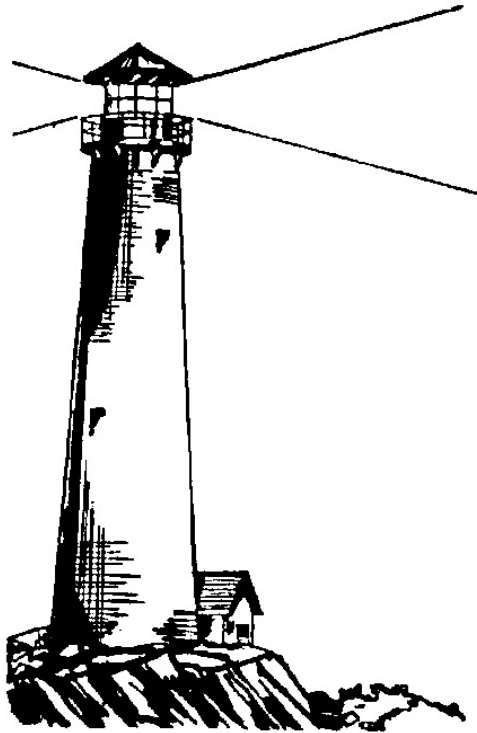


CHURCH OF GOD

SUNDAY SCHOOL QUARTERLY



**"EXCEPT" OR
ESSENTIALS FOR SALVATION**

"EXCEPT" OR ESSENTIALS FOR SALVATION

CONTENTS

Except a Man Be Born Again	1
Except Ye Repent	3
Except the Father Draw You	5
Except Ye Believe on Jesus Christ	8
Except Ye Forgive Others	11
Except Shedding of Blood Is No Remission	13
Except Ye Eat My Flesh	15
Except a Corn of Wheat Die	18
Except Ye Become as Little Children	21
Except Ye Have Love	24
Except Your Righteousness Exceed	27
Except Ye Be Holy	30
Except Ye Hold Steadfast	33

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

Except a Man Be Born Again

Scripture Texts: Jeremiah 13:23; John 1:1-13, 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 3:9-10; 1 Peter 1:3-4

In this quarterly we look at some essentials of salvation—requirements without which there is no salvation. Each of these, many of which may be called "exceptions," is a supernatural work of God in the heart. Our part is to obey Him.

Skilled workmen know they must follow certain procedures exactly or fail. Trained workmen and precision tools are required for many jobs. Natural laws are sought and followed. Spiritual laws are just as exact.

MEMORY VERSE: Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

—John 3:3

The Necessity of Rebirth

Have we not heard, "It does not matter where we worship, just so one is sincere" or "We are all going to the same place; we are all brothers" or "Everyone has a right to his belief; one is as good as another"? Are these statements true? There is ONE way to spiritual life—the RIGHT way. It is given in the Bible. Wrong directions and ignorant guidance have resulted in the loss of many a soul. To follow opinions of men rather than God's essentials of truth is tragic.

Since all have sinned (Romans 3:23), therefore all come under the truth of the statement found in Jeremiah 13:23. We cannot do good. By man's standards there seems to be unsaved people doing good all about us. How about God's standard? There is none good but God, as written in Luke 18:19. God counts nothing as good except that which proceeds from Him.

A natural, unsaved one is a dead soul. A reborn one is alive, with God living within him. We cannot rid ourselves from sin because it is a part of us as much as spots are a part of the leopard. The only way that we can be rid of the spots of sin is to have them removed by the miraculous work of God through the new birth, or rebirth that makes us new persons, as we read in John 3:3. By being born again we enter the Kingdom of God—and in no other way. This is a divine change.

The Way of Rebirth

John 14:6 plainly tells us that rebirth, spiritual birth, comes through one Person and one only—Jesus Christ who is God. He gave His life on the Cross, which enabled Him to give mankind a new life, a new birth. He died so that we may live. We become sons of God, not by natural birth but by spiritual birth into God's family. To do this, we must receive Christ by repenting and believing the Gospel, as we read in Mark 1:15. Repentance is turning from sin in heartfelt sorrow. The Gospel tells us to believe on Christ's name. This includes believing His identity as God, believing that He, through the sacrifice of His life, can and will save us from sin, and trusting Him to save us.

The Result of Rebirth

Second Corinthians 5:17 expresses the truth that if any man be in Christ, is born again, actually living in Christ, then he is a new creature. He has new life, at first a babe in Christ, then growing to a mature Christian. Many have joined a church but have never been born from above. Often they live good lives by worldly standards, but they have not been taught the truth of the Scriptures, which teach that they must become new creatures, not just good people. Whose plan is "church joining"? How does it compare with the new birth? Is "church joining" biblical?

First John 3:9 tells us that whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin. Some teach that there are two types of sinners—"saved sinners" and "unsaved sinners." In 1 John 3:10 we find that God counts all sinners as children of the devil. Sin is a nature separated from God, a disposition to disobey God. The new birth puts in one the nature of God, godliness, and obedience to Him.

