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# Strengthening Your New Heart

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## INTRODUCTION

**Ezekiel 11:19-20** *"And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God."*

Congratulations! If you have made a decision to surrender to Christ and to believe in Him for salvation, then you are a new creation! (2 Corinthians 5:17) Not only are you a new creation, but God has also given you a new heart.

The main purpose of this Personal Study for Christian Growth is to assist you in how to strengthen your new heart as you journey toward the abundant life Jesus Christ desires that all of His followers possess as they learn to live in Him. Each of its brief lessons lays hold on the heart of the Christian faith. The major doctrines or teachings are approached in a simple and easy-to-understand manner. The lessons containing doctrinal studies are immediately followed by lessons to help you approach the practical aspects of the basic Christian truths.

All references to man and mankind throughout this volume should be understood in the generic sense; that is, to include male and female, unless the context dictates otherwise.

It is helpful, while studying these lessons, that you look up the Bible passages mentioned. This will aid you in becoming more familiar with your Bible and serve to form a solid foundation for the study material. All Bible passages quoted are from the New American Standard Version, unless otherwise designated. At the beginning of your Bible is a table of contents listing all the books in the order in which they appear in the Bible, along with their beginning page numbers.

At the close of each lesson in this book, there is a brief quiz to assist you in grasping the important truths of the lesson. It will be very beneficial if you take this immediately after studying the material presented. Then check your answers with those in the back of the book to make sure you have grasped the heart of the issues.

Also found in the back of your handbook is a glossary of important Christian terms with which you should become familiar as you continue to grow. It will help you to know what they mean and also help you to know when others are using the terms correctly. I've also included a small sample of some of the most-often-asked questions about the Christian faith and their scriptural answers is also set forth in the back of the book for your benefit. May the Lord Jesus Christ bless you richly as you pursue a closer relationship with Him through this beginning study of how to live in Christ.

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## LESSON 1

### THE BIBLE: GOD'S HOLY WORD [BIBLIOLOGY]

*For,*

*“All flesh is like grass,  
and all its glory like the flower of grass,  
the grass withers, and the flower falls off,  
but the word of the Lord abides forever.”*

*And this is the word which was preached to you.*

**(1 Peter 1:24-25)**

The Bible is the source book for the Christian faith! It is the Christian's foundation of authority. It gives direction and purpose to your new life in Jesus Christ. This direction comes from five important sources as outlined in 2 Timothy 3:14-16. This passage points out the ways the Bible helps us.

1. **It leads us to salvation through our faith in Jesus Christ by revealing God's redemptive plan.**
2. **It affords us a resource for teaching.** That is, the Bible reveals God's standards of life an expression He expects us to employ in our daily lives.
3. **It establishes the basis for reproof.** This means that the Bible points out our shortcomings much as a mirror reflects our image. It is God's method, through the Holy Spirit, of convicting us of sin.
4. **It presents guidelines for correction.** The Bible does not leave us standing convicted but shows us the way to correct our attitudes, speech, and behavior. In essence the Bible is the Christian's source of constructive criticism.
5. **It assists us in training for righteousness.** The Bible continually teaches us how to develop and maintain right relationships. There are five basic relationships the Bible aids the Christian in developing:
  - a) *The relationship with God and Jesus Christ;*
  - b) *The relationship between marriage partners;*
  - c) *The relationship with one's children and vice versa;*
  - d) *The relationship with one's neighbor;*
  - e) *The relationship with one's self.*

The purpose for all this direction is found in the next verse, 2 Timothy 3:17—“that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” It is God's intention that His followers be “set” and “outfitted” for the work He has called them to do. The Bible is His basic means of accomplishing this goal. A father once gave his young son excellent advice well worth our consideration. He said, “The Bible doesn't belong on the shelf, but rather, it belongs in your hand, under your eyes, and in your heart.” May it be so with you.

Someone once called the Bible a Divine Library, and so it is. It is made up of sixty-six books. The Old Testament, originally written in Hebrew, contains thirty-nine books, while the New Testament, originally written in Greek, contains twenty-seven. The Bible, under God's authority, was written by as many as

fifty-five different writers over a period of sixteen hundred years. Peter tells us how this task was accomplished in 2 Peter 1:20-21. The phrase "moved by the Holy Spirit" carries the idea of being "borne" or "carried" toward a goal. This idea is best illustrated by the game of chess. Each piece is "moved, borne, or carried" toward a goal established in the mind of the player. Just as the player approaches the game from his or her own perspective of preparation, personality, and thought, so the writers of the Bible were used by God to write out of their own social and religious backgrounds, understandings, and characters. God thus "moved" his message of redemption through the minds and hearts of his writers.

It is necessary for us at this point to grasp the significance of two important words: inspiration and revelation. The oldest definition of inspiration is "to breathe into deliberately and forcefully, such as blowing up a balloon." The Bible teaches us that God "breathed" into His Word and it became alive. It is because of God's inspiration that His Word will not fall to the ground useless, but will accomplish what God intends for it to accomplish (Isaiah 55:11). When God inspires men and women, they too become alive and suitable for the task for which they have been called. Revelation, on the other hand, means to draw back the drapes or to uncover something so that all may see what heretofore had been hidden. The combination of these two actions produces the desired result. When God wanted His people to know a body of truth, He revealed the content of the truth to human beings. These persons were then inspired to communicate this truth to others. Both the truth and the communicators received inspiration and became alive.

Down through the years biblical scholars have debated the method God used to achieve the writing of His sacred word. Two main suggestions have come forth from these years of study and evaluation: (1) the verbal inspiration method, and (2) the thought inspiration method. Those scholars holding to the verbal inspiration idea say that God inspired every word and that the writers were simply stenographers. The group supporting the thought inspiration idea suggest that God inspired the thought and that each writer wrote from his own perspective and through his own personality. Regardless of which method God used, we know that the Holy Spirit guarded the writing by moving the authors to write what God wanted written.

It is interesting to note that the Bible has a unity of theme and has only one main key to its understanding. The theme is "The unfolding of God's redemptive purpose for mankind." The key to this theme is Jesus Christ the Son of the living God. Once a person has accepted Jesus Christ as personal savior, the Bible will open up like a rose, releasing its wealth of beauty, excitement, and message.

## REVIEW

1. What are the five ways the Bible helps a person?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
  
2. After Jesus a person establishes His personal relationship with Christ, what are the basic relationships of life?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
  
3. How many books are in the:
  - a) Bible?
  - b) Old Testament?
  - c) New Testament?
  
4. What does the phrase "moved by the Holy Spirit" mean?
  
5. What is meant by the "verbal inspiration" idea?
  
6. What is meant by the "thought inspiration" idea?
  
7. What is inspiration?
  
8. What is revelation?

9. What is the main overall theme of the Bible?

10. What is the only key to unlock the Bible's wealth?

## LESSON 2

### HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

*"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15 KJV).*

The study of the Bible, God's Holy Word, is extremely important in the spiritual growth of a Christian. There is no way to grow "in Christ" apart from the study of the Bible.

If you are to gain what the Lord has in store for you through Bible study, you will have to adhere to several important principles. **First**, you should provide yourself with a version of the Bible with which you feel comfortable and which you can understand. It should be of convenient size to carry and have a good clear print of readable size. Your Bible should have cross references, maps, and a concordance. The selection of a Bible is very important. It would be wise to seek some assistance from a minister or mature Christian friend in the selection of your Bible. **Second**, set aside a definite time and place for your Bible study. The time should be when you are at your best. The place should be free from distraction if possible. **Third**, consider this time as an appointment with God and strive to keep it at all costs. Remember, there is no substitute for studying your Bible. **Fourth**, you must fight off all urges to do other things in place of your study. This is a battle a Christian must fight constantly—the battle between the GOOD and the BEST. **Fifth**, it is important to pray before you begin your study. You will need to ask for the Holy Spirit to interpret God's will to you. Since the Holy Spirit is really the author of the Bible, He is the only one who can adequately reveal its truths to you. You will need to ask God to help you understand what you have read. **Sixth**, you will need to seek the Holy Spirit's guidance in the application of His truth to your everyday life. It is also necessary that you read expectantly, thoughtfully, and carefully. You will need to ask yourself four important questions:

1. *What is the setting of the Scripture passage?*
2. *What does this passage teach me to believe?*
3. *What does this passage teach me to become?*
4. *What does this passage teach me to do?*

**Seventh**, when you read the Bible, be sure to read slowly and with imagination. Try to picture the action in your mind's eye. Mentally "crawl" into the picture, look around, watch the people, listen to their words, and try to grasp the mood of the scene. It would be helpful to "read" with a pencil. Jot down impressions, ideas, and lessons. Where the Lord reveals an important truth, write it down so you will have it when you come to this passage again in the future. Be sure to close your study with prayer, asking the Lord to help you to use and share what you have read. Don't forget to thank Him for "speaking" to your heart.

There are many methods you could use to study the Bible. The following five methods are the most commonly used today:

## 1. The Cover-to-Cover Study Method

This method is simply to start at the beginning and read straight through the Bible. This is a rewarding method and should be done at least once in order to gain the overview of the whole biblical narration. Here is a suggested plan you might follow:

January -	Genesis and Exodus
February -	Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
March -	Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel
April -	1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles
May -	Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job
June -	Psalms
July -	Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah
August -	Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Isaiah
September -	Hosea through Malachi
October -	Matthew through John
November -	Acts through Colossians
December -	1 Thessalonians through Revelation

## 2. The Book-by-Book Method

More Bible scholars use this method than any other. This method of study is very rewarding when a few simple rules are followed such as:

a. Read the background of the book:

- (1) Where was it written?
- (2) When was it written?
- (3) By whom was it written and to whom?
- (4) What is the purpose of the book?

b. Look for the overall theme and subthemes.

c. Read it more than once.

d. If possible, read the entire book at one sitting.

## 3. The Great-Chapter Study Method

There are 1,189 chapters in the Bible, but usually only 40 are singled out for concentrated study. These have been called the "heart" of the Word of God:

Genesis 1	John 3
Genesis 3	John 14
Exodus 20	John 15
Leviticus 19	Acts 2
Deuteronomy 28	Acts 11
Psalms 1	Romans 8
Psalms 19	1 Corinthians 13
Psalms 23	1 Corinthians 15
Psalms 37	Galatians 5
Psalms 90	Ephesians 2

Psalm 100	Ephesians 4
Psalm 119	Ephesians 6
Proverbs 1	1 Thessalonians 4
Proverbs 31	Hebrews 11
Ecclesiastes 12	1 Peter 2
Isaiah 53	2 Peter 3
Matthew 5	1 John 1
Mark 5	Revelation 2
Luke 2	Revelation 3
Luke 15	Revelation 22

#### 4. The Topical Study Method

This is a favorite study method of many people. It is a method that will take you on a crisscross venture of the Bible touching many people and situations. The main strength of this method is that it zeroes in on one topic at a time. Some of the more interesting and rewarding topics for study are:

Angels	Marriage
Atonement	Miracles
Baptism	Obedience
The Blood	Parables
The Church	Peace
Creation	Prayer
Death	Purity
Eternal Life	The Rapture
Faith	Repentance
The Fall of Man	Resurrection
Forgiveness	Sanctification
Heaven	Satan
Hell	Sin
Holiness	Spiritual Fruit
The Holy Spirit	Spiritual Gifts
Hope	Temptation
Joy	The Trinity
The Kingdom of God	The Word
The Lord's Supper	Works
Love	

#### 5. The Biblical-Personality Study Method

This is perhaps one of the most enjoyable methods of study. It allows you an immediate identification with a "face" or personality. You can gain much from his or her experiences as the person lives before you. The following personalities will afford you rich, true-life lessons:

Aaron	Joseph
Abraham	Joshua
Adam	Judas
Ahab	Lazarus
Andrew	Levi

Balaam  
Barnabas  
Cain  
Daniel  
David  
Deborah  
Dorcas  
Elijah  
Elisha  
Esther  
Eve  
Ezra  
Gideon  
Herod  
Hezekiah  
Isaac  
Jacob  
James  
Japheth  
Jeremiah  
Jezebel  
Job  
John  
John the Baptist  
Jonah

Lot  
Mark  
Mary and Martha  
Mary the Virgin  
Moses  
Nehemiah  
Nicodemus  
Noah  
Paul  
Peter  
Philemon  
Philip  
Pilate  
Rachel  
Rebekah  
Ruth  
Samson  
Samuel  
Sarah  
Saul  
Solomon  
Stephen  
Timothy  
Vashti

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

Regardless of which method or combination of methods you choose to assist you in studying God's word, be sure that:

1. It is consistent, day by day.
2. It is organized.
3. It has a goal.
4. It is saturated with prayer.

## REVIEW

1. What are seven principles of Bible study?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
  - f)
  - g)
  
2. What are five commonly used methods of Bible study?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
  
3. How many chapters are there in the Bible?
  
4. What four rules will aid you in developing a good habit of Bible study?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)

## LESSON 3

### GOD: THE FATHER [THEOLOGY]

*"Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable" (Isaiah 40:28).*

When we approach the subject of God, we come face to face with the greatest truths that can occupy the human mind. This subject is so vast and so deep that a lifelong study would do little more than scratch the surface. No one has ever seen God, nor has anyone ever fully conceived Him. Yet, the Bible paints many pictures of God so that we can catch the reality of His nature and attributes.

There are three important points we must understand at the very beginning:

1. **The Bible does not argue the existence of God.** In Genesis 1:1, the Bible simply declares that in the beginning, whenever that was, God was there.
2. **The Bible shows God to be inclusive in nature**, as reflected in Genesis 1:27—"And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."  
  
Men and women are always included in such references to "man" or "mankind" in the Bible. Likewise, all pronouns in reference to God express personality and not sex. The writer intends it to be so considered in such references throughout this volume.
3. **The Bible also challenges the skeptical person** by declaring that "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Psalm 53:1).

Perhaps the best way to approach the subject of God is first to focus our attention on His nature and then His attributes.

1. **God is holy.** Isaiah gives us the best picture of the holiness of God in Isaiah chapter 6. This encounter with God (as all such encounters) called for a response from Isaiah. We can see through Isaiah's experience the awesome reverence for God's moral excellence in that He is higher, holier, and superior to any and all human beings.
2. **God is Spirit.** Jesus said this of his Father in John 4:23-24: If we worship God, we will do so by faith. We cannot see Him, yet His footprints are everywhere. He is not limited by space or time.
3. **God is righteous.** This aspect of God's nature can best be seen through a threefold expression:
  - a) God's mandatory righteousness as found in the Ten Commandments, God's rules for social living (Exodus 20:1-18).
  - b) God's punitive righteousness as found in His command for administering justice (Romans 2:1-16).
  - c) God's redemptive righteousness as seen in His patient desire for all men and women to come to Him through faith in Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:8-9).

4. **God is love.** This is perhaps the all-inclusive portrait of God's true character. The Bible abounds with verse after verse proclaiming this important truth. The Scriptures reveal three objects of God's love:

- a) His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:17).
- b) The followers of His Son (John 14:20-24).
- c) The sinner still lost in His sin (John 3:16).

The Scriptures also show us three ways God reveals His love to us:

- a) Through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ (John 3:16 and 1 John 4:7-10).
  - b) Through the forgiveness of sin and pardon from its consequences (Ephesians 2:1-9).
  - c) Through the security of His followers (Romans 8:35-39).
5. God is the source of all truth. Every major education discipline has its share of truth, but only in God does all truth come together. A person rejects truth when he turns his back on God (Romans 11:33-36).

Over the years biblical scholars have attempted to bring forth an accepted list of attributes or qualities of God. Even though there is no one list, the following are the most readily accepted attributes of God. Each is like a brush stroke on the painter's canvas revealing another portion of God's portrait.

- 1. *God is self-existent* (Genesis 1:1). He did not come into being from some other source. He is the source of all things. If a person cannot accept this important truth, he will never be able to establish a foundation for any other spiritual beliefs.
- 2. *God is omnipresent, or ever-present* (Psalm 139:1-12). God is not limited to anyone place, time, or people. He is God of all. One cannot raise a hand anywhere without thrusting it into the very presence of God. You are always in God's presence!
- 3. *God is omniscient, or all-knowing* (Psalm 139:1-6 and Matthew 10:29-31). Since God is everywhere at the same time, He knows everything that is going on. He has foreknowledge of the future but does not impose His will on us. He knows what we say, what we think, and even our motives for our actions.
- 4. *God is omnipotent, or all-powerful* (Genesis 1:1-31). The only limit to God's power is that which He superimposes upon Himself (Genesis 18:20-33). God has the power to cut across the divine laws that He has established if He so wishes. When this happens, the phenomena are called miracles, such as:
  - a) The ten plagues in Egypt (Exodus 7:8-12:30);
  - b) The parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:13-31);
  - c) The falling of the walls of Jericho (Joshua 6:1-20);
  - d) The virgin birth of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-27).

5. *God is immutable* (Malachi 3:6-7 and Hebrews 13:8). God is unchanging in His character, His nature, and His purpose for mankind. He is consistent in His dealings with humanity and can be relied upon to fulfill His promises.
6. *God is immense* (Romans 11:33-36). A small child has offered the best explanation of the saying, "God is so big that all of heaven can't hold Him, and yet He can fit into my heart." Where could one find a simpler or better explanation?
7. *God is eternal* (2 Peter 3:8 and Revelation 1:8). We think in segments of time: seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and years; but God deals with the endless period of time called eternity. Our minds cannot grasp this fact, but the Scriptures reveal God's power and wisdom to do so. He is not bound by our time schedule. He has His own timetable. We would be wise to align ourselves with Him and seek to walk in His sequence of time.

It is important that we study the nature and attributes of God in order that we may learn more about Him and the ways He has chosen to reveal Himself to us.

## REVIEW

1. What does the Bible say about the existence of God?
  
2. "The \_\_\_\_\_ has said in his \_\_\_\_\_, 'there is no God'" (Psalm 53:1).
3. What are five main characteristics that describe the nature of God?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
4. In what three ways is God's righteousness revealed?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
5. In what three ways does God reveal His love to us?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
6. List the seven attributes of God as given in the lesson.
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
  - f)
  - g)

## LESSON 4

### HOW CAN WE APPROACH AN ALMIGHTY GOD?

*"With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints" (Ephesians 6:18).*

It is impossible to progress in the Christian life unless you develop a deep prayer life. This does not come automatically. You will have to work at developing and maintaining your prayer life.

Just as you practice the important aspects of any activity in which you hoped to achieve a level of competence, so you must practice the art of praying in order to develop a good habit of prayer. Jesus taught us to pray and not to lose heart (Luke 18:1). Paul told us always to maintain an attitude of prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18).

There are over 7,000 promises in the Bible, and a large portion of them are concerned with prayer. Here are just a few of the many promises involving prayer:

- |                   |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. Matthew 7:7-12 | 6. John 15:7, 16 |
| 2. Matthew 18:19  | 7. James 1:5     |
| 3. Matthew 21:22  | 8. 1 John 1:9    |
| 4. Mark 11:24     | 9. John 5:14-15  |
| 5. John 14:13     | 10. Psalm 37:4-5 |

Prayer, as these examples show, is nothing more than approaching God reverently and asking Him for what we feel is important. Prayer, next to the study of God's Word, is probably the greatest builder of faith within the Christian experience. Prayer is the means whereby we glorify God, have fellowship with Him, and gain strength and direction for everyday living.

There are three main types of prayers: petition or supplication, intercession, and praise. Petitions are simply addressing God on your own behalf and asking for some personal need. Intercession, on the other hand, is asking God to bless or assist another person. Praise is giving forth your love in adoration and worship. A healthy prayer life is one that maintains a good balance of all three areas.

The use of a personal prayer list is extremely helpful to your prayer life. It affords you some organization and direction in praying. This prayer list, bearing the names of family, friends, and events can be carried with you and utilized while walking, driving (carefully of course), while riding on a bus, taking a coffee break, and in many other ways. As you become more consistent and adamant about prayer, you should begin to see and feel God's power being reflected in your life. A prayer list, however, should never be considered as a report card on God in relation to your requests and His answers. Some people have found the "praying hand" method quite rewarding to their prayer life. This is simply using your hand to remind you of the specific areas of need. The following suggestions might prove helpful:

1. The open hand reminds us to praise and acknowledge God for all His blessings and goodness to us. At this point you would want to name your blessings one by one and thank God for them.
2. The index finger reminds us to pray for teachers and pastors since it is the "pointing" finger.
3. The large finger reminds us to pray for our leaders in government.
4. The ring finger reminds us to pray for those who are ill since it is the weakest finger on our hand.
5. The small finger reminds us to pray for ourselves.
6. The thumb reminds us to pray for those closest to us since it is closest to us when we extend our hand.

Even though this is a simple reminder method, it has proved to be quite successful for those who use it consistently. You will find that names and faces will flash across your mind as you mentally move from finger to finger.

If you are to have a fruitful prayer life, there are several fundamental attitudes necessary for the establishment of power in prayer:

1. You must develop a sincere hatred for sin.
2. You must call sin by name and not try to rationalize its presence in your life. (For example, gluttony is sin, not just the cause of some extra padding.)
3. You will need to separate yourself from the things of the world by establishing biblical priorities for your time, talents, resources, and energy.
4. You must cut loose from your old habits and put on the new man (2 Corinthians 5:17).
5. You must be consistent in your Christian life-style regardless of where you might be and with whom you might be associating.
6. You must, by confession, maintain a clean heart and mind (1 John 1:9).

Here are some time-tested suggestions to help you develop your prayer habit:

1. Learn to acknowledge God immediately upon waking each morning. It has been proved that the first thought usually sets the emotional tone of the day.
2. Set a specific time aside each day to approach God. It is most helpful if your prayer time accompanies your Bible study. Fifteen minutes of prayer daily will change your life while an hour of prayer each day will revolutionize your life.
3. The use of a prayer list will help you pray more specifically.
4. The spirit or attitude of prayer should not end with the "amen." Paul admonished us to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18).
5. Spend enough time in prayer to really meet God and have fellowship.
6. Be sure to spend time listening to God. Give Him an opportunity to respond to your prayers.

7. Pray out loud if possible. This helps to hold your attention and diminishes the possibility of your mind wandering.
8. Pray when you are at your best. If you are a "morning" person, that is the best time to encounter the Father.
9. Use "arrow" prayers throughout the day. This type of prayer is intercessory prayer. It is simply asking God to help the stranded motorist on the freeway or the tired mother on the bus or the person being rushed to the hospital in the ambulance, and so forth.
10. Find a special place to go for those times of tremendous importance when beseeching the Father is the most consuming demand at the moment. Perhaps this place will be in a city park, on the beach, in a woods, by a river, on the patio, by a scenic window, or in a backyard garden. Wherever it is, make it your spot for heavy praying.

As you develop your daily habit of prayer, like the study of God's word, you will find several things taking place. First, you will become more like Jesus in your thoughts and actions. Second, you will gain glimpses of God's glory and power in your own life. You will also experience spiritual nourishment from the moments you spend with God. You will find yourself being a blessing to those around you. This will be evidenced from their own words to you. Finally, you will receive more direction and purpose in everyday matters.

Before we leave this subject of prayer, there are several bad habits to avoid if your prayer life is to become effective. The first is that of allowing feeling to dictate when and if we pray. When you don't feel like praying, that's probably the time you need to pray most. Also be very careful of substituting some "good" activity for your prayer time. If you ever become too busy to pray, something is seriously wrong in your spiritual life. Finally, be careful not to allow well-meaning friends to impose their methods of prayer, length and type of prayers, or prayer postures upon you. You must develop your own type of prayer life, one with which you are comfortable and one which brings forth spiritual fruit.

## REVIEW

1. Most of the 7,000 promises in the Bible are connected with \_\_\_\_\_.
2. What are the three main types of prayer?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
3. Explain the "praying hand" method of prayer.
4. If you are to develop power in prayer, what are six attitudes needed to accomplish this task?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
  - f)
5. What importance is a prayer list to your prayer life?
6. List ten suggested ingredients in developing the habit of prayer.
7. What three bad habits should you avoid in the development of your prayer life?

## LESSON 5

### MAN: GOD'S CROWNING CREATION [ANTHROPOLOGY]

*"What is man that Thou dost take thought of him? And the son of man, that Thou dost care for him? Yet Thou hast made him a little lower than God, And dost crown him with glory and majesty" (Psalm 8:4-6)*

Man is a marvel to doctors and scientists! His complex physical makeup amazes all who study him. He is truly unique in his being. A careful study of the creation story recorded in Genesis 1 reveals that God created all things, but created only male and female in His image (Genesis 1:27). There have been many definitions suggested for the word "image." Some have said it means an outline of God. Others say it is like a shadow of God, while others refer to "image" as a likeness of God. All of these point to the meaning of the word, but its definition is more complex than these ideas suggest. There are several passages of Scripture that offer us a combination of qualities included in the meaning of the phrase "in the image of God." Three of them are:

1. **Ecclesiastes 7:29.** In this passage the writer tells us that after much investigation and evaluation of men, he concludes that God created them with an original righteousness. This simply means that man possessed the capacity to do right in relationship to God. The writer then goes on to say, however, that man chose to do otherwise.
2. **Ephesians 4:24.** This passage adds a few more strokes to our picture of the word "image." Here Paul tells us that man originally was created with a capacity for truth and holiness. Man could know, recognize, and respond to truth. God gave him that privilege. Man also had the ability to live a holy or blameless life; he could do it. It was a reality at the beginning.
3. **Colossians 3:8-10.** In this passage Paul is stating his case for the "new" man that emerges in Christ, who has restored to man the original state of his pure relationship with God. In other words, God created man to respond to a special relationship or fellowship with Him.

Now, when we put all three of those pieces together, we can see that the phrase "in the image of God" carries the connotation of man having been created with the capacity to live a righteous life as God does. But man decided to do it his own way. Man was also created with the capacity to respond to God in a manner of holiness and truth as God exhibited it to him. Lastly, God created man to love and respond to love (as God responds to love) and thereby maintain a true give-and-take relationship. Yes, when God created man, He gave man the capacity to be all God wanted him to be—a personality like God Himself.

We must go one step further if we are to see why man fell away from God and thus marred the image of his likeness to God. The answer is clearly laid out for us in Genesis 2:15-17. Did you catch it? God gave man free will! He allowed man the privilege to make choices between right and wrong. This is the greatest power a person has—the power of choice. He can choose to accept or reject God, Jesus, or the Bible. He can choose between good and evil, heaven and hell, life or death. He has the power. God does not want robots as His children. He wants His children to respond to their capacities and maintain a loving relationship with Him. Man can choose whether he wants to relate to God in this way or not.

