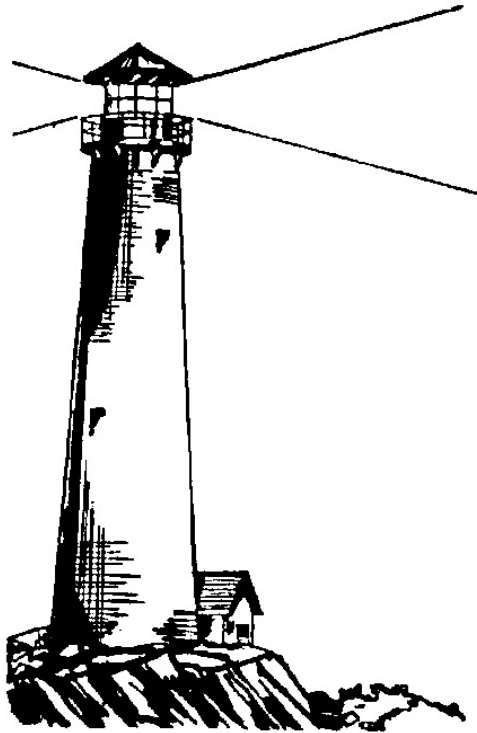


CHURCH OF GOD

SUNDAY SCHOOL QUARTERLY



DISCIPLESHIP

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NOTE TO THE TEACHERS

This booklet is intended to be a *help* in preparing Sunday school lessons. The title, subject, and topics are only the menu. It is *your responsibility* to prepare the meal.

The proper ingredients are the salty inspirations of the Holy Spirit, seasoned with His grace. Bake the ingredients at a hot temperature in the oven of prayer. The time-tested recipe for preparing a nutritious meal is found in 2 Timothy 2:15, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

LESSON 1

SEEKING CHRIST

Scripture Text: John 1:35-51

This is a thirteen-week course of study of how Jesus Christ influences the lives of men and women who seek and find Him. We will study the different forms of response and varied experiences of early disciples of Christ so that we may more easily understand ways in which He reveals Himself to those who seek Him.

MEMORY VERSE: We have found the Messiah.

—John 1:41

Straight Gospel Preaching Causes Men to Seek Christ

The reason for preaching the Gospel is to cause a hunger in people for Christ. It was John the Baptizer who said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). John and Andrew left following John the Baptizer and began to follow Christ. The sermons we hear in church must be put into action before they will help us find Christ. The way we respond to a message determines what we receive from it. A message, like a road map, only points the way we should go; it does not force us to go. When we obey a Holy Spirit anointed message, it always leads us to Christ, the Lamb of God.

The lamb held an important place in Jewish worship, both in daily temple worship and in feast days.

Personal Faith Helps People Find Christ

Andrew and John found Jesus because they believed and acted on what they had heard. After finding Him, they were convinced He was the Christ. This one message led to the change in their lives.

This incident shows the great value of church attendance and listening to the Gospel message. What might have been if these men had gone fishing, or anywhere else, instead of going to hear John the Baptizer preach?

John and Andrew, as have many others, found Christ was easy to find when they sought Him honestly and sincerely in faith. Christ makes definite changes in the inner man, and that causes a change in the outer man.

If Christ were to ask you, "What seek ye?" what would be your answer?

Personal Evangelism Helps People Find Christ

What was it that caused Andrew to go to Peter and bring him to Jesus? Was it his love for Christ? Was it his love for Peter? Was it not his love for both? This is the secret to the success of personal evangelism. After men find Christ, it is natural that they want to help others find Him as well.

We Become Like the People Whom We Follow

When we follow Christ, we become like Him. If we follow the world, we will become like it. The greatest challenge in life is to seek and find Jesus. Have you found Him?

JUST A THOUGHT

**The lazy man aims at nothing
and usually hits it.**

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LESSON 2

THE FISHERMEN ARE CALLED

Scripture Text: Luke 5:1-11

Last Sunday, we studied about Peter, Andrew, James, and John and their first meeting with Christ. Today, we study about their call to full-time service. Salvation is free, but discipleship costs. We pay the first payment when we are converted, and the remainder is paid in daily installments of one's property, time, and talent. What Christ required of the early disciples, He requires of us today. They forsook all.