Begun here, the godly life is to go on after death. To be born of God starts one toward everlasting life in Heaven. The new birth gives LIFE, HOLINESS (which is sinlessness and godliness), and FUTURE HOPE. There can be no future hope without a new life and holiness. Is it worth suffering for?

JUST A THOUGHT

**Almost anything can be bought at a reduced price
except lasting satisfaction.**

LESSON 2

Except Ye Repent

Scripture Texts: Psalm 38:3-4; Matthew 5:23-26, 7:13-14; Luke 13:1-2; 2 Corinthians 7:9-11; 1 John 1:9; Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 55:7; Psalm 34:18

Last week we studied about being born again, the new birth. There are steps that must be taken to gain this experience of a new birth. Today we learn about the first steps—repent of and forsake sin.

MEMORY VERSE: I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Luke 13:3

What Is Repentance?

Our first step to salvation is repentance. There is no salvation without it. It is difficult for the flesh to yield and humble down, but it yields a reward of forgiveness, peace, and joy. Psalm 38:3-4 tells us that sin is a heavy burden. Nothing else can hurt one as much as the pain of a guilty conscience. All understand this, for all have felt it. David was overwhelmed by his sin and by the frown of God. Conviction held him as it holds men today. Thank God, we can be free. By confessing, repenting, forsaking sin, and trusting in the only Savior, Jesus Christ, this is possible.

In Luke 13:1-2 Jesus was impressing upon His disciples the equality of need for repentance, which ALL humanity shares. Some of these Galileans appear to have more sin than others, but any sin damns the soul. God's verdict is the same for all—repent or perish. God measures the repentance, not the sin. Matthew 7:13-14 points out that we all enter in at the strait gate unto life. Both the strait and the broad gates are before us early in life. We begin life or destruction here. Why is it that few find life? It is not because God hides the gate. He has given us the Gospel. It is because repentance is the gate, and repentance is hard and painful. Repentance is to become tired of the ways of sin and to be sorry that we have ever sinned against God.

Confession of Sin

In 1 John 1:9 we are told that to have our sins forgiven they must be confessed. We know that we cannot name out every sin that we have committed.

We simply acknowledge our guilt and humbly ask forgiveness for all our wrongs, and God is faithful and just to forgive us of all our sins and make us clean from all unrighteousness. To be rid of guilt, confession must be made to those who were wronged. Before God, the heart must be laid bare and the sin owned.

Proverbs 28:13 reminds us that he that covers his sins shall not prosper. He may feel that he has his sins covered, but God will uncover them for all to see. The only cover for sins is the blood of Jesus Christ, the only Savior of the souls of mankind. Psalm 34:18 tells us that a broken heart and a contrite spirit are a part of repentance.

Forsaking of Sin

In 2 Corinthians 7:9-11 we are told that godly sorrow has a part in repentance to salvation. Heartfelt sorrow causes one to hate and turn from sin. It breeds carefulness. There is a clearing of yourself. You clean up your conduct, make restitution, feel indignation at your wrong acts, and have a fear of God's wrath. You also have a vehement desire to be free of guilt and to do right in the future, a zeal to make a thorough change, and a revengeful desire to destroy the works of Satan.

In Isaiah 55:7 we see that at the heart of repentance there is a forsaking. A change of direction, of conduct, of living, of goal, of masters—without this, confession and sorrow are fruitless. The change is outward and inward. Beware at this point of going along on your own efforts, which would end only in failure.

Put your full trust in God to begin the work of salvation and return to Him each day to continue the work in you. You will experience then His loving mercy, abundant pardon, peace, and joy. God and His angels rejoice with us when one finds true salvation. True repentance is found only where there is a complete change of heart toward God.

JUST A THOUGHT

**Regret for sin or remorse over sin
is not repentance.**



LESSON 3

Except the Father Draw You

Scripture Texts: John 6:44-45; 1 Corinthians 1:9; Romans 2:4; Acts 2:37-39, 3:19; James 4:7-10

Jesus died for our sins. God (the Father), the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God all have a great part in our salvation. Conviction works in the heart of a sinner, and it is very important and needful that one feels the convicting and drawing influence of God. We cannot choose our own time to be saved. The result of refusing the drawing of God is always of a serious nature. The right response to the drawing of conviction is to yield to it.

MEMORY VERSE: No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. John 6:44

The Father's Part in Salvation

Before one can repent and receive Christ through salvation, he must be drawn to it by the supernatural touch of the Father. He sends conviction of sin and a desire for Jesus Christ.

All three Persons of the God-head work together in bringing this work of conviction. No one of Them can be said to accomplish any work by Himself independently of the Others. Yet each has certain phases of divine work in which He leads and the Others support.

In John 6:44-45 Jesus invited us to come unto Him. We may think it is all in our hands, that we can put it off or choose our time and way to come. Not so. The Father must touch our hearts to draw us. It is a supernatural work. If we heed His drawing, if we hear and learn of Him, His truth will draw us toward Jesus to be saved.

The greatest privilege and honor that man can experience in this life is to be spoken to by the Spirit of God and offered salvation through conviction.

