handling the Hormones

Volume 9

Lesson 8



## Bible References

Proverbs 5

Matthew 5:28

1 Corinthians 7:1

2 Corinthians 10:4, 5

1 Timothy 5:2

Hebrews 13:4



#### **Theme**

The lessons deals with the importance of having pure relationships between the opposite sexes.



#### 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

- 3 "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:
- 4 "That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor;
- 5 "Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God.
- 6 "That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such as we also have forewarned you and testified.
- 7 "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.
- 8 "He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit."



#### 1 Thessalonians 4:3

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication."



### **Outline**

## I. God Wants Us to Avoid Sexual Immorality. (verse 3)

- A. It is God's will that we do so. It is also a commandment.
- B. We live in a society which says that there is nothing wrong with premarital sex; but it is God's will that we have standards for our sexual conduct.

## II. God Wants Us to Learn How to Control Our Bodies. (verse 4, 5)

- A. God is not into birth control; God is into self control.
- B. Controlling our bodies is something we must learn. It takes discipline, character and spiritual strength. It is not easy.
- C. Lust of concupiscence or passionate lust is the desire to have sexual activity outside of marriage.

#### III. God Does Not Want Us to Take Advantage of Others, in the Area of Sexual Conduct. (verse 6)

- A. Guys are aroused sexually by sight. Girls can take advantage of boys by wearing clothing that reveals the sexual zones of their bodies (such as high-cut bathing suits, low-cut blouses, tight-fitting clothes).
- B. Girls and boys can take advantage of each other by seductive flirting.
- C. Guys can take advantage of girls by showing them physical expression, and by misleading girls into thinking that they like or love them, when they have no such emotions.

## IV. God Wants Us to be Pure in Our Relationships With Members of the Opposite Sex. (verse 7)

- A. Purity is keeping ourselves free from sexual immorality.
- B. If we do not keep ourselves pure, then we are rejecting God. (verse 8)



## Spiritual Truths

- Our bodies are vessels that we must learn to control.
- There is a price to pay for sexual immorality.

- Sexual purity is a behavior that is holy to God.
- We are rejecting God, when we refuse to live a pure life.



## Lesson Material

Sexual immorality is a sin of every culture. The apostle Paul addresses this with the Thessalonian church. It was a problem in his era. Our own society is saturated with sex. We are bombarded by it in music, movies, magazines, television and advertising. It is not unusual for teenagers to say, "What is wrong with premarital sex," when society says that it is acceptable. Yet, regardless of the culture, regardless of what the majority is doing, we must teach that God says that sexual immorality and premarital sex are wrong.

We must encourage teenagers to trust God and stay pure sexually. God is not against sex. He created us with sex in mind; but, God's plan is that we wait until we can have the ultimate relationship with a member of the opposite sex --marriage. God does not want teenagers to sacrifice long-term happiness for short-lived gratification. Sex at the wrong time damages relationships, because it is done with wrong motives. It also damages our relationship with God.

God does not want us to indulge in sex before marriage; and God also does not want us to indulge in "lust of concupiscence." (1 Thessalonians 4:5) This is the desire to have sex outside of the boundary of marriage. It is stirring up thoughts of sexual activity with someone to whom we are not married. With this in mind, the first step to gaining control over our actions is to gain control of our desires. Lust is a sin of the heart. It is a sin of the mind. It starts in our thoughts, when we allow desires to run wild in our minds. Jesus said that out of the heart comes all kinds of evil. (Mark 7:21) The Bible says that premarital sex is wrong (Hebrews 13:4); but it also says lust is wrong. (Matthew 5:28) This is where we must start to gain victory over sexual sin. We must control our thought life. (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)

The Bible tells us not to "defraud" one another. (1 Thessalonians 4:6) To "defraud" means to raise desires (lust) in another that cannot be satisfied within the boundary of marriage. We can do this by our actions (seductive flirting); by our dress (immodest clothing); or by our words (playing upon another's emotions). This is tempting others into sin; and the Bible warns punishment for those who do so. If we play games with one another and defraud each other, then we will never build honest, healthy relationships with the opposite sex.

We must challenge teenagers to set biblical standards that will please God. Teenagers must set limits on how much physical expression they will give to one another. Any physical expression that causes "lust of concupiscence" is too much. Also, teenagers should set standards on what they will do, where they will go, what they will wear, and how they will act with members of the opposite sex.

God has called each of us to live a pure life; and this means to wait until we are married to have sex. It is for our own health and happiness. The greatest satisfaction a person can have with the opposite sex is not sex, but it is the commitment and communion of a lifelong relationship called "marriage." Sex is to be reserved for this ultimate love relationship between a man and a woman.



### **Methods**

The teacher may give the students a written, anonymous questionnaire. No one is to look at anyone else's answers, because the answers will be very personal.

Ask the students what questions they may have concerning sex. Ask them if their friends are sexually active. Ask them if they are sexually active. The teacher may have other questions to ask on this questionnaire.

Have a humorous skit with a guy and a girl who are sitting together in a car, at a park, or some other scene. The guy starts to put his arm around the girl; and she starts to explain to him the lesson outline.

Discuss with the students the ways that guys and girls can defraud one another. This could be a very interesting conversation.

# The Consequences of Premarital Sex

Volume 9

Lesson 9



## Bible References

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

2 Timothy 2:22

Hebrews 13:4

Colossians 3:5



#### **Theme**

Teenagers must be confronted with the negative consequences of premarital sex, and challenged to stay pure until marriage.



#### 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

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."

#### 1 Corinthians 7:1-2

- 1 "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.
- 2 "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband."



#### Ephesians 5:3

"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;"



## **Outline**

- I. God Says That We Are to Avoid and Flee Fornication.
- A. Fornication is any sexual activity outside of marriage. It includes all premarital sex.
- B. The Bible says that it is wrong, because it is not within the boundary of marriage.
- II. If We Disobey God's
  Commandments, We Will Face
  Unpleasant, Negative
  Consequences.
- A. This is not because God enjoys spoiling our fun or seeing us suffer. It is because without laws, we live in a world of godless chaos and confusion.
- B. All of the consequences of premarital sex may not affect a particular person;

but this does not immunize any of us from being stung by at least a few.

- 1. Pregnancy. Sex is a life-creating force. Are we willing to accept the responsibility of creating life? Are we willing to be a parent -- right now?
- 2. Sexually transmitted disease. There are over 50 different types of STDs; and many are not curable.
  - a. The STDs that are curable, if not arrested in early stages, can cause severe damage to the body.
  - b. STDs are a common health risk for those who engage in premarital sex.
- AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). AIDS is an STD that has no cure; and it <u>will</u> kill you.
- 4. Guilt. God has given all of us a conscience. When we do something wrong, guilt is inevitable. If guilt is not dealt with, it can cause anxiety, low self-esteem, and depression.
- 5. Fear. Fear is present in almost all instances of premarital sex.
  - a. There is the fear of getting pregnant.
  - b. There is the fear of getting an STD.
  - c. There is a fear of getting caught.
  - d. There is the fear of being rejected, if we do not perform well
- 6. Communication breaks down. Sex is a powerful experience; and it can become addictive and overshadow every other area of a relationship.
  - a. Once we focus on the physical, the more important areas of a relationship -- sharing values, interests, goals and dreams -- break down.
  - b. Sex becomes an all-absorbing activity; and, what is so

- wonderful at first, can become a bondage to the flesh.
- It clouds love. Sex is physically and emotionally explosive. It is a wonderful experience -- but it is not love.
  - a. It may fool us into marrying someone that we do not really love.
  - b. After the dust settles, we may find that we do not have much in common, and that we fell in love with a body -- and not the person in the body.
  - c. The true test of love is the willingness to wait.
- 8. It spoils the honeymoon. Premarital sex takes the adventure out of the honeymoon. The purpose of the honeymoon is eliminated. It may be a great vacation, but the true excitement and thrill are lost.
- 9. It causes marital difficulties.
  - a. If a person experiences guilt, fear, shame, or any other emotion with sex before marriage, these emotions will follow into marriage.
  - b. The person may become inhibited and be unable to totally respond sexually in marriage.
     This will cause withdrawal and other sexual problems.
- 10. There is a loss of fellowship with God. It drives a wedge between us and the Lord.
  - a. There is a loss of fellowship, because we know that our actions are the opposite of what God desires for us.
  - b. It can cause us to grow cold in our relationship with God. (Matthew 24:12)

- III. God Gives Us Commandments
  Not to Restrict Our Fun, But to
  Protect Us and to Give Us
  Freedom.
- A. Life without laws would be chaos.
  - 1. If we did not have rules (commandments) in sports, then we would have total frustration and confusion; and sporting competition would be impossible.
  - 2. If we did not have rules on the highway, then no one would be safe. It would be extremely dangerous to drive on the road, if there were no speed limits or stop signs or passing lane markers.
- B. God's commandments are for our ultimate benefit and happiness.
  - 1. God wants to protect us from harm and to insure our health.
  - 2. We must trust God. He is not trying to spoil our fun when He says "No" to premarital sex. He is saying through His Word that we will be burned, if we engage in premarital sex; and we will be blessed, if we wait until marriage.



## Spiritual Truths

- The Bible calls premarital sex "fornication" and "sin."
- All sin has a price tag on it.
- Sin separates us from fellowship with God.

- God gives us commands in order to insure our ultimate health and happiness.
- We must live by God's standards, and not by the world's.
- Premarital sex damages our relationships and causes many unpleasant, negative consequences.



## Lesson Material

The society in which we live may accept premarital sex with cute euphemisms, but the Bible calls sex before marriage "sin." It is fornication; and the Bible says that no fornicator will enjoy the blessings of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) This is strong language, but it is something that teenagers need to hear. Even if "everybody is doing it," premarital sex is wrong; and, somewhere down the road, those who indulge in it will get burned. We need to trust God. He gives us commandments to protect us, and not to spoil our fun. We need to have faith in God that He knows what He is talking about. Society may promote it, and people may think they are getting by with it; but, sooner or later, there is a price to pay for sin. (Romans 6:23) As someone has said, "The wages of sin have never been reduced."

It is helpful if we explain to teenagers not only what God says, but why He says it. If we say to teenagers that sex before marriage is wrong — because God says so—their first reaction is often, "Why does God say so?" It is important that we do our best

to answer this question. Many teenagers get involved sexually, because they see the thrill and excitement of sex on television and in movies; but they do not see the down side of sexual promiscuousness. They do not hear often enough, if at all, that there is a negative side and a cost to "casual" sex. Ten of the negative effects which may happen to teenagers are listed in the outline. These are not exhaustive; but they should be enough for teenagers to see that there are very real consequences that may harm them (or even kill them, if they contract AIDS).

The teacher may want to search for more consequences than those listed in the outline; or, the teacher may ask the students if they can think of any others. Write them on the blackboard.

The important point is that we want the students to see that God commands us to avoid and flee fornication for our own good. If we refuse to listen, then we will get hurt. We may not suffer immediately, but we will suffer eventually. All sin has a stinger in it. We will pay a price.

We must challenge teenagers to think ahead. Is it worth it? For a few minutes of pleasure, do we want to sacrifice a possible lifetime of grief? If a girl gets pregnant and keeps the child, then 90% of her life's script is written out for her. If a guy gets AIDS, then his life is over. If a girl gets rejected by a guy that she has had sex with, then her self-respect will die, and bitterness, anger and grief will be born. Premarital sex sacrifices the future of our ultimate relationship. Everyone prefers to marry a virgin.

Teenagers may say that they love each other; and they assume that love makes sex right and good. While it may sound noble, and while sex is meant to be an

expression of love, there is a huge difference between two people who are married and two people who are presumably in love. The difference is that a married couple has made a permanent commitment to each other. An unmarried couple may privately promise their love to each other; but this is not nearly as binding as being married. The opportunity to back out of the relationship is always present. In America, one-third of all engagements break up. This statistic indicates that a lot of couples who feel that they are in love eventually change their minds. A broken relationship is extremely painful; but the pain is intensified, if physical involvement has taken place.

God created sex as one of the most intimate ways a man and woman can express their love for each other. But this expression of love, in order to be sincere, secure, and totally satisfying, must be placed within the safeguard of marriage. Society may consider waiting "old-fashioned," but it works. There is not a price to pay, but only rewards to receive. God knows what He is talking about, when He tells us to wait until marriage. (Hebrews 13:4) We must communicate this to teenagers. We must challenge teenagers to set a godly standard of abstinence until marriage.



### **Methods**

At the beginning of the lesson, ask the teenagers to express what they think are the pros and cons of premarital sex. Write these on the board. At the appropriate time in the lesson, include the consequences from the lesson on the blackboard; and then, ask the students to compare the lists and see if they think that sex before marriage is worth the risk.

The teacher may want to collect statistics on teen pregnancy and the prevalence of AIDS and other STDs.

The teacher may want to have a guest speaker, who had a baby as a teenager, share a testimony on the experience; or, have an AIDS Task Force speaker share. (Always get your pastor's approval, before inviting any guest speaker.)

Have the students carry a hard-boiled egg with them for a day, without cracking it. This is baby-training.

Have them sign a commitment card, if you feel that it is tasteful and appropriate.

## **Honorable Relationships**

Volume 9

Lesson 10



1 Corinthians 6:13, 18

Romans 12:1

Philippians 2:3-4

Romans 1:21-28



#### **Theme**

We must have honor and respect in our relationships with God, others, and ourselves; and sexual purity is an expression of that honor.



Romans 1:21-28

- 21 "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified {him} not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.
- 22 "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,
- 23 "And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.
- 24 "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:
- 25 "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.
- 26 "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:
- 27 "And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.
- 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;"



#### 1 Corinthians 6:13

"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."



## **Outline**

#### I. Introduction.

- A. Webster's dictionary defines the word "honor" as "yielding or submitting to another's judgment or preference, out of respect and reverence."
- B. We will discuss three different relationships, in which we need to express honor.

#### II. We Must Honor God.

A. In all of life's decisions and choices, we must ask ourselves, "Will I or will I not honor God?"

- B. It is possible to know God, but to not honor Him as God. (Romans 1:21)
- C. We must always honor God.
  - 1. We honor God with our minds.
    - a. We need to guard our minds with prayer. (Philippians 4:6-7)
    - b. When something knocks on the door of our minds, we must test it with Philippians 4:8. If it does not pass the test, then we must not open the door.
    - c. We should fill our minds with the Word of God. (Psalms 119:9)
  - We honor God with our bodies. God's Word is the Owner's manual for our bodies.
    - a. The body is not for immorality. (1 Corinthians 6:13)
    - b. The body is to glorify God. (1 Corinthians 6:20)
    - c. We are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God. (Romans 12:1)

## III. We Must Honor Others (Specifically, in Our Dating Relationships).

- A. Our girlfriend or boyfriend.
  - 1. Real love is described in Philippians 2:3-4. This kind of love should be evident in every area of our relationships.
    - a. We should let nothing be done from our own selfishness. (verse 3) Our concern should not be what we can get in the relationship, but how we can honor and respect the other person.
    - b. We should consider the other person as more important than ourselves.

- We need to honor and respect his or her commitment to God.
- (2) We need to honor and respect his or her standards. (Real love will not violate another's standards for personal gratification.)
- 2. We should not look out only for our own interests, but also for the person's interests. (verse 4)
  - a. We should consider the other person's interests above our own.
  - Josh McDowell says, "An aroused hormone has no conscience."
  - c. We must not compromise our standards, even in the smallest area. Once we allow ourselves to be aroused, even the greatest commitment and standards can come crashing down.

#### B. Our future wife or husband.

- 1. On our honeymoon, will we be able to say to our wife or husband, "I have honored you?"
- 2. The question should not be, "How far can I go?", but "How much can I save for my mate?"
- C. Our girlfriend's or boyfriend's future mate.
  - 1. The person we are dating may one day be someone else's wife or husband.
  - 2. We must honor that person in the way that we would want to be honored.
  - Very few teenage dating relationships develop into marriage. This means that regardless of how we feel about the person we are dating, he or she is

likely to become someone else's mate.

#### **IV.** We Must Honor Ourselves.

- A. In every decision, we have a choice to bring honor or dishonor to ourselves. (Galatians 6:7-8)
- B. When we involve ourselves in sexual immorality, we dishonor ourselves.
  - 1. We sin against and dishonor our bodies. (1 Corinthians 6:18)
    - a. There are fifty-one documented types of sexually transmitted diseases.
      - (1) Twenty are not prevented by contraceptives.
      - (2) Almost one-third of adults in America are carriers of herpes.
    - b. AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).
      - (1) It can take six to eight years for AIDS to manifest itself in the body. This means that many people may have contracted AIDS when they were teenagers.
      - (2) It also means that if we are having sex with someone, we are able to contract any sexual diseases of the other person's previous partner(s).
    - c. Premarital sex is dangerous! If we contract an STD, then we will take it into our marriage and endanger our spouse and our future children.
  - 2. We sin against and dishonor our minds.
    - a. Memories of premarital sex will plague our married life.
    - b. Sexual sin can cause serious guilt and other emotional problems.

- 3. We sin against and dishonor our spirits.
  - a. Sexual sin will greatly hinder our relationship with God.
  - b. Romans 1:21-28 describes the tragic consequences of those who dishonor God.



## Spiritual Truths

- God's instruction in the area of sex is there to protect us and prepare us for joy and peace in marriage. He instructs us to remain sexually pure, for our own good.
- There is no greater way for a young person to honor and glorify God than to remain pure sexually until marriage. If we honor God in this area, He will honor us.
- True love and respect is shown not by getting all that we can out of a relationship, but by respecting the other person and honoring his or her standards and commitments.
- We impact others in every decision we make. When we violate sexual standards, we hurt many people, including our date, future husbands and wives, ourselves, and the Lord.
- Immorality is so tragic, because we actually sin against ourselves. Sexual sin can bring long-lasting consequences of guilt, emotional pain, low selfesteem, and physical disease. We must flee it immediately, when temptation comes.



## Lesson Material

God has given us a great treasure — our sexuality. It has been given to us to enjoy and share with our future marriage partner for the whole of our life. Because sex is such a great treasure, God has given us guidelines and instructions, in order to protect this gift, so that it will not become tarnished and marred. The Bible says that Satan comes to steal, kill and destroy. (John 10:10) As with every gift God that gives us, sex is an area in which the enemy tries to steal and rob from us. We must resist the devil.

"Honor" is a word that we may not hear much about these days. When we honor someone, we give them our respect. We place their interests above our own.

We must determine to have honor in our relationships. First of all, we must determine to honor God. If we honor God with our minds and bodies, then we will bring honor to ourselves and to our dating relationships.

In dating, we need to set standards by asking ourselves, "When I am married, how far will I have wanted my mate to have gone in his or her dating relationships before our marriage?" Remember, that person we are dating will likely be someone else's wife or husband someday. The question should not be "How far can I go?", but "How much can I save for my future mate?"

Remember, God created us. As our Creator, He knows what is best for us. He does not tell us to be sexually pure, in order to take all of the fun out of our lives.

He wants us to have the very best in life, and not second best. Although the price of sexual purity may seem great, it is well worth it.

We do have a choice. We can chose to dishonor God in our dating relationships. In the end, this is sure to cause great pain and sorrow. With the spread of STDs and AIDS, premarital sex not only can cause us emotional pain and grief, but it also can cause disease and death. There is only one kind of safe sex -- a monogamous marriage relationship. Condoms break; and no one is free from the consequences of sin.

Remember, however, that there is no sin that cannot be forgiven. If we have sinned in the area of sexual purity, God can forgive us and restore us. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us (our) sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." God can make us pure and clean again. Regardless of how far we have fallen or what we have done, God wants to make us righteous before Him. We need to confess our sin to Him; and we need to determine to live a pure and godly life, from this day forward.



### **Methods**

It may be appropriate to present this message with a same sex audience. The teacher may want to share with the guys one week and the girls the next.

Remember that a good portion of the students may be sexually active. This message must be given in a straightforward manner; but, it also must be done with grace and compassion. Be sure to emphasize that God is concerned about our future. And He also wants to forgive and cleanse our past.

Encourage the young people to take a stand for purity. Ask those who will vow and commit themselves to be pure to stand. Pray with them, that God would honor their commitment and keep them from temptation.

## **Judging Others**

Volume 9

Lesson 11



## Bible References

Jeremiah 17:10

John 5:22

Acts 10:42

Romans 14:3-4; 10; 13; 19

James 2:12-13; 4:11

1 Peter 2:1-5

1 Corinthians 4:5



#### **Theme**

Jesus came to save the world, and not to judge it. We must learn to follow Jesus' example.



## Scripture Reading

#### Matthew 7:1-5

- 1 "Judge not, that ye be not judged.
- 2 "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.
- 3 "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considereth not the beam that is in thine own eye?
- 4 "Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?
- 5 "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."



## Memory Verse

#### 1 Corinthians 4:5

"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."



## **Outline**

## I. Are We God, That We Should Judge One Another?

- A. There is only One Who is able to save or destroy. That is God. Let Him be the Judge.
- B. We cannot search the hearts of others, in order to see what is there. (1 Samuel 16:7)
  - 1. We tend to judge by outward appearances.
    - a. Man judges by the way someone looks, by what they wear, or by how they speak.
    - b. God, the righteous Judge, is merciful; and He looks on the inward heart.
    - c. We see the actions; God sees the heart.
  - 2. The heart of man is desperately wicked. This includes our own hearts. (Jeremiah 17:9)
- C. God is responsible for trying our hearts to see of what spirit we are -- whether we have sin leading to unrighteousness, or obedience unto righteousness. (Psalms 139:23-24)
  - 1. He judges the widow and the fatherless, because He is just, and He

- knows their suffering. (Deuteronomy 10:18)
- 2. He tests and proves us, in order to perfect us for the day of Jesus' coming.
- 3. He rewards us according, to the fruit of our doings. (Jeremiah 17:10) God sees the things that men do in secret, whereas we only see the outward things; and so, we are not qualified to judge others.
- D. Jesus came to save the world, and not to judge it. Where do we find in the Bible that we are appointed to the task of judging our brother or sister?

## II. What Does God's Word Say About Our Judging Others?

- A. We bring the same judgment on ourselves that we use when we judge others.
  - 1. If we judge without mercy, then we will be judged without mercy.
  - 2. If we judge by the flesh, then we will be judged by the flesh.
  - 3. If we spare our brother or sister from our harsh judgment, then the Lord will spare us from harsh judgment.
  - 4. If we judge by the law of liberty in Christ Jesus, then we will have liberty in our walk with God.
  - 5. If we judge by the letter of the law, then we will be judged by the letter of the law.
- B. God is watching the secrets of men; and He will reward each man according to his ways. "With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright; With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt

show thyself froward. For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks." (Psalms 18:25-27)

## III. Examples of People Judging Others Unrighteously.

- A. The Jewish leaders' judgment of Jesus, because He healed on the Sabbath, was unmerited. (Matthew 12)
  - 1. It was more important for Jesus to heal and deliver a man on the Sabbath, than to follow the letter of the law regarding the Sabbath. The Bible states that God is the only true Lawgiver. (James 4:12)
  - Jesus fulfilled a higher law, by healing the man. It was the law of love.
- B. The Roman and Jewish Christians were judging each other, because of the type of food being eaten.
  - 1. It was more important that they were all accepted in Christ, and not that they all have the same kind of food on their table.
  - We must see that it is more important to have fellowship in Christ than to have arguments over lesser matters.
  - 3. The kingdom of God is great, beyond mere eating and drinking. It is more precious than meeting our bodily, physical needs. It is "...righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Romans 14:17)
  - 4. Judging others squelches the real purpose of fellowship together in Christ.
    - a. The fellowship in Christ is beyond petty arguments.
    - b. The purpose of fellowship is for edifying one another, by building

each other up, strengthening each other in love, and encouraging each another in Christ.

- C. In James 2, James speaks to the believers about the respect of persons.
  - 1. They were judges of evil thoughts, and partial in themselves.
  - 2. The rich people among them were to be treated the same as the poor in the body of Christ, and not with the exaltation of one above the other.
  - 3. It was wrong to give the rich the best seats in the assembly, and make the poor stand in the back.
    - a. In our church, we must see that the lowliest members are treated with honor.
    - b. We must seek the building up and edification of our weak members, above our catering to the whims of the elite.

#### IV. Alternatives To Judging Others.

- A. Be reminded that it is Jesus Who was ordained of God to be the Judge.
- B. When we are reviled, we should not revile again; when we suffer, we do not threaten others, but we commit ourselves and others to Jesus, Who judges righteously.
- C. Desire the salvation of others, rather than judging them for being different than us.
- D. Be careful not to give honor to one person above another, for reasons of outward appearances.
  - 1. Honor the weak, poor and needy in the body of Christ.

- 2. Strengthen the weak members in Christ's church.
- E. We should work on our own weaknesses first, rather than pointing out the weaknesses of others.
- F. We must be a doer of the word, rather than a judge. (James 1:22) We cannot be both.
- G. We must have mercy, instead of judgment.
- H. We must follow after actions and words that make for peace and lifting up the spirit of our fellow man, rather than tearing him down by accusations and unrighteous judgment.

## V. Additional Revelation On Judging Others.

- A. The Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son. (John 5:22)
- B. The Son came not to judge us, but to save us; and He has committed all judgment to the Word. (John 12:47-48)
- C. The only kind of judgment that the Son knows is what the Father reveals to Him (only merciful, kind and just judgment). (John 5:30)
- D. The saints are only privy to judging spiritual things by spiritual things. The insight that the saints are given by the Holy Spirit are our only wisdom in judgment. Anything other than spiritual discernment is off limits to the saints. (1 Corinthians 2)
  - 1. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might

know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth: but which the Holy Ghost teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." (1 Corinthians 2:12-16)

- 2. We are not to judge anyone, until Jesus comes and reveals all things.
  - a. No man can judge us. (1 Corinthians 2:15)
  - b. Let God's Word and Christ's excellent example be our judge.



## Spiritual Truths

- God is the anointed Judge. the Father has committed all judgment to the Son. The Son has committed all judgment to the word.
- We are charged not to judge, until Jesus comes and reveals all the hidden things in men's hearts.
- Mercy rejoices against judgment. We need to sow mercy, so that we can reap the mercy that we need.

Jesus came not to judge, but to save.
 We should also desire others' salvation, above condemnation.



## Lesson Material

There is only one kind of acceptable judgment -- God's righteous judgment. There is the possibility of unrighteous judgment, and that is the kind we bring upon ourselves and others. There is no room for our unrighteous judgment in the kingdom of heaven. The only kind found in God's kingdom is pure, true, holy, just and everything else that is characteristic of a merciful, loving God. God sent His dearest, beloved Son into the world to save us. Jesus knew this fact very well, for He states in John 12:47 that He came not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He is telling us that it is desperately wicked to judge our brethren, and to tear down their faith in doing so.

The people of Israel judged king Saul by his stature. They thought he would make a good king, because he was taller than all the rest of the men. (1 Samuel 9:2) But God rejected Saul; and he died in his rebellion against God. (1 Samuel 15:23) The people did not listen to God when choosing a king; and God turned them over to their own devices. (1 Samuel 8:7) Besides, anyone knows that being a good king consists of much more than looks. That is the least trait that should be considered in choosing a leader. Unfortunately, we find that our memory does not serve us well; and we continue to make the same kind of mistake over and

over again. We judge others by such things as their appearance, how much money they make, the car they drive, or the house they live in. We fail to consider things like their honest heart, their love and obedience to God, or their kindness to us.

On the other hand, Jesus brings us the sweet gift of salvation, rather than judgment unto death for our shortcomings. We did not learn our evil habit of judging others from Jesus, for He teaches against it in His Word and by His life's testimony. First, we have never been appointed to be the judge over our brethren. There is only One Who can bring to light the secrets of men; and, in His perfect time, He can apply the proper amount of mercy to every man, according to His ways. We are not the "almighty judge," in that we do not know everything there is to know about a person's heart or his situation. We could not handle that kind of information anyway -- only God can.

When the Book of Life is opened up and all men stand before God, it will be revealed what each man will receive according to his works. (Revelation 20:12) We are not to judge anything, until that day in which the Lord will reveal all of the things of darkness which men have so carefully tried to cover up. We cover up our own weaknesses; but then, we set ourselves up to be judges over our weak brother. We cannot see clearly enough to remove a speck from our brother's eye, because we are blinded by the immense encumbrance in our own eyes. We can allow God's Holy Spirit to light upon us in a supernatural way with His immutable, righteous judgment that wants only our best in Christ Jesus. If we could only experience the love of Christ in a depth that would judge others kindly, lovingly,

mercifully, carefully and spiritually, it would be heaven. Experiencing this kind of love of the brethren would be glorious if not for just one week, then for one single day of our lives.

Judging others thwarts the work of the Holy Spirit. We are not responsible for that task; and so, we must leave it along with its temptation in the gracious, all-knowing hands of God. Then it will be done righteously, justly and lovingly. Our alternative, for the time being, is to follow Jesus' example. He desired no judgment upon God's children, but only salvation, mercy and open arms.



### **Methods**

Do some scripture choosing. Have the students read John chapter 15 (or 1 Corinthians 4, or Matthew 7); and choose the most important verse(s) pertaining to this lesson.

Assign scripture choosing for homework or extra credit.

Have the students write their thoughts on judging others on a slip of paper, after hearing this lesson. Ask for their comments on what is right or wrong about judging others in their own words. Only a few brief sentences are required. Gather their responses, and comment on them.

## Being a Servant to One Another

Volume 9

Lesson 12



Matthew 20:26-28; 25:35-46

Luke 22:27

John 21:16

Acts 20:18-19

Galatians 5:13; 6:2, 10

Philemon 2:7

1 Corinthians 9:19-23



### Scripture Reading

John 13:4-5, 14

- 4 "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.
- 5 "After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded."

14 "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet."



#### **Theme**

Serving others is what makes us great in God's kingdom.



### Memory Verse

Mark 10:44

"And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all."



### **Outline**

#### I. Jesus Was a Servant of God.

- A. Jesus served His father with much poignancy. (Acts 20:19)
  - 1. By humility of mind.
  - 2. By tears.
  - 3. By suffering temptations.
- B. We can learn to be a servant by following the example of Jesus.
  - 1. According to Jesus, serving is a must. (Luke 22:27, John 13:14)
  - 2. There is no escaping its importance, knowing that it was Jesus' purpose for coming to earth. (Matthew 20:28)

#### II. Jesus Was a Servant of People.

- A. A common misconception is that in order to be considered a great person, one must be served and not expected to serve others.
  - 1. This may be true in the world, as we see it; but it is not the case, in the kingdom of heaven.
  - 2. In the kingdom, the greatest people are servants to the poor and lowly.
- B. Jesus washed the feet of the disciples.
  - Washing the feet of others signifies serving their needs.
    - a. When we wash the feet of others we help them, refresh them, and lighten their burden.

- b. While washing someone's feet we minister love, forgiveness, compassion, friendship, strength, encouragement, and mercy.
- Jesus is our Example of ministering to another person with a servant's heart.
- C. Jesus illustrated servanthood, by taking on the form of a servant. (Philippians 2:7)
  - 1. He came to earth to serve His Father in obedience.
  - 2. Jesus came to earth to feed God's sheep from the table of His bounty; and He comes into our hearts to sup with us and have fellowship with us. (Revelation 3:20)
- D. The surest way of learning to serve is by way of example. Jesus is our Example.
  - 1. He took on the form of a servant and died on a cross, so that we might be saved from sin and death.
  - 2. He could have been born a king in a rich palace with no need of anything; but he was born in a stable to a common family. He suffered the same needs that we do, so that He could feel our needs and meet them. (Hebrews 4:15)
  - 3. He had great compassion on us, because He knew our needs first hand.

# III. We Must Be a Servant of God and a Servant to Our Fellow Man.

#### A. To God.

- 1. Mary served Jesus by anointing His feet with her perfume and tears. (Luke 7)
  - a. It signified her love for Him.
  - b. She washed the Lord's feet as an act of humility, repentance and worship.
- 2. We are to serve freely with good will, doing it as unto the Lord. (Ephesians 6:7)

#### B. To men.

- 1. We are instructed to take Jesus' example by "washing the feet" of others in the body of Christ.
- 2. Serving our brothers and sisters is serving God, because we are following His command.
  - a. It lightens their heavy burdens.
  - b. It refreshes the person whom you are serving.
- 3. We are required to feed God's sheep. (John 21:16)

### IV. Requirements We Have in Service to Others.

- A. We must be quick to serve.
  - 1. Elisha immediately dropped his plow in the field to follow Elijah. (1 Kings 19:19-20)
  - 2. Zacchaeus immediately went home to prepare a meal for Jesus. (Luke 19:6)
  - 3. Peter's mother in law got up immediately from her bed after being healed, to minister food and

drink to the disciples. (Luke 4:39)

- B. We must be in obedience to Christ's commandment.
  - 1. When we minister to another's needs, we are actually doing it to the Lord. (Matthew 25:35)
  - 2. When we see a person in need of food, water, clothing or fellowship and refuse to serve their need, we disobey God. (Matthew 25:41-46)
- C. We must minister first to those who are in the family of God. (Galatians 6:10)
  - God's servants have great needs; and many times, they go without, devoting long hours to carry on the work of the Lord.
  - 2. We must learn to meet the needs of God's servants first and foremost. (Gal. 6:10)



### Spiritual Truths

- Jesus came to earth to be a Servant to His fellow man, in order to show us how we must live among one another.
- Jesus was the greatest Example of a servant that we can find to model ourselves after.
- We minister to the Lord, when we learn to serve one another.
- We are obedient to follow His command, when we learn to "wash one another's feet" (serve one another).



### Lesson Material

The apostle Paul says that he became all things to all people, in order to save many from eternal death. (1 Corinthians 9:22) He truly was a servant of Jesus Christ, because he became a servant to men, when he had no obligation whatsoever to do so. Christ, who was Paul's ultimate example of a humble servant, gave him reason to follow God's example and be a servant to mankind. Paul inconvenienced himself, put his own wishes aside, and buried his aspirations, in order to become whatever it took to reach hearts for Christ's kingdom. If it meant becoming weak to reach someone who was weak in the faith, then he was willing to become weak. He had the freedom to do whatever he wanted; but he chose to be under the law and perform certain things, in order to reach those who were under the Jewish law. To those who did not follow the rules and regulations of the Jews, he became like them, so that he could understand their needs and minister to them. This is a true picture of a loving, caring servant of God. Paul desired that his fellow man would be a partaker with him in the bounty and fellowship of Christ.

Christ was the King and Ruler of the universe; and yet, He came to perform the duties of a servant. He washed the feet of His disciples, and showed them that they must become a servant to each other, if they were to be great in God's kingdom. This principle of greatness is contrary to what we see around us. In the world, men are considered great, when they have others to serve them. This is not the principle in the kingdom of heaven. Great

men are to serve the lowest members in the body of Christ. We must exercise our compassion, by reaching out to minister to the poor and lowly we see around us. This takes humility and unselfishness. Most of all, it takes the love of Christ working and moving through us.

Mary loved Jesus so much, that she gave up her most important, expensive possession in order to worship Him. (Matthew 26) To cry and kiss the feet of someone would seem foolish to an onlooker; but it deeply ministered to Jesus, in His time of great need. One cannot stop a problem or circumstance, but one can share in another's grief and have a heart of love and compassion for what has happened. The fact that someone else knows what we are going through can ease the heavy burden.

Jesus gives us an illustration of how we are actually ministering to Him when we meet the needs of His children. In Matthew 25, He speaks of wanting a cup of water and food; and He speaks of having someone coming to visit Him in prison. These are opportunities in our everyday lives to meet the needs of others. When we can take these opportunities to minister to others, we are actually serving the Lord Himself. This illustration proves the importance and urgency of being a servant, ready and willing to wash the feet of the weary.

Jesus said to Peter, "If you love me, feed my sheep." (John 21:16) This same statement is repeated three times to Peter. Jesus wanted Peter (and us) to understand the importance of feeding God's children with whatever we have, however we can.



### **Methods**

Ask the following questions to the students to see if they understand what it means to "wash one another's feet."

Does washing the feet of others literally mean getting a towel and basin of water like Jesus did? (Most importantly, it means serving one another in helpful, meaningful ways.)

What does washing someone's feet entail? (It could be helping someone, expecting nothing in return. It could be doing something for someone above and beyond the call of duty. It could be showing forgiveness, mercy, love or kindness when it is totally undeserved, but very much needed. It is doing something that is extremely costly to us, for someone who needs our concern.)

What are some examples of washing someone's feet? (Offering to help someone with a chore; Giving food or clothing to the poor; Talking to someone or listening to them when they have not any other friends; Writing a letter of encouragement to a parent, teacher or pastor, or helping them in some way; Smiling at someone who is lonely; Offering an encouraging word, forgiveness or mercy to someone you feel has wronged you.)

Do the students know of anyone who is an example of a servant, either in church, school, or home? What have they seen them do, that makes them show the heart of a servant?

# How To Capture a Friend

Volume 9

Lesson 13



### Bible References

Proverbs 17:17

Proverbs 18:24

Matthew 7:12

Luke 6:31

John 15:13, 15



#### Theme

This lesson deals with the principles of being a friend and developing friendships.



### Scripture Reading

#### 1 Samuel 18:1-4

- 1 "And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.
- 2 "And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.
- 3 "Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.
- 4 "And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle."



Luke 6:31

"And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."



### **Outline**

#### I. How to Make Friends.

- A. Smile -- look friendly.
- B. We must be willing to take risks.
  - 1. If we want to have friends, then we must be friendly. (Proverbs 18:24)
  - 2. We should not always wait for others to meet and greet us. We should step out and meet others.
    - a. We should not stand around and hope someone speaks to us, but we should take the initiative and talk to others.
    - b. We should learn the art of asking questions.
      - (1) Asking questions is the best way to start conversation.
      - (2) By learning to ask questions, we find out if we have anything in common, which is what friendships grow out of common interests.
    - c. We should get involved in activities with other people and be participants, and not spectators.
- C. We must learn to take an interest in others. (Philippians 2:4)
  - 1. One of the best ways to be interested in others is to listen.
    - a. All of us want to be heard, but few of us want to listen.
    - b. We listen by paying attention to what a person is saying. We must discipline ourselves to focus on the conversation.

- (1) We must listen to the meaning behind the words -the main ideas and feelings.
- (2) If we are not sure we understand, then, at the appropriate moment, we should express what we think that the other person is saying. We need to summarize.
- c. At the same time, we should not feel that we must have a response or an answer to everything.
  - (1) Do not interrupt, when a person is talking.
  - (2) The word "listen" and the word "silent" have the same letters in them.
- d. Those who learn the skill of listening will make solid friendships. Listening is not an option, but it is essential for building close friendships.
- 2. We must learn to appreciate others.
  - a. "Appreciate" means "to value, or to hold in high regard."
    - (1) We need to value others for who they are as people.
    - (2) We need to value the abilities and achievements of others.
  - b. We should be generous in our praise.
  - c. We should be generous with sincere compliments.
- D. We must be genuine.
  - 1. We need to have the courage to be ourselves.
  - 2. We should not pretend to be someone we are not, in order to impress others.
  - 3. It is better not to develop a friendship, than to be a phony.

- a. If we are performing and pretending in order to be accepted, then we are not being accepted. We are fooling ourselves.
- b. If people do not like us for who we are, then we must have the courage to accept rejection, because they will never be true friends.
- c. Popularity is a shallow achievement, when compared to true friendship.
  - If what makes us popular is taken away (looks, athletics, etc.), then our so-called friends will fade quickly, too.
  - (2) A true friend accepts us for who we are -- faults and all.

#### E. We must learn to be "transparent."

- 1. This is taking the risk to be open with someone.
  - a. As we get to know someone, we begin to share with that person what is inside us.
  - b. We begin to share our feelings, our hopes, and our views.
  - c. We reach out; and, depending upon the response we receive, we decide whether to move forward in the relationship.
    - (1) The possibility of rejection is present, when we open up to another.
    - (2) It is the risk that we must take, if we want to develop close friendships.
- 2. Transparency takes time.
  - a. There is no such thing as instant friendship.
  - b. It is only as we get to know someone that we begin to share our values, feelings, and fears.
  - c. We should not pour out our life story with someone we hardly

- know. This is usually a turn-off to the other person, because it indicates that we are out of balance in our ability to relate to others.
- d. Transparency and trust go handin-hand; and it takes time to develop trust.

#### II. How to Keep Friends.

- A. We must be loyal.
  - 1. Loyalty is standing, sticking, and staying with someone through the good, the bad, and the ugly. (Ruth 1:16; Proverbs 17:17)
    - a. Anyone will stand with another when everything is going well; but only a true friend will stand when things start to fall apart.
    - b. The test of friendship is not when success and prosperity are flourishing.
    - c. The test of friendship is when failures, struggles and problems develop.
      - (1) A "fair-weather" friend bails out in the storm.
      - (2) A true friend weathers the storm.
  - 2. Loyalty is the ability to keep confidences and trust. (Proverbs 11:13)
    - a. Trust is one of the basic foundations for any relationship.
    - b. Trust demands honesty in our relationships.
    - c. If a person cannot keep a confidence, then the person will never keep a friend.
  - 3. Perhaps the greatest example in the Bible of loyalty in friendship is the story of Jonathan and David. (1 Samuel 18;1-5; 19:2-7; 20:4)

- a. Jonathan stood up for David and interceded for him, when Saul sought to kill David. (1 Samuel 19:2-7; 20:27-34)
- b. Jonathan protected David, when Saul sought to kill him. (1 Samuel 20.)
  - (1) Jonathan was originally to be the next king in Israel; but, because of Saul's sin, God was giving the kingship to another. It was obvious to Jonathan that the new king would be David. (1 Samuel 20:14, 15, 30, 31)
  - (2) Jonathan had no jealousy toward David, but only love. (1 Samuel 18:1; 20:17)
  - (3) Jonathan could easily have turned David over to Saul; but, instead, he helped David escape. (1 Samuel 20)
- B. We must be willing to forgive and seek forgiveness.
  - 1. Every friendship of any value will encounter difficulties and hassles.
    - a. There are bound to be misunderstandings.
    - b. There are bound to be situations that surface, which we do not like.
    - c. We all have our moments when we say or do things that we later regret. (Ecclesiastes 7:21,22)
  - 2. We must be willing to forgive, when we have been offended.
    - a. If we hold on to an offense or a grudge, it will destroy the friendship. Is the grudge worth more than our friend?
    - b. A friendship cannot grow where there is unforgiveness.
    - c. Unforgiveness will cause anger, resentment, and bitterness to grow. It will kill friendship.

- 3. We must be willing to ask forgiveness, when we have offended.
  - Asking forgiveness takes courage, because it goes against the grain of our ego and pride.
  - b. Asking forgiveness lets the other person know that we care about the relationship and want it to continue.
- 4. Forgiveness is one of the "acid tests" of true friendship.
- C. We must be willing to sacrifice for our friends. (Romans 16:3, 4)
  - 1. The principle of sacrifice -- which is giving to benefit another at our expense -- is the mark of a true friendship. (1 Timothy 1:16-18)
    - a. It may be giving our time.
    - b. It may be giving our attention.
    - c. It may be helping with a project or predicament or any kind of problem.
  - 2. Jesus said that the greatest love was the willingness to sacrifice our lives for our friends. (John 15:13)
    - a. This is the ultimate sacrifice, which most of us will never have to make.
    - b. This is the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. He is the greatest Friend that we can ever know. (John 15:15)



# Spiritual Truths

 We are social creatures; and God created us with the need to relate to others.

- Friendships do not happen automatically; they must be nurtured and tested over time.
- One of the greatest principles for making friends is the Golden Rule.
- True friendships meet our God-given needs to be accepted and loved.



### Lesson Material

Friends are life in high school. A school can have excellent facilities -indoor track, swimming pool, and pizza in the cafeteria; a church can have impressive programs -- dynamic music, awesome trips, and great services; but, if teenagers do not meet and make friends, they will not fully enjoy what the school or church has to offer. There are exceptions to the rule. Some teenagers are heavily involved in studies, hobbies, or sports; and their time is so limited that they are not really concerned about making friends -- and they are too busy to notice their lack of friends. These are the exceptions. Most loners would rather not be alone.