What did man do with this great power? The Bible records that answer for us in Genesis 3:1-12. Man, in all of his newness and with all his potential and capacities to be Godlike, squandered his great power by

falling victim—by choice—to the temptation of the devil. He chose to rebel against God through disobedience. Almost all sin carries with it this same progression of rebellion through disobedience by choice.

The state of fallen man went from bad to worse, as we find recorded for us on every page of the Bible. God Himself responds to man's rebellion by stating that He was sorry He created man (Genesis 6:1-6) and that He would cleanse His world by the removal of this attitude of sin by a flood (Genesis 6:7, 17). Later on, God again responded to man's sin (Genesis 18:20; 19:24-25). The apostle Paul gives us a summary of the progression of man and his sin in Romans 1:18-32.

One would think that God would be ready to give up on man. Not so! In fact, just the opposite. He once again initiated His love, but this time through His Son, Jesus Christ (John 3:16). It is through this relationship that God continues to call His creatures back to Himself. It is not His desire that any be lost or separated from Him (2 Peter 3:9).

The call to return to God comes to man from many different directions. First of all, God calls men through His written word, the Bible. He also calls through ministers as they preach and teach the word of God. He often calls men and women through concerned friends and acquaintances. Music is sometimes the medium through which a person's heart is touched for God. Yes, God uses many ways and means to call us back to Him and to the renewed relationship we can have through Jesus Christ. God also calls us to specific levels of response to Him and His purpose. Some of the most important relationships to which we are called, according to William Barclay<sup>1</sup>, are:

1. To salvation through Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:9). It is God's will that men and women should be rescued from the life of sin, destruction, and eternal separation (John 3:18, 36).
2. Back to holiness (1 Thessalonians 4:1-8). To be sanctified simply means to be set aside for a special and different purpose, a holy and "above normal" purpose. This special purpose is seen most clearly in our witness for God, which will be discussed in lesson 10.
3. To an attitude of peace (1 Corinthians 1:15). This means primarily an emotional stability. It is an assurance that, regardless of what the future holds, we know who holds it.
4. To a unique relationship in grace (Galatians 1:6-1). The uniqueness is in the fact that grace is a gift from God. We cannot buy it, win it, or earn it. It is God's unmerited love for His children.
5. To fellowship in Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:9). As children of God we need not crawl through life on our hands and knees. We are offered daily fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. To share the kingdom of God and the glory of Christ as children of God through Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 2:10-12). The invitation is to come and enjoy the very presence of God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son for all eternity.

Man is definitely God's crowning act of creation. He is "packed" with all the essential possibilities for becoming the person he was created to be, with all of the privileges and responsibilities of faithfulness. He has the power to choose how he will respond to God's call. But along with the freedom of choice comes an accountability for how he utilizes this tremendous power.

<sup>1</sup> William Barclay's Daily Study Bible WESTMINSTER JOHN KNOX PRESS

## REVIEW

1. In one sentence, define the phrase "in the image of God."
  
2. What is man's greatest power?
  
3. Give three instances of God's response to man's wholesale sin.
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  
4. List some of the means God uses to call men and women to Himself.
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  
5. Name six relationships to which God calls men and specific women today.
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
  - f)

## LESSON 6

### HOW TO EXERCISE YOUR GREATEST POWER

*“And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and said to them, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me,’ (Mark 8:34)*

Whether you realize it or not, your life swings on the hinges of decisions. Life is a continual series of decisions! Your decision or indecision today about a particular matter will have a great influence on tomorrow.

Making its way throughout society today is a saying that we have all heard. We have heard it so many times that perhaps its great truth has been blurred somewhat. The saying referred to is this: "Today is the first day of the rest of your life." This simple statement is packed with tremendous truth. It is calling our attention to the importance of the present moment as a doorway through which we approach tomorrow, next week, and next year...the doorway of decision.

The point was made in the previous lesson that God created us as free moral agents, free to choose how we would relate to Him through our several godlike capacities. We have, through the love of God, an awesome power within our personal being—the power of choice, our greatest power. The Bible, in numerous passages, gives us directions for the use of this power in the relationships of life. There are really only five basic relationships referred to directly in the Bible. We looked at these in lesson 1, but by way of reminder they are:

1. *The relationship with God through Jesus Christ;*
2. *The relationship with one's marriage partner;*
3. *The relationship with one's children and vice versa;*
4. *The relationship with one's neighbors;*
5. *The relationship with one's self.*

Every day we make choices within these relationships that affect them and contribute considerably to our joy or sadness. Our decisions can bring forth emotional strain or emotional release. We can build up these relationships or tear them down. We can, by exercising our power of choice, make our existence on earth one of thrill and adventure or one of drudgery and despair. We have the power—the power of choice.

Since we have this awesome power at our fingertips, it only stands to reason that we seek direction and purpose for its application. The Bible is our source of help. Almost every page is aglow with directions for making choices. A careful reading of the prophets will afford us case histories of persons refusing to accept God's guidance in decision making. We can and should learn much from the mistakes of others. As we read story after story of how these ancient people exercised their decision-making powers, we can immediately learn a fundamental lesson. If they chose to abide by God's teaching, He blessed them; when they chose to do things in their own ways, we see them fall under the weight of the consequences of those misdirected choices. God warned the people of that day of the consequences of unfaithfulness (doing things in their own ways) but equally promised them blessings for their faithfulness—doing things His way. Jesus, in order to drive this point home, issued an invitation to His listeners in Matthew 11:28-30 when He said: "Come to Me,

all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

Jesus seems to be saying that, after we have worn ourselves out and broken ourselves down trying to do life our way, we should come to Him. He implies that He will not only give us rest but will "fit" a life to us. This new life will be one we can carry and handle. But this doesn't happen automatically! We must make the decision, by exercising our power of choice, to abandon our efforts to live in our own way and to accept Him and His way. When we do that, we will have set the stage for most of our future choices. By accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior, we figuratively "hook up" with Christ and begin going in the direction He desires us to go. We then begin to make our decisions in light of His will for our lives. Once we establish this solid base for exercising our power of choice, we can begin using the biblical principles recorded for us as guidelines for making the right decisions. There are many guidelines given in Scripture, but the following five have been proved over the years to be the most readily applied.

1. We can simply, in prayer, ask what Jesus would do in this particular situation. Peter tells us that Jesus is our example to follow (1 Peter 2:21) and, therefore, sets the tone of our decisions. We are also encouraged to seek the mind or will of Christ for our lives. Christ told us that He was our example to follow (John 13:15). Asking this question allows the Holy Spirit direct access to our minds, thus giving us specific leadership in knowing what Christ would do. James tells us we need not try to decide on our own (James 1:5).
2. When our decisions deal with the basic relationships of life, we can apply the rules for social living given by God in Exodus 20. These Ten Commandments have never been retracted or discarded by God. They give us precise direction in relating to God, parents, acquaintances, and neighbors.
3. The "golden rule" (Matthew 7:12) is still one of the best guides for decision making even though it has been abused considerably by those of the world. It simply means to sit down and decide how you would like to be treated and then go out and do it first to others. If you don't want to be lied to, laughed at, ignored, or treated unkindly, then don't do it to others.
4. Paul gave us another guide for the decision-making process in stating, "... whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). A simple three-question test will help determine our direction here:
  - a) Can this act be done in the name of Jesus?
  - b) Will my action be a good example to other Christians?
  - c) Will my decision bring glory to God?
5. The last helpful guideline again comes from the apostle Paul. He had been faced with the question of whether it was right for a Christian to eat meat that had been offered to an idol. Most of the fourteenth lesson of Romans deals with this question. He gives us three important handles on the question of decision making.
  - a) Each one of us will give an account of himself or herself to God (v. 12).
  - b) Nothing is unclean in itself; it's what we make it to be in our minds (v. 14).

- c) When we can't do something in the full faith that it is all right to do, then it is sin to do it (v. 23). James also contributes to this point by reminding us that when we know what is right and we don't do it, this is also a sin (James 4:17).

No matter how we approach the subject of decision making, we cannot get away from the fact that God has bestowed upon us a tremendous power—the power of choice. He has given it to us because He created us with the capacities to handle it thoughtfully and accurately. It is one of the greatest privileges we have, but it carries with it an awesome responsibility and accountability; therefore, use it wisely according to the instructions.

## 1. REVIEW

2. What is your greatest power?
  
2. What are five basic relationships of life?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
  
3. Where do we find the directions for the use of the power of choice?
  
4. List the five major scriptural guidelines we should follow in exercising the power of choice.
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
  
5. The freedom to choose is an awesome privilege. What goes along with this privilege?
  - a)
  - b)

## LESSON 7

### **SIN: THE DARK BLOT [SOTERIOLOGY]**

*"...for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory God..."*  
(Romans 3:23)

*"...as it is written, 'There is none righteous, not even one...'"*  
(Romans 3:10)

*"Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death" (James 1:15).*

Whatever man is, he is not what God intended him to be, and the reason is sin. Our key verses for this lesson point out this truth in vivid color. Several years ago Billy Graham stood before a gathering of several thousand people and made one of the most astute observations about sin that has ever fallen on human ears. He pointed out various statistics to show how sin has saturated the human race and then said, "sin has lost its sinfulness in America." He meant, of course, that most people disregard the biblical teaching on sin and its cancerous consequences. Multitudes of people continue to live as if there is no God, no tomorrow, and no judgment. But God has already said in His Word that the time is set; there will be judgment (Hebrews 9:27).

Our study on sin will address itself to answering five important questions. These questions are almost as old as time itself, and yet, in many instances, they are as fresh and new as tomorrow's news. The questions are:

1. *What is sin exactly?*
2. *Where did sin come from?*
3. *Who is it that commits sin?*
4. *What are the consequences of sin?*
5. *What is the remedy for sin?*

#### **1. What is sin exactly?**

Regardless of how one approaches the subject of sin when seeking a definition, he or she ultimately comes to the conclusion that sin is willful rebellion against almighty God. This is why it is such a dark blot upon mankind. Paul pointed this out very clearly in some of his opening remarks to the church in Rome:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks, and their foolish heart was darkened (Romans 1:18-21).

God has always maintained a witness to Himself. Man has ignored God's witness and willfully rebelled; therefore, he is without excuse and must answer for his sins. The Bible shows this intentionality for sin in the various words used to describe the different facets of sin.

- a) There is the sin of total disregard for God and His word. It is the attitude of living as if God didn't exist. This attitude can be seen in such passages as Romans 1:18-21, 28-29; and 6:12-13.
- b) Another type of sinful attitude is that of lawlessness. This type of sinner willfully and completely disobeys God's moral and ethical laws. He or she knows what is right but deliberately does what is wrong. Paul uses this word descriptively in 2 Corinthians 6:14.
- c) Then, too, there is the deliberate "stepping over the line" into a forbidden area. God has given us freedom within bounds. When we disregard these boundaries by stepping over them, we commit sin (James 2:9).
- d) One facet of sin, evident all around us, is that of slipping due to a lack of concentration or concern. Many people try to dismiss this sin by saying, "I just fell into it," or "It happened before I knew it." Neither excuse is acceptable to God because we are to be on the alert so this very thing will not happen to us (1 Peter 5:8). Paul also cautions us in our daily walk to be careful lest we slip (Ephesians 5:15-17).
- e) Lastly, there is the kind of sin that seems to be the all-American sin. It is the sin most often mentioned by the apostle Paul, the sin of falling short of achieving the purpose for which God created us (Romans 3:23). This is an intentional sin, too. It suggests that we could measure up, but choose not to, usually for a selfish reason. It points out the danger of settling for the good when the best is within reach.

Regardless of what tag, color size, or face you put on sin, it is still spelled with an I right in the middle.

## **2. Where did sin come from?**

There have been hundreds and thousands of pages written in answer to this question. All too often the answer comes from more of a promise or theory than fact. The Bible is our source of truth and therefore we must seek an answer there.

The Bible has quite a bit to say about fallen angels. These created beings evidently had the same capacity for choosing as God has given us. Jude said they had lost their first estate, a position (Jude v. 6). The following passages afford us insight as to how sin progressed from certain angels in heaven to man on earth:

- a) Isaiah 14:12-15. The first sin—pride—is seen in the fall of Lucifer, the devil, or Satan (slanderer, adversary, Beelzebub).
- b) Revelation 12:7-9. The battle in heaven was caused by the sin of pride.
- c) Genesis 3:1-7. Satan introduces the first temptation to mankind by questioning the truthfulness of God, resulting in the first sin on earth.
- d) Romans 5:12. Adam, the father of mankind, was also the doorway to sin for mankind.

Pride seems to have been, and still is, the source of sin. It is pride that encourages man to see himself as the sole reason for living and then to seek to satisfy himself without restraint. It is from this orientation that the sin of pride splinters into many other forms of rebellion, all rightfully deserving the name "sin."

### **3. Who is it that commits sin?**

Every living person commits sin! Paul indicated that the nature of sin takes up residence within every human being (Romans 7:18-21). David proclaimed that we are born in sin (Psalm 51:5). Because of Adam's sin all mankind is saturated with the attitude of sin. Parents can perhaps see this best in the growth of their children. No one has to teach children how to lie, cheat, or steal, as these actions come naturally. This is that is meant by "original" sin. We are born with it. It is implanted in our very natures. Paul reminds us that all have sinned and there are no righteous (without sin) persons (Romans 3:10, 23).

### **4. What are the consequences of sin?**

The Bible gives us three results of sin. First, there is physical death. God told Adam that death would result if he disobeyed and ate of the forbidden tree (Genesis 2:15-17). Adam, up to this point, had never seen death, but was soon to experience it within his family when his son Cain, out of anger, killed Abel (Genesis 4:1-8). Adam also found out something we so often forget—that is, that God does not accept excuse for sin (Genesis 3:12, 17-19). It is important to remember that even though a natural death may not be the direct result of a specific sin, yet all death is ultimately due to the original sin experience of Adam in the Garden of Eden.

The second result of sin is separation from God in fellowship (Isaiah 59:1-2). We not only lose our fellowship, but, as Isaiah points out, we also short-circuit our prayer life. If we are determined to walk in sin, we will have to walk alone. God does not walk away from us; on the contrary, when we desire the way of sin, it is we who walk away from God. A good illustration of this truth can be seen in the life of Samson (Judges 13-16).

The third result is the most terrible of all sin in that sin brings forth spiritual death and eternal separation (Revelation 20:11-15). This is what the Bible refers to as the second death following the judgment of unsaved souls. The Bible even gives us a catalog of those who will experience this eternal separation (Revelation 21:8).

### **5. What is the remedy for sin?**

Man has no remedy of his own making! We can educate ourselves all we wish, but education will not remove sin. We can change our philosophy of life, turn over a new leaf, change the environment, and even move to another town and start all over again with a new name, but that will not remove sin and its guilt. There must be a change in our nature and attitude (thought process), or we will never get away from sin and its condemning effects. There is only one remedy—you must be born again (John 3:3). There must be a change in the person's spiritual nature. Paul said that when we accept Jesus Christ and are "in" Him, we become a whole new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Yes, Jesus is our only remedy for sin (Romans 8:1). He does three important things for us in relation to sin when we invite him into our hearts and lives as Lord and Savior:

- a) He saves us from the binding power of sin over our lives by forgiving us of our sins (1John 1:9).
- b) He saves us from the guilt that accompanies all sin (Romans 5:1; 8:1, 30).
- c) He saves us from the eternal penalty of sin demanded by a righteous God (Romans 6:23).

The songwriter has captured this truth in the old familiar song “Jesus Saves” (verse 4):

Give the winds a mighty voice—  
Jesus saves! Jesus Saves!  
Let the nations now rejoice—  
Jesus saves! Jesus Saves!  
Shout salvation full and free,  
Highest hills and deepest caves;  
This our song of victory—  
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!

## REVIEW

1. Perhaps the best summation of the sin problem today could be put in one simple statement. What would that be?
  
2. What is sin basically?
  
3. Name and describe five main types of sin.
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
  
4. Where did sin come from?
  
5. What is the source of all sin?
  
6. Who can commit sin?
  
7. What are three major results of sin?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  
8. What is the only remedy for sin?
  
9. We are saved from what three things when we accept Jesus Christ as Savior?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)

## LESSON 8

### HOW TO OVERCOME TEMPTATION [PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION]

*“No temptation has overtaken you but such is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way to escape also, that you may be able to endure it” (1 Corinthian 10:13).*

Let the truth be known immediately—we who have invited Jesus Christ into our hearts can overcome temptation! We need not fall victims to its degrading power. We can live a victorious and fruitful Christian life. Our key verse in one of many that gives us that assurance. Jesus has also promised us that we do not have to face life by ourselves; “...lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

Some Christians think that their salvation experience is some kind of “vaccination” against temptation and sin. Not so at all. In fact, the real struggle just begins when one accepts Jesus Christ a Savior. Why? Because the person still possesses the old sinful nature that tends to drag him into sin. But once he has experienced his salvation, he then possesses a new nature (2 Corinthians 5:17). These two natures will war against each other as long as we live (Galatians 5:16-17). Paul, in writing to those in Rome, said that these two natures, that of the flesh (sinful) and that of the Spirit (godly), are determined in their expression by one’s desire (Romans 8:5-8). One elderly gentleman expressed the situation in this manner: “As a Christian, I have two dogs in my mind and heart. One wants to do good and the other desires to do evil. They are constantly in battle.” Someone asked him which one usually wins. The gentleman then came forth with an astounding truth. He said, “Whichever one I say, ‘Sic ‘em!’ to.” Well, it can’t be made any plainer than that. We do what we really want to do. It would be good for every Christian to learn this lesson early in his new life. We might even go one step further and say, in answer to the above question of which one wins, that it would depend on which dog or attitude or desire we fed most often. The Bible challenges us at this crucial point not to make provision for the old, sinful nature, but rather put on the positive, good, and new nature in Christ (Romans 13:14). Sin and its infectious disease has already been condemned by Christ’s death on the cross and therefore we must treat the old nature as if it is dead.

Temptations will come our way! Oftentimes the higher our level of commitment to Christ, the stronger the temptation. A temptation is nothing more than a strong pull, by the devil, on some aspect of our old sinful nature. He tries to lure us away from our strength in Christ by appealing to the baser attitudes of life. This pull is not usually all at once but, rather just a little at a time. The devil knows that if he can pull us a little at a time and get us to wander a little, it won’t be long until we will stray away from God altogether. We become like boats drifting downstream, going farther and farther away from the good and the best God has in store for His followers. The pull of the devil is often so subtle that before we realize what has happened, we are a long way downstream, going faster and faster.

There are several things we can do to deal with temptation.

1. **Recognize the reality of temptation and be on guard.** Peter challenges us to be awake for the craftiness of the devil (1 Peter 5:8)
2. **Realize that we don’t have to fall to temptation.** The key verse for this lesson (1 Corinthians 10:13) points out four very important truths for our consideration.

- a) Every Christian faces temptation. We are all in the same boat, so to speak. We aren't facing anything that thousands of others haven't faced or overcome.
- b) God will not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability or capacity to resist. We don't give in because we have to but because we want to.
- c) Along with the temptation will come *the way of escape*. Notice not a way or *some way*, but *the way*. Almost every temptation is so much in contrast to God's teaching that the way out is evident. Usually it comes out in an affirmed "**No!**" Once we try to make excuses or hedge on the issue we are beaten. We must take our stand; as Paul said, "...having done everything [we can]...stand firm" (Ephesians 6:10-13).
- d) Remember that we can do all things through Christ (Philippians 4:13). We need also to remember that the power to overcome resides with us (1 John 4:4). We have a promise that needs to be exercised more often in relation to temptation; when we resist, the devil will flee from us (James 4:7). Jesus reminds us that we are no match for the devil; without Jesus we are helpless (John 15:5).

Even though we can't stop temptations from coming our way, we can take specific steps that will lessen the frequency and intensity of the temptation.

1. **We need to be very selective in the material that we read.** Much of the printed word one reads today is nothing but garbage and shouldn't enter the Christian's mind. If you think you can read anything and not have it condition your attitudes, the drifting process we talked about earlier is already in motion.
2. **We need to be extremely selective in our television viewing.** Programs that are saturated with violence, sex, and crime have more of a conditioning effect than we realize.
3. **What we give our listening attention to must also come under the scrutiny of our Christian convictions.** One of the most damaging attitudes among Christian people today is the "bandwagon" philosophy—everybody's doing it! Jesus told us to be careful when the majority is in control (Matthew 7:13-14).
4. **There is also a subtle danger concerning the places that a Christian goes.** He or she sometimes, without thinking, frequents places dangerous to his or her witness. Certain recreational and entertainment pursuits can be harmful.

These four activities of everyday life can encourage and set the stage for crushing temptation that few Christians can escape without paying a heavy toll. Perhaps it would be profitable at this point to review lesson 6 in light of temptations.

Here are several other steps of a preparatory nature that a Christian can take to deal with inevitable temptations:

1. **Memorize passages of God's Word.** Having the living Word of God in your heart will give you a strong defense against temptation and sin (Psalm 119:9-16)
2. **Confess your sins immediately.** You have the promise of cleansing from God (1 John 1:9). Don't put off dealing with sin. When you are aware of sin, ask forgiveness.

3. **When facing a temptation, pray diligently for strength to cast it aside.** Oftentimes we don't utilize the power of prayer to fight evil. James tells us that we have not, because we ask not (James 4:2).
4. **Establish strong friendships among other Christians.** You will have many things in common with other brothers and sisters in Christ but little, if anything, in common with the lost. Proverbs warns us about our companions (Proverbs 1:10-16). Perhaps the most helpful passage to assist us in our choice of friends is Proverbs 13:20-21: "He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. Adversity pursues sinners, but the righteous will be rewarded with prosperity.
5. **Lastly, be active in the Lord's work.** Commit yourself to Him without reservation. Remember, He has first claim on your stewardship of time, talents, resources, and efforts (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

## REVIEW

1. Name the two natures of a Christian.
2. What is temptation?
3. What is the first important thing we need to recognize about temptations?
4. What four truths come to us from the lesson's key verse, 1 Corinthians 10:13?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
5. What are four ways we can lessen the frequency and intensity of temptation?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
6. What five preparatory steps can a Christian take that will aid him or her in facing temptation?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)

## LESSON 9

### JESUS CHRIST: THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD [CHRISTOLOGY]

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God” (John 1:1-2).*

*“For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6).*

It is impossible to understand God, the Bible, or even the history of mankind fully without a thorough knowledge of the person and ministry of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Jesus is the key to understanding life itself.

We once again come to the proverbial “scratch the surface” as we attempt to study Jesus Christ. There probably have been more words written about Jesus than any other single person in all of history. Perhaps these lines, penned by an unknown author and entitled “One Solitary Life,” afford us the best overall picture of Jesus Christ:

He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in still another village where He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a house. He didn't go to college. He never visited a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place where He was born. He did none of the things one usually associates with greatness. He had no credentials but Himself.

He was only thirty-three when the tide of public opinion turned against Him. His friends ran away. He was turned over to His enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While He was dying, His executioners gambled for His clothing, the only property He had on earth. When He was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and today He is the central figure of the human race. All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that ONE SOLITARY LIFE.

With this dramatic picture of Christ before us, let us now seek to gain a clear understanding of His person and ministry by looking at several important facets of His life.

**The Incarnation.** God became a man in Jesus Christ (John 1:14). God directly intervened in the lives of men and women through the miraculous virgin birth of Jesus, which had been prophesied by Isaiah seven hundred years before it actually happened (Matthew 1:21-25). The place of Jesus' birth, Bethlehem, had also been foretold by the prophet Micah over seven hundred years before (Micah 5:2). The night Jesus was born was a very special night accompanied by an angelic host, a bright light, and later on a star that guided wise men from the East to Jesus (Luke 2:1-20; Matthew 2:1-11). His name, Jesus Christ, means the promised

deliverer who would save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). He was God's promise of salvation in the flesh—fully God, yet fully man. Paul helps us to understand this seeming paradox by stating that Jesus temporarily set aside the form of His godliness and took upon Himself the form of a servant in order to meet man where he was (Philippians 2:1-11). Herschel H. Hobbs has offered the best explanation of this indescribable action where he said it resembled the pouring of the same amount of water from a round glass into a square glass. Nothing of Christ's substance was changed but just the form and manner of His manifestation.<sup>1</sup>

**The Life of Jesus.** Jesus' life was a perfect pattern and example (1 Peter 2:21-25). The earthly ministry of Jesus covered but a short three and one-half years. The Four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—cover the life of Jesus from different perspectives. Matthew shows us Jesus as the Jewish Messiah. He writes to prove that Jesus was the promised one. Mark shows us the powerful image through Jesus' many miracles. Luke sets forth the life of Christ from the chronological perspective after much investigation of eyewitness accounts (Luke 1:1-14). John approaches the life of Christ from still a different direction. He shows the divine side of Christ. Even though each writer wrote from a different vantage point and through his own personality, most of the important teachings and lessons are found in each of the four books. It is believed that Jesus was about thirty-three years of age when He was crucified.

**The Crucifixion.** This was the encounter of God's judgment and God's love. It is here at the cross that we see the plan of God taking shape most clearly. Sin must be paid for as God's attitude of judgment declared. But God loved the sinner and therefore provided a way for the sin to be paid for (a blood sacrifice) and yet allowed the sinner to be forgiven and pardoned from the guilt and consequences of sin. This total experience is called the atonement. Jesus' death fulfilled the debt or payment for everyone who would believe in Him (John 3:16, 18, 36; Romans 6:23). Jesus declared that He had come for the express purpose of saving sinners (Luke 19:10). Men did not put Jesus to death by force. He voluntarily laid down His life as a ransom (Matthew 20:26-28). Jesus, as the familiar hymn says, "paid it all":

Jesus paid it all, All to Him I owe;  
Sin had left a crimson stain,  
He washed it white as snow.

**The Resurrection.** Death was disarmed by Jesus' resurrection (1 Corinthians 15). The crucifixion was but a comma in the life of Jesus Christ. His death on the cross would have served no real purpose if He had not risen from the dead triumphantly. Thousands of people had been crucified. It is reported that over two thousand were crucified at the hands of the Roman general Titus in 70 A.D., when Jerusalem was destroyed. Without the resurrection Jesus would have been another martyr for a cause. We Christians do not worship and serve a dead Savior, but rather a living Lord—Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords. The deity of Jesus is made clear once and for all at the empty tomb. The lifeline of the church is the resurrection life of its Lord!

The resurrection proved many things concerning Christ and His teachings. It first proved Him to be truthful. He said He would be killed but would rise from the dead on the third day (Matthew 16:21). It also proved His power over death. The resurrection of Jesus became the heart of the Christian message (1 Corinthians 15:12-20). Jesus' resurrection guarantees life after death to His followers (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). He promised us this new life when He said, "...because I live, you shall live also" (John 14:19). The joy of our Christian assurance finds its expression in an empty cross and an empty tomb. He lives!