We read in 1 Corinthians 1:9, God calls us. We should answer. "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Proverbs 29:9). The Holy Spirit is the Agent through whom the Father draws us. Jesus spoke of Him as the Holy Ghost, whom the Father would send in His name. One of the Spirit's functions is to reprove (or convict) the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment, as we read in John 16:8. This is the influence in the heart that we call conviction.

Workings of Conviction

One in the grasp of conviction feels his sin and suffers the pain of guilt. He sees God's righteousness and longs to possess it. He realizes his life is laid bare to the all-seeing eye of God. These are the strong cords by which the Father draws us. Romans 2:4 tells us that the goodness of God leads to repentance. The hard step of repentance is a good step because it leads to the entrance of life everlasting. It opens to us the Kingdom of God. The Father sends the persuasions of conviction because He loves us. We are told in 2 Peter 3:9 that He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

In Acts 2:37-39 we find a good example of the workings of conviction. Peter, newly filled with the Holy Spirit, preached, exalting Christ and accusing the people of His crucifixion. The Spirit fastened truth in their hearts. They were pricked in their hearts—conviction seized them. To escape the results of their guilt, they cried, "What shall we do?" They obeyed Peter's command to repent and be baptized. They were valid candidates for baptism when they had repented and were born spiritually. Continued obedience, joy, and victory followed. It was the Word of God activated by the Holy Spirit that brought conviction. God's Word still brings conviction when it is applied with godly love and prayer. Hebrews 4:12 tells us the reason.

Our Response

In Acts 3:19 we read, "Repent . . . that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come. . . ." God sends these times. These are the times when it is most easy to heed and yield, and be filled with life. Most can remember a time of refreshing in a service when God's call was louder, His drawing was stronger, and His joy was greater. These times come from the Lord. We do not send them.

When influence, providences, and circumstances so combine as to allow His call to reach us, we should heed. A time we might set, after neglecting or refusing His call, might find us too hardened to hear it. When the Father draws us, what is our part? James 4:7-10 gives us the answer to this question. Submit to God and resist the devil. Draw nigh to God. Cleanse your hands (make right outward sins). Purify your hearts (cast out sinful thoughts and motives). Be afflicted, mourn, and weep (sorrow for sin). Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord. These are true characteristics of repentance. The fruit of repentance is forgiveness, cleansing, and life in Christ. Our response is to obey at the first drawing of the Father.

JUST A THOUGHT

**It is what we have in our hearts that makes us thankful,
not what we have on the table.**



LESSON 4

Except Ye Believe on Jesus Christ

Scripture Texts: John 3:14-18, 3:36, 5:24, 5:44-46, 6:29, 8:24; Acts 8:37; Hebrews 11:6; 1 John 5:5

The way of life is believing. Repentance, which we have studied in an earlier lesson, is a NEGATIVE step. It is ridding oneself of sin. It is turning from and emptying out. Believing is POSITIVE. It is a turning to, an accepting or receiving of life of Christ Himself. One is not saved, not alive in Christ until he has believed on Christ.

MEMORY VERSE: He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.
—John 3:36

The Way to Life

Believing on Jesus Christ completes the requirement for receiving Christ—being saved. This is belief in Christ's deity and power and love. It is full dependence upon His sacrifice to pay for our sins.

What kind of believing transforms a dead soul into a living one? Not merely accepting the fact that Christ lived nor the mental belief that He is good and God's Son. No, it is an opening of the heart to receive. God performs open-heart surgery on all who are saved. It is felt as much as thought. In John 3:16 we read that those who believe in God shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Does not believing IN make it more positive than believing ON? In John 5:24 we find that he that hears the Word of God—listens, receives—is passed from death unto life. Do we not have to listen to hear? What we listen to and hear has much to do with what we receive. Not with fleshly ears, but with the heart do men believe unto righteousness (Romans 10:10). In this he is passed from death unto life. This is resurrection, the first resurrection (Revelation 20:5-6). Now, we have just begun to live. Anything less than life in Christ Jesus is merely existing.

Hindrances to Believing

In John 5:44-46 we see that one attitude that shuts out belief is that of seeking honor of men, having our values out of perspective. Worldly values

are external and fleeting. Honor God gives is quiet, spiritual, lasting, and precious. Jesus spoke here of the hindrance of unbelief in His Word. Jesus' hearers followed Moses in form but disbelieved his inspired writings in the first five books of the Old Testament. Today belief in the truthfulness and divine origin of the Bible is a basis for belief in Christ (John 17:17).

Dependence upon one's own efforts is another hindrance to belief in Christ. True belief in Him is dependence upon Him. It is casting oneself upon His mercy. It is taking His death as payment for one's sins. Some asked Jesus, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? What act, great effort, gift, kind deed, sacrifice, or penance? Something to earn salvation, produce life?"

God wants none of these. They cannot produce life eternal. The death of Jesus Christ won our salvation. Yield to His work, cast yourself upon it, believe He saves. Hebrews 4:10 says, "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his."