MEMORY VERSE: Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. —Mark 1:17

Christ Demands the Use of Our Property

Verse 3 reads, "And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's." Christ took command of Simon's ship. Christ always takes command of all that He enters, whether it be ships, men, homes, or workplaces. What would you do if Christ suddenly entered your car or place of business? Would He be able to take it and use it as a place to preach to others? The value of your property is determined largely by the use to which it is put. Christ's choosing Simon's ship for a pulpit caused its value to go up. By getting Simon, Christ was able to get Simon's ship as well. Find out what a man has his property dedicated to, and you will find what he is most interested in.

Christ Demands the Use of Our Time

"Launch out into the deep." After Christ had Simon's boat, He asked for Simon's time and energy; He asked him to man the oars. Fishing was an honorable job in Jesus' day. Jesus noticed they were busy. They showed no sign of laziness. They were robust, skillful, and courageous, but they were humiliated by failure. Thus, Jesus found them at their work and immediately called them to follow Him. He could see what they could be for Him.

Peter had no desire to launch out again. His feelings said, "No," but his faith in Christ said, "Yes." The result was a great "draught" of "fishes." Many men who have failed in their own strength have succeeded greatly after taking Christ as a partner.

Christ Desires the Use of Our Talents

Christ knew what He was doing when He took over Peter's ship. He came to Peter at a time of failure, and He turned failure into success. He helped Peter to see his talent to catch fish was going to be used to catch *men* and not *fish*. This brought to Peter a sense of purpose. He transformed Peter from a fisherman to a "fisher of men" (Matthew 4:19). Christ is still calling for men and women to dedicate their time, talent, and property to Him today. Who can deny Him these things?

JUST A THOUGHT

**There is no reaching Heaven except
by treading the only path that leads there.**

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LESSON 3

MATTHEW BECOMES A DISCIPLE

Scripture Text: Luke 5:27-39

We can all relate to one word in our lesson today. That word is *taxes*. We would like to get rid of taxes and thus remove tax collectors. But taxes and tax collectors are here to stay, so we must get along with them. Christ knew taxes were necessary to support the government, so He instructed men to give to the government that which belongs to it and to give to God that which belongs to God. In today's lesson, Jesus converted a tax collector. He recognized Matthew's life as belonging to God. He called him to Christian service. Christ extends to all men a threefold call.

MEMORY VERSE: They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.
—Luke 5:31

Christ Calls Men to Be Something

For this reason, Christ calls men to repentance. Men cannot be what they ought to be without genuine repentance. Matthew's call to be *something* involved at least two things: transformation of character and reformation of conduct. Christ saw him as he was, and He saw him as he could become. By changing his character, or in giving him a new Spirit, He reformed his conduct. Christ deals with all men in this manner.

Each of us is two persons: the person we now are and the person we could become.

Christ Calls Men to Do Something

Matthew's first job was to arrange for his friends to meet Christ. He prepared a feast in his home, invited his friends, and brought Jesus to them. They saw and heard Him for themselves. The larger one's circle of society, the greater is one's opportunity and responsibility to introduce others to Christ. Compare the personal approach of Andrew to the mass evangelism of Matthew. Matthew lived and worked in a much larger social circle and had a feast for that purpose. Both methods are effective in helping others to find Christ. Everyone does not have to work in the same way. Why?

Christ Calls Men to Suffer for His Cause

Matthew had to pay a price to have a relationship with Christ. What he did brought to both him and Christ the ridicule and criticism of the scribes and Pharisees, who were the religious sects of that day. It must have been extremely embarrassing and trying for Matthew to have these folks enter his home and criticize his Guest. Christ is always more than a match for His critics and can handle every situation, as He did here, if we will only allow Him. It is always much easier to face persecution when Christ is near. Are we willing to answer Christ's call today to *be something*, to *do something*, to *suffer something* for His cause?

JUST A THOUGHT

The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother.



LESSON 4

NICODEMUS, A HESITANT FOLLOWER

Scripture Texts: John 3:1-12; 7:45-52

This lesson affords an excellent opportunity to evaluate a few reasons some refuse to accept Christ. Nicodemus is not the only man who has had problems in making a clear-cut decision for Christ and His way of life. He is a type of those who become cautious because of a great education and official position. They find it difficult publicly to confess Christ. Nicodemus came, but he came by night.

MEMORY VERSE: Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. —John 3:3

Some Refuse to Accept Christ Because of a Distorted Sense of Values

Some men have a desire to live for Christ, having seen His works, but have gotten themselves involved in business relationships, social positions and public opinions to such a degree they feel it would nearly ruin them to become Christians. Thinking only about the things that seem secure for the present time, they fail to realize the price man must pay in the future for leaving Christ out of their lives. Nicodemus was one who, we might say, wanted to have his cake and eat it too.