<sup>1</sup> Herschel H. Hobbs, *Fundamentals of Our Faith* (Nashville: Broad- man Press, 1960), p. 44.

**The Ascension.** The stage of preparation preceded Christ's ascension into heaven (John 14:1-6). The ascension of Jesus Christ is one of the most often passed over events in the ministry of Jesus. The Bible does not say a great deal about the event, but it does give us one glorious account in Acts 1:9-11.

The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us that Jesus is making intercession with God for us here on earth (Hebrews 7:23-28). John tells us that Jesus is our advocate with the Father (1 John 2:1-3). Jesus told us that He was going to prepare a place for us (John 14:2). One aspect of the ascension of Jesus often overlooked is that it prepared the way for the coming of the Holy Spirit, who now lives with us every day (John 14:15-20, 25-26). Finally, the ascension assures us of confident access to God (Hebrews 4:14-16), the hope of immortality (1 Corinthians 5:1-8), God's truth (Romans 8:28, Colossians 1:15-18), and Christ's authority (Ephesians 1:22; Philippians 2:9-10).

**The Second Coming.** Jesus will come back for His followers (John 14:3). There is no more sure truth than the second coming of Christ because Jesus promised that He would return, as the above Scripture records for us. His second coming will be far different than His first. At His initial coming, He came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10), but at His second coming He will come to judge the world (Revelation 19:11-21). Those who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior have no need to fear His return as the Scriptures indicate, but it will not be so for those who have rejected His authority.

It is necessary for you to study carefully and earnestly the life of Jesus if you want to grasp all the many facets of His truth and person. There is no other study to which you could give yourself that would provide you with as many adventures, thrills, and dividends for life.

## REVIEW

1. Jesus is the \_\_\_\_\_ to understanding \_\_\_\_\_ itself.
2. What does the name of Jesus Christ mean?
3. List the perspective from which each of the Gospel writers described the life and ministry of Jesus.  
Matthew:  
Mark:  
Luke:  
John:
4. What two aspects of God came together at the cross?
  - a)
  - b)
5. What is the lifeline of the church?
6. What is the heart of the Christian message?
7. When Jesus ascended to the Father, He paved the way for what important event?
8. What will be the major difference in Christ's second coming as compared to the first?

## LESSON 10

### HOW TO BE A WITNESS FOR JESUS CHRIST

*“...you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses...” (Acts 1:8).*

Words are very fragile things. They can be abused, battered, and broken down quite easily. The word "witness" has been one such word. It has been defined in so many ways that it has almost lost its real meaning. The word "witness", in its purest and simplest definition is this: a person who shares the facts of some experience as they relate to him or her personally. One simply tells it as he or she knows it. So, when this truth is reflected in the Christian context, a witness for Christ is a person who tells another what has happened to him or her personally in relation to Jesus Christ. There is no theory, only facts!

The key verse for this lesson, Acts 1:8, points out a very significant truth in relation to our being witnesses. Jesus didn't ask us to be witnesses; He told us! He didn't suggest that we be witnesses; He told us to be witnesses! He didn't even give us an option. We are commanded by Jesus Christ, in His last words prior to His ascension, to relate the facts to others as we have experienced them in our own salvation experiences. As we ponder this specific command from our Lord, we need to be reminded that we are His servants, and servants do not refuse their master nor do they dictate policies to their master. For us to say no to Jesus or "not now, but maybe later" is direct disobedience to His last command. In truth, we have no choice but to do as Jesus has commanded us to do.

It is important that you seek training in the ministry of witnessing. This skill does not come automatically with your salvation. It must be learned if you are to become effective. A person not trained in the specifics of witnessing often does more harm than good even though he or she is sincere in these efforts. The intent of this lesson is to give some helpful suggestions that may be used until you can become involved in an in-depth training class or can be assisted in the ministry of witnessing by your pastor or some mature Christian lay person.

There are several important aspects of becoming a witness for Christ. It is difficult to list them according to importance because each one is tremendously important in itself. However, these have proved to be the pronounced points to grasp:

1. **Develop and maintain a healthy spiritual life.** This involves, of course, daily devotions in which you study God's word and seek His presence through prayer. Your effectiveness in witnessing will be in direct proportion to your personal level of spiritual growth. You cannot give to another what you yourself do not have to give! Along with your Bible study and prayer must come open and honest confession of known sin. We, have a biblical promise that if we will confess our sins, God will forgive us and cleanse us (1 John 1:9).
2. **Strive for consistency in your speech and behavior.** Perhaps the number one cause of a Christian's ineffectiveness as a witness for Christ is that his or her actions speak so loudly that those around can't hear what the believer has to say. Nothing will hurt your witness for Christ more than saying one thing and doing another. It is at this point you must develop Christian convictions and dispose of religious preferences. A preference is something that you don't think you should do, but—in the company of certain persons or if pressure is put on you or if circumstances are such that you don't want to make "waves"—you go ahead and do it. Once this happens, all the words you can utter

will not override the fact that you did the thing you didn't really want to do. What does that say to those around you? Doesn't it say that your commitment to Christ is rather shallow? This action of preference usually shows up most in speech, habits, recreation, and use of money. A conviction, on the other hand, is a settled issue. It doesn't matter what the circumstances are, within whose presence you find yourself, or the degree of pressure brought forth—you stand for what you have committed yourself to and what you believe. A good illustration of a conviction can be seen readily in the life of the young man Joseph. He was a slave in Egypt but refused to sin against his God by submitting to the seductive attempts of Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:1-23). A Christian whose life is inconsistent with the teachings of Jesus Christ will bear no fruit in his or her attempt to witness for Christ.

3. **Take advantage of the opportunities to witness.** The apostle Peter challenges us to be ready always to give an account of what we believe to anyone who asks us (1 Peter 3:15-17). You need to be looking for opportunities to share your faith. A good procedure to follow is to ask the Lord to give you the chance to witness each day. You might even commit yourself to seek out one different person each week with whom you can share what the Lord has done for you. That alone would result in fifty-two different people hearing from you annually. That is a challenging goal for every Christian.

You may as well know now that the devil is not a passive foe. He will not sit idly by and watch you "claim" souls for Christ. He usually attacks young Christians, in relation to witnessing, in one or more of three ways:

1. **By producing an attitude of fear of the response you may receive from those with whom you strive to share your witness.** A training class on witnessing, such as mentioned earlier, can help you overcome this kind of fear. A good promise to remember is that the power within you (the Holy Spirit) is greater than the power that is within this world (the devil) (1 John 4:4). You need also to remember that if you commit your witness to the Lord, He will work it through (Psalm 37:5).
2. **By distracting you from your witnessing mission.** This attack usually comes through an encouragement to busy yourself doing so many "good" things that you don't have time left to fulfill your mission. The main excuse Christians give for not witnessing is that they are just too busy. A careful examination of their "busy" lives will reveal a series of substitutions for witnessing. It is easier to give one's time to the P.T.A., a service club, or a volunteer agency than to confront people with the claims of Christ. The only problem with doing all these good things is that Christ has first claim on a Christian's time, talent, resources, and efforts (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), and Christ has commanded us to bear testimony to what He has done for us so that others might open their hearts to Him.
3. **By projecting the erroneous idea that witnessing is very complex and hard to do.** This attitude has rendered many Christians useless in the ministry of witnessing. It is not difficult to be a witness for Christ. If your life is consistent with the teachings of Christ, you can easily gain an audience among your friends, relations, schoolmates, fellow workers, recreation associates, and others. The most successful method of witnessing is simply to share your testimony (relate the facts) around these three main points:
  - a) *Your life prior to becoming a Christian.* Most of us had no real direction, purpose, or joy during that period. Most of the people you share this with will find their own lives to be similar and will be able to identify with your former life.

- b) *How you became a Christian.* It is here that you can share the help you had from other people who cared enough to assist you. It is good to reveal the biblical truths that paint a vivid picture.
- (1) Everyone is a sinner (Romans 3:23).
  - (2) Sin separates man from God (Romans 6:23).
  - (3) Jesus died for our sins (John 3:16).
  - (4) We are saved by our faith in Him (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Where and how you made your decision to repent and ask Christ into your heart is also helpful.

- c) *What Christ has done for you since you became a Christian.* You now can be very specific in naming your blessings one by one. As you share the many ways your life has become abundant as a Christian, you bring honor and glory to your Lord Jesus Christ. A good formula to follow is to write out your testimony in not more than 200-250 words. This allows you to give it in about three minutes, thus guarding it from becoming a travelogue. Your testimony should be progressive in nature. Strive to contain your non-Christian life in the area of 25 words. Next work out the "how" you became a Christian in 75 words. Then spend the majority of time expressing the joy you have found in Christ and what He has done for your life. You should practice giving your testimony several times before you begin to share it.

After you have given your testimony, it is always wise to ask your listener if he or she would like to have the same experience as you have had.

If the answer is yes, simply ask the person to pray with you and ask forgiveness for his or her sins and to ask Christ into his or her heart. Be sure to point your listener toward a good church and/or to a mature Christian for follow-up.

If the answer is no, thank him or her for listening, saying that you will be praying for him or her and hope he or she thinks about what you have said. You might give your phone number in case he or she has any questions after pondering your conversation. By all means—leave the door open!

The world has yet to see what Christ can do with a fully dedicated follower. The possibilities are limitless if we take advantage of them and are obedient to our Lord's command to be witnesses.

## REVIEW

1. Define the word "witness."
2. What is a servant's responsibility to his master?
3. What are the three major rules for developing an effective witness?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
4. Explain the difference between a conviction and a preference.
5. What are three ways the devil often hinders a Christian witness?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
6. What are the three main points a testimony should include?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
7. What is the suggested number of words for each of the above main points of your testimony?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)

## LESSON 11

### THE HOLY SPIRIT: CHRIST'S DAILY PRESENCE [PNEUMATOLOGY]

*"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you" (John 14:26).*

As we continue our study of the ingredients that make up the abundant life, we come to one of the hardest topics for young Christians (and many mature Christians) to grasp—that of the Holy Spirit and His ministry. The Holy Spirit is probably one of the most neglected elements of the Christian faith. The reasons for this neglect can be attributed to several factors.

1. The doctrinal teaching on the Holy Spirit is difficult to understand. This doctrine is more steeped in theology than any of the other major Christian doctrines.
2. The Holy Spirit is always listed third when the Trinity is referred to, and thus the suggestion of lesser importance emerges.
3. Many Christians refer to the Holy Spirit as "it" rather than "he." When this happens, the Holy Spirit loses His distinctive personality and character.
4. Some Christian groups place so much emotional emphasis on the Holy Spirit and His ministry that those whose worship is more reserved tend to avoid a close contact with the doctrine.
5. Since the one sin that God will not forgive has to do with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:31-32), many Christians, due to lack of understanding, back away from the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
6. The King James Version of the Bible, translated in 1611, referred to the Holy Spirit as the Holy Ghost. This is a perfectly good and accurate term—in Elizabethan English—but it has lost its meaning down through the years. The term "ghost" tends to suggest a phantom, a spirit of the dead, or a mythical figure to a present-day mind.<sup>1</sup>

All too many Christians have forfeited much of their spiritual power because of the neglect of the Holy Spirit. It is therefore important that we obtain the proper perspective of the Holy Spirit and His ministry. Our brief study will be centered around two important questions:

1. Who is the Holy Spirit?
2. What is the ministry of the Holy Spirit?

#### **1. Who is the Holy Spirit?**

*The Holy Spirit is the third part of the Godhead or the Trinity.* This word "Trinity" does not appear in the Bible but has been used as an attempt to explain the threefold expression of God. There is God the Father,

<sup>1</sup>Herschel H. Hobbs, *Fundamentals of Our Faith* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1960), pp. 51-52.

God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. All are equal and are one but manifest themselves in an individual manner. This concept of "three in one" presents a mystery that almost defies explanation. One illustration which may shed some light on this difficult truth is that of the three states of water. Under normal conditions water is liquid. When the temperature is dropped to zero degrees centigrade, it becomes a solid, or ice. Should the temperature be raised to 100 degrees centigrade, water boils and becomes a gas, or vapor. All three states—liquid, solid, and gas—are different expressions or manifestations of the same thing—water. In essence this is a reflection of the Trinity. God the Father expresses Himself as creator and sustainer of the universe. He expresses Himself through Jesus Christ as Savior of mankind while expressing Himself through the Holy Spirit as a daily companion living within the hearts of His followers. Here are some of the ways we see the Holy Spirit as an expression of God.

- a) The same four basic characteristics attributed to God are also attributed to the Holy Spirit. He is
  - (1) Omnipotent (all-powerful)—Luke 1:35;
  - (2) Omniscient (all-knowledgeable)—1 Corinthians 2:10-13;
  - (3) Omnipresent (ever-present)—Psalm 139:7-10
  - (4) Eternal (everlasting)—Hebrews 9:13-14.
- b) The Holy Spirit is referred to as God by Luke in Acts 5:3-4, and Paul calls Him Lord in 2 Corinthians 3:18. He is also known by such titles as the Spirit of: grace, truth, life, wisdom and knowledge, promise, and glory. Jesus refers to Him as the Helper (John 14:26).
- c) The same divine powers attributed to God are also ascribed to the Holy Spirit:
  - (1) Power to create (Genesis 1:2).
  - (2) Power to regenerate (John 3:1-8).
  - (3) Power to resurrect (Romans 8:11).
- d) The Holy Spirit is coupled in equality with God and Christ in the baptismal formula (Matthew 28:19) and the Christian benediction (2 Corinthians 13:14). The Holy Spirit is also revealed as a person by the personal characteristics ascribed to Him.
  - (1) He has knowledge (1 Corinthians 2:11).
  - (2) He has a will (1 Corinthians 12:7-11).
  - (3) He has a mind (Romans 8:26-27).
  - (4) He has power (Romans 15:13).

Yes, the Holy Spirit is a person, equal with God and Christ. He is to be accepted with God and Christ as one of God's expressions to us, relating to us personally.

## **2. What is the ministry of the Holy Spirit?**

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is wide and varied. Here are some ways it touches every facet of a person's life once he or she comes to a personal salvation experience with Jesus Christ.

- a) He brings conviction upon people due to their sin (John 16:7-11).
- b) He brings persons to Christ by convincing them of their need (John 3:3-7).
- c) He takes up permanent residence within the believer's heart (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

- d) He “seals” a believer's salvation (Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30).
- e) He guides the believer (Acts 8:26-29; 13:1-4).
- f) He gives the believer special gifts for serving Christ (1 Corinthians 12:1-11; Romans 12:4-8).
- g) He assists the believer in prayer (Romans 8:26-27).
- h) He gives the believer power to witness for Christ (Acts 1:8).
- i) He gives the believer freedom from sin and death (Romans 8:11-13).
- j) He interprets to believers what He has written in Scripture (John 16:13-15).
- k) He will raise the believer from the grave (Romans 8:11).

## REVIEW

1. List the six reasons for the neglect of the Holy Spirit by many Christians today.
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
  - f)
  
2. The Holy Spirit is a \_\_\_\_\_.
  
3. What four attributes of God are also ascribed to the Holy Spirit?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  
4. What four personal qualities does the Holy Spirit possess?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  
5. List seven of the many ways the Holy Spirit works in the life of the believers.
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
  - f)
  - g)

## LESSON 12

### HOW TO RELATE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

*“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you” (John 14:16-17).*

The key verses for this lesson point out very plainly that the coming of the Holy Spirit, following Christ's return to was to be our source of contact with Jesus. The previous (lesson 11) pointed out the many different ministries of the Holy Spirit, which touch every facet of our lives. How do we respond or relate to these ministries? What is our action, in relationship to the Spirit, so that we can be used by God? We will seek answers to these questions in this study.

The apostle Paul indicates in every one of his letters that the Holy Spirit is the source of the Christian life. The Spirit of God helps us in our infirmities (Romans 8:26). We abound in grace through the Spirit (Romans 15:16). We are sanctified or set apart for service by the Spirit (2 Thessalonians 2:13). The Spirit gives each of us each at least one spiritual gift for carrying on the ministry of the church (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). The lovely qualities that adorn the Christian life are the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). The unity of the Christian fellowship is provided through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:22). The potential for our development of spiritual strength and character is also the work of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 3:12-16).

It seems, as far as Paul is concerned, that the Church history from the beginning, through the middle and at its close describes the work of the Spirit and our response to him. This record will largely determine the rate and level of our growth in Christ and is saying that the Holy Spirit sets the atmosphere and climate for Christian qualities to grow, for the Christian graces to take root and for the individual activities of the church to take place. In short, it is through the power of the Spirit that Christians live, move, and have their being.

No doubt it is because of the tremendous importance to have the Spirit in the life of the Christian that Paul challenges us to be "filled" with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). This simple command is packed with potential power. Paul is simply saying that we all have determined to be filled with something. This is a truth we know ever so well. Some people are filled up with themselves, a love for money, a desire for fame, and a thousand other "filling" desires. Some live for drink or food or drugs. Here in Scripture we are commanded to be filled up with the Spirit of God. These verses simply mean to "let it happen." Let the Holy Spirit fill up your life. Let Him control your thoughts, attitudes, motives, and behavior. Put your speech as well as your resources at His disposal. This takes a commitment on your part, but the commitment is necessary if you are to respond to the Spirit in the manner Christ intends. This is what is meant by "yielding" to the Holy Spirit. You simply open the doors, all of the doors, of your life and let Him flood it with His presence.

There are some danger spots of which we need to be aware if we are to become the people of God according to His will. Paul points out two of these pitfalls and Luke one other.

**We must not quench the Holy Spirit** (1 Thessalonians 5:19). This means to "put out," like throwing water on a fire. We are guilty of quenching the Holy Spirit through our lack of faith. The Bible records the promise that all things are possible through Christ (Philippians 4:13), but oftentimes we reject this promise by failing to exercise our faith. When this happens, we can quench the Holy Spirit's ministry among us. God wants us

to accept His word as fact, and act accordingly. When we begin to question, modify, or set conditions on God's promises as presented in the Bible, we show a lack of faith in His ability to fulfill His promises. This action quenches the Holy Spirit's effect on our lives. The best remedy for this problem is to intensify and expand our faith. We do this by reading and studying the word of God (Romans 10:17).

**We must not grieve the Holy Spirit** (Ephesians 4:30). This means to bring undue sorrow on someone. In this context we grieve the Holy Spirit when we act or speak in a manner unbecoming a Christian. We bring forth a "grieving" situation when we willfully disobey the teaching of the Lord Jesus. Since it is the responsibility of the Holy Spirit to lead us and guide us in our Christian experiences, we grieve Him deeply when we willfully disregard His leadership and go on our own way even though we know better. Parents often feel the sting of grief when their children deliberately reject their love and guidance. It is the same story when we, the children of God, disregard His "parental" guidance through the Holy Spirit. We bring grief into the relationship. The most successful remedy for this situation is to strive toward being faithful to what we know the Lord desires from us. Our responsibility is to develop biblical convictions that will stand the test of pressure, friends, and circumstances. When we are determined that our lives will uplift, honor, and glorify the name of Jesus Christ, we will not grieve the Holy Spirit.

**We must not resist the Holy Spirit** (Acts 7:51). This is the worst reaction or response we can make to the Holy Spirit. It means to take a deliberate stand on an issue, disregarding all truth. It borders on getting to the place where we say, "I don't care what the Bible says, this is what I am going to do." That is a very dangerous position to take. Resisting the Holy Spirit is the same as ignoring His ministry as it relates to you. It is an attitudinal problem usually resulting from a conflict between our desire and God's will for our lives. There is only one remedy for this negative response, and that is to confess it as sin and ask for forgiveness (1 John 1:9). If you find this hard to do, perhaps a careful reading of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 will help set things in motion: "...do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought for a price: therefore glorify God in your body." Paul makes the idea of "resisting" the Holy Spirit rather hollow when he reminds us that we don't have the right to run our lives to suit ourselves. We belong to Christ. Jesus Christ paid for us by dying on the cross in our place. God has first claim on our lives, and He executes this right through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

As you continue to grow in Christ, you will realize just how important your response to the Holy Spirit really is. The proper response, as set forth in God's word, will bring peace of mind, joy, and satisfaction.

## REVIEW

1. According to Paul, who is the source of the Christian life?
2. What determines the level and rate of our growth in Christ?
3. What does it mean to be filled with or to yield to the Holy Spirit?
4. What are the three major danger spots in our response to the Holy Spirit? What are the remedies?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
5. What does the word “quench” mean?
6. What does the word “grieve” mean?
7. What does the word “resist” mean?

## LESSON 13

### THE NEW BIRTH: A CHANGE FROM ABOVE [REGENERATION]

*“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God’” (John 3:3).*

The "new birth" that a person experiences through faith in Jesus Christ is like one's physical birth. Some even refer to their salvation experience as a second birthday. It is a time when old things have passed away and everything has become new (2 Corinthians 5:17). There is absolutely no way that man can save himself. The best of persons in the world is still a sinner. Even his or her good deeds are looked upon as filthy rags by God (Isaiah 64:6). It is because of man's desire to "save" himself that the new birth has been obscured and often replaced in man's misunderstanding, by his own efforts. Some of these substitute ideas are answered as follows:

1. **The new birth does not come by heredity.** Some people seem to believe that they were born into a saving relationship to Christ because their parents were Christians and they were brought up in a Christian atmosphere. A person's natural birth has nothing whatsoever to do with his or her spiritual birth (John 1:12-13).
2. **The new birth cannot be conferred upon someone by another.** There are no honorary Christians. All of man's religious rites and ceremonies cannot make a Christian. Some of the most miserable people in the world are those who have been taught that they became Christians through baptism or a catechism or a class of studies. Their misery sets in when they try to practice the Christian virtues, claim the Christian promises, and lay hold of the Christian power only to find that life has handed them an empty soul (Ephesians 2:8-9).
3. **The new birth is not just changing one's philosophy of life or "turning over a new leaf."** Many have tried to do this by joining a church, thinking that once their names were on the roll, everything between God and them would be all right. The one thing that these people don't realize is that God keeps His own records; He doesn't copy ours (Revelation 20:12-15).
4. **The new birth is not some kind of progression of goodness resulting in a "graduation" to salvation.** Some people seem to believe that, if they continue to live by the Ten Commandments and practice the golden rule, they will somehow "drift" to God and heaven. Someone once said, "There is no heavenly accommodation without an earthly reservation." Jesus tells us the way when He says, "I am the way...no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (John 14:6).
5. **The new birth is not the result of a person promising God that he or she will do better in one's relationships.** Often when the Holy Spirit convicts a person of sin there is a moment of sorrow, of good intention, and perhaps even promises made. If this is all there is to the experience, the person is no better than the prodigal son Jesus told us about in Luke 15:11-24. The difference between this boy and many people of today is that he put his decision into action and went to the Father. Until a person does that, that person will remain in his or her own "pigpen" of self-pride.

These are only a few of the ways people of today try to replace the work of Jesus Christ with their own efforts. But Jesus showed us the result of a person seeking to gain entrance to heaven on his or her own merit in the parable of the man without a wedding garment in Matthew 22:8-13. The man crashed the party and was thrown out into the darkness. No one will be left out of heaven that should be there, but no one will be there that does not have the right to be there (John 1:12). None of the above five substitutes for the new birth constitute the saving experience, but they should all be the results of the new birth.

The new birth, brought about by Christ's death on the cross and our faith in Him, is difficult to understand, as evidenced in Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus in John 3. In fact, Nicodemus, a ruler of the synagogue, couldn't fully comprehend what Jesus was saying about the new birth. Perhaps the following suggestions will be helpful in grasping the truth of the new birth.

1. **The new birth is a divine change in one's life**, a change that affects every phase and facet of a person's being. The Holy Spirit, through Christ, comes into the person's life and immediately becomes a guide to his or her speech, actions, even thoughts (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).
2. **The new birth is an absolute change in one's life** (2 Corinthians 5:17). A person is a new creation, with new direction, purpose, hopes, and dreams. Things that once seemed important all of a sudden lose their allure. New desires come to the surface. A new master is on the throne of the person's heart.
3. **The new birth is a visible change in one's life**. Jesus told Nicodemus that he couldn't see the wind, but he could hear and see the effects of it (John 3:7-9). A person's family and friends will see and hear the change that has taken place. The change will be evident in the way he or she relates to them and talks to them. They will see a more settled person, one who doesn't operate from a point of fear but from soundness of mind and a heart of love (2 Timothy 1:7).

Another question arises when we hear Jesus tell Nicodemus that he "must" be born again. Why must he be born again? Why did Jesus say that? Well, basically because in his present sinful nature, Nicodemus would not be acceptable to God or qualify for eternal life in heaven. God's will is that not one soul should perish, but that all should repent and come to Him (2 Peter 3:9). There are three other conditions that prohibit man from coming to God as he is:

1. **Man is a sinner, and God will not allow sin in His presence** (Revelation 21:8, 27). Sin is an abomination to God. Therefore, there must be a change in man himself, and this can only come through Christ. Man cannot forgive himself and remove his own sin. This is the reason Christ came—to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10).
2. **Man does not possess a spiritual nature apart from Christ, therefore he cannot be acceptable to God** (Romans 8:5-10).
3. **The kingdom of God cannot be entered by natural man; there must be a spiritual change** (John 3:3, 5). Paul emphasized this truth as he taught about the change that had to take place at one's death or at the second coming of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:50-58).

We now have looked at what the new birth is and isn't, and why it is necessary. This, then, brings us to the last point of this lesson: How can a person be born again? What is the process that one must follow to receive the new birth? There are several important things that must be said first if we are to grasp the fullness of the answer to the question.

1. **A person must come to an awareness that he or she is a sinner** (Romans 3:23). Until one realizes this, the person will see no reason for turning to Christ. This is the reason many "good" people are lost today. No one has witnessed to them concerning sin (Romans 3:10, 23).
2. **Once a person realizes he or she is a sinner, the person must be helped to understand the eternal consequences of that sin** (James 1:15).
3. **Finally, the lost person must come to the position where he or she can see and understand God's love and provision for him or her in sending Jesus** (John 3:16).

With these three facts in mind, let us approach the question of how a person can be born again. There are three important points to be made in providing an answer to how this can come about.

1. **The lost person must trust Jesus Christ as Savior** (John 3:16). This word "trust" carries more than just a belief about Jesus. Many people believe in a Jesus but few trust Him for their eternity. Believing that an airplane can fly is one thing, but getting on it and trusting your life to those who designed it, built it, maintain it, and fly it is quite a different thing. Trust demands faith, and James says faith must be expressed in action or it is dead (James 2:26). The lost person must be willing, through faith, to place his or her trust in Jesus Christ as his or her Savior.
2. **Next there must be the expression of one's trust in Christ before others** (Romans 10:9-10). Jesus told us that if we are ashamed of Him, He in turn will be ashamed of us before the Father (Mark 8:38).
3. **The ultimate evidence of the new birth is for a person to live the Christian life in a consistent manner day by day**. Jesus taught us that a city set on a hill is always visible, and we should let our light shine forth for God's glory (Matthew 5:14-16). Remember, our actions speak so loudly that people can't hear what we say.