A youth survey reports that the number one thing teenagers like about school is being with their friends. With most church activities, the first question a student will ask is "Who is going to be there?" Everyone wants friends. God has made us social creatures. We are created for relationships. (Genesis 2:18)

Friendships meet some of the basic needs that we all have: the need to belong,

to be accepted, to be listened to, to be respected, and to be appreciated. Often, people clamor for fame to meet these needs. But fame is fleeting and shallow. It is a cheap substitute for true friendship. When our fame fades, so do the friends that accompany it. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with fame, and we should enjoy it, if it comes our way; but, we must realize that fame will pass. A true friend will stay forever. There is nothing more valuable than genuine friendship.

The problem for many of us is that we do not know how to make and/or keep friends. Friendship cannot be bought, borrowed, or demanded. We must build and develop friendships; and we must make friends.

This lesson is by no means exhaustive, but it does gives some basic factors in making and keeping friendships. The teacher may want to add a few more insights, if time permits.

There are different stages or levels of friendship: acquaintance, casual, close, and lifetime (intimate). These can be broken down even further, but this will suffice for the lesson.

An acquaintance is someone we may know by name, but we only have a few personal contacts together. We exchange niceties, but we do not share inner feelings.

A casual friend may be someone who is on our sports team, or in our science class, or runs with our particular group; but apart from an outside interest bringing us together, we do not spend much time, if any, alone with each other.

A close friend is someone with whom we spend a lot of time. We share common

interests and enjoy one another's company. We feel comfortable together; and we can share hurts, hassles, dreams and desires, without fear of rejection.

A friend for life (intimate friend) is a lasting friendship that does not end with high school. It continues to grow and develop throughout life. Very few lifetime friendships ever develop between two people. Those that do are great treasures.

Of the four levels of friendship, the one this lesson focuses on is "close" friendship. How do we make close friends?

Although not mentioned specifically in the outline, the greatest principle of friendship may well be the Golden Rule. "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." (Luke 6:31). What we want people to do for us, we should do for them. If we want people to take an interest in us, then we must take an interest in them. If we want people to be nice to us, then we must be nice to them. This is the essence of the first part of Proverbs 18:24, which says that if we want to have friends, then we need to be friendly. This makes great sense; but it is not as easy to practice, as it is to understand. Most friendships are based on what others can do for us and not what we can do for them. A lot of teenagers cannot make genuine friendships, because they are too busy taking from the relationship, instead of giving into it. We must learn to be givers.

The teacher should encourage the teenagers to trust God. The Lord will meet our needs (Philippians 4:19; 1 Peter 5:7), if we will follow Him. And if the Lord can

meet our needs, then we can meet the needs of others.

The teacher should challenge the teenagers to reach out to others and practice the qualities shared in the outline. The teacher should encourage the students to start practicing the Golden Rule. It will improve their relationships. It is God's promise!



### **Methods**

Have a group discussion on the qualities that make close friendships. Write these qualities on the blackboard.

Have the students discuss the traits that ruin friendships or keep friendships from developing.

Ask the students to describe their best friend to the class, without saying the person's name. The description should not be of physical characteristics, but of the internal characteristics which make that person a "best" friend.

Have the students role-play a conversation between two people who meet each other for the first time. The circumstance may be waiting in line, or sitting next to each other in a new class. One person is to initiate the conversation. Have the class evaluate and discuss the role-playing.

# Surviving Peer Pressure Stampedes

Volume 9

Lesson 14



### Bible References

Proverbs 1:10-19

1 Corinthians 15:33

Daniel 3:1-27

Daniel 6



#### Theme

God will give us the courage to resist negative peer pressure.



### Scripture Reading

1 John 2:15-17

15 "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."



### Memory Verse

#### Romans 12:2

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."



### **Outline**

#### I. What Is Peer Pressure?

#### A. Peer pressure defined.

- 1. A "peer" is considered an equal in age or rank or status. For our purposes, a "peer" is someone who is of similar age; and "pressure" is something that pushes us in a particular direction.
- Peer pressure is being pushed or influenced in a direction by people of the same age group.
- 3. Peer pressure may also be defined as pressure to conform to the norms (behavior and rules) of the group.
- B. Peer pressure affects people of all ages, because we all want to be accepted by our peers; but it is extremely forceful during the teenage years.
  - 1. Teenagers are at an age where they are searching for identity, acceptance and a sense of belonging.
  - 2. The urge to be accepted by and identified with the peer group is so strong that teenagers will usually conform to the behavior of the group, without much hesitation.

### II. How Does Peer Pressure Affect Teenagers?

- A. It affects their dress and appearance.
  - It affects the clothes they wear.
     a. If blue jeans, t-shirts, sandals, and hats are what the group is

- wearing, then that is what they will wear.
- b. If army pants, sweatshirts, gym shoes, and head bands are what the group is wearing, then that is what they will wear.
- 2. It affects hair styles.
  - a. If long hair is in, then they will wear their hair long.
  - b. If short hair is in, then they will wear their hair short.
  - c. If bald is in, then they will shave their heads.

#### B. It affects the language they use.

- 1. All teenagers have their own terminology to communicate with one another.
- Every peer group of teenagers seems to devise their own system of communication, whether by words, signs or symbols.

#### C. It affects their activities.

- 1. If biking is in, then they will bike.
- 2. If hanging out at the library is in, then they will go to the library.
- D. The pressure from peers can affect almost every area of life.

# III. What Are the Positive and Negative Affects of Peer Pressure?

#### A. Positive.

- 1. Peer pressure is positive, when it motivates us to do constructive things.
- 2. Pressure from peers can motivate us to work hard to achieve in athletics or academics, to participate in fun

activities, and to attend church.

#### B. Negative.

- 1. Peer pressure is negative, when it motivate us to do destructive things.
- 2. Unfortunately, many forms of peer pressure have negative consequences, because a lot of teenagers conform their behavior to the pattern of this world. (Romans 12:2; Colossians 2:8)
  - a. Peer pressure can tempt us to steal, to vandalize, to cheat, to lie, and to do all kinds of destructive activities.
  - b. In today's cultures, many teenagers have to face the pressure from peers to take drugs, to drink, and to get involved in premarital sex -- all of which can have deadly consequences.

### IV. How Can We Battle Negative Peer Pressure?

- A. We must decide to set standards.
  - 1. A standard is a boundary that we will not cross.
  - 2. We must decide ahead of time what we will and will not do.
    - a. It is harder to resist temptation, if we have not settled in our mind beforehand our plan of action in a particular activity.
    - b. If we decide to "cross the bridge when we get to it," we are in for a fall.
  - 3. Examples of standards that we can set are as follows:
    - a. "I will not be pressured to have sex before I am married."

- b. "I will not be pressured to use illegal drugs."
- c. "I will not cheat in school."
- d. "I will not be pressured to drink for the purpose of getting drunk."
- A standard becomes a conviction, when we determine not to be swayed.
  - a. Shadrach, Meshach, and
    Abednego would not worship
    the golden image of
    Nebuchadnezzar. They would
    not be pressured into bowing
    before the idol, even at the cost
    of their lives. (Daniel 3)
  - b. Daniel would not stop praying to God, even when it meant being thrown to the lions. (Daniel 6)
  - c. These men had convictions. God honored them, because they were faithful to their convictions.
- B. We must determine to obey God. (Acts 5:29)
  - 1. God says that we should not follow the crowd in doing wrong. (Exodus 23:2)
  - 2. If God says that a certain action or activity is wrong, then we should not allow others to pressure us into doing it. (Romans 12:1, 2)
  - 3. God does not want us to be "worldly" in our attitudes and actions. (1 John 2:15-17)
    - a. Worldliness is having values that are based on fleshly passions (lust of the flesh), external things (lust of the eyes), and selfish ambitions and aspirations (pride of life), instead of values that are based on God's Word.
    - b. This means that Christians will have lifestyles that are against

- the flow of our "worldly" culture.
- c. All that the world has to offer will pass away; but God will reward us with lasting happiness, if we follow Him. (1 John 2:17)

#### C. We must develop courage.

- 1. It is not easy to "go against the flow," because we will be considered strange; and we may suffer ridicule. (1 Peter 4:4)
- 2. We are not going to be liked by everyone, if we live a godly life. (2 Timothy 2:12).
  - a. Jesus is our Example.
  - b. He was the most mentally and spiritually together Person Who ever lived; and yet, people hated Him.
- 3. Many people, especially teenagers, are looking for someone to take a stand; and then, they would have the courage to stand, too.
  - a. Most peers will respect a person who will stand for something, even if they do not agree.
  - b. Most people are attracted to someone who has "backbone" (courage).
- 4. God will reward us, when we are ridiculed for His sake. (Matthew 5:10-12)
- 5. In the Bible, God says in many places, "Fear not," because He is with us. We do not have to fear. God will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5); and if God is for us, then who can be against us? (Romans 8:31)

#### D. We must discern our friendships.

- 1. We become like the people with whom we spend our time. (Proverbs 13:20; 1 Corinthians 15:33)
  - a. If our friends all go to church, then we will be influenced to go to church.
  - b. If our friends are involved in drinking, then we will be pressured to drink.
  - c. We need to realize that our friends are a major factor in influencing our behavior; therefore, we need to choose our friends carefully.
- 2. Some friends are not friends at all; they are friendly poison.
  - a. They are users. When they have had their fun with us, they discard us; or, if we do not behave according to their rules, they dump us.
  - b. If we are not accepted for not doing something, then we need to wake up to the fact that they (whoever "they" may be) are not our friends; and we need to seek friends elsewhere.
  - c. We must understand that being "popular" (or whatever the culture calls it) with a group does not necessarily mean acceptance and friendship. The true test of friendship is this: When we do not follow the peer group code of behavior, are we still accepted? We should not spend our time trying to impress people who do not really care about us.
- 3. We need to learn how to say "No."
  - a. Occasionally, our friends will invite us to do something that, in their thinking, is not wrong at all. This is especially true with friends who are not Christians. In this case, it could cause the

- other person to feel rejection, if we courageously say, "No."
- b. We should suggest an alternative.
  - (1) This way, we can refuse the behavior without rejecting the person.
  - (2) If we are invited to a drinking party, we should decline the offer, but suggest an alternative, such as golfing, basketball, etc.
- c. We need to be honest.
  - (1) If we do not feel comfortable doing a questionable activity, then we should say so, without condemning our friends.
  - (2) If our friends are doing drugs, then we should tell them that we are not into it, because it is bad for the health. They will get the message; and, if they are true friends, they will respect us for it.
- E. We must depend upon God. (Hebrews 13:6)
  - 1. God will give us the strength and ability to do His will. (Philippians 2:13)
  - God will reward us, when we are rejected for His sake. (Matthew 5:10-13)
  - 3. God will develop our character, when we do not yield to peer pressure.
  - 4. God will meet our longings for acceptance, when we trust in Him. (Psalms 37:3-9)



# Spiritual Truths

- We need to choose our friends wisely, because we become like the people with whom we associate.
- If we live a godly life, then we will suffer misunderstandings, rejection, and persecution.
- Although we will suffer from the ridicule of fools, wise people will respect us when we stand for what is right.
- If we will do what is right, then God will use us to influence others with positive peer pressure.
- If we cannot stand for God, then we are likely to fall for anything.
- God will give us the courage to resist negative peer pressure.
- We are loved and accepted in Christ.



### Lesson Material

Of the common problems that teenagers face, there is nothing more painful than being ignored, ridiculed or rejected by peers. It is a brutal experience, which can cause deep hurts that do not easily heal. Ask any teenager who has been laughed at, mocked, or excluded from a group. With this in mind, it is not difficult

to understand why many teenagers fall victim to peer pressure -- the tremendous push to conform to the behavior of the peer group. Some teenagers are so desperate to be accepted, and so fearful of rejection, that they will do almost anything to be one of the gang. Unfortunately, this usually includes destructive behavior; and they still get hurt, in the end.

Peer pressure affects all of us. Often, the affect is neutral. Following the latest fashions is not necessarily sinful; and there is nothing wrong or right about roller skating, surfing, or jogging, when they are the latest fads. We are all influenced by those around us. The danger of peer pressure is when it becomes so strong that we do not make our own decisions. We do whatever the group does. We follow the crowd. If the crowd does activities that we think are wrong, we participate out of fear of ridicule or rejection. Ironically, we join the group to gain a sense of identity; but, if we do not have the courage to stand alone, we lose our identity in the process, and we become susceptible to all kinds of negative consequences.

First, it should be made clear that everyone battles peer pressure. If most of us are honest, we all have given into peer pressure at one time or another. It is not easy to just say "No," especially when we are speaking to friends or to those who we want to be our friends. Yet, as Christians, we must be willing to "go against the flow." This takes conviction; and this takes courage. The teacher must encourage young people to set standards and have convictions. Convictions commitments that we will not break. Convictions are what strengthen our character. It is not be easy to live by convictions in a permissive

promiscuous world; but if we do, then we will gain self-respect and respect from others.

The teacher must challenge teenagers to set convictions in the area of moral purity. The teacher must challenge teenagers to set convictions in the area of integrity and honesty. A good name is better than great riches. (Proverbs 22:1) The teacher must challenge teenagers to obey God. God will honor those who honor Him. (1 Samuel 2:30)

Courage is a quality that can be taught in the classroom, but which can only be tested in the battlefield. We never truly know if we have it, until we are tried in life experiences. It is in the battle that we either stand or fall. It is God's promise that He will be with us in the fight; and so, we can take courage. (Joshua 1:9) All of the great Bible characters are men and women of conviction and courage.

Teenagers will be able to battle peer pressure more effectively, if they choose their friends wisely. The Bible says that it is possible to be deceived by friends; and, whether we believe it or not, we become like the people with whom we associate. (1 Corinthians 15:33) If we spend time with hot-tempered friends, then we will become hot-tempered. (Proverbs 22:24,25) If we walk with wise men, then we will become wise. (Proverbs 13:20) This being the case, we must be careful in our selection of friends. If a particular group is known for their immoral behavior, then we can be assured that if we join them, we will be pressured to be immoral.

Finally, the teacher must sound the trumpet that Jesus Christ accepts each one of us. (Romans 15:7) God will meet our needs and fill up the places that are left empty by broken friendships. We must

trust that He knows what is best for us. He has a good plan for our lives. (Jeremiah 29:11)



### **Methods**

The teacher should look for illustrations in his or her own life, or the life of another, to illustrate the power of peer pressure.

Have a group discussion on peer pressure. Ask the students what the worst pressures are that they face. Or have the students write these down on a piece of paper; and, after the papers are collected, discuss the answers with the class.

Do a skit on a teenager being pressured to drink with his friends. This can be an impromptu skit, in which the students adlib the outcome.

Discuss ways in which the students can fight against peer pressure.

Discuss with the students how faith in Jesus Christ can help battle peer pressure.

Have the students break into groups; and give each group a difficult situation, such as being offered drugs by a friend, or having a friend ask for answers to a test, etc. Each group is to come up with what they think is the best possible response; and then, a spokesperson for each group may share their answers with the class.

# God Forgives -- Can You?

Volume 9

Lesson 15



Psalms 103:12

Matthew 5:7

Luke 6:36

1 John 1:9

Colossians 3:13



### **Theme**

God has forgiven us; therefore, we need to forgive others.



Matthew 18:21-35

- 21 "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?
- 22 "Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.
- 23 "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.
- 24 "And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.
- 25 "But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.
- 26 "The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.
- 27 "Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.
- 28 "But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.
- 29 "And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

- 30 "And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.
- 31 "So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.
- 32 "Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:
- 33 "Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?
- 34 "And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.
- 35 "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."



#### Mark 11:25

"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."



### **Outline**

### I. Forgiveness Is a Commandment.

- A. Peter wanted to know how often it was required to forgive someone.

  Apparently, he was thinking that there was a limit to forgiveness, and that after a certain number of offenses (seven), he could retaliate. (verse 21)
- B. Jesus said that it did not matter how many times we are sinned against -- we are to forgive. (verse 22)
  - 1. Jesus meant that we are to have unlimited and unconditional forgiveness.
  - 2. Jesus then tells a parable to illustrate the perspective that we should have on forgiveness.

#### II. God Has Forgiven Us.

- A. The parable tells about a servant who had a debt that he could not repay. (verse 24)
  - 1. Estimates vary; but 10,000 talents was equivalent to about 10 million dollars.
  - 2. There was no possible way the servant could ever repay this amount.
- B. The king forgave the entire debt, at the servant's plea. (verse 26, 27)

- C. The parable is an example of how God has forgiven us.
  - 1. There is no possible way that we can earn our own forgiveness.
  - 2. God, like the king in the parable, will forgive us, when we request it.

#### III. We Must Forgive Others.

- A. After the servant had been forgiven his debt by the king, he met a man who owed him a small sum of money (perhaps a day's pay). (verse 28)
- B. The servant, who had been forgiven of the enormous debt, refused to forgive the fellowservant of a very small debt.
  - 1. It was possible for the fellowservant to repay the amount he owed.
  - The servant, whose debt was forgiven by the king, threw the fellowservant into prison. (verse 30)
- C. It was obvious to the other fellowservants that this was wrong. (verse 31)

### IV. God Will Hold Us Accountable, If We Do Not Forgive Others.

- A. When the servant, who was forgiven, did not show similar compassion and forgiveness, he was thrown into prison by the king.
- B. The king was angry, because that servant, who had been forgiven so much, could not forgive his fellowservant of so little, in comparison.
- C. The parable ends with a solemn warning that our heavenly Father will

not forgive us, if we do not forgive others.



# Spiritual Truths

- Forgiveness is a commandment.
- We could never repay our sin before God.
- We have been forgiven much; and, therefore, we should forgive others.
- It is God's will that we forgive others.



### Lesson Material

Peter came to Jesus wanting to know how often he had to forgive someone. He thought seven times was a generous number; and he was probably astonished by Jesus' answer of "seventy times seven." This would be 490 times!

What does Jesus mean by this? He was saying that there was no limit to the number of times Peter was to forgive another person. This was a radical concept.

Forgiveness is a commandment. It does not depend on the actions or attitudes of the other person. It does not depend on the other person being sorry for what happens. If someone offends us 490 times, then it is safe to assume he or she is not sorry. Forgiveness is hard enough, when the other person is sorry; but it is much more difficult, when the other person has no remorse over the offense. Yet, Jesus says to forgive.

We need to tell teenagers that forgiveness goes against the grain of our natural tendencies. If offended, our first impulse is frequently revenge. We want to strike back, lash out, or at least hope that the offender receives punishment. Everyone, especially teenagers, should be able to relate to this. This is where many Christians fall short in following the teachings of the Lord. We can gossip, backbite, slander and plot revenge as easy as those who do not know God; and then, we justify it by remembering the offense. But this does not please God. He wants us to forgive others, as He has forgiven us.

Forgiveness is not an easy assignment. To tell teenagers to forgive others, especially if they have been deeply hurt, is asking a lot. We need to identify with their pain and not deny or dismiss it. It is difficult to forgive, after being hassled and hurt. We need to let them know it is difficult. Jesus knew this. One reason that He told the parable of the servant and the king to Peter is because Peter almost certainly did not understand how a person could forgive 490 times. Peter needed to get a new perspective on forgiveness. The students in our class may need a new perspective, too. What was the insight that Jesus wanted Peter to learn from the parable?

First, God has forgiven us a debt that we could never repay. God has forgiven us of every sin, if we choose to seek and accept His forgiveness. (1 John 1:9) The realization of God's forgiveness is the first step in forgiving someone who has hurt us. When we remember what God has

done for us, we are more likely to forgive others.

Secondly, since God has forgiven us, we must be willing to forgive others. God has freed us from the prison of our sins; and we must do so for others.

Thirdly, if we do not forgive others, then God will not forgive us. This is a hard saying and a solemn warning. Yet, should we expect God to do for us that which we are unwilling to do for others? The servant in the parable was unloving and cruel. It is interesting that the king did not call the servant "wicked" when he owed 10,000 talents, but only after the servant showed no mercy to another. God will not allow the unforgiving and cruel-hearted to fellowship with Him. There is no mercy for the merciless.



### **Methods**

The parable of the king and the servant could be acted out in a skit.

The teacher may want to use group discussion with questions like the following: What does forgiveness mean to you? When is the last time you were offended? What was your immediate reaction? What is your reaction now? Is there someone whom you have not forgiven?

Ask the students to think about someone whom they have not forgiven; and ask them what they think God would have them do about it.

# Forgiveness: Mission Impossible?

Volume 9

Lesson 16



Matthew 6:14

Matthew 18:15-17

Luke 23:34

Proverbs 20:22

Colossians 3:13

1 Peter 2:23



#### **Theme**

Forgiveness is essential for our own health and happiness.



#### Luke 17:1-5

- 1 "Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!
- 2 "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.
- 3 "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.
- 4 "And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.
- 5 "And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith."



#### Ephesians 4:32

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."



### **Outline**

- I. Someday, Somewhere, Somehow, We Will Be Offended by Someone.
- A. Jesus said that it is impossible to go through life without being offended. (verse 1)
- B. No one gets through life without being wronged, hurt or "burnt."
- II. When We Are Offended, We Need to Communicate Our Difficulty with the Person Who Hurt Us.
- A Jesus makes it clear that we are not to withdraw from the person who offends us, but we are to go to the person and communicate our grievance. (verse 3)
- B. We are not to be soft-spoken or appeasing, when we approach the

person. Jesus uses strong words when He says, "Rebuke him." (verse 3)

# III. The One Who Hurts Us Will Pay the Consequences of Causing Such an Offense.

- A. Jesus uses the analogy that it would be better if a person was dead, than suffer the consequences of offending another. (verse 2) Jesus indicates that it will not be pleasant for the one who hurts others.
- B. The specific consequences are not expressed by Jesus; but some consequences may be guilt, lack of intimate friendships, and the judgment of God.

### IV. Forgiveness Is an Act of the Will.

- A. Forgiveness is not contingent upon whether or not a person is truly sorrowful. The example of a person hurting us seven times in one day, and then saying he repents, presents the likely possibility that he is not sorry. Yet, regardless of this, Jesus says to forgive. (verse 4)
- B. Forgiveness is not based upon our feelings. If someone were to offend us seven times in one day, then most of us would not feel like forgiving. Therefore, Jesus is revealing that forgiveness is not a feeling, but an act of the will.
- C. We must consciously choose to forgive the person who hurts us.

### V. Forgiveness Is Not Easy, but It Is Possible.

- A. When the disciples heard Jesus' illustration on forgiveness, they said, "Lord, increase our faith." (verse 5) It is difficult to forgive.
- B. It is important to remember that God never gives us a commandment that we are incapable of doing. The Lord will help us, if we have a willing heart. He will give us the grace to forgive.



# Spiritual Truths

- Forgiving those who hurt us is God's will for our lives.
- Jesus is the greatest Example of Someone Who forgave when wronged.
- The one who offends us will reap unpleasant consequences; but, if we refuse to forgive, then we, too will reap unpleasant consequences.
- God commands us to forgive for our own physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.
- Unforgiveness will strip us of our joy.



### Lesson Material

When we are offended, we usually have one of three reactions. The first is to get even and seek revenge. We want to retaliate and injure the one who has injured us. The second is to avoid the person and withdraw from his or her company. Although we may not actively seek revenge, we want the person to suffer for what has been done to us. The third reaction is to forgive.

The first two reactions are typical responses of our natural tendencies. Forgiveness is the correct response that God requires from us.

Forgiveness is having the same openness toward a person after we have been offended as we did before the person hurt us. We treat the person the same after the injury as we did before the injury. We let go of any hostility, resentment or ill-will toward the person. We clear the person of his or her offense; and we do not hold on to hostility. This is what God does for us. He clears our record, and He does not hold it against us anymore.

This does not mean that we simply withdraw and do not share our grievance with the person. On the contrary, Jesus says that we are to go to the person and "rebuke him." We are to tell the other person what he or she has done to hurt us. If the person repents, then we are to forgive. Does this mean that if the person does not repent, then we are not to forgive?

In our scripture passage, Jesus explains that it is not what the person has done or

even if the person is sorry that determines whether or not we are to forgive. If someone hurts us on seven different occasions in the space of one day, and seven separate times that person repents, chances are that he or she is not sincere. Jesus is revealing that forgiveness is a principle of life that is not conditional on the way we feel. It is a choice that we must decide to make toward another. It is an act of the will. The emphasis of this passage is the importance of forgiving, regardless of the way we feel.

When we do not forgive, but respond with revenge or withdrawal, then we will suffer. Francis Bacon said, "A man that studieth revenge keeps his own wounds green."

Unforgiveness results in resentment, bitterness, anger and emotional wounds that may never heal. It can cause physical ailments such as ulcers, headaches and disease. Perhaps, worst of all, unforgiveness robs us of joy. We will be worse off, if we do not forgive. God wants us to forgive, for our own health, happiness, and forgiveness.

It must be remembered that forgiveness is a commandment. Jesus gives no indication that forgiveness is optional. He warns the offended person to forgive; and He begins his teaching by saying, "Take heed to yourselves...." (verse

3) God requires us to forgive. It is the only right response for us who love God and have been forgiven. We need to make Ephesians 4:32 more than a memory verse. We need to make it our way of life.



### **Methods**

Have the students make a list of everyone who has offended them. If they are willing, ask them to share the situation; and then, discuss in class how they should respond.

Find examples of great men and women who have forgiven terrible wrongs and share them with the class. Joseph's forgiveness of his brothers, after being sold into slavery, is a good example. Perhaps the teacher can share experiences from his or her own life.

Challenge the teenagers to meet with the people who have offended them. First, they should share their hurt; and then, they need to verbally forgive. Encourage them to share testimonies in class. God will honor this, if they do it in a loving spirit.

# Forgiveness: Mission Impossible? -- II

Volume 9

Lesson 17



Luke 15:17-21

Acts 24:16

1 Timothy 1:5



#### **Theme**

If we wrong someone, God requires that we seek forgiveness.



#### Matthew 5:23-26

- 23 "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;
- 24 "Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.
- 25 "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest an any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.
- 26 "Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."



#### Proverbs 28:13

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."



### **Outline**

### I. God Requires Us to Have a Clear Conscience.

- A. A "clear conscience" is making right any wrongs that we have committed against another person. It is knowing that we have not offended anyone, without making an attempt to right the wrong.
- B. The way to acquire a clear conscience is to ask forgiveness.

#### II. If We Do Not Seek to Make Amends, Our Relationship With God is Hindered.

- A. God is not pleased with our worship and offering. (verse 24)
- B. Obedience is better than sacrifice. (1 Samuel 15:22)

# III. We Must Search Our Hearts, to be Sure that Our Conscience is Clear.

- A. Have we stolen from anyone?
- B. Have we broken, damaged or vandalized anything that belonged to someone else?
- C. Have we lied to anyone?
- D. Have we lost our temper with anyone?

#### IV. We Must Ask Forgiveness.

- A. We must approach the person whom we have offended. (verse 24)
  - 1. A phone call is appropriate for someone who does not live close.
  - 2. A letter is not the best way, because it is a continual reminder of the wrong committed.
  - 3. A personal meeting is usually the best way.

#### B. Timing is important.

- 1. What we are going to talk about is important; and so, we do not want to meet when the other person is busy with other things. We also must be careful not to make light our seeking forgiveness by saying, "Oh, by the way..." as if the discussion was an afterthought.
- 2. We may need to set up a special appointment to see the other person, and let the person know the meeting is important to us. If he or she refuses to meet with us, then talk over the phone, if possible.
  - a. We should not ask forgiveness,
     when other people are listening.
     It should be discussed in the

- presence of the one offended, and no one else.
- b. We need to be as concise and clear as possible.

#### C. Wording is important.

- 1. The prodigal son chose his words carefully, and then spoke them to his father. (Luke 15:17-21)
- 2. There are ways to ask forgiveness that will never work, because we are not accepting the responsibility of our actions.
  - a. "I am not sure it was all my fault, but I am sorry."
  - b. "If I was wrong, please forgive me."
  - c. "I do not think that you should have done (whatever), but I am sorry for what I did."
- We must ask forgiveness for our attitudes and actions which caused the offense, and not try to side-step our wrongdoing by blaming someone else.

#### V. We Must Make Restitution.

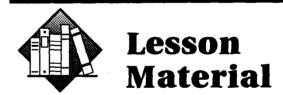
- A. "Restitution" means "restoration."
  - 1. If we have stolen anything, then we will return it. If we have broken something, then we will repair it.
  - 2 If we steal something and then ask forgiveness without returning it, we are insincere.
- B. It is not enough to ask forgiveness. If we cause a loss that can be replaced, then we must replace it.

#### VI. Often, It is Difficult to Seek Forgiveness, Because We Feel that the Other Person Was Partially Wrong.

- A. This does not excuse our actions.
- B. We must clear our conscience of that for which we are responsible. God will deal with the other person. (Matthew 12:46)

#### VII. We Must Not Put Off Reconciliation, but Must Take Action Immediately.

- A. Putting it off makes it harder to do later.
- B. Putting it off is avoiding responsibility and encouraging self-justification.



Perhaps the toughest assignment for a Christian, next to forgiving, is to ask forgiveness. It requires us to humble teacher ourselves. The should acknowledge this to teenagers. Reconciliation is not easy. We must die to ourselves. It is a painful experience. Yet, the joy we receive, once we have done it, far outweighs the pain. A clear conscience enables us meet each person and each day with the peace of God.

Often, it is difficult to ask forgiveness, because we feel that the other person is partially wrong, too. This may be the case; but, it does not change our responsibility.

We are not responsible for the other person's conscience, but we are responsible for our own. If we want a clear conscience, then we must be willing to face our wrongdoing and seek forgiveness.

Asking forgiveness is so difficult, that we often rationalize away our offenses with thoughts such as the following:

"It was such a little thing."

"It was so long ago."

"I will not do it again."

"It was not all my fault."

"They would not understand."

None of these excuses will clear our consciences; and they may cause us to balk at our need to reconcile. If we remember the offense (if it still "bugs" us), then the Holy Spirit is trying to get our attention, and we need to seek forgiveness. If we have offended someone, no matter how insignificant it may seem, God wants us to seek forgiveness and make it right -- no exceptions and no excuses.

The teacher should also point out that there are wrong ways to ask forgiveness. Many times, our pride causes us to resist the true humility that must accompany reconciliation. Pride causes us to think our offense is not that bad, or even wrong at all. If we say, "If I was wrong, please forgive," or "I did not realize that you were so sensitive, but since it hurt you, I am sorry," then we should not expect much reconciliation. We are not taking full responsibility for our wrongdoing. We must confess our wrong attitudes and actions in true repentance and humility, with no escape routes to comfort our pride. This alone will give us the joy and peace of a clear conscience.

There are unfortunate consequences to an unclear conscience. Our relationships will suffer. It is impossible to have long-term relationships, without some misunderstandings and hurts. If we refuse to seek forgiveness, then the closeness of our fellowship with others will suffer. We will be unable to resolve conflicts and unable to build genuine friendships. People will keep their distance.

Our witness for the Lord will also suffer. If we say that we are Christians, but do not reconcile our offenses, then the one whom we have offended will question our Christianity, or Christianity as a whole. With an unclear conscience, we do not have the peace of God. In Matthew 5:23-26, Jesus is commanding us to reconcile our differences with others. If we refuse, then we are disobeying God in an area of our lives. God would rather see us have right relationships with others, than give Him gifts at the church altar. Obedience is better than sacrifice.

If we can learn to forgive and seek forgiveness, we will have joyful relationships with family, friends and God. These two qualities are essential for true happiness and successful living.



#### **Methods**

Have the students list all they people they have offended. Is there anyone at school whom they avoid, because of a conflict? Is there a family member who is upset with them? If appropriate, have them share some of their offenses in class. After the students have made their list of offenses, tell them to seek forgiveness within the week. Tell them to think carefully about the words that they will use. There must be no hint of pride. Finally, tell them to make sure that they pick the right time to talk with the one offended. Go to it!

## The Danger of Anger

Volume 9

Lesson 18



Proverbs 16:32

Proverbs 19:11

**Ecclesiastes 7:9** 

Ephesians 4:26



### **Theme**

This lesson is a study on the emotion of anger, with practical help on how to control it.



#### Matthew 5:21,22

21 "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

22 "But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."



James 1:19

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:"



### **Outline**

#### I. What Is Anger?

- A. Anger is an emotion.
- B. Anger is an intense feeling of displeasure, when something happens that we do not like.

#### II. Is Anger a Sin?

#### A. No.

- 1. God has anger. (Psalms 7:11; Isaiah 1:4)
  - a. God cannot sin; and yet, in many passages of scripture, God is angry.
  - God's anger is justified. In every case in the Bible where God is angry, it is because of wickedness, unrighteousness and sin.
- 2. Jesus has anger. (Mark 3:5; John 2:15)
  - a. Jesus is angry with mans' sin and hardness of heart.
  - b. Anger over sin and evil is righteous anger.
- 3. We get angry. (Ephesians 4:26)
  - a. In Ephesians 4:26, the apostle Paul does not say "Do not get angry." He said that when we are angry (in other words, we will get angry), do not sin.
  - b. We need to control our anger and deal with the cause of our anger. We are not to leave our anger unresolved. "...Let not the

- sun go down upon your wrath." (Ephesians 4:26)
- 4. Everyone gets upset and must deal with the emotion of anger. If anger is controlled, then it is not sin.

#### B. Yes.

- 1. Uncontrolled anger is sin.
  - a. Uncontrolled anger gives the devil opportunities to harm us. (Ephesians 4:27)
  - b. Uncontrolled anger leads to strife, violence, and hell. (Proverbs 29:22; Genesis 49:6; Matthew 5:22)
- 2. We must control our anger. (Psalms 37:8; Proverbs 16:32)

### III. How Do We Control Our Anger?

- A. We need to learn to ignore minor irritations. (Proverbs 19:11)
- B. We must not associate with people who are easily angered. (Proverbs 22:24, 25)
  - 1. We become like those with whom we associate. (Proverbs 13:20)
  - 2. If we hang around a person who is easily angered, we will become like that person.
- C. We must learn to control our tongue. (Proverbs 15:1)
  - 1. We should never lash out, when angry.
  - 2. The power of life and death are in the tongue. (Proverbs 18:21)
- D. We may need to remove ourselves from the circumstance that is making us angry.

- 1. If our emotions are getting hot (temperature rising), walking away to gather our thoughts is not a bad idea. This may save us from saying something without thinking.
- 2. "The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things."
  (Proverbs 15:28)
- E. If another person has made us angry, then we must confront the person in a biblical way.
  - 1. Anger that is suppressed can lead to bitterness and other harmful emotions. (Ephesians 4:31)
  - 2. We must resolve the anger. (Matthew 18:15)
  - 3. We must have a right spirit. (Galatians 6:1)
  - 4. We must choose the right words. (Proverbs 15:1, 28)
- F. We must trust God to help us with our anger.
  - 1. Sometimes God puts us in irritating situations, in order to develop our character. (Romans 5:3)
  - 2. God will give us the help and grace we need to control our anger. (Philippians 2:13; 4:13)



# Spiritual Truths

- God gets angry with unrighteousness and sin. This anger is justifiable.
- Anger is not always sin. The Bible says that we will get angry, but that we are

- not to let the sun go down on our anger.
- We are not to repress anger or destructively express it, but we are to resolve it in a godly way.
- If not handled properly, anger can be harmful and destructive.
- It is possible to control anger. God would not command us to control it, if it was impossible to do so.



### Lesson Material

Anger is a emotion that is experienced by everyone. It occurs in various degrees of intensity -- from minor irritations to raging fury. It strikes all age groups -- from the smallest baby to the aged adult. Anger can be constructive when it is used to right a wrong or correct an injustice; or, anger can be destructive when it leads to strife, revenge, bitterness and hatred.

Teenagers must realize that anger is normal. Anger is not sin, unless or until it is expressed in a wrong way. The Bible says that the key to anger is in controlling it. The Bible does not say that we should never be angry, but it does say that we should be slow to anger. (James 1:19) If anger is not controlled, then it is harmful and destructive; and it becomes the cause of much misery and suffering. This is why the Bible says that anger rests in the bosom of fools. (Ecclesiastes 7:9) In Proverbs 25:28, it says that the man who cannot control his emotions is like a city that is broken down and without walls -- he will come to

ruin. God wants us to learn to control our anger. If we do not, then our anger may destroy us.

Acknowledgment is the first step to controlling anger. Only when we admit our anger can we effectively deal with it.

King Solomon said that there is a time for everything. (Ecclesiastes 3) With anger, there is a time to avoid anger-arousing situations and people, and there is a time to confront the situation or person. In each circumstance, we should seek God for wisdom. (James 1:5) We may want to talk to a trusted friend or counselor. When we are angry, we do not often see from a correct perspective; and a good friend may be able to help us evaluate our anger more clearly.

When we are angry, we should share our frustration with God. This is what the psalmist did in Psalms 73. Instead of exploding in wrath, he poured out his feelings to the Lord. God has a way of bringing peace to our unsettled spirits, when we share with Him. (Philippians 4:6,7)

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, etc. (Galatians 5:22-23) God will develop these qualities in us, as we seek to please Him by controlling our anger.



### **Methods**

The teacher may want to role-play an angry situation with another youth leader. To make it interesting, the teacher should not let the students know that it is acting, but let them think that it is a real situation. Afterwards, ask the students how they felt about it.

Have discussion with the students on situations or people that make them angry.

Have the students discuss how they control their anger.

Divide the students into small groups, and give them situations that would arouse anger. Ask them to work together on what they would do, in order to control their anger.

Have the students share experiences that they have had with anger. What is the angriest they have ever been? What have they done to resolve the situation?

Discuss with the students the consequences of uncontrolled anger: bitterness, fighting, retaliation, murder, depression, broken relationships, and emotional turmoil. Ask the students for examples of uncontrolled anger; and be prepared to share examples with the students.

### Who Is God?

Volume 9

Lesson 19



### Bible References

Galatians 1:1

John 1:1

Acts 5:1-4

Colossians 2:9

1 John 5:7



### **Theme**

This lesson is on the character and nature of God.



### Scripture Reading

Isaiah 44:6-8

6 "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.

7 "And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them show unto them.

8 "Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any."



Deuteronomy 6:4

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God {is} one LORD:"



#### Outline

## I. There Are Many Different Beliefs About God.

- A. "Polytheism" is the belief in many gods.
  - 1. Dagon: god of the Philistines (Judges 16:23)
  - 2. Ashtoreth, Chemosh and Milcom: gods of nations. (1 Kings 11:33)
  - 3. "Gods of the hills." (1 Kings 20:23)
- B. "Pantheism" is the belief that God is a part of everything.
  - 1. Nature is all a part of God.
  - 2. Living creatures all have divinity in them.
  - 3. The Hindu religion believes in pantheism.
- C. "Monotheism" is the belief in one God.
  - 1. Some believe God to be a supernatural, impersonal force.
  - 2. Some believe that God is a personal being, who does not operate within his creation. This is called "Deism."
  - 3. The Muslims believe in one God, whose name is "Allah."

## II. Christians Believe in the Holy Trinity.

A. "Trinity" defined: Within the nature (essence, elements that make up) of the one God, there are three eternal Persons. They are co-equal and co-eternal. They are described in scripture

as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three separate Entities (Beings) are the one God.

- 1. We do not believe in polytheism (1+1+1=3).
- 2. We believe in monotheism (1x1x1 = 1).
- 3. We believe in the Triune God ("Tri" meaning "three" and "une" meaning "one" -- "Three in one").
- B. Although the Triune God is hard to understand, and the term "Trinity" is not mentioned in the Bible, we believe that this is exactly what the Bible teaches.
  - 1. The Father is called "God" in scripture.
    - a. Galatians 1:1 -- "God the Father."
    - b. 1 Thessalonians 1:1 -- "God the Father."
    - c. 1 Peter 1:2 -- "God the Father."
  - 2. The Son is called "God" in scripture.
    - a. John 1:1 -- "...the Word was God." John 1:14 -- "...the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,...."
    - b. Colossians 2:9 -- "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
    - c. 1 Timothy 3:16 "...God was manifest in the flesh,...."
  - 3. The Holy Spirit is called "God" in scripture.
    - a. In Acts 5:1-4 is the story of Ananias and Sapphira. In verse three, Peter asks Ananias why he has lied to the Holy Spirit; and then, in verse five, Peter tells Ananias in the same conversation that he (Ananias) has not lied to men, but to God.
      - (1) Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit; and Peter declares that he has lied to God.

- (2) This passage reveals that the Holy Spirit is God.
- b. In John 14:16, Jesus says that He will pray to the Father, and the Father will send the disciples "another Comforter."
  - (1) In John 14:26, it specifically tells us that the Comforter is the Holy Spirit.
  - (2) In John 14:16, the word "another" means "exactly like the first." In other words, the Holy Spirit is exactly like Jesus. The Holy Spirit is God.
- c. In John 16:12-15, it says the Holy Spirit was sent to glorify Jesus, and not Himself. This is why there are not as many verses on the Holy Spirit in the Bible. He came to glorify Jesus.
- 4. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the one God.
  - a. The Bible state in many places that there is only one God.(Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10; 1 Corinthians 8:4)
  - b. Yet, the Bible calls the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit "God." Why? It is because these three co-equal, co-eternal and co-united Beings make up the one God. (1 John 5:7)
- 5. The Old Testament evinces the triunity of God.
  - a. Genesis 1:26 -- "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:...."
  - b. A plural pronoun is always used for the Hebrew name "Elohim" ("God") in the Old Testament, along with plural verbs. The reason is that God is triune -- Three in One.

#### III. God Is Knowable!

- A. The omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent Creator of the universe is knowable. (John 17:3; Jeremiah 9:24)
- B. God desires that each one of us gets to know Him in a personal way. (Ephesians 1:17-19; Revelation 3:20)



### Spiritual Truths

- The Bible reveals to man the true nature of God.
- The Bible teaches that God is a Trinity. God is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- The Bible teaches that it is possible for man to know God.



### Lesson Material

"Canst thou by searching find out God?...." (Job 11:7) Job asks the question that every man considers at some point in life. Is there a God, or are we the chance collision of molecules in a biological "soup?" And if there is a God, then who is God? What is he (or she) like? Someone has said that the reason people cringe when we talk about God is because they do not know who or what we are talking about.

Who Is God? Volume 9

There are numerous beliefs about the existence of the Supreme Being. If ten people on the street are asked about their belief in God, we may receive ten different answers: God is a grandfatherly figure; God is an impersonal force; God is the divine spark within us all; God is a "cool dude."

Some people do not believe that God exists. This belief is called "atheism." Others believe that it is impossible to know whether God exists. This belief is called "agnosticism."

"Canst thou by searching find out God?" The atheist does not bother with the question; and the answer to the agnostic is "No," because he says that it is impossible to find out whether or not God exists. The Bible rebukes the atheist with strong words: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God...." (Psalms 14:1; 53:1) The Bible refutes the agnostic: "...He that cometh to God must believe that he is,...." (Hebrews 11:6)

The Bible is beacon light shining out to humanity with the truth of God's existence; and it gives a clear picture of the nature of God (what God is like) and the plan of God (God's purpose for man).

The Bible teaches that God is a trinity or tri-unity. Three eternal Beings, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are the one God. This may be difficult to wholly comprehend; but, this is exactly what the scripture teaches, as seen in the lesson outline.

There are numerous ways to illustrate the Trinity, in order to help the students come to a better understanding. Creation implies the tri-unity of God. Man is made up of body, soul and spirit -- three distinct parts, which make one person. The universe is a combination of three elements: space, matter, and time. Space is three-dimensional, with height, width, and length. Matter is energy, motion, and result. Time is past, present, and future. It is not unrealistic to believe that the Creator of this triune universe is Himself a Trinity.

Another good illustration is water. Water is generally thought of as a single element; and yet, it can be a solid (ice), a liquid (water), and a gas (steam). The substance is the same; and yet, it can appear in distinctly separate forms. In a laboratory experiment, scientists can make a test tube of water become all three forms at the same time. In the right conditions, the water at the bottom of the tube will solidify into ice with the water in the middle of the tube remaining in liquid form, and the water at the top of the tube turning into steam simultaneously.

Saint Patrick of Ireland used the three-leaf clover as a famous illustration of the concept of the Trinity. There are three separate leaves, but only one clover.

Sunday School teachers have used an egg to explain the Trinity. The yolk, white, and shell are three elements that make one egg. However, none of the three elements alone are an egg; whereas, each of the three Members of the Trinity is very God.