Some Reject Christ Because of a Doubt of His Divinity

Like Nicodemus, some people hold Christ in high regard as a great teacher and prophet from God, but they are unable to believe in Christ as the Son of God, or as "God made manifest in the flesh." Their faith in Christ is little more than the belief they have in other people of history—that they lived and did the deeds told of them. They agree with Christ's teaching in their heads, but they continue to walk in darkness because they lack a change in their hearts. We receive just what we pay for. Christianity has no "Bargain Day Sales."

Some Reject Christ Because They Are Unwilling to Measure to His Demands

Motivated by a desire to be held in high esteem by others, some people refuse to humble themselves to follow Christ. His plan and purpose runs against their plans and purpose. For everyone who refuses Christ because of a failure to discern His true nature, a hundred refuse to follow because of His exacting demands. It is not easy to break away from old habits, associates, influences, and selfish ambitions after living a self-centered life for twenty, thirty, or more years. Only a spiritual rebirth that puts God as the center of life, that brings a complete subjection to God's will and way, can make it possible. It is not easy, but it pays great dividends.

Some Reject Christ Because They Lack Moral Courage

A lack of moral courage seemed to be the weakness of Nicodemus. He lacked the courage to stand for his convictions. His deeds of courage came too late. Christ does not call for secret disciples. He calls for disciples who will put their hands to the plow and not look back (Luke 9:62).

The time to begin following Christ is now. Nothing but sorrow and regret can come to those who refuse to follow Christ. What might Nicodemus have been if he had lived by the courage of his convictions? We never know the measure of another person's temptation. Our attitude should be, "There but for the grace of God go I." How can we, as the Church of God, help these?

JUST A THOUGHT

**When you break your word, you break something
that cannot be mended.**



LESSON 5

A PHARISEE AND A REPENTANT WOMAN

Scripture Text: Luke 7:36-50

This lesson lets us see Christ as One who draws a response from every person who comes to know Him. The response He receives determines the response He gives. When the response is warm, He extends pardon and forgiveness. When the response is half-hearted and self-justifying, His response is a rebuke. He limits His forgiveness to those who prepare their hearts for it. This lesson shows the attitude of a proud Pharisee and a penitent woman. We see two kinds of sin and two kinds of response.

MEMORY VERSE: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

—1 John 1:9

The Sin of Attitude

The Pharisee manifested the sin of attitude by neglecting to show Christ, his invited Guest, the tokens of hospitality customarily shown to a guest. Instead, he showed a false sense of superiority in the presence of the penitent woman. He questioned the ministry of Christ. Although his sin was of thought and attitude and "he spake within himself" (verse 39), what he said and his feelings were known to Christ. He questioned Christ's knowledge of the woman. He must have been surprised to find that Christ knew his mind and heart.

The Sin of Action

Verse 37 tells of a "woman in the city, which was a sinner." Her sins were known in the city, for she had openly sinned there. She did not attempt to cover her sins with a cloak of religious profession. She had lost control of her life. So she turned to Christ that her purity and innocence might be restored. She had been a sinner before all, so now she wanted to be a Christian before all.

The Response of Pride

Offended pride always turns a critical eye. The Pharisee's false sense of superiority caused him to assess the other person's value as lower than himself. The Pharisee lowered Christ in his estimation to the level of the sinful woman. He failed to realize that he was farther in sin and farther from the kingdom than she was. He felt comfortable before she came in and did for his Guest what he had failed to do. Her action rebuked his attitude. What he proudly refused to do, she did and received the blessing for doing it. His attitude brought him "little" forgiveness, while her action brought her "much" forgiveness.

The Response of Penitence

The woman paid no mind to the Pharisee whose home she had entered, but she gave her attention, time, and personal effects to Christ. No doubt the alabaster box of ointment was all she had to show her love for Christ. She made her way to the only One who could help her win the battle against sin. She had given all to sin, now she would give all to Christ and His cause.

Such penitence always brings its reward. When Christ knew that her penitence was complete, He spoke: "Thy sins are forgiven" (verse 48). This is the way Christ deals with all who repent and forsake their sins. The Pharisee was satisfied with his own goodness and refused to repent. This simple contrast made the difference. Whether our sin is of attitude or action, the response we give to Christ determines what we will receive from Him. Why not give Him a full response today?