The new birth is open to all who will call upon the name of Jesus Christ in faith (Romans 10:13). It takes place the very moment he or she places his or her trust in Jesus as Lord (2 Corinthians 6:1-2).

## REVIEW

1. Many people seem to substitute certain ideas for the new birth. Name the major four.
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  
2. What three major changes are evident in born-again believers' lives?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  
3. What are the three reasons why natural man cannot come to God as he is?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  
4. What two important truths must a lost person become aware of before he or she can come to Jesus Christ?
  - a)
  - b)
  
5. What are the three necessary steps for establishing a saving relationship with Christ?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)

## LESSON 14

### ASSURANCE: HOW TO KNOW YOU ARE SAVED

*“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:13).*

Do not settle for salvation without an assurance of salvation! The same Bible that says you can be saved from the consequences of sin, says you can know that you are saved. All too many Christians are living under a dark cloud of uncertainty. They go through life hoping that when God "adds up" His book they will have enough pluses to get them to heaven. What a miserable existence that is! Usually this type of person is depending too heavily on feelings and not relying enough on the true word of God. Once you have the assurance of your salvation, you will have the feelings produced by the joy it brings forth.

Since salvation is the promised result of your personal response to the grace of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, it is important that you become aware of the magnitude of this promise. Notice the assurance given by Jesus, Paul, John, and Peter:

1. **Jesus promised that His followers can have eternal life—**
  - a) by being born again (John 3:3),
  - b) by exercising faith in Him (John 3:14-16, 36),
  - c) by accepting His word and trusting in God (John 5:24),
  - d) by following Him (John 10:27-30).
2. **Paul proclaims that we can have the salvation promise—**
  - a) by accepting salvation as a free gift from God (Romans 6:23),
  - b) by being set free in Christ (Romans 8:1-2),
  - c) by calling upon the name of the Lord (Romans 10:9-10, 13),
  - d) by withstanding the judgment of the testing of works by fire (1 Corinthians 3:11-15),
  - e) by being sealed by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13-14),
  - f) by being re-created (2 Corinthians 5:17),
  - g) by granting of God's grace (2 Timothy 1:7-10).
3. **John, too, proclaims that we can have the salvation promise—**
  - a) by our confession of Christ (1 John 2:23-25) and
  - b) by our belief (trust) in Christ (1 John 5:10-13).
4. **Peter proclaims the salvation promise by the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:3-5)**

These and other such promises give us assurance that when we place our faith in Jesus Christ, we are saved and need not ever doubt our salvation. Now, some people say we can lose our salvation once we are saved. This belief has again caused many people to crawl through their Christian life on their hands and knees. They continually grope along in the darkness of doubt. There is no need for this condition to exist in the life of a truly born-again believer. The following passages from God's Word erase all questions concerning a "temporary" salvation:

1. *Jesus said a true believer will never perish (John 3:16).*
2. *Jesus said He would not cast us out (John 6:37).*
3. *Jesus said no one will ever remove us from God (John 10:27-30).*
4. *Paul said he has confidence in Christ (Philippians 1:6).*
5. *Paul said no one or nothing will separate us from Christ (Romans 8:35-39).*
6. *Paul said we have been redeemed (Galatians 4:1-7).*
7. *Paul said we have been sealed (Ephesians 1:13-14).*
8. *Paul said if we are in Christ, we are in God (Colossians 3:3).*
9. *Jude said Jesus is able to keep us secure (Jude 24-25).*

When you read these verses carefully one thing becomes very apparent: we are kept secure by God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit—not by the church, not by baptism, not by our own strength or power. God holds us; we don't hold Him! The Bible, God's Holy Word, is our source of assurance. God's Word never changes. It will not become void but will do all that God intended (Isaiah 55:11).

The apostle Paul presents a good summary of how we are kept by God through his picture of adoption (Romans 8:15-17). Adoption was legal and greatly practiced in the Roman Empire. There were specific rules or laws governing this unique process. Some of these were as follows:

1. *There must be witnesses to all transactions.*
2. *An adopted child lost all ties to the old life.*
3. *He was accepted on par with a naturally born son.*
4. *He became heir to all his father had in the way of wealth.*
5. *If he had any previous debts, they were all cancelled.*
6. *He was considered a "brand new" person.*

This is the result Paul was describing in 2 Corinthians 5:17— "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

There are a few things concerning salvation that we must remember if we are to realize the assurance that accompanies the salvation experience.

1. **Every person must answer and give an account of himself or herself to God** (Romans 14:12). Therefore, we must not judge the capability of Christ to "hold" His followers by watching the lives of other Christians. Remember, Paul said that if a man is truly in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), he is secure. Many people say they are Christ's followers even though they don't show it. Christ must be the judge, not us.

2. **Jesus is not a loser.** He didn't come here to die for lost souls only to have them fall away from Him. He is strong enough to keep all who come to Him.
3. The key verse for this lesson (1 John 5:13) points out three important truths worth our notice.
  - a) John wrote His first letter for the expressed purpose of providing the followers of Christ with ample proof of their salvation: "These things I have written to you..."
  - b) He made certain that there was no mistake as to whom he was addressing: "...you who believe in the name of the Son of God..."
  - c) Lastly, he affirmed that these two truths result in the promise "...in order that you may know that you have eternal life."
4. **It is important that we realize the mechanics of our salvation.** God took the first step toward our salvation by loving us enough to send Jesus (John 3:16). Jesus loved us enough to die for us (Romans 5:8). We are saved, therefore, by the grace of God (Ephesians 2:8-9). We did nothing to earn this relationship with God, nor did we do anything to warrant the salvation given to us. Since it began in the heart of God, it must rest in the heart of God. It certainly stands to reason, then, that if we come to the Father through our faith in Christ, we will be secure in His hand (John 10:29).
5. **There is other evidence**—outside the Scriptures, brought about by the Holy Spirit—that adds proof to one's genuine salvation experience.
  - a) *There will be a deep love for God's Word. Even though this may waver at times, it will never leave a true Christian.*
  - b) *There will be a desire to pray to the heavenly Father.*
  - c) *There will be an uneasiness over godless speech, habits, and amusements.*
  - d) *There will be a desire to be with God's people in worship, fellowship, and work.*
  - e) *There will be a deep conviction over willful sin. There may even be mental or physical illness due to consistent sin.*
  - f) *There will be a desire to draw close to Christ through commitment. This will involve complete stewardship of time, talents, resources, and efforts.*
  - g) *There will be a desire to serve Christ through a local church ministry. This service may take many forms, but at the heart of it all will be a desire to tell others about Jesus Christ and how He has changed your life.*

Can you know you are saved? Yes, most assuredly you can. You have God's word on it, Christ's death for it, and the Holy Spirit's witness to it!

## REVIEW

1. Do not settle for \_\_\_\_\_ without an \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
  
2. What is the major source of proof for one's salvation?
  
3. What four people in the New Testament give us specific promises concerning salvation?
  - a) \_\_\_\_\_ c) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_ d) \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. List the nine passages that assure us of permanent salvation.
  - a) \_\_\_\_\_ f) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_ g) \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) \_\_\_\_\_ h) \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) \_\_\_\_\_ i) \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. What word-picture did Paul use to summarize the unique relationship we have with God?
  
  
6. What are the basic mechanics of salvation?
  
  
7. List the three important truths of 1 John 5:13.
  - a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) \_\_\_\_\_
  
8. What are seven evidences of a true salvation experience, apart from the Bible promises and teachings?
  - a) \_\_\_\_\_ e) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_ f) \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) \_\_\_\_\_ g) \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON 15

### GRACE: GOD'S UNMERITED LOVE

*"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not a result of works, that no one should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).*

The word "grace" appears over 160 times in the Bible. Peter refers to God as the God of all grace (1 Peter 5:10). John describes Jesus as being full of grace (John 1:14), and the third member of the godhead, the Holy Spirit, is called the Spirit of grace (Hebrews 10:29). It is interesting to know that the apostle Paul began and ended each of his thirteen letters with the term "grace" nestled within his words.

The definition of grace is really two-pronged. First, it comes from a Greek word meaning beauty or loveliness. In the Christian context, it refers to the beauty of holiness. The other facet of the word "grace" presents the idea of receiving a free and undeserved gift. Putting the two sides together, we can say that grace is a free gift, given out of the generosity of a loving heart. It must be remembered that the receiver could never have earned or deserved it regardless of his or her effort.

The apostle Paul seems to present a variety of pictures that throw light on the overall meaning of grace.

1. **Grace is the undeserved generosity of God freely given** (1 Corinthians 1:3-4; Ephesians 3:4-6).
2. **Grace is something that can only be received** (2 Corinthians 8:1).
3. **Grace is the loving sacrifice of God for us** (2 Corinthians 8:9).
4. **Grace is something undeserved and unearned by us** (Ephesians 1:3-6).
5. **Grace is the only means of our salvation** (Ephesians 2:4-9).

Paul then adds a summary statement concerning grace when he says, "I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly" (Galatians 2:21). In essence Paul was simply saying that it is by grace alone that a person is saved. Nothing else is needed. Should man try to introduce anything into his salvation experience, he immediately destroys God's intended principle of salvation in Christ. If man tries to bring himself into the picture, he then forfeits the opportunity for salvation by grace and must come under the law.

A careful study of Paul's writings brings forth another ministry of grace. He shows us that through the power of grace a believer can meet and handle adequately the demands of everyday life for the glory of God.

1. **Grace enables us to stand true in the midst of hardship and even persecution** (2 Thess 2:15-17).
2. **Grace enables us to deal with heartrending physical problems** (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).
3. **Grace enables us to do effective work for Jesus Christ** (2 Corinthians 12:1).

William Barclay summarizes grace in these words:

Grace is that power of God which clothes a man with day-to-day fortitude and strength. Grace is that power of God which adorns a man's life with lovely things. Grace is a man's day-to-day defense and inspiration. Grace is not only the glory of the mountain top; it is the source of strength for the ordinary road of the everyday. <sup>1</sup>

It is through the grace of God that two of the most wonderful aspects of the Christian experience are applied to the believer—justification and sanctification. It is necessary that we understand the meaning and application of these two important workings of the Holy Spirit within our lives.

1. **Justification** is the act whereby God declares a sinner just and righteous in His sight. It is as if the person had never sinned at all. Justification is much more than a pardon. A pardon only frees one from the penalty of the crime; but justification releases the believer from the penalty, the guilt, and the blame.

When a sinner comes to Jesus Christ by faith, the death of Christ covers his sin, and he stands spotless before God because of his faith in Christ. It is as if God is just waiting for us to turn to Christ so He can apply His loving grace to our lives. We, therefore, are justified by grace (Romans 3:21-26). This justification is made possible through the death of Jesus on the cross (Romans 5:6-10). The results are evidenced in the believer's faith as it brings forth confession of sin (Romans 10:9-10) and good "fruit" in his or her daily life (James 2:14-26).

How does justification work? Well, there are three answers to the question:

- a) It is an instantaneous act! It happens immediately as seen in a multiplicity of places in the New Testament (Acts 2:37-38; 10:34-43; 16:27-34).
- b) It is an irreversible act! It cannot be revoked. We cannot be unborn once we are reborn (John 3:16).
- c) It is an undeserved, unearnable, and unpurchaseable act! There is simply nothing that a person can do to achieve this facet of grace except to receive it through God (Romans 3:19-20).

Justification also presents three specific blessings to those who accept Jesus Christ through faith.

- a) There is a full and free pardon from all past sins (Romans 8:1).
- b) There is the "perfect" standing before Almighty God (Romans 8:2-10).
- c) There is the peace of mind the believer enjoys because of his or her justification (Romans 5:1).

2. **Sanctification** is the act whereby God sets His followers apart for special service (1 Thessalonians 5: 23). The Bible describes sanctification in three different ways:

- a) It is the act of setting one apart for a specific service for God, as illustrated in Jeremiah 1:5.

<sup>1</sup> William Barclay, *The Mind of Paul* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1958), p. 169. Copyright 1958 by William Barclay.

- b) It is the act of progression as a believer grows in grace (2 Peter 3:18 and 2 Corinthians 3:18). This progression presents the idea that a young Christian is like a baby and must grow and mature in the Faith. Through the Holy Spirit God assists us in this growth.
- c) It is an act that reaches its climax at the second coming of Jesus Christ (1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 15:49-52; Philippians 1:6) These Scriptures show that the progression of this change goes from physical to mental to spiritual. The ultimate goal is our own glorification (Romans 8:29-30). In Adam, man's paradise was lost; in Christ, it is forever regained.

In summary we can say that the grace of God, because of one's faith in Christ, forgives sin, removes guilt, restores one to full fellowship with God, offers the privilege of a brand new life, offers the opportunities to serve the Lord in a responsible manner, and assures one of eternal life.

## REVIEW

1. How many times does the word “grace” appear in the Bible?
2. What is the definition of grace?
3. List the five pictures Paul presents of grace.
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
4. What three ways does grace enable us to bear our witness for Christ?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
5. What are the two deeper aspects of grace?
  - a)
  - b)
6. How do you define justification?
7. How do you define sanctification?
8. What three blessings come to us from justification?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)

9. In what three ways does the Bible set forth sanctification?

a)

b)

c)

10. In what three ways does justification work?

a)

b)

c)

## LESSON 16

### HOW TO FACE SUFFERING

*"Man, who is born of woman, is short-lived and full of turmoil. Like a flower he comes forth and withers. He also flees like a shadow and does not remain." (Job 14:1-2)*

A young boy once asked his pastor, "Is getting saved like being vaccinated?" We have a tendency to smile at a question like this, but the sad thing is that many people have this very concept of salvation. They think that when a person accepts Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit takes up residence within the believer's heart, that person is immune to all problems, sadness, and sorrow. This is not the case however. Jesus never promised His followers they would be spared from hardship or sorrow (John 16:33). In fact, He prayed that we be not removed from the world, but that we be kept from the power of the devil (John 17:15). Jesus expects His followers to be in the world, but not of the world. Therefore we must live out our lives on earth and deal with or respond to the things that come to us as a result of this life.

When a Christian realizes that he or she has been put here for the purpose of glorifying God by responding to life, the question will change from, "Why did this happen to me?" to "How can I bring glory to God out of this situation?" This is an extremely important truth that few Christians have grasped. Another important truth that needs to be grasped is that all suffering is not due to one's sins. Many people believe that the problems, heartaches, and sadnesses are all due to some deep, dark sin. Jesus laid the axe to this "old wives' tale" in John 9:1-3. Yet, an unconfessed sin can bring all kinds of problems through the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. If sin is allowed to lie too long in our minds and hearts, we will come under the chastisement of God (Hebrews 12:5-11). In other words, the all-knowing and loving God treats us as we would treat our own children (Proverbs 13:24). For our own good He disciplines us out of love. God doesn't make mistakes! He knows exactly how to deal with us and does so because we belong to Him.

In this study on "How to Face Suffering," we will be looking at a number of interesting facets of how suffering is related to the follower of God. There are two verses of Scripture that open the door to our study: Psalm 23:4 and Psalm 112:4. In Psalm 23 David points to a truth often overlooked by Christians when they face the sorrow that accompanies death. Notice that he said, "Even though I walk through the valley..." the word "through" does not mean going into and stopping, but passing from the beginning to the end. He goes one step further and mentions a "shadow." There is no way for a shadow to exist without light. In Psalm 112, we can see exactly what the purpose of this light is—it is for the upright or believers in God. So, for a child of God we can say that regardless of the darkness that may fall into one's life, there will always be a light to guide, a light to give hope, and a light for assurance of God's presence.

Now with this truth in mind, let us look at four examples of sources of suffering that reflect light within darkness.

#### 1. **There is the contrast of things in life that are both good and bad.**

- a) The force of gravity is the source of thousands of accidents, bringing sorrow to millions. The child that loses his balance on a bicycle will topple over. An airplane will plummet to the earth if its engine fails. A person who leans too far out of a window will be "pulled" to the ground. And yet, not one of us would want to live in a world where we couldn't sit in a chair, walk on the sidewalk, ride in a car, build a building, or span a river. If we live within the bounds of the natural law of

gravity, we can enjoy many things; but if we break this law, we are in for suffering.

- b) Fire is another example of a phenomenon that is both good and bad. Our lives would be miserable if fire were removed, and yet thousands die or are seriously hurt every year when they misuse it.
- c) Water is an essential of life, but it becomes a hazard to life when we fail to control it adequately or we ignore the rules of water safety.
- d) Add drugs and alcohol to the above, and you have yet another example of the light and darkness. When drugs and alcohol are used properly and medicinally, they bring healing to one's body. When they are misused they bring much sorrow and disaster.

We can see from these simple everyday things that we cannot claim life's assets without taking on some of its liabilities. Some of the things we enjoy most can also destroy our joy and happiness. Almost anything we count as good, if used the wrong way, can become a source of suffering. Yet we are willing to run the risk. This is one light.

- 2. **Second, we are all members of society.** As members of society we depend a great deal on one another for the necessities of life. We wouldn't want to live and work in a world all by ourselves. We need other people, and yet some of these other people can make mistakes in judgment and hundreds can be seriously hurt. The greed of a world leader can plunge millions of people into war, resulting in manifold sufferings. Being a member of society has its pluses and minuses, but if the choice were given, there would be few choosing isolation. Yes, society is worth the risk; it is worth the price. This is another light.
- 3. **The next example of light that shines in the darkness of suffering is "divine impartiality."** Jesus told us that it rains on the righteous as well as the unrighteous (Matthew 5:44-45). A brief visit to any hospital will show the reality of this truth. Suffering knows no limits. It comes to the lost and saved; the rich and poor; the black and the white; the saint and the sinner. Nowhere in the Bible are we told that we will be exempt from sorrow, but we have great promises that provide us with light in the darkness. Jesus said He would be with us always (Matthew 28:20). We have the promise that God will never leave us or forsake us. Paul promised us that we have victory only in Christ (Philippians 4:13). He also said if God is for us, no one can stand against us (Romans 8:31). Even though being a Christian doesn't make us immune from suffering and sorrows, we do have the assurance that God's grace will be sufficient for us to cope more positively with adverse events than we could without His grace (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Jesus closed His teaching on the mountainside by telling about two houses (Matthew 7:24-27). He said one was built on the rock and withstood the flood while the other was built on the sand and fell under the flood. The rock, He said, was His word. Those who know Christ can withstand the floods of life. They have His word (rocks) on it. This is yet another light in the darkness. God's grace is always sufficient for our "floods" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

- 4. **The last example of light in the darkness of suffering is that through this suffering, Christians can glorify Christ with their responses.** Many suffering people have come to realize the difference Christ makes in a life when that life reaches out to them in love. More work has been done to alleviate suffering throughout the world by Christians than by any others. More money has been given to meet the needs of suffering people in the name of Jesus Christ than in any other name. More Christians

than any other group in society have given their lives willingly to help people in need. Christ has placed a "caring" spot in the hearts of His people and this has been evidenced in every level of society. This is the light at the end of the tunnel of darkness.

We now come face to face with an important factor concerning Christians and their sufferings. And that is, in the total makeup of a life fit for living—suffering, trials, trouble, and problems have a positive and creative function to fulfill.

Much of our suffering is actually a contribution to the molding, shaping, and beautifying of our souls. Paul pointed this out in his second letter to Corinth (2 Corinthians 4:6-18). There are three important things that need to be brought to the forefront in our study:

1. **It takes a world of suffering, troubles, trials, and problems to bring out some of the finest qualities in our lives.** We don't need to be art critics to realize that the great paintings of the world need both light and shadow to present the picture properly. Often it is the darkness of a shadow which highlights the most important part of the painting. This can be seen very clearly in the masterpiece Mona Lisa.

Likewise, we don't have to be concert pianists to realize the value of discord in beautiful music. It is often the dissonance that adds excitement and beauty to a musical work and points up the harmony in it. Life is like that, too.

If there were no risks in life, where would the adventure and challenge be?

If there were no suffering, how would we learn compassion?

If there were no discipline and hardship, how would we learn patience and endurance?

If there were no fierce temptations, where would righteousness be found?

If there were no darts of the wicked to fight, where would be the thrill of victory?

James challenged us to consider these things as positive and constructive (James 1:1-4). If all of life's sadnesses and sorrows could be eliminated, man's spiritual relationship would also diminish. One man said, "We are shaped down here, so we will fit up there." How true!

2. **It takes a world of hardships to satisfy man's drive for happiness and attainment in life.** Every outward quest for achievement carries with it an open invitation for suffering. Just think of the multitude of times when man has treated a severe cut as if it were only a scratch. How many people step into a boat when they are unable to swim! Think of the multitudes that roar through the air, over the water, or around the track for the thrill of it. All of these examples (and there are many more) simply say that man will risk suffering for the sake of adventure and thrill. In such cases as these, when things go wrong, should God ever have to listen to the sufferer ask, "Why, God, did you let this happen to me?" When we get right down to it, most of the suffering we experience is self-induced—by choice or carelessness.
3. **Lastly, it takes personal suffering to "carve" man for his high calling as a child of God.** The person who has never known suffering has not found the riches of God's love and grace. The person who cries the loudest, makes the most noise, asks the most questions, and does the most condemning of God when suffering comes, is not the real participant in life. He is really just an observer or a spectator. History has shown us clearly that the world's greatest sufferers have

produced the most shining examples of life at its best. It is from this group that the most convinced and committed Christians have come. They are the ones who have found light amidst the darkness. They are the ones who really know the love and grace of God because they have experienced it.

This is not saying that we should go around looking for ways to suffer for Christ. No! But it is saying that if and when suffering does come, let it not be due to unforgiven sin or lack of prayer or willful disobedience. Rather let it be for the shaping of the real persons that we can become through trials and tribulations. May we respond in such a manner that those watching our response will have to give honor and glory to our Father God (Matthew 5:16)!

## REVIEW

1. What are four examples of light within darkness?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
2. What four everyday things carry good and bad elements at the same time, often leading to human suffering when they are misused?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
3. What are three important things that help mold and shape our souls?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
4. What happens to the question "Why did this happen to me?" when a Christian realizes his or her purpose in life?
5. What two main passages of Scripture from Psalms provide us with hope in darkness?
6. Where could one go to realize that suffering knows no limits?
7. "We are \_\_\_\_\_ down here, so we will \_\_\_\_\_ up there."
8. Every outward quest for \_\_\_\_\_ carries with it an open \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_.

## LESSON 17

### **THE CHURCH: CHRIST'S GIFT TO HIS FOLLOWERS [ECCLESIOLOGY]**

*"...upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not over power it" (Matthew 16:18).*

The question was once asked, "It really doesn't matter what church a person belongs to, does it, since all churches are fundamentally the same?" If we are to answer this question fully, we must agree that all churches are the same just as all automobiles are the same. All cars have fenders, tires, seats, doors, engines, and lights; but these basic similarities are not usually the reasons we choose one make of car over another. We base our selection on the way a car will meet our needs and fulfill our desires. The same is true with a restaurant. All are fundamentally the same in that they serve food and have tables, chairs, dishes, menus, and waitresses. But again, these are not the criteria we use for making our selection. We look at the types of food available and its preparation. Atmosphere also has much to do with our selection, and the manner in which we are served is also important. When it comes to churches, they, too, are fundamentally much the same in that they have preachers, choirs, church school classes, Bible reading and prayer; but are these the major reasons we choose one church over another? No! We find one type of sermon presentation here and another there. The music in this church is often quite different from the music in that church. The emphasis on the Bible differs considerably from church to church. While one church may meet the spiritual needs of one person, it may not meet the needs of another. The choice of a church is one of the most important choices, if not the most important choice, a young Christian must make. His future spiritual growth depends on the choice he makes.

These next six lessons are extremely important and should be studied very carefully; they center on the different aspects of the church of Jesus Christ. In this lesson we will answer the question "What is the church?"

The word "church" is found more than sixty times throughout the New Testament. It means simply, "the called-out ones." It is important to realize that the meaning of the term "church" has to do with people and not a building. Each city had its representative to the general governing body. When a meeting was scheduled, these representatives were "called out" of their respective areas to assemble together for the purpose of doing business. You can readily see where we get our words "assembly" and "congregation." It is important to realize that the meaning of "church" has to do with people and not a building. During the early years of our nation's history, the term "meetinghouse" was used so as to guard against the idea that the building was the church. It's too bad this difference between the building and the body or church did not survive the progression of time. All too many people consider the building on the corner to be the church rather than merely the house in which the church meets.

Jesus makes three important points about His church in Matthew 16:13-18:

1. **He said He was going to establish His church** (v. 18). The church is not man's institution; it is Christ's. It was not conceived in the mind of man, but in the mind of Christ. Man has done marvelous things. He has begun many unique institutions, but the church is not one of them.
2. **He said He would establish His church upon a profession of faith** (vv. 16-18). A play on two Greek words gives us the true picture. When Peter brought forth his affirmation of faith, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus said that God had revealed that truth to him. He then said,

"You are *Petros* [Peter], and upon this *petra* [rock] I will build My church." The word *Petros* (the name "Peter") means a stone or pebble, while *petra* means a massive rock ledge. In essence Jesus was saying, "That's right, Peter; you've got it. You are a pebble of faith, but upon this solid rock (faith in me), I will build my church. "The church is built on Jesus Christ! Man did not establish it.

3. **The third point Jesus makes is that "the gates of Hades [hell] shall not overpower it"** (v. 18). The power of the church rests in the resurrected life of Jesus Christ. All the hosts of the devil cannot overcome the church as long as it keeps Jesus Christ as the head of the body. The strength and power of the church lies in its relationship to Christ.

The apostle Paul used the word "church" in three different ways:

1. When he referred to a group of believers assembling or congregating together for worship (1 Corinthians 11:18, 14:4-5, 12, 19).
2. When he referred to a number of groups meeting together (Romans 16:1; Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-2).
3. When he referred to all believers everywhere (Philippians 3:6). This is the universal reference to the total body of believers, past, present, and future.

The church of Jesus Christ is a living organism made up of faithful believers in Christ, meeting together to worship Him in spirit and truth. It can mean a small group, several groups, or all believers everywhere, but the entire focus is on our praise to God the Father through His son as the Holy Spirit leads us. This truth rules out several well-known human ideas about the church.