Necessity of Believing

In Acts 8:36-37 the Ethiopian asked Philip for baptism, the symbol and testimony of the new birth. Philip laid down one condition—if you believe with all your heart. Believing goes before conviction and repentance. The Ethiopian believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Jesus Himself said this belief is necessary (John 8:24).

Hebrews 11:6 says that in order to come to God, we must believe that He is. No atheist is saved. No agnostic is saved. The first believes there is no God. The other is not sure. The Christian is sure that God lives and that Jesus Christ is God, being the Father's Son. He believes both God's ability and His willingness to save, both His power and His love. These truths God says we must believe. What prepares one to place faith in Christ so much as believing that the Bible is God's Word? Does any other authority bear as great weight with an inquirer as to be shown a Bible statement?

Consider this illustration of believing and depending on God, or of depending on self: A little girl started for Sunday school wearing a new dress. "Take my hand," said Daddy. "It is icy and very slippery."

"No, I can walk by myself." A few steps and down she went, messing the pretty dress. Tearfully back to Daddy she turned.

"Now will you take my hand?" he asked.

"No, carry me, Daddy."

Power in Believing

In the search for power many miss the greatest power—that over sin and self (overcoming the world). We get it by believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God as we are told in 1 John 5:5. This means letting go of self and casting our broken hearts at the feet of Jesus, trusting His blood to cleanse from all sin and give us life. When repentance and faith are complete, the soul is born again a child of God.

What we truly believe, we dedicate ourselves to. The teachings of evolution and modernism rest upon unbelief of God's Word. How can we protect ourselves and others from their poison? How can we counteract the slogan that "there are no absolutes"? Truth never changes.

Parent, you have in your hands much of the believing of your children. The greater influence is in their early years. They must be taught to love, respect, read, and obey the Bible as the absolute authority. Can one believe for another? Where does this leave infant baptism?

JUST A THOUGHT

**It is not only necessary to have faith in a good cause,
we must also make an investment in it.**



LESSON 5

Except Ye Forgive Others

Scripture Texts: Matthew 6:12-15; Luke 6:36-37, 17:3-4; Romans 12:19-20; Ephesians 4:32

Most agree it is right to forgive. Many wish they could. Some do. How is forgiveness brought about? Forgiveness is conditional. Many people find it too difficult to forgive others and thus find themselves unable to obtain forgiveness from God.

MEMORY VERSE: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. —Matthew 6:15

Forgiveness Is Dependent

Since all have sinned, all need forgiveness. When one sees his sin through the Spirit's convincing power and yields to the Father's drawing and repents, he craves forgiveness. God is ready to give it. Why then are some not forgiven? Forgiveness is conditional. Jesus said so. God can forgive only a heart that is willing to forgive.

To be forgiven one must be willing to forsake all sin. A grudge, hatred, desire for revenge, bitterness—these are sins. An unforgiving heart is closed. God can put His forgiveness into an open heart only. God's purpose in doing a work in our hearts is to make us like Him. He is loving, merciful, and forgiving. If He is not allowed to make us like that, He can do nothing at all. Such an one remains unforgiven, unsaved, without hope of Heaven.

Ability to Forgive

Jesus is our example. On the Cross He forgave His murderers. We will not have more to forgive than He. We will have His help in doing it. Unsaved persons cannot muster a forgiving attitude, but they must have a willingness to give God opportunity to help them to forgive.

All suffer injuries at times. Sometimes we may rebuke the offender, point out his offense. If he repents, forgive him. If he does not repent, forgive him. He cannot receive this forgiveness until he comes and asks for it. Our watching must be of self rather than of the other fellow, as we are admonished in Luke 17:3 to take heed to ourselves.

Forgiveness does not bring about a bad memory. We will not forget the act, but we will not remember the wrong. We will not hold a judging and condemning attitude. We bury it with never a thought of digging it up again, ever.

Response to Injuries

Romans 12:19-20 gives us good instruction. Vengeance and the love of God do not dwell in a heart at the same time. A desire to get even, to pay back a wrong, is sinful. To do kindness to the offender is right and blesses doubly. (1) It nourishes the love and forgiveness in the offended one's heart. (2) It persuades toward repentance in the heart of the offender. The coals of fire on his head mean conviction in his heart. No vindictive punishment could produce this.

Give place unto wrath—give way or yield before the wrath of an enemy rather than to retaliate. Wrath is a work of the flesh that will keep one from the Kingdom of God (Galatians 5:20-21). We cannot afford to harbor it. Adam Clarke suggested this means to leave the matter to civil law and to God to judge and punish. Or "yield a little to a man when in a violent passion, for the sake of peace, until he grows cooler." The very fact that we have been forgiven creates in us a desire to forgive.

Effects of an Unforgiving Spirit

People who refuse to forgive hold resentment, bitterness, and revenge against others. In some cases people hold unforgiveness toward God. Their lives are void of the joy and peace that only God can supply. They are misfits in the congregation. They are of no help in God's service. They are the cause of evil gossip. Their speech and actions are affected by their unforgiveness. We must never ask ourselves if they deserve forgiveness.