JUST A THOUGHT

Life makes some people better and others bitter.



LESSON 6

THE DECISIONS OF TWO RICH MEN

Scripture Texts: Luke 18:18-30; 19:1-10

In this lesson, once again we turn to Luke's Gospel and learn the case histories of two men. We study their needs when they came to Christ and the response they gave when Christ let His demands be known. As we study the rich young ruler and Zacchaeus, several things come to our attention.

MEMORY VERSE: Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

—Matthew 7:13-14

Wealth Is No Safeguard Against Spiritual Poverty

This fact is brought to light when we realize there are needs in the human heart that money cannot satisfy. This young ruler who came to Christ had kept all the commandments and was very rich, but he still recognized an inner need, a void in his life. He knew he was missing something in life. It was more than curiosity that caused Zacchaeus to climb the tree to see Christ. He felt a need within his soul for the life shown by Christ. These men realized that they did not have in their lives the thing that money cannot buy—eternal life.

How We Obtain and Use Our Money Is Important

No person has a right to collect from society without giving something in return. When labor collects from industry without giving production, industry is not receiving from labor its moral obligation. When industry profits from labor without equal compensation, it lacks in justice and fairness. Money obtained falsely, whether by word of mouth, or act of hand, is dishonest gain, and the person who collects it must give an account to God. Zacchaeus, sensing this truth, pledged himself to restore "fourfold."

Money, although rightly earned, must be used as a sacred trust from God. Money rightly earned but wrongly spent brings a curse to our lives and others about us. The young ruler not only robbed himself of a blessing by not

heeding Christ, but he also robbed those who would have been blessed by his generosity. The use men make of money is an index of their characters. We must put first things first.

Money Is of Great Value in the Work of the Kingdom

The matter of feeding the poor and preaching the Gospel lies close to the heart of God. He has ordained that His disciples give liberally of their time, talents, and money for the spreading of His work. The only way for the poor of the world to be fed is for those who have bread enough and to spare to share with those who have not. The only way the heathen will hear the Gospel is for those who have it to take it to them. Money is needed to accomplish both these goals.

There is nothing to lose by investing your life in the Kingdom of God, but there is everything to gain. "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life" (Matthew 19:29).

Will you be like Zaccheus or like the rich young ruler?

JUST A THOUGHT

**Beware of the Christian with an open mouth
and a closed pocketbook.**



LESSON 7

THE FAMILY AT BETHANY

Scripture Texts: Luke 10:38-42; John 11:1-45

In this lesson, we look at the ways we can allow Christ to be the center of our home activities. Did you ever see the motto that hangs in many American homes, which reads, "Christ is the Unseen Guest in Our House"? Christ is just that in many homes—"an unseen guest." He is not only unseen, but in many homes, He is uninvited, unread about, un-talked to, and unthought of unless some kind of trouble arises. May we bring this unseen Guest into our homes and enable Him to be seen by those who have not seen Him!

MEMORY VERSE: She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

—John 11:27

We Can Use Our Homes to Teach Respect for Law

The home is the world's oldest and most important institution. As goes the home, so goes the world. When discipline breaks down in the home, good government departs from the world. Parental law is the first code of ethics to which a child is exposed. If parental law is lacking, it becomes easy for the growing child to disobey civil and moral law.

According to the law of God, "every transgression and disobedience receives a just recompense of reward." The home should be used to teach respect for all kinds of law—parental, civil, and divine. Children should be taught to recognize and obey the moral laws written into their consciences.

We Can Use Our Homes as Centers for Christian Training

Growing children need careful guidance in matters of conversation, conduct, and practices. They need to be coached in what to say and how to say it, what to do and how to do it. The home should be used as a school in which to teach the basic principles of honesty, sharing, fair play, cooperation, and unselfishness. "Do" is a more appealing word to children than "don't" when it is accompanied by patient instruction and the right example.

We Can Use Our Homes as Centers of Worship

There should be a daily gathering together of the family for prayer and Bible reading. Children should be taught to love and respect their pastor and all men of God. The home should supplement the work of the church in teaching about God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, the church, and Christian service.

We Can Use Our Homes to Lead Others to Christ

By inviting others into our homes for a meal or for an evening's visit, we allow them to see by example how a Christian home operates. Is your home open to your children's friends so they may observe a Christian home in operation? How does your home compare with the Bethany home (the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus where Jesus was a regular guest)?