The truth of the Trinity or Triune God is difficult, if not impossible, to totally understand. When we hear that there is only one God, we think of only one Person. How can the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be the "one" God? We think terms of 1 + 1 + 1 = 3. We think of people as individual human beings; and we know that three human beings do not make one person. Yet, the Bible teaches this is not

true with God. When we relate to God, we must think in terms of  $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$ .

No illustration of the Trinity will sufficiently explain the co-equal relationship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Yet, we must make it clear to teenagers that is exactly what the Bible teaches about the true nature of God.

In the lesson outline, Roman numeral three is an addendum. It is not essential to the aim of the lesson. Yet, the biblical truth that we can know God, the Creator of the universe, is an awesome revelation. God is not a impersonal force with no concern over the affairs of men.

The teacher may want to use this point as an opportunity to express that God loves each one of us, and that we can know God in a personal way, by committing our lives to Jesus Christ, God the Son.



#### **Methods**

The teacher may want to expound on different religions and beliefs in God. The library, if available, is an excellent place to research different beliefs in God.

The teacher may want to ask the class what some of the different beliefs in God are. What do some of their friends believe about God?

The teacher may ask the students to give some reasons why they believe in God, without using the Bible as proof. The students may be broken into small groups to work on this assignment, and then each group share with the class.

If the teacher expounds on the point that God is knowable, then an altar call or commitment time may be in order.

## **Good News**

Volume 9

Lesson 20



2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Romans 5:8-11; 10;9-13

John 3:3; 5:24

Hebrews 9:27,28

1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:18

1 John 5:11-13



#### **Theme**

This lesson expounds on the biblical doctrine of salvation.



Romans 3:21-26

- 21 "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;
- 22 "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:
- 23 "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
- 24 "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:
- 25 "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God;
- 26 "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."



### Memory Verse

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."



#### **Outline**

- I. The Bible Teaches that God Is Perfect. (Deuteronomy 32:4, Matthew 5:48)
- A. God is righteous. (Psalms 48:10; 119:137; 145:17)
- B. God is holy. (Psalms 99:9; Isaiah 6:3)
- C. God is light. (1 John 1:5)
- II. God, In His Perfection, Will Not Allow Imperfection or Unrighteousness to Dwell In His Presence. (Psalms 15:1,2)
- A. Heaven is where God dwells. (Psalms 11:4)
- B. Heaven will only be inhabited by perfection. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)
- III. The Bible says that every man has fallen short of God's perfection. (Isaiah 64:6)
- A. Every person has sinned. No one (except Jesus -- John 8:46) has lived a perfect life. (Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:23)
- B. This is one of the basic facts that the scripture teaches about all men.

## IV. Sin Separates Us From God. (Isaiah 59:1,2)

- A. We will be judged for our sin. (Hebrews 9:27)
  - 1. There is a penalty for sin that must be paid.
  - 2. The penalty for sin is death or separation from God. (Romans 6:23)
- B. We are described as "dead," or "lost." (Ephesians 2:2; Luke 19:10)
- C. We cannot reconcile ourselves to God. No amount of good deeds will eliminate our imperfections. (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- D. We will not dwell with God in heaven; we will be separated from God by our sin. (2 Thessalonians 1:9)
- E. This is the bad news.

## V. God Has A Plan For Our Salvation.

- A. God is able to reconcile us to Himself. (Romans 5:10)
- B. This is the good news ("gospel").
- VI. God Provided a Solution to the Problem of Sin by Sending a Savior, Jesus Christ, Who Came to Eliminate Our Sin and Restore Us To God. (1 Peter 3:18)
- A. Jesus lived a perfect life, without any sin. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

- B. Jesus came to take away our sin. (John 1:29)
- C. Jesus died to pay the penalty that we owe for breaking God's laws. (Isaiah 53:5) Jesus died in our place.
  - 1. We can be set free from the punishment of sin.
  - 2. We can be justified -- declared not guilty -- before God. (Romans 3:26)

#### VII. Jesus Does Not Automatically Become Our Savior. We Must Meet the Conditions.

- A. We must have faith. (Romans 5:1)
  - 1. We must believe in Jesus and what He did for us. "Belief" is accepting something as true.
  - 2. We must act on what we believe. We must put our belief into action.
  - a. This is the difference between belief and faith. (James 2:19) Belief is acknowledgment of a truth; and faith is acting upon that truth.
  - b. Often, in the Bible, the word "believe" is used synonymously for the word "faith." (John 3:16)
- B. We must repent.
  - 1. "Repent" means "to turn," or to "change one's mind."
  - We must turn to Christ to be our Savior. We must change our mind concerning sin, and ask Jesus to forgive us (take away the penalty) for what we have done wrong.

- C. Faith and repentance work together. We cannot have faith without repentance; and we cannot repent without faith.
- VIII. When We Ask Jesus to Be Our Savior Through Faith and Repentance, God Has Many Promises For Us. It Is Good News!
- A. We are forgiven. (Acts 5:31; 1 John 1:9)
- B. We are made righteous in God's sight. (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- C. We are able to know God. (John 17:3; Revelation 3:20)
- D. We will go to heaven and live eternally. (John 10:28)



### Spiritual Truths

- Salvation is a gift from God. There is nothing we can do to earn it -- we must receive it.
- Man is sinful, and therefore needs a savior. Jesus Christ is the Savior.
- Through Christ, God is both just and the justifier of anyone who believes (has faith) in Jesus. (Romans 3:26)
- If we refuse to acknowledge Christ, we will be eternally separated from God.
- There are great promises of life and life eternal to those who receive Christ.

 Doing good things, going to church, or being religious does not make a person a Christian --- only faith and repentance makes a person a true Christian.



### Lesson Material

"Salvation," in the Greek and Hebrew, simply means "to be saved." Soteriology, the doctrine of salvation, is the glorious plan of the ages that God has for man. (2 Timothy 1:9) The doctrine of salvation is the gospel message (the "good news"). Through Jesus Christ, we can be born again (John 3:3); and we can know and experience God. (John 17:3)

In sharing the doctrine of salvation, it must be made clear to the students that all men are separated from God because of sin. God is perfect. Man, although created in God's image, is not perfect. All have sinned and fallen short of God's standard of perfection. (Romans 3:23) Since God will not allow any imperfection to enter His presence, man is in trouble. The teacher may want to draw a picture of a great chasm, with God on one end and man on the other, to illustrate this truth.

Man may try to reach God by his own doings, but this is futile. Nothing man can do will make him sinless or perfect. If a man does good deeds, this is great; but, he is still a sinner. If a man is religious or philosophical, then good for him; but, he is still a sinner. Man cannot reach God by his own devices of goodness and works of religion. Man is lost in sin.

God's answer is Jesus Christ. Jesus not only came to reveal God to us (Colossians 2:9), but also to solve the sin problem that separates us from God. Jesus came to save us from our sin. (1 Timothy 1:15) Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sin, so that we would not have to pay the penalty. (1 Peter 2:24) Jesus came to reconcile us with God. (1 Peter 3:18) The teacher may draw a cross that bridges the chasm between God and man.

It is not enough to acknowledge this, or to believe only with mental or intellectual assent. A man must act on what he believes. This is the difference between faith and belief. A drunk may believe that it is better to lead a sober life; but, if he continues to get drunk, he has not exercised faith. A criminal may believe it is better to lead an honest life; but, if he continues to steal, he has no faith in what he believes. We must exercise faith in what we believe. We must receive Iesus as our Savior. (John 1:12) We must repent and turn to Jesus for forgiveness. (Acts 3:19) The Bible says that when one sinner repents, there is great joy in heaven. (Luke 15:7)

The teacher should expound on the great benefits and blessings of salvation. There are many wonderful promises: forgiveness (Ephesians 1:7); eternal life (1 John 2:25); becoming a child of God (John 1:12); becoming a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17); future glorification (Romans 8:30); and adventure. (Jeremiah 29:11)



#### **Methods**

If available, the teacher should use a blackboard to illustrate the gospel message.

The teacher may ask the students to explain as clearly as possible the "good

news" of Christianity, at the beginning of the lesson.

The teacher may ask the students to write down questions they have about salvation, and then answer these in class. Or, ask the students to find the answers from the Bible.

Certainly, the teacher should close the lesson with the invitation for teenagers to invite Jesus to be their Savior.

## Answering the Tough Questions

Volume 9

Lesson 21



Psalms 14:1; 53:1

John 7:17

John 8:31,32

Romans 1:19,20

Colossians 2:8



#### Theme

This lesson deals with the frequently asked questions about God and about Christianity.



1 Peter 3:13-16

13 "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

14 "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

15 "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

16 "Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ."



#### Jude 3

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."



#### **Outline**

#### I. Is There a God?

- A. Creation declares the glory of God. (Psalms 19:1)
  - 1. The apostle Paul says that creation proves the existence of God. (Romans 1:19, 20)
  - 2. How do we explain the fact that the universe exists? There are only a few possibilities.
    - a. The universe is eternal and it has always been.
      - (1) The Second Law of Thermodynamics disproves an eternal universe.
      - (2) This scientific law says that things move toward disorder and decay. The universe is in the process of wearing down; and it will eventually wear out. The energy of the universe will be so dispersed

- that the universe will eventually die. Since this has not yet happened, we know that the world is not eternal.
- (3) If we look at the Second Law of Thermodynamics from another angle, it says that heat flows from hotter regions to cooler regions. Eventually, all available heat energy in the universe will decline, or in time, be dispersed throughout space, until the universe reaches "Heat Death." For example, we know that the sun is cooling off and will someday die out. It will lose its ability to emit heat energy. This will eventually happen to the entire universe, in what is known as "Maximum Entropy" or "Heat Death." If the universe is eternal, then it would have already reached "Maximum Entropy." Since this has not happened, we know that the universe had a beginning; and it is not eternal.
- b. Something was created out of nothing.
  - Nothing -- working on nothing, through nothing, by nothing and for nothing -created everything.
  - (2) This takes more faith than believing in God.
- c. God created the universe.
  - (1) This is what the Bible teaches. (Genesis 1:1)
  - (2) This is the best conclusion to the possibilities.

- B. The universe has structure, order and design, which indicates the existence of a Designer.
  - A watch does not, with its intricate design and complexities, simply happen; it must have a watchmaker.
  - 2. The earth, planets, sun, solar system, and galaxies all have order and design.
    - a. They do not collide into one another, but maintain their orbits.
    - b. The earth is just the right distance away from the sun. Any further or closer, and it will freeze up or burn up.
    - c. These facts indicate a Designer.
  - 3. Man, with all his complexities of mind and body, shows the handiwork of a Designer.
    - a. A simple cell is more complicated that any man-made creation on earth, including the computer.
    - b. To say that the human eye, with its ability to focus and admit light, is a product of chance, is difficult to comprehend.
    - c. St. Augustine said that his thumb proved God.
    - d. Design bespeaks Designer.
- C. God has revealed Himself in the Person of Jesus Christ. (Colossians 2:9)
  - 1. The Bible declares in many places of the New Testament that Jesus is God. (For example, see John 1:1,14; John 10:30-33; John 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:16.)
  - 2. In Christian apologetics, we have what is called The Trilemma. Jesus is either the Lord, or a liar, or a lunatic. The reasoning is as follows:

- a. Jesus said that He was God, but He was lying.
  - (1) He knew His claim was false. He was a liar.
  - (2) He was telling others to be honest, when he was living a lie. He was a hypocrite.
  - (3) He told others to stake their eternal destiny on what He knew was a lie. He was a devil
  - (4) He died for a lie. (John 19:7) He was a fool.
- b. Jesus said that He was God, but He was deluded.
  - (1) He was sincere about His claim, but He was wrong.
  - (2) Where to we find any trace of insanity in His life? Could someone who gave such moral teachings as the "Sermon on the Mount" be mentally disturbed to the point of claiming to be God?
  - (3) Even men who will not admit to His deity, will not submit that He was insane.
- c. Jesus said that He was God, because it was (is) the truth.
  - (1) He said that His words would never pass away (Matthew 24:35); and they never have.
  - (2) He said that He was without sin (John 8:46); and no one could accuse Him of sin.
  - (3) He would know complete truth (John 8:31, 32); and He went a step further, by proclaiming that He was truth. (John 14:6)
  - (4) He would have power over the natural universe (Mark 4:37-41); and the wind and sea obeyed His command.

- (5) He would have power over death (Matthew 28:5-6); and the grave could not hold Him.
- d. Jesus is the answer to all of the questions and problems of mankind, because He is the Creator of all things. (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:17)
- D. Christianity teaches that God has revealed Himself to man in the pages of the Bible.
  - 1. The Bible says that disbelief in God is foolish. (Psalms 14:1; 53:1)
  - 2. The Bible says that God will be found by and reward those who seek Him. (Jeremiah 29:13; Acts 17: 27; Hebrews 11:6)
  - 3. The Bible teaches that we can know God through Jesus Christ. (John 17:3)

## II. Why Does God Allow Suffering and Evil?

- A. Suffering and evil results from man's ability to make choices.
  - 1. There is a tendency to blame God for everything, because He could prevent suffering and evil.
  - Yet, the Bible clearly says that God has given man (us) a free will. We have the freedom to choose to do what we want.
  - When people make careless and cruel choices, the problems of suffering and evil result.
    - a. When parents divorce, should we blame God for the scars to the children?
    - b. When a drunk driver kills an innocent person, is God to blame?

- c. When people mock or reject others, should God be blamed for the suffering it causes?
- 4. Why does God not make man, so that he cannot make evil choices?
  - a. If God did this, then we would cease to be humans.
  - b. We would be robots.
  - c. There are some things that God cannot do. God cannot make us love Him. Love is only possible with the ability to choose.
- B. If God totally eliminated suffering and evil, He would do a perfect job.
  - 1. If God stamped out evil, then He would wipe out lying, cheating, stealing, bad thoughts, gossip, lack of love, and every failure to do good.
  - 2. We would all be in trouble, because, who of us would be left?
- C. The Bible says that some day God will put an end to suffering and evil.
  - 1. God will put an end to suffering and evil at the great, horrible Day of Judgment. (Revelation 20:11-15)
  - 2. After the Judgment, God will create a new heaven and a new earth. He will wipe away all tears; and there will be no more sorrow, crying, pain or death. (Revelation 21:1-4)
  - 3. Why has God let suffering and evil go on for so long?
    - a. The Bible says it is because God does not want anyone to perish.(2 Peter 3:9)
    - b. God is waiting as long as possible, in order to give men a chance to repent.
- D. Suffering is a teacher. (This does not answer the question of evil, but it does help answer the question of suffering.)

- 1. We tend to listen better, forgive easier, judge less, wise up quicker, learn patience faster, and stay humble longer when we go through suffering. (Romans 5:3; Ecclesiastes 7:4)
- 2. Suffering can draw people toward God. (Psalms 119:71)
- 3. God Himself is the great Sufferer.
  - a. Jesus learned obedience through the things He suffered. (Hebrews 2:18; 5:8)
  - b. Jesus Christ understands suffering. (Isaiah 53)
- 4. When we suffer, God will give us the strength to get through it. We need to trust Him. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

## III. How Can We Know that the Bible Is True?

- A. The Bible claims that it is inspired by God, or "God-breathed."
  - 1. This is not proof in itself, because it is circular reasoning; but it would be difficult for us to say that the Bible is the Word of God, if it never made the claim in its content. (1 Timothy 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 1:21)
  - 2. The writers of the Bible were honest men.
    - a. Paul said the Bible is inspired. (1 Timothy 3:16)
    - b. Peter said the Bible is inspired. (2 Peter 1:21)
    - c. These were men of integrity, who were not seeking to deceive people.
      - (1) If they were lying, then they had every opportunity to change their minds.
      - (2) They were beaten, imprisoned and ridiculed;

- and yet, they held fast to the Word of God.
- 3. Over one-hundred and fifty times, the Old Testament prophets began their oracles with "Thus saith the Lord." They believed that they were speaking the words of God.
- 4. Jesus Christ believed in the inspiration of the scripture.
  - a. He quoted the Old Testament as truth when He said on numerous occasions, "It is written." (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10; Mark 7:6; Luke 19:46)
  - b. He accepted the scripture as the final authority, when He said, "...The scripture cannot be broken." (John 10:35)
  - c. Jesus said His own words were true, and that they would never pass away. (Matthew 24:35; John 8:31,32)
- B. Fulfilled prophecy proves that the Bible is the inspired Word of God.
  - 1. Bible prophecy is the future being foretold according to God's will.
    - a. Bible prophecy is very specific, and does not speak in vague generalities.
    - b. A prophet of God could make no mistakes, or his life was taken. (Deuteronomy 18:20-22)
  - 2. There are various kinds of prophecies in the Bible. Many have to do with the coming of the Messiah; others have to do with historical events that concern nations, kings, and cities; and still others deal with the Jewish nation.
    - a. It is amazing that the Old
       Testament predicts that the
       Israelites would be scattered as a
       nation, because of their rebellion
       against God. (Hosea 9:17; Amos
       7:11) This happened as the Bible

- predicted; and yet, the incredible consideration is that the Bible also predicted that Israel would someday be restored as a nation. (Jeremiah 31) This was thought to be improbable, if not impossible, especially when the Jewish people did not exist as a nation for almost two thousand years; and yet, today, Israel is a nation. It is fascinating that Jesus predicted that His return would be soon, when the focus of world attention would be on the nation of Israel. Today, two thousand years later, Israel is again the focus of world attention.
- b. The Old Testament gives dozens of prophecies concerning the coming Messiah. Perhaps the most amazing are in Isaiah 53. These prophecies were fulfilled in the life of Jesus.
  - (1) Many prophecies about the Messiah are very specific, such as Micah 5:2, which says that the Christ would be born in Bethlehem.
  - (2) The Old Testament contains over three hundred references to the Messiah that were fulfilled in the life of Jesus.
- 3. There are only three explanations for biblical prophecy.
  - a. Fulfilled Bible prophecies are a hoax, and they had to be written after the events took place.
    - (1) No historian would agree with this.
    - (2) The Dead Sea scrolls disprove this beyond question.
  - The fulfillment of Bible prophecies are coincidental.

- (1) The probability of all the prophecies to come true, as in the life of Jesus, would be a mathematical improbability, if not impossibility.
- (2) If the prophecies and their fulfillments are studied in detail, a thinking man would have to agree that it takes more faith to believe that they happened by chance, than to believe that the Bible is the Word of God.
- c. The third explanation is that the Bible is the Word of God! (Psalms 119:89)
- C. The great challenge of the Bible is that if we do what it says, then we will know whether it is true or not -- whether it comes from God or not. (John 7:17)
  - 1. If we will follow the commandments of God in the Bible, then the promises of God will take effect in our lives.
  - 2. The great challenge to every individual is to do what the Bible says, instead of reading it and only speculating about its content. (James 1:22)



# Spiritual Truths

- Christianity is a rational, reasonable faith.
- If Christianity is true, then it will stand up to close examination.

- God has commanded us to love Him with all of our minds, which means He wants us to think about our faith.
- Gods wants us to be able to give people the reasons for what we believe.
- Christianity can be defended.
- Only fools say that there is no God!



### Lesson Material

This lesson is a brief introduction to Christian apologetics. "Apologetics" does not mean "to apologize," in the sense that we are sorry. The Greek word apologia actually means "to make a verbal defense."

In Jude 3 we are told to "earnestly contend for the faith." The word "contend" means to "vigorously wrestle with a rival." It means to fight for the faith. We need to contend for our Christian beliefs. Apollos contended for the faith (Acts 18:24,28); and Paul contended for the faith against the philosophers of his day in the Mars Hill discourse. (Acts 17) Christianity can be defended.

It should be understood that this lesson is not, by any means, an exhaustive study. Men have spent lifetimes debating and deliberating on the issues of God and Christianity. The aim of the lesson is not so much to answer the three questions posed in the outline as it is to challenge teenagers to study the truths of Christianity. God has not commanded us to commit intellectual suicide by taking an

that we are to love the Lord with all our heart, soul and mind. (Matthew 22:37) God does not expect us to accept with our heart what our mind rejects. It is extremely hard to love God, if our minds reject His existence. Actually, it is impossible. Yet, at the same time, all of us wrestle with questions. The problem comes when we do not search out the answers. And the Bible says that there are answers! (1 Peter 3:15) If Christianity is true, then close examination of its content will do no harm. If anything, it will strengthen our faith.

We must communicate to teenagers that we have a rational faith, which is able to be defended. Christianity is reasonable. As someone has said, our faith goes beyond reason, but not against it. The three questions in the outline are some of the most frequently asked by unbelievers. The answers to the questions should give resource to teenagers, when their friends make honest inquiries. This study may lend to excellent discussion with the students; and so, it may be difficult get through the outline in the allotted class time. If this is the case, the teacher may want to choose one or two questions to thoroughly examine in class.

It is important to remember that our duty as Christians is not to win arguments, but to win people to Jesus Christ. Our duty is to persuade people to become Christians. This is not done with a know-it-all, arrogant attitude. It is done with a lifestyle that reflects Jesus, which is why Peter said to sanctify the Lord in our hearts and give reasons for our faith with meekness and fear. (1 Peter 3:15) "Meekness" means that our conversation is not angry or arrogant, but calm and peaceful; and "fear" does not mean that we should be afraid, but that we should be respectful to the other person.

The truth will stand against any attack. We do not need to be timid about our faith. We serve the living and true God. (1 Thessalonians 1:9) Jesus said that if we follow Him, we will know the truth -- and the truth will set us free. (John 8:31,32)



#### **Methods**

Have the students write down what they think are the most common questions people ask about God and Christianity. Read these questions to the class; and allow the teenagers to give their answers.

Have the students break into groups. Give each group a question that they are to answer. They may share their answers with the class.

At the beginning of class, read the questions given in the outline; and have a group discussion on what the students think that the answers are.

## Angels On Assignment

Volume 9

Lesson 22



### Bible References

Psalms 34:7

Daniel 10

Matthew 1:20; 18:10

Luke 1

1 Corinthians 6:3

Ephesians 6:12

Colossians 1:16

1 Timothy 5:21

Hebrews 1:14; 13:2



### Scripture Reading

Hebrews 13:1, 2

1 "Let brotherly love continue.

2 "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."



### Memory Verse

Hebrews 1:14

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"



#### **Theme**

This study examines the nature and characteristics of angels.



### **Outline**

#### I. Angels Are Creations of God.

- A. The scripture does not give the time of their creation; but, angels existed before man.
- B. There are countless numbers of angels. (Daniel 7:10; Hebrews 12:22)

## II. Angels Differ In Rank and Authority.

- A. There is a hierarchy of authority among the angelic hosts.
- B. The Bible speaks of principalities, powers and rulers -- both good and evil. (Ephesians 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Colossians 1:16; 2:15)
- C There are archangels. "Arch" simply means "chief." These are angels of high authority; and they are probably the highest authority, under God.
  - 1. Michael. (Jude 9)
    - a. Michael is the only angel specifically called an "archangel." (Jude 9)
    - b. Michael is described as "one of the chief princes," which infers that there are others of equal rank.
  - 2. Gabriel. (Luke 1:19)
    - a. Although Gabriel is not specifically called an archangel, he is definitely a "chief" angel in scripture.

- b. Gabriel is given responsibilities of utmost importance. (Daniel 8:16; Luke 1:19, 26)
- 3. Lucifer. (Isaiah 14:12)
  - a. Lucifer was one of the chief angels of God.
  - b. Lucifer rebelled against God and became Satan -- the adversary. (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:11-19)
- 4. There may be more archangels; but Michael, Gabriel, and Lucifer are the three which the Bible mentions.
- D. There are angels who rule over and influence nations.
  - 1. There is an angel over Persia. (Daniel 10:13, 20)
  - 2. There is an angel over Greece. (Daniel 10:20)
  - 3. Michael is the prince over the Hebrew nation. (Daniel 10:21)
  - 4. "Principalities and powers" mentioned in the New Testament may refer to these angelic rulers.
- E. There are elect angels. (1 Timothy 5:21)
  - 1. These are what Bible scholars call "common angels," which appear throughout the Bible.
    - a. There is nothing ordinary about common angels.
    - b. One angel killed the entire Assyrian army. (2 Chronicles 32:21)
  - 2. These are angels that did not follow Satan in his rebellion against God.

#### III. Angels Differ In Kind.

#### A. Cherubim.

1. Cherubim guarded the Garden of Eden, after the expulsion of Adam. (Genesis 3:24)

- 2. Cherubim serve at the throne of God. (Psalms 80:1; 99:1)
- 3. A physical description of cherubim is given in Ezekiel 1.

#### B. Seraphim.

- 1. There are over fifty references to cherubim in the scripture; but seraphim are mentioned only twice. (Isaiah 6:1-7)
- 2. Isaiah gives us all that we know about the seraphim.
- 3. "Seraphim" means "burning."

#### C. Beasts or Living Creatures.

- 1. "Beasts," when translated literally, means "living creatures."
- 2. The four beasts, as described by the apostle John, are spirit beings that only appear in the book of Revelation. (Revelation 5:6; 7:11; 14:3; 15:7; 19:4)
- Their description is a cross between seraphim and cherubim. (Revelation 4:6-9)
- D. Archangels and elect angels may be different in kind, but we do not know. We only know that they are different in rank and authority.

#### IV. Angels Differ In Loyalty.

- A. Fallen angels rebelled with Lucifer against God.
  - 1. Satan led a rebellion against God; and one-third of the angelic creation joined him. (Revelation 12:4, 7-9)
    - a. Satan and his angels were defeated in the rebellion.
    - b. Satan and his angels were cast out of heaven, and were hence

- called "fallen" angels. (Luke 10:18; Revelation 12:9)
- 2. God will some day permanently punish Satan and his angels for their rebellion. (Matthew 25:41)
- B. Elect angels are faithful and loyal to God. They did not take part in Satan's rebellion.

## V. The Bible Reveals the Characteristics of Angels.

- A. What are angels like?
- 1. Angels are intelligent and wise. (2 Samuel 14:20; 19:27)
- 2. Angels are limited in knowledge. (Mark 13:32; 1 Peter 1:12)
- 3. Angels are immortal. (Luke 20:36)
- 4. Angels are not limited to the physical dimensions of man.
  - a. They have the ability to materialize in the form of human bodies. (Hebrews 13:2)
  - b. They can appear and disappear. (Acts 12:7, 10)
  - c. They can travel at incredible speed. (Revelation 9:1)
- 5. Angels are always described in the male gender.
- 6. Angels have wills. (Isaiah 14:12-14)
  - a. Angels have the ability to sin. (Revelation 12:7; Jude 6)
  - b. Angels who sin are punished by God. (Matthew 25:41; Jude 6)
- B. What are the responsibilities of angels?
  - 1. Angels are messengers. (Matthew 28:2-7; Luke 1:11-17, 26-37)
  - 2. Angels are to minister to the saints. (Hebrews 1:13,14)
  - 3. Angels protect saints. (Psalms 34:7)

- 4. Angels are obedient to do God's command. (Psalms 103:20; Matthew 6:10)
- 5. Angels worship God. (Hebrews 1:6; Philippians 2:9-11)



### Spiritual Truths

- Angels are beings in the spirit world.
- Angels are not robotic creatures. They have wills and emotions, like humans.
- There was a war in heaven, in which one-third of the angels rebelled against God. Today, they work evil in the world, in order to deceive and destroy men.
- The elect angels are responsible to watch over us and protect us from harm.
- The Bible says that it is possible to entertain angels without knowing it.
   We need to be careful how we treat strangers.



#### Lesson Material

The word "angel" (or "angels") is used 294 times in the scripture. The word means "messenger" in both Greek and Hebrew. Angels are also called "sons of the mighty" (Psalms 89:6) and "sons of God."

(Job 1:6) Angels were created by Jesus Christ. (Colossians 1:16)

A point of interest is that angels are often depicted in art and literature as female; and it is not unusual to compliment a lady by referring to her as "looking like an angel." But the fact is, whenever angels appear in the Bible, they are always described in the male gender.

Another point of interest is that when God gets ready to wrap up the ages, and the small and the great of His creation appear at the judgments, the Bible teaches that we shall judge angels. (1 Corinthians 6:3)

Angels are God's messengers, sent to accomplish His purposes. God uses them to minister to the saints. (Hebrews 1:14) God uses them to protect the saints. (Psalms 34:7; 91:11, 12) God uses angels to instruct and direct the saints. (Matthew 1:20; 2:13; Luke 1:26-37) The Bible teaches that God uses angels to do many other things; but the above examples are sufficient to show that angels are used by God to watch over us.

There are numerous testimonies of men and women who have been helped by strangers, only to discover later that the strangers may have indeed been angels. (Hebrews 13:2) Often, in our own lives, we may have a close call with tragedy: almost hit by a car, nearly missed in a gun incident, or almost fell off or out of a dangerous structure. Who knows if we were not being protected by angels? Heaven knows.

From scriptures such as Matthew 18:10 and Acts 12:15, many believe that there are "guardian angels" who specifically watch over individual believers. This is entirely possible; and it should encourage us to live carefully. Whether we have a

guardian angel or not, we do know that angels watch over us; and this should be a great source of encouragement. We must realize that the Bible teaches that there is a powerful spirit realm which is invisible to man, but which is strongly influential in the affairs of man. Countless angels, both good (elect angels) and evil (fallen angels), whirl their way throughout the earth in a dimension unseen by man. Elect angels are agents of the Lord; and they are concerned about our welfare. (Luke 2:13,14) Fallen angels are emissaries of Satan; and they seek to destroy us. (Ephesians 6:12) The Bible teaches that elect and fallen angels fight against one another, in their efforts to effect man for good or evil. (Daniel 10:12-21; Jude 9)

The Bible teaches that our prayers are a major factor in determining the ability and mobility with which the spirit world can work among us. Through our prayers, we engage in spiritual warfare and have influence in the outcome of the battles in the spirit world. (Daniel 10:12-21; Ephesians 6:10-18) This is why it is critical that Christians continually exercise themselves in prayer. We do not know to

what extent our prayers effect the dispatching of angels in the unseen world, in order to defeat the powers of darkness and accomplish God's purpose.



#### Methods

The teacher may be able to find some legitimate testimonies of men or women who have been helped by angels. These will serve as excellent illustrations in class.

Have the students get together in groups, and give them scripture verses on angels. The students are to come up with as many truths as they can about angels from these scriptures; and then, they may share them with the class.

Ask the students to give examples of "close calls" they have had in their lives. Then present them with the possibility that they were protected by angels. The responses may be interesting.

## What In Hell Is Going On?

Volume 9

Lesson 23



### Bible References

Isaiah 66:22-24

Matthew 25:41,46

Mark 9:43-48

Luke 16:19-31

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9

Revelation 20:11-15



#### **Theme**

This study examines the existence and reality of hell.



### Scripture Reading

Luke 16:19-31

- 19 "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:
- 20 "And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,
- 21 "And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.
- 22 "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels unto Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;
- 23 "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.
- 24 "And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.
- 25 "But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.
- 26 "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

- 27 "Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:
- 28 "For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.
- 29 "Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.
- 30 "And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.
- 31 "And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."



#### Revelation 20:15

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."



#### **Outline**

- I. The Bible Speaks of Hell As a Very Real Place.
- A The Bible indicates that hell is below the surface of the earth. (Isaiah 5:14; Ezekiel 32:18, 21; Matthew 12:40)
- B. Jesus spoke of hell, many times, as a real place. (Luke 16:19-31)

## II. The Bible Teaches the Existence of an Underworld.

- A. The underworld is made up of five areas. Three of these areas are translated "hell;" but they are separate domains in the underworld.
  - "Sheol" is the Hebrew word for "hell." In the Old Testament, Sheol is translated "hell," "grave," and "pit."
  - 2. "Hades" is the Greek word for "hell." In the New Testament, Hades is translated "hell," and "grave."
  - 3. Sheol and Hades are the same place -- hell.
  - 4. "Tartaros" is translated "hell" in the New Testament. (2 Peter 2:4) It is a place where wicked angels are held prisoner, until the Last Judgment. (Jude 6) It is a separate place in the underworld from Sheol or Hades.
  - 5. "Gehenna" is translated "hell" in the New Testament. It refers to the Lake Of Fire.
    - a. The Lake of Fire is an eternal place, into which the entire area

- of hell (Sheol-Hades) will be cast at the Last Judgment (or, "Great White Throne Judgment"). (Revelation 20:11-15)
- b. It is the final prison -- eternal hell -- for all who rebel against God. Satan (Revelation 20:10), fallen angels, and humans will all be cast into the Lake of Fire. (Matthew 25:41)
- c. Hell (Sheol-Hades) is a holding station, where men who die without Christ must wait until the great Day of Judgment; and then, they are thrown into the Lake of Fire (Gehenna), which is called the "Second Death." (Revelation 20:14)
- d. The Lake of Fire may not be located within the heart of the earth. It is an eternal place, and the Bible indicates that the present earth will pass away and a new earth will be created by God. (2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 21:1) Therefore, the Lake of Fire may be located in a place other than earth.
  - (1) It is interesting that dwarf white stars have been identified by scientists as "lakes of fire."
  - (2) Isaiah 66:22-24 indicates that when the new earth is created, men will be able to see the "carcasses of men that transgressed." (verse 24). Is the Lake of Fire visible in God's newly created earth, as a reminder of the penalty of rebellion and sin?
- B. The other two areas of the underworld are "Paradise" and "The Abyss," or "Bottomless Pit."

- 1. Paradise is where the Old Testament saints went, until Christ brought them to heaven, after His sacrificial death. (Ephesians 4:8-10).
  - a. It is believed that Paradise is a special compartment in hell (Sheol-Hades). It is also called, "Abraham's bosom." (Luke 16:22-31)
  - b. There is a "great gulf" separating Paradise and Hades. (Luke 16:26)
  - c. Paradise was emptied, when Christ led the Old Testament saints to heaven after His sacrificial death. (Ephesians 4:8-10)
- 2. The Abyss, or Bottomless Pit, is a prison.
  - a. It is where fallen angels and demons are held. (Luke 8:30, 31; Revelation 9:1,2)
  - b. Satan is bound in the bottomless pit for 1000 years, during Christ's millennial kingdom. (Revelation 20:1-3)

#### III. What Is Hell Like?

- A. Sheol-Hades, or hell.
  - 1. It is a place of torment and suffering. (Luke 16:24)
  - 2. It is a place where desires cannot be satisfied. (Luke 16:24)
  - 3. It is a place of great sorrow. (Psalms 18:5)
- B. Gehenna, or Lake of Fire.
  - 1. It is described as a "furnace of fire" (Matthew 13:42); "fire that never shall be quenched" (Mark 9:43,45); "hell fire" (Mark 9:47); and "everlasting fire." (Matthew 25:41)
  - 2. It is a place of "outer darkness." (Matthew 8:12; 22:13)

- a. It is also described as "blackness of darkness forever" (Jude 13), and "the mist of darkness." (2 Peter 2:17)
- b. It is a place of great loneliness and despair.
- 3. It is a place of "weeping." (Matthew 8:12; 13:42; 22:13)
  - a. It is a place of great sorrow and grief.
  - b. There is no joy of any kind.
- 4. It is a place of "gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 8:12; 13:42; 22:13)
  - a. It is a place of great disappointment.
  - b. It is a place of great rage.
- 5. It is a place of eternal punishment and destruction. (Matthew 25:41; 2 Thessalonians 1:9)
  - a. There are degrees of punishment in the eternal hell of Gehenna.
  - b. There would not be a judgment, if every one received the same punishment. The Bible says that men will receive judgment according to what they have done. (Revelation 20:11-13)

## IV. How Can a Loving God Send Anyone to Hell?

- A. God is perfect; and therefore, heaven, God's dwelling place, is a perfect place.
  - 1. We would expect heaven to be nothing less than perfect.
  - 2. Hell is separation from God. (2 Thessalonians 1:9)
  - Heaven will not be filled with imperfect people. (Revelation 22:14-15)
- B. God is loving; but God is also just.
  - 1. Justice demands that a penalty be paid for breaking the law.

- a. If someone steals our wallet or murders our family, then we want justice.
- b. Justice is getting what is deserved, whether it be rewards or punishment.
- 2. Justice is a universal belief. Cultures may have different ideas on how justice is to be administered; but all people believe in some sort of justice.
- God, in His justice, requires punishment for sin. If we break the laws of God, then He must execute punishment, in order keep His perfect justice.
  - a. We cannot do wrong, and expect to go where everything is right.
  - b. We cannot raise hell on earth, and expect to enjoy heaven.
  - We cannot reject God on earth, and expect to enjoy Him in heaven.
- C. God has done all that He can to enable us to go to heaven.
  - 1. God sent Jesus to pay the penalty for our sin. (John 3:16; Romans 5:8)
  - Jesus paid for our sin; therefore, God will acquit us -- declare us "not guilty" -- if we trust Jesus Christ to take away our sins. (Romans 3:22)
  - 3. Through Jesus Christ, we are made fit for heaven; and we will not be condemned. (Romans 8:1; John 5:24)
- D. God's justice must punish sin; God's love sent Jesus to a cross.
  - 1. Jesus died in our place, to take away our sin.
  - 2. If we believe and receive what God has done for us through Jesus -- we are heaven-bound!

E. God does not send anyone to hell; one must freely choose to go there, by rejecting His Son, Jesus Christ.



# Spiritual Truths

- The Bible teaches that there is life after death; and a person will either spend eternity in heaven or hell.
- The Bible teaches that there are various prisons in the underworld.
- The Bible does not teach annihilation, purgatory, or second chance. After death, comes judgment -- either heaven or hell. (Hebrews 9:27
- There is nothing enjoyable about hell.
   It is a place of eternal torment and destruction.
- Those who are not reconciled to God through Jesus Christ will be eternally separated from God in hell.
- There are degrees of suffering in the Lake of Fire. Each person will receive his or her degree of punishment at the Great White Throne Judgment.
- God has done everything necessary to make us fit for heaven; but, we must accept His provision.



### Lesson Material

What happens when we die? Are we here by accident? After death, do we cease to exist? Or, do we return as something or someone else? Are we reincarnated? Is there a heaven? Is there a hell? These are questions that everyone considers at times in their lives. The Bible has a lot to say about life after death. The Bible does not teach annihilation or reincarnation. The Bible teaches heaven and hell.

hell can be a topic of great interest with young people. Teenagers have high levels of curiosity; and their fascination with the underworld can keep their attention indefinitely. At the same time, the subject of hell can cause great offense and confusion. Many refuse to believe in its existence; and they are angered, when Christians refer to it. Others legitimately question how God could create such a place. It is important that the teacher be well prepared for these questions.

The teacher must make it clear to teenagers that the Bible teaches the reality of hell. Many people treat the subject as a big joke, but the Bible teaches that hell is no joke. There is nothing funny about it. Jesus talked about hell more than anyone else in the Bible. Jesus described it as a place of fire, outer darkness, weeping, gnashing of teeth, and torment. The point is clear: Hell is not the place to vacation, let alone spend eternity.

The Bible teaches that there are five areas of the underworld. Three are prisons for those who have rebelled against God. Angels are prisoners of Tartaros. Demons are prisoners of the Abyss. And men are

prisoners of Sheol-Hades. These prisons are temporary holding stations, until the Great White Throne Judgment, when all rebels will be thrown into the Lake of Fire -- the final, eternal hell. Satan himself will be cast into the Lake of Fire, along with all of the angels who followed him in rebellion against God.

One of the most often asked questions by the unbeliever is, "How could a good and loving God send anyone to hell?" The answer is that God is just. Justice demands punishment for sin. God must deal with sin, or heaven would not be a perfect place and God would not be a perfect God. Heaven will not be filled with people who reject God and enjoy sin. God will separate them from His presence. His justice demands it.

The Lake of Fire was created by God for the devil and his angels. Men were created to know God and live forever in heaven with Him; but the sin condition of men necessitates salvation, in order to enjoy the eternal glories of heaven. Men have the choice as to whether they will go to heaven or hell. The great truth of the gospel is that God has provided a way to escape the fire of hell. He has done everything necessary to forgive us, clean us up, and make us fit for heaven, by sending Jesus to die for our sin and pay the

price for God's justice. If we refuse to receive what Jesus has done, then we enter the eternal flames by our own choosing. For those who go to hell, it is because they rejected God's love and provision for them.



#### **Methods**

If available, the teacher should use a blackboard or overhead projector to map out the underworld.

The teacher may pass out a survey, in order to find out how many teenagers believe in hell and what they know about it from the Bible (or what they think it is like).

The teacher may want to ask the question, "Why would a loving God allow people to go to hell?" and let the teenagers respond with their thoughts on the subject.

The teacher may want to end the lesson with a call to salvation.

## For Heaven's Sake

Volume 9

Lesson 24



### Bible References

Psalms 11:4

Luke 11:2

1 Corinthians 15:50-57

2 Corinthians 5:8;12:2

Ephesians 4:8-10

Philippians 1:23

Hebrews 12:22,23

Revelation 5:10



#### Theme

This study examines the existence and reality of heaven.



#### Revelation 21:1-4

- 1 "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.
- 2 "And 1 John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
- 3 "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.
- 4 "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."



### Memory Verse

#### 1 Corinthians 2:9

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."



#### **Outline**

## I. The Bible Teaches that Heaven Is a Real Place.

- A. The Bible speaks of three heavens. (2 Corinthians 12:2)
  - 1. The atmosphere of our planet is referred to as "heaven." (Genesis 7:23; Jeremiah 51:16)
  - The starry space (outer space) is called the "heavens." (Genesis 22:17; Psalms 8:3; 19:1)
  - 3. The actual place where God dwells is called "heaven." (Luke 11:2)
    - a. Heaven, where God dwells, is also called the "third heaven." (2 Corinthians 12:2) (The first two being the earth's atmosphere and outer space.)
    - b. Heaven is also called "Paradise." (2 Corinthians 12:4)
      - (1) Paradise was an area of the underworld, where the saints of the Old Testament

- awaited for Christ to free them. (Ephesians 4:8-10)
- (2) When Jesus emptied
  Paradise and took the saints
  with Him to heaven,
  "Paradise" became
  synonymous with "heaven."
  (Revelation 2:7)
- B. Heaven is where God dwells and rules the universe. (Psalms 11:4, Acts 7:49)
- C. The Bible seems to indicate that heaven is located in the northern part of the universe. (Isaiah 14:13; Psalms 75:6, 7)

#### II. What Is Heaven Like?

- A. The physical (external) realities of heaven.
  - 1. Heaven is a place of great beauty.
    - a. The apostle John gives a description of heaven, when he describes the city coming out of heaven -- New Jerusalem.
       (Revelation 21:1-22:5)
      - (1) The city is pure gold, yet like transparent glass.
        (Revelation 21:18)
      - (2) The foundations of the wall of the city are built with twelve kinds of precious stones. (Revelation 21:19, 20)
      - (3) The city has twelve gates; and each gate is made of one pearl. (Revelation 21:21)
      - (4) The street of the heavenly city is paved with transparent gold. (Revelation 21:21)
    - b. With the light of God shining through the city (Revelation 21:11,23), the brilliant spectrum of colors that radiate from the

- city must be inexpressibly glorious. The apostle John does the best that he can to describe its beauty.
- 2. The Bible speaks of many things that are in heaven: Mansions (John 14:2); animals (2 Kings 2:11, Revelation 19:11,14); musical instruments (Revelation 5:8); fruit trees (Revelation 22:2); and many other items too numerous to list.
- 3. God will be present in heaven. All three Members of the Trinity may be visible. Revelation 22:1, 3, 4 indicates that the Father and the Son will be seen; and perhaps the Holy Spirit will be visible, too.
- B. The spiritual (internal) realities of heaven.
  - 1. God will wipe away all tears; and there will be no more death, sorrow, crying, or pain. (Revelation 21:4)
  - 2. Heaven is a place of great joy and happiness.
    - a. There will be nothing to make us sad or depressed.
    - b. There will be nothing to hurt us emotionally or physically.
    - c. We will live forever to enjoy
       God's creation with our family,
       friends, angels, and the Lord.
       (And whatever else the Lord
       may have created that we do not
       know about.)
  - 3. We will have resurrected, glorified, spiritual bodies, that will be like Jesus' body. (1 Corinthians 15:44; Philippians 3:21)
    - a. We will have incorruptible, immortal bodies. (1 Corinthians 15:50-54)
      - (1) Our bodies will be immune to sickness and disease.