None of us were deserving of God's forgiveness. God did not give us justice, He gave us forgiveness. We are to forgive because we have received forgiveness. We are to forgive because God forgives. He is our example. His nature is ours if we are His children. "Except" we forgive our brother, we cannot be forgiven.

JUST A THOUGHT

**No matter how long a fellow nurses a grudge,
it won't get better.**

LESSON 6

Except Shedding of Blood Is No Remission

Scripture Texts: Leviticus 17:11; Exodus 24:8; Matthew 26:27-28; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:22, 10:12-19; Revelation 12:11

In Leviticus 17:11 we are told that blood is precious because in it is life. God ordained the system of animal sacrifices as a symbol of the coming sacrifice of Christ. Even before Christ came here sin could be atoned for only by the shedding of blood.

Animal sacrifices atoned temporarily until time for the final sacrifice. This final sacrifice was Christ's. His blood was necessary for salvation. Except we trust in the blood of Christ, shed for us and in our place, there is no forgiveness of sin.

MEMORY VERSE: And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. —Hebrews 9:22

Covenants Sealed With Blood

In Exodus 24:8 we find that when God made His covenant of the Law with Israel, Moses took blood of sacrifices and sprinkled it on the altar (representing God's side) and on the people. It bound God to His promises to bless Israel and be their God. It bound Israel to their promises to keep His Law.

Matthew 26:27-28 tells us that when Jesus was about to sacrifice Himself, He gave the symbol of His shed blood (grape juice) to His disciples, calling it My blood of the New Testament, or new covenant. A better one was taking the place of the old. His blood bound Him and His people together; He to save from sin, they to receive, trust, and obey Him.

The Blood of the Lamb

Why is Jesus called our Passover? Why is He called the Lamb of God? As God prepared Israel to escape from Egypt, He instructed them to kill the Passover lamb. The Israelites applied the blood as they were instructed and were saved from death. They ate the flesh of the lamb and received strength for their journey. Does Jesus fulfill this type?

Power of the Blood

Ephesians 1:7 tells us that through Christ's blood we have forgiveness of sins—our guilt is blotted out. Also, through it we have redemption. That is, Christ's sacrifice "buys back" from Satan all who repent and trust Him. It frees those who repent from sin's bondage. God does not forgive and leave us in sin. He gives us the power to keep from sinning. He also frees us from sin's final result, which is hell.

In Hebrews 9:11-28 the writer looked back into the religious history of Israel and saw the blood shed by the many sacrifices. This blood of animals was effective for purifying material articles that were patterns of things that would follow in a new dispensation. The cleansing power of animal blood was limited. It was only a type of a greater cleanser to come.

Nothing but blood could purify material patterns. Animal blood could do that only if applied in divine order, but to cleanse a soul from sin takes divine blood. Only the blood of Jesus Christ suffices. This is the teaching of the Bible, and the Bible is the Word of God. One offering is enough if its quality is perfect for the need. The sacrifice of Christ is. None other will ever be made to sanctify us and set us apart to God, as we read in Hebrews 10:12-14.

In Revelation 12:11 we find three means by which the martyrs of the early church overcame Satan: (1) The blood of the Lamb—faith in the shed blood of Christ put within them life in Christ, power, purity, and light—casting out the corruption, ignorance, and falseness of paganism. (2) Their testimony. (3) The consecration of their lives even unto the death. These weapons are available to all God's people when they take complete faith in the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed on Calvary's Cross.

Jesus died to pay our debt for sin. He died to give us life—His life. Jesus did a work on the Cross that no other could do, the greatest ever done in the world. Have you entered into this holiest place that the blood of Jesus opens to us? If not, as far as you are concerned, Christ died in vain. Do not let your portion be wasted.

JUST A THOUGHT

**The loneliest place in the world is the human heart
when love is absent.**



LESSON 7

Except Ye Eat My Flesh

Scripture Texts: John 6:51-63; Matthew 26:26-28; 1 John 5:12; 2 Peter 1:4; Hebrews 10:16; John 4:14; 1 Corinthians 1:30

The process in physical life is to be born to live and eat to keep living. In our lesson today we study the spiritual analogy to this. Be born of the Spirit (Lesson 1) to live, partake of Christ to nourish that life, and grow in grace. If a soul brought to life is not fed, it will soon die. Matthew 5:6 teaches us the truth of this. Open your heart wide to Him. Hunger for and desire Him. Could failure to do this explain the loss of many souls from the rank of the newly saved?

MEMORY VERSE: Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. —John 6:53

Eating Christ's Flesh

How does one eat and drink of Christ? In John 6:51-58 the people questioned Jesus' comparison of Himself to the manna God gave the Israelites. The very thought of eating Christ's flesh was repulsive to the Jews. The manna was a type of Jesus, the true Bread from Heaven that nourishes the spiritual life of man. When Jesus said we must eat His flesh and drink His blood to have life, He spoke of our spiritual life that is much more important than our physical life. Unless we take Christ into ourselves, unless we open our hearts wide and take Him in to live there, we are dead souls. First Corinthians 10:1-4 tells us that all the people partook of Christ even back in Moses' day. They were partaking of spiritual meat and spiritual drink. First Corinthians 10:16-17 speaks of the blood and body of Christ.