JUST A THOUGHT

**If you would have your children turn out well,
do not turn your home into a lunch counter and lodging house.**

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LESSON 8

PETER, JAMES, AND JOHN

Scripture Texts: Mark 9:2; 10:35-45; Acts 4:13-22

In this lesson, we study about the high cost of leadership. Peter, James, and John paid heavily for their special places in leadership.

MEMORY VERSE: For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. —Acts 4:20

Some Followers Feel Left Out

Places of leadership within the church belong only to those who are willing to pay the price of preparation for Christian service. Some people frequently ask themselves and the pastor, "Why do I never get called upon to do any of the special assignments in the church activities?" They have the feeling of being left out, of being unappreciated, or they think that the church is playing favorites. No doubt some of this feeling may have infiltrated the minds of the remaining disciples when Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the Mount of Transfiguration and the Garden of Gethsemane and left the others behind.

Most desire to be in the inner circle, as pillars in the church. There is always a small clique that can be found on the sidelines, never volunteering for any work, but ready and willing to criticize.

Pillars in the Church

Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him more frequently because He recognized in them greater capacities of loyalty, leadership, and devotion. They spent time alone with Christ in prayer, and their service was invaluable to the church. God has always limited His revelation of truth to man's capacity to receive it.

The prophetic revelation of Christ was given according to this principle. This same principle holds true in Christian discipleship. In the church today, as we prove our ability to bear responsibility, God reveals Himself and His purposes more fully to us. Thus, becoming pillars brings with it increased responsibilities.

Greater Responsibility

Special privileges bring increased responsibility to serve others and to pay the price that leadership demands. The more we know, the more we owe. The church is what it is today because in every generation, God has had a few people who have dared to bear faithful witness to His truth, regardless of the consequences. God will have a tested and tried following. In many instances, Christians have been severely persecuted, but the witness has not been stopped. God's people are continuing to overcome by "the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony" (Revelation 12:11).

Ours is a great heritage; let us pass it on to future generations. Will the Christian witness die out in this generation? Come what may, the answer is no, a thousand times no!

JUST A THOUGHT

**Whenever you are robbed by worry,
it is always an inside job.**

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LESSON 9

BARNABAS, THE SON OF CONSOLATION

Scripture Texts: Acts 4:32-37; 9:20-27; 11:19-30; 13:1-4; 14:8-15; 15:22-39

In this lesson, we study about a man who never grew tired of doing good. He kept his heart full of the Holy Ghost and faith. His goodness was the result of his godliness. By giving God the first place in his life, he learned the secret of personal goodness. This man's example of goodness is needed in the church today in at least three ways.

MEMORY VERSE: For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. —Acts 11:24

Barnabas Held a Good Attitude Towards Property

Barnabas recognized what he had acquired through honest labor rightly belonged to God. So when a true need came, he sold his property and distributed the money to the poor and needy in the Kingdom of God. His motive for action was found in the needs of others. Barnabas valued souls above property. Would not this example, if followed, revolutionize our practices of stewardship within the church today?

Barnabas Recognized the Value of the Other Fellow

When Paul, after his conversion, found it difficult to get the church at Jerusalem to fellowship him, Barnabas came to his defense and verified Paul's conversion to Christianity. He was a great help to Paul in his ministry to Tarsus and in the church at Antioch. Still later, Barnabas helped John Mark through some of his difficulties in getting started in the ministry. Wherever we find this man, we find him encouraging and helping someone forward in the grace of God. The Church of God needs such as Barnabas today. He was not only a good man, but he was good for something. A good man does not care who makes the points or who gets the credit. What makes a man good?

Barnabas Was a Man of Sympathy and Understanding

Barnabas served as a bridge between the Jewish-Christian community at Jerusalem and the Gentile world. He was the first delegate to be sent from the Jerusalem church to visit the Gentile church in Antioch. Barnabas worked to remove prejudice and to weld Christians together in one loving fellowship. These many good qualities add up to what we commonly call "character." Only good men can do this kind of work; others need not apply for the job. Will you answer God's call to this kind of service?

JUST A THOUGHT

**Any fool can criticize, condemn, and complain
(and most fools do),
but it takes character and self control
to be understanding and forgiving.**

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LESSON 10

PAUL, A PRISONER FOR CHRIST

Scripture Texts: Philippians 3:4-17; 2 Corinthians 11:24-33; Acts 22:3-29

In this lesson, we study how Paul's conversion and life of hardship became "a pattern" of Christian living to all future Christians (1 Timothy 1:16).