- (2) Our bodies will not deteriorate; they will last forever.
- b. We will not be restricted by the physical universe, as we know it.
  - (1) We will be able to travel at incredible speed and will not be subject to gravity. (1 Thessalonians 4:17)
  - (2) We will be able to pass through matter. (John 20:26)
  - (3) We will have the ability to appear and disappear. (Luke 24:31, 36)
  - (4) We will be able to eat food. (Luke 24:41-43; John 21:12)
- c. Although we will receive new bodies, we will recognize one another in heaven. Our old bodies will be recreated -- changed, but not exchanged.
  - (1) Jesus was recognized by His disciples after His resurrection. (John 20:19, 20, 27, 28)
  - (2) The Emmaus disciples did not recognize Jesus; but the passage of scripture specifically says that they were kept from recognizing Him. (Luke 24:16) Then, at the right time, their eyes were opened to recognize Him. (Luke 24:31)
  - (3) The apostle Paul says not to sorrow over those who have died in Christ, because we will see them again. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14); therefore, they must be recognizable.
  - (4) Moses and Elijah were recognizable on the Mount of Transfiguration. (Luke 9:30-31)

#### III. Who Is In Heaven?

- A. God is in heaven. (Matthew 6:9; Revelation 21:3)
- B. Angels are in heaven. (Revelation 5:11; 21:12; Hebrews 12:22)
- C. All humans beings who, by faith in Christ, have been redeemed from their sin and have their names written in the Lamb's book of life are in heaven. (Hebrews 12:22-23; Revelation 21:27)
  - 1. Faith in Jesus Christ is the only way an individual can enter heaven. (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Revelation 5:9)
    - a. Both Old and New Testament saints are saved by faith in Christ.
    - b. The Old Testament saints believed by faith that the Messiah would come in the future; and the New Testament saints believe by faith that the Messiah came in the past.
  - 2. Unbelieving humanity will not enter heaven, but will be cast into the Lake of Fire. (Revelation 21:8, 27)
  - 3. According to the Bible, when believers die, they are immediately brought into the presence of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23) Believers go to heaven at the time of death.

#### IV. What Will We Do In Heaven?

- A. We will worship the Lord. (Revelation 19:1)
- B. We will reign with Jesus. (Revelation 5:10; 22:5; 2 Timothy 2:12)

- 1. We will judge angels. (1 Corinthians 6:3)
- 2. We will reign over men and nations. (Revelation 5:10; 21:24-26)
- C. We will serve the Lord. (Revelation 22:3; Matthew 25:14-30)
  - We do not know what all of our service is to be; but we know that we will reign and administrate with Christ in His universal kingdom, throughout eternity. (Revelation 22:5)
  - 2. It is an awesome and wonderful eternal destiny.



### Spiritual Truths

- Heaven will not be filled with ignorant people, wondering how they arrived.
   Heaven is for the righteous, who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ.
- The Bible says that we can know that we are going to heaven, when we have faith in Jesus Christ.
- Heaven is a place of indescribable beauty and joy.
- Heaven is the home and headquarters of God. It is where He lives and rules the universe.
- We will have responsibilities and activities in heaven. We will reign with Jesus forever and ever.
- We will have glorified bodies that will never die.



### Lesson Material

The longest scripture passage describing heaven in the Bible is Revelation 21:1-22:5. It is appropriate that this description comes at the end of Revelation and includes the last chapter of the Bible. The apostle John gives us the best picture he can of the appearance of New Jerusalem. It is a city of unimaginable splendor. It is a place of inexpressible happiness.

After this life, we can look forward to the joy of heaven, where there will be no more sorrow or pain of any kind. (Revelation 21:4) We can look forward to glorified bodies. (1 Corinthians 15:52) We can look forward to a new home. Jesus said that He would prepare a place for each of us in heaven. (John 14:2)

Although heaven is the number one choice where people desire to go when they die, it is interesting that many people consider heaven as less than exciting. For some, heaven is a place to float on clouds and play the harp. Of course, this is better than burning in hell; but the idea of floating around on a cloud with not much else to do is a fairly boring thought. Heaven is a quiet, serene, and dull place. It is a nice vacation resort; but, would we really want to spend eternity playing the harp?

This is a wrong concept of heaven. The Bible does refer to heaven as a place of rest (Hebrews 4:8-11; Revelation 14:13); but "rest" does not mean "inactivity." It means that we will be free from stress, struggle and sweat. Heavenly rest does not mean we will be unemployed cloud-dwellers. "Rest" means that we will be free

from the turmoil of this present life. There will be activity and excitement in heaven. God has a universe for us to explore and rule over, as a joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. (Romans 8:17) Heaven is a place to look forward to with great anticipation.

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Corinthians 2:9)

There are some who promote a doctrine of "universalism," which teaches that everyone will go to heaven, no matter what they have done. This is not a teaching of the Bible. The scripture clearly says that the destinies of the righteous and the wicked are different. (John 5:28, 29) No evil doer or immoral person will enter heaven's gates. (Revelation 21:8) Faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to the holy city of God. (Revelation 21:27) There is no other way to enter heaven and enjoy the presence of God. (John 14:6)

The good news of the gospel is that it is possible for us to know that we are going to heaven. (1 John 5:13) Jesus said that He would always be with us and would never leave us or forsake us. (Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5) As Christians, we do not need to fear death, because when we die, we will enter heaven and be with the Lord forever. (1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 2 Corinthians 5:8) It will be joy unspeakable and full of glory. (1 Peter 1:8)

With the prospect of heaven in mind, the teacher should emphasize to the students the importance of holy living (1 John 3:2,3); right priorities (Matthew 6:20-21); prayer (1 Peter 4:7); and faithfulness. (Matthew 25:19-23)

For Heaven's Sake Volume 9



#### **Methods**

Ask the student to discuss what they think heaven is like. Ask the students if they believe in heaven -- why, or why not.

Perform a skit with Saint Peter at the front gate of heaven; and have different people try to reason with Peter about why he should let them into heaven.

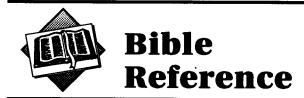
Have the students break into small groups and search for as many scriptural truths as they can find about heaven. Then have them share these truths with the class.

Challenge the students with the Bible's claim that we can have the assurance that we have eternal life. If any of the students are not sure that heaven is their eternal destiny, challenge them to commit their lives to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

## The Faith of the Magi

Volume 9

Lesson 25



Matthew 2



#### **Theme**

This lesson is a character study on the incredible faith of the Wise Men.



### Scripture Reading

#### Matthew 2:1-12

- 1 "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,
- 2 "Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

- 3 "When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.
- 4 "And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.
- 5 "And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet,
- 6 "And thou Bethlehem, {in} the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.
- 7 "Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.
- 8 "And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.
- 9 "When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.
- 10 "When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.
- 11 "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had

opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

12 "And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way."



#### Numbers 24:17

"I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth."



#### Outline

- I. The Wise Men Traveled a Great Distance, to See the Newborn King.
- A. They came from the East. (verse 1)
  - 1. The region of Asia (east of Israel) that they came from is not known. It may have been India, the Orient, or another area of Asia.
  - 2. Certainly, the distance when traveling by animal -- camel, horse,

- or mule -- would be considered a lengthy journey.
- B. It took the wise men approximately two years to arrive in Jerusalem, from the time they first saw the star.
  - 1. Herod inquired of them as to when they first saw the star. (verse 7)
  - 2. After Herod was eluded by the wise men, he had all the children in Bethlehem killed who were at least two years old. The reasoning behind the age of the infant murders was because the wise men told Herod they had seen the star two years earlier; hence, all of the children two years and under were killed. (Matthew 2:16)
  - 3. If it took the wise men two years to get to Jerusalem, then they obviously traveled a great distance.
- C. To travel such a distance to visit an unseen king in an unfamiliar land took great faith.
- II. The Wise Men Sacrificed Their Time, Money, and Reputations, to Seek the King.
- A. They dedicated at least two years of their lives to seeking the King of the Jews.
  - 1. When they were on the journey to Jerusalem, they were not able to pursue their careers or vocational responsibilities.
  - 2. If they arrived in Jerusalem two years after they had seen the star, then by the time they arrived home again from Israel, they may have spent closer to three years or more pursuing the Christ-child.

- B. They encumbered large financial expenses traveling to Jerusalem from their country.
  - 1. To protect against desert thieves and bandits, they must have taken a caravan.
  - 2. Traveling in a caravan with equipment, hired help (certainly, they did not travel alone), animal fodder and food was not cheap. Desert travel made the trip more expensive.
  - 3. Thy brought costly gifts for the King.
- C. They sacrificed much time and money; and yet, they did not know where they were going.
  - 1. They reputation for being "wise" men was at stake.
  - 2. They were following a star, to lead them to a king. Was this reasonable?
- D. To take such a risk, the wise men had great faith.

# III. The Wise Men Trusted God and His Word, In Their Quest to Find the King.

- A. How did they know that the star meant the Jewish Messiah was born?
- B. It was prophesied in the Old Testament; and they must have read it and believed it. (Numbers 24:17)
- C. The wise men had great faith in God's Word.

# IV. The Wise Men Did Not Give Up, In Their Search for the King.

- A. When the wise men entered Jerusalem, they must have wondered why no one was aware that the King of the Jews had been born.
  - 1. Why had no one else come to worship the King of the Jews?
  - 2. Why had no one else acknowledged the sign of the star?
  - 3. Why was the King of the Jews not being royally treated in a palace?
  - 4. Why was the Jewish nation not even aware that their Messiah was born?
- B. Bethlehem was not far from Jerusalem; but, apparently none of the Jews from the city accompanied them to find the Messiah.
  - 1. If the chief priests and scribes were not aware that the Messiah had been born, then how could the wise men, as foreigners, be sure?
  - 2 They had plenty of opportunity to doubt their faith.
- C. The wise men did not give up, even when those who should have searched (Jewish religious leaders) did not bother. They had great faith.

# V. The Wise Men Found the King. (verse 11)

- A. God supernaturally led them to the King. (verse 9)
- B. The star directed them to the house; and they were filled with great joy. (verse 10)

#### VI. The Wise Men Worshipped the King and Presented Him With Treasures.

- A. They must have been surprised when Jesus was living in an ordinary house, and his mother and father were not royalty.
  - 1. For powerful, wealthy and intelligent men to worship a carpenter's baby took great faith.
  - 2. For powerful, wealthy and intelligent men to give treasures to a carpenter's baby took great faith.
- B. The wise men trusted God that this baby was the Messiah.
  - 1. They did not question God's planning.
  - 2. They were unashamed to worship the Christ-child.

# VII. God Honored the Faith of the Wise Men. God Spoke to Them.

- A. God warned them in a dream that they should not return to Herod. (verse 12)
- B. They reached out in faith; and God directed their lives.
- C. They heard the voice of God.
- D. God rewarded their great faith.



## Spiritual Truths

- Faith requires action. Faith requires sacrifice.
- If we seek for God, we will find Him; and He will help us in our search.
- God is no respecter of persons. He created the star for foreigners to follow.
- When things do not seem to be going as planned, we must hold on to the promises of God.
- God does not always work His plans in the way that we would envision them.
- When we sacrifice materially, God will give to us spiritually.



#### Lesson Material

The account of the Magi (wise men) in the Christmas story is truly remarkable. These men took huge risks and had exceptional faith. They left the security of their environment -- home, family, friends, and business -- and journeyed to a foreign land, where they had probably never been before. They traveled through desert hardships, not knowing exactly where they were going. The possibility of being attacked by robbers was a threat. They were noted for being wise men; and yet, their reputations were ruined, if they were wrong -- and so was their time,

money and effort. In a way, it is reminiscent of Noah building the ark. The time, labor, sacrifice, sweat and great faith are comparable.

The Wise Men had persevering faith and trust in God and His Word. They must have been familiar with the Old Testament and realized that the star was a supernatural sign of the "sceptre" or ruler to "rise out of Israel." (Numbers 24:17) Their expectations after arriving in Jerusalem were presumably shaken, when they did not find the King in Jerusalem, the Jewish capitol city. It was difficult for them to understand why no one was worshipping the Messiah, or was even aware of His birth. Perhaps, as they journeyed to Bethlehem, they began to question their sacrifice. Had they been wrong? Was the journey a terrible mistake? Was their great effort wasted? Then the star appeared again! (Matthew 2:10,11) God never lets us endure more than we can bear. (1 Corinthians 10:13) The wise men were filled with joy, for God was guiding them again.

Their joy must have turned to wonderment, when they entered a carpenter's home, instead of a palace, to see the King of Kings. God's ways are above our ways. (Isaiah 55:8-9) But they did not doubt. They worshipped the baby Jesus and gave Him costly gifts. Their faith was not shaken.

After fulfilling their journey of faith, they heard the voice of God. God visited them in a dream; and He directed their lives, by warning them not to return to Herod. God honored their great faith.

A teacher can share many truths with the students from the account of the Magi. The wise men studied the Word of God. They acted upon it. They did not let hardship, peril, or others interfere with their quest to seek the King. They worshipped Him. They gave precious treasures to a child.

The wise men had great faith, and God honored them. So shall God honor each one of us who chooses to reach out in faith and pursue God. Do not give up! God will see us through all hardships; and we will rejoice, in the end. Certainly, the wise men were never the same after this experience; and surely God continued to use them, in spreading the good news in their own country.



#### Methods

After the scripture reading, have the students break into small groups and find as many scriptural truths from the story as they can.

Some interesting facts about the wise men: We do not know from scripture that they were kings; we do not know that there were only three of them; we do not know that they came from the Orient; and we do not know what happened to them, when they returned to their own country. The teacher may use these facts to spawn interest in the lesson.

The teacher must paint the picture that the wise men were people just like us; and their preparation and subsequent journey to visit Jesus was not one of ease and merriment, but one of sacrifice, sweat and struggle.

# Christmas Challenge

Volume 9

Lesson 26



Matthew 1:18-25; 2:1-23

Luke 1

Luke 2:1-20



#### Theme

The students are going to see how much of the biblical Christmas story they really know.



## Scripture Reading

Luke 1:26-38

26 "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

- 27 "To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.
- 28 "And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.
- 29 "And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.
- 30 "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.
- 31 "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name IESUS.
- 32 "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:
- 33 "And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.
- 34 "Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?
- 35 "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall over shadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

36 "And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

37 "For with God nothing shall be impossible."

38 "And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her."



Luke 2:10, 11

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."



#### **Outline**

- I. How Well Do We Really Know the Biblical Story of Christmas? This Test Will Help Us to Find Out.
- A. The Christmas story is in which of the Gospel books?
  - 1. Matthew and Luke.

- 2. Matthew, Mark, and Luke.
- 3. Matthew, Luke, and John.
- 4. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.
- B. When Joseph first heard that Mary was pregnant, he ...?
  - 1. Was overjoyed.
  - 2. Passed out cigars.
  - 3. Passed out.
  - 4. Was going to leave her for good.
- C. Where was Joseph's home town?
  - 1. Jerusalem.
  - 2. Cleveland.
  - 3. Bethlehem.
  - 4. The Bible does not say.
- D. What is the name of the angel who appeared to Mary?
  - 1. Michael.
  - 2. Gabriel.
  - 3. Bert.
  - 4. The Bible does not say.
- E. Who had the most visits from an angel?
  - 1. Mary.
  - 2. Joseph.
  - 3. Neither; they both had one visit.
  - 4. The Bible does not say.
- F. Why did Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem?
  - 1. They went to be taxed (census registration)
  - 2. They went to be married.
  - 3. Joseph was transferred.
  - 4. The Bible does not say.

- G. Where did Mary and Joseph try to find lodging the night of Jesus' birth?
  - 1. Roadside motel.
  - 2. House.
  - 3. Inn.
  - 4. The Bible does not say.
- H. According to the Bible, where was Jesus born?
  - 1. Bethlehem.
  - 2. Hospital.
  - 3. Stable.
  - 4. Both 1 and 3.
- I. Where did Mary place Jesus on the night of his birth?
  - 1. In a bed of hay.
  - 2. In a manger.
  - 3. In a crib.
  - 4. The Bible does not say.
- J. What is a manger?
  - 1. A feeding trough for animals.
  - 2. A container for storing straw.
  - 3. A baby crib.
  - 4. A bench.
- K. Who saw Jesus, on the night of His birth?
  - 1. Mary, Joseph, and shepherds.
  - 2. Mary, Joseph, shepherds, and wise men.
  - 3. Mary, Joseph, shepherds, wise men, and little drummer boy.
  - 4. The Bible does not say.
- L. Who did not rejoice over Jesus' birth?
  - 1. Innkeeper.
  - 2. King Herod.
  - 3. Everyone rejoiced.

- 4. None of the above.
- M. How many angels spoke to the shepherds?
  - 1. One.
  - 2. Two.
  - 3. A "multitude of the heavenly host."
  - 4. The Bible does not say.
- N. What was the shepherds' first response to the angelic appearance?
  - 1. Awe.
  - 2. Joy.
  - 3. Fear.
  - 4. The Bible does not say.
- O. Who said, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men?"
  - 1. An angel.
  - 2. A "multitude of the heavenly host."
  - 3. God.
  - 4 The shepherds.
- P. What kind of animals where present when Jesus was born?
  - 1. Sheep.
  - 2. Sheep and a couple of cows.
  - 3. Lions and tigers and bears.
  - 4. The Bible does not say.
- Q. Jesus had a special cousin. What was his name?
  - 1. Zerubbabel.
  - 2. John.
  - 3. Waldo.
  - 4. None of the above.
- R. How many wise men came to visit Jesus?
  - 1. Three.

- 2. One.
- 3. An innumerable company.
- 4. The Bible does not say.
- S. Where were the wise men from?
  - 1. The East.
  - 2. The Orient.
  - 3. Local Union 1438.
  - 4. The Bible does not say.
- T. What was the occupation of the wise men?
  - 1. Professors.
  - 2. Kings.
  - 3. Archaeologists.
  - 4. None of the above.
- U. How many times did the star appear to the wise men?
  - 1. Once.
  - 2. Twice.
  - 3. Every night.
  - 4. The Bible does not say.
- V. Where did the wise men find Jesus?
  - 1. House.
  - 2. Stable.
  - 3. Jerusalem.
  - 4. The Bible does not say.
- W. What treasures did the wise men give to Jesus?
  - 1. Gold, silver, and precious stones.
  - 2. Myrrh, gold, and frankincense.
  - 3. Gold, frankincense, and toys.
  - 4. The Bible does not say.
- X. What was the other name that Jesus was given at His birth?
  - 1. He was not given another name.
  - 2. Emmanuel.

- 3. Joshua.
- 4. Joseph, Jr.
- Y. When was Jesus born?
  - 1. December 25.
  - 2. During the winter season.
  - 3. Both A and B.
  - 4. The Bible does not say.

#### II. Answer Key.

- A. 1. -- Only Matthew and Luke write about the birth of Jesus.
- B. 2. -- Joseph was going to divorce Mary. (Matthew 1:19)
- C. 3. -- Joseph's home town was Bethlehem. (Luke 2:3, 4)
- D. 2. -- Gabriel. (Luke 1:26-28)
- E. 2. -- Joseph received two visits from angels. (Matthew 1:20; 2:13)
- F. 1. -- They went to be taxed. (Luke 2:1-4)
- G. 3. -- Inn. (Luke 2:7)
- H. 1. -- Bethlehem. (Matthew 2:1) The Bible does not say that Jesus was born in a stable. This is a logical assumption, because Mary placed Him in a manger; but the manger may have been in a barn we do not know for sure.
- I. 2. -- Manger. (Luke 2:7, 12)
- J. 1. -- Feeding trough.
- K. 1. -- The wise men visited Jesus in a house, and it was probably two years after His birth. (Matthew 2:11, 16)
- L. 2. Herod. (Matthew 2:3, 16)
- M. 1. -- (Luke 2:9-12)

- N. 3. -- Fear. (Luke 2:9)
- O. 2. -- A "multitude of the heavenly host." (Luke 2:13, 14)
- P. 4. -- The Bible does not say.
- Q. 2. -- John. (Luke 1) Elizabeth and Mary were close relatives. (Luke 1:36) John the Baptist and Jesus were first or second cousins.
- R. 4. -- The Bible does not say. People assume three, because of the three gifts they gave. (Matthew 2:11)
- S. 1. -- The East. (Matthew 2:1)
- T. 4. -- None of the above. The Bible word for "wise" is the Greek word Magos, (hence we call the wise men "Magi"); and this word may mean "magician," "sorcerer," "scientist," "astrologer," or "wise."
- U. 2. -- Twice. (Matthew 2:2, Matthew 2:9, 10) Apparently, the star disappeared when they were on their way to Jerusalem; and it reappeared, when they traveled to Bethlehem.
- V. 1. -- House. (Matthew 2:11) Their visit to Jesus could well have been at least two years after Jesus was born.
- W. 2. -- Gold, frankincense, and myrrh. (Matthew 2:11)
- X. 2. -- Emmanuel. (Matthew 1:23)
- Y. 2. -- The Bible does not say. It was not until the 4th century that December 25th became the set date for Jesus' birth. We do not know the actual day; but this should never stop us from celebrating the birth of the Savior!



# Spiritual Truths

- The Christmas story has many traditions that are not in the actual Bible account.
- What we think the Bible says may not be accurate with what it actually says.
- We must study the Bible, and not simply take people's word for what it says.



#### Lesson Material

It is amazing how many traditions have been woven into the gospel account of the birth of Jesus. The merchandised story of Christmas is filled with details that are not in the Bible. For example, there is no record of the number of wise men who visited Jesus; there is no indication that they were kings; they were not present on the night of Jesus' birth (Jesus lived in a house when they arrived -- Matthew 2:11); and there is no certainty that they came from the Orient. These are assumptions that have some logical possibilities -- three gifts, therefore three wise men -- but, they are still assumptions.

After the teenagers have taken the test, take the time to go over the answers in class. The questions should be researched together as a class. There may be much surprise among the students. This is a great lesson to demonstrate the necessity

of Bible study and of not believing everything we hear as gospel truth. (Acts 17:11)



#### **Methods**

The teacher may start the class by asking the students to tell as much of the Christmas story as they know. Give the students time to elaborate on as much

detail as they can, without looking at their Bibles.

It would be good if all the students had a copy of the test; or, the teacher can pass out blank paper and have the questions on an overhead projector or blackboard. If a projector or blackboard is not available, then give the students blank paper and read the test to them.

Ask the students to discuss how this test relates to people's knowledge of the Bible. Much of people's Bible knowledge comes from what they hear, and not from what they read. We must be students of the Word!

# Ready, Set, Goal

Volume 9

Lesson 27



## Bible References

1 Kings 5:5, 6

Nehemiah 1-6

Daniel 1:8-16

Proverbs 16:1, 3, 9

Mark 10:32

Acts 19:21



#### **Theme**

This lesson is on the importance of setting goals for our lives.



## Scripture Reading

Luke 14:28-33

- 28 "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?
- 29 "Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,
- 30 "Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.
- 31 "Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?
- 32 "Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.
- 33 "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."



## Memory Verse

Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of

peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."



#### **Outline**

# I. Goal-setting Is Planning for a Particular Outcome In the Future.

- A. The scripture reading (Luke 14:28-33) is in the context of discipleship; and yet, the truth it reveals about goal-setting is significant.
  - 1. A goal, without a plan to accomplish it, is only a wish; and it probably will not be accomplished. (Luke 14:29)
  - 2. We must calculate a plan, in order to complete the goal. (Luke 14:28, 31)
- B. If we do not set goals, then we do not have a future -- we only have a longer present.
- C. Our present situation is the result of our past goals (or lack thereof).
- D. If we do not set goals, then it is circumstance, events and others which determine our future. If we set goals, then we determine our own future.
- E. In setting goals, we must consider God's plan for us. (Luke 14:27; Proverbs 16:1, 3)

# II. The Bible Is Filled With People Who Set Goals.

- A. King David and King Solomon. building the temple. (2 Samuel 7; 1 Kings 5:5-6)
- B. Daniel, purposing not to defile himself with unclean food, set a dieting goal. (Daniel 1:8-16)
- C. Nehemiah restoring the walls of Jerusalem. (Nehemiah 1-6)
- D. Jesus setting a goal to reach Jerusalem in the face of opposition. (Luke 9:51)
- E. Paul setting a goal to go to Rome. (Acts 19:21)

# III. God Is the Great Goal-setter and Planner.

- A. He planned for Jesus to die for us, before He created the world. (Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:20)
- B. God has a goal for us, that He planned before He created the world. (Ephesians 1:4)
- C. God has goals for the future. He is planning to create a new heaven and new earth. (Revelation 21:1-3)

#### IV. How We Can Set Goals.

- A. We must be realistic with our goals.
  - 1. To set a goal to become king or president, or to make a billion dollars, or to swim the Atlantic ocean, may not be realistic. These goals are improbable, if not impossible, to achieve.
  - 2. We must make our goals attainable.

- a. To set a goal to become president of the youth club, or to save a hundred dollars, or to swim five lengths of the swimming pool, is more realistic.
- b. A goal should be something that is within our reach, but we have to stretch for it.
- B. We must make our goals specific and measurable.
  - 1. If we set a goal to be a good person, or to get in better shape, or to draw closer to God, these are not good goals, because they are too general and too difficult to measure.
  - A better goal would be to volunteer twice a week for a church or community service, or to jog three times a week, or to read the Bible thirty minutes a day for a particular period of time.
    - a. These goals are specific.
    - b. These goals are measurable.
- C. We must organize a plan, in order to accomplish our goals.
  - 1. Once we have set a goal, then we must prepare a plan to accomplish the goal.
    - a. If we set a goal to lose twenty pounds, then we must decide how we are going to accomplish this.
      - (1) Exercise fifteen minutes a day.
      - (2) Join a health club.
      - (3) Start counting calories and start dieting.
    - b. If we set a goal to learn how to play the guitar, then we must plan how we are going to accomplish this.
      - (1) Take lessons.
      - (2) Practice thirty minutes a day.

- (3) Study books on how to play the guitar.
- 2. Remember that a goal, without a specific plan to accomplish it, is only a wish.
- D. We must set our goals within a time frame.
  - 1. If we set a goal to lose twenty pounds, but do not have a time frame or set a target date for its completion, then we will flounder.
  - 2. All goals should have a specific time frame for their accomplishment.
    - a. A target date may change; but without setting a time frame, we may never reach the goal.
    - b. If we do reach the goal, it is almost guaranteed that it will take us much longer, without a target date.

# V. What Types of Goals Should We Set?

- A. Life or long-term goals: What do we want to accomplish in our lifetime?
  - 1. Educational.
  - 2. Career.
  - 3. Financial.
- B. Short-term goals: What do we want to accomplish in the immediate future?
  - 1. School Grades.
  - 2. Sports.
  - 3. Health and fitness.
- C. Family goals: How can we strengthen our relationship with our family?
  - 1. Time together.
  - 2. Phone calls and letters.

- 3. Gifts.
- D. Spiritual goals: How can we strengthen our relationship with the Lord?
  - 1. Prayer.
  - 2. Bible study.
  - 3. Church attendance.

VI. All Goals Should be Written
Down On Paper and Kept In a
Noticeable Place, Where They
Will Not be Forgotten.



# Spiritual Truths

- God is the great Goal-setter.
- The Bible has dozens of examples of men and women who set goals.
- If we commit our plans to the Lord, then it is His promise that we will succeed.
- If we want to have a successful future, then we must prepare for it, by setting goals.
- Our future is determined by the planning we make for it.



#### Lesson Material

There is one common denominator that all people from all walks of life share. Everyone wants to be successful. The definition of "success" will vary from person to person and culture to culture; but everyone wants to be a winner. One of the greatest keys to success and satisfaction is goal-setting. Success does not happen by accident. It happens to those who plan for it, and then work at it until their plans (goals) come to fulfillment.

Some people may say that they never set goals. But, the fact is, we all set goals, whether we realize it or not. We may unconsciously set a goal to get to church service on time, or to clean our room in the morning, or to complete our homework before the weekend. These may seem superficial, but they are goals nonetheless. And, if we want to make the most of our lives, then goal-setting is a great tool to accomplish this.

In order to get somewhere significant in life, we must know where we are going and how we plan to get there. We must set goals. If we are not planning for the future, then we will only have a longer present. We will be in the same place tomorrow or next year that we are today, unless we determine to set goals. We will not have a future (a satisfying future), unless we plan for one, by setting goals for our lives.

This is one reason why goal-setting is such an important skill for teenagers to learn. The goals that teenagers set today -- or do not set -- will determine the kind of adult life they will experience tomorrow.

The lesson outline provides the essentials in goal-setting. Goals must be realistic, specific, measurable, within a time frame, and written down. All goals must have a plan of action -- the specific steps that will be taken to accomplish the goal. It is great to have a goal; but, without a plan of action, it will never be completed.

Goal-setting should become a lifelong habit. Once one goal is achieved, then another one should be conceived. It is not probable that we will attain every goal that we set out to accomplish. We may find that a particular goal is not what we really want, or that the commitment and cost is too high to achieve it. This may cause us to terminate our plans or change directions. There is nothing wrong with this. The important thing is that we keep striving in a positive, worthwhile direction. Goals may change; but as long as we keep moving, then we will achieve what God has for us to do. (Jeremiah 29:11)



#### Methods

After sharing the lesson on goal-setting, give every student a piece of paper and have them write down long-term and short-term goals. Ask each student to share a goal with the class; and the class will check to see if all of the goal-setting essentials have been covered.

The teacher should use the blackboard, if available, when sharing the basics of goal-setting.

Break the students into two teams, and give them ten minutes to find as many examples of goal-setting in the Bible as they can. Make sure that the winning team receives an award.

Ask the students to share some goals in their lives that they have accomplished.

Remind the students that the goals that they set for themselves should always be according to God's revealed will for their lives, which they can discover in His Word, through prayer, and through the counsel of godly authority.

# Just Do It: Making Wise Decisions

Volume 9

Lesson 28



## Bible References

Proverbs 11:14

Proverbs 15:22

Proverbs 24:6

Psalms 19:8

Psalms 119:105



## Scripture Reading

Proverbs 3:5,6

5 "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

6 "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."



#### Theme

The quality of our lives will be determined by the choices we make.



## Memory Verse

Proverbs 16:3

"Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established."



#### **Outline**

- I. The Quality of Our Lives Will Be Determined by the Decisions that We Make.
- A. We will make decisions in high school that will affect us for the rest of our lives.
  - 1. Many of us will decide where to go to college and/or what to do for a career.
  - 2. Many of us will meet our future spouse in high school.
  - 3. We will develop habits, attitudes and values that will stick with us for the rest of our lives.
- B. Most of the hassles and hang-ups we experience are because of our choices.
- II. Why Teenagers Make Bad Decisions.
- A. Teenagers are fooled by appearances.
  - 1. Appearances can be deceiving.
  - A lot of times, teenagers are swayed by glitter and glitz-covered packages.
    - Some things look so good, but they do not turn out to be so good.
    - b. Commercial advertising is a good example of this. Some things that sound so great on television or look so good on the billboard or in the magazine are not so wonderful, in reality.

- B. Teenagers are fooled by the present.
  - 1. Many teenagers make decisions based on the moment, without considering the future.
    - a. Decisions are made based on how they feel in the present, without giving thought to the impact on the future.
    - b. Teenagers make decisions that give immediate pleasure.
      - (1) The decision to take drugs.
      - (2) The decision to drink alcohol.
      - (3) The decision to have sex.
  - 2. Many teenagers do not see down the road of their future; and, because they do not see the dangers, they often "crash and burn."
    - a. "Kicks" have kickbacks.
    - b. Their present choices may have future dangers, that are hidden from immediate view.
- C. Teenagers are fooled by friends.
  - 1. Teenagers make bad decisions, because they listen to friends who are making bad decisions.
    - a. They think that it is all right, because their friends are doing it.
    - b. The notion that "Everybody's doing it" seems to make the wrong right.
  - 2. Sometimes teenagers know what they are doing is wrong; but they do not want to be rejected by their friends, and so they join in, out of fear.

# III. How Teenagers Can Make Wise Decisions.

- A. They must think through the possible outcomes of their choices.
  - 1. There is a consequence to every decision that they make.
  - 2. They must consider the effects that a decision will have on them in a few months, or in a few years.
- B. They should make a list of all the advantages and disadvantages of a decision.
  - 1. This is especially true of major decisions, such as choosing a college.
  - 2. Once the pros and cons are written on paper, it may put the decisions in a better overall perspective.
- C. They should seek advice and gather information.
  - Teenagers should seek advice from parents, pastors, guidance counselors and trusted friends.
  - 2. Another good resource for gathering information and seeking advice is the local library.
  - Teenagers should look for and listen to others who have had to make similar decisions.
- D. The Bible gives good counsel for making wise decisions.
  - 1. It will give direction. (Psalms 119:105)
  - 2. It will give wisdom. (Proverbs 1:1-6)
- E. Teenagers should seek God for guidance. (Psalms 48:14; Proverbs 16:3; Isaiah 30:21)

- 1. In making a decision, teenagers should not neglect to pray.
- Teenagers should not make decisions that are contrary to God's will.



# Spiritual Truths

- Our future happiness is based upon our present decisions; and our present situation is the product of our past choices.
- The Bible give precepts and principles to guide our lives. It is the blueprint for successful living.
- · God will guide those who seek Him.



#### Lesson Material

Every day, teenagers must make dozens of decisions. Many are as simple as what to eat and what to wear. Other decisions are not so simple -- where to go to college, what to do for a career, and who to marry. Ironically, some decisions that affect an entire lifetime must be made during the teenage years. For this reason, it is critical that a teacher helps guide the students in developing good decision-making skills. The quality of their future will be determined by the quality of their decisions.

Some decisions such as curfew, dress code, and education are controlled by parents. But the day will come when teenagers will be responsible to make all of their own decisions.

One question frequently asked is, "Why do some teenagers make such bad decisions?" There may be as many answers as there are teenagers; but this lesson attempts to address some of the major influences that cause teenagers to make unwise choices. In sharing these, the teacher should keep in mind that the goal is to prevent the students from falling into these deceptions.

Teenagers make bad choices, because they are deceived by appearances. In Proverbs 5:3-5, it says that the lips of a prostitute drip honey and her speech is smoother than oil, but in the end she will destroy. The admonition is not to be fooled by her appearance. She looks good, but she is not good!

Teenagers make unwise decisions, when they only think about the moment and not about the future. They get caught up in the excitement of the moment and in feeling good, without taking into account the long-term effect. Drugs and alcohol, sex and partying can give immediate pleasure, but the price down the road is expensive.

The teacher should discuss the costs of bad decisions. If a student takes drugs, he may become addicted. If a student has sex, he may contact AIDS or get a girl pregnant. If a student parties, he may become an alcoholic. Is it worth the risk? Fun choices may turn out to be frustrating or deadly choices. Sometimes, teenagers make foolish choices, because they think that they are indestructible and that nothing

will hurt them. The teacher must let them know that this is a false assumption.

Finally, teenagers can be persuaded by peer pressure to make wrong choices. No one wants to be unpopular or look stupid. If friends are doing questionable activities, then the pressure is great to conform. Often, this leads to trouble -- which is the reason that we should choose our friends carefully. (1 Corinthians 15:33)

In order to make wise decisions, teenagers should consider the possible outcomes of their choices. What are the consequences? What could happen? What are the advantages and disadvantages of a decision? These should be written down, in order to give a better overall view.

The Bible says that there is wisdom and success in the multitude of many counselors. (Proverbs 11:14; 15:22; 24:6) Teenagers should seek advice from parents and godly men and women.

Teenagers should look to the Bible for help and guidance. What are the principles in God's Word that will give direction? Some teenagers treat the Bible as a good luck charm, or something for "goodie-goodies," or a boring piece of ancient literature that has no relevance; but the scriptures give wise counsel for making good decisions.

Finally, decisions should be committed to the Lord. It is His promise that He will guide and direct. He will bring success, when we rely on Him. (Proverbs 16:3)



#### Methods

Ask the teenagers to give some examples of bad decisions that they have made; and the teacher should share a few of his or her own.

The teacher should give to the students a list of situations that call for a decision. These can be shared verbally, or written down. Ask the class to decide what to do. The teacher may use role-playing, or have the students work in groups, or work through the decisions with the entire class.

Ask the students to share a few decisions that they are wrestling with right now. If appropriate, work one out in class.

# Money, Money, Money

Volume 9

Lesson 29



Luke 12:13-34

Matthew 6:19-34

Ecclesiastes 5:10



#### Theme

We must develop a balanced, biblical perspective on money.



#### 1 Timothy 6:6-11, 17-19

- 6 "But godliness with contentment is great gain.
- 7 "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.
- 8 "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.
- 9 "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.
- 10 "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.
- 11 "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness."
- 17 "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

- 18 "That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;
- 19 "Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."



#### 1 Timothy 6:10

"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."



#### **Outline**

- I. There Is Nothing Intrinsically Evil or Wrong With Money.
- A. Every civilization must have some form of currency exchange (money), in order to sustain itself.
- B. We need money, to meet the needs of our day-to-day living.

# II. We Need to Respect Money, but Not Fall In Love With It.

- A. Money is necessary to take care of needs; but we are in trouble, when we fall in love with money. (1 Timothy 6:10)
- B. We must be careful about wandering from the faith and piercing ourselves with sorrows, because of money. (verse 10)
  - 1. The Bible describes wealth as the "deceitfulness of riches." (Mark 4:19)
  - Money is deceitful, when we think that wealth and material things will make us happy.
    - a. Money does not satisfy. (Ecclesiastes 5:10)
    - b. Many wealthy people are not happy.
  - 3. Money is deceitful, when it causes us to fall into foolish and hurtful lusts. (1 Timothy 6:9)
    - a. Foolish and hurtful lusts are desires such as greed, pride, dishonesty, stinginess and temporal values.
    - b. The love of money can destroy friendships and ruin marriages.
       We sacrifice relationships for money.
- C. We must keep a balance by recognizing the importance of money, without devoting all of our time, talent and life to it.

#### III. We Need to Learn to Be Content With What We Have. (1 Timothy 6:6-7)

- A. "Contentment" does not mean "laziness."
  - 1. We should not sit back with a "laissez faire," "que sera sera" attitude.
  - 2. We need to try and better ourselves.
- B. Contentment, in the context of 1
  Timothy 6:6-7, means that our
  happiness is not dependent upon
  external situations or material things.
- C. It is not external situations that will make us happy, but following after righteousness and godly qualities that will make us happy. (verse 11)

#### IV. We Need to Open a Bank Account In Heaven.

- A. The Bible does not condemn earthly riches.
  - 1. The Bible does not say that the rich should relinquish their wealth.
  - 2. The Bible says that the rich should not be high-minded or put their trust in wealth. (verse 17)
- B. The Bible says that the rich can lay up treasure in heaven. (verse 19)
  - 1. Wealthy people can open a bank account in heaven, if they are rich in good works and they are generous and willing to share. (verse 18)
  - God does not show favoritism (Romans 2:11); and if He will allow the rich to store up treasure in heaven, then He will do the same

for us. (Matthew 6:19-21)

- C. We must not spend our lives striving only for material pursuits, but we must invest our lives in eternal things. (Colossians 3:2)
  - 1. God will meet our needs. (verse 17)
  - 2. We must seek first the kingdom of God. (Matthew 6:33)



## Lesson Material

One of the most misquoted verses in the Bible is 1 Timothy 6:10. Many people quote the verse as saying, "Money is the root of all evil;" but this is incorrect. It says, "The <u>love</u> of money is the root of all evil." When we fall in love with money and give it first place in our lives, then we are going to fall into trouble.

Although the scripture gives many warnings about riches, it is important to understand that the Bible does not condemn the rich. Jesus said that it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God (Luke 18:25); and yet, in the next chapter, wealthy Zacchaeus receives salvation. (Luke 19:1-10) The danger with riches is that it is easy to depend upon wealth for security, instead of God. It is easy to be arrogant and selfish with riches. Another danger is that riches can tempt people to cheat, steal, lie and even kill. The Bible commands people to avoid these sins.

Many cultures place a heavy emphasis on material possessions. Clothes, houses, jewelry, gadgets and material things are status symbols of prestige and importance. Success is measured externally — by the things we have — instead of internally — by what we are. It is easy to get swept up in this philosophy. Teenagers need to hear the words of Jesus: "...Man shall not live by bread alone,...." (Matthew 4:4) Money is important; but when teenagers make wealth their top priority, they are laying the foundation for a value system that will drown them in destruction and perdition. (1 Timothy 6:10)

Worldly people have a false idea that money and happiness are synonymous. Not true. Money does not satisfy. It does not bring happiness. There is much that money cannot buy. It cannot buy health, love or intelligence. Money cannot buy happiness. Some people spend their entire lives trying to accumulate wealth only to find out that, once they acquire it, they are no happier. Money-seekers spend their lives trying to increase wealth, only to find out that it is a bad deal. Do not waste life on money!

We must learn to be content with that which the Lord has given us. The Bible teaches that our source and supply is the Lord. (Philippians 4:19) We need to trust in God, and not in money. Material things and worldly wealth can be stripped from us; but godliness with contentment is eternal gain. (1 Timothy 6:6) Our financial situation may change with the loss of a job or loss of health or any other outside factor; but if our trust is in God, then we can have His peace and joy, no matter what happens.

The Bible teaches that it is possible and important to lay up treasure in heaven. On earth, our wealth is only temporal; but in heaven, it will last forever. (Matthew 6:19-21) We store up treasures in heaven by living a life of service to others. (Matthew 10:42) We store up treasures in heaven by being generous to others. (Luke 12:33) We store up treasures in heaven by our good works. (1 Timothy 6:18,19)

Teenagers must be challenged to make the Lord their first love. Pleasing God, and not making money, is the way to life and life eternal. God knows our needs and our desires. He will take care of us. We need to trust Him. (Matthew 6:33)



#### Methods

The teacher should find examples of rich people who have died unhappy. Every culture has many affluent figures with tragic lifestyles.

Ask the students to pull out a United States coin, if they have one. All United States coins have written on them "In God We Trust." Ask the students which of the two do they trust in the most -- God, or money?

The teacher should ask the students to calculate how much money it would take to make them happy. Discuss their answers in class.

# How To Be a Teenage Millionaire

Volume 9

Lesson 30



Proverbs 10:5; 11:24-25

Proverbs 13:11; 19:17; 21:20

Matthew 6:24

Luke 12:13-21

Acts 20:35

1 Corinthians 4:2

Philippians 4:19



#### **Theme**

It is important that we learn how to use money wisely, as good stewards of the resources that the Lord gives us.



Luke 12:13-21

- 13 "And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.
- 14 "And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?
- 15 "And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.
- 16 "And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:
- 17 "And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?
- 18 "And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.
- 19 "And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

20 "But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21 "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."



#### Proverbs 21:20

"There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up."



#### **Outline**

# I. We Must Learn to Spend Money Wisely.

- A. We must not spend more than we earn.
  - It is staggering how many adults are in financial trouble, because they do this.
  - 2. It is not uncommon for a government to spend more than it earns
  - 3. Eventually, those who spend more than they earn will be bankrupt and broke.

- 4. How can we spend more than we earn? It is called "borrowing."
  - a. Many Americans, who have an outward appearance of affluence, live on the brink of economic disaster.
  - b. They have borrowed their prosperity.
- B. The best advice for borrowing money is- do not do it.
  - 1. We should not borrow money for items that depreciate in value.
    - a. Almost all consumer goods depreciate in value.
    - Borrowing is a way of life for many people, because they possess something immediately, even if they do not have the money.
  - 2. When we borrow money to buy something, we do not own it -- the lender does.
  - 3. If we cannot pay what we owe, then we lose it. (Proverbs 22:7)
  - 4. We should borrow money only on items that appreciate in value.
    - a. Education. It is an investment in our future.
    - Business. If we start a business, then we may need to borrow to purchase necessary equipment or resources.
- C. Do not be an impulse buyer.
  - 1. We should shop around for the best deal.
  - 2. Do not be pressured to buy anything immediately.