In John 6:51-63 Jesus made it clear that He was speaking figuratively, as a parable, saying flesh to mean spirit. He pictured the relative value of the flesh and the spirit. What a vast difference. Do we value them as He does? In Galatians 6:8 we find the Spirit to be life and the flesh to be death. The Bible is God's written Word. It is a living Book because it leads us to Christ who is life. Jesus is the living Word. To eat and drink of Christ, we must begin by reading, but the Bible's benefit comes only when we go on to believe, accept, and obey it. Only when His Words come to abide in us (John 15:7)

do they lead to Christ and life. Seek Him in His Word and in prayer, ready to obey. Commune with Him, letting thought, worship, fellowship, and love flow freely back and forth between you and Him.

This Is My Body

When Jesus spoke of our eating His flesh and drinking His blood, He did not mean in the communion supper, as spoken of in Matthew 26:26-28. He said the flesh profiteth nothing. The supper is material or fleshly. It cannot give spiritual life or virtue to the partakers. If so, why are we required to examine ourselves first lest we eat and drink unworthily?

Visible, material forms (the Lord's Supper, baptism, feet washing) are symbols of spiritual realities. By themselves they have no value. When we possess the reality for which it stands, the symbol has sacred meaning. When one has Christ's life within, he may rightly partake of the symbol as a testimony to that fact.

What Christ Brings In

When we partake of Christ's flesh and blood, that is, take Him into our hearts, He brings in all that He is. In Him we have:

LIFE (1 John 5:12): God is the Author of all life. Without Him no life exists. We can have no spiritual life except by having Jesus Christ within. Having a religious form, joining a church, being baptized, taking communion, doing good works, reforming, striving, or good living—none of these can make the soul live. Christ's entrance does.

DIVINE NATURE (2 Peter 1:4): Through knowing Jesus and His Father we have all things that pertain unto life and godliness. By believing and complying with His promises, we have the divine nature—the nature of God. Jesus promised that if we abide in Him and He abides in us, we will bring forth much fruit (John 15:5). This fruit is godliness, holiness, and spiritual graces that are Christ-like (Galatians 5:22-23). The divine nature is planted when Christ enters at our repentance and increases as we walk with Him in obedience each day.

LAWS OF GOD (Hebrews 10:16): One who is eating, or taking in, Christ has God's laws written in his being. Thus, doing God's will is neither dreary drudgery nor an unwilling task. Although it costs hard work and suffering at times, the motives and desires of the heart accord with God's laws. The impulse of our hearts will be to do right.

CONSTANT SUPPLY (John 4:14): The living water Jesus brings into

a heart refreshes and gives life to the soul. It becomes a spring ever flowing. It is eternal life begun in this world. It flows into an overflowing stream, drawing others to the Lord (John 7:37-39).

ALL WE NEED (1 Corinthians 1:30): Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. What more do we need? Colossians 2:9-10 tells us that in Him we have all—a completeness. His death bought all. If an unbroken connection runs from the power plant to our house, it brings a flow of electricity to supply light, heat, and power for any variety of needs. Christ in us is our supply for any need here and also the perfect life to come. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

JUST A THOUGHT

**What is in the well of your heart will show up
in the bucket of your speech.**



LESSON 8

Except a Corn of Wheat Die

Scripture Texts: John 12:23-26; Matthew 10:37-39; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:3; Romans 6:8, 8:13, 12:1; Revelation 12:11

We cannot live the self-life and the Christ-life at the same time. Self-life must die that Christ may live in us and that we may be His disciples.

MEMORY VERSE: Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. —John 12:24

Old Man or New Man

The old man counsels, "Do your best, break off bad habits, work hard, improve yourself, be good." Perhaps this is the biggest mistake made in the religious world—build a good record before man, unite with God, and you will get to Heaven. What does Jesus say to the old man? Read Romans 6:6 and Colossians 3:9-10.

Christ's Death and Ours

In John 12:23-26 we find that as His death drew very near, Jesus spoke of Himself as a corn of wheat that must die to bear fruit. Only His death could bring about the saving of sinners. From Himself, Jesus turned immediately to speaking of all people. Jesus must die; so must we. Before Jesus died physically He died to self. He left Heaven, gave up ease, comfort, and honor. He hated His life for our sake. For Him, we must hate ours to death and bury it. This planting will bear fruit of righteousness and union with Christ.

In Matthew 10:37-39 we see that sacrifice of self to Christ requires us to love Him above ourselves, relatives, or friends.

Bearing the cross is often thought of as suffering such afflictions and troubles as life brings. But sinners experience these, too, often with courage and patience. When Jesus took His Cross, He was going to voluntary death. To take up our cross is to voluntarily die to self and the world. Death is a separation. Separate from self-interests. Yield your will, lose your life, make Christ all in all. Without this death, Jesus said, we cannot be His disciples (Luke 14:27).