MEMORY VERSE: But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. —Philippians 3:7

His Beginning

The reasons Paul experienced a strong spiritual struggle are fairly clear. Paul had to desert the Law for the Gospel. This went against all his training and beliefs. For him to turn to Christ would, no doubt, sicken his parents, turn his friends against him, surrender his future, and deny his concept of God and His law. By becoming a Christian, he would open his life to hardship, persecution, and suffering, even as he had inflicted these things on others.

Who knows what all went through Paul's mind while he traveled the road to Damascus? One thing we can be sure of was the message of a young man by the name of Stephen, whom Paul had seen put to death because of his stand for the Gospel. What an impression that man's life and death made on Paul's mind. He never got away from the effects of it. Paul was sincere and honest. Thus, when the heavenly vision came, he willingly surrendered his life to Christ.

His Conversion

Paul's surrender marks one of the great events in Christian history. His beginning was amazing, and his Christian life was even more amazing. Few, if any, have ever equaled his devotion to Christ. No wonder he referred to his conversion as "a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on" Christ. What an example of radiant joy, unending faith, and strength made perfect in weakness! Can one find any greater personal endurance and dependence on Christ in the face of hardship?

His Course

A great quality of Paul's life is in his forsaking of self that Christ could live in him in his daily walk on earth. He said, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). Paul lost his own identity so that Christ might fulfill His purpose through him. His life and message were "Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). From the halls of kings' palaces, jail cells, and the shadow of death, he handed down to us a great part of the New Testament writings. What would our lives be like today if it were not for these writings of Paul? Paul encouraged us to be brethren, to be followers together, to know that Christians are interdependent upon each other and upon Christ. No Christian can live separately and apart from other Christians.

Paul would also let us know that there is a crown of life awaiting all who endure to the end, who keep pressing on "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Do you consider the crown worth pressing for?

JUST A THOUGHT

**Few speed records are broken
when people run from temptation.**



LESSON 11

TIMOTHY, A DEPENDABLE FOLLOWER

Scripture Texts: Acts 16:1-3; Philippians 2:19-24; 2 Timothy 2:1-13

In this lesson, we study three important factors that contributed to the development of Timothy's life and the success of his ministry. These factors are of such importance that we will deal with them separately.

MEMORY VERSE: Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. —1 Timothy 4:12

Timothy Was Reared in a Godly Home

Timothy received a heritage of unfeigned faith from his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5). His early life was spent in an environment of devotion to God and attendance at the house of worship. This environment helped stabilize his life during his younger years. The child who does not receive this kind of heritage from his parents is thrust upon the sea of life as a ship without a rudder.

Timothy Was Backed and Supported by His Home Church

The members of Timothy's congregation in Lystra were interested in him and gave him an opportunity to develop his talents for God. They placed certain responsibilities upon him that developed his usefulness. Every young person who is sincere in his efforts should have this kind of backing from his home congregation. The members of the local church should seek out youthful talents and put them to work for God.

Timothy Was Coached in His Work by a Successful Minister

None other than the Apostle Paul discerned the value of this young man and asked Timothy to accompany him on his missionary tours. By accepting this invitation, Timothy accepted an apprenticeship in the teaching and counsel of one of the wisest and best ministers ever known in the Church of God. He chose as his pattern one who was motivated by a genuine missionary zeal, who was an unexcelled scholar, and who was willing to give his life in

defense of the church and its purposes. Timothy did not pattern his ministry after some self-centered glory seeker.

If the Church of God is to continue its evangelistic outreach to future generations, then parents and church leaders must see to it that the young people are reared in an atmosphere conducive to their deciding to follow Christ and to use their talents to His glory. "Parents, who wish to train up their children in the way they should go, must go in the way in which they would have their children go " (Bacon). "Parents wonder why the streams are bitter, when they themselves have poisoned the fountain" (Locke).

Within the church today, there is a lack of consecrated leaders. Let us all present a challenge to young people to answer the call of Christ to the ministry. There may be several Timothys in our congregations who await recognition, encouragement, and training.

There is no limit to what can be done if we do not care who gets the credit for what is done. How do you feel about it?