#### II. We Must Learn to Save Money.

- A. There are no safe ways to get rich quickly. (Proverbs 13:11)
- B. The best way to be financially secure is to develop the discipline of saving money. (Proverbs 21:20)
  - 1. We should save a percentage of everything we earn.
  - We will be able to get tomorrow the things we learn to sacrifice and save for today.
- C. A good indication that someone will develop financial troubles is if the person does not save. (Proverbs 21:20)

#### III. We Must Learn to Be Generous.

- A. The Bible says that a generous man will prosper. (Proverbs 11:24, 25)
- B. The Bible says that if we give to those in need, then we are lending to the Lord, and we will lack nothing. (Proverbs 19:17; 28:27)

#### IV. We Must Tithe.

- A. The tithe is a principle in both the Old and New Testaments which mandates that a tenth of our earnings belongs to the Lord.
- B. God says that if we will honor Him with the tithe, then He will honor us. (Proverbs 3: 9,10; Malachi 3:10)

# V. We Must Learn that God Is Our Source and Security.

- A. No matter what the circumstance, the Lord will meet our needs, if we will trust and obey Him. (Psalms 37:25; Philippians 4:19)
- B. We must never spend our time and talent storing up riches in this world, at the expense of being rich toward God. (Luke 12:13-21)
  - 1. Our life does not consist in the abundance of the things that we possess. (Luke 12:15)
  - 2. What profit is it, if we gain every earthly luxury, but forfeit heaven? (Matthew 16:26)
  - 3. We must put God first in our lives; and everything else will fall into place. (Matthew 6:33)



## Spiritual Truths

- God wants us to be good stewards of the material blessings that He gives us.
- When we give generously to others, the Lord will give generously to us.
- We need to trust God; and He will take care of our earthly needs.
- The discipline of saving will develop prosperity.
- The discipline of giving to the Lord will develop prosperity.



#### Lesson Material

The title of this lesson implies making millions; and students may ask how we become millionaires, if the first outline point is learning to spend money wisely. The answer is that we will not be millionaires, if we spend everything that we earn.

This lesson is about financial principles in the scripture. The Bible talks more about finances than almost any other subject, probably because money is the treasure of most men's hearts. (Matthew 6:21) We must learn how to use money, but we cannot let it become our master. (Matthew 6:24) Money can be used for great good, or money can be used for great evil. (1 Timothy 6:10) God wants us to learn how to control our finances, and not allow money to control us. God wants us to be good stewards of the material blessings we receive.

The first step toward being good stewards with our finances is to learn the discipline of spending money wisely. In American culture, with the prosperity available, teenagers can spend money quickly on almost anything: clothes, cars, cosmetics, concerts, compact disks, etc. It is also easy for most teenagers to acquire two of everything. We must realize that there is a difference between needs and wants, necessities and luxuries. Is it necessary that we have a house, garage and closet full of things? God promises to meet our needs; and He wants to meet the desires of our heart, but He also wants us to rely on Him for our happiness, rather than things. God does not want us to be over-indulgent on

material luxuries, because these can take priority in our lives, if we are not careful. What are our motives for buying luxuries? This is not to say that luxuries are wrong, but they can become too important to us. When things become a priority in our lives, they can choke our witness and effectiveness for God. (Mark 4:19) God wants us to live comfortably but not lavishly, especially when we go into debt to appear prosperous.

If we must acquire debt to purchase a luxury, then we should not buy it. The Bible says that we will become the servant of the lender. (Proverbs 22:7) Many Americans are living in debt prosperity. They not only spend money unwisely, but they spend money that they do not have. Eventually, they get into financial bondage in trying to pay back what they owe; and if they cannot pay it back, then they lose everything. God does not wants us to be debtors. If we feel that we must have something, then that thing has us — and we are serving another master. (Matthew 6:24) God wants us to serve Him.

Another similar financial principle of the scripture is that we learn to save money. (Proverbs 21:20) This requires discipline; and it is important to learn at a young age. If we cannot learn to save, then we will not be able accomplish any financial goals that we may have in the future. If we cannot learn to save, and then misfortune strikes, we will suffer. Teenagers should be challenged to save money out of every paycheck.

Another principle of scripture is that we learn to be generous with our finances. Over and over in the Bible, God says that He will bless us, if we will bless others. God does not want us to be stingy or greedy. He wants us to be liberal and cheerful in our giving. (2 Corinthians 9:7)

We will never lack, if we are givers. If we give, it will be given to us. (Luke 6:38)

Finally, God wants us to learn the discipline of tithing. This is giving ten percent of our income to the Lord's work. The Bible says that the tithe belongs to the Lord, and that we are not to keep it for ourselves. Tithing is a key to financial security. The Old Testament required tithing, and even says that not to do it is "robbing God." (Malachi 3:8) Jesus affirmed the principle of tithing in the New Testament. (Luke 11:42)

We must trust God with our finances. If we discipline ourselves to learn and practice a few simple principles, then God promises that He will always meet our needs. (Psalms 37:25; Philippians 4:19)



#### **Methods**

Ask the students to write on a piece of paper what they would do with one million dollars, and then share these answers with the class.

Have the students make a list of everything they have purchased in the last week. Have the students figure out how much they spent last week, and then share these lists with the class.

Discuss with the students when they think prioritizing money becomes evil.

The teacher should challenge the teenagers to save a percentage out of every paycheck starting this week. This is a very practical homework assignment.

The teacher should challenge the teenagers to be tithers.

# Standing On the Mountain Top

Volume 9

Lesson 31



## Bible References

Matthew 5

Ephesians 4:26, 27



#### **Theme**

This lesson is a study of the Sermon on the Mount, from Matthew chapter five.



## Scripture Reading

#### Matthew 5:1-2

- 1 "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:
- 2 "And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,"



## Memory Verse

#### Matthew 5:16

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."



#### **Outline**

#### I. The Beatitudes. (verses 1-12)

- A. Each of the nine beatitudes begins with the word "blessed," which is the Bible word for "happy." We will be happy, if the beatitudes become our attitudes.
  - 1. "Poor in spirit" -- Those who have a humble heart, and are not boastful and proud. Those who recognize their continual need for God.
  - "Mourn" -- Those who are acquainted with grief, and are sensitive to the sufferings of others.
  - 3. "Meek" -- Those who are gentle, and are not quick to anger.
  - 4. "Hunger and thirst for righteousness" -- Those who are on fire for God.
  - 5. "Merciful" -- Those who forgive, and do not hold grudges or resentments.
  - 6. "Pure in heart" -- Those who control their thoughts and stay morally pure.
  - 7. "Peacemakers" -- Those who make peace between others and with others.
  - 8. "Persecuted for righteousness" -- Those who are not ashamed of the gospel.
  - 9. "Revile and persecute you" -- Those who endure persecution, for the sake of Jesus.
- B. Each of the nine beatitudes ends with a promise; and the conclusion of the Beatitudes is a invitation to rejoice and be glad. (verse 12)

#### II. Salt and Light. (verses 13-16)

- A. Salt is a purifier, preservative and seasoning.
  - 1. Purifier -- We are a purifying (change) agent in this world.
  - 2. Preservative -- Our godly lifestyle helps keep the world from moral decay.
  - 3. Seasoning -- We are to give flavor to the world.
  - 4. Salt also makes people thirsty.
- B. Light is an illuminator.
  - 1. We are to live a life that points others in the direction of Jesus.
  - 2. We are not to hide our Christian lifestyle. We are to let it shine.

# III. The Law and the Prophets. (verses 17-20)

- A. Jesus' mission was not destructive, but constructive.
- B. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament.
  - 1. The Jews referred to the Old Testament as the "Law and the Prophets."
  - 2. The theme of the Old Testament was the promise of redemption through the coming of the Messiah.
- C. The motivation to obey God's laws must come from an inward desire to please Him. (verse 20)
  - 1. The righteousness of the Pharisees and Scribes was only an outward show of godliness. Their outward actions looked good; but on the

- inside, they were full of wickedness. (Luke 11:42-52)
- 2. Our actions must be motivated by the attitude of our heart. (Colossians 3:23-24) Our motivation for obeying the commands of the Bible must come from within. If not, we will be least in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19)

#### IV. Danger in Anger. (verses 21-26)

- A. Jesus warns us that severe punishment is in store for those who cannot control their temper. (verses 21-22)
- B. Jesus teaches about the importance of reconciliation. (verses 23-26)

#### V. Sex that Sours. (verses 27-32)

- A. Sexual sin starts with lust. (verse 28)
  - 1. Jesus says that not only is the act of adultery wrong, but thoughts of adultery are wrong, too.
  - 2. If we control our desires, we will control our actions. If we control our thoughts, we will control our acts.
- B. Jesus wants us to deal radically with sin. (verses 29-30)
  - 1. The ultimate reward of sin is the fire of hell.
  - 2. Cutting off one's eye or hand is used figuratively, to show the importance of dealing with sin. It is not to be taken literally, because Jesus also says not to lust, which is a sin of the mind -- and cutting off one's head would be the logical conclusion to the literal view, which is ridiculous. Jesus is saying

- that sin is serious business, and do not deal lightly with it.
- C. Jesus says that the broken relationship of divorce is not God's will.

#### VI. Yea and Nay. (verses 33-37)

- A. Our lives should be examples of honesty and truth.
  - 1. Jesus wants us to keep our promises.
  - 2. Jesus wants us to be honest.
- B. Oaths are unnecessary, if we are honest. In Jesus' time, if they swore by something sacred, then they were more obligated to keep their oath. Jesus said that we are to keep our promises, regardless of whether or not we swear by anything sacred.
  - 1. If we say that we are going to do something, then do it.
  - 2. Jesus does not want us to lie.

#### VII. Eye and Tooth. (verses 38-42)

- A. Jesus is ruling out revenge. (verse 39)
- B. Jesus is calling on us to deny ourselves and adopt an attitude of self-sacrifice. (verses 40-42)
  - 1. We should not cling too tightly to our personal possessions. (Matthew 5:40, 42)
  - 2. We should not cling too tightly to our time and energy. (verse 41)

#### VIII. Hatred and Love. (verses 43-48)

- A. Jesus said that we are to love our enemies.
  - 1. We are to bless those who curse us. (verse 44)
  - 2. We are to pray for those who persecute us. (verse 44)
  - 3. We are to overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:21)
- B. Anyone can give love, in return for love. There is no reward in doing this. (verses 46-47)
  - 1. God allows His sunshine and rain to fall on those who do not love Him. (verse 45)
  - 2. Jesus said that others will know we are Christians by our love. (John 13:35)
- C. We are to be complete and mature in God's righteousness. (verse 48)
  - 1. Jesus sets a high goal for us, at the end of the chapter.
  - 2. We are to have attitudes, values, and lives that exemplify the life of Jesus.



# Spiritual Truths

- Happiness comes from obedience to God.
- Happiness does not come from the things we possess, but from godly values and attitudes.

- We are to rejoice in persecution.
- If we are salt and light to the world, then people will see through our lifestyle that God is real.
- Jesus came to fulfill the Old Testament law. He was the Messiah.
- We are to reconcile our differences with anyone with whom we have a conflict.
- Lustful thoughts and desires are sin, as well as actions.
- God wants us to deal radically with sin.
- We are not to make special oaths, but we are to keep our promises.
- Jesus wants us to yield our rights to time, money and energy to Him.
- We are to love our enemies.
- We are to strive for perfection.



#### Lesson Material

There is enough substance in the fifth chapter of Matthew to keep a teacher busy for a lifetime. It is not likely that the teacher will have time to cover all nine outline topics in detail. For this reason, the teacher is encouraged to select areas which he or she feels are the most essential for the particular class.

The Sermon on the Mount is the most famous discourse of Jesus Christ. It has been described as one of the greatest treatises on mental health ever given. It is a wonderful study on true Christian living.

"Blessed" means "happy." When we think about it, the Beatitudes do not sound like happy stuff. Happy are the poor in spirit? Happy are they that mourn? Happy are the meek? And the clincher -- Happy are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you? These do not exactly sound like a good time. The teacher needs to explain that the Beatitudes are attitudes of the heart. Only from within, can we have true and lasting happiness. The teacher may want to give examples of the Beatitudes, or skim through them, in order to cover other topics of the chapter.

The value of salt and light is their effect. Christians are to be agents of change in the world. We are to make a difference in people's lives. We are to let our Christianity shine. This is not to say we should become "oddballs," but the difference in our lifestyle should be noticeable enough that others see Christ shining in and through us.

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. A teacher may want to mention some of the biblical prophecies that Jesus fulfilled, as the Messiah. This passage is a great example of how seriously Jesus took the Old Testament. Teenagers must be encouraged to do the same. The Bible is the Word of God.

We need to be careful with our anger. Jesus says that stiff punishment is in store for those do not control their anger. Yet, we need to let teenagers know that anger is not always wrong. Jesus got angry. (John 2:15) His was righteous anger. There are some things we should get angry about --injustice, cruelty and wickedness. Paul said that we could get angry without sinning.

(Ephesians 4:26) In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is talking about a selfish kind of anger, that is hurtful and destructive. This we must avoid.

Jesus warns against impure relationships with the opposite sex. It is important to point out to teenagers that looking at the opposite sex is not sin. It is looking to lust that is sin. If our thoughts are pure, then our actions will be pure. We must control our thought life.

Jesus went as far as to say that we should do away with the parts of the body that cause us to sin. Jesus was using figurative language, in order to express the seriousness of sin. God does not take our sin lightly, and neither should we.

Jesus validated the sanctity of marriage. In the Old Testament and in Jesus' time, it was fairly easy to get a divorce. (The teacher may mention that the same is true in our day.) Although God permitted divorce, it was never in His perfect plan. Jesus was emphasizing this in His teaching.

In the passage on swearing and oaths, Jesus is condemning dishonesty. If a person made an oath, but swore by earth and not by heaven, then he was more inclined to break the promise. In other words, an earthly oath was considered less severe than a heavenly oath — and so, the earthly oath could be broken. Jesus was saying that this practice of making oaths or swearing by degrees was evil, because it was allowing for the retraction of promises that should have been kept.

The passage about "turning the other cheek" is one of the best known sayings of Jesus; and it is one of the most misunderstood. The passage is not saying that we should never defend ourselves.

Even Paul stopped the authorities from giving him a severe beating, by defending his Roman citizenship. (Acts 22) If we are persecuted for our Christianity, then we should yield our lives to God and let Him defend us when we are wronged. It does not mean that we should allow anyone to strike us, without doing anything. The passage is emphasizing the need for self-denial and self-sacrifice, in our pilgrimage as Christians.

It is interesting that there is no Old Testament scripture that says to "hate your enemy." Apparently, it was a familiar saying from Jewish tradition. Jesus says that we are to love and pray for those who are against us. This is a radical concept for anyone. Jesus teaches that we are to be governed by the love that comes from God. God loves those who do not love Him (Romans 5:8); and we are commanded to do the same.

The Sermon on the Mount gives the highest standard of living known to man. If we follow its precepts, then we will be perfect, like our heavenly Father is perfect. It is a goal for us to aim for. Jesus is our Example. Men were drawn to Him, because of His lifestyle. If we can live the lifestyle of Jesus, then we will make an impact on our world. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your

good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)



#### Methods

Group discussion:

Ask the students what do they think that the Beatitudes mean?

Ask the students to discuss how they can be better witnesses.

Ask the students when was the last time that they got angry?

Ask the students when was the last time that they made a promise that they did not keep?

Ask the students to discuss the meaning of "turn the other cheek."

Have the students pick a teaching of Jesus that they need to learn; and then challenge them to spend time this week looking for ways to demonstrate that particular teaching in their lives.

# Falling Off the Mountain

Volume 9

Lesson 32



## Bible References

Matthew 6

Philippians 4:19

**Psalms 37:25** 



#### **Theme**

A study in the Sermon on the Mount, from Matthew chapter six.



## Scripture Reading

Matthew 6:1; 19-21

- 1 "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven."
- 19 "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:
- 20 "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:
- 21 "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."



Matthew 6:33

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."



#### **Outline**

# I. We Must Take Heed With Good Deeds. (verses 1-18)

- A. In Matthew 5, Jesus discusses living life in such a way that makes an impact on others for the kingdom of God. (Matthew 5:16) In this chapter, Jesus is making sure that we guard against hypocrisy and keep a balance in our lives, by keeping our motives pure.
- B. Jesus gives three illustrations of doing good deeds with wrong motives.
  - 1. Alms. (verses 2-4)
    - a. If we want to please God with almsgiving, then we must do it in secret.
    - b. If our motive is to impress men, then we will have no reward from God.
  - 2. Prayer. (verses 5-15)
    - a. If we want to please God with prayer, then we must do it in private.
    - b. If our motive is to impress men, then God will not answer our prayers.
  - 3. Fasting. (verses 16-18)
    - a. If we want to please God with fasting, then we must do it in private, without making a public show of it.
    - b. If our motive is to impress men, then we will have no reward from God.

# II. We Must Take Heed of Our Heavenly Needs. (verses 24-34)

- A. We should not spend all of our time and money on earthly things that perish. (Proverbs 23:4; John 6:27)
  - 1. Examples of this are tangible things such as cars, bikes, clothes, toys, houses, and things; but this can also include intangible things, such as fame, power and influence.
  - 2. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with earthly treasures, as long as we do not pursue them at the expense of heavenly treasures. We must remember that earthly treasures will pass away.
- B. God will take care of us and meet our needs.
  - 1. If God feeds the birds and clothes the flowers, then we do not need to worry about material needs. God will provide for us.
  - The kingdom of God and righteousness (doing what is right) is more important than physical needs, such as clothing, food and drink. We should seek God's kingdom first.



# Spiritual Truths

 It is possible to do good works with wrong motives. If our motive is to be seen and admired by others, then we will have no reward from the Father.

- God rewards good deeds, which are done with a pure heart.
- No one can serve both God and money.
- Material things are temporal and will pass away; and so, we should not spend all our energy pursuing them. God will take care of His children.



#### Lesson Material

In Matthew chapter five, we are admonished to be perfect. (Matthew 5:48) And now, in Matthew chapter six, we are warned to be careful that our good deeds do not become tainted by wrong motives. We are cautioned that our righteous lifestyle does not become self-righteousness. The content of the Sermon on the Mount changes from actions to attitudes. Right actions do not necessarily mean right attitudes. We must keep our Christianity in balance, or we will fall off the mountain.

In Matthew 6:1, the word "alms" is more properly translated "acts of righteousness." We need to be careful that we do not perform our righteous deeds, in order to be admired by men. Jesus gives us three common examples of good deeds that can be perverted with wrong motives.

The first is alms -- giving offerings of food, clothing or money to the poor; the second is prayer; and the third example is fasting. In all three cases, the action is noble, but the attitude is hypocritical, because we are doing it to receive praise from others. God will give no reward.

(Matthew 6:1) Our righteousness must surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:20), which means that our motives must be pure. If we are trying to impress men rather than please God, then we are losing our heavenly rewards. Jesus instructs us to do our good deeds in secret (Matthew 6:4, 6, 18); and this is the true test of our sincerity. We should not try to draw attention to ourselves, in our devotion to God. God knows what's in our hearts. (Proverbs 16:2) God, Who sees what is done in secret, promises to someday reward us openly. The teacher may want to give other examples of good works with insincere motives: singing, witnessing, ushering, etc. These are noble activities; but the motives can become ignoble, if we do not keep a balance and watch our hearts.

If time permits, the teacher may want to share some of the principles of prayer in The Lord's Prayer. (verse 9-13)

Prayer should begin with worship. (verse 9)

We should pray according to God's will. (verse 10)

We should pray for our daily needs. (verse 11)

We should pray for forgiveness; and we must forgive. (verse 12)

We need to pray for deliverance from temptation and evil. (verse 13)

In the last half of the chapter (verse 19-24), Jesus does not want us to develop a wrong value system. We should not spend our lives seeking after material things. We cannot serve both God and mammon. (verse 24) "Mammon" is the King James word for "money." This is not to say that

material things and money are evil; but, when they become the primary goal and driving force of our lives, then we have gotten off balance and have fallen of the mountain. Material wealth is temporary and will pass away. God has a better bargain -- a layaway plan in heaven! (verse 19-20)

How can we lay up treasures in heaven? Jesus gave us three examples: almsgiving, fasting, and praying with pure motives (done secretly, or done without trying to impress others). Good works with right motives will give us treasures in heaven. Seeking to do what is right will lay up treasures in heaven, too.

Finally, Jesus admonishes us not to worry when He says over and over, "Take no thought." (verses 25, 28, 31, 34) God cares for us; and He will take care of us. If He is able to feed the birds and clothe the flowers, then He will certainly supply our needs. (Philippians 4:19)



#### **Methods**

The teacher may ask the students to make a list of all of the things they presently worry about. Perhaps there are family, school or friendship problems. The teacher may choose to take time to pray for the lists.

The teacher may find illustrations of rich men and women who were not happy. Every culture has many examples, because money and happiness are not synonymous.

The teacher may challenge the class to a day of fasting, or to take up a special offering for the poor, or to spend time each day in prayer. If the teacher asks for a show of hands, then he or she can ask whether this makes motives impure. This would make for an interesting discussion.

# Storm Warnings

Volume 9

Lesson 33



## Bible Reference

Matthew 7



#### **Theme**

A study in the Sermon on the Mount, from Matthew chapter seven.



## Scripture Reading

Matthew 7:1-5

1 "Judge not, that ye be not judged.

- 2 "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.
- 3 "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?
- 4 "Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold a beam is in thine own eye?
- 5 "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."



#### Memory Verse

Matthew 7:7

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:"



#### **Outline**

## I. Judging Is Not a Good Occupation. (verses 1-6)

- A. If we do not want to be criticized, then we should not be judgmental toward others.
- B. Jesus gives three good reasons for not judging.
  - 1. If we judge others, God will judge us.
  - 2. We will be judged by the standard we use.
  - 3. We are usually being hypocritical when we judge others, because we often judge people for the very things that we are guilty of, ourselves. (Romans 2:1)
    - a. It is not uncommon to fall into the same trap that we recently judged someone else for doing.
    - b. Our actions may not be the same, but our attitudes are the same.
- C. The closer we walk with God, the more we will see our own shortcomings; and, consequently, the more understanding we will be toward the faults of others.
  - 1. We should concentrate on our own relationship with God, and not worry about critiquing the spiritual progress of others.
  - 2. We often hinder, rather than speed up, a person's sanctification process, when we become judgmental. We also hinder our own sanctification.

D. We are not to be judgmental, but we are also not to be naive about evil people. (verse 6)

## II. Prayer Is a Good Occupation. (verses 7-11)

- A. There are different levels of prayer. (verse 7)
  - 1. Prayer takes different degrees of effort.
  - 2. Asking is the easiest level of prayer; seeking takes more effort; and knocking is the most earnest of all.
- B. God wants what is best for us; and He will answer our prayers. (verse 9-11)

## III. The Golden Rule Is the Best Way to Treat Others. (verse 12)

- A. Our care toward people is a reflection of our love for God. (Mark 12:30-31)
  - 1. If we claim to love God and know that He loves people, then we should treat people accordingly.
  - 2. The acid test of our relationship with God is how we love others, as shown by our actions.
- B. We can set an example and impact others, by following the Golden Rule.
- C. We have done everything that God's Word requires, when we follow the Golden Rule.

#### IV. The Strait Gate Is the Best Road to Follow. (verses 13-14)

- A. The wide gate and broad way are accommodating, but they lead to destruction.
- B. The strait gate and narrow way are more restricting, but they lead to life.
- C. The narrow way is less traveled, because it is the tougher road; but those who choose it will have no regrets, unlike those who take the broad and easy way.
- D. Many are on the broad way, because they have not found the narrow way.
  - 1. They need someone to give them directions to the narrow way.
  - 2. They need to see someone walking the narrow way.

# V. We Must Learn to Identify False Prophets and False Followers. (verses 21-23)

- A. False prophets look like true prophets.
  - 1. They try to imitate true prophets, but they are only out for their own selfish gain.
  - 2. The appear to want to help others, but they actually work to destroy people.
- B. We can learn the true identity of a tree by its fruit; and we can learn the true identity of a prophet by his fruit.
  - We must check out a person's life and doctrine, before giving him our trust.

- 2. Outward displays of goodness do not necessarily mean inward purity.
- C. Obedience is the test of a Christian. (verse 21)
- D. A false follower may perform Christian practices. (verse 22-23)

## VI. We Must Learn to Be Wise Builders. (verses 24-27)

- A. In order to be wise builders, we must build our lives on the right foundation.
  - 1. Christ is the only stable Foundation in this world. He is the immovable Rock.
  - 2. As long as we build upon the Rock, nothing in life will destroy us.
  - 3. Every foundation without Christ is weak and unstable.
- B. In order to be wise builders, we must practice the teachings of Jesus.
  - 1. Hearing the teachings of Christ, but not practicing them, is useless. (James 1:22)
  - The person who follows the example and instruction of Jesus will be successful and happy in life.
- C. Jesus wants us to put into practice the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount.



 Judging others is an occupation that only God can fulfill. He is perfect; and He will pass the correct judgment on everyone, in the day of reckoning.

- God wants to give us the desires of our hearts, but we must seek Him in prayer.
- The best way to treat people is the way that we want to be treated. If everyone would do this, it would solve many of the world's problems.
- The road that the majority is following is not always the right one. We must follow God's road to life.
- Satan and his emissaries can appear as angels of light; but, we can identify them by their fruit.
- If we want our lives to be solid and secure, then we must build our lives upon the Rock of God's Word.



#### Lesson Material

This is the last of three lessons on the Sermon on the Mount; and, except for the passage on prayer, Matthew chapter seven is replete with warnings. We are to be careful in our Christian living to do what pleases God. In this way, we will have a firm foundation, so that when the storms of life beat against us, we will stand firm.

The first passage in the lesson deals with judgmental attitudes. We are not to be critical and condemning of others. How can we be concerned with the small faults of others, when we have large faults of our own? Our attitude is wrong. When the

faults of others look worse than our own, then our judgment is wrong. Our perspective is off.

Jesus gives a solemn warning to those who enjoy fault-finding. They will be judged with the same harshness. If we do not want to be judged by God and others, then we must stay away from a judgmental attitude. Jesus warns that we will be judged according to the way that we judge others.

Jesus condemns the judgmental attitude, but this does not mean we cannot make discernments. In the next verse (verse 6), Jesus makes a judgment by referring to some people as "pigs" and "dogs." Later in the chapter, we are told to recognize false prophets by their fruit. (verses 15-20) This is not a contradiction, but rather a caution that we must keep balanced. We are warned about being too critical in our judgment of others, but we are also warned about being too lenient in our discernment of others. We should not cater to evil people, simply because we do not want to be judgmental.

For the second time, the Sermon on the Mount discusses prayer. Prayer has different levels of intensity. (verse 7) Seeking is more intense than asking; and knocking is more forceful than asking and seeking. The key to the passage is that we should pray expectantly. We may have to seek and we may have to knock, but it is God's desire to answer our requests.

The Golden Rule (verse 12) is not original with Jesus. Wise men from other religions had similar sayings; but Jesus was the only One to express the rule in a positive statement, by saying, "Do to others." All of the commandments of the Old Testament are summed up in this verse.

In the last four passages of the Sermon on the Mount, we are given four warnings. Each warning reveals a right and a wrong decision or direction. There are two gates, two trees, two claims and two builders. We must be careful to choose correctly; and we are given instructions to help us find the right way.

The wrong gate to life is wide and filled with activity, because it is so accommodating. The right gate is narrow; and only a few are traveling it.

The wrong (false) prophets are like rotten trees that bear bad fruit. If the fruit is rotten, the prophet is false. The true teachers and prophets of the Lord bear good fruit. If the fruit of their ministry is good, then the teacher is good.

It should be noted that the fruit of false prophets should be judged by their teachings (doctrines). False prophets may have a form of godliness (such as giving to the poor), but their teachings are corrupt.

The wrong claim is to say, "Lord, Lord," while doing Christian activities without any real commitment to the Lord. The right claim is to say, "Lord, Lord," and be doing the will of the Father.

The wrong builder is the unwise one who builds his house on sand, by not obeying the teachings of Jesus. The right builder is the wise one who builds his house on the rock, by doing the teachings of Jesus. (verses 24-27; James 1:22)



#### **Methods**

Ask the students to give examples of judging others.

Discuss the reasons why so many people choose the wide gate and broad way, instead of the strait gate and narrow way.

Discuss the meaning of Jesus' teaching about the house upon the sand and the house upon the rock.

Encourage the students to check their foundation.

# The Purpose of Parents

Volume 9

Lesson 34



Ephesians 6:1-3

**Exodus 20:12** 

Proverbs 1:8



#### **Theme**

This is the first in a series of lessons that answers the question, "Why should we obey our parents?"



### Scripture Reading

Luke 2:41-52

41 "Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.

- 42 "And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.
- 43 "And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.
- 44 "But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.
- 45 "And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.
- 46 "And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.
- 47 "And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.
- 48 "And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.
- 49 "And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father business?
- 50 "And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 "And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

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



Colossians 3:20

"Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord."



#### **Outline**

- I. In Luke 2:41-52, We Have the Most Important Lesson a Young Person Can Learn.
- A. This passage of scripture is the only incident in the life of Jesus that we know anything about, from the time He was two, until He was 30.
  - 1. There were approximately 28 years of silence, in which the Lord walked this earth.
  - 2. All we know is that He was a carpenter, and that He grew up with brothers and sisters. (Mark 6:3)

- 3. The only recorded event of His youth is Luke 2:41-52.
- B. Since the Bible is inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21), we can logically conclude that this incident (Luke 2:41-52) is very significant; and the Holy Spirit wants us to learn something of great importance from this event in Jesus' youth.
- C. We need to take a close look at this event.
  - 1. Mary and Joseph travel to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover. (verse 41)
    - a. Jerusalem was more populated during Passover, than any other time of the year.
    - b. People came from all over the world to celebrate the Passover.
  - 2. Jesus was twelve years old. (verse 42)
    - a. This may have been Jesus' first time to Jerusalem, since He was a baby.
    - b. At twelve, He would become an adult, a "son of the covenant," by Jewish custom.
  - 3. Mary and Joseph left Jesus behind. (verses 43-44)
    - a. They "supposed" He was in their company. They had not checked to make sure.
    - b. They made a mistake.
    - c. If the parents of Jesus, who were hand-picked by God, could make a mistake, then it is possible for any parent to err.
  - 4. Jesus was lost for three days. (verse 46)
    - a. The agony that Mary and Joseph must have felt at the loss of their Son was indescribable.
    - b. After three days, Mary and Joseph found Jesus in the

- temple; and they were amazed. (verse 48)
- 5. When Jesus' parents found Him, He was not in any distress.
  - a. There is no indication that He needed food or shelter.
  - b. Surprisingly, Jesus was not in need of emotional comfort from His parents. Remember, He was only twelve years old.
- Jesus made an astonishing statement, when Mary and Joseph found Him.
  - a. Jesus said, "...How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (verse 49)
  - b. Apparently, Jesus was not planning on seeing or being with His parents anymore.
- 7. Perhaps, in the excitement of seeing the temple as a young man, and realizing it was the home of the Father (verse 49), Jesus was ready to begin His ministry.
  - a. Jesus was talking with the educated leaders of the Jewish people. (verse 46)
  - b. Jesus was asking them questions, and He was giving them answers. (verses 46-47)
  - c. All that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and His answers. (verse 47)
- 8. Jesus' parents did not understand; and they made Jesus come home with them. (verses 50-51)
  - Jesus must have realized that if His parents did not understand, then it was not yet His time.
  - b. Jesus went to Nazareth with them, and was subject to them. (verse 51)

#### II. The Holy Spirit Wants Us to Learn the Importance of Obeying Our Parents!

- A. Jesus became "subject unto them." (verse 51) Jesus obeyed His parents!
- B. The only recorded incident in the life of Jesus as a young Man is to teach us the importance of obedience to parents.

# III. The Commandment of Parental Obedience Is Strongly Emphasized In the Bible.

- A. In the New Testament, there are only two specific commandments given to children; and they both say the same thing.
  - 1. Ephesians 6:1-3: Children are to obey their parents.
  - 2. Colossians 3:20: Children are to obey their parents.
- B. In the Old Testament, obedience to parents is also an extremely important commandment.
  - 1. Proverbs 1:8: After a seven-verse introduction, the very first command or instruction is obedience to the counsel of parents.
  - 2. Exodus 20:12: Obedience to parents is the first commandment with a promise.
  - 3. Exodus 20:12: Obedience to parents is one of the Bible's all-time top ten -- The Ten Commandments.

# IV. God Gives Us This Commandment, Because He Uses Parents to Shape Our Lives.

- A. Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man -- after He became subject to His parents. (Luke 2: 51-52)
- B. Who taught Jesus? His parents!
  - 1. Mary lived a life that found favor with God. (Luke 1:28, 30)
  - 2. Joseph was a just and righteous man. (Matthew 1:19)
- C. God uses parents to mold us, to make us, and to shape us into the kind of people that He wants us to be.
  - 1. God uses parents to teach us "wisdom."
  - 2. God uses parents to help us develop "stature."
    - a. "Stature" in the literal sense means "physical growth."
    - b. "Stature" can also mean "personal development and character."
    - c. Parents help develop our character.
  - 3. God uses parents to help us grow spiritually -- "favor with God."
  - 4. God uses parents to give us "favor with men."
    - a. To have favor with men is to acquire a good name.
    - b. Parents can help us gain a good reputation.
- D. The Holy Spirit does not automatically "zap" godly character into us. He uses parents to develop His qualities in us.
  - 1. Jesus increased in godly character. (Luke 2:52)

- 2. Mary and Joseph were God's instruments to help Jesus grow.
- E. God uses parents as His tools, in order to shape His children.



### Spiritual Truths

- Obedience to parents is so important that it is the only command given to youth in the New Testament.
- Parents are God's principal agents to develop in us the kind of character that He wants us to have.
- If Mary and Joseph, who left Jesusbehind in Jerusalem, could make a mistake, then any parent can make a mistake. No parents are perfect; but God commands us to obey them.



#### Lesson Material

God makes it clear in His Word that youth are to obey their parents. The story of Jesus at the temple is a major example. Although many truths can be gleaned from the passage (Luke 2:41-52), the most important truth is that of parental obedience -- Jesus obeyed His parents. The Bible emphasizes that children are to obey their parents -- not in a few things or only in the things they agree with, but in all things. (Colossians 3:20) If we are going to

submit to God, then we must first learn how to submit to our parents.

The scripture gives an illustration that describes God as a Potter and His people as clay. (Isaiah 64:8; Jeremiah 18:6) God molds and shapes His people, like the potter does the clay on the potter's wheel. God makes each lump of clay into exactly the vessel that He wants it to be.

If God is the Potter and we are the clay, then how does God shape us, in our day-to-day living? The answer is that He uses the authority that He places over us to shape us. And the number one authority that God places over us, in our youth, is our parents. Our relationship with our parents is the most important relationship we will have, while growing up. It will affect almost every area of our lives. The instruction, correction, example and influence we receive from our parents will be a major force in shaping our lives.

God uses parents to mold and shape us. They have the ability to rub out negative characteristics that He does not want us to have; and they have the ability to polish in positive characteristics that God does want us to have. The Bible describes us as the Lord's jewels (Malachi 3:17); and God uses parents to chip and cut and polish us into a precious treasure. This is not necessarily an easy task.

The Bible says that foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it far from him. (Proverbs 22:15) Who imparts the rod of correction? Parents. When Mom or Dad disciplines a child, it is to rub out or sand

off those rough edges and polish in good qualities. This shaping process is not always pleasant; but the Bible says it will yield the fruit of righteousness to those who are trained by it. (Hebrews 12:11)

It is critical that young people see the importance that God places on obedience to parents. When they do not understand or agree with their parents' decisions, they are still responsible to obey them. The Bible promises that those who honor their parents, God will honor. (Ephesians 6:1-3)



#### Methods

Have the students discuss what they especially enjoy about their parents.

Have the students discuss the areas in which it is particularly difficult to obey their parents.

A good exercise is to have a few students play the role of parents, and give them problem situations with their teenage children. They must decide how to deal with the problems. The class can grade how well they do as parents.

A variation is to role-play between a parent and a teenager. One student is the parent and another student is the child. Give them a tense situation (curfew, chores, car keys); and they must act out what will happen.

# The Purpose of Parents II

Volume 9

Lesson 35



Psalms 127:3-4

Proverbs 23:22



#### **Theme**

The importance of parental obedience.



Proverbs 6:20-23

- 20 "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother:
- 21 "Bind them continually upon thine heart, {and} tie them about thy neck.
- 22 "When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and {when} thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.
- 23 "For the commandment (is) a lamp; and the law (is) light; and reproofs of instruction (are) the way of life:"



#### Ephesians 6:1-3

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."



#### Outline

## I. God Uses Parents to Protect Our Lives.

- A. Parents can keep us from the destructive temptations that may ruin our lives.
  - 1. Parents have lived longer and have learned more from life-experiences.
  - 2. Their experiences will benefit us, as we listen to their counsel. (Proverbs 23:22)
  - From observation or experience, parents may know the grievous consequences to actions and attitudes that we may not know of or consider.
  - 4. Teenagers, because of their youth, have a tendency to think that they are indestructible and cannot be harmed.
  - 5. Parents can give a better perspective on reality, and help keep teens from destructive activities.
- B. Parents have made a big investment in the lives of their children; and they are going to protect their investment.
  - 1. In the United States, by the time a teenager is eighteen, parents will have spent over \$100,000. This is for one child!
  - 2. Parents have invested a lot more than money in their children.
    - a. They have invested their love, time, affection and sweat.
    - b. They have invested a large portion of their lives.

- c. No one has invested more in children than their parents.
- 3. Teenagers sometimes think parents are being too strict and unloving in their decisions.
  - a. Curfew is too early.
  - b. Dating is too restrictive.
  - c. Freedoms are too limited.
- 4. Parents base their decisions on what they believe is best for teens. It is not that they want them to miss out on fun, but that they want their teens to be safe and protected from unseen dangers.

## II. God Uses Parents to Direct Our Lives.

- A. Proverbs 6:20-23 says that the commands and teachings of our parents will guide us.
- B. No one is better qualified than parents, to give guidance for the future.
- C. Parents are concerned about their children's welfare and future happiness, more than anyone else.
- D. Psalms 127:3-4 describes children as "arrows in the hand of a warrior."
  - 1. An arrow has no effect, unless it is aimed and shot.
  - 2. An arrow must be directed (aimed) by the warrior, in order to be effective and hit the mark it was made for.
  - 3. Like a warrior who must aim the arrow, God uses parents to direct our lives -- to aim us in the right direction.
- E God intends that our best guides, instructors, and counselors should be our parents.

# III. When We Refuse to Obey Our Parents, We Are Out of the Will of God.

- A. One reason that many teenagers wander aimlessly and do not have direction in their lives is that they do not listen to and obey the directives of their parents.
- B. This is why Satan viciously attacks the authority of parents.
  - 1. He will do whatever he can, to make parents look foolish.
  - 2. He will do whatever he can, to cause conflict in the home.
  - 3. He will do whatever he can, to cause misunderstanding, tension and stress, in an attempt to incite us to rebel against our parents.
- C. If we rebel, then we are open to the devil's deceptions.
  - When we rebel against our parents, we lose their protection and guidance.
  - 2. We must not play into Satan's hand.



#### Spiritual Truths

- Parents are God-ordained instruments for the protection and direction of our lives.
- When we rebel against our parents, we open ourselves to the destructive temptations of the evil one.



#### Lesson Material

God has ordained that parents are the instruments He uses to protect and direct us in our youth. We need to be under their authority. This is God's command. It is difficult, when Mom and Dad do things that we do not understand, or that we think are unfair. But we must trust God. The memory verse, Ephesians 6:1, says to obey parents "in the Lord." We often obey out of fear or natural affection; but God says that we should obey out of obedience to Him.

Many times, the decisions that parents make that we do not understand are for our ultimate good and protection. For example, when they do not want us to be around certain people, it may be because they do not want us to develop bad character. (1 Corinthians 15:33) When they do not let us have certain things (motorcycle, shotgun, etc.), it may be because of our carefree temperament and disregard for safety. When they do not let us go to certain places, it may be because we are not mature enough to handle ourselves properly. Parents may not be able to give reasons (that satisfy us) for their decisions. We must trust God.

In Ephesians 6:1-3, it indirectly implies that obedience to parents will determine our future happiness -- "...that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." This is a special promise from the Lord. God will honor us, if we honor and obey our parents. He will use their guidance to direct us into a good future. This does not mean that they are responsible to tell us exactly what we are to

do vocationally or whom we are going to marry. The Bible does teach individual responsibility. But parents can aim us in the right direction. (Proverbs 22:6) No one is better qualified and knows best our disposition, than our parents.

If we rebel against our parents, then we are rebelling against God. We are opening ourselves up to the destructive temptations of Satan. (1 Samuel 15:23) We are being deceived by the great deceiver (Revelation 12:9); and we may be hit by a fiery dart of the wicked one. (Ephesians 6:16) We must take up the shield of faith, and trust God that He will work through our parents' decisions. What is God's will for a teenager's life? It is very easy to find out, but very hard to follow: "Children, obey your parents." It is that simple. God will not require anything from us that is impossible to do. And God will not reveal any more of His will to us, until we are faithful with what He has already shown us. It is important that we follow the Lord in this commandment (Ephesians 6:1-3),

so that He can continue to fulfill His plan for our lives. (Jeremiah 29:11)



#### **Methods**

Have the students discuss what their parents will and will not allow them to do; and then, have discussion on why their parents have set these rules.

Have the students discuss the worst "grounding" (loss of privileges) they have ever received, and why.

Have the students discuss various types of correction and discipline administered by their parents.

Ask the students to discuss how parents can influence their future.

# The Purpose of Parents III

Volume 9

Lesson 36



### Bible References

Proverbs 4:1

Proverbs 15:20

Proverbs 17:21

Proverbs 22:1

Proverbs 28:7

Psalms 15:4



#### **Theme**

We must earn the trust of our parents, so that we can gain the freedom and independence to make our own decisions.



## Scripture Reading

Proverbs 23:22-25

- 22 "Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.
- 23 "Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.
- 24 "The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.
- 25 "Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice."



### Memory Verse

Proverbs 25:13,19

"As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters. Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint."



#### **Outline**

- I. The Struggle for Independence Between Parents and Offspring Is as Old as the Dawn of Man.
- A. Every generation fights this battle.
- B. Our parents fought for the struggle of independence with their parents, when they were teenagers.
- C. The majority of teenagers who want their freedom from parents are not totally capable of handling it.
  - 1. Because in most cultures, and especially in America, it is almost economically impossible for teenagers to make it on their own.
  - The majority of teenage runaways resort to crime, in order to sustain themselves.
  - Most teenagers are not emotionally and socially mature enough to have total independence from parents.
- II. The Transfer from Dependence to Independence Between Teenagers and Parents Is Rarely Done Without Some Degree of Tension and Strain In the Relationship.
- A. Teenagers usually want their freedom from parental control immediately.
- B. Parents are not willing to give independence to their children too quickly.

C. This difference in perspective is the cause of the age-old conflict -- the struggle for independence.

# III. The Transfer from Dependence to Independence Does Not Happen Automatically.

- A. Independence must be earned.
- B. If we want more freedom and independence, we must prove that we are mature enough handle it.

## IV. Teenagers Who Want Independence Must Earn Trust.

- A. If we want to be independent, then we must show that we are dependable -- that we are trustworthy.
- B. Trust is not something that we can demand, inherit, or get for free. Trust is something we earn.
  - 1. It takes time to earn enough trust to acquire independence.
  - 2. There is no such thing as "instant" trust.
- V. We Earn Trust, and Win Independence, By Learning to Be Responsible.
- A. Responsibility is reliability.
  - 1. Can we be relied upon?
  - 2. Can we be depended upon?
  - 3. Are we trustworthy?
- B. Responsibility is accountability.
  - 1. Do we follow through with the tasks we are given?

- 2. Do we keep our promises?
- 3. Do we obey the rules that we are given?
- C. We cannot expect independence, if we are not handling responsibility. (Proverbs 25:19)
  - 1. If we do not or will not do household chores, then do not expect much independence.
  - 2. If we do not or will not obey household rules, then do not expect much independence.
  - 3. If we do not keep our word, then do not expect much independence.
- D. Irresponsibility is one of the easiest ways to lose trust.
  - 1. If we come home an hour after curfew and do not bother to call, then we have lost trust -- and the trust we may have earned by being home on time is lost.
  - If we sneak out with the family car and are caught, then we have lost trust -- and parents will tighten their restrictions, instead of giving us more freedom.