1. **The church is not a saving institution.** Jesus Christ and He alone can save man from the consequence of sin. Church membership is not a "ticket" to heaven as many people may think or hope it to be. God keeps His own records.
2. **The church is not an ark of safety, shielding its members from the evil of the world.** Our safety lies in our closeness to Jesus Christ. The church never was intended to be a "baby sitting" service for timid souls.
3. **The church is not a "faucet" of convenience.** Many people see the church as a "marry and bury" service and when those services are not needed, neither is the church. Some people see the church as a place for business contacts and therefore use it as a tool for monetary gain.
4. **The church is not a collection of receivers.** All too often we hear people talk about what they didn't get from the sermon or music or Sunday school lesson. A careful reading of the Scriptures shows us that we are to be givers rather than receivers. We are to be participants rather than spectators. Christ wants the priority of our time, talent, resources, and efforts. This will never happen if we only look for what we can get from church. We were saved to serve, not to sit!
5. **Finally, the church is not an extension of society's humanitarian organizations.** The church is an extension of Jesus Christ, not the Red Cross, Heart Association, or Goodwill Industries. Yes, the church is often engaged in similar outreaches, but that is the outgrowth of its dedication to Christ and His love for all mankind.

The apostle Paul also refers to the church of Jesus Christ, these called-out ones, in several descriptive word pictures.

1. The term he uses most often is "**saints**". This word means those who are different from the ordinary, in speech, attitude, and actions (Philippians 1:1-2; 4:21). Paul sets this term within the context of being "in" Christ. This means surrounded by and dependent on. An example would be that of a fish, surrounded by and dependent on the water, or a tree root surrounded by and dependent on the soil. A saint is a person surrounded by and dependent on Jesus Christ, and this commitment lifts the person above the ordinary level of existence to the abundant life.
2. Paul refers to the followers of Christ as "**believers**." This is a title much like that of "disciple" or "learner." Jesus commanded His followers to go and make believers and disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19). He then added that His followers were to be instructed in all the things He had taught while He was on earth (Matthew 28:20). Jesus is our pattern or example (1 Peter 2:21). This unique relationship involves an in-depth commitment to Jesus Christ on the part of the believers. This means that the believers will derive their thoughts, actions, and speech from Jesus, their example (Mark 8:34-38).
3. The followers of Christ are seen as the "**brethren**" in the eyes of Paul. This simply means a brotherhood or brothers. In this context there is concern and compassion for one another. If one brother hurts, all brothers hurt. Regardless of the reference often made about being our brothers' keepers, we are not our brothers' keepers; we are our brothers' brothers and sisters.

So, in these three word pictures Paul shows Christians in the world as those who live higher, holier, and different lives; to Christ the believers commit themselves and on Christ they are dependent; and to fellow believers, Christians are brothers and sisters.

Lastly, we need to see how all this fits together and functions in the church setting. Once again we look to word pictures to give us understanding here.

1. **We are to function as the body of Christ** (Romans 12:1-5). It is in this manner that we can bring all parts into harmony and unity. Paul uses the physical body as an example. Each part must fulfill its special function (eye, ear, hand, foot) if the body is to be functional. One of the biggest dangers the church faces is not from the outside but from within—the senseless, loveless, and Christ-less division among the parts of the church body (1 Corinthians 1:10-13). Each of us has a job to do, and we must not withhold our contribution to the whole body. We must perform our tasks for the glory of Christ, not for ourselves.
2. **We are to function as the "garden" of God.** Paul presents us as a fertile field or garden in 1 Corinthians 3:9. This is a field with the potential of bringing forth thirty, sixty, or even a hundredfold of the seeds sown in it. If we are to "yield" the fruit Christ expects, winning people (Acts 1:8) and making disciples (Matthew 28:19-20), then we must keep our garden free of "weeds" or sin. The greatest "weeder" is available in confession and repentance (1 John 1:9).
3. **We are to be the bride of Christ.** This is perhaps the loveliest of all pictures of the church's relationship to Christ. It calls for our faithfulness, loyalty, purity, and love, those priceless ingredients of every relationship. It calls for devotion, and preparation.

This lesson has described the church—its meaning, its makeup, and its function. Each member has a unique privilege to be part of the fellowship but also must be willing to fulfill his or her responsibility.

## REVIEW

1. Why is the choice of a church important?
2. What does the word "church" really mean?
3. Who established the church?
4. What was the foundation upon which the church was founded?
5. Why is it impossible for the "gates of Hades (hell)" to overpower the church?
6. In what three ways does Paul use the term "church"?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
7. List the five things the church is not.
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
8. What are the three main terms Paul uses to refer to the followers of Christ?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
9. If we aren't our brothers' keepers, what are we in the relation to our brothers?

10. Name the three word pictures that give us understanding about our functions within the church.

a)

b)

c)

## LESSON 18

### HOW TO CHOOSE A CHURCH

*“So then, those who had received His word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41).*

The choice of a church is the first decision of magnitude a new Christian faces following his salvation experience through Jesus Christ. It is an extremely important and critical decision and should not be made quickly or without much prayer and consideration. We have the promise that we don't have to face decisions on our own strength, but can seek wisdom and direction from our Father (James 1:5).

It should be noted that the moment a person accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, he or she becomes a member of God's universal church—the believers of all races, colors, and cultures and of all times. This lesson deals with the selection of the local church family. It is in this local church setting that a Christian gets the bulk of one's Christian education. It is also here that family members will receive their basic Christian training. Almost all of one's service for Christ will be directed through the various ministries of the local church. The spiritual growth of the new Christian will depend largely on the local church he or she attends. So, when we look at all that's involved in the church relationship, the selection of that church becomes intensely important as well as critical to the future of the new Christian.

There are several important aspects of a church that need to be considered. Perhaps they could best be expressed in the form of questions to which one should seek answers about any prospective church he or she might consider for joining. Some of the important questions are the following:

1. How does the prospective church acknowledge the Bible to be the holy, inspired, infallible, living Word of almighty God?
2. How does the prospective church acknowledge the Bible as the final authority in all matters pertaining to life in general, one's relationships in particular, and one's response to God specifically?
3. In what way does the prospective church acknowledge God as the one and only true living God, maker and sustainer of the universe and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ?
4. How does the prospective church acknowledge and proclaim the person of Jesus Christ as the only Savior of mankind?
5. What does the prospective church teach about the biblical truths of the incarnation, the crucifixion, the resurrection, the ascension, and the visible return of Christ?
6. What does the prospective church teach about Christ's voluntary death on the cross for the sins of man and about salvation by faith in Christ as the only means of eternal life?
7. How does the prospective church teach the love as well as the wrath of almighty God as seen in the eternal abodes of heaven and hell?

8. In what way does the prospective church encourage the carrying out of the Great Commission as stated in Matthew 28:19-20, both by the church as a whole and by individuals?
9. How does the prospective church structure its worship service(s) so that there is an encounter with Christ and an opportunity for response?
10. What are some of the ways the prospective church affords adequate opportunities for spiritual growth through Christian education and service?
11. Does there seem to be a genuine demonstration of care and concern for one another among the membership?

If the answers to these questions are consistent with your beliefs about what a church should be, then you will want to consider the following characteristics of the New Testament church as given to us in Acts 2:42-47.

1. **It was a teaching church.** Church history tells us that around 100 A.D. there was a body of Christian truth called the old Roman Creed. This was perhaps one of the first statements of faith used by the early church in its teaching, preaching, and training. Similar statements of faith or creeds have been used down through the years by various bodies of believers, to define their faith and set forth the standards for their doctrinal statements. These statements contained such truths as these:
  - a) *God is the creator of the universe and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit.*
  - b) *Jesus is His only Son, born of a virgin and crucified under Pontius Pilate.*
  - c) *Jesus rose from the grave and ascended back to heaven.*
  - d) *He now sits at the right hand of God as our advocate.*
  - e) *He will come again to judge the living and the dead.*
  - f) *He established the church on earth for the communion of His followers.*
  - g) *He will take His followers back to heaven with Him.*
  - h) *He forgives sin, hears prayers, and offers salvation.<sup>2</sup>*

Do these tenets sound familiar? They should. In 390 A.D. with a few additions, they were the basis for the familiar Apostles Creed, quoted in thousands of churches every Lord's day.

2. **It was a praying church.** These early Christians were taking Christ at His word concerning prayer (Matthew 7:7-8). They were receiving answers to their prayers and experiencing power in everyday living. The book of Acts gives numerous examples of answered prayers.
3. **It was a reverent church.** These early Christians realized that they were in the very presence of the living God. They were experiencing what Isaiah witnessed in his encounter with God (Isaiah 6:1-8).
4. **It was a church in which things were happening.** The people were expectant. People were being saved, healed, and changed; enthusiasm was being "caught" rather than "taught." They were confident that Christ was ministering within their midst.

<sup>1</sup> William Barclay, *The Apostle's Creed for Everyman* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1967), p. 12.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

5. **It was a sharing church.** Even though they were very poor, for the most part they were willing to share what they had with one another. When Jesus told the parable of the good Samaritan, therein lay a teaching about three prevalent philosophies of life (Luke 10:30-35):
  - a) The philosophy of the robbers: "What's yours is mine if I can get it."
  - b) The philosophy of the priest and Levite: "What's mine is mine, and I'm going to keep it."
  - c) The philosophy of the good Samaritan: "What's mine is yours when you need it."

This early church had learned well and was living its philosophy by faith, daily.

6. **It was a worshiping church.** These early Christians did not stop assembling together (Hebrews 10:25). They had not learned how to turn God's holy day into a holiday—yet. They came together to adore, praise, and honor the name of God.
7. **It was a fellowshiping church.** The members ate together, prayed together, played together, and enjoyed one another. Christian fellowship can best be defined as "the Christian attitude of give and take with other brothers and sisters in Christ." They kept Jesus Christ at the center of their church life, social life, and family life.
8. **It was a grateful church.** Its members were thankful for all that Christ had done for them. A good picture of this is found in Romans 8. Here Paul tells us why any Christian should be grateful to Christ.
  - a) We will not be condemned (v.1).
  - b) We are children of God (vv.14-15).
  - c) We are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ (vv.16-17).
  - d) We don't have to worry (v.28).
  - e) We can't lose (v.31).
  - f) We will never be separated from the love of Christ (vv.34-35).

9. **It was a witnessing church.** These early Christians could not contain their joy. They told everyone about Jesus Christ and what He could do for them. They were reaching out to the unreached. They were showing love to the unloved. They showed no partiality as they went to Jew, Gentile, and Greek, to those who were bound and free. They didn't try to modify the command of Christ when He made it evident that theirs was to be a "whosoever" ministry. Thus, the three great qualities of Christianity were manifested throughout the known world: love, compassion, and unity.

Any new Christian seeking the Lord's will through prayer and sincerely considering all the facts will have no problem in finding the proper church to join. It will be a church that fits the New Testament pattern by acknowledging the Word of God as its guide and the person of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and by reaching the lost in a ministry of outreach.

## REVIEW

1. What is the first important decision a new Christian will make?
  
2. List six important questions to which a new Christian should seek answers in relation to a prospective church.
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
  - f)
  
3. What creed emerged from the Old Roman Creed?

When?

4. List six characteristics of a New Testament church?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
  - f)
  
5. What three philosophies of life are evident in the parable of the good Samaritan?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  
6. What are six things for which Christians should praise God?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)

d)

e)

f)

7. What is a good definition of Christian fellowship?

## LESSON 19

### **THE CHURCH: ITS MESSAGE AND MISSION [MISSIOLOGY]**

*“...you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).*

The church of Jesus Christ has been given a unique mission and message to share with the world. Every passage that shows the church in action reveals the penetrative force of its mission and message. It is to penetrate the world with the message of Jesus Christ in that He came to seek and to save every lost soul (Luke 19:10). The church is to march into every part of the world with the truth of the "whoever believes..." promise (John 3:16; Romans 10:13). The church is to penetrate every heart with the gospel (Good News) of Jesus Christ. This Good News reveals the fact that God became a man in Christ (incarnation) and that He died on the cross to save man (crucifixion). He rose from the dead (resurrection) to assure victory over death for every believer and thus provide everlasting life. Christ then ascended to the Father (ascension) to prepare a place for His followers, but He promised to return (second coming) to receive them unto Himself. This is basically the mission and message of the church.

There are several passages in the Bible that afford us examples of the penetrative mission of the church. Even though there are numerous passages, we will only look at the images described in the following four:

#### 1. 2 Timothy 2:1-4: **Good soldiers penetrate.**

Here Paul likens the followers of Christ to soldiers. He challenges us with the fact that good soldiers are obedient and disciplined. They do not become entangled with the things of the world that would hinder them in accomplishing their mission. A disciple of Christ must be just as obedient to Him as a soldier is to his commander. The follower must also discipline his life in relation to attitudes. The Bible warns us that our attitudes or thoughts dictate what we are, what we do, and what we become (Proverbs 23:7). The thought is always the father of the fact. We must also be on guard of becoming so entangled with the things of the world that we will have no time for the things of Christ. Remember! Christ has first claim on your life (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). We dare not become so busy here and there that we fall victim to doing good at the cost of doing the best. A good soldier is constantly aware of his duty.

If we are to follow the example of soldiering, we must confront ourselves with the reality that a soldier endures to the end. Paul was speaking in this passage of a Roman soldier, no doubt, and therefore a good lesson comes forth. Romans were known for their dedication to their emperor. They would rather die than surrender or quit. Perhaps the same idea was in Paul's mind when he told us we would reap if we would only endure in our efforts (Galatians 6:9). Jesus also approached this same truth when he said that we are not fit for the kingdom if we once put our hand to the plow and then look back (Luke 9:62). We only need to read Mark 8:34-38 to get a clear picture of Christ's feelings toward discipleship.

There is another element of soldiering that should be followed by Christ's penetrating people: the continual training needed to stay in top form. Again, the Roman soldier is a good example. He had to train daily for his specific part in his company's designated responsibility. The Romans were such

a tight unit that each man knew the exact moves of the man in front, behind, and on both sides of him. Paul called us to such training when he told us to study so that we would be approved by God (2 Timothy 2:15).

2. Matthew 5:13: **Salt penetrates.**

Salt was a very precious item in the days of Jesus. It was looked upon as a very pure substance. In fact, the soldiers were often paid in quantities of salt. We get our English word "salary" from the same root word. The saying "He isn't worth his salt" reportedly comes from the same source.

There were several important things to know about salt and its qualities which show us why Jesus chose this word to refer to His followers.

- a) Salt was a preservative when it penetrated meat. It caused a complex chemical reaction that prevented spoilage. When we, the church of Jesus Christ penetrate society, there is a definite "preservation" action that takes place. The church is the only hope this world has. The church is the only institution charged by Christ to carry His message to the lost world. We are to show the world that morality is good and holds society together as nothing else does. Christians must show the world that marriage can be wonderful and lasting and is God's plan for man and woman. The world must also see that fair play and honesty are rewarding attributes for everyday living. If the world is ever to see the love of God for mankind, it will see and experience this love through the ministry of the church first and foremost. When the principles of God's Word are carried out faithfully, there is a very definite preserving quality that permeates all phases of society.
- b) Salt, when it penetrates food, brings out the flavor in a distinct manner. There are certain foods that are tasteless without salt. So it is with life! Without the "salt" of Christianity, much of life is bland and tasteless, if not repulsive. When Christ penetrates a person's life, that person's attitudes toward his or her job, school, family, and friends take on a new dimension. Then and only then can a person truly live what has been called Christ's golden rule (Matthew 7:12). The church, as it penetrates the community around it, will bring to the relationship of life a flavor that cannot be duplicated. This flavor will evidence itself in such qualities as the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).
- c) Anyone eating french fries when he has a split lip knows the final quality of salt firsthand. Salt always makes its presence known as it penetrates the wound. Likewise, the church makes its presence known by its stand for right and decency within its community. The church of Jesus Christ was never meant to be dormant and passive to social ills. It must always let the world know for whom and what it stands.

3. Matthew 5:14-16: **Light penetrates.**

Light was meant to be seen. Jesus said we were to let our light shine (penetrate) so that the Father would be glorified (Matthew 5:16). As the church penetrates the darkness of society, it will dispel the darkness by giving a clear direction and purpose to life. The type of light Jesus refers to here is the quality of light that gives direction. It is a guide to those who have lost their way and to those who are looking for the way. This light reveals the One who said He was the way, the only way (John 14:6). Through the church, such darkensses as fear, sadness, guilt, and insecurity are dispelled and replaced by hope, joy, forgiveness, and assurance.

#### 4. Acts 1:8: **A witness penetrates.**

This is perhaps the most penetrating force of all. As the church begins to reach out like the branches of a tree, it penetrates every facet of society. So important is this type of penetration that Jesus used extremely strong language here. There are four important points to be considered:

- a) Jesus, in His last recorded words on earth, is telling us that when the Holy Spirit comes into our lives (Christians believe this happens at conversion), we will be witnesses for or against Him from that time on. Wherever we go, whatever we say, whatever we do—all will ultimately reflect upon Christ and His church. This is an awesome responsibility.
- b) He used the Greek word *martures*, which in time came to mean "martyr." Its root, *marturos*, even reminds us of the English word. Jesus in essence was saying to His followers, "From now on you are to be my witnesses even if it costs you your lives." When we realize this, it makes our petty reasons for not penetrating our society, by our witness, rather flimsy, doesn't it?
- c) The term "witness" means to bear testimony to the truth as one knows it personally or as it relates specifically to him or her. As we witness, we are simply sharing what has happened to us in relation to Jesus Christ. Our witness has three parts:
  - (1) Our life before we accepted Christ;
  - (2) How we accepted Christ;
  - (3) What Christ has done for us since the salvation experience

Every Christian has a witness! He is commanded to share it, but he does not have to do it on his own power.

- d) The expressed purpose of the Holy Spirit for the Christian is to give him the power he needs to witness (penetrate) for Christ. The Holy Spirit will give us explosive, life-changing power when we exercise our privilege of witnessing. It is interesting to note that we get the word "dynamite" from the same Greek root. This power will help us say what we never thought we could say, do what we never thought we could do, and become what we never dreamed we could become in Christ.

The mission of the church of Jesus Christ is quite simple. It is to penetrate the world with the message of the Good News of Christ. It is God's plan that we bear our testimonies because it is His will that no one perish, but that all repent of their sins (2 Peter 3:9).

## REVIEW

1. The mission of the church is to \_\_\_\_\_ society with the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ.
2. What are four images that help describe the penetrative ministry of the church?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
3. Name three evident qualities of salt.
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
4. Give the four important points of Acts 1:8.
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
5. How does the word *matures* enforce the command of Christ to witness?
6. What three steps should be covered in one's witness or testimony?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
7. What assistance can a Christian count on as he witnesses?
8. Why are we commanded to be witnesses?

## LESSON 20

### HOW TO FUNCTION AS PART OF THE BODY

*“For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12)*

The church is really the body of Jesus Christ! Just as our physical bodies have many parts, so does the church. Paul uses this analogy to show the similarity between the body of Christ, the church, and the physical body (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). In this passage, he points out the different functions of the various parts of the physical body such as the eye, hand, and foot. Each part has a special job to do. Can you imagine what would happen if the hand would decide to place the piece of steak in the ear rather than the mouth? Just as our minds dictate the proper action for each part of the body, so does Jesus Christ dictate the appropriate action of the members of His body, the church. As each member functions in the proper manner, the church will be able to perform the duties and ministries Christ desires. There are several basic functions each member of the church must perform if the church "body" is to be healthy and accomplish its mission:

#### 1. **Consistent church attendance is a must for a follower of Christ.**

Attending church services on the Lord's Day is the least a Christian can do to honor his or her Lord. When a believer in Christ begins to forsake the assembly of the "body," he or she is drifting away from Christ. It is important to remember that when drifting begins, it is always away from Christ and His church and not toward Christ. Attending the regular church services should be seen as keeping an appointment with God. Even though many people will say that you don't have to be in church to worship God, the truth of the matter is, these people will not be the active and victorious Christians they could be if they were part of the body and performing their proper function. Certainly, we can worship God anywhere—by the lake, in the mountains, or walking through the woods—and we should. But if we belong to a church, we should be in our places every time we have the opportunity. Christians need one another in fellowship. Such need supports, encourages, and stimulates the whole body. When a burning log is removed from a fire, it will continue to burn for a short time, but soon it will flicker, smoke, and then die out. So it is with those who remove themselves from the body of Christ, the church. A Christian's attendance is one facet of witness to the world. If a Christian doesn't take the church seriously, those who look upon that person's life will not take him or her seriously.

#### 2. **Honoring and glorifying the name of Christ through worship is an essential part of one's Christian experience.**

Worship is the key ingredient in growing in grace. As we worship God, we gain the proper perspective of His greatness and our dependency on Him. One of the reasons that God removed Himself from fellowship with mankind is that people ceased to praise and thank Him (Romans 1:21-22). If true worship is to take place there must be an encounter with God and a response to God (Isaiah 6:1-8). As we sing praises to God, pray to God, and thank Him for His many blessings, we will be brought into the very presence of God. It is here that we recognize the Father's greatness. This unique experience then calls for a response or commitment from us.

We find ourselves wanting to draw even closer. We want to do more than we are doing. Soon we begin to pour forth our deep adoration to God in worship. We begin responding to Him and His will.

As our faith increases as we encounter Him in the music, prayers, and message, we begin to grow to be more and more like Christ.

**3. We also grow in grace through our faithfulness in stewardship.**

Most people think that stewardship involves only money, but this is not true. The giving of one's resources is only part of being a faithful steward. There are other aspects, such as the giving of one's talents and time and efforts. For some reason, a young Christian usually has a problem with stewardship, but if he or she will only remember to whom he or she belongs, this barrier can be overcome, resulting in great blessings (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). The author has known hundreds of great Christians who have lived victorious lives and led many people to Jesus Christ. But he has never seen one among this group who was unfaithful in his giving or stingy with his time, talent, or efforts. When a person falters here, that person usually falls down all the way along in his or her Christian life. We have a wonderful promise from God concerning His blessings upon the faithful (Malachi 3:8-12). A tenth (tithe) of all we have belongs to God. A Christian who does not respond with a tithe of time, talent, resources, and effort, will become most miserable. A young Christian should begin immediately to give the tithe and watch God bless him or her for this faithfulness.

**4. Growing in grace also involves serving the Lord through the ministry of the church.**

Most young Christians possess usable skills needed within the church family. Perhaps they can type, decorate, plan, and organize special functions like meals, meetings, or outings. Some have maintenance skills while others may be plumbers, electricians, engineers, or have some other necessary talent. There are numerous opportunities to serve if persons will only make their desires known.

There are other opportunities for ministry that take special training such as Sunday school teaching, witnessing teams, the music ministry, and youth work. Most churches will provide the necessary training for those who are serious about wanting to be active in the Lord's work. One of the best ways to assume your role in the church is to volunteer for a position or a committee. This will afford you an excellent opportunity for involvement, and will also expose you to the inner workings of the church. A word of caution however! If a young Christian possesses several talents or is the type who can't say no, that person will run the risk of overextending oneself and might burn out very early. Until he or she has developed a sound judgment about his or her limitations, it would be wise for that person to consult the pastor or a close friend before accepting everything that is offered by other well-meaning members or church officers. In the long run, learning to say no can be as important as saying yes.

**5. The Sunday school program of Christian education should have a definite place in the life of every Christian.**

It is in the Sunday school that the word of God is taught in a small group setting. This ministry offers every believer an opportunity to ask questions and enter into discussions that will enhance knowledge and understanding of God's Word like no other program of the church. Paul told us that we should study to show ourselves "approved unto God" (2 Timothy 2:15, KJV). The better we know the Bible, the closer we will be able to draw to Christ and His will for our lives. We must remember that the "fuel" on which a Christian operates is faith, and the best source of that faith, according to Paul, is the word of Christ (Romans 10:17). It is also important to be prepared for the Sunday school class. The best way to do this is to read and study the lesson during the week, writing down any questions that arise

from the reading. In Sunday school, much as in other experiences, you will get more out of the class if you are prepared and put more into it.

**6. A church member should enter into the area of church business.**

As a member, you have the privilege and responsibility of being a part of the total church process. When regular or special business meetings are held, you should try to be present. This will give you an excellent opportunity to see the total church in action. You will be exposed to the financial picture of the church, the ministry of various boards and committees, and the overall goals the church has established. This type of education will prepare you to vote intelligently on the issues confronting the ministry of the church.

These six basic functions by the membership are essential to the growth and strength of the local church. There are other opportunities offered within the church if one wishes to become more involved.

Most churches have women's missionary societies responsible for diffusing mission education and news throughout the church family. There are men's fellowship organizations as well as different types of youth groups. There are usually many interesting opportunities available in relation to the size of the church family. It is very important to remember that unless the basic functions are met, participation in all other activities will not produce a strong, healthy, and growing church family. First things must always come first, and then the other interests can be satisfied.

It is within the fellowship of the church body that a believer will develop the "spiritual muscles" necessary to carry the message of Christ's redemption into the local community and ultimately to the unchurched world. If the message of Christ is to become the penetrating force implied in the Great Commission (Matthew 28: 19-20), it will become so only as the believers share their witness with their community. The church should become the inspirational and equipping base for helping its members lift the name of Christ while on the job, in the neighborhood, and at school. It is tragic when a local church becomes nothing more than a building on the corner in which its members gather each week to sing hymns, listen to a sermon, exchange pleasantries, and then depart without a challenge to reach out to the unreached within their community. A church loses its privilege to exist if its members become "reservoirs of truth" and not "channels of blessings."

Yes, the church is truly a living organism with Jesus Christ as its head. It is made up of many parts, all different to some degree, but all united as to purpose and function. Paul said that Jesus loved the church and gave Himself for it (Ephesians 5:25); therefore it must become precious to us. Each of us must do his or her part and accomplish his or her specific task in order that the church can move forward as Christ intended when He established it.

## REVIEW

1. The church is much like a physical \_\_\_\_\_ having many different \_\_\_\_\_, but all \_\_\_\_\_ together.
2. List the six basic functions that each church member must perform if the church is to fulfill its mission.
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
  - f)
3. What four areas of responsibility go to make up a person's stewardship?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
4. What is a tithe?
5. What does the Sunday School program offer its member that no other program in the church offers?
6. What danger must a young Christian avoid in the church?
7. What is the major benefit you derive from attending church business meetings?

## LESSON 21

### **THE CHURCH: ITS OFFICERS AND ORDINANCES**

*“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also”  
(2 Timothy 2:1-2)*

Our study, in this lesson, will be directed toward the officers and ordinances of the church. The Bible records the presence of two officers in the early church: pastors and deacons. We find also three words that refer to the same person and yet to somewhat different functions: elder, bishop, and pastor.

The word "bishop" means overseer and refers to one who is charged with the responsibility of seeing that all things are done in order and accurately. Paul uses this title in reference to the local churches in Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:2; and Titus 1:7. He further challenges the overseers at Ephesus to guard the "flock" (Acts 20:28).