JUST A THOUGHT

**A self-made man is usually a horrible
example of unskilled labor.**



LESSON 12

LYDIA, WHO OPENED HEART AND HOME

Scripture Text: Acts 16:6-40

This lesson teaches us how the Gospel was first taken to Europe and the response it received there. Note how the church in Philippi grew from a humble beginning to take its place among the churches of early Christianity.

*MEMORY VERSE: A woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.
—Proverbs 31:30*

Paul and Silas Responded to God's Message to Them

Paul and Silas responded to the vision of a man of Macedonia calling for help. They entered into Philippi from Troas. The following Sabbath, not finding a place within the city to conduct services, they went out of the city by a riverside, where a prayer meeting was held. This is another prayer meeting that has made history. The man in Paul's vision turned out to be a woman. Why? Man, here, is symbolized as humanity as a whole. Do not men and women both need the Gospel?

Lydia Responded to God's Message to Her

These were hungry souls gathered in an out-of-the-way place, looking for soul food. No one but God knew where they were and could supply their needs. Lydia and her household were down by the river on that day and gave attendance to Paul's preaching. Thus, the new church was begun. Many churches in our day have been started in this manner. First, there was a prayer meeting, conducted under the open sky or within some humble home. Through the influence of this meeting, souls were saved. Little by little, the church has grown and now sends workers out to other cities.

Lydia, with her family, opened her heart to the message. She was baptized and opened her home to Paul and Silas. Women have always filled an important place in the evangelistic and missionary program of the church. In many instances, a few consecrated women have kept the church alive and its doors open through the consecration of little things.

When Lydia opened her heart to God, she also opened her home to His work and workers. This consecration of self and property keeps the church

alive and growing. Lydia was an industrious woman and had obvious business ability. Her many associates meant many contacts for Christ.

Faithful preachers will always be important and necessary. But faithful laywomen and laymen like Lydia and her friends still make up the great army of the Lord. The lesson reads that Lydia worshiped God. Does not this fact alone go a long way in explaining the stature of this wonderful woman? Her invitation to Paul and Silas to visit and stay at her home must have been very heartening to these men of God.

Can God call on you and me whenever He sees people who need help?

JUST A THOUGHT

**The price of wheat rises and falls,
but the price of wild oats remains the same.**



LESSON 13

LUKE, PHYSICIAN AND HISTORIAN

Scripture Texts: Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-12; 28:1-10; Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11

The Gospel of Christ presents an appeal to men in all walks of life—rich and poor; doctors, lawyers, and merchants and the down and out. This lesson is about a doctor who heard and accepted Christ's call to Christian service. He is referred to by Paul as "Luke, the beloved physician."

MEMORY VERSE: For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. —Acts 1:5

Luke, the Physician

We do not know a great deal about Luke except that he was a companion of the Apostle Paul and writer of two books of the New Testament, the Gospel which bears his name and a part, if not all, of the Acts of the Apostles. The Book of Acts is a good history of how the Holy Spirit worked through the early apostles.

The profession of physician implied a considerable amount of scientific knowledge and shows Luke certainly belonged to the class of educated men. Because of his highly technical training, Luke recorded some interesting bits of history which other writers of the New Testament have left out. His tracing of Christ's genealogy back to Adam and his description of Christ's physical reaction in the Garden of Gethsemane are two examples.

The Apostle Paul had no misgivings about taking Luke in company with him. Luke may have been Paul's personal physician in his travels, helping him to prepare for different climates, food, and water.

Luke, the Historian

The historical record left for us by Luke directs us on our course in facing hardships. Without it, we would not know how the early church faced and overcame its difficulties and met the battles of life in an attitude of triumph. This man Luke, though highly trained in the sciences of his day, still recognized the power of prayer and recorded for us many miraculous answers God gave to the early Christians as a surety that God will do the same

for us. Luke's knowledge helped him to see more clearly the way in fulfilling the purpose of God. Notice in Acts 16:10, he began to write in the first person, letting us know he was right there with them, recording what he saw. As the end of Paul's life grew near in the Roman prison, he wrote to Timothy that Luke alone was with him (2 Timothy 4:11). Is it possible that he had been a personal physician to Paul? At any rate, Luke was proven faithful.

Let us tell the story of salvation, not as history only, but as something we experience and are participating in. This is the way Luke served his Lord. What must we do to fulfill the purpose of God?

JUST A THOUGHT

**You are a precious vessel God has crafted
for a unique purpose.**



NOTES

NOTES

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