# VI. We Earn Trust and Win Independence By Learning to Be Honest.

- A. Honesty is telling the truth.
  - 1. If we tell our parents that we will be at a certain place, and then we deliberately go somewhere else, we have lost trust.
  - 2. If we say one thing and then do another, we must not expect much independence. We cannot be trusted.

- 3. If we do something wrong and then lie about it, we are in double trouble.
  - a. We are in trouble for the wrong, and then added trouble for lying about it.
  - b. If we 'fess up (confess), we may not avoid getting corrected, but we will earn trust by being brave enough to be honest about it.
- B. If we want our parents to trust us enough to give us independence, then we must learn to be honest with them at all times.
  - 1. If we lie to them, then we must not expect to be trusted.
  - 2. When we lie, we steal from our parents the ability to know when we are telling the truth.
  - 3. It only takes one lie to be considered a liar. It only takes one lie to lose trust.
  - 4. The Lord delights in honesty, but He does not tolerate dishonesty. (Proverbs 12:19, 22)
    - a. If we are dishonest, then we will suffer consequences.
    - b. One consequence of dishonesty is that we will not gain independence.

# VII. If We Want Our Parents to Give Us Our Freedom and Independence, Then They Must Be Able to Trust Us.

- A. Responsibility gives parents the ability to trust us with independence.
- B. Honesty is not the best policy -- honesty is the only policy to earn trust with parents.

C. If we want parents to learn to get along without us, then we must learn to earn trust.

## VIII. Earning Trust Takes Time. It Does Not Happen Overnight.

- A. Winning our independence is a process that happens gradually, as our parents see us mature.
- B. We must be patient.
- C. When our parents see that we are becoming more responsible, they will give us more freedom.

#### IX. We Must Trust God.

- A. God is using our parents to teach us the character qualities of responsibility and honesty.
- B. If we demand our independence without earning it, then God will raise up other authority to teach us.



#### Spiritual Truths

- Living within the guidelines of our authority does not restrict our freedom, but it enhances it.
- Independence from authority is gained when our authority has confidence in our responsibility and integrity. The more they can trust us, then the more freedom we will receive.

- Trust is one of the most basic ingredients to healthy relationships. Trust must be earned; therefore, it takes time to build a strong relationship.
- Character qualities like responsibility and honesty must be learned and developed.
- It is God's will that we submit to our authority; and as we do, we will develop the character that He wants us to have.



#### Lesson Material

It would be nice, if parents would take care of the "minor" details in our lives such as paying bills, buying food and seeing that we have meals on the table, taking care of health and medical costs, and providing those simple basics -- food, shelter and clothing. We, as teenagers, could take care of the more important decisions: when we should be home at night, how long we can stay up, who we hang around with, who gets the family car, and how much of the family budget should be spent on our personal care. Unfortunately, it does not seem to work this way. Parents have the majority of the control over our lives. How do we get them to relinquish some of this control? How do we win some independence?

First, we do not gain independence and freedom by simply demanding it. We gain independence by earning it. We must develop maturity. If we do not want to be treated like a child, then we must start acting like an adult.

When our parents tell us to do something, we must do it. If curfew is at 11:00 p.m., then we need to be home on time. If we are to mow the lawn over the weekend, then we need to make sure that we do it. When we start being responsible, our parents will have the confidence to give us more freedom. If we whine and complain and beg and bawl, we are only showing our immaturity — and we should not expect much independence.

Maturity does not come with age; maturity comes with acceptance of responsibility. When we can show our parents that we are responsible, they will be able to trust us enough to let us make our own decisions. We must earn their trust. It does not happen automatically. If we feel that our parents do not trust us, it is probably because we have not earned it. Have we been dishonest with them, in the past? Have we been lazy around the house? Do we gripe and groan? Do we forget to do things? Remember, parents do not owe us any trust -- we must work for it. This is the way that God teaches us maturity. We must be patient. There is no such thing as "instant" maturity.

If we refuse to wait and work for independence, and we rebel against our parents, then God will raise up other authority figures to teach us. If we continue to rebel, we will suffer serious consequences. (Proverbs 29:1).

Trust is one of the most basic and important qualities in any relationship. If we do not develop trust in our youth, it will not be any easier to develop when we get older. It will be hard to keep a job, if we cannot be trusted. It will be hard to keep a marriage, if we cannot be trusted. It will be hard to keep a close friendship, if we cannot be trusted. If we want God's best, then we must do it God's way. And God's way is that we develop trust by being responsible, honest, and obedient toward our parents. This will give us a quality relationship with our parents; and it will set us free.



#### Methods

Ask the students to discuss ways that they can build trust with their parents.

Give the students difficult situations that they may encounter with their parents; and discuss what should be done. Have the students role-play the situations, to see how they handle the difficulties.

Ask the students to give examples of when they gained trust, and when they have lost it. For those who have lost trust with their parents, discuss how they can regain it.

# Parents: Say What?

Volume 9

Lesson 37



## Bible References

Proverbs 16:24

Proverbs 25:11

**Ecclesiastes 3:7** 

Ephesians 4:29

Colossians 4:6

29 "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."



### Memory Verse

Proverbs 25:11

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."



#### **Theme**

The importance of establishing good communication with parents.



## Scripture Reading

Ephesians 4:29



#### Outline

- I. We Must Learn to Communicate With Our Parents.
- A. Communication lays the foundation for a good relationship.
- B. Parents want to be a part of our lives.
- C. Parents want to know what we are doing.

D. The more we talk, the more we find out about each other.

#### II. How Do We Begin to Make Verbal Contact With Parents?

- A. We can start by telling them (communicating) what is going on in our lives.
  - 1. One reason that they pick at and pester us is that we never volunteer any information.
  - 2. We need to share with them our interests and pursuits.
- B. We need to share with them on a regular basis.
  - 1. Every day, we should try to share something with them.
  - 2. Timing is important.
    - a. As we begin to talk with them, we will discover the best times for conversation.
      - (1) Around the dinner table may be a good time.
      - (2) While driving to school or the ball game may be a good time.
    - b. Sometimes the timing is off.
      - (1) When Dad is reading the paper is not a good time.
      - (2) When Mom is trying to get dinner on is not a good time.
- C. We should learn the art of asking questions.
  - 1. A good question is the doorway to good conversation.
  - 2. Ask parents questions about their lives.
    - a. Ask Dad to explain what he does at work.

- b. Ask Mom to explain how she met dad.
- c. Find out about their childhood and school days.
- d. Ask them how their day was.
- D. We need to be patient, and not give up.
  - 1. Parents may be taken by surprise and feel uncomfortable.
  - 2. Parents may seem to go overboard in trying to guide us, but their motive is right.
  - 3. Communication with parents can be frustrating, but do not give up!

## III. What Are the Benefits of Good Communication?

- A. We find out who they are and where they are coming from.
  - 1. When we do not know the reason for their decisions and actions, we often respond negatively. The best way to find out their reasoning is to communicate with them.
  - 2. Communication helps us see things from their perspective.
  - 3. We may find out that our parents are dealing with some difficult problems.
    - a. It is not that they are unconcerned about us.
    - b. They are struggling with hassles of their own.
  - 4. Communication helps us to see that parents are people, too.
- B. Parents find out who we are and where we are coming from.
  - 1. Parents want to know what is going on in their children's lives.
  - 2. Communication brings understanding.

Parents: Say What?

- 3. Do not pout, yell, scream and fight -- communicate!
  - a. Parents will not know how we feel, unless we tell them.
  - b. Parents will not understand our actions and attitudes, unless we make the attempt to help them understand.
- C. Communication brings healing. (Proverbs 16:24)
  - 1. Communication can heal misunderstandings.
  - 2. Communication can create an atmosphere of forgiveness.
- D. God will honor us, as we seek to share with our parents.
  - 1. He will help us, when we do not know exactly what to say.
  - 2. He understands the struggles of growing up.



# Spiritual Truths

- Communication is essential for any relationship.
- The enemy brings more division between people through misunderstanding and lack of communication, than through any other scheme.
- When problems come, communication usually breaks down.



### Lesson Material

Good communication is the foundation of good relationships. If we want to get along with our parents, then we must learn to communicate with them. In the United States, the average father and son (teenager) spend less than fifteen minutes a week in meaningful conversation. This translates into three minutes a day, with the weekends off—not very promising for quality bonding. This is not completely the fault of the parents. Most communication from teenagers comes in the form of groans and growls.

A teenager can spend a week at camp and win awards, flirt with death in dorm raids, fall in love, and lose the larynx from singing and shouting; but, when asked by parents what happened at camp, the answer will be, "Stuff." Sharing works both ways; and many teenagers do not make any attempt to talk with their parents. Teenagers often say that parents do not listen, or parents always lecture, or parents do not understand them, or this or that; but the problem is usually a twosided coin, sword, or street (pick one). Parents are just as quick to say that teenagers do not listen. And often, the reason that parents do not understand "what is happening" is because their children never tell them. They are "out of touch," because they are not kept "in touch."

If teenagers will make a sincere effort to build communication, they may be surprised how willing their parents are to follow suit. The majority of parents want to converse with their children. They want to know what is going on in their lives. Teenagers should be challenged to talk with their parents every day. Teenagers should be challenged to think of good conversation-starting questions. Teenagers should be challenged to spend time with Mom and Dad.

When problems and hassles come, communication is usually the first to go. Teenagers may resort to various devices, such as the "silent treatment" or "back talk," to vent their frustration. We must refrain from using these communication killers. All relationships have problems; and when hassles come, we must strive to keep communication lines open. The majority of our hassles with each other are either from misunderstandings or from misinterpretations; and these will never be resolved, if we do not communicate.

We must not give up. The rewards of interlocution are too great.



#### Methods

Have the students write down questions to ask their parents. Then, challenge them to find a time to ask Mom and/or Dad the questions.

Ask the students to share the most difficult frustrations in communicating with their parents; and then, have the class think of creative ways to eliminate the frustrations.

Have the students perform a skit that they think depicts a typical conversation between a parent and a teenager.

Ask the students if they have discovered when is the best time to talk to their parents.

Find out which of the students believe they have good communication with their parents; and ask them to share why they think so.

# Parent/Teen Negotiations

Volume 9

Lesson 38



Daniel 1

Proverbs 21:1



#### **Theme**

The biblical procedure to appeal to authority and negotiate with our parents.



### Scripture Reading

Daniel 1:8-16

8 "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

- 9 "Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.
- 10 "And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king.
- 11 "Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,
- 12 "Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten day; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.
- 13 "Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.
- 14 "So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.
- 15 "And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.
- 16 "Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink: and gave them pulse."



#### Proverbs 21:1

"The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."



#### **Outline**

- I. God Says that We Are to Obey Our Parents, and This Is Not Debatable; However, the Bible Is Filled With People Making Appeals -- Negotiating With --Their Authority.
- A. The word "appeal" is a judicial term which means "to plead a case," or "to make an earnest request." The word "negotiate" means "to settle a matter, by coming to a mutual agreement."
- B. God commands us to obey our parents; but God also allows us to make appeals to our authority.
- C. The Bible has many examples of people who appealed to their authorities.
  - 1. Nehemiah appealed to the king. (Nehemiah 2:1-8)
  - 2. Daniel appealed to government authorities. (Daniel 1:8-16)

- 3. The Syrophenician woman appealed to Jesus. (Mark 7:25-29)
- 4. The apostle Paul appealed to Philemon, on behalf of Onesimus. (Philemon)

# II. When Parents Do Something that We Disagree With, Instead of Groaning or Growling -- Negotiate!

- A. Negotiation is not a confrontation. It is not loading up the verbal bazooka.
- B. Negotiation is conferring, in order to discuss concerns and come up with a mutual agreement.

## III. How Do We Negotiate Successfully?

- A. We must control our emotions. (Proverbs 25:28)
  - 1. If we let anger or frustration get the best of us, then we will not be able to share effectively.
    - a. When we are upset, we often say things that we later regret.
    - b. We should never confront, when we are emotional.
      - (1) Allow time to calm down.
      - (2) Allow time for parents to calm down.
      - (3) Always wait until the calm.
  - 2. If we get angry or defensive, then their natural response is to act in kind. (Proverbs 15:1)
    - a. If we challenge their authority or sensibility, we will lose any appeal we make.
    - b. The best way to maintain control is to delay our response.

- B. We must study our response. (Proverbs 15:28)
  - 1. We must think through what we want to say.
    - a. What do we want to see happen?
    - b. What is the course of action that we should take?
  - 2. We must think through our options.
    - a. What choices do we have?
    - b. What are some alternatives that we can share?
    - c. The more possibilities that we can create, the greater chance we have for successful negotiation.
- C. We must confer with our parents.
  - 1. We must not condemn and accuse.
    - a. We should approach them with reverence.
    - b. We must not let the conversation dissolve into an argument.
  - 2. We must not make demands.
    - a. When we demand, we are not negotiating.
    - b. There is a difference between alternatives and ultimatums.
  - 3. We must listen.
    - a. We must try to see from their perspective.
    - b. We often say that they do not listen; but a lot of times, we are the ones who do not listen.
- D. We must leave the final decision to our parents.
  - Are we willing to do what they say regardless?
  - 2. We should anticipate the possibility of more options from them.
    - a. They may come up with an alternative that we have not thought of.

- b. They may be willing to compromise.
- E. We must trust God.
  - God can work in the hearts of our parents, if we have the right attitudes and responses. (Proverbs 21:1)
  - 2. We must be patient and give God time to work.
  - 3. If our appeal is rejected, then we must trust that God is using them in this area to shape our lives.
    - a. God is using our parents' decision for our ultimate good.
    - b. The only exception to this is if our parents knowingly command us to do something that is evil.
      - We must honor them as our parents, but we must refuse to do evil.
      - (2) We must appeal to them and tell them that we must obey God. (Acts 5:29)



## Spiritual Truths

- God commands us to obey our authorities.
- God does not expect us to be blindly obedient. God wants us to learn to creatively, and in a spirit of submission, appeal to our authorities.



#### Lesson Material

In order to have a successful future, the Bible tells us that we must obey and honor our parents. (Ephesians 6:1-3) However, the Bible does not teach "blind" obedience -- submission, no matter what. There are many examples in scripture of men and women appealing to their authorities. We can follow these examples by appealing to (negotiating with) our parents.

Many times parents make a decision, and we must accept it. The decision is nonnegotiable. However, sometimes parents make a decision, and they have not completely thought through their reasoning. For example, parents may say "No" to a particular activity, because it is the easiest response to get us out of their hair or to keep them from worrying. Instead of whining or complaining or arguing or yelling or accepting it with sadness and disappointment -- negotiate! Present them with a few creative possibilities that could benefit and accomplish the desires of both sides. Perhaps a family rule is too impractical, or a discipline for a wrongdoing is too severe, or a restriction for an activity is unnecessary. If this is the case, then we should appeal to our parents. We need to talk with them about the issues or areas of concern. Parents are not out to hassle, embarrass or deprive us. They want what is best for us. And if we make a good appeal, then they are more likely to grant our request.

Good communication is essential for good negotiations. This only makes sense. We must be able to sit down and talk with them, as rational human beings. We must watch our tone of voice and our attitude.

It is important to realize that a good attitude enhances creativity, but a rebellious spirit destroys it. If we think that our parents are fools, then it is impossible to see any positive alternatives. We must have the right attitude, when dealing with our parents. If parents feel that they are being intimidated or manipulated, then we are in for a rough time; and we should not expect too much. A pleasant spirit will do wonders for us, when we confer with Mom and Dad. Also, we must let them know that we will support their final decision. We may not get everything we want; but, who does? If our attitude is right, then God will make sure that we ultimately receive the desires of our heart; and He will use our parents to give us wisdom, maturity, and future happiness.



#### Methods

Ask the students to share some disagreements they have had with their parents; and then, discuss ways in which creative negotiations may be applied to the situations. Or, give the students some sample situations with authority (parents) that would require negotiating. Break the students into groups; and have each group work out a positive solution.

Have the students role-play negotiating a conversation between a parent and a teenager. Give the students a problem to work out; or have the students come up with their own.

# **Easter Sunday**

Volume 9

Lesson 39



#### Bible References

Matthew 26,27,28

Mark 14,15,16

Luke 22,23,24

John 19,20



#### **Theme**

An Easter message on the passion and resurrection of Jesus.



## Scripture Reading

Luke 22:39, 43-44, 48, 61, 63-64

39 "And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed Him."

- 43 "And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.
- 44 "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."
- 48 "But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"
- 61 "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice."
- 63 "And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him.
- 64 "And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophesy, who is it that smote thee?"

Luke 23:11, 21, 26, 33-36, 46

- 11 "And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate."
- 21 "But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him."
- 26 "And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus."

- 33 "And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.
- 34 "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.
- 35 "And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.
- 36 "And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him and offering him vinegar,"
- 46 "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."

#### Luke 24:1-7, 36, 45-46, 50-53

- 1 "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.
- 2 "And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher.
- 3 "And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.
- 4 "And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:
- 5 "And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?
- 6 "He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

- 7 "Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."
- 36 "And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you."
- 45 "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,
- 46 "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:"
- 50 "And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.
- 51 "And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.
- 52 "And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy:
- 53 "And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen."



#### John 15:13

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."



#### **Outline**

#### I. Jesus Suffered.

- A. Emotionally. (By emotional suffering, it is not meant that Jesus was mentally disturbed, but that He suffered emotional anguish. It is suffering of the heart.)
  - 1. Jesus was in such emotional agony that He sweat drops of blood in the Garden of Gethsemane. (Luke 22:44)
    - a. This is a physical malady called "hematidrosis."
    - b. Jesus was sorrowful, almost to the point of death. (Matthew 26:38)
    - c. Jesus knew what was going to happen to Him; and He even asked the Father, if possible, to let this suffering pass. (Luke 22:42)
    - d. He was in such agony that the Father sent an angel to strengthen Him. (Luke 22:43)
  - 2. He was forsaken by His friends.
    - a. Judas betrayed Him with a kiss. (Luke 22:48)
    - b. All of the disciples deserted Him at Gethsemane. (Matthew 26:56)
      - (1) A young disciple followed him for a short while, and then fled. It may have been Mark. (Mark 14:50-52).
      - (2) Peter followed the angry crowd, and so did another disciple, who was almost certainly John. (John 18:15-16)

- (3) Peter denied with curses (Matthew 26:74) that he even knew Him; and Jesus was within hearing distance. (Luke 22:61)
- 3. Jesus was unjustly accused with false testimonies and lies. (Matthew 26:59-61)
- 4. He was mocked, ridiculed and scorned by the religious leaders, in the court of the high priest. (Luke 22:63)
- 5. He was mocked by Herod and his soldiers. (Luke 23:11)
- 6. He was mocked by the soldiers of Pilate. (Matthew 27:27-29)
- 7. He was forsaken by the crowds who, a week earlier, shouted His praise and who now were shouting for His execution. (Luke 23:18, 21, 23)
- 8. He was humiliated by Pilate before the angry crowd. (John 19:4-5)
  - a. This may have been in an effort to have Jesus released.
  - b. When the crowd saw how defenseless, beaten and foolish Jesus looked, perhaps Pilate thought that they would have compassion on Him. But it was not to be.
- 9. Jesus was mocked by the people who passed by Golgotha. (Matthew 27:39)
- He was mocked by the chief priests, scribes and elders who were at Golgotha. (Luke 23:35)
- 11. He was mocked by the soldiers who were at Golgotha. (Luke 23:36)
- 12. He was mocked by the two thieves on the crosses next to Him. (Matthew 27:44) One of the thieves would soon have a change of heart. (Luke 23:39-43)
- 13. He was forsaken by the Father. (Matthew 27:46)
  - a. This was the most painful of all.

b. When Jesus carried the sin of the world on his shoulders, God the Father left Jesus to die alone.

#### B. Physically.

- 1. He sweat great drops of blood in the garden. (Luke 22:44)
- 2. He was struck by an officer of Annas. (John 18:13, 22, 24)
- 3. He was up all night, and He had no sleep.
- 4. He was spit upon, slapped, and struck by the religious leaders in the high priest's court. (Matthew 26:67; Luke 22:63-64)
- 5. He was scourged (whipped). (Matthew 27:26)
- 6. The Roman soldiers thrust a crown of thorns on His head.
- 7. He was beaten by a whole band of soldiers.
  - a. They beat Him with their hands. (John 19:3)
  - b. They beat Him on the head with a staff. This was after they jammed the thorns on His head. (Matthew 27:29-30)
- 8. He was made to carry a wooden cross a great distance, after His back was cut open from the scourging. (John 19:17)
  - a. Jesus was too weak to go the distance; and so, the soldiers got another man to help Him. (Luke 23:26)
  - b. Jesus, most probably, dragged the cross outside the city, before He was helped. (Matthew 27:32; Luke 23:26)
- 9. His hands and feet were nailed with large spikes to the cross. The gospel accounts only say that He was crucified; and this could have been done with ropes, but from other passages of scripture we know that

- Jesus was nailed to the cross. (Luke 24:40; John 19:37; 20:25-27)
- 10. After He was nailed to the cross, it was more than likely lifted up and dropped into a hole that would support it.
  - a. The impact of the cross being dropped may have separated his bones from their sockets.
  - b. Hence, the prophecy in Psalms 22:14 -- "...all my bones are out of joint:...."
- 11. He had nothing to drink, throughout this torturous experience. (John 19:28; Psalms 22:15)
- 12. He was stabbed with a spear. (John 19:34)
  - a. When Jesus was pierced by the spear, blood and water flowed out.
  - b. Medically, this would indicate that His heart had ruptured. (Psalms 22:14)

#### II. Jesus Forgave.

- A. While suffering on the cross, Jesus asked the Father to forgive the jeering crowd. (Luke 23:34; 1 Peter 2:23-24)
- B. Before giving up His spirit, Jesus said, "It is finished." (John 19:30)
  - 1. The Greek word for this saying is *tetelestia*, which literally means, "It is paid," or, "The debt is paid."
  - 2. Our sins were paid for on the cross. Jesus bought our salvation. (1 Corinthians 6:20)

#### III. Jesus Rose.

- A. The tomb was empty. (Luke 24:3)
- B. Angels declared His resurrection. (Luke 24:4-7)
- C. The grave clothes that Jesus was wrapped in were "laid by themselves." (Luke 24:12)

#### IV. Jesus Appeared.

- A. To Mary Magdalene. (John 20:14)
- B. To the women at the tomb. (Matthew 28:9-10
- C. To the Emmaus disciples. (Luke 24:13-33)
- D. To Peter. Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5
- E. To the apostles, with Thomas absent. (John 20:19-24)
- F. To the apostles, with Thomas present. (John 20:26-29)
- G. To the seven, at the Lake of Tiberias. (John 21:1-23)
- H. To over 500 believers at one time. (1 Corinthians 15:6)
- I. To Paul -- "one born out of due time." (1 Corinthians 15:8)

#### IV. Jesus Lives!

- A. We can know Jesus. (John 17:3)
  - 1. As our Savior. (1 Timothy 1:15-16)
  - 2. As our Lord. (Philippians 2:5-11)
  - 3. As our Friend. (John 15:15; Revelation 3:20)

- B. We can have great joy. (Matthew 28:8; Luke 24:41, 52)
- C. We can have peace. (Luke 24:36)
- D. We do not have to fear death. (John 11:25-26)
- E. We can trust in everything He said. (Matthew 24:35)
- F. We have a responsibility to share the Easter message with others. (Luke 24:46-47)
- G. We can worship, praise and bless God with great joy! (Luke 24:52-53)



## Spiritual Truths

- The suffering of the cross comes before the celebration of the resurrection.
- If we want to enjoy the power of the resurrection, then we must endure the suffering of the crucifixion. Jesus not only promises us peace and joy, but He also tells us to pick up our cross and follow Him. (Luke 9:23)
- God's love is revealed by Jesus' life; and God's justice is displayed by Jesus' death.
- Sin is the most costly thing. It cost the Son of God His life.



#### Lesson Material

There are many truths worth mentioning, discussing, and considering in the Easter message. These are the truths that we must concentrate on at this time of the year; but, let us not forget these truths the rest of the year. In fact, it is critical that we consider these truths on a daily basis, if we are to grow and mature spiritually and deepen our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is sad to say that for many in the Christian community, Easter has become just another time of dress-up and celebration with family and friends. It has become another time to shop and exchange pretty presents. We must continue to emphasize that if Jesus had not died and risen from the grave, there would be no Easter season. Once again, we can say, "He is the reason for the season." The world has forgotten that this is another time of the year that was set aside to honor the risen Savior. We can easily take for granted what Jesus Christ did for us at Calvary on the cross and the hope that He gave all of us by His resurrection from the grave and ascension into heaven.

God is so good that He did send His only begotten Son to die on a cross for our sin; and when we fully understand that concept and accept it and put our exclusive trust in what Christ did for us at Calvary, we come into a salvation experience. Because of Calvary and that first Easter morning, we have eternal fellowship and life in heaven with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

One of the important lessons we can learn from the Easter story is the lesson of supreme and ultimate sacrifice. Jesus Christ accepted the will of the Father by going to the cross; and, while He asked that the "cup" be taken away from Him, He submitted to the will of the Father. Jesus knew the good that would come from His death on the cross and His resurrection from the grave. (Isaiah 53:11) Jesus knew that by His act of sacrifice, millions and even billions of souls would be saved and assured of an eternal place with Him in heaven.

Jesus' example of sacrifice is agape love at its best. "Your good at my expense," should be the motto of all Christians. We should follow the sacrificial example of Jesus Christ, and always put the good of others ahead of our own wants and needs. If we are to be true servants of the Lord, we need to set aside our desires and feelings, and become willing to totally give of ourselves for the good of someone else.

Another lesson that we can learn from the Easter story is that of total surrender. Jesus Christ surrendered His own will, so that the will of the Father could be accomplished in His life. How often do we cry out, seeking the will of God for our lives, without being willing to completely surrender to His perfect will? How often do we say, "I do not know what God's will for my life is?" His will for us is very simple. We were made in His image and likeness; and He created us for fellowship. He created us to worship Him and to serve Him. He created us to bear fruit and to be a representative for Him in all walks of life. He created us to be a model of His love. mercy, grace and power. People who are searching are looking to us, to see Jesus Christ inside of us.

One final lesson from the Easter message is this: There is hope for everyone on the face of the earth. Our hope is eternity in heaven. We need to get our eyes off of the things of the world and get our eyes focused on Jesus Christ. Men will fail us and things will fail us, but Jesus Christ will never fail us. He said that He would never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5); and He will be with us always, even until the end of the age. (Matthew 28:20)

We need to understand and realize that earthly things can be swept away, at a moment's notice. The only thing that matters is our relationship with Jesus Christ. He cannot be swept away by the storm. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)

Let us go through this Easter season with a renewed hope and expectancy of His return. Let us go through this season with our faith at an all-time high. Let us go through this Easter season entering into a sacred covenant with God, that we will be the representatives of Jesus Christ. We will sacrifice, like He sacrificed. We will surrender, like He surrendered. We will

show agape love, like He showed agape love. We will live through each circumstance in our lives, knowing that all things do work together for good. (Romans 8:28)

Let us celebrate this Easter season with our eyes more than ever on Jesus Christ, and less and less on the things of the world.



#### **Methods**

Have the students write down on a piece of paper what Easter means to them; and then, read these to the class.

Role-play, allowing the students to act out how different New Testament characters may have felt and acted, when they heard about or saw the resurrected Christ.

## **Witness Workshop**

Volume 9

Lesson 40



Proverbs 11:30

Daniel 12:3

Mark 16:15

Luke 5:10

Luke 15:7, 10

2 Corinthians 5:20



### Theme

The students are challenged and equipped to be witnesses for Jesus Christ.



Matthew 28:18-20

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."



#### 1 Peter 3:15

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."



### **Outline**

#### I. This Is Our Mandate.

- A. We are ambassadors for Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:20)
- B. The Lord wants us to be witnesses for Him. (Acts 1:8)
  - 1. Jesus has given us the job of representing Him to the world.
  - 2. God communicates His message of salvation to the world, through us. (Romans 10:14-15)
- C. We are told to let our lights shine before men. (Matthew 5:16)

#### II. This Is the Message.

- A Man is sinful, and therefore, separated from God.
  - 1. Sin is breaking God's law. (1 John 3:4) It is missing the mark. It is overstepping the boundaries. It is falling short of God's perfect standard. (Romans 3:23)
    - a. Because of sin, man is described as "dead." (Ephesians 2:1)
    - b. Because of sin, man is described as "lost." (Luke 19:10)
  - 2. The consequence of sin (the penalty for breaking God's law) is death, or separation from God. (Romans 6:23)
    - a. In the Bible, "death" means "separation."
    - b. The Bible speaks of three kinds of death and each is the consequence of sin.

- (1) Physical death is separation of the soul and spirit from the body. (James 2:26)
- (2) Spiritual death is separation from God. Our spirits remain inactive, or dead, even while we live. (Ephesians 2:1)
- (3) The second death is eternal separation from God. (Revelation 20:13-15)
  - (a) The Bible teaches that the soul of man is immortal.
  - (b) After physical death, we will be judged by God. (Hebrews 9:27)
- 3. God is just; and He must punish sin with justice. If He excused sin, then He would limit justice, and He would become less than perfect. Since God is perfect, He must deal with sin.
- B. God's answer to mans' problem of sin is Jesus Christ.
  - 1. Jesus Christ came to save us from our sin. (1 Timothy 1:15)
  - 2. Jesus paid the penalty for man's sin by dying on a cross, in order to satisfy the justice of God.
    - a. We can receive forgiveness and pardon from our sin, because Jesus paid the penalty for sin.
    - b. God remains perfect in justice by punishing sin, and perfect in love by not punishing us.
      (Romans 5:8) God is just; and God is the justifier of man.
      (Romans 3:26)
- C. We must receive Christ as our Savior.
  - 1. The Bible says that salvation is a free gift; but it is not ours, until we receive the gift. (Romans 3:24)

- a. It is not enough to only believe (mentally acknowledge) that Jesus died for our sin.
- b. We must individually accept the gift.
- 2. We must exercise faith. We must act upon what we believe.
- 3. We must repent, by asking Jesus to forgive us of our sins and be our Savior.
  - a. When we do this, the Bible says our sin is taken away (John 1:29), covered (Psalms 32:1), blotted out (Acts 3:19), and cleansed. (1 John 1:9)
  - b. When we do this, the Bible says that we are justified, and that we are no longer separated from God. (1 Corinthians 6:11)
  - c. When we do this, the Bible says that we will spend eternity with God. (John 5:24; 17:3)

#### III. This Is Our Method.

- A. There are many ways to present Christ. The following are a few:
  - 1. A,B,C's.
    - a. Admit you are a sinner.
    - b. Believe Christ died for you.
    - c. Confess Christ to be your Savior.
  - 2. The Four Spiritual Laws.
    - a. God loves you, and has a plan for your life.
    - b. Man is separated from God, and cannot experience His plan.
    - c. Jesus is God's provision for sin.
    - d. We must receive Jesus, in order to experience God's love and plan for us.
  - 3. The Roman Road.
    - a. Romans 3:23 -- Man is a sinner.
    - b. Romans 6:23 -- The wages of sin is death.

- c. Romans 5:8 -- God loves us, and He sent Jesus to die for us.
- d. Romans 10:9-10 -- If we confess Christ, we will be saved.
- B. The problem with most of us is we have not determined a plan to share the gospel.
  - 1. We do not know how to start; and so, we avoid starting.
  - 2. We may get tongue-tied, and lose our train of thought, and get frustrated.
  - 3. A plan to share the gospel gives us confidence and an ability to be ready "in season and out." (1 Peter 3:15)
- C. Jesus said that we would see results, when we share the gospel. (Mark 16:15-16)
  - 1. People will become Christians, when they hear the gospel.
  - 2. We must trust God, and expect people to respond to His truth.
  - 3. There is nothing more exciting than seeing someone believe the gospel, and cross over from death to life! (John 5:24)



## Spiritual Truths

- We are God's ambassadors to a needy world.
- As Christians, we represent the Lord; and so, we must be an example with our walk and a good witness with our words.

- Many people would respond to the gospel, if someone presented it to them.
- Lack of motivation or lack of information are two of the significant reasons why many Christians do not witness.
- Most Christians experience an element of fear when witnessing. This is not unusual. God wants us to trust Him and overcome our fear. The more we share, then the more confidence we will have, and the less fearful we will become.
- In order to share the gospel clearly, we need to understand the basics of salvation. Man is a sinner and needs a Savior. Jesus is the Savior. We become Christians and receive Jesus as our Savior, by confessing our sins to Him and receiving the gift of eternal life.



### Lesson Material

Without question, the most profound statement in human history is the statement of Jesus recorded by the apostle John, "For God so loved the world...." (John 3:16) Telling others about the love of God is the greatest privilege we have as Christians. The rewards are great (Daniel 12:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:16) and the stakes are high. (Revelation 20:15) With this in mind, it is amazing that so few of us share the gospel. We must encourage teenagers to be witnesses for the Lord!

There are two significant reasons why Christians do not share their faith. The first is lack of motivation in two areas. These two areas are fear and desire.

Many of us do not witness, because of fear. No one, especially a teenager, wants to be rejected. The thought of being ridiculed or scorned is not pleasant. Therefore, many Christians avoid sharing their faith, because the risk of being disdained or misunderstood is too great.

We must express to teenagers that a certain amount of fear is naturally in all of us. There is nothing wrong with being afraid, unless our fear keeps us from obeying God. God wants us to be witnesses. (Mark 16:15) This being so, we must trust God to help us and give us strength and courage; and then, we must take the risk and make the attempt to shine and share for God. Courage is not fearlessness—courage is doing what is right, especially when we are afraid. We must challenge teenagers to step out for God. He will honor us when we do.

Another lack of motivation to witness is in the area of desire. Unfortunately, the busyness of life and the cares of this world keep many of us from sharing the gospel. (Mark 4:19) We are too caught up in our own pursuits -- education, career, interests, activities and things -- to heed the Great Commission. (Matthew 28:19-20) We are choked by the distractions and burdens of this life; and God and His work are put on the back shelf. We must encourage teenagers to prioritize their relationship with God.

We also must teach teenagers that God does not expect us to become "oddballs" or "weirdos." There is a difference between being bold for the Lord and being obnoxious. Blurting out memorized

formulas of salvation to a reluctant soul is not a good witness. If people do not want to hear the gospel message, then God does not require us to shove it down their throats. This is offensive, and can do more harm than good. It is true that some people will be offended when we share; but most will not, if we tactful and respectful. The fact is that most people will respond, when they hear the gospel presented in a sincere and caring way. Our sharing with others should not be done out of a sense of guilt, but it should be the natural overflow of our love for God and those around us. The more we begin to know and experience God, then the more we will want to share His goodness with others.

The second major reason many Christians do not share their faith is lack of information. In other words, we do not know how to go about sharing the gospel with someone, so that it makes sense. We know that we are saved; but we do not quite know how to explain it. We may have made an attempt, but it was awkward and jumbled, and not very successful. This sense of inadequacy can be very frustrating; and it causes many of us to avoid witnessing opportunities when they come. When a challenge is made from the pulpit to witness, it only makes us feel guilty, because we do not know how. What is needed is not necessarily motivation, but information -- instruction on how to share the gospel.

When a teenager is properly motivated and equipped with adequate information, then the devil will flee. When the Lord is lifted up, all men will be drawn to Him! (John 12:32)

There are hundreds of ways to share the gospel; but the problem with most of us is that we do not know even one way. Although we want to be careful not to encourage a rote method of sharing the gospel, which can be artificial and shallow, it is important that we have a clear presentation of the gospel, so that our listener can understand it clearly.

In sharing the Gospel, there is something we must know, and there is something we must do; or another way of saying it is, there is something to be believed and someone to be received.

#### What must we believe?

First, we must believe that we are not perfect in God's sight. We have all done things that are wrong. We are all sinners. This must be communicated to our listener. Most people would agree with this fact. It is not too difficult to prove. If we ask a person if he or she has ever done anything wrong, very few would say, "No. I am perfect."

The second fact that we need to believe is that God will not allow sinners into His perfect presence, which is heaven; and therefore, we need a Savior. Jesus Christ is that Savior, because He died to save us from our sins.

These are the two basic facts that we must know to present the gospel; and these are the two facts that must be believed, in order to receive the gospel.

#### What must we do?

We must individually receive Jesus Christ as our Savior, by asking Him to forgive us of our sins. It does no good to simply know the facts. We must act on what we believe. This is what the Bible calls "faith." When the Bible says that we are saved through faith, it means that we are putting our belief into action. We may

believe that Jesus died on a cross for sin, but if we do not ask Him to forgive us, then we do not have faith, and we are not Christians. We must make a decision to repent, which is a word that means that we turn from our sin and we ask Jesus to forgive us.

We can receive Jesus by simply praying to Him and asking Him to forgive us. This is the gospel of salvation. This is how someone becomes a Christian.

There are many plans to help Christians share the gospel; and it is not a bad idea for us to become familiar with at least one. This will help us from getting tongue-tied or off the track, plus it may give us added confidence. It will ease our fear and reduce our frustration.

Witnessing should not be a burden. The teacher must be careful not to rebuke students for their reluctance in sharing, since this may only make them feel more guilty (and teenagers do not need guilt dumped on them). Teenagers should be encouraged to make witnessing a response to their love for God and a genuine attempt to love others. God will honor our efforts, when we do it for His glory.



### **Methods**

Find out which students have ever witnessed to someone; and ask them to share their experience(s).

The teacher may want to share with the students a specific method for communicating the gospel.

Have a group discussion with the students, and ask them the following questions:

What are their biggest fears about sharing Christ with someone?

What is the most difficult area to explain, when sharing the gospel?

What are the biggest turn-offs, when someone shares the gospel?

What are ways to get their friends interested in the gospel?

How can we overcome the fear of talking to others about the Lord?

Have each student find a partner, and practice sharing the gospel with each other.

Have the students role-play in front of class. One student is a believer who tries to witness to another student, who plays a non-believer.

Perform a skit, in which students act out wrong ways to witness to friends.

## Last Days: Rapture, Reward, Return, Reign

Volume 9

Lesson 41



### HCICI CHC

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

1 Corinthians 15:51-58

Philippians 3:20-21

Colossians 3:4



#### **Theme**

The doctrine of Eschatology: The Second Coming of the Lord and what will happen in the Last Days.



### Scripture Reading

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

- 13 "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.
- 14 "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.
- 15 "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep.
- 16 "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first:
- 17 "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.
- 18 "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

#### 1 Corinthians 15:51-55

- 51 "Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
- 52 "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 "For this incorruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

55 "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"



#### 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

"Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."



### **Outline**

### I. The Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-58)

A. The Rapture is called "the coming of the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:15); but it is not the same as the Second Coming of Christ. The Rapture and the Second Coming of Christ are two distinct, separate events.

- 1. Jesus does not appear on Earth at the time of the Rapture; He appears in the air. (1 Thessalonians 4:17) During the Second Coming, Jesus returns to the earth. (Zechariah 14:1-4)
- 2. The Rapture could happen at any time, whereas the Second Coming of Christ happens after specific events take place.
  - a. The Second Coming happens after the Tribulation. (Matthew 24)
    - (1) In the Olivet discourse, Jesus gives many signs that will precede His coming.
    - (2) In Matthew 24:29-30, Jesus specifically says that after the Tribulation, He will appear, and all shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds.
    - (3) In 2 Thessalonians 2:3, it specifically says that "that day shall not come," until the Antichrist is revealed.
    - (4) Jesus comes when the nations of the world are gathered together for the last battle, Armageddon, which happens at the end of the Tribulation. (Revelation 19:11-21)
  - b. The Bible gives many convincing indications that the Rapture will happen before the Tribulation, and is not dependent upon any prophecies that need yet to be fulfilled. It could happen at any moment. (John 14:1-3)
    - (1) With John 14:1-3 in mind, it would be hard for the disciples' hearts not to be troubled, if they would have

- to await the events preceding the Second Coming, according to the Olivet discourse. (Matthew 24)
- (2) After talking about the Rapture, Paul tells the Thessalonians to "comfort one another with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4:18) It would very hard to comfort one another, if they first had to go through the horrors of the Tribulation.
- (3) The Tribulation is the result of God pouring out His wrath on a Christ-rejecting world. In Revelation 6:16-17. the terror of the Tribulation is called the "wrath of the Lamb." Does it make sense that Jesus will pour out His wrath on those who have received Him as Savior? -especially when 1 Thessalonians 1:10 says that Jesus has "delivered us from the wrath to come," and 1 Thessalonians 5:9 says "For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."
- (4) In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus ends His Olivet discourse by saying it is possible to "escape all these things that shall come to pass." (Luke 21:34-36) By what means shall we escape? The Rapture.
- (5) In Revelation 3:10, Jesus says to the church that He will "...keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to

- try them that dwell upon the earth."
- (6) In 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8, it says that the Antichrist will not be revealed until "he" (verse 7) is taken out of the way.
  - (a) Who is the "he" of verse seven that is taken out of the way? This is not the Holy Spirit, because people will be saved in the Tribulation (Revelation 7:13-14); and people cannot be saved except through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. (John 3: 5-8) (b) It would seem, then that the "he" who "letteth," or holds back the Antichrist from being revealed, is the church. How will the church be taken out of the way? The Rapture.
- (7) After Revelation 3, the true church is never mentioned again on earth, which indicates that the Rapture has taken place.
- (8) The Marriage Supper of the Lamb takes place in heaven (Revelation 19;5-9) before the return of Christ. (Revelation 19:11-21).
  - (a) The church is the Bride of Christ; and whoever heard of a marriage supper taking place, without the bride being present? It does not happen.(b) If the Marriage
  - Supper of the Lamb takes place before the

- return of Christ, then the church must already be in heaven. The church has been raptured.
- (9) The saints come with Jesus, when He returns to this earth to set up His Kingdom. (Revelation 19:14) Therefore, the Rapture and the Second Coming cannot be the same event.
- B. In the Rapture, the saints will be "caught up" to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17); and we will receive our resurrected bodies.
  - 1. The dead in Christ and living believers will rise to meet Him in the air. (1 Thessalonians 4:17)
  - 2. The dead in Christ will receive their resurrected bodies first; and then, the living saints will follow. (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17)
    - a. In the Rapture, God will bring with Jesus those who have died "in Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 4:14,16) In other words, the saints who have died and are in heaven will come with Jesus at the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:14); and they will receive their resurrected bodies, which will rise up out of the grave to meet their souls and spirits. (1 Thessalonians 4:16)
      - (1) The Bible does not teach that we fall asleep into the unconscious when we die. The phrase "sleep in Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 4:14) has the same meaning as "dead in Christ." (1 Thessalonians 4:16) To "fall asleep in the Lord" is a pleasant term for "death."

- (2) The Bible teaches that when we (Christians) die, our bodies will decay in the grave; but our souls and spirits will enter heaven, to be with Jesus. When we are "absent from the body," we are "present with the Lord." (2 Corinthians 5:8)
- b. At the Rapture, the dead in Christ (those who are in heaven with Jesus) will be reunited with their earthly, resurrected bodies.
- 3. After the dead in Christ, who come from heaven, are reunited with their bodies, which come from the earth (the grave) (1 Thessalonians 4:14-16), the bodies of the living saints will be changed from "corruptible to incorruption." (1 Corinthians 15:53-54)
- C. The Rapture will happen in a moment -- in the "twinkling of an eye." (1 Corinthians 15:51-52)
- D. We will meet together, with the dead in Christ, in the clouds. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)
- E. We will be with the Lord forever (1 Thessalonians 4:17); and death will have no more power over us. (1 Corinthians 15:54,55)
- II. The Judgment Seat of Christ. (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10)
- A. After the Rapture, the saints will ushered to the Judgment Seat of Christ. (Luke 14:14)
- B. The sins of believers are judged at Calvary (1 Peter 2:24); but the works of

believers are judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:11-15)

- 1. Our works, both good and bad, will be judged. (2 Corinthians 5:10)
- 2. We will receive rewards, if our works are made of gold, silver and precious stones. In other words, our works are pure, if they are done with a sincere motive to please God. (1 Corinthians 3:12-14)
- 3. We will lose rewards, if our works are wood, hay, and stubble. If our works are not pure, then they will be burned, and we will lose our rewards. (1 Corinthians 3:12-15)
- 4. If our works are burned up, we will still be saved. (1 Corinthians 3:15)
- C. What will be judged by Christ at His Judgment Seat?
  - 1. Our words. (Matthew 12:36-37)
  - 2. Our giving. (Matthew 6:1-3)
  - 3. Our own measure of judgment against others. (Matthew 7:2)
  - 4. Our motives. (1 Corinthians 3:12-13)
  - 5. Our faithfulness. (Luke 19:12-27)
  - 6. Our stewardship with our talents. (Matthew 25:14-30)
  - 7. Our service for the Lord. (Colossians 3:23-25)
- D. We will receive crowns as rewards, if we remain faithful. (Revelation 3:11)
  - 1. Crown of incorruption, for running a good race. (1 Corinthians 9:25)
  - 2. Crown of righteousness, for perseverance. (2 Timothy 4:7,8)
  - 3. Crown of life, for victory over temptations. (James 1:12)
  - 4. Crown of glory, for ministers. (1 Peter 5:2-4)
  - 5. Crown of rejoicing, for soulwinning. (1 Thessalonians 2:19)

### III. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

- A. After the Judgment Seat of Christ, it would appear that the next event for the saints is to enjoy the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. (Revelation 19:7-9)
- B. We do not really know anything particular about the Marriage Supper, except that we can assume that it will be a great feast.
  - 1. Food will be eaten in heaven (Revelation 2:7; 22:2); and so, there is no reason to believe that the Marriage Supper will not be an actual banquet.
  - 2. We will celebrate the banquet with the Lord, in our new relationship with Him as the Bride of Christ.