Death, the Way to Life

In Galatians 2:20 we see that Paul had identified himself with Christ. He was submerged in Him, crucified with Him. He drew life from Him. He ate and drank of Christ's flesh and blood (Lesson 7). Paul had died; his new life was Christ. This was a continuing experience as he formed his action by it. He said, "I die daily." We must kill the old man and stand on his grave with a sword every day.

In Colossians 3:3, writing to brethren in Christ, Paul said that they were dead. Death to sin freed them to be hid with Christ in God. Safely hidden, their lives joined with Christ's—this is eternal life begun in this world. It is certainly worth the loss of corrupt, doomed self-life.

In Romans 6:8 we accept His sacrificial death as being for us personally. Joined with Him until His death is our death; His life is our life. This is baptism into Jesus Christ, as we read in verses 3-6.

Water baptism symbolizes this. The burial in water pictures death to sinful self—the old man. Rising from the water pictures new life in Christ. The complete meaning of water baptism includes the filling with the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:2-6). Jesus' death purchased this for us (Hebrews 10:19). Complete death to self is rightly pictured only by complete immersion in water.

Wheat that refuses to die bears no fruit, has no continuing life, no communion with its Maker, no part in His work, no companionship with living grains, and no growth. What does solitary existence mean to a human soul? Jesus said that where He is, there would His servant be.

How to Die

Romans 8:13 tells us that the wrong kind of life brings death. The right kind of death brings life (Galatians 6:8). We must put to death the deeds of the body and repent of them. How can we cast out the inclinations of natural, sinful self? Through the Spirit, by yielding all to Him (Romans 6:13-16). Only by coupling our decisions and actions with His supernatural power can we do it or continue to live the Christian life.

Old Testament saints killed and burned animals in sacrifice to God. God still wants sacrifice from us, but now it is our living bodies that He desires, as we are told in Romans 12:1. His saving and cleansing power makes our bodies holy and acceptable to Him. We yield them to Him to use forever. We are given details of how they are to be used in the completion of Chapter 12.

Satan is not overcome by half measures. Revelation 12:11 tells us of

saints who loved not their lives unto the death. Having died to self they could die for Christ without fear. The victory was won not when the head dropped lifeless, but when they had laid all on the altar of Christ—life, possessions, ambitions, loves, will, and all. Repent, put faith in Christ. Lay all on His altar. The flame of the Holy Spirit will consume it and live in your heart.

Counterfeit Death

Down through history many schools of thought have tried with varied success various methods of conquering self. One is inflicted suffering. Self is to be killed, not tortured. Beds of spikes do not cleanse away sin or kill the old man. Another is rigorous abstinence. We are to deny self not deny TO self. Choosing to abstain from foods we like will not meet the offering for sin.

Another method is repression. The old man is not to be repressed, but put to death. By determined effort one can thwart many an evil impulse. This is not enough. This will only cause self to grow bigger, feeding on the pride of its own efforts and sacrifices. None of these methods are taking your cross and following Jesus.

When self is dead, one does not seek recognition or praise. He does not desire to be seen. He is not jealous of praise or favor shown to another. He does not care who receives credit for what is done, as long as the work is successful. He forgets what he does or suffers and gives Christ all the glory.

JUST A THOUGHT

**If the church aims to hit sin,
it should pull the trigger.**



LESSON 9

Except Ye Become as Little Children

Scripture Texts: Matthew 18:2-4; Isaiah 26:4; Luke 11:34; Philippians 4:8; 1 Corinthians 5:8, 14:20; Titus 1:15; James 3:17; 1 Peter 5:5

The first glance at the title of today's lesson might cause it to appear that saints are weaklings. But we shall find that to become childlike, trusting, and submissive to our Heavenly Father does not make us easy prey to unfair imposition. When children of God submit to God and put their trust in Him, they find great protection from the wicked schemes of the enemy. We need never fear what God leads us into. In today's lesson we learn what the expression "Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves" means.

MEMORY VERSE: Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

—*Matthew 18:3*

Necessity of Childlikeness

We read in Matthew 18:2-4 of being converted and becoming as little children. We must be changed because we are self-willed, self-dependent, and stiff-necked. There are many descriptive traits of a child—honest, trusting, dependent, yielding, tender, openhearted, receptive, pure, etc. But those who know children might say that none quite so adequately defines the child nature as Jesus' words—as a little child. What this nature is, God wants us to be. The Kingdom of Heaven does not open to the proud, the self-assertive, or the heart closed by sin. These must be repented of. One must humble himself.

How is a little child humble? Does he protest his unworthiness? Or resent the fact that he is beneath others? He humbly depends on another for his every need. He is open, frank, and yielding; looking to higher authority, obedient to it. Repentance breeds this childlike attitude in one. Without it one cannot be saved (Luke 18:17).

The refreshing change of the newly saved is due to the child nature springing fresh in their hearts like new growth on a plant. They are hopeful, receptive, openly honest, eager, hungry for new light and new duties. This should continue and does according to how close and obedient one keeps to the Lord.