The word "elder" means one who possesses dignity by maturity and is, because of experience and age, able to give adequate direction and counsel to others. The Greek word denotes a person of mature wisdom. We find this title in such passages as Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22. Paul singles out the elders for special service in 1 Timothy 5:17-19 and Titus 1:5.

The word "pastor" means shepherd, carrying with it the idea of feeding and tending a flock of sheep. It also conveys the action of governing or leading. Peter uses this term in relation to elders in 1 Peter 5:1-2.

It is important to note that these three titles, even though they reflect different actions, always refer to one person and never to three different persons or groups. Biblically, they are simply descriptive terms for the functions of an office in the local church.

Paul lays down very specific qualifications for the persons filling the office of *elder* (pastor, bishop). He lists the following in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 (also see Titus 1:5-9):

1. *They are to be above reproach.*
2. *They are each to have one current marriage partner.*
3. *They are to be temperate, prudent, respectable, and hospitable.*
4. *They must be able to teach.*
5. *They are not to be addicted to wine or be pugnacious (ready for a fight).*
6. *They are to be gentle and uncontentious.*
7. *They are not to be lovers of money.*
8. *They must be able to manage their own households and control their children.*
9. *They must be mature in the faith.*
10. *They are to have good reputations outside the church.*

The second officer of the church recorded in the Bible is the *deacon*. This word means one who serves or ministers. Luke records the interesting incident that brought forth the need for such persons in the early church in Acts 6:1-6. Paul also lays down strict requirements for those who were to be chosen as deacons (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

1. *They must have dignity.*
2. *Their lives must back up their words.*
3. *They are not to be addicted to wine.*
4. *They are not to seek sordid gain.*
5. *They are to have clear-cut convictions.*
6. *They must be mature in the faith and proven.*
7. *They are each to have one marriage partner.*
8. *They must be in control of their own households.*

The question of women deacons or deaconesses has been one of debate in some circles. Paul mentions women within the context of the above requirements (v.11), and therefore many feel he is describing the qualifications of deaconesses. Some feel, however, that Paul is describing the necessary qualifications of the deacons' wives and not a separate office. Many churches have deaconesses serving in the church today, but some churches have restricted the office of deaconess to the wife of a deacon and not to a separate servant. In either case, contemporary Christianity is witnessing an increasing number of capable women serving in all aspects of church ministry. There are more women pastors today than ever before. A visit to almost any seminary in the United States will show you an increase in women students. These women are also assuming leadership roles in such ministries as Christian education, youth work, and music. This trend is being accelerated in some denominations. While the increases are coming at a slower pace in others, they are coming.

As the church began to grow, other needs arose requiring such officers as clerks, treasurers, moderators, and so forth. Even though these officers are not specifically mentioned in Scripture, it is assumed that they were added to meet the church's growing needs, much like the addition of deacons described in Acts 6:1-6. This type of organization brought about a simple democratic pattern of church government. Each church seemed to be its own functioning body and had local autonomy. We can see this in such passages as 1 Corinthians 1:1-4 and 2 Corinthians 8:1-8 in regard to giving, and 2 Thessalonians 3:6 and 1 Corinthians 5:4-5 in regard to church discipline. To this day each church, then, maintains its right to relate to other local churches in an association of churches or a state or area convention of churches and also to a national or international body of churches of like faith and order.

There has been much controversy over the ordinances of the local church. The word "*ordinance*" means simply an action by command. There are only two such ordinances recorded in the New Testament—*Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper* (Matthew 28:19; Luke 22:19; and 1 Corinthians 11:23-24).

The word "*baptism*" comes from the Greek ***baptizo*** and is plainly a transliteration. It is believed to be the word that described the dyeing process of cloth in ancient Thyatira, once the dye capital of the world. Large vats of boiling water were prepared, and the dye was cast into the water. After the dye had diffused into the water, the cloth was cast in and pushed beneath the dye-water so that every fiber was saturated with color. Therefore, the best definition of the word "baptism" is "to plunge under and soak thoroughly." This is commonly called "baptism by immersion."

Baptism by immersion symbolizes our relationship to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 6:1-11). Jesus set an example for His followers by being baptized by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:13-17). He also commanded that His disciples be baptized when He gave the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19). The act of submitting to baptism is a public profession of one's faith in Jesus Christ. This act is the greatest "sermon" that a believer will ever preach to those who look on. Even though baptism is only a symbol, it is the outward symbol of the inner change of masters experienced by the one being baptized.

The second ordinance of the local church, as set forth by the Scriptures, is that of the *Lord's Supper* or *Communion*. Every Christian church celebrates this ordinance, but not all in the same manner or frequency. Some churches hold Communion every Sunday, while others observe it once a month and still others quarterly or yearly. The Scriptures do not specify any set time or number of observances per year. In fact, Paul quotes Jesus as saying, "as often as you [do] it..." (1 Corinthians 11:25), thereby leaving the frequency of the observance up to the local church.

Communion was instituted by Jesus Christ on the night He was betrayed. The accounts of this institution are found in Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; and Luke 22:14-20. Paul also refers to the Communion service in 1 Corinthians 11:23-31. Since the Corinthian letter was circulated prior to the Gospels, Paul's account is the first and earliest we have.

Paul, in his remarks concerning the Communion service, tells us that he received his revelation from Jesus Himself. It was not secondhand or hearsay.

The word Paul used here for the Communion was "*Eucharist*". This word means "to give thanks for something." When the word is used in the context of our relationship to Jesus Christ, we are to give thanks to God for Jesus. It is from this idea that the terms "Communion" and the "*Lord's Supper*" came to be used when many Protestants dropped the title of "*Eucharist*." Some scholars feel that this was due to the fact that the Roman Catholic Church had made so much of the term "*Eucharist*" by attaching to it the concept of "*transubstantiation*." This means, according to Roman Catholic belief, that the wine and the bread change (transfer) into the actual blood and flesh of Jesus Christ when the priest consecrates them prior to distributing them.

The Protestant concept of "*consubstantiation*" describes the meaning of partaking of the elements for non-Catholics. This means that Jesus is present (alongside) as His followers partake of the symbolic elements of His blood and flesh. This, then, completes the idea of giving thanks for Jesus—that is, of giving thanks to God for the shed blood and the broken (crushed) body of Jesus, who died on the cross for us.

Paul goes on to lay down some strict rules governing the participation in the Communion (meeting of believers and the Lord). If a person is not worthy (a true believer and follower of Christ), then he is guilty of blasphemy and is mocking the death of Jesus. Paul said that many people had been guilty of this and that they were now asleep or dead. This seems to mean that death came upon them due to their unworthy participation. A nonbeliever should not play with Communion! We should make this clear to our unsaved friends.

Paul also exhorts us to examine ourselves before we participate in the elements. This speaks to those who proclaim Christ as their Savior. We should confess our sins and ask forgiveness (1 John 1:9) before we take the symbolic elements, so that we will not come into the presence of Jesus Christ and take part in a memorial service for Him with unforgiven sin in our hearts.

Participating in the Communion service (or Lord's Supper, or the Eucharist) is our proclamation to the on looking world that we have placed our faith in Jesus Christ. We are taking our stand for Him, and we are awaiting His return.

## REVIEW

1. What three titles are found in the Bible for the local church minister?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
2. What idea or function does each of the above suggest?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
3. What is the title for the second officer of the church described in the Bible?
4. What is this person's specific function?
5. Does the Bible give any guidance to the selection of the two church officers?
6. Where are the above qualifications found?
  - a)
  - b)
7. Name the two church ordinances.
  - a)
  - b)
8. What does the word "baptize" mean?
9. Give two other names for the Lord's Supper.
  - a)
  - b)
10. What does the word "Eucharist" mean?

## LESSON 22

### HOW TO VIEW OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO THE WORLD

*“And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a certain man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’ And when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the Gospel to them” (Acts 16:9-10).*

Have you ever heard someone say, "I don't believe in sending missionaries to other countries"? Many people believe that the Christians in America ought to keep all their missionaries and all their mission dollars right here and not interfere in other countries. Certainly we could use more money and more personnel to do the work here, but can we really do that? No, not according to the Great Commission given us by Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20). He told us to go into all the nations and make disciples of all people. We do not have the right to alter the command of Jesus upon the church.

An artist once painted a picture of a church and entitled it *A Dead Church*. When you first looked at the picture, it was hard to understand why he had chosen such a title. The building was large and stately. It had a beautiful stained-glass entrance with several people standing in the doorway. But over to one side of the foyer was a small box on which were the words "Gifts for Foreign Missions." The artist had covered the box with cobwebs, showing its lack of use. He was saying, "When a church ignores its mission to the world, it becomes a dead church." This artist had captured the truth of the Christian ministry. When we turn everything inward, ignoring those around us, we become like the Dead Sea—stagnant. We cannot ignore our responsibility to the people around us, near or far. If we do, we are guilty of refusing to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with those who haven't yet heard. It is the same as saying, "I've got mine; now you get yours." God forbid that we should ever adopt this policy!

Just the command of Jesus to "go" should be enough to compel us to be faithful to His desires. But all too often this is not the case. So, let us reach beyond His command and consider other reasons for carrying on a mission program overseas.

Man is body, mind, and spirit (or soul). Whenever you meet a person, you meet all three of these components. Jesus taught us to minister to each of these human aspects by ministering in His name.

1. **Man has a body, and the gospel compels us to minister to its needs and to work toward its healing.** W. E. Sangster challenges us for missions in a report from a young missionary to his family in England:

We arrived in the village in an old car at late afternoon. It was a jumbly mass of little mud huts without any pathways.... At each hut a few children came out and tagged behind us as we walked around. Most of the children were naked, though a few had a rag on. All had sores, runny noses, and verminous heads. The first child was covered with the most terrible oozing wounds and his hair a mass of scabs. Sheila explained to me that it is common to brand a child of that age (three) in order that the intense pain suffered will drive the spirit of pain away from the body forever. The smells,

the diseases, the deformities, the filth made me so sick I didn't think I could prevent myself from vomiting. I made myself take the stump of an arm of one little child who had no hand and I watched the insects in her hair as we walked along together....

In the end, we took about fifty children to a flat piece of muddy ground and by the light of a single hurricane lamp, organized games for them. There was no real gaiety, because children here are born old and with too much knowledge. But some interest crept into a few faces, and they danced around a ring like old people playing at being young again.

When I think of all the books I have read about the glamour and mystery of the East, I want to jam them down their author's [sic] throats. It is unrelieved hell, and (in a moment of weakness) I thought there was nowhere else on earth that I would not rather be. <sup>1</sup>

Why do young men and women give their lives to serve in a place such as this person described? Because Jesus commanded us to share the Word; because it is God's will that no one perish (2 Peter 3:9); and because God loves everyone (John 3:16). Some people say that we have no right to interfere in the lives of other people. Many leaders of Africa, India, Cambodia, and Thailand have responded to that idea of "interfering"! They are asking America to "interfere" more by sending additional missionaries to help them. The need is made clearer when we compare statistics showing the number of doctors and nurses in the U.S.A. and in India. In 1983, there was approximately one doctor to every 500 people in the U.S.A.,<sup>2</sup> but the latest Indian statistics reveal only one doctor for every 3,500 people in India.<sup>3</sup> We had two nurses for every 510 people here, but in India there was only one nurse for every 6,000 people.<sup>4</sup> When we have the resources to meet human needs, do we dare keep them to ourselves?

2. Man also has a mind that must be reached for Christ.

The above report from the young missionary mentioned the "branding" of the three-year-old child to ward off all future suffering. This is just one indication of how the Good News of Christ can make a difference. Superstition is a terribly heavy burden to carry. This mother undoubtedly loved her little child as much as we love our children, and she was doing what she thought was good for the small child. Reports from other missionaries tell of the binding of infants' feet at birth to inhibit the growth of the feet. The reason, tradition says, is that tiny feet are more beautiful. Nothing is said about the resulting lameness or deformity. How can we be interfering when education can stop painful and destructive practices? How can we be interfering when education can diminish filth, disease, and superstition? The mind of a human being is an awful thing to waste! (Acts 19:18-19).

3. Man has a spirit, or soul, for which Jesus Christ died (Luke 19:10). The critics of foreign missions raise questions in this area. "Go ahead," they say, "and send the doctors, nurses, and teachers. Heal the bodies of primitive peoples and educate their minds but don't interfere with their religious beliefs."

<sup>1</sup>W. E. Sangster, *Sangster's Special-Day Sermons* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1960), p. 153. Copyright 1960 Abingdon Press; paperback edition 1977, Baker Book House.

<sup>2</sup> *U.S. World Almanac*, "American Physician Master File," 1983, p. 964. <sup>3</sup> *Statistical Yearbook*, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 1981, p. 847. <sup>4</sup> *Ibid*

What these "broad-minded" people don't realize is that penicillin and cortisone can't heal sin and guilt and the three R's can't assure a person of salvation. In other words, medicine, in all of its sophistication, has limits, and education can only do so much.

The author has taught comparative religions in college and will agree that there are some good morals in Hinduism, some great teachings for social living in Confucianism, some fine ethical codes offered in Buddhism, some good behavioral points to Islam, and some excellent teachings on purity in Shintoism. But, there is no forgiveness of sin and removal of guilt or assurance of salvation in any one of these religions. When Jesus Christ declared, "I am the way" (John 14:6), He was not saying that He had found some new way, but that He was the way. There is no other way to God the Father but through Jesus Christ, and it is this truth the world needs to hear.

It is extremely important for you to grasp the fullness of the word "world." Just as the word "mankind" is inclusive and includes both men and women, so the word "world" here in this context, is also inclusive. It includes the ministry responsibilities here at home as well as those on the foreign fields. Some Christians have become so spiritually nearsighted that they want to pour all of the churches' time, resources, and energies into touching only Americans (those within the United States) with the gospel of Christ. There are other Christians suffering from spiritual farsightedness. For them, unless an ocean is involved, the ministry isn't really missions. The truth is that our responsibility for reaching the world includes *both* home and foreign fields.

There must be a balance in the churches missionary outlook. Jesus gave the pattern for this balance outreach to the early church in Acts 1:8. Notice that the work was to begin at home and spread to the remotest parts of the world. Any church that centers its full attention on the needs of the community around it at the expense of supporting the work in foreign fields is just as disobedient to the will of Christ as the church that overlooks the needs of its own community, because it has fastened its full attention overseas. If there is anything the Scriptures call for in Christian living, it is for a balanced life. Likewise, the same call is issued for missions. Missions cannot be a ministry of "either/or"; it has to be a ministry of "both/and."

(NOTE: Perhaps it would be profitable to reread lesson 19 after studying this lesson in order to maintain your balance for world missions.)

Jesus showed us plainly in His encounter with the rich young ruler that we aren't to force our beliefs on anyone (Mark 10:17-22). Mark even tells us in 10:21 that Jesus felt love for the rich man, but we find no evidence of Jesus using forceful tactics on him. He was presented the choice by Christ, but he chose to cling to his wealth instead of accepting Christ. The Great Commission of Jesus lays upon every one of his followers the obligation of presenting the claims of Christ to every person. Each must then make his or her own choice.

If we believe that Jesus Christ is the Savior of all mankind; if we believe that Jesus Christ died for everyone; if we believe that He is coming again; and if we believe that the Bible is true; then we cannot, we must not, we dare not, keep this Good News to ourselves. If we in America were to find a cure for cancer and keep it only for ourselves, this act would be a crime against all mankind. If we were to find the cure for our number one killer, heart disease, and refuse to share it with other countries, this would be an unforgivable act. If we could come up with a cure for the dreaded rheumatoid arthritis and then not make the cure known to all people, we would be guilty of a major act of inhumanity. But those are all "ifs." There is no "if" in the Good News of Christ. We have the cure for the consequences of sin, and we must do what it takes and pay what it costs to share that cure with the whole world.

We must become involved in outreach to the unreached because:

1. Jesus commanded us to do it (Matthew 28:19-20);
2. There are staggering health needs all over the world;
3. There are minds that need to be liberated from superstition
4. There are multitudes of souls without the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

Yes, we must see the mission program, whether it's at home or abroad, as an opportunity to share the claims of Jesus Christ. He is the light of the world, and we must not selfishly keep His Good News to ourselves.

## REVIEW

1. What are the three aspects of man that are ministered to through the modern mission program?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
2. Some people say we have no right to \_\_\_\_\_ with people of other countries.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ of a human being is an awful thing to \_\_\_\_\_.
4. What important truth concerning missions comes from Jesus' encounter with the rich man in Mark 10:17-22?
5. When a church ignore its \_\_\_\_\_ to the world, it becomes a \_\_\_\_\_ church.
6. What are the three reasons men and women give their lives as missionaries?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
7. How does the doctor-persons ration for the U.S.A compare to that of India, as seen in recent (1981 and 1983) figures?
8. What is the biggest thing Christian education tries to overcome (or free people from) in many tribal countries of the world?

## LESSON 23

### THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: A CALL TO COMMITMENT

*"...If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; and whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?" (Mark 8:34-36).*

The key verses for this lesson present a clear call from Jesus for commitment on the part of His followers. Here you are challenged to deny yourself; that is, to say no to your personal goals and ambitions if they are not in step with God's. Jesus indicates that the only way really to have a life is to commit it to Him. Otherwise you will waste your life for time and eternity. This simply means that your life will produce no lasting work even though you will be saved (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). Notice, too, in the key verse the freedom of choice when Jesus says, "...if anyone wishes to come after Me..." Jesus will invite people to come to Him, but they must make the life-changing decision.

In Psalm 37:4 the psalmist gives us a clear picture of what commitment really does for a person. Here we see that when we "delight" ourselves in (better rendered—align ourselves with or get in step with) the Lord, He will give us the desires of our hearts. Why? Because once we have aligned ourselves with Him and His will, we will be going with Him and in the same direction. When this happens, His desires will become our desires and, therefore, He will bless us in our efforts. The very next verse (v. 5) adds an important dimension to this new life. In fact, three steps are evident here:

1. We must commit our way (life or situation) to the Lord;
2. We must trust (rely) on Him;
3. He will bring to pass (bring into reality) His will for us.

So, to avoid the possibility, as well as the tragedy, of a wasted life several ideas must be taken into account.

1. **We must be willing to pay the price of being a follower of Jesus Christ.** Jesus even taught those seeking to follow Him that there was a cost involved (Matthew 10:16-42; Luke 14:25-35; Mark 8:34-36). To follow Jesus may mean ridicule, loss of family and friends, giving up comforts and security. But the rewards are far greater (Matthew 19:27-29). Yes, there is a price to pay if we commit ourselves to Jesus Christ, but we have a perfect example to follow. The Bible tells us that it is not God's will that anyone perish (2 Peter 3:9); therefore, He paid a great price to redeem mankind when He gave up His only Son to die for the salvation of those who would believe (John 3:16).
2. **There must be a point of no return for each one of us who commits himself or herself to Christ.** Once that decision is made, it is to be Jesus Christ first, last, and always for us. This commitment will be evidenced in the way we spend our time, use our talents, expend our resources, and put forth our daily efforts. Paul presents this challenge to us in Romans 12:1-3. Here we are challenged to present ourselves as living sacrifices to God as a starting place. We are also admonished to break free from the mold of the world by getting our attitudes right with God. Jesus told us that once we put our hands on the plow (make our commitment) and turn back, we are not "fit" for the kingdom (Luke 9:62).

3. **We must develop convictions that stand the tests of the world.** Paul described the protective armor of the Christian in Ephesians 6:10-18. A careful study of this passage will reveal a very important truth. There is no armor or protection for the Christian's back. Once we turn from an offensive position, we are extremely vulnerable to the devil. Peter told us how the devil sneaks around looking for someone he can attack or devour (1 Peter 5:8). We need to develop convictions like the three Hebrew men who refused to bow to the golden image even though they were threatened with death in the furnace of fire (Daniel 3:1-30). Daniel himself was a good example of one who maintained his convictions even though he knew it would mean being thrown into a den of lions (Daniel 6:1-28). If you have noticed, these events were followed by revivals. God always blesses faithfulness. You cannot take a stand for the Lord Jesus Christ without being blessed in some manner.
4. **We must not become sidetracked or distracted from our Christian responsibility.** The writer of Hebrews warns us of drifting away if we ignore what we know to be true (Hebrews 2:1-4). Again in the book of Hebrews we are told to keep our eyes upon Jesus, or else we will become entangled in sin (Hebrews 12:1-2). All too many new Christians burst forth as if they will gobble up the world for Christ only to fall into old ruts, routines, and habits. The only way we can maintain our direction is to have a clear-cut goal set before us. Without a goal, we will have no direction or purpose. Paul points out to us his goal in Philippians 3:13-14. He goes on to give us the ways and means of accomplishing such a goal in the next lesson (Philippians 4:4-13).
5. **We must come to realize that true greatness lies in serving others.** Jesus often referred to Himself as a servant of man. He told His disciples that He came not to be ministered to, but to minister (Matthew 20:28). If we are going to follow the example set down before us by Jesus, we, too, must seek to serve others. Paul reminds us in Acts 20:35 that it is more blessed to give than to receive. In fact, Paul said that Jesus Himself had said this. There are people all around us who need someone to care enough to take the time to share with them.

It stands to reason that every believer should want to seek the will of God for his or her life. The joy is that we can know the will of God (John 7:11-18)! Unless we seek, find, and commit ourselves to His will, much of our lives will be forfeited and misused.

It doesn't matter whether we are seeking God's will in answer to a daily problem or for guidance for our life's work, the procedure is still the same. There are five basic steps to follow:

1. **Make certain in your heart that you want to know God's will because you desire to follow it.** This statement may seem a little odd at first, but it uncovers an important truth. Many people want to know God's will in a given situation, not necessarily because they want to do it, but to see if they want to do it. God doesn't usually reveal His will to onlookers, but to earnest seekers. So, it is extremely important to have already settled this question in your heart. You must be determined to do His will once it is revealed to you.
2. **The Bible teaches us that if we want God to hear our prayers, we must confess the sin within our hearts** (Psalm 66:18). John tells us that through confession we can receive forgiveness and have the sin cleansed away (1 John 1:9).
3. **The use of prayer is vitally important in seeking God's will.** It is through prayer that we can really "touch" God. James told us that we have not, because we haven't asked (James 4:2). Through prayer we can collect on the promises of God by meeting His conditions (Colossians 1:9-12). A daily habit of prayer will result in definite spiritual leadership, usually revealed through the Word of God.

4. **Next we need to study the Scriptures, for they are the light of our lives** (Psalm 119:105). God has already revealed His will for nearly everything we will face in this life. Many Christians miss God's direction for their lives because they do not read His Word regularly. The Bible contains the answer for all the problems of man. We need to read the Bible more, and other books less, regardless of their spiritual emphasis. God will reveal Himself through His Word!
5. **Once you have done the above, you need to write down all the pros and cons concerning the dilemma for which you are seeking God's will.** Then using the talent God has given you, make a choice. Commit the choice to God for His honor and glory and begin moving in that direction (Acts 26:16). God will direct you by opening and closing doors as you follow His leading. Since you have committed the decision and/or action to Him, He knows your heart and will guard you from making a mistake that will hurt you and shame Him. Oftentimes the direction you started to follow will change as God alters your course day by day through the Holy Spirit (John 15:1-5).

One further thought needs to be set forth here concerning the seeking of God's will. Mature Christian friends are often the best source of spiritual counsel. They have had experience over the years and know this path much better than a young Christian. If we earnestly seek their help, God often will confirm His will through them (Hebrews 13:7, 17). Their wise and loving advice can save many younger believers from serious mistakes and pitfalls.

## REVIEW

1. According to Psalm 37:5, what are the three steps to commitment for the new life in Christ?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
2. If we are to avoid the possibility of a wasted life, what five particulars must be taken into account?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
3. We are to present our bodies as \_\_\_\_\_ to God (Romans 12:1-2).
4. Why is there no Christian armor on the believer's back?
5. What is the best way to guard ourselves from being sidetracked from our Christian responsibilities?
6. What are five basic steps Christians can follow to find God's will for their life situations?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  - d)
  - e)
7. How has God, for the most part, already revealed His will?
8. What is a good source of assistance besides the Bible for determining God's will in a given situation?

## LESSON 24

### HOW TO KEEP YOUR GARDEN GROWING

*“And the seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity” (Luke 8:14).*

The apostle Paul teaches us that the life of a follower of Jesus Christ is much like a fertile field or garden ready to receive the good seed from God (1 Corinthians 3:9). Jesus taught us that oftentimes this good seed falls into a field where the thorns crowd it out, therefore stunting the harvest (Matthew 13:22). This is a good illustration of what happens in many Christians' lives. They hear the Word of God, receive it joyfully, and want to apply its truths, but their lives are so cluttered with the things of the world that their good intentions are soon smothered. The only way to guard against this condition is to "weed" your garden of those "thorns" that rob you of gaining daily victories for Jesus Christ.

In this study, you will deal with eight well-known thorns that constantly crowd our lives and work against the good seed of God taking root and bringing forth a bountiful harvest as God intends it to do. The following list of thorns is not a complete list by any means, but it does represent some of the most common as well as the most harmful thorns confronting Christians today.

#### **1. The thorn of worry is perhaps the most common weed in the Christian's garden.**

The word "worry" or "anxiety" literally means "to choke or to strangle." Worry is a disease, a modern-day black plague, a sabotaging force that must be weeded out immediately if you are to grow in Christ and have the abundant life Jesus intends you to have (John 10:10). According to numerous studies on worry, it is the cause of, or a definite contributing factor in the occurrence of, ulcers, stomach disorders, high blood pressure, and some forms of arthritis. Someone once said, "If you don't turn worry off, sooner or later it will turn you off."

A careful study of this weed will reveal that it is much like a rocking chair; it will give you something to do, but it won't get you any place. Medical science has proven that worry is as harmful to the body as tobacco, alcohol, or drugs. The Bible teaches that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and therefore must be guarded and kept free of such destructive elements (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Since worry isn't hereditary, that is, you weren't born with it, you must recognize it for what it really is—a habit—and deal with it accordingly. The following steps will prove helpful in weeding your life of this intruder:

- a) *Confess it as the sin it really is* (1 John 1:9). Worry is essentially lack of faith. It is the emotional state we allow ourselves to get into when we try to deal with life by ourselves.
- b) *It is a habit that can be broken*. Paul tells us that we can do anything through the power of Christ (Philippians 4:13).
- c) *Once you have confessed your worry as sin and claimed the power of Christ, then commit it to God* according to the promise in Psalm 37:5. Be sure to follow the steps of this passage.
- d) *When worry raises its head, face it immediately with an affirmed expression of faith*.