#### IV. Christ Will Return at His Second Coming With His Saints. (Revelation 19:11-21)

- A. After the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, the saints mount up on white horses and return with Jesus, at His Second Coming to earth. (Revelation 19:11-21)
- B. The Bible says that Christ will return with His saints. (Zechariah 14:5; Jude 14-15; Matthew 24:31)
- C. The saints will be riding white horses. (Revelation 19:14)
- D. The saints will come with the angels. (Matthew 24:30-31)

## V. The Saints Will Reign With Jesus, at His Return. (Revelation 20:4-6)

- A. The saints shall reign through the Millennial kingdom with Christ. (Revelation 4:6)
- B. The saints shall reign through eternity with Christ. (Revelation 3:21)
- C. The Bible teaches that we are jointheirs with Jesus (Romans 8:17); and, as joint-heirs, we will inherit all things that are His -- which is everything. (Revelation 21:7)



### Spiritual Truths

- The Rapture and the Second Coming of Christ are two separate events.
- The Rapture will happen in a moment, when we will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.
- We will receive our resurrected bodies at the Rapture.
- At the Rapture, we will also meet the dead in Christ, as they, too receive their resurrected bodies.
- After the Rapture, we will face the Judgment Seat of Christ.
- The works, and not the sins, of all believers will be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

- At the Judgment Seat of Christ, many believers will receive rewards and crowns, while others will receive nothing but their salvation. Our position in heaven will be determined by the quality of our works at the Judgment.
- The saints will return with Christ at His Second Coming.
- We will reign with Jesus, when He returns to set up His kingdom.



### Lesson Material

This lesson takes a different path than most studies on the Last Days. It follows the events of the believer, beginning with the Rapture, that will happen in heaven. After the Rapture, the Antichrist will soon appear (2 Thessalonians 2:7-8), and the Tribulation, Daniel's seventieth week, will begin. This will happen on earth; but what will happen in heaven? It is during this time that the Judgment Seat of Christ and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb take place. In this lesson, we follow the Last Days events in heaven, rather than the events of the Last Days on earth.

The first in the sequence of events is the Rapture. The Rapture of the church is hidden from the Old Testament. None of the Old Testament prophets foresaw it. The Second Coming of the Lord is one of the major doctrines of the Old Testament, but the Rapture is strictly a New Testament doctrine. It is a mystery that is revealed to Paul by special revelation from the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:15; 1

Corinthians 15:51) Although the word "rapture" is not mentioned in the Bible, it comes from the phrase "caught up" in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, which means "to seize." The actual word "rapture" comes from the Latin word rapturo which means "to take away forcefully or quickly."

Before Christ returns a second time to set up His kingdom on earth, He will appear in the clouds to take away His saints and deliver them from the "wrath to come." (1 Thessalonians 1:10) The teacher needs to communicate that the Rapture is not the same as the Second Coming. If we understand this, then a lot of confusion is cleared up concerning the Last Days. For instance, how can we expect for Jesus to come any moment (like the entire church age has anticipated), if the Tribulation must take place and the battle of Armageddon must be in progress before He will return? (Matthew 24; Revelation 19:11-21) How can we look forward to His return, if we must go through the Tribulation? The answer is that the Rapture takes place before the Antichrist is revealed and the Tribulations begins. It does not need any prophecies to be fulfilled. It could happen at any time. It is our imminent, blessed hope. (Titus 2:13)

There are some who believe that the Rapture may occur during the middle or the end of the Tribulation; but these views are extremely difficult to substantiate, in light of all the scripture passages taken in context. In the Tribulation, called "Daniel's seventieth week," God is dealing with the Jews again. He is also pouring out His divine wrath on a Christ-rejecting world. The church is out of place in this setting; and, in view of total scriptural context, God thinks so, too. The Lord raptures the church! We do not have to fear the coming calamity that this world is heading toward.

It should be noted that if the church is to be raptured before the tribulation, and we see the signs of the Last Days beginning to come to pass (Israel reborn as a nation, war and rumors of war, famine, pestilence etc.), this means the Rapture is even closer. If the Rapture comes before the days of trouble, and the world stage is being set for the days of trouble, then the Rapture will happen soon!

After the Rapture, when we are resurrected to be with the Lord forever, the next event is the Judgment Seat of Christ. This is one of the most sobering and serious doctrines of the Bible for the Christian. Every one of us will stand before Jesus and give an account of our service for Him. (Romans 14:12) How faithful were we? How much did we do out selfish motives, and how much out of sincere love for Jesus? All of our secrets, that we think no one else knows, will be revealed. All of our inner desires and motives will be made known. For some of us, it will be an experience of great joy and happiness, as we receive rewards and hear the Lord say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." (Matthew 25:21, 23) For others of us, it will be an experience of disappointment, sorrow and shame, when we see the Lord's great love for us and all He has for us, and then realize how little we served Him. The apostle John writes that we need to abide in Him, so that when He appears, we will not be ashamed. (1 John 2:28)

The Rapture and the Judgment Seat of Christ are sobering realizations. If presented to the class with the Lord's help, this lesson can be a great challenge to encourage teenagers toward holy living and service to the Lord. (1 John 3:2-3; 2 Corinthians 5:10-11)

The next event in heaven is the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, which precedes in scripture the return of the King. The first half of Revelation 19 is the Marriage Supper (verses 1-10); and the second half of Revelation 19 is the Return of Christ with the saints (verses 11-21). We know very little about the Marriage Supper, except that it is a great celebration. Since there are many passages of scripture that say that there will be food in heaven, there is every reason to believe that the Marriage Supper is a literal banquet. We are going feast with the Lord and celebrate our wedding and new life with Him.

After the Marriage Supper, the most glorious event since the creation of the world will unfold. Jesus Christ will appear in the clouds and return to earth in great glory, in blazing fire, with His mighty angels and the saints of God. He will destroy the Antichrist and his forces; and He will rescue Israel. The redeemed and raptured saints will be in the army of heaven, which descends upon the earth with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. (Jude 14-15; Revelation 19:14) We will be witnesses and participants in the Second Coming of Christ!

When the Lord returns, He will establish His Kingdom on earth for one

thousand years; and we will rule and reign with Him. (Revelation 20:6) The millennial kingdom will end when mankind, deceived by Satan, will rebel one last time. (Revelation 20:7-10) God will put an end to it quickly. The Great White Throne Judgment will convene; and God will judge the world. (Revelation 20:11-15) Then the Lord will create a new heaven and a new earth; and the greatest story of the redeemed will yet be written. We will enjoy the creative works of God for eternity. It is only the beginning.



### Methods

The teacher should use a blackboard to chart the sequence of events of the saints.

Depending upon the schedule, the teacher may want to have a question and answer time. Have the students ask and discuss questions about the subject matter in class; or, if there is not enough time, have them write questions on a piece of paper, for the teacher to address at a later time.

## Fighting the Battle

Volume 9

Lesson 42



### Bible References

Galatians 5:16-17

Ephesians 4:22-25

Philippians 4:8

Colossians 3:9-14

1 Corinthians 10:13, 31

2 Timothy 2:22

1 Peter 1:14; 2:11



#### **Theme**

This lesson is on recognizing and winning the war between our fleshly nature and our spirit nature.



#### Galatians 5:13-26

13 "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

14 "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

15 "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

16 "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17 "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

18 "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

19 "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 "Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

- 21 "Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
- 22 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
- 23 "Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
- 24 "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.
- 25 "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.
- 26 "Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another."



#### 1 Corinthians 10:31

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."



### **Outline**

- I. We Need to Understand that By Nature (By Our Natural Desires and Tendencies), We Are Selfish.
- A. Selfishness is a product of our sin nature.
- B. Selfishness does not automatically disappear, when we become Christians and receive a new nature.
  - 1. The Bible tells us to put off the "old man." (Colossians 3:9; Ephesians 4:22)
    - a. The "old man" is an expression that represents the way we used to live before we became Christians.
    - b. The deeds of the "old man" are the sins of the flesh, such as uncleanness, anger, filthy communication, lying, and deceitful lusts. (Colossians 3:5, 8-9; Ephesians 4:22)
    - c. If the "old man" (our selfish desires) was not a problem, then Paul would not tell us to get rid of him.
  - 2. The New Testament Epistles have hundreds of commands for us concerning holy living. (1 Peter 1:14)
    - a. All of the New Testament Epistles are written to Christians.
    - b. Why would the writers bother with commandments for holy living, if we still did not have selfish desires?

- 3. The Bible tells us to put on the "new man." (Colossians 3:10; Ephesians 4:24)
  - a. The "new man" is an expression that represents the way we are to live as Christians.
  - b. The deeds of the "new man" are the works of the new nature, such as mercy, kindness, forgiveness, love, righteousness, and truthfulness. (Colossians 3:12-14; Ephesians 4:24-25)
- II. There Is a War Between Our Selfish Desires and Our Desires to Please the Lord. It Is the War Between Our Sin Nature and Our New Nature. (Romans 7:23; Galatians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:11)
- A. When we become Christians, we have a new desire to please God; and yet, we still live in the same body that has fleshly desires.
- B. When we become Christians, we begin a conflict between our sinful, selfish desires and our desire to please the Lord.
- C. The fact that we are facing and fighting this battle is proof that we are Christians and strangers to this world. (1 Peter 2:11; 4:3-4)

### III. The Nature that We Feed the Most Will Win the War.

- A. The desires that we feed the most will become the strongest; and they will be victorious in the battle.
  - 1. If we concentrate on selfish desires or consume ourselves with lustful passions, we will not have the strength to do what pleases the Lord.
  - 2. If we concentrate on spiritual disciplines and consume our energies with Godly thoughts and activities (Philippians 4:8), then we will have the strength to defeat our selfish passions. (Romans 6; Galatians 5:16)
- B. This is why we need to be committed to spiritual disciplines.
  - 1. We need to attend a church, where we can be urged toward love and good works. This will help keep us strong in the Lord. (Hebrews 10:24, 25)
  - 2. We need to have a consistent prayer life. This will help keep us strong in the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
  - 3. We need to read God's Word. This will help keep us strong in the Lord. (Psalms 119:9-11)
  - 4. We need to be thankful and worship God with our voices. This will help keep us strong in the Lord. (Psalms 100:4)
  - 5. We need to fill our minds with good things. This will help keep us strong in the Lord. (Philippians 4:8)
  - We need to walk in the Spirit, by obeying God's Word. This will help keep us strong in the Lord. (Galatians 5:16)
  - 7. If we stumble and fall, we need to seek God's forgiveness and get back

- up again. This will help keep us strong in the Lord. (Proverbs 24:16; 1 John 1:9)
- If we are not consistent in feeding our spirit, then we will neither be strong nor consistent in our walk with the Lord.
- C. This is why we need to flee youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, charity, and peace. (2 Timothy 2:22)
  - 1. We need to be careful about the things that we listen to, the places we go, the materials we read, and the sights we watch.
    - a. If they begin to stir up our sinful desires, then we are heading for a fall.
    - b. Desires begin in our thoughts; and so, we need to be careful what we put into our minds. (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)
  - 2. God says that He will provide a way out when temptation seizes us (1 Corinthians 10:13); but, when we seize temptation, then we will be dragged into sin, without much of a fight. (James 1:14)
    - a. There is a difference between temptation seizing us, and us seizing temptation.
    - b. It is one thing for a man to be tempted when a beautiful woman walks across his path (the temptation seized him); it is another thing when he looks at pornography (he seized the temptation).
    - c. There is a difference between being confronted with temptation, and loitering around temptation's doorstep.
      - (1) An ex-alcoholic may not be able to stop seeing liquor advertisements, but he or

- she can stop visiting drinking parties.
- (2) A gambling addict may not be able to get away from all the lottery fanfare, but he or she can stop eating lunch at the local casino.
- D. If we walk after the Spirit, then God promises us a life of joy and contentment and rewards. If we do not walk after the Spirit, then we will live a mediocre Christian life that is filled with disappointments and defeats; and our use to God and influence to others will be minimal. (Galatians 5:16-26)
- IV. A Victorious Life Is a Life that Glorifies God. (1 Corinthian 10:31)



### Spiritual Truths

- The old nature does not disappear when we become Christians. We still have the law of sin and death working in us.
- There is a great conflict that rages in the life of every Christian. It is the battle between the old nature and the new nature.
- If we want to be victorious over temptation in our Christian living, then we must feed and exercise our spirit. If we are consistent in our spiritual disciplines, then we will consistently win spiritual battles.

 Temptation is not sin. We can resist, flee, or avoid it. It is when we fall to temptation that we sin.



### Lesson Material

Every Christian is in a war. It is a fight between the desire to please God and the desire to please ourselves. It is a war between the Spirit and the flesh. (Romans 7:23-8:2; Galatians 5:17) We have a new nature, but we still live in an unredeemed body. The cravings and appetites of the old nature can cause a careless Christian to fall back into the activities of selfishness and lust. (1 Peter 1:14)

How do we live a victorious Christian life? How do we battle the selfish desires that swirl in our brains? How do we stay clean, in a world that does not mind dirt?

First, we must communicate to teenagers that they are not abnormal or wicked when they have desires that displease God. It is what they do with those desires that is paramount. No Christian, no matter how much he or she loves God, will escape the battle with the flesh. This is especially true with teenagers. Paul tells Timothy to flee "youthful" lusts. Paul emphasizes youth, because physical and emotional passions have their greatest pull during these years. Physically, the hormones are raging; and emotionally, the needs for acceptance and significance are crying out. Teenagers have an "old man" working overtime in their young bodies. (Ephesians 4:22) The teacher needs to remember that the battle is often hottest during youth. It is a mistake to

lecture teenagers on the virtues of purity, without identifying in their struggles with passion. They do not need guilt -- they need guidance. Most do not need rebuke -- they need reassurance. They need someone to stand with them in the battle.

In any fight, the strongest contender will win. If we want our new man to pummel the old man (Colossians 3:9-10), then we must work at strengthening our spirit. We must not give our flesh any opportunity to flex its muscle.

If we feed our spirit and starve our flesh, then we will be able to stand against temptation. This is one reason why parents and pastors urge teenagers to read the Bible, go to church, kneel in prayer, and stay in shape spiritually. It is so that teenagers can win the battle!

We must continually exercise our spiritual muscles, if we want to be strong in the Lord. A Christian teenager cannot expect to stay strong in the Lord, if he or she rarely prays or reads the Bible. It is true that spiritual disciplines can become mechanical; but even routine training is better than no training. If we do not remain consistent in our workouts, then we will not be ready, when the battle is joined.

Many Christians get careless with their attitudes and activities. We must never underestimate the strength and cunning of our opponent. If we start to indulge in a little "harmless" fun with the attitude that we can handle it, take heed! (1 Corinthians 10:12) The knockout blow may be forthcoming. The Bible says that we should avoid even the appearance of evil. (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

God created us to glorify Him. (Isaiah 43:7) This means that we were created to

give Him honor. The best way to honor God is to live a life that pleases Him. We cannot do it on our own strength, but God is faithful. If we will make an effort to stay in shape spiritually, then He will help us overcome temptation and sin. When the battle is engaged, God will provide a way for us to be victorious. (1 Corinthians 10:13) Let us keep pressing on! (Philippians 3:14)



### **Methods**

Have three students stand in the front of the class. One student should be a very big young man, and the other should be a delicate young woman. Have these two stand next to the third student (one on the right and one on the left); and then, have them each take an arm of the student in the middle. On a given signal, have them pull on an arm of the middle student, so that the student is drawn toward them. Of course, the big guy should win this battle. It is an illustration of how the stronger person should win. We must keep our spirits strong.

Discuss with the students the difficulties of staying consistent with spiritual disciplines.

Discuss what the 1 Corinthians 10:31 means to them, and how they can fulfill this command in their daily lives.

Have the students fill out a commitment card, in which they commit to read the Bible, or go to church, or pray, etc., for a specific period of time.

## Running the Race

Volume 9

Lesson 43



### Bible References

Hebrews 12:1-2, 12

1 John 1:9

Philippians 3:13-14



#### **Theme**

This lesson examines what is involved in the Christian race.



### Scripture Reading

#### Hebrews 12:1-2

- 1 "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
- 2 "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."



#### Philippians 3:13-14

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."



### **Outline**

#### I. Join the Race.

- A. We cannot run in the race, if we do not join the team. What would happen, if we were at a track meet and someone started running, who was not on the team?
- B. God wants everyone to join the team. (2 Peter 3:9)
- C. We can only get on the team by accepting Christ as our Savior. (John 14:6)

### II. Throw Off Hindrances and Sins. (Hebrews 12:1)

- A. Hindrances are not necessarily bad or evil.
  - Anything that distracts us from our relationship with Christ is a hindrance.
  - 2. A hindrance can be television, music, cars, sports, a hobby, or even a relationship.
- B. Sin is directly disobeying God.
  - 1. Sin entangles us.
  - 2. We cannot run the race, when our feet are entangled.
  - 3. The entangling sins that youth face include: sexual immorality, rebellion, alcohol, drug abuse, gossip and backbiting.

C. God's answer is to throw off hindrances and sins. We must confess them and leave them behind. (1 John 1:9)

### III. Get In Shape. (Hebrews 12:12-13)

- A. We would not think of running in a track meet, without working out and getting into shape.
- B. We get into shape by getting into God's Word. Everything we need for the race is in the Bible. We must make it a part of our lives, so that we can have direction and know God's will.
  - 1. Do it now!
  - 2. We must discipline ourselves to read it.
  - 3. We should ask God to help us understand it and apply it in our lives. We will lose the race, if we do not train with the Bible.
- C. We get in shape by exercising with prayer.
  - 1. It is hard work, but it must be done. (Matthew 26:41)
  - 2. It takes discipline, just like physical exercise.
  - 3. The Holy Spirit will help us. (Romans 8:26)

#### IV. Do Not Look Back.

A. When we are running in a race, if we look back, then we will break our stride. It is the same way in the race of life.

- B. We must forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead. (Philippians 3:13-14)
  - 1. Do not allow Satan to condemn with past sins. (Romans 8:1)
  - 2. Do not allow Satan to tempt with past sins. (2 Peter 2:20)
- C. We must flee youthful lusts and follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (2 Timothy 2:22)
  - We must stay on the course and not get sidetracked by youthful and carnal desires.
  - 2. We must avoid situations where we will face strong temptation, especially in dating and sexual areas.

### V. Finish The Race. (1 Corinthians 9:24)

- A. Paul was able to say, "I have finished the race." (2 Timothy 4:7) Will we be able to say that?
- B. Do not quit! Trust in the Lord. He will see us through.
- C. Be determined to finish! We must fix our eyes on Jesus. (Hebrews 12:2)



 God desires that all receive salvation through Christ and join the team.

- We must deal with habitual sin and hindrances in our lives, in order to run the race God that has called us to. It is impossible to run with entangled feet.
- To be effective runners in the race, we must develop the discipline of studying God's Word and prayer.



### Lesson Material

God wants everyone to be on His team. He wants us all to run the race and follow the course set out for us. However, many follow the way that seems right or feels good, pursuing the desires of the flesh and the ways of the world. Proverbs 14:12 says that in the end, this path leads to death. God does not want people to follow this path. In fact, He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us, so that we could have eternal life. We must choose to receive Him and join the team, or reject Him and face eternal death. We cannot have it both ways. Either we run the race of life, or we run the race of death.

Those who determine to run the race of life will experience joy, satisfaction and purpose in life. However, the runner will also face trials, temptations, challenges and obstacles, as he runs the race.

The Christian runner must determine to get rid of the things that hinder his relationship with Christ. In our culture, there are many things that are not necessarily evil, but which nonetheless, can be a hindrance in our walk with Christ. TV, music, sports, cars, habits, even relationships should never come before our commitment to Christ.

We cannot run the race of life with our feet entangled in sin. Sin ensnares us and makes it impossible for us to run. If there is sin in our lives that God is dealing with, we must get rid of it. This cannot be done in our own strength, but only when we truly submit our desires to God. He will then replace the old desires with new ones that please Him.

As an athlete must develop discipline and demonstrate self-denial, so a Christian athlete must develop godly discipline, in order to get in shape spiritually. We must discipline ourselves to know and study God's Word. The Bible is our road map for life. We will be lost, if we do not know it well. We must have active communication with the Lord. A disciplined prayer life is essential, in order to run well the race set before us.

Every Christian runner must determine to run the race to the end. God wants victorious runners, who receive the prize in the end. Now is the time to determine to run with all your heart and strength the course set before you.



### **Methods**

Use this opener to start the lesson, if time allows:

1. Split into two teams, with an equal number of guys and girls on each team.

- 2. Have the girls on team 1 exchange places with the girls on team 2 and pair up with a guy on the other team.
- 3. The girls now tie the opposing guys' shoe laces together.
- 4. The guys then run a relay with their shoes tied together and the opposing girl using one hand to try and prevent them from progressing.
- 5. The entangled shoes represent being entangled in sin. The girls represent hindrances.

Refer back to the opener during the lesson; and ask the guys to describe what it was like trying to run the race. Then apply it to the spiritual race we run.

The teacher may want to announce to the class that he or she is going to be a coach during the course of the lesson, and will give the points, as a coach would talk to his team.

The following illustration is good to use for the last point, or anytime during the lesson:

THE GUY GERTSCH STORY (<u>Time</u> Magazine, May 3, 1982)

"Alberto Salazar's victory in the Boston Marathon last week came in the record-breaking time of 2:08:51. It was an extraordinarily performance, but it was no more remarkable than the finish of Guy Gertsch. The Salt Lake City bus-station ticket agent finished No. 985 in the entirely ordinary time of 2:47. But he did it on a broken leg. Gertsch, 38, felt what he thought was a cramp starting after seven miles. But he was determined to finish, and so he pounded on for 19 more miles before collapsing at the finish line. Doctors, who later set his right femur with

a steel rod, theorized that his powerful thigh muscle must have acted as a splint, until he finally relaxed it at the race's end."

Be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit, as the lesson is closed. Each point will probably hit home with at least one or more of the students. An invitation to join the team and accept Christ can be given, as well as re-commitments in each of the other areas.

On point two of the outline, ask the youth to name some hindrances and sins; and write them on a chalk board.

Many track illustrations can be used and applied to the Christian's race, such as: not looking back, getting in shape and finishing the race. If one of the students runs track, the teacher may want to get his or her opinion on what happens, when a runner does these things.

## Winning the Game

Volume 9

Lesson 44



Ephesians 6:10-18



### **Theme**

We must on the armor of God, in order to take advantage of all that God has made available for us.



#### Ephesians 6:10-18

10 "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

- 11 "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
- 12 "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.
- 13 "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
- 14 "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;
- 15 "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;
- 16 "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.
- 17 "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
- "18 "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."



### Memory Verse

#### Ephesians 6:11

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."



### **Outline**

- I. Here We Are In the Locker Room at Ephesus Stadium, Suiting Up for a Game In the Spiritual League Against the Demonic Team.
- A. Here is the apostle (coach) Paul's pregame message. (verse 10)
  - 1. First, let me remind you that the Owner is in the great press-box at the top of the stadium, anytime we need Him.
  - 2. Let me remind you of one last thing before we go out -- your strength must come from the Owner's mighty power within you.
  - Put on all of your equipment, guys, because these guys are dirty; they will hit you anywhere you are not covered up. They are cheap-shot artists. (verse 11)

- B. Now let me give you the scouting report. This team is not like your normal team. (verse 12)
  - 1. They do not have bodies.
  - 2. This is Satan's all-star team.
  - 3. They are the biggest and most evil he has got.
- C. So make sure that you put on every piece of equipment that the Owner has provided, so that after each play, you will be able to stand up and be ready to go at it again. (verse 13)

### II. Now Let's Go Through Each Piece of Equipment.

- A. Belt. This holds up your pants -- without it, you go nowhere. (verse 14)
  - l. You must have the right one. Not any old one will do.
  - 2. The Owner gave this to you. It represents His truth. You know that He is infinitely just.
- B. Shoulder pads (breastplate). (verse 14)
  This covers the chest area, or your
  heart. The Owner wants you to be
  righteous, with right motives, so you
  do not get off track.
- C. Shoes. You must make sure you get the right ones, since you do not want to be stumbling and fumbling around. To score, we must share what we have with others, so that they can have the peace that we have. (verse 15)
- D. Shields. The Owner told you that these will work against those guys. (verse 16)
  - 1. He says that it works, because He has given you supernatural

- strength, which will make you stronger than the enemy.
- 2. For these to work, you have to have faith that they will work, as the Owner said.
- E. Helmet. This is to protect the head, the face, and your thinking. (verse 17)
  - 1. The Owner gives you nothing but the best salvation protection.
  - 2. But you have to accept it and put it on, to do you any good.
  - 3. If you do not put this on, the rest of the equipment is useless.
- F. Playbook (Bible). This is the game plan for winning. (verse 17)
  - 1. If you do not have it with you, that means you must have it memorized.
  - 2. Without this you cannot score -- you are on the defense all of the time.
  - 3. You have got to score; and you must know the offense, in order to score.
  - 4. The playbook will lift you up and keep you strong.
- G. Now you have everything you need; but, you must be constantly praying. (verse 18)
  - 1. You may not gain in every play; and you may lose ground, now and then.
  - 2. But the victory is ours, according to the Owner.



### Spiritual Truths

- God gives us all of the help we need, in order to win.
- We must actively receive what He has provided for us.
- We must know His Word.
- We must always pray.



### Lesson Material

God has given us everything that we need, in order to fight and win in the everyday spiritual battle we face in the world. We usually want to plead, "No contest" or, "I could not help myself." But, in reality, what we face is a lack of preparation, due to apathy or lack of discipline. Just as a football player or soldier would think it absurd to go into the game or battle without preparing ahead of time and getting all of the equipment and protection available to him, so also we should not go into the everyday battle at school or our job, without being prepared.

So, as Christians, we need to read the Word and pray, and find out how to be prepared for peer pressure and the host of other temptations that will pass our way every day. Also, we need to surround ourselves with soldiers from our army, and not the enemy's. Once we have found

out how to protect ourselves and what we have available, then we need to practice, practice, practice. This means going to church and other activities available to strengthen us. Otherwise, we will always be floundering and failing, instead of being victorious and filled with joy.



### **Methods**

Discuss preparation in sports and practice for games that the students are involved in. Discuss what happens when we do not practice.

The teacher should use football equipment to illustrate the lesson. As the teacher shares the lesson, the equipment should be put on, as each piece is discussed. The teacher may use a student volunteer to put on the equipment.

### The Full Armor of God

Volume 9

Lesson 45



Ephesians 6:10-18

1 Corinthians 10:4-5



### **Theme**

Every Christian is in a spiritual war; and the Lord has equipped us to fight with spiritual armor and weapons.



Ephesians 6:10-18

10 "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

- 11 "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
- 12 "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.
- 13 "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
- 14 "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;
- 15 "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;
- 16 "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.
- 17 "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;
- 18 "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."



#### Ephesians 6:11

"Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."



### **Outline**

#### I. We, As Christians, Are In a War.

- A. The apostle Paul is giving us a call to
- B. We are commanded to be strong, to take a stand, and to fight.

## II. We Have Unseen Enemies, Who Wrestle Against Us In the Battle.

- A. The enemies are not human.
- B. The enemies are Satan and his cohorts.

## III. It Is a War that We Must Fight With Spiritual Armor and Spiritual Weapons.

- A. We have spiritual armor to protect us.
  - 1. We are to have our loins girded about with truth.
    - a. This piece of armor is a belt, which holds other parts of the armor in place.
    - b. We are to wrap around ourselves the truth that God reveals to us in His Word. (Philippian 4:8)
  - 2. We are to wear the breastplate of righteousness.
    - a. The breastplate is worn aroundthe midsection of the body; andit protects the heart.
    - b. The righteousness is that of Christ, and what He has done for us.
    - c. We can stand against the enemy and stand before God, because Jesus Christ died to give us forgiveness of sins and His righteousness.
  - 3. We are to have our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.
    - a. We are to have on our combat boots.
      - (1) Roman sandals (boots) were studded with sharp nails.
      - (2) The boots ensured good footing, and they allowed soldiers to cover slippery terrain quickly.
    - b. We are to be prepared to move out for the Lord, and do His work and will.
    - c. In the midst of the battle, God will give us His peace, so that we do not slip and lose heart.

- 4. We are to take up the shield of faith.
  - a. The shield protects the whole body.
  - b. Faith is the shield in spiritual warfare.
  - c. Our faith in God will protect us from all the flaming arrows (accusations, deceptions and temptations) of the enemy.
- 5. We are to put on the helmet of salvation.
  - a. The helmet protects the most vital part of the body -- the head.
    - (1) The helmet protects our mind.
    - (2) We must guard against the doubts and questions that Satan tries to thrust into our mind.
  - b. The helmet of salvation is our assurance that we are saved.
  - c. The assurance of salvation will keep us courageous and committed in the battle.
- B. We have spiritual weapons, with which to conquer the enemy.
  - 1. We are to take up the sword of the Spirit.
    - a. It is very clear that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. (verse 17)
    - All of the armor is defensive, except for the sword. It is both defensive and offensive.
    - c. The Word of God cuts through all of the deception and error that the enemy can muster.
    - d. The better we know God's Word, then the better we will be able to battle the enemy. Jesus' confrontation with Satan is a great example of this. (Matthew 4:3-11)

- 2. We are to pray.
  - a. Prayer is not mentioned with a corresponding piece of armor; but prayer is definitely the most formidable weapon in spiritual warfare.
  - b. We are to pray on a consistent, regular basis.
  - c. We are to use every kind of prayer -- private, public, spoken, silent, intercessory, tongues. (verse 18)

## IV. If We Do Not Put On the Armor of God, Then We Will Be Defeated By the Enemy.

- A. We must put on the armor, if we are going to protect ourselves from the enemy.
- B. We must study the Bible and pray, if we are going to be successful in defeating the enemy.



### Spiritual Truths

- All Christians, whether they realize it or not, are in a spiritual battle.
- We do not battle against flesh and blood, but against unseen forces in the spirit world.
- God has equipped us with everything that we need to defeat the enemy.
- Prayer and the Word of God are the two most powerful weapons with

which we can advance the kingdom of God.



### Lesson Material

The book of Ephesians is divided into two sections. The first section consists of chapter 1-3. It is here that Paul tells us our position. (Ephesians 1:6, 7, 10, 13, 17) The second section contains chapters 4-6. In this section, we come to understand what our practice is in Christ, as a result of our position. Our walk is different than the world's, because our position is different. Christ is in us, and we are in Christ.

We must convince our class that, as a result of our being in Christ and having access to His resources, we have entered into a warfare with a real enemy called Satan.

In 1 Peter 5:8, it says that the devil is as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Two truths must be realized. First, he is as a roaring lion. His power is not greater than the power of Christ in us, but he tries to make us believe he has greater power. Secondly, it says "whom he may devour." Satan can have no power over us, without our permission. When we resist him, he will flee. (James 4:7) We can be more than conquerors through Christ. (Romans 8:37)

God has provided everything that we need to resist the devil. Ephesians 6 details the victory that is ours, if we put on the armor of God.

Ephesians 6:11 says that the devil has many schemes, or wiles. Undermining God's credibility, making it hard to live the Christian life, hindering our service, causing division in the body of Christ, and tempting us into worldliness, are a few of the enemy's schemes.

As we look to Ephesians chapter 6 and learn about the weaponry, we find that we have the ability to be delivered from every fiery attack that will ever be directed at us.

The only way the enemy can have any effect upon a believer is if one of these things happens:

If we, as soldiers, quit fighting.

If we, as soldiers, get out of rank.

If someone behind us quits fighting.

Someone has said that the armor protects everything but our back, because we are not supposed to run from the devil. There is truth to that; but the deeper truth is found in how Roman armies fought. Positioning themselves in circles, they could fight on all fronts, without being concerned about their back. As long as everyone held their formation, they did not have to worry. This illustrates the importance of our fellow believers.

In this lesson, just as much attention needs to be given to why the armor is important, as to what the armor is.

Let us look at the armor. First, Ephesians 6:14 says to have the belt of truthfulness. In the Roman army, the tunic was a symbol of being a soldier. It was a type of identifying with the battle. Lose-fitting and difficult to move around in, a belt was needed over the tunic, to allow for ease of movement. This may be compared to our doctrine. It needs

restraints. (Ephesians 4:4) We must know the Truth. It means an attitude of obeying the Word of God.

The second piece of armor is the breastplate of righteousness. (Ephesians 6:14) "Righteousness" is a "right relationship" with God. The breastplate protects two areas. One is the heart -- not the muscle that pumps blood, but the center of the thought process. (Proverbs 23:7; Mark 7:6-23; Jeremiah 17:9-10) The second area is the bowels, referring to the vital organs of the mid-section. We associate our feelings and emotions with this area. (For example, see 1 John 3:17.)

When Satan attacks, it is primarily in these two areas. When we bring together a thought process and an emotion, it causes an action. The defense against Satan's lies is a right relationship with God (righteousness).

Righteousness involves imputed righteousness, which assures my position in Christ, and practical righteousness, which affects my relationship with Christ.

Ephesians 6:15 says "having our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace." The shoes of the Roman soldier were for protection and stability. Paul is not referring to salvation, when referring to the gospel of peace. We are believers in a battle. Our walk will be a protected and stable walk, when we as believers recognize that God is not against us. He is on our side. We are at peace with God. (Romans 5:1; 8:31)

The next piece of armor is the shield of faith. (Ephesians 6:16) The shield is to protect us from the fiery darts of the devil -- darts of doubt, fear, disappointment, lust, greed, vanity. When these darts come at us faster than we are able to dodge them,

we can hide behind the shield of faith that says, "Regardless of the circumstances, I have heard the Word, I accept what I have heard as absolute truth, and I act on what the Word says, and not what the devil says." (2 Corinthians 1:24; Proverbs 30:5; Psalms 18:30; 1 John 5:4; 1 Peter 5:8-9)

Ephesians 6:17 says, "And take the helmet of salvation." Again, we must know that Paul is not referring to our getting saved. The helmet is to protect our heads against the blows of Satan's sword. Satan has a counterfeit for everything God has; and Satan also has a two-edged sword, which he attempts to use to cut off the head of the believer. The two edges are discouragement and doubt. But God has provided a helmet -- a helmet of salvation. This salvation is threefold. I was saved, I am in the process of being saved, and I will be saved. (2 Corinthians 1:10) Philippians 1:6 says "...He which hath begun a good work in you (referring to salvation past) will perform it (salvation continuing in the present) until the day of Jesus Christ (salvation future)." What fantastic protection!

Finally, we will examine the sword of the Spirit. (Ephesians 6:17) This is our only offensive weapon. The Word of God is our source of direction. The Word of God reveals to us the will of God. The will of God is our source of power. The Bible says that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. (Romans 10:17) Our faith is strengthened, in order to accomplish God's purpose in our lives, as we get into the Word.

One final thought is that the verb forms used in Ephesians 6:10-17 are themselves significant in ministering to us regarding the usage of the six pieces of armor. The first three pieces of armor use the verb "having," which means "in a continual state of being:"

- 1. "Having loins girt about with truth" -- continually be in state of commitment of God;
- 2. "Having put on the breastplate of righteousness" -- continually be in a state of holiness and a right relationship with God.
- 3. "Having feet shod with preparation of gospel" -- continually be in a state of confidence in God.

The second three pieces of armor use the verb "taking," which means "necessary, when need arises:"

- 1. "Taking the shield of faith" -- be ready to pick up, at any temptation, the belief in God's commandments;
- 2. "Taking the helmet of salvation" -- be ready to put on the helmet at any attack to the mind, for confidence in full salvation;
- 3. "Taking the sword of the Spirit" -- be ready to pick up the Word and fight the spiritual battle.



### **Methods**

The teacher may want to bring to class a Roman military costume. As the armor is discussed, the teacher will be able to use the costume as a visual aid.

The teacher may use group discussion, and ask the students what they think is the purpose for each piece of the armor.

After the scripture reading, the teacher may divide the class into groups, and ask each group to come up with an explanation for each piece of armor.

The teacher may ask the students which pieces of the armor they are wearing, and which pieces they are missing.

The teacher should think of examples and experiences that would illustrate to the students the use of the armor in the Christian life.

# Hats We Wear (The Disguised Christian)

Volume 9

Lesson 46



1 Corinthians 2:10-16

1 Corinthians 3:1-4, 13, 18-21

Galatians 5:16

Ephesians 4:1-3

Ephesians 4:17-19



#### Theme

Staying focused on the Lord, and not being pulled away by peer pressure.



1 Corinthians 2:10-16

10 "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

11 "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

12 "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

13 "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

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

15 "But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

16 "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

#### 1 Corinthians 3:1-4, 13

- 1 "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.
- 2 "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.
- 3 "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?
- 4 "For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?"
- 13 "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."



#### Ephesians 4:1

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."



## **Outline**

# I. Hats Come In a Variety of Sizes and Styles.

- A. They can be used for many different purposes.
  - 1. They can add class to an outfit.
  - 2. They can advertise a product.
  - 3. They can provide protection.
  - 4. They can provide a disguise.
  - 5. They can change a person's looks.
- B. We, as Christians, can wear many different hats or disguises.
  - 1. We act differently, depending on where we are.
    - a. At school.
    - b. At work.
    - c. At home.
    - d. On a date.
  - 2. We may not want people to know that we are Christians, or what church we go to.

# II. The Bible Describes Three Types of "Hats." (1 Corinthians 2:9-3:4)

- A. The first "hat" is the Natural Man.
  - 1. He is dead to spiritual things.
  - 2. Spiritual things are foolish to the natural man.
  - 3. He cannot understand them.
  - 4. The wisdom of the natural man is futile. (1 Corinthians 3:18-21)
  - 5. The natural man thinks that he is smart, but it is all for nothing.

- 6. The natural man lifts up humanity as a god.
- B. The second "hat" is the Carnal Christian. (1 Corinthians 3:1-4)
  - 1. He cannot speak as a mature Christian.
  - 2. He is still a baby, and cannot take in mature teaching.
  - 3. He initiates in the body of Christ jealousy, envy, and strife.
  - 4. He walks as the world walks; and no one can tell the difference between him and the world.
- C. The third "hat" is the Spiritual Man. (1 Corinthians 2:9-13)
  - 1. He examines and judges all things.
  - 2. He has the mind of Christ.
  - 3. He knows the deep things of God.
  - 4. The world cannot find fault in him.
  - 5. He is able to speak of spiritual things.

# III. What About You? (What Hat Are You Going to Wear?)

- A. Are you going to be natural, and reject Christianity altogether?
- B. Are you going to be sucked in by the world, and be carnal?
- C. Are you going to be God's man (or woman), and walk as God has called you to walk? (Ephesians 4:17)



# Spiritual Truths

- We must take a stand. We cannot be a fence-sitter.
- God has called us to a life of commitment, faithfulness and holiness.
- The wisdom of man is foolishness, in God's sight.



# Lesson Material

Taking a stand, without wavering or being dishonest, is a novelty today. We see dishonesty in our government officials and in leadership in all areas. There are very few people who have a walk that matches their talk.

All of us feel the pressure to conform. It is much easier to conform, than to feel the rejection or ridicule if we do not go with the crowd.

In the scriptures, Jesus was crucified for the stand that He took against evil. Paul was imprisoned and beaten. Stephen was stoned. The Bible has numerous examples of believers who were persecuted for standing up for what they believed. They suffered for not bowing to the peer pressure of their day. God honored them. (Hebrews 11) The Lord calls us to walk in a manner worthy of God. We must be something different — our behavior must set us apart from the world. People are looking for something to believe in that is solid and true. We must demonstrate in our walk and talk something that is worth following.

We must not be "secret agents," who wear disguises, because no one will know what we stand for; and, more importantly, Who we stand for -- Jesus Christ.



## **Methods**

The best way to illustrate this lesson is to bring to class different kinds of hats, and to use them to describe the different types of disguises we might have as Christians.

# Dead Drunk: The Booze Challenge

Volume 9

Lesson 47



# Bible References

Proverbs 21:17; 23:20

Isaiah 5:11

1 Corinthians 6:12, 13, 19, 20

Galatians 5:21

Ephesians 5:18

1 Timothy 5:23



### **Theme**

What does the Bible have to say about drunkenness? A challenge for teenagers to glorify God with their bodies.



# Scripture Reading

Proverbs 23:29-35

29 "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?

30 "They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

31 "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.

32 "At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

33 "Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.

34 "Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.

35 "They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."



#### Proverbs 20:1

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."



## **Outline**

# I. Alcohol Is a Psychoactive, or Mind-altering Drug.

#### A. It is a drug.

- 1. It kills brain cells.
- 2. It is addictive.
- B. It causes breakdown in normal brain functions.
  - 1. It causes hallucinations.
  - It causes a loss of control in physical and psychological functions. (Proverbs 23:34)
    - A person who is drunk is not in control of his thoughts or actions.
    - b. A person who is drunk cannot talk, walk, or think correctly.
      - (1) Coordination is affected.
      - (2) Vision is impaired.
      - (3) Speech is slurred.
  - 3. It causes memory loss.

# II. Alcohol Is Dangerous. (Proverbs 23:29-32)

- A. Drinking can cause a person to become physically addicted to alcohol.
  - 1. No one starts drinking with the thought in mind to become an alcoholic; but, it happens all too often.
  - Approximately one out of every ten people who drink will become an alcoholic. This is a conservative estimate.
  - 3. Alcoholism destroys families, careers, relationships, dreams and human life.
    - a. Alcohol abuse is the #1 drug problem among America's youth.
    - b. Alcohol is the #1 killer of teenagers in America. More American youth die from alcohol-related deaths, than any other cause.
- B. The Bible says that those who love wine will never be rich (Proverbs 21:17); or, to put it another way, drunkenness will make a person poor. (Proverbs 23:21)
- C. God's Word says that those who carelessly indulge in drinking alcohol are not wise, and will suffer. (Proverbs 20:1)

#### III. Why Do Teenagers Drink?

- A. In America, as with other countries, it is socially acceptable; and so, the peer pressure is great.
  - 1. With some peer groups, drinking is a prerequisite for entrance and acceptance.

- We all want to be accepted; and, if drinking is the acceptable behavior, then most of us will succumb to it.
- B. In many cultures, drinking is considered a rite of passage into adulthood. Teenagers think that they are more grown-up, if they drink.
- C. They are raised in a home, where the parents drink.
  - 1. Access to liquor is readily available.
  - 2. It is interesting that many alcoholics are children of alcoholics.
- D. Drinking is a way to escape problems.
  - 1. When a person wants to get away from a problem, drinking is a coping mechanism.
  - 2. Teenagers drink, in an attempt to ease pain and frustrations.
  - 3. The problem is that drinking does not solve any problems.
- E. Teenagers drink, because they do not recognize the destructive consequences of drinking.
  - 1. It causes alcoholism. The physical addiction is a terrible bondage.
  - 2. It can devastate families and careers and friendships.
  - 3. It causes crime. In America, alcohol is a factor in approximately 50% of all arrests.
  - 4. It causes liver and kidney disease; and it can kill us.