- e) *Claim the promises of victory as given in Romans 8:31 and Matthew 6:33.*
- f) *Remember, as a man thinks in his heart, that's the way he is (Proverbs 23:7).*

## **2. The thorn of inferiority is one of the most distressing and defeating weeds in your garden.**

Feelings of inferiority are the emotional feelings we conjure up when we are afraid we don't measure up to a certain situation or the expectations of a certain person or group. The roots of this weed reach all the way back into childhood and usually express themselves in several different ways:

- a) *Fear of what people will say or think about us;*
- b) *Fear of being a failure;*
- c) *Fear of one-to-one competition.*

Everyone fails once in a while. Everyone makes a fool out of himself or herself now and then. Those who are free of this weed laugh it off and refuse to be defeated by the situation. But the person caught in the clutches of this evil habitually retreats deeper into these feelings when threatened. This is a devastating position for a Christian to allow himself or herself to fall into. Why? Because it will not only steal one's joy in Christ, but will become a hindrance to the very cause of Christ. This result is due to the fact that—

- a) *the Christian will not reflect victory in living;*
- b) *he or she will show no consistency in living, being up one day and down the next;*
- c) *the believer will call attention to himself or herself (not to Jesus) and people will be turned off by what they see;*
- d) *he or she will not reflect the teachings of Jesus but, instead, will have a tendency to strike out at others, blame others for his or her own mistakes, or criticize and condemn others unjustly.*

There is absolutely no reason for a Christian to feel inferior. Everything God has done for you has been to build up this confidence and assurance. Think for a moment on these important truths.

- a) *To God you are worth more than the whole world because He offered up Jesus as a sacrifice for you (John 3:16).*
- b) *God doesn't want you to feel inferior or afraid.*
  - (1) *2 Timothy 1:7: He didn't give you fear.*
  - (2) *Philippians 4:13: You can do all things.*
  - (3) *Romans 8:31: You can't be dominated.*
- c) *God has given you freedom of choice, a tremendous power.*
- d) *God has given you the Holy Spirit for guidance (John 16:13-14).*
- e) *God has given you an example to follow in His Son Jesus Christ (2 Peter 2:21).*

The only hope a nonbeliever has of throwing off the feelings of inferiority is the seeking of professional psychological help. The believer, on the other hand, can exercise his or her faith in the Word of God and claim its promises, realizing that the ultimate deliverance comes from God.

### **3. The thorn of disappointment is a common and frequent problem in the Christian's garden**

Along with the feelings of inferiority, disappointment is like a mad dog that has bitten every one of us at one time or another. It has caused many young Christians to throw up their hands and adopt such philosophies as "Who cares!" "So what!" and "I quit!"

Disappointment is the emotional feeling we get when things don't go as we planned or expected them to go. The word means "not as appointed." If these feelings are allowed to remain too long in the Christian's mind and heart, there is the danger of a reversion to the old life before coming to Christ. If this happens, he or she will begin to pick up some old habits and perhaps some old sinful indulgences.

Most of our disappointments fall into one of two different categories:

- a) Circumstances and/or situations
- b) Relationships with other people

We must remember, when circumstances and/or situations tend to produce disappointment, that God is not controlled by such things. He can take any situation and turn it into a victory. Experience has taught this writer that a disappointing situation is like a can of sardines; that is, it has the key right with it. Every disappointment has a lesson in it somewhere if we only look for it.

When we tend to become disappointed because of our relationships with others (usually when our friends let us down somehow), we must remember they are not perfect or sinless. They will, like us, make mistakes, too. But we are not to pattern ourselves after other human beings, regardless of how much we love them. Our pattern is the Lord Jesus Christ. He has not let anyone down, and He never will. Let us heed the words of the writer of Hebrews, "...fixing our eyes on Jesus..." (Hebrews 12:2), and not on people.

### **4. The thorn of guilt is a recurring weed in the Christian's garden of life.**

Psychiatrists tell us that guilt is one of the most frequent problems they deal with in America. This problem arises when the person is unable to forgive himself or herself for some thought, word, or action. Even though the Bible tells us over and over that sins can be forgiven through confession (1 John 1:9), many of us refuse to let go of the sin and turn it inward, thus producing guilt. Many times this writer has counseled people who have said quite earnestly, "I know God has forgiven me, but I'll never forgive myself." When that happens, the guilt begins to fester and soon will permeate his or her attitudes, thus altering behavior drastically.

A person suffering from this feeling of guilt will often try to do some extra, difficult task for God as a way of paying for the sin. He might employ some form of self-punishment to ease his or her burden. If the feeling goes on long enough, the person develops a complex and soon evidences negativism and a critical nature.

Perhaps the best weeding method for this problem is found in Hebrews 10:11-12, 17-18, and 19-25. Consider the following important truths.

- a) Jesus' death on the cross was the ultimate sacrifice for sin. All sin has been paid for and forgiveness is available to every believer.
- b) Along with the forgiveness comes removal of guilt. The Holy Spirit will not convict a believer of forgiven sin. If the guilt feelings still linger after you have confessed the sin (1 John 1:9-10), you can be assured they are from the devil. God said He would remember our sins no more! (Jeremiah 31:34).

- c) We need to turn our attention outward to others as a help to pull this weed of guilt. Replace the negativism with positive action.
- d) Maintain close fellowship with the church family. Fellowship during a real or imagined "guilt trip" is a tremendously helpful thing.

**5. The thorn of everyday pressures is quite evident today and must be weeded out if the believer is to enjoy the Christian experience.**

There are three helpful suggestions for weeding out the destructive feelings of pressure.

- a) A brief change of scenery can work wonders. This escape method for dealing with pressure is a valid procedure that Jesus used often (Mark 6:30-32).
- b) Reducing one's activities is often a cure for certain pressures. A careful study of our activities will reveal areas in which we can reduce pressure. We don't have to do everything right now at this very moment. Usually spending some time in planning one's day will reduce much of the pressure that takes its toll on our lives.
- c) A moment of worship in the midst of pressure will calm almost any situation down. Just a few minutes with the Lord in prayer or reading some precious passage from God's word will afford us a calming effect.

If we would be honest with ourselves, we would agree that most of the pressure we face daily is self-inflicted. When will we learn that we can't pack two weeks of vacation into ten days? When will we realize that minds and bodies can take only so much push, hurry, or drive before they cry out? When we learn to respond to situations instead of reacting to them, we will immediately eliminate most of the internal pressures of life.

**6. The thorn of doubt is one of the most aggressive weeds in a Christian's garden.**

It has stripped countless thousands of their joy and happiness. It is the silentcrippler of one's faith, the arrogant mocker of one's assurance, and the avid rejecter of one's trust in the promise of God. It is the direct opposite of faith.

The causes of doubt that spring up in one's life are many.

- a) *Feelings of inferiority and unworthiness*
- b) *Feelings of personal pride*
- c) *Feelings of depression and discouragement*
- d) *Feelings of guilt*
- e) *Physical illness or accidents*

Each of these emotional and physical experiences cast many weed seeds into a Christian's garden. Peter told us to be on the lookout for the works of the devil, who is always on the prowl looking for those he can successfully devour (1 Peter 5:8).

Although it is not always the case, many doubters arise from among the multitude of Christians who refuse to feed upon the Word of God. They read books about the Bible, take other people's ideas about the Bible, but rarely study it for themselves. Their "fields" are ripe for the sowing of the seeds of doubt.

The remedy for the disease of doubt is a simple, childlike faith. The great prophet Habakkuk was the first to put this truth in writing when he said, "The just shall live by faith" (Habakkuk 2:4). Paul also dealt doubt a death blow in Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11. The writer of Hebrews laid the final axe to doubt for Christians by stating that we are not to shrink back from life but to step forward in full faith (Hebrews 10:38-39).

The cure for doubt, the only cure, is the faith we receive from reading the Word of God, listening to the Word of God, and finally resting in the Word of God. The following five doubts (along with their biblical antidotes) are most prevalent among young Christians:

- a) Doubting one's salvation (Romans 10:11; 2 Corinthians 5:17);
- b) Doubting Christ's presence (Matthew 28:19-20; John 14:16);
- c) Doubting one's eternal security (1 John 5:13; John 3:16);
- d) Doubting God's love (2 Peter 3:9; John 3:16);
- e) Doubting the Bible (Matthew 5:17; 2 Timothy 3:16).

#### **7. The thorn of envy is a pernicious flowering vine and must be weeded from your garden.**

If it is allowed to remain until it blossoms, it will ruin your reputation, shrink your circle of friends, hinder your initiative, cripple your desire, and stunt your spiritual growth. The early church fathers called envy one of the seven deadly sins. Paul calls it one of the sins of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21). Envy is mentioned nearly fifty times in the Bible and is always condemned.

Envy describes the feeling of dissatisfaction one has when someone else has something he or she would like to have. As you can see, jealousy is a cousin of envy. The result of this dissatisfaction usually vents itself in anger, hate, and often violence. Paul tells us that envy is among the sins that alienated man from God in the beginning (Romans 1:28-32).

In dealing with envy, you must realize its potential danger and not play with it; it is not a toy or a joke. People will often laugh and say, "I'm green with envy over your new car," but it is no laughing matter if it takes root in your life. The following five suggestions for dealing with envy can prove helpful.

- a) *If you are an envious person, admit the fact and confess it for the sin it is (1 John 1:9).*
- b) *Realize that you cannot defeat envy by your own power, but only with the help of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16).*
- c) *Follow Paul's example and stop comparing yourself and your possessions to those of other people (Philippians 4:11-13, 19). Along with this step, claim Christ's promise set forth in Matthew 6:33.*
- d) *Go to God for your needs (Philippians 4:4-7). He is your source for all things.*
- e) *Claim the victory which has already been accomplished as we see in Colossians 3:1-5.*

Remember, when you weed something from your life, be sure to replace it with something positive, good, and Christlike. If you don't, another weed will take its place.

#### **8. The last thorn that must be weeded from every Christian's garden is that of fear.**

This is probably the most common weed of all. It is as flourishing as the common cold. Even in the most basic psychology course, fear is singled out as one of the most, if not the most, debilitating emotions of the human personality.

This emotion usually manifests itself in one or more of three different fears in a Christian's life:

- a) *The fear of what might happen;*
- b) *The fear of what will happen;*
- c) *The fear of having the past exposed.*

When we take a close look at fear against the backdrop of these three categories, we can see what fear can do to a person's life: it can disturb your days and haunt your nights; it can produce all kinds of emotional complexes; it can short-circuit your energies; it can destroy your inner peace; it can reduce your spiritual effectiveness; and it can shatter your joy and peace of mind. Fear is truly a thorn in the flesh. But regardless of its devastating power, it can be weeded from your life. The truth from God's Word that can rip this weed from your garden is found in 2 Timothy 1:7— "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity fear, but of power and love and discipline." This verse of Scripture tells us plainly that fear is not of the Lord. He has given us three important qualities:

- a) Power. In the source this word means explosive power. We get our English word "dynamite" from the same Greek word. So we have the power to overcome fear. God has promised us that.
- b) Love. This is the special kind of love that can come only from God. This kind of love knows no fear, in fact it draws fear out of our lives (1 John 4:15-19).

One of the best passages of Scripture for us to grasp in relation to fear is Matthew 6:24-34. Even though this passage is directed primarily toward worry, it carries with it important declarations for living one day at a time. The advice in these verses is excellent. Yesterday is gone; tomorrow hasn't come yet, but you do have today. The psalmist put it this way: "This is the day which the LORD has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24). Fear has no place in the Christian's garden; it must be weeded out at once.

Just as any flower or vegetable garden must be kept clear of weeds, so must the life of the Christian. It is Christ's will that we receive the good seed and bring forth a great harvest. Does your garden need weeding?

(NOTE: The writer does not intend that the suggestions contained in this lesson for handling problems should be complete within themselves. The weeding techniques offered are of a "first aid" nature and should be understood as such. If or when one of these problems becomes evident in your life, you should seek competent Christian counsel from your pastor or a mature and understanding friend.)

## REVIEW

1. Paul likens a Christian's life to a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. What did Jesus say would choke out the good seed?
3. List eight thorns we must weed from our lives if we are to receive the good seed from God.
  - a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) \_\_\_\_\_
  - f) \_\_\_\_\_
  - g) \_\_\_\_\_
  - h) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which thorn means "to choke" or "strangle"?
5. Which thorn is one of the most frequent to deal with in American life?
6. What are the three ways of dealing with daily pressures?
  - a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) \_\_\_\_\_
7. This thorn is like a mad dog. \_\_\_\_\_
8. What thorn has roots reaching back into childhood?
9. Which is perhaps one of the most aggressive weeds in the garden?
10. What are five prevalent doubts in a young Christian's life?
  - a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) \_\_\_\_\_
11. Fear usually shows itself in what three forms?
  - a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON 25

### **THE ETERNAL FUTURE: HEAVEN AND HELL [ESCHATOLOGY]**

*“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).*

People have always had a desire to look into the future. This is very evident in the annual multimillion-dollar business involving horoscopes, fortune-tellers, palm readers, and self-acclaimed mystics. But we do not need to turn to such sources for insight into the future. The Bible once again, as always, is our source.

It is necessary to realize, as we approach this study on future events, that there are considerable differences of opinion among Christians as to exactly what the Bible is teaching. We are faced here with an area of mystery and, therefore, must approach this portion of our study with that in mind. The writer is presenting what he feels the Bible is saying. He realizes there are other interpretations for the following future events.

In this study we are going to look at the progression of a person from death to his or her eternal abode, along with several future events climaxing the end of time as we believe it to be. To do this we will be seeking answers to eight different questions.

#### **1. What happens to a person when he or she dies?**

We must remember that a person is made up of mind, spirit, and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23). When he or she dies, the body is put into the grave, but the soul and spirit leave the body. If the deceased person was a believer in Christ, the Bible tells us that the person's body is "sleeping" (Acts 7:59-60). If the deceased person was not a believer in Christ, the body is referred to as being dead. Paul tells us that the believer's soul and spirit enter a conscious awareness of joy and happiness (2 Corinthians 5:6-8). But the unbeliever experiences just the opposite according to Jesus (Luke 16:19-31).

#### **2. What does the Bible say about hell or Hades?**

Because some Bible versions use hell and Hades interchangeably, it is important to differentiate between them. Hades seems to be a temporary holding place of the unbelieving dead. Hell, on the other hand, is that final abode of eternal punishment (Revelation 20:11-15). We might think of Hades as a jail where the prisoner is detained until sentenced to his or her final place of incarceration. Jesus remarks about the undying worm and the unquenchable fire in Mark 9:43-48; many think these terms refer to one's memory. Luke 16:19-31 tells us several things about Hades.

- a) *Hades is a place full of consciousness, even memory.*
- b) *Hades is a place of punishment.*
- c) *Hades is a place of confinement.*

#### **3. What does the Bible tell us about heaven?**

We know that it is a place of bliss, or a paradise (2 Corinthians 12:2-4). Heaven is usually referred to as being "up" in relation to earth. (Perhaps the age in which we live, with its accent on outer space, calls for defining heaven's location as being beyond earth's atmosphere as we know it. Regardless of its direction, Jesus allows us to see heaven as a definite place and not just a state of being [John 14:1-6].) It is the abode

of God and the residence of angels. The Bible tells us that Jesus is in heaven at this time (Acts 1:9-11). It is a place of gain and joy (Philippians 1:21-23). The book of Revelation presents the best overall picture of heaven in chapter 21:1-7 and chapter 22:1-5. But the most wonderful thing about heaven is that we will be in the presence of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

#### **4. When will Christ return to claim His followers?**

We have His promise of His return from His own lips in John 14:1-6. We do not know when He will return; however, the time should not be of importance. We must work for Christ by sharing our witness while we have the time.

Paul teaches us that when Christ returns, He will "catch up" the believers who are alive on earth (an event that has come to be known as the rapture) as well as those who have died (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). This could come at any time, and therefore we must be prepared... Paul teaches that only those who know Christ as Savior will be "caught up" (1 Corinthians 15:23).

#### **5. What is the judgment seat of Christ?**

After the rapture of the believer, comes the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:1-10). We have two key ideas concerning the purpose of such a seat.

First, Paul used the word here that referred to the judgment stand of Olympic games. In his day everyone was given a prize for participation. Those who had excelled were given more honor than those who had participated in the games but had failed to excel. The fact is that everyone was a winner and everyone received a prize.

In Paul's first letter to Corinth, chapter 3, verses 10-15, there is perhaps a clue as to the basis for the prizes and honor that we receive at the judgment seat. The things we do for Christ in our everyday lives are like gold, silver, and precious stones. When they pass through the judgment fire, they are not burned up, but remain. Yet, on the other hand, if we live for ourselves, our works are likened to wood, hay, and straw. When these things pass through the judgment fire, they are burned up so that nothing remains of our labors. We then have nothing to show for our lives, but we are still saved (v.15). It seems as though we are then to be rewarded for our faithfulness at the judgment seat of Christ, as indicated in 2 Corinthians 5.

There is a second key to understanding the judgment seat. Usually those winning crowns for their athletic achievements would go before the official of the games and lay these prizes at his or her feet as a gesture of love and devotion. John indicates the same practice for the Christian in Revelation 4:10-11. What an honor that would be for every believer in Christ!

Jesus said that a time of suffering, sorrow, and hardship will come upon the earth. This is called the tribulation period (Matthew 24:5-31). The Bible doesn't give us all the details of the period, but it does express the terribleness of the times in chapters five through eighteen of the book of Revelation. Most evangelical Christians believe that the church—that is, the believers on earth—will have been taken out of the world prior to this awful period. The reference to the "twenty-four elders" (Revelation 4:4) is considered to be the presence of the church in heaven before the tribulation begins. There are several differing views on this point, however.

## 6. What will happen at the end of the tribulation period?

The apostle John teaches us that Christ will return in great power and destroy His enemies and bind the devil for a thousand years in the bottomless pit (Revelation 20:1-3). At this time the period of the millennium will begin upon the earth. This will be a time of peace and happiness lasting for a thousand years. Isaiah speaks of this period as a time of peace from war and a time of prosperity, when the wild animals will graze together, people will live longer lives, and there will be no sorrow or crying (Isaiah 35:1-10; 65:17-25).

## 7. What happens after the millennium?

The climax comes at the close of this period with the final judgment (Revelation 20:11-15). This judgment will involve only the unbelievers. They will be gathered from the four corners of the earth to stand before God. This will be a time of sentencing. No one will be overlooked in this final judgment.

## 8. What is the final result of all of this for the believer?

The Bible teaches that those who know Jesus Christ will be in His presence for all eternity (Revelation 22:3-5). Just what type of service we will render to Him is not known. We know it will be an existence in a state of sinlessness and purity because the Bible is quite specific about the type of nonbeliever that will not be in heaven (Revelation 21:7-8).

Based upon the Scriptures given in the above paragraphs, we could summarize heaven and hell in the following manner:

### Heaven

1. *It is a definite place.*
2. *It is a perfect place.*
3. *It is a permanent place.*
4. *It is the place for believers*
5. *It is a place of purity and joy.*
6. *It is a place of rest.*
7. *It is a place where God and Jesus are.*

### Hell

1. *It is a definite place.*
2. *It is a prepared place.*
3. *It is a permanent place.*
4. *It is a place for sinners.*
5. *It is a place of horror/sadness.*
6. *It is a place of torment.*
7. *It is a place where God and Jesus are not.*

Before we bring this particular lesson to a close, we must be reminded of a very important point. All too often Christians get so interested in looking toward future events that they forget their responsibilities for the here and now. It is thrilling to spend time reading, studying, and exploring the events of the future, but these must not replace the emphasis on today's opportunities and needs. Some people get so wrapped up in the future that they are of no earthly good to Jesus Christ. We must guard against anything distracting us from our commission to "go and make disciples of every nation" (Matthew 28:19).

## REVIEW

1. What does the word "sleep" mean in reference to death?
  
2. How do Hades and hell differ?
  
3. List three aspects of Hades.
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
  
4. What has the word "rapture" come to mean?
  
5. What two keys shed light on the judgment seat of Christ?
  - a)
  - b)
  
6. What is the tribulation period?
  
7. What is the millennium?
  
8. What is the main difference between heaven and hell?

## LESSON 26

### HOW TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE BY FAITH

*"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval" (Hebrews 11:1-2).*

It is impossible for anyone to read the Bible, attend a Christ-centered church, or be in the company of a true Christian without realizing the importance of faith. The apostle Paul seems to sum up the very heart of Christianity by the word "faith," but this faith was always directed to Jesus Christ. He is the supreme object of Christian faith. William Barclay, in his book entitled *The Mind of St. Paul*, offers us the best definition of faith in these words:

Faith is complete trust and complete surrender to Jesus Christ. It is the total acceptance of all that He said, of all that He offered, and of all that He is. It is the approach to God in complete confidence that all that Jesus said and taught about God is true, and that we can rest our souls in it. <sup>1</sup>

This definition shows us clearly that our relationship to God is not one of distance but, rather, because of our faith, one of a close fellowship through Jesus Christ.

The Bible tells us that faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). There are three important elements contained within this simple statement.

1. **Faith begins by being receptive to God's Word.** At this point faith takes root if it's received with an open mind, or it makes no impact if the mind is shut. So, receptivity to the Word of God is the beginning of one's faith.
2. **Faith then continues by a simple trust in the truth of the message being presented by the Word of God.** There must be a genuine confidence in the proclamation of Christ.
3. **Faith progresses from receptivity and trust to its ultimate level of submission.** Once we receive the Word and trust in it, we then are to submit ourselves to its Object, that of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. It is at this level of one's faith that life can truly be abundant in purpose.

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews has been called "God's Hall of Faith." In this chapter the author of Hebrews cites numerous examples of faith as expressed in the lives of men and women in the Old Testament. This chapter should be studied by every Christian because it lifts faith out of the category of "theory" and presents it as a practical way of life for the believer. A careful study of the life of each of the personalities mentioned would be quite rewarding for any believer.

The application of one's faith is perhaps best seen in the manner in which he or she relates to the promises of God. This application must come after the salvation experience through one's faith in Christ. Many people try to claim the promises of God prior to their coming to Christ only to find no fulfillment of the promise.

<sup>1</sup> William Barclay, *The Mind of St. Paul* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1958) p. 143. Copyright 1958 by William Barclay.

The reason is quite simple; God has not made promises to the unsaved (except those relating to the consequences of sin and God's invitation to salvation) but has reserved His fulfillment for His own children. When we begin claiming God's promises through our faith in His desire and ability to fulfill them, we will begin to grow in our faith and to experience abundant life.

A promise from God is very similar to a check. It is presented to the believer with the intent of bestowing upon him or her a blessing. But if it is never cashed or collected on, the believer will never receive the blessing God has for him or her. There are several steps to claiming God's promises.

1. **We must accept the promise just as we would a check, claiming it by our own endorsement.** It is here that we begin to express our faith in the one making the promise. When we receive our paycheck, we accept it by faith because we know the person or company issuing the check is good for the amount indicated. It is no different with a promise from God. But let us assume that when we get our paycheck, we believe that the company probably can't fulfill the check's particulars; so we put it in a drawer and ignore it. What would happen? We would be out the money we had worked for, wouldn't we? No matter how much we might talk about the company, until we exercised our faith in the company, our money would still be in the drawer. James told us that faith without evidence is dead (James 2:26). We must claim the promises of God by faith.
2. **Once we have claimed the promise, we must then present it for fulfillment.** This is done by meeting the conditions. Again, it is like a check. When we try to cash a check, there are certain conditions that must be met. We have to give evidence that we are the person to whom it is written. It must be cashed within a given time period as well as at the proper place. So it is with one of God's promises. If we aren't children of God, we can't cash His promise because it is not given to us. Even God's promises have limits, too. Many of God's promises can only be collected under certain conditions and at certain times. Some examples of these "conditions" to hindered prayer are found in the following scriptural references: James 1:5-8; 4:2-3; 1 Peter 3:7; Proverbs 21:13; Isaiah 59:1-2; and Ezekiel 14:1-3.
3. **Once we have accepted the promise and met the conditions, then we must use the blessings as they were intended to be used when God promised them.** This is where a promise of God and a payroll check part company. Once you cash your check, you can use the money any way you desire, but this is not so with the promises of God. He gives them to us for the purpose of bringing honor and glory to Himself through our witness in the world.

We can be sure that God has made no promise that He is unable to fulfill. He never offers persons false hope for living. Once we can accept these truths by faith, there is no limit to the blessings we can receive from the hand of the almighty God.

The following promises are just a few of over seven thousand in the Bible and are free and available to every child of God:

1. Genesis 28:15 "And behold, I am with you, and will keep you wherever you go...I will not leave you..."
2. Deuteronomy 12:28 "Be careful to listen to all these words which I command you, in order that it may be well with you and your sons after you forever, for you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God."

3. Psalm 37:4 Delight yourself in the LORD; and He will give you the desires of your heart.
4. Psalm 37:5 Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He will do it.
5. Isaiah 41:10 "Do not fear, I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with my Righteous right hand."
6. Malachi 3:10 "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until there is no more need."
7. Matthew 5:7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy."
8. Matthew 11:28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden and I will give you rest."
9. John 6:37 "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me; and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out."
10. John 10:28 "...and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand."
11. John 12:46 "I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness."
12. John 14:13 "And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."
13. John 15:7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you."
14. Romans 10:9-10 ...if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.
15. Philippians 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
16. James 1:5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.
17. James 4:7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
18. James 4:8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you...
19. 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

20. Revelation 3:20

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.”

These are just a few of the wonderful promises we find in God's Word. Each one can be ours if we meet the conditions.

One of the best ways to increase your faith is to claim one promise each day. Then meet its conditions and reap its blessings. As you see these promises being fulfilled day by day, you will find your faith increasing by leaps and bounds. The reason is that you will be applying biblical principles to your everyday life, and God will honor His Word. One of the greatest and most powerful promises we have in the Bible is found in Isaiah 55:6-11. The whole truth for basing our lives by faith on the Word of God rests in this dynamic statement by God:

Seek the Lord while He may be found;  
Call upon Him while He is near.  
Let the wicked forsake his way,  
And the unrighteous man his thoughts;  
And let him return to the LORD,  
And He will have compassion on him;  
And to our God,  
For He will abundantly pardon.  
“For My thoughts are not your thoughts,  
Neither are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD.  
“For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
So are My ways higher than your ways,  
And My thoughts than your thoughts.  
For as the rain and snow come down from heaven,  
And do not return there without watering the earth,  
And making it bear and sprout,  
And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater;  
So shall My Word be which goes forth from My mouth;  
It shall not return to Me empty,  
Without accomplishing what I desire,  
And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.”

## REVIEW

1. Paul says that \_\_\_\_\_ is the very heart of Christianity.
2. What is the major source of faith for the Christians?
  
3. What are the three elements of Christian faith?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
4. The eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews has been called “\_\_\_\_\_ of Faith.”
5. Why can't unbelievers collect on God's promises?
  