# IV. The Bible Does Not Say that Drinking Alcohol Is Sin.

A. Jesus' first miracle was changing water into wine at a wedding celebration.(John 2:1-11) If drinking alcohol was

- sin, then Jesus would not have performed this miracle.
- B. Paul told Timothy to take wine for medicinal purposes. (1 Timothy 5:23)
  - 1. Timothy may have been a total abstainer, because Paul told him to stop drinking only water.
  - 2. Paul wanted Timothy to drink wine, because of his sickness.
- C. Wine is identified in the sacredness of communion. (Matthew 26:27-29)

# V. The Bible Does Say that Drunkenness Is Sin.

- A. No drunkard will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6:10; Galatians 5:21)
- B. We are not to walk in drunkenness. (Romans 13:13)
- C. We are not to identify with drunkards. (Proverbs 23:20)
- D. The Bible says that woe (or trouble) will come to those who drink too much. (Isaiah 5:11; 28:1; Proverbs 23:29)
- E. The Bible commands us not to get drunk with wine. (Ephesians 5:18)

#### VI. God Wants Us to Honor Him With Our Bodies. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

- A. God wants us to learn self-control (temperance). (Acts 24:25; 1 Corinthians 9:25)
  - 1. God does not want us to be a slave to any addiction. (1 Corinthians 6:12)

- 2. God wants us to keep our bodies under subjection. (1 Corinthians 9:27)
- B. God has a special blessing for those who abstain from wine.
  - 1. The tribe of the Rechabites were honored by God for their commitment not to drink. (Jeremiah 35)
  - Daniel was honored by God, for not drinking wine. (Daniel 1:8)
  - 3. John the Baptist abstained from drinking. (Luke 1:15)
- C. God does not want us to cause others to stumble. (Romans 14:21)



# Spiritual Truths

- Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit; and we need to honor God with them.
- The Bible commands us not to get drunk.
- The Bible warns against the dangers of drinking. Alcohol is a drug, which can be addictive and deadly. Alcohol can destroy families, futures, friends and lives.
- Teenagers must gain the courage to follow God, and not the crowd.



# Lesson Material

In America, by the time a youth is eighteen, he or she has seen over 100,000 beer commercials on television. The alcoholic beverage industry is big business, selling everything from hard liquor to wine coolers to "fake" beer. The consumer is bombarded with media messages about how glamorous and great it is to drink. Teenagers pick up the message and pick up the bottle, only to find out that the good time can be disastrous.

The Bible says that it is possible to be deceived by liquor. (Proverbs 20:1) "Deception" is thinking or believing that something is right, when it is actually wrong. No one expects to become an alcoholic; no one expects to lose control; no expects to lose family, career, or life to alcohol; but, it happens. "Wine is a mocker...and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." (Proverbs 20:1) It would seem that the symptoms of drunkenness -- loss of body control, loss of judgment, loss of memory, loss of stomach contents (vomiting) -- would cause people to recognize the dangers of alcohol; but, ironically, for many teenagers, these symptoms are considered funny and fun. Vomiting is fun? "...Whosoever deceived thereby is not wise." (Proverbs 20:1)

We must communicate with teenagers that alcohol is not something to play around with. If one out of every ten people who drink becomes an eventual alcoholic, then drinking is like playing "Russian roulette" with a ten-chamber gun. It is not wise.

Another fact about teenage drinking is that most youth do not drink, because they enjoy the taste. To the contrary, many teenagers do not even like the taste, when they first start. Taste is something that develops later. Teenagers drink, because of the pressure to conform to the behavior of the peers (sound familiar?). Teenagers drink, because of peer pressure.

With this in mind, we must challenge teenagers that choosing not to drink is a sign of courage and maturity. Truthfully, it is hard to stand when everyone else is falling (literally); but this is how we develop true character and maturity. The fact is, many peers will respect someone who has the strength to stand alone. Also, our self-respect increases, when we have the courage to say "No," and not be persuaded against our will.

We must encourage teenagers to make a decision about drinking, before they get into a tempting or difficult situation. It is hard to say "No" in the midst of peers, if much thought has not been given to it. We must challenge teenagers to set standards for pleasing God.

Also, teenagers need to realize that alcohol is not a good coping mechanism for problems. Alcohol may help us forget our hassles, but it does nothing to solve our difficulties. When we come back to reality, the problems are still there. In reality, alcohol only adds to our problems, by keeping us from searching for legitimate solutions.

Alcohol can stifle our social growth and development. If we need to have a drink to get "friendly," then we are becoming fake and phony -- plus, we are losing our opportunities to develop social skills.

There is a difference of opinion as to whether Christians should drink at all. The Bible certainly warns against excessive drinking, and it lauds abstinence; but, it does not say that we cannot drink. We must all work out our own salvation, "with fear and trembling." (Philippians 2:12) We must be careful, and discern the Lord's will for our lives. (Ephesians 5:17)

However, the Bible does command us not to get drunk. There is no question about this. The Bible also says that we are to obey the laws of the land (Romans 13:1-3; 1 Peter 2:13-14); and, in America, it is against the law for a teenager to drink. So the good news is that American youth do not have to struggle with this issue. They should not drink! We must urge our class of teenagers to become law-abiding citizens.



## **Methods**

Ask the students at the beginning of class whether they think it is right or wrong to drink.

Discuss with the students the reasons why drinking is so popular with teenagers.

Take an anonymous poll; and have the students write down on a piece of paper if they have ever drunk alcohol, and if they have ever been drunk.

Have the students role-play the various ways to say "No" when offered an alcoholic beverage. Make the situations different.

The teacher may want to bring in an exalcoholic to share a testimony. (Always get your pastor's prior approval on any guest speaker.)

Ask the students to think of creative ways to have fun without alcohol.

# **Teenagers and Drugs**

Volume 9

Lesson 48



# Bible References

Leviticus 20:6

1 Samuel 15:23

1 Chronicles 10:13

Genesis 2:17

Psalms 68:6

Isaiah 30:1-2

Isaiah 59:12-13

2 Corinthians 6:17-18

2 Timothy 4:1-2

John 17-19

1 Corinthians 6:19



# Scripture Reading

Proverbs 1:10-15

10 "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

11 "If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause:

12 "Let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit:

13 "We shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil:

14 "Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse:

15 "My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path."



## **Theme**

The pitfalls and dangers of drugs and drug abuse.



#### 1 Corinthians 6:19,20

"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? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."



## **Outline**

#### I. Why Do Teenagers Use Drugs?

#### A. Peer pressure.

- 1. Teenagers are more than likely to take drugs, if the peer group with which they associate is using drugs.
- 2. Teenagers take drugs, because they are offered drugs from so-called friends; and they are afraid that refusal will mean ridicule or rejection.
- 3. A best friend says that it is really fun and awesome.

#### B. Curiosity.

- 1. They are curious and even fascinated by what they hear about drugs.
- 2. They want to find out themselves, rather than learn from the

consequences of others.

#### C. Escape.

- 1. The pressures from home, school, or life in general cause teenagers to want to escape from the hassles.
- 2. Drugs are a way to exit reality, for at least a short time.

#### D. Fun.

- 1. The initial high from drugs is physically pleasurable and fun.
- 2. Teenagers enjoy the "rush" and thrill from drugs.

#### E. Rebel.

- 1. Taking drugs is a way for some teenagers to get back at their parents.
- 2. In some peer groups, drugs are a way to identify with rebellion.

#### F. Ignorance.

- 1. Teenagers do not see the negative consequences of drugs.
- 2. If teenagers do understand the consequences, then they think that none of the dangers will happen to them.
- 3. They think that they are strong enough to quit when they want to.
  - a. They think that they can try drugs a few times, and then be done with it.
  - b. Usually, the first few times, drugs are fun and enjoyable. A teenager takes drugs with the thought of only being a "casual user," until it is too late -- and he or she is addicted.
  - c. If it was so easy to quit, many people would not have ruined their lives or died from drugs.

- (1) Cocaine is one of the most psychologically addicting stimuli known to man.
- (2) All illicit drugs have the potential to create drug addiction.

# II. What Are the Negative Effects of Illicit Drug Use?

- A. Drug use causes and contributes to rebellion.
  - 1. Teenagers who use drugs are more likely to be rebellious toward their parents.
  - Teenagers who use drugs are more likely to rebel against society as a whole.
- B. Drug use alienates us from relationships.
  - 1. When influenced by drugs, we withdraw from the people who love us.
  - 2. The effects of drugs cause us to hurt the people we love.
  - 3. We hurt our relationship with God, by alienating ourselves from Him.
  - 4. Eventually, users find themselves all alone.
- C. Drug use causes emotional distress.
  - 1. It can cause severe depression.
    - a. Drug use clouds judgment and deepens sad feelings.
    - b. Users find themselves swimming in a sea of hopelessness.
  - 2. It can cause bizarre and violent behavior.
  - 3. It can cause hallucinations and delirium.

- 4. It can cause mental illness.
- D. Drug use causes physical harm.
  - 1. It can cause permanent brain damage.
  - 2. It can cause a myriad of bodily dysfunctions.
- E. Drug use causes death.
  - 1. Death by an overdose.
  - 2. Death by suicide.
- F. The expense of purchasing illicit drugs can ruin us financially, or contribute to criminal activity, in order to support the drug habit.

# III. How Does God Feel About Our Using Illicit Drugs?

- A. Our bodies are temples of the indwelling Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
  - 1. We are commanded not to defile ourselves with anything harmful and unclean. (Acts 15:29, 2 Corinthians 12:21)
  - 2. God wants us to take care of our bodies and our minds; and drug use is destructive to both the body and the mind.
- B. God does not want us to have to escape reality, in order to enjoy life.
  - 1. God wants us to live a life of peace and joy. (John 14:27)
  - 2. God will meet and satisfy our every need, if we follow Him. (Psalms 37:4)
- C. Using illicit drugs is illegal; and it contributes to rebellion.

- 1. Using illicit drugs is breaking the law; and God requires us to obey earthly laws. (Romans 13:1)
- 2. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. (1 Samuel 15:23) God says that the rebel will live in a dry land. (Psalms 68:6)
- 3. In the Old Testament, God commanded that the rebellious teenager be put to death. (Deuteronomy 21:18-21) God takes a very dim view of rebellion.

# IV. How to Get Unhooked From Drugs.

- A. First, we must admit that we have a problem.
- B. We need to make a 180-degree turn toward obedience to God.
  - 1. We must trust God and believe that He has a better life for us.
  - 2. God will help us to overcome our dependencies. (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- C. We need to find a church that is filled with prayerful, loving Christians.
  - 1. Church is to be a hospital to help the sick and hurt; it is not a righteousness club.
  - We need to find people that we can be accountable to, in a family of believers. We should make friends with people who love God, and seek support from them.
- D. We should seek professional help, if we are chemically dependent.
- E. We must stay away from drugs and drug users, and never go back to them.

- If it was our friends who turned us on to drugs, then we need to find new friends.
- 2. Some friends are friendly poison.
- F. We must trust God and walk with Him every day. (Matthew 6:8-9)
  - 1. God will meet our needs.
  - 2. God will deliver us from evil.
  - 3. God will put a song in our hearts.



# Spiritual Truths

- Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit; and we should honor God with our bodies.
- God wants us to be upright and honest; and using illegal drugs is a crime.
- Satan seeks to destroy us; and drug abuse is one of his best methods to damage teenagers.
- God can clean up the drug user.



# Lesson Material

Satan has many ploys to get us off track. Drugs is one of them.

Satan comes to us first as a beautiful angel of light, and feeds us fun and exciting things. (2 Corinthians 11:14) In

truth, Satan is not a beautiful angel who loves us. He is a deceptive, perverse, harm-seeking creature. He ruins lives, marriages, homes, relationships, and fellowship with God. He can use drugs as a means of doing all of the above.

Satan is the great deceiver. He poses as an angel of light and peddles wares that look so good, but destroy. He deceived Eve with a piece of fruit; and he deceives teenagers with drugs.

We take a bite of his bait; and, before we know it, we have eaten the lies that he has fed us. Then, it is too late; he has gotten us, and we do not even know that we are trapped. We cannot escape from him. We thought that if we just took one look and one bite, we could throw it away and move on. That is not how it works, though. The first bite tastes surprisingly delicious, and soon we take another and another. We are warned that it will cause us much harm and possibly even sudden death; but, we deceive ourselves and tell ourselves that it will not happen to us -we are too strong for the consequence. The lies that we believe about drugs are: "It will not hurt me;" "I will only try it once;" "It is a lot of fun;" "I am strong enough to get myself out of this, if I do not like it." These are all lies; and where do they come from? What happens to the advice from loved ones? "Drugs can kill;" "You will be hooked before you even know it;" "Satan is behind it;" "God hates it;" "Do not do it, or you will be sorry." The advice and pleas are disregarded, because we have been deceived by the evil one.

Teenagers, especially, need to know the lies and pitfalls of doing illicit drugs, because the peer pressure and natural tendencies for fun are almost too strong to resist. A strong relationship with Jesus, awareness, communication, education,

and family support are the best deterrents for drug abuse. Unfortunately, these are in small supply for many teenagers.

Substance abuse prevention is this: good self-image, peer support and good relationships with parents. If the parent is not there to help, then a responsible informed adult can. If we cannot halt Satan in his tracks and tricks, then we can at least help students avoid him. Prevention is an ongoing process. Students need to be able to talk about the issue of drugs; and it is wrong for us to "freeze up," or turn away from it. The teacher should be open to help answer their questions.

Parents and older former drug addicts are the most credible source of information that students can find concerning drug use. But the real heroes are the students who do not take drugs. They need to be recognized and rewarded. To glorify recovered drug users has not proven to be good drug prevention, because the students see them as survivors and then want to be heroes, also. Studies have found that ex-drug users are good in helping recovering users.

Drugs are unpredictable, and some of their effects are subtle. In the teenage years, the facts are not well enough known by young people. Since there have been more and more drug prevention programs starting up in high schools and communities, there has been a decline in drug use by American high school students. More education, awareness and communication has caused a decline in abuse. It is very necessary to continue to flood the students with facts, statistics, and the truth about drugs. The teacher should research the drug abuse problem in his or her own area, by consulting the local library or even taking a survey in class.

God's displeasure with lies, deception and causing someone to turn away from Him is clearly spelled out in the Bible. (Deuteronomy 13:6-10) Throughout the Word of God we can read countless examples of punishment, separation, suffering and death, because of man's rebellion, idolatry and witchcraft practices.

Disobedience against commandment of God began when Adam and Eve took of the forbidden fruit. (Genesis 3) Like teenagers today, they were warned it was wrong and harmful, and would cause death. But, like foolish children, they rebelled. They experimented with something evil and harmful, and ended up paying for it very dearly. They were beguiled to look, and then touch, and then eat. It was a seductive, carefully thought-out plan by Satan to lure them away from the peace and safety of God. This is the same idea that Satan uses on unsuspecting young people today. Good teaching and education from caring Christian teachers can hopefully save some of God's children from drugs. The teacher(s) must take on a heart of intercession for the students.



## **Methods**

Go to the local library, and make a list of books which give facts about drug abuse.

Hand this list to the students, so that they can research for themselves.

Use deterrents, such as giving students factual information about what the laws are concerning possession of illegal drugs. In America, prison sentences of up to ten years can be meted out for possession of certain types of drugs.

Take a survey in class, to find out how many students have used illicit drugs.

Start a "Just Say No" club involving parents, also. Use students who do not take drugs as peer counselors.

Provide alternatives to drug use:

Offer just-for-fun activities, or activities that help the community.

Open a gymnasium for "off-hours" -- including evenings, weekends and summers.

Give students action-based programs, so that they have something to be proud of. (Combine your program with other groups in the community.)

Provide mentors for high-risk students. Do not wait for the worst to happen.

Do not give so much attention to the high risk students, that the non-users feel unappreciated.

# The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Volume 9

Lesson 49



## Bible References

Joel 2:28-29

Acts 2:4,38

Matthew 3:11

Luke 24:49

1 Corinthians 12-13

Ephesians 5:18



### **Theme**

The baptism in the Holy Spirit.



# Scripture Reading

Acts 2:1-8, 12-17

- 1 "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.
- 2 "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.
- 3 "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.
- 4 "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.
- 5 "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.
- 6 "Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

- 7 "And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans.?
- 8 "And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?"
- 12 "And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?
- 13 "Other mocking said, These men are full of new wine.
- 14 "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:
- 15 "For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.
- 16 "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel:
- 17 "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:"



#### 1 Corinthians 14:39

"Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues."



## Outline

# I. Why Do We Believe In the Baptism In the Holy Spirit?

- A. The baptism is promised.
  - 1. It was promised in the Old Testament. (Joel 2:28-29)
  - 2. John the Baptist promised it. (Matthew 3:11)
  - 3. Jesus promised it. (John 7:37-39; Acts 1:8)
- B. The baptism is poured out.
  - 1. On the day of Pentecost, the 120 in the upper room received the baptism. (Acts 2:1-4) This included the twelve apostles. (Acts 11:16-17)
  - 2. The baptism is poured out upon the Gentiles. Cornelius, his household and friends received the baptism. (Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-17)
- II. Why Do We Believe that Speaking With Tongues Accompanies the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?
- A. This is the pattern described in the Book of Acts.
  - 1. When the 120 were baptized in the upper room, they spoke with tongues. (Acts 2:4)
  - 2. Cornelius and his company, upon listening to Peter, had the Holy Spirit fall on all them; and they all spoke with tongues. (Acts 10:44, 46)

- a. This astonished the Jewish believers who were with Peter. (Acts 10:45)
- b. Peter and his companions recognized that Cornelius and his company had received the Holy Spirit.
- c. How did Peter recognize this? The awareness came when they (Cornelius and company) spoke in tongues. (Acts 10:46-47; 11:16)
- Paul met a small company of disciples in Ephesus. He asked them if they had received baptism in the Holy Spirit, to which they responded that they did not know about it. (Acts 19:1-7)
  - a. Paul laid his hands upon them, and they received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. How did Paul know that they received the baptism? They spoke in tongues. (Acts 19:6)
  - b. When Paul asked them if they received the Holy Spirit, he was not asking if they had become Christians. This was already established in verse 1, where it said that they were disciples. Everyone "receives" the Spirit at the moment of salvation; and so, Paul was specifically talking about something other than salvation. He was talking about the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which was evident when Paul laid hands on them and they spoke with tongues.
- 4. In Acts 8:14-17, Peter and John visited new believers in Samaria. They prayed that the new believers would receive the Holy Spirit. The passage does not say that the new converts spoke in tongues, but it is definitely implied by the situation that followed.

- a. A carnal man name Simon wanted to purchase from Peter and John the "power" to baptize people in the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:18-19)
- b. How did Simon know that the believers had received the Holy Spirit? What made him go to the extent of offering the apostles money, so that he could do the same?
- c. We are certainly justified in assuming that Simon heard them speak in tongues. It is obvious that something happened, and speaking in tongues would fit the context.
- B. The ministry and benefits of spiritual gifts and the baptism are explained to the church. (1 Corinthians 12-14)
  - 1. The Bible says that we should desire spiritual gifts. (1 Corinthians 14:1)
  - 2. One of the spiritual gifts we should desire is speaking with tongues (1 Corinthians 14:5), which happens through the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
  - 3. Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles, was thankful that he spoke with tongues. (1 Corinthians 14:18)
  - 4. The ability to speak with tongues has three important functions. Two are for the church, and one is for the believer.
    - a. The gift of tongues to the church is a sign to the unbeliever. (1 Corinthians 14:21-22) This is exactly what happened on the day of Pentecost. The people were "amazed and marveled" by what they heard; and then, Peter preached to the curious crowd, and three thousand were saved. (Acts 2:41)

- b. The gift of tongues to the church is a way to communicate messages to the church for the edification to the body. If the church is to be blessed through the ministry of tongues, then there must be an interpretation. (1 Corinthians 14:5-13)
- c. The gift of tongues to the individual believer is for personal prayer and edification.
  - (1) When we speak in tongues, we are not speaking to men, but we are speaking "unto God." (1 Corinthians 14:2)
  - (2) When we speak in tongues, we edify ourselves. (1 Corinthians 14:4)

# III. What Will the Baptism In the Holy Spirit Do For Us?

- A. We will receive a new ability to commune with God. (1 Corinthians 14:2)
  - 1. The gift of tongues opens a whole new dimension and freedom in our prayer life. We have the ability to pray, when we do not know what to say. (1 Corinthians 14:2)
  - 2. Our spirit prays, even though our mind does not understand what we are saying. This can free us from the frustration of not knowing how we should pray. (1 Corinthians 14:14)
  - 3. We are able to speak mysteries to God. (1 Corinthians 14:2)
- B. It will add a new dimension to our praise and worship. (1 Corinthians 14:15)
- C. It will give us joy and edification. (1 Corinthians 14:4)

- 1. The gift of tongues, with the freedom in prayer and praise it gives us, will edify us.
- 2. It will build us up and strengthen us in our faith.

# IV. How Do We Receive the Baptism In the Holy Spirit?

- A. We must already be baptized into the body of Christ. We must be believers. (Acts 2:38)
- B. We must ask Jesus to baptize us. We must pray for the baptism.
  - 1. The baptism is a gift from the Lord. (Acts 2:38)
  - We do not have to go through any form or ritual, in order to receive it. We must open ourselves up to the Lord.
- C. We must exercise our faith, by praying as we feel the Lord prompting us.
  - 1. We should be in an attitude of prayer and praise before the Lord.
  - 2. Our spirits are still subject to us. God is not going to put us in a trance. We must speak. (1 Corinthians 14:32)



# Spiritual Truths

 The baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking with tongues is a scriptural experience, which is well documented in the New Testament.

- The baptism in the Holy Spirit brings a new dimension to our prayer life.
- The baptism in the Holy Spirit brings a new dimension to our worship.
- When we speak in tongues, we speak mysteries unto God.



## Lesson Material

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is one of the special gifts that God has for every one of His children. The apostle Paul desired that every Christian would receive it. (1 Corinthians 14:5) With this in mind, we, too should seek this spiritual gift. (1 Corinthians 14:1)

There are some who say that speaking in tongues is foolishness. They do not believe that the baptism is a legitimate experience. They say that praying with words that we do not understand is unreasonable.

For the people who say that the gift of tongues is unscriptural, how do they explain the examples of tongues in the New Testament church? All of the apostles spoke in tongues, as Peter declared. (Acts 11:17) The apostle Paul exclaimed, with thanksgiving, that he spoke in tongues. (1 Corinthians 14:18) Were all of these men deceived? We must accept the Word of God for what is says. The baptism in the Holy Spirit, with the evidence of speaking with tongues, is a legitimate, scriptural experience. God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise! (1 Corinthians 1:27)

The Bible says that the Holy Spirit will give us "utterance," or the words to speak. (Acts 2:4) This does not mean that we lose control of our own voices. (1 Corinthians 14:32) We are the ones who must speak. The Holy Spirit will not override our wills. If we do not speak, then nothing will happen. (1 Corinthians 14:32) We must exercise faith in the baptism, just like we exercise faith in our salvation. We must take a step of faith and reach out, by speaking words. The Holy Spirit will give us the "utterance," when we lift up our voice, reach out in faith, and speak. God's Word tells us that we are praying "unto God." We are speaking "mysteries." (1 Corinthians 14:2)

The baptism gives us a new prayer language with God. It is a heavenly language that only God understands. We can pray with our spirit and pray with our understanding. We can also sing with our spirit and sing with our understanding. (1 Corinthians 14:15) It brings a new dimension to prayer and a new dimension to worship. We are no longer bound by the difficulties of not knowing what to say, or not feeling adequate in our praying. We can pray in the spirit and trust, with joy and thanksgiving, that the Holy Spirit will help us communicate with God in words we do not understand. This can give us great freedom and power in prayer, when we do not know what to say or do. The same is true in our praise. The baptism in the Holy Spirit allows us to speak and sing directly to God.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience that every Christian can receive. We should heed the admonition of Paul, when he closed his instruction on the subject to the Corinthian church by saying, "Forbid not to speak with tongues." It is a promise of God that is still for

"...all...even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2:39)



## **Methods**

Before class, ask a few students, who have received the baptism, to give testimonies on what it has meant to them.

Ask the students to write down any questions they have on the baptism; and discuss them in class.

Give the students an opportunity to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit in class. Get prayed up!

# All We Need Is Love

Volume 9

Lesson 50



1 Corinthians 16:14

John 15:13

Romans 13:9-10

1 Corinthians 13



## **Theme**

This lesson is an examination of biblical love.



# Scripture Reading

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

4 "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

- 5 "Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;
- 6 "Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth:
- 7 "Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

#### Romans 13:8-10

- 8 "Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.
- 9 "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
- 10 "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."



# Memory Verse

#### 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not

itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."



## **Outline**

# I. Love Is a Union of Many Characteristics.

- A. In 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, love is defined. Fifteen different character qualities (or lack thereof) are given to describe love.
  - 1. "Suffereth long" -- Love is patient. It is interesting that in the Greek language, patience is associated with suffering. Patience is a willingness to remain steady through difficulties. This often means suffering.
  - 2. "Kind" -- Kindness is a willingness to help others. Love is gracious and helpful.
  - "Envieth not" -- Envy tends to restrict, confine and control. Love gives freedom. Love is not jealous; it is not possessive. Love will not cling, clutch and claw at another person.
  - 4. "Vaunteth not itself" -- Love is not boastful. Love does not call attention to itself. Love does not try to impress others with bragging.
  - 5. "Not puffed up" -- Love is not proud and arrogant. Love does not see others as being inferior.

- 6. "Doth not behave itself unseemly"-Love is not rude. Love respects
  others. It does not mock, tease or act
  unbecomingly toward others. It is
  not thoughtless or inconsiderate.
- 7. "Seeketh not her own" -- Love is not selfish. It is unselfish and giving. (Philippians 2:4)
- 8. "Not easily provoked" -- Love is not easily angered. Love is not irritable or touchy. Love keeps control over the emotions and remains calm. It does not lash out.
- 9. "Thinketh no evil" -- Love is positive and optimistic. Love forgives. It does not keep an account of past failures and offenses. (Proverbs 10:12)
- 10. "Rejoiceth not in iniquity" -- Love does not enjoy evil, or secretly take pleasure in sin.
- 11. "Rejoiceth in the truth" -- Love rejoices in doing what is right. Love rejoices when good men are successful. Love rejoices in righteousness.
- 12. "Beareth all things" -- Love is loyal. Love will cause a person to stand beside another, when there is trouble and distress. Love will not quit or give up.
- 13. "Believeth all things" -- Love trusts.
- 14. "Hopeth all things" -- Love expects the best.
- 15. "Endureth all things" -- Love will not give up, when difficulties and problems appear. Love will remain.
- B. 1 Corinthians 13:8 gives the final characteristic of love by saying, "Charity never faileth." Perhaps the best word to describe genuine biblical love is "commitment" -- a willingness never to leave or forsake another, no matter what happens. This is God's outlook toward us. (Hebrews 13:5)

# II. All of the Characteristics Given In 1 Corinthians 13 Must Be Learned and Developed By an Individual. No One Has Them Automatically.

- A. Many of the character qualities mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13 are synonymous with the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23) Fruit does not automatically appear on a tree; it must grow and develop.
- B. God may put us in unloving situations, in order to see how we will react, and to help us grow in love.

#### III. Love Is the Most Important Character Quality that We Can Attain.

- A. Paul said that we can have great abilities and do noble deeds, but if they are not motivated by love, then these abilities and deeds are meaningless. (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)
- B. Our motives are very important. God is not only concerned with what we do, but with why we do it. It is possible to do good deeds with wrong motives. This is one reason why Jesus was so upset with the Pharisees. (Luke 11:37-54)
- C. All of our actions should be motivated by love. If we perform good deeds, but have wrong motives (Matthew 6:1-4), then what we have done is of no value or, like Paul said, "it profiteth me nothing." (1 Corinthians 13:3)



# Spiritual Truths

- Love is the most important quality that God wants us to have.
- Love is the summation of all of the commandments in the Bible.
- It is possible to do good works with wrong motives. Love is to be the motive behind our actions.
- Love is an act of the will; and it takes work and effort.
- Love is not something that happens automatically, or something that a person can "fall into." Love is something that grows and develops, as we mature in our attitudes and actions. Love is something we learn.
- Love is a universal need that all people have.



# Lesson Material

The Bible has four Greek words that are translated "love" in the English language. The four words are as follows:

Eros -- Romantic or physical love;

Storge -- Love for family;

Philea -- Love of friendship;

Agapeo -- God's love.

Agapeo is the greatest kind of love. It is the love that God has for us. It is an unconditional acceptance of another person. It is the desire for someone else's highest good.

The title of this lesson is the name of a popular hit song. The theme of the song says that nothing is impossible as long as you have love, because "love is all you need." But what is love? Ask the students in class, and you will probably get a lot of varied and vague answers. The problem for many young people is they have a wrong perspective about the concept of love. Many think it is a special feeling, or a mystical, magical power that cannot be explained or understood. Popular belief is that a person can "fall in love." Unfortunately, young people who believe these notions are in for trouble; and they may eventually be disillusioned by the whole idea.

In this lesson, we want to show teenagers that love is not a mystical, irrational feeling or ideal. Love can be understood. The Bible is our guide to understanding.

In 1 Corinthians 13, we have a brief explanation of the characteristics that describe love. The teacher should study these fifteen characteristics and hunt for examples to illustrate them. The teacher may ask the students to give examples from their own lives.

The Bible also says that we are to do everything in love. (1 Corinthians 16:14) Yet, it is possible to do good deeds and not be motivated by love at all. (1 Corinthians 13:1-3) This is why the characteristics mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 are attitudes of the heart, and not necessarily actions. The teacher could share personal illustrations or examples from the Bible

on good deeds done with wrong motives. (1 Samuel 15:30-31; Matthew 6:2)

Often, God allows us to go through difficult situations, in order to test our motives and love. When we experience trials and struggles, do we grumble and complain? Do we give up and quit? Testing times are when our love can be cultivated and developed. For example, a person can develop patience, when he is put into an impatient situation. A person can develop kindness, when placed in situations that give opportunity to express it.

In God's plan for our lives, He wants us to learn to genuinely love Him and one another. This is the Bible's greatest commandment. (Matthew 22:36-40) God will work in our lives to develop the qualities of love, so that we can become more like Jesus. (Romans 8:29)



## Methods

For group discussion, the teacher may ask the students to give their definition of love. The teacher may ask them for illustrations from their lives that demonstrate the fifteen characteristics of love.

There are hundreds of popular songs with lyrics about love. The teacher may play a few songs in class and ask the students to respond. Do they agree with the messages of love the songs give? Why, or why not?

Ask the students to think of ways that they can demonstrate love to their parents, siblings, friends and classmates. Challenge them to make an attempt to perform at least one act of love during the week. Later, you may ask them to share testimonies.

The teacher may want to present the students with a special ministry in the church or community, in which they can get involved.

# The Everlasting Love of God

Volume 9

Lesson 51



# Bible References

Deuteronomy 7:8

Psalms 146:8

Jeremiah 31:3

John 3:16

John 16:27

John 15:11-13

Romans 5:8

Ephesians 2:4

1 John 3:1



## **Theme**

This lesson teaches the importance of learning the depth of God's love toward

us, so that we are better equipped to love ourselves, others and God.



# Scripture Reading

1 John 4:7-13, 16-21

7 "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

8 "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

9 "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

10 "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

11 "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

12 "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

- 13 "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."
- 16 "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.
- 17 "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.
- 18 "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.
- 19 "We love him, because he first loved us.
- 20 "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?
- 21 "And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."



#### 1 John 4:7-8

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."



## **Outline**

- I. God Loved Us, When We Were In an Unlovely State.
- A. He began to draw us to Himself with His loving kindness and tender mercy.
  - 1. He had a plan for our salvation, by sending His Son, Jesus, to die on a cross, enabling us to have fellowship with the Father. His love is greater than our sin.
  - Cleansing, redemption and sanctification are a part of the plan to draw us to a place where we can receive and enjoy the Father's love for us.
    - a. We are to live a clean life for God.
    - b. We are to go and sin no more.
    - c. We are to set ourselves apart from sin for God.
- B. After receiving His love through this plan of salvation, by the shed blood of Jesus, He then begins to prepare us for eternity with Him.
  - 1. After we have received the gift of eternal life, the Lord will prepare us and deal with our sinful desires, in order to develop a love relationship between us and Himself.
  - 2. We will be rewarded for our labor, our works, and our wisdom in choosing the way of love that God has to give us. (1 Corinthians 3:8)
  - 3. When we have been tried in the fiery furnace of earth, we come forth as pure gold. (1 Peter 1:7)

#### II. After Learning of God's Love, One Has the Choice of Either Receiving It, Or Rejecting It.

- A. God's love is always the same. He will never stop loving us, even if we fail.
  - 1. If we purposely reject the Lord and His commandments, then we are in rebellion. God's love will not change; but He has the right to exercise His wrath. (Romans 9:22)
  - If one accepts the everlasting love of God, then obedience to His commands is required, in order to obtain His best.
- B. If we are living in sincere obedience before the Lord, then we are aligned with the Father; and He gives us all of the bounty of His promises and comforts. (Ephesians 1:3)
  - 1. It is possible to live too comfortably and become careless. God deals with all of the aspects of our walk with Him, in order to steer us in the path that leads to everlasting life.
  - 2. The Holy Spirit can teach us how to obtain His favor and blessings, as we daily walk with Jesus.
- C. He is able to present us blameless to the Father, in the end. (Jude 24-25)
  - 1. There is nothing that He cannot deliver us from.
  - 2. There is nothing that we cannot do through His strength, including fighting any battle that we have with our fleshly desires. (Philippians 4:19)

# III. God's Love Is Perfect. We Are the Ones Who Need Perfecting.

- A. In order to perfect our love, God uses the body of Christ (His church -- a Bible-believing place of worship) to make otherwise dull rocks into fine jewels. (Ephesians 4:16)
  - 1. By working together, the church becomes like a physical body, which performs many functions for all of its members.
  - 2. While working together, we learn to be as one body, like the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one.
  - 3. Working together allows opportunities for deeper relationships and maturity. We eventually need these qualities, in our relationship with God.
    - a. In deeper relationships with others, we can experience the love of God.
    - b. In deeper relationships among believers, we can experience "fullness of joy" in Christ Jesus.
    - c. True love can be found; but, it is only found in Christ. Others are merely reflections of His love.
- B. If we fail in loving our brothers and sisters in Christ, we also fail in loving God. (1 John 4:20)
- C. It is by the Holy Spirit that we are able to love as Christ loves, "...because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Romans 5:5)
  - 1. It is impossible in our own strength to love as Christ loves; and so, the Holy Spirit is our help.
  - Part of learning to love God is learning to love one another in the family of God.

- 3. One must daily seek to be right with God and man.
  - a. It is good to please God, rather than man.
  - b. It is best to put God first in all things.



# Spiritual Truths

- God loved us in our sinful state, knowing we would be unable to return that love. (1 John 4:10)
- God gave up His most prized possession (His own Son), in order to communicate His purpose of drawing us to Himself. (Jeremiah 31:3; John 3:16)



## Lesson Material

When we receive the gift of salvation by asking Jesus to come and live inside our hearts, we begin an adventure that leads to life everlasting. This journey will end face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ, dwelling with Him in a place He is preparing. (John 14:3) He is not only preparing a place for His own, but he is also to preparing His own (all believers) for that place.

God's perfect love is characterized by His long-suffering and grace. It is these attributes of His love that will bring us to heaven, and not our own efforts. Our own efforts have a tendency to lead us astray. As human beings, failure and falling short of God's purpose is inevitable. (Proverbs 14:12; Romans 3:23) If it were up to us to obtain His promise of eternal life on our own, it would be impossible. This is why it can be said that God's love never changes, and His love never fails. His promises are still true, no matter how much one falls short. God's promise to bring us to heaven is the same yesterday, today and forever -even if we feel we have done Him wrong.

We have heard about the "love" of God -- how He sacrificed His only Son for us, as a substitute for our sin. We know the plan of salvation through accepting Jesus Christ as the Bearer of our sin. Now, upon learning these great truths from men and women of God who have taught from the Bible, it is up to us to make a decision. Will we live in sin, or will we love God and obey His word?

For those who already know Jesus through the gift of salvation, it is still possible that we are not aligned with Him, so that His promises can be obtained. Obedience aligns a believer with the perfect will of God. Forced obedience or fearful submission are allowed; but, they are not the perfect way to serve Him. Rather, serving God with one's whole heart, soul and might is the better way. (Deuteronomy 6:5)

Not everyone has a dramatic salvation experience such as the apostle Paul, who saw visions, was struck blind, and was then healed of his blindness. But, as teenagers, everyone is the same on one point -- we all suffer temptations, such as peer pressure, rebellion against parents and authority, or curiosity to try alcohol, drugs and sex. There are very few teenagers who do not suffer in these areas;

and, eventually, everyone suffers somewhere. This is why we need a Savior.

God loves us. He not only promises to meet our every heart's desire, but He wants to get involved in the everyday cares of our lives. He will help us with any problem. He will be on our side, when we align ourselves with Him. He will be our Friend, even if it means being our only friend. He will hurt with us, sit with us, talk with us, and laugh and cry with us. He will be our "all in all" for all of time. Is that not what all of us really want? He is Somone Who knows us better than anyone else, and Who still loves us for who we are.

He has great plans for our future; but He loves us today for who we are, even before tomorrow's successes. He has great dreams to fulfill in us, and He can develop in us His excellent qualities. No eye has seen or ear has heard of the great things that He has prepared for those who love Him. (1 Corinthians 2:9; Romans 9:23)

The friends we hang around with may be our key to hell or our key to heaven. If we know about God's love and have accepted Jesus as our personal Savior, then it is up to us to choose the right friends. If we love Christ and then go with those who are doing drugs and drinking alcohol, then we are participating in their rebellion. This is not pleasing to God. There is no fellowship of light with darkness (2 Corinthians 6:14); and we need to realize that our friends can lead us down the road to destruction. On the other hand, friends can help us on the pathway to life and godliness. Our friends will influence us. There are no exceptions to this rule. (1 Corinthians 15:33)

God is aligned with us, through His Son, Jesus. Aligning ourselves with Him

means obedience to His will and loving Him with our whole heart, mind and strength. (Deuteronomy 6:5) With His perfect love, He draws us to His side. Is this not the heart cry of a true believer?



## **Methods**

Ask the following questions to make sure the students know what is pleasing to God:

What brings punishment, or the wrath of God? Does disobeying the Ten Commandments? (Lying, stealing, and disobedience toward parents are some things that bring the wrath of God. Also disobeying any of the Ten Commandments will bring consequences upon oneself.)

How can we bring God's favor and blessing upon our lives? (Read the Word and do it. By loving and serving God with all of our mind, heart and strength, gives God opportunity to favor and bless us.)

If we have bitterness or anger against any of God's children, is He pleased or displeased; and what should be done about it? (When we have ought against our brother, we are not right with God; and we need to go to the person and make it right.)

If bad things happen, does that mean that God is temporarily out of love with us? Why, or why not? (No, because His love is the same yesterday, today and forever. See Hebrews 13:8.)

Have an altar call for anyone who wants to receive Christ into their heart.

Allow for a brief time to have students pray for one another, if there are disputes among them.

Ask the students to think of any questions they have about God and His love for them. Allow them to come to the teacher privately, if they are self-conscious in the company of their peers. Assure

them that God loves them, no matter what they have done; and encourage them to make their lives right with Him today - now. Do not discourage anyone who wants special prayer. Make an appointment with them, if necessary. Do not let them walk out of the class, not having had prayer for a problem.

Teach the students God's phone number, which is Jeremiah 33:3.

# Wrapping Up the Year

Volume 9

Lesson 52



# Bible References

**Ecclesiastes 12** 

Ieremiah 29:11

Psalms 37:4



#### **Theme**

This lesson is a summation of the year by the teacher, and an evaluation of the class by the students.



Ecclesiastes 12:1, 13-14

- 1 "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;"
- 13 "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.
- 14 "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."



**Psalms 90:12** 

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."



## Outline

- I. The Teacher Should Review Briefly the Topics that Were Discussed During the Year.
- A. This will help refresh the memories of the students.
- B. The teacher may begin by mentioning the purpose of the class, which was discussed in the very first lesson.
  - 1. The purpose of the class was to increase knowledge and understanding of the Bible.
  - 2. The purpose of the class was to increase love of and appreciation for the Bible.
  - The purpose of the class was to increase knowledge, understanding, love and appreciation for Jesus Christ.
- C. The teacher should review the highlights of the year.
  - 1. This can be an enjoyable time of sharing together.
  - 2. The teacher should highlight the character qualities of the students, as well as highlight the year's activities.

# II. The Teacher Should Give His Or Her Thoughts About the Class Year.

- A. The teacher may share what he or she liked best about the class, or what was the most memorable experience with the class.
- B. The youth leaders, if there are any, should share their parting thoughts with the students.
- III. The Teacher Must Give an Evaluation to the Students, So that They Can Assess the Class.
- A. The following questions should be written on a piece of paper, with enough space between each question so that the teenagers can write their answers. These questions are to be distributed to the students, with ample time to be completed. If a copy machine is not available, then the questions can be written on a blackboard or overhead projector, and the students can use blank paper. It is best that the evaluations remain anonymous, so that the students can be totally honest.
  - 1. What two things did you like best about the class?
  - 2. What two things did you like the least about the class?
  - 3. How could this class be improved?
  - 4. What two things did you like best about the teacher(s)?
  - 5. What two things did you like least about the teacher(s)?
  - 6. On a scale from one to ten -- one being the worst and ten being the best -- where would the you rate this class; and what is the reason for your rating?

- 7 On a scale from one to ten -- one being "very little" and ten being "very much" -- how well did this class help you learn and appreciate the Bible? What is the reason for your rating?
- 8. In what ways has this class been beneficial?
- 9. What was your favorite class lesson(s), and why?
- 10. Are there any additional comments the you would like to make?
- B. The teacher may add more questions to the evaluation. It is important to give the students as much time as necessary to fill out the questionnaire.
- IV. The Teacher Should Give an Encouraging Word to the Students, As They Go On to New Horizons.
- A. God has a plan for their lives. (Jeremiah 29:11)
- B. God will give them the desires of their hearts, if they will delight in Him. (Psalms 37:4)
- C. God will meet their needs. (Philippians 4:19)
- D. God cares for them; and He will see them through all of life's battles. (Psalms 55:22; 1 Peter 5:7)
- E. If they commit to the Lord whatever they do, then God will allow them to succeed. (Proverbs 16:3)



# Spiritual Truths

- We must listen to others, if we are to grow.
- Evaluations are necessary for growth.



# Lesson Material

The last class meeting should be a time for review, evaluation, and if possible, refreshments. The teacher may want to throw a party; but, whatever is done, it is absolutely critical that the students fill out the class evaluation. The teacher must allow enough time for this. The most important part of this last meeting is not the overview of the year, but it is the students' critique of the class.

A teacher may be reluctant to give an evaluation, because it is tough to deal with criticism, and some teenagers can be particularly insensitive and brutal. Yet, evaluations are necessary for growth and improvement. No one likes to be critiqued; but it is essential, if we are going to develop our calling and our class. We will never know how successful we are. unless we receive feedback. Evaluations are feedback. The best judges of our teaching abilities and classroom success are those who have had to listen to us from week to week. The way to find out how well we are doing as teachers is to ask the students. The truth may hurt, but it will also help sharpen our skills. We should

prepare for some stinging comments, as well as lavish praise.

If the teacher is really bold, he or she may want to go over some of the questions, as part of a class discussion. This should be done after the students have already filled out the written evaluation. This will keep them honest. Many of the students' comments may be eye-opening.

The teacher's overview of the year should not be long. A quick summary of the teaching subjects and the class accomplishments will suffice.

The teacher should pray that the Holy Spirit gives him or her an encouraging word to share with the students, as they prepare to take the next step in their lives.



## Methods

A party is always a good idea for the last class meeting. The teacher may want to give each student a gift.

The teacher and youth leaders may share their favorite class experiences; and the students may be given the opportunity to do the same.

The teacher may wish to have a testimony time, in which everyone is given a chance to share what God has done for them.

The teacher may want to have a special time of prayer with the students.