6. A promise from God is often likened to a \_\_\_\_\_.
7. What are the three steps to “cashing” a promise from God?
  - a)
  - b)
  - c)
8. What is one of the best ways to increase our faith daily?
  
9. We can have God's promises when we \_\_\_\_\_ His \_\_\_\_\_.
10. In what Scripture can we find one of the most important promises on which a Christian can base his or her faith for everyday life?

## SOME IMPORTANT CHRISTIAN TERMS

As you begin to grow in your new Christian life, you will hear and read many new and different terms. At first they may seem quite foreign to you, but as you continue to read your Bible and grow in knowledge, you will find that they become household words. Christianity involves you in a unique relationship. Here are a few of its most basic terms. You should become familiar with these as soon as possible, for they will assist you in establishing your abundant life in Christ:

1. **Adoption** : God's process of accepting human beings into His spiritual family through their faith in His Son Jesus Christ.
2. **Apostle**: One sent out to represent the sender.
3. **Ascension**: The return of Jesus Christ to heaven following His resurrection.
4. **Baptism**: (Believer's baptism) The water symbol of death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The mode is immersion.
5. **Born Again**: Refers to the spiritual rebirth of an individual through his faith in Jesus Christ.
6. **Communion**: A symbolic act of having fellowship with Jesus Christ through the sharing of faith in His shed blood and broken body. Also known as the Lord's Supper and the Eucharist.
7. **Deacon**: A servant selected for lay leadership in the church.
8. **Faith**: The confidence one has in God's Word as revealed in Jesus Christ and as it relates to all facets of social and spiritual life.
9. **Grace**: The unmerited love of God.
10. **Hope**: Confident expectations based on the promises of God as revealed in the Bible.
11. **Invitation**: An opportunity given for a response to the preaching of God's Word.
12. **Justify**: To pardon one from the penalty of sin by accepting a substitution.
13. **Maundy Thursday**: The Thursday prior to Easter, commemorating the last supper of Jesus with His disciples.
14. **Millennium**: The one-thousand-year reign of Christ on earth just prior to the end of time.
15. **Missions**: The sharing of the gospel of Jesus Christ with persons beyond the walls of the church (home or abroad).
16. **Ordination**: The process of setting one apart for special ministry in the name of Jesus Christ.
17. **Pentecost**: The historical beginning of the Christian Church and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

- 18. **Prayer:** Communicating with God through praise, thanksgiving, and petition.
- 19. **Rapture:** The "catching up" of the believers at Christ's return for them.
- 20. **Regeneration:** The spiritual rebirth experience through faith in Jesus Christ.
- 21. **Saved:** Salvaged from destruction for a purpose.
- 22. **Sanctify:** The consecrating of a person or thing for the work of the Lord.
- 23. **Progressive Sanctification:** The "continual" consecrating of a person for the work of the Lord.
- 24. **Temptation:** The lure of the devil causing a Christian to commit some form of rebellion against God.
- 25. **Tithing:** The return of one-tenth of one's resources to the church for the support of the ministry of Christ.
- 26. **Witnessing:** Sharing the facts about Jesus Christ as one knows them personally.

### **Systematic Theological Terms**

- 1. **Bibliology:** The study of the Scriptures
- 2. **Theology:** The study of God
  - a. *Christology:* The study of Jesus Christ
  - b. *Pneumatology:* The study of the Holy Spirit
- 3. **Angelology:** The study of Angels
- 4. **Anthropology:** The study of Man
- 5. **Soteriology:** The study of Salvation
- 6. **Ecclesiology:** The study of the Church
- 7. **Eschatology:** The study of the End Times

## COMMON QUESTIONS WITH BIBLICAL ANSWERS

Below are some commonly asked questions about the Christian faith. I would encourage a discussion of their answers and implications with your pastor or mature Christian friend to seek as much understanding and clarification as possible.

1. **How can I know there is a God?**  
John 1:14, 18; 14:9-14; Romans 1:18-20; Psalm 19:1. (See page 12.)
2. **How can I know that the Bible is true?**  
John 5:39-40; Acts 17:11-12; 2 Timothy 3:16-17. (See page 4.)
3. **What is sin?**  
Romans 1:18-21, 28-29; 6:12-13. (See pages 27-29.)
4. **Don't I have to become a better person before I can be saved?**  
Matthew 9:12-13; Romans 7:23-25; Galatians 2:16. (See pages 51-52.)
5. **If I sin after I accept Jesus Christ can I be forgiven?**  
1 John 1:9. (See pages 32-33.)
6. **How can I overcome sinful habits?**  
Romans 6:9-14; Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 Peter 5:6-10. (See pages 32-34.)
7. **Why did Jesus have to die to save man?**  
Romans 5:12, 19; 6:23; 8:3. (See pages 52-23.)
8. **If people are really sincere even though they are on the wrong road, won't God save them?**  
John 3:3; Romans 3:3-4; Acts 17:30-31. (See pages 51-52.)
9. **Are movies, card playing, and dancing sins?**  
John 17:14-17; Romans 14:23; 1 Peter 4:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17. (See pages 24-25.)
10. **Do I have to join the church to be a Christian?**  
Matthew 16:13-18; 28:18-20; Ephesians 5:25; Hebrews 10:25. (See page 70.)
11. **Where is the Holy Spirit now?**  
John 14:17; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 6:14-20; 2 Timothy 1:14. (See page 48.)
12. **Where did man come from?**  
Genesis 1:27; 2:7; 2:18; 2:21-23. (See page 20.)
13. **Why did Adam and Eve sin?**  
Genesis 3:1-6; James 1:14-15. (See pages 28-29.)
14. **What about the natives in the unexplored world who haven't heard of Jesus Christ?**  
Romans 1:18-32. (See pages 94-95.)
15. **Doesn't baptism save a person from his or her sins?**  
John 3:16, 18, 36; Romans 10:13; 1 John 1:7; 5:13. (See pages 89-90.)
16. **How often should the Lord's Supper be served?**  
1 Corinthians 11:25-26. (See page 90.)

17. **Are there restrictions as to who can participate in the Lord's Supper?**  
1 Corinthians 11:18, 20, 26, 27-30. (See pages 90-91.)
18. **Why should we pray?**  
Matthew 7:7-8; 26:41; Luke 18:1; John 16:24; James 1:5. (See pages 16, 18, 99-100.)
19. **Are we to give to the church?**  
Malachi 3:8-10. (See page 85.)
20. **Can a person be saved once and for all?**  
John 3:16; John 5:24; John 10:28-29; Ephesians 1:13-14; Colossians 3:3; 1 Peter 1:5. (See pages 55-57.)
21. **How long should prayers be?**  
Matthew 6:7. (See page 17.)
22. **Why is baptism called a symbol?**  
Romans 6:1-11. (See pages 89-90.)
23. **What will be the hardest part of the Christian life?**  
Mark 8:34-38. (See pages 98-99.)
24. **What will the Bible do for me?**  
2 Timothy 3:16-17. (See page 3.)
25. **How will Jesus return?**  
Acts 1:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58. (See pages 110.)

## **ANSWERS to LESSON REVIEWS:**

### **LESSON 1**

1.
  - a) It leads a person to salvation by faith in Jesus Christ by revealing God's redemptive plan.
  - b) It affords us a resource for teaching.
  - c) It establishes the basis for reproof.
  - d) It presents guidelines for correction.
  - e) It assists us in training for righteousness.
2.
  - a) The relationship with God and Jesus Christ.
  - b) The relationship between marriage partners.
  - c) The relationship with one's children and vice versa.
  - d) The relationship with one's neighbor.
  - e) The relationship with one's self.
3.
  - a) Sixty-six (66).
  - b) Thirty-nine (39)
  - c) Twenty-seven (27)
4. To be carried along toward a goal.
5. That God used men as stenographers and dictated every word of the Bible.
6. That God spoke to man (inspired his thoughts) and allowed man to write God's truths through his own personality, style, and times.
7. To bring alive by forcefully and intentionally breathing into.
8. To draw back the drapes and allow man to see what has been covered or hidden.
9. The unfolding of God's redemptive purpose for mankind.
10. Jesus Christ the Son of the living God.

### **LESSON 2**

1.
  - a) Select a Bible with which you feel comfortable.
  - b) Set aside a definite time and place for Bible study.
  - c) Consider your Bible study time as an appointment with God.
  - d) Don't allow other things to take the place of Bible study.
  - e) Pray before your Bible study, seeking the Holy Spirit's assistance.
  - f) You will need to seek the Holy Spirit's guidance in applying the biblical truths.
  - g) Read the Bible slowly and with imagination.
2.
  - a) The cover-to-cover study method.
  - b) The book-by-book study method.
  - c) The great-chapter study method.
  - d) The topical study method.
  - e) The biblical-personality study method.
3. 1,189

## **LESSON 2 (cont.)**

4. a) Be sure your method is consistent, day by day.  
b) Be sure your method is organized.  
c) Be sure your method has a goal.  
d) Be sure your study is saturated with prayer.

## **LESSON 3**

1. The Bible declares the existence of God from the beginning.
2. Fool; heart
3. a) God is holy.  
b) God is Spirit.  
c) God is righteous.  
d) God is love.  
e) God is the source of all truth.
4. a) God's rules for social living as found in the Ten Commandments.  
b) God's punitive righteousness as found in His command for administering justice.  
c) God's redemptive righteousness as seen in His patient desire for all men and women to come to Him through faith in Jesus Christ.
5. a) Through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ.  
b) Through the forgiveness of sin and pardon from its consequences.  
c) Through the security of His followers.
6. a) God is self-existent.  
b) God is ever-present (omnipresent).  
c) God is all-knowing (omniscient).  
d) God is all-powerful (omnipotent).  
e) God is immutable (unchanging).  
f) God is immense.  
g) God is eternal.

## **LESSON 4**

1. Prayer
2. a) Petition or supplication  
b) Intercession  
c) Praise
3. a) The fist or whole hand reminds us of praise to God.  
b) The index finger reminds us to pray for pastors and teachers.  
c) The large finger reminds us to pray for our government leaders.  
d) The ring finger reminds us to pray for those who are ill.  
e) The small finger reminds us to pray for ourselves.  
f) The thumb reminds us to pray for those closest to us.

#### **LESSON 4 (cont.)**

4.
  - a) You must develop a sincere hatred for sin.
  - b) You must call sin by name and not rationalize its presence in your life.
  - c) You must separate yourself from the things of the world by establishing biblical priorities for your time, talents, resources, and energy.
  - d) You must cut loose from your old habits and put on the new person.
  - e) You must be consistent in your Christian life-style regardless of where you might be and with whom you might be associating.
  - f) You must, by confession, maintain a clean heart and mind.
5. Assists you in praying more specifically.
6.
  - a) Learn to acknowledge God immediately upon rising.
  - b) Set aside a specific time each day to approach God.
  - c) Use a prayer list.
  - d) Learn to maintain an attitude of prayer.
  - e) Spend enough time in prayer really to meet and have fellowship with God.
  - f) Be sure to spend time listening to God.
  - g) Pray out loud if possible.
  - h) Pray when you are at your best.
  - i) Use “arrow” prayer throughout the day.
  - j) Find a special place to go for those deep moments of prayer.
7.
  - a) Don’t allow feelings to dictate when you pray.
  - b) Don’t substitute a “good” activity for your prayer time.
  - c) Don’t allow legalism to cause boredom in your prayer life.

#### **LESSON 5**

1. “In the image of God” means the capacity of man to live a righteous life in the presence of God—before sin entered the picture.
2. The power of choice.
3.
  - a) God stated that He was sorry He had created man.
  - b) God established a way back for man by His love through Jesus Christ.
  - c) God will that none of His children be lost.
4.
  - a) He calls through His written Word, the Bible.
  - b) He calls men through the preaching and teaching of pastors.
  - c) He calls men through concerned friends and acquaintances.
  - d) He calls men through the medium of music.
5.
  - a) To salvation through Jesus Christ.
  - b) To holiness of life.
  - c) To an attitude of peace.
  - d) To a unique relationship in grace.
  - e) To fellowship in Jesus Christ.
  - f) To become kingdom people.

## LESSON 6

1. The power of choice.
2.
  - a) The relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
  - b) The relationship with one's marriage partner.
  - c) The relationship with one's children and vice versa.
  - d) The relationship with one's neighbor.
  - e) The relationship with one's self.
3. The Bible; God's Holy Word.
4.
  - a) Ask what Jesus would do (1 Peter 2:21).
  - b) Apply the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20).
  - c) Use the "golden rule" (Matthew 7:12).
  - d) Ask if it will glorify God (1 Corinthians 10:31).
  - e) Consider whether it can be done in complete faith (Romans 14:23).
5.
  - a) Responsibility
  - b) Accountability

## LESSON 7

1. Sin has lost its sinfulness.
2. Rebellion against the will of God.
3.
  - a) Total disregard for God—a person lives as if there is no God.
  - b) Lawlessness—a person knows what's right but deliberately does wrong.
  - c) Stepping over the line—a person dabbles in sin.
  - d) Slipping up—a person slips into sin because of inattention.
  - e) Falling short—a person chooses not to strive for the best relationship to God.
4. From the rebellion of the devil in heaven against God because of the devil's prideful desires.
5. Pride
6. Every living person.
7.
  - a) Physical death.
  - b) Separation of fellowship with God.
  - c) Spiritual and eternal separation from God.
8. Faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God.
9.
  - a) Forgives us of our sins, therefore breaking its sinking hold on our lives.
  - b) Saves us from the guilt that accompanies sin.
  - c) Saves us from the eternal penalty of sin.

## LESSON 8

1.
  - a) Flesh (sinful)
  - b) Spirit (Godly)
2. A strong pull, by the devil, on some aspect of your old sinful nature.
3. The reality of temptations. They come to everyone, but we don't have to fall victim to them.
4.
  - a) Every Christian faces temptation.
  - b) We will not be tempted beyond our capacity to resist.
  - c) With every temptation comes the way of escape.
  - d) Our strength to resist comes through Christ.
5.
  - a) Be extremely selective in the material that we read.
  - b) Be extremely selective in the television programming that we watch.
  - c) Remember that everyone is *not* doing it!
  - d) Be careful of the places that we go.
6.
  - a) Memorize passages from God's Word.
  - b) Confess sins immediately.
  - c) Pray when facing temptations.
  - d) Establish strong Christian friendships.
  - e) Become active in the Lord's work.

## LESSON 9

1. Key; life
2. The promised deliverer who would save His people from their sins.
3.
  - a) The Jewish Messiah (Matthew).
  - b) The power of Christ (Mark).
  - c) The chronological life of Christ (Luke).
  - d) The divine nature of Jesus (John).
4.
  - a) God's judgment
  - b) God's love
5. The resurrection life of Jesus Christ.
6. The resurrection of Jesus Christ.
7. The coming of the Holy Spirit or Comforter.
8. He will be coming to judge the world, not to die for it.

## LESSON 10

1. A person who shares the facts of some experience as they relate to him or her personally.
2. To do as He commands.

## LESSON 10 (cont.)

3.
  - a) Develop and maintain a healthy spiritual life.
  - b) Strive for consistency in your speech and behavior.
  - c) Take advantage of the opportunities to witness.
4. A *conviction* is a position that one holds, regardless of the person one is with, the circumstances of the moment, or the amount of pressure that is placed upon one. A *preference* is a position that one holds but will alter rather than be seen as a fanatic.
5.
  - a) By producing an attitude of fear in the witnessing person.
  - b) By distracting the witnessing person from his or her mission.
  - c) By projecting the erroneous idea that witnessing is very complex and hard to do.
6.
  - a) Your life before you became a Christian.
  - b) How you became a Christian.
  - c) What Christ has done for you since you became a Christian.
7.
  - a) 25 words
  - b) 75 words
  - c) 150 words

## LESSON 11

1.
  - a) The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is difficult to understand.
  - b) The Holy Spirit is listed third in the Trinity.
  - c) The Holy Spirit is often referred to as "it" rather than "He."
  - d) Excessive emotional emphasis is placed on the Holy Spirit by some groups.
  - e) The unpardonable sin is against the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:31-32).
  - f) The King James Version of the Bible calls Him the Holy Ghost.
2. Person or personality
3.
  - a) Omnipotent or all powerful.
  - b) Omniscient or all knowledgeable.
  - c) Omnipresent or ever present.
  - d) Eternal or everlasting.
4.
  - a) He has knowledge.
  - b) He has a will.
  - c) He has a mind.
  - d) He has power.
5.
  - a) He brings conviction upon men and women due to their sin.
  - b) He brings men and women to Christ by convincing them of their need.
  - c) He takes up permanent residence within the believer's heart.
  - d) He "seals" a believer's salvation.
  - e) He guides the believer.
  - f) He gives the believer special gifts for service.
  - g) He gives the believer the power to witness for Christ.



## LESSON 14 (cont.)

5. Adoption
6.
  - a) God took the first step by loving us enough to send Jesus.
  - b) Jesus loved us enough to die for us.
  - c) We are saved by God's grace.
  - d) We did nothing to earn salvation.
7.
  - a) John wrote to the followers of Christ to provide proof of salvation.
  - b) John made certain there was no mistake as to whom he was addressing.
  - c) John confirmed the promise of salvation: eternal life.
8.
  - a) A deep love for God's Word.
  - b) A desire to pray to God.
  - c) An uneasiness over godless speech, habits and amusements.
  - d) A desire to be with God's people in worship, fellowship, and work.
  - e) A deep conviction over willful sin.
  - f) A desire to draw close to God through commitment.
  - g) A desire to serve God through a local church ministry.

## LESSON 15

1. Over 160 times.
2. Grace is God's unmerited love—a free gift given out of the generosity of a loving heart.
3.
  - a) Grace is the undeserved generosity of God freely given.
  - b) Grace is something that can only be received.
  - c) Grace is loving sacrifice of God for us.
  - d) Grace is something undeserved and unearned by us.
  - e) Grace is the only means of our salvation.
4.
  - a) Grace enables us to stand true in the midst of hardship and persecution.
  - b) Grace enables us to deal with heartrending physical problems.
  - c) Grace enables us to do effective work for Jesus Christ.
5.
  - a) Justification
  - b) Sanctification
6. Justification is the act whereby God declares a sinner just and righteous in His sight.
7. Sanctification is the act whereby God sets His followers apart for special service.
8.
  - a) It's an instantaneous act.
  - b) It's an irreversible act.
  - c) It's an undeserved, unearnable and unpurchaseable act.
9.
  - a) Setting one apart for a specific Godly service.
  - b) An act of progression as one grows in grace.
  - c) An act that reaches its climax at the second coming of Christ.
10. a) The believer experiences a full and free pardon from all past sins.

### **LESSON 15 (cont.)**

- b) The believer has a “perfect” standing before God.
- c) The believer has peace of mind.

### **LESSON 16**

1.
  - a) The contrast of things in life that are both good and bad.
  - b) We all are members of society.
  - c) God is impartial.
  - d) Through suffering, Christians can glorify Christ.
2.
  - a) Gravity
  - b) Fire
  - c) Water
  - d) Drugs, alcohol
3.
  - a) A world of suffering.
  - b) A world of hardships.
  - c) Personal suffering that “carves” man.
4. He changes it to: “How can I bring honor and glory to God through this experience?”
5.
  - a) Psalm 23:4
  - b) Psalm 112:4
6. A visit to any hospital.
7. Shaped; fit
8. Achievement; invitation; suffering

### **LESSON 17**

1. The future spiritual growth of a believer depends on his or her choice of a church.
2. “The called out ones.”
3. Jesus Christ, Son of the living God.
4. A believer’s proclamation of faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of the living God.
5. The power of church rests in the resurrected life of Jesus Christ.
6.
  - a) He refers to a group of believers assembling together for worship.
  - b) He refers to a group of groups meeting together, such as an association of local churches.
  - c) He refers to all believers of all times—the universal church.
7.
  - a) It is not a saving institution.
  - b) It is not an ark of safety.
  - c) It is not a “faucet” of convenience.
  - d) It is not a collection of receivers.
  - e) It is not an extension of society’s humanitarian organizations.

### LESSON 17 (cont.)

8.
  - a) Saints
  - b) Believers
  - c) Brethren
9. We are our brothers' brothers and sisters.
10.
  - a) The body of Christ.
  - b) The garden of God.
  - c) The bride of Christ.

### LESSON 18

1. Choosing a church home.
2.
  - a) How does the church acknowledge the Bible as God's Holy Word?
  - b) How does the church acknowledge the Bible as the final authority in all matters?
  - c) In what way does the church acknowledge God as the only true, living God?
  - d) How does the church acknowledge Jesus Christ as the only Savior of mankind?
  - e) What does the church teach about such truths as the incarnation, the crucifixion, the resurrection, the ascension, and the second coming of Christ?
  - f) What does the church teach about the doctrines of Christ's death on the cross as atoning for the sins of mankind?
3. The Apostles Creed; 390 A.D.
4.
  - a) It was a teaching church.
  - b) It was a praying church.
  - c) It was a reverent church.
  - d) It was a church where things were happening.
  - e) It was a sharing church.
  - f) It was a worshiping church.
5.
  - a) "What's yours is mine if I can get it" (thieves).
  - b) "What's mine is mine, and I'm going to keep it" ( the priest and the Levite).
  - c) "What's mine is yours when you need it" (the Samaritan).
6.
  - a) We will not be condemned for our sins.
  - b) We are children of God.
  - c) We are heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.
  - d) We don't have to worry.
  - e) We can't lose.
  - f) We can't be separated from the love of Christ.
7. It is the Christian attitude of give and take with other brothers and sisters in Christ.

## LESSON 19

1. Penetrate; Good News
2.
  - a) A good soldier
  - b) Salt
  - c) Light
  - d) A witness
3.
  - a) It has a preservative quality.
  - b) It brings out the flavor.
  - c) It makes its presence known.
4.
  - a) Jesus commanded His followers to witness.
  - b) We are to witness for Christ even if it costs us our lives.
  - c) We are to bear testimony to the facts as we know them personally.
  - d) The power to witness comes from the Holy Spirit.
5. It wipes out flimsy excuses for not witnessing
6.
  - a) His or her life before he or she became a Christian.
  - b) How he or she became a Christian.
  - c) What the Lord Jesus has done for him or her since he or she became a Christian.
7. The power of the Holy Spirit.
8. In order to penetrate the world with Good News of Christ.

## LESSON 20

1. Body; parts; functioning
2.
  - a) Consistent attendance at church services.
  - b) Honoring and glorifying God through worship.
  - c) Faithfulness of stewardship.
  - d) Serving the Lord through the ministry of the church.
  - e) Consistent attendance in a Sunday School class.
  - f) Assuming a responsible role in the church business.
3.
  - a) Time
  - b) Talents
  - c) Resources
  - d) Efforts
4. One-tenth of whatever we have.
5. A small group setting where questions can be asked and discussions entered into.
6. Overextending oneself into too many areas of service.
7. You have a privilege and responsibility of being part of the whole church process.

## LESSON 21

1. a) Bishop  
b) Elder  
c) Pastor
2. a) Bishop—an overseer.  
b) Elder—a leader dignified by maturity.  
c) Pastor—a shepherd.
3. Deacon
4. The deacon is to serve Christ in the name of the church.
5. Yes, it gives biblical qualifications.
6. a) 1 Timothy 3:1-13  
b) Titus 1:5-9
7. a) Baptism  
b) Communion
8. To plunge under and soak thoroughly.
9. a) Communion  
b) The Eucharist
10. To give thanks for something.

## LESSON 22

1. a) Body  
b) Mind  
c) Spirit (or soul)
2. Interfere
3. Mind; waste
4. We aren't to force our beliefs on anyone.
5. Responsibility; stagnant
6. a) Jesus commanded us to reach out.  
b) There are staggering needs all over the world.  
c) There are multitudes of lost people all over the world.
7. One doctor to every 500 persons in the U.S.A but one doctor to every 3,500 persons in India.
8. Superstition

## LESSON 23

1.
  - a) We must commit our way to the Lord
  - b) We must trust or rely on Him
  - c) We will bring our desires to pass (or into reality).
2.
  - a) We must commit our way to the Lord.
  - b) We must commit ourselves totally to Jesus Christ.
  - c) We must develop convictions that stand the tests of the world.
  - d) We must not allow ourselves to become sidetracked from our responsibility.
  - e) We must realize that true greatness lies in serving others.
3. Living sacrifices
4. Because a Christian is to advance from an offensive position against the devil.
5. Set specific goals.
6.
  - a) Be certain they want to know God's will in order to do it.
  - b) Confess their sins.
  - c) Be in tune with God through prayer.
  - d) Study the Word of God.
  - e) Commit their choices to God and pursue them.
7. Bible
8. Counsel with mature Christian friends.

## LESSON 24

1. Fertile field or garden.
2. The thorns or weeds.
3. 

a) Worry	e) Pressure
b) Inferiority	f) Doubt
c) Disappointment	g) Envy
d) Guilt	h) Fear
4. Worry
5. Fear
6.
  - a) Remove yourself from the situation for a while.
  - b) Reduce your activities.
  - c) Take a moment to worship God through prayer.
7. The thorn of disappointment.
8. The thorn of inferiority.
9. The thorn of doubt.
10.
  - a) Doubting one's salvation.
  - b) Doubting Christ's presence.

## **LESSON 24 (cont.)**

- c) Doubting one's eternal security.
  - d) Doubting God's love.
  - e) Doubting the Bible.
11. a) Fear of what might happen.  
b) Fear of what will happen.  
c) Fear of the past being exposed.

## **LESSON 25**

1. The condition of a believer's body after death.
2. Hades is a temporary holding place of the unbelieving dead, while hell is the permanent abode of the unbelieving after the final judgment.
3. a) A place of full consciousness and memory.  
b) A place of punishment.  
c) A place of confinement.
4. To catch up.
5. a) The meaning of the Olympic games awards.  
b) The giving of the crowns to the honored official.
6. A period of suffering, sorrow, and hardship on earth following the rapture of the believers.
7. The thousand-year reign of Christ on earth in which there is to be a perfect peace.
8. God and Christ are present in heaven but not in hell.

## **LESSON 26**

1. Faith
2. The Word of God (Bible).
3. a) Receptivity to God's Word.  
b) Trust in the truth of God's promises.  
c) Submission to God.
4. "God's Hall...."
5. God has not made promises to the unsaved except for salvation. All other promises are for His children through Jesus Christ.
6. Check
7. a) We must accept the promise by claiming it personally.  
b) We must meet its conditions.  
c) We must use the promise as it was intended.

**LESSON 26** (cont.)

8. Claim a promise each day, meet its conditions, and reap its blessings.
9. Meet; conditions
10. Isaiah 55:6-11