Some Childlike Qualities We Need

TRUST (Isaiah 26:4): Trust in the Lord, not self. The world urges one to have faith in oneself. Faith in oneself cannot reach far enough. In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. Trust Him as a little child trusts his parent. Rest in Him. When a parent puts a child on a table and tells him to jump, his faith in his parent just naturally causes him to jump, trusting that his parent will catch him.

SINGLE EYE (Luke 11:34): The straight forward, steady look, singleness of purpose. A shifting eye casts about for an excuse, a change, for possible advantage over one. The single eye is settled, steadfast. It looks to Jesus and deals in truth. Truth is light.

SINCERITY, TRUTH (1 Corinthians 5:8): To have the right to partake of the Lord's Supper, one's inward spiritual state must be in accordance with the symbolic meaning of the supper. In the heart must be sincerity and truth unmixed with malice and wickedness.

NO MALICE (1 Corinthians 14:20): In malice be ye children—be ignorant of it. There is a saying, "Children and fools tell the truth." Duplicity, hypocrisy, and sly scheming have not yet entered them. They believe what they hear and speak to be believed.

GOOD THOUGHTS (Philippians 4:8): As he thinketh in his heart, so is he (Proverbs 23:7). Thought is the root of action and character. Wrong thoughts are as hidden cancer that will break out in corruption and sin. Pure thoughts blossom in righteousness. Think of the things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtue, and praise. When evil thrusts itself before us, let thoughts of it keep pure, free of the guilt. This is done when we lean upon the Holy Spirit.

PURITY (Titus 1:15): A pure heart sees things in a pure way. As mud thrown into a spring cannot contaminate it but is quickly washed away, so is impurity when thrust at a pure heart. A well of water is there springing up (John 4:14). It refuses what is contrary to it.

GENTLENESS, EASILY INTREATED (James 3:17): Could this describe a little child? A saint is easily touched, easy to talk to, and has sympathy for others. The love of God in the heart listens, feels, and is ready to consider a plea for help. A saint can be inconvenienced and not feel injured.

SUBJECTION, HUMILITY (1 Peter 5:5): All of you be subject. Saved individuals are not bossy, demanding, proud, or control-seeking. They are submissive, yielding, cooperative, humble, self-forgetful, and in honor they prefer one another. For a pattern look at Jesus—the King of kings. He was meek and lowly. He came to minister.

The child nature is planted in the heart with salvation. We must let it grow. Feed, cultivate, and develop it, refusing temptations to act otherwise. The Christian life is repression of self and expression of Christ. Why does Christ esteem singleness of eye and singleness of heart so highly?

Jesus set a little child before us as a sample of that in which He delights. Christ said to become as that little child; the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. Should not what is precious to Him be held precious by us?

He went on to show the dreadful end of those who wrong children. Discuss some of the ways children are being wronged and led astray in our land. (Read Matthew 18:6.)

JUST A THOUGHT

"No nation has ever fallen from without until it has corrupted from within."—C. W. Burpo



LESSON 10

Except Ye Have Love

Scripture Texts: 1 Corinthians 13:3; Matthew 22:37-40; John 13:34-35, 17:26; 1 John 4:7-8,18; Galatians 5:6-14; Romans 5:5; Jude 21

The word *love* is used very loosely by the world. In this lesson we will study together what this is that God calls the highest virtue, the very essence of God Himself. Is it more than attraction? Or is it care for? Does it desire the good of itself or of another? Is it given according as the receiver deserves it? Is God's love for us dependent upon what we are or upon what He is? He is no respecter of persons. He loved us and sent Christ to die while we were yet sinners. His love working in us will give us love for even the least lovely. They are the ones who need it most. His love will not promote love of self but will cause us to love others.

MEMORY VERSE: He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

—1 John 4:8

Love Is Necessary

The virtue of love is necessary for acceptance with God. It must be more than natural, human love. It must be the love of God received through the new birth and Holy Spirit baptism. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 13:3, told us that no ability, no works, or no virtue can take the place of love. No sacrifice can make up for lack of love. Love is an absolute essential of salvation, of spiritual life. Without it we are nothing, lost, and doomed for eternity. In Matthew 22:37-40 we see that to love is the great commandment of God. Therefore we cannot please Him without love. All of His rules and promises—the Law and the prophets—depend upon love. They can be accepted and obeyed as God desires only through love. We are to love God first and our neighbor second. That is, our fellow man wherever found. We cannot love our neighbor rightly until we love God most.

The only way we can love God is with our whole heart, soul, and mind. Every faculty is to be turned toward exalting Him, is to be spent in adoration of Him. His will must be our first pleasure. Love breeds joyful service. What is to measure love for our neighbor? Love for self. Everyone has a built-in measuring rod of self-love—and the further from God we are, the longer it grows. Love for self leads to a great number of other sins (2 Timothy 3:2).

When one's self-love is set right, love for others will also be right.

The love binding saints together is the mark by which the world recognizes the true church, as we read in John 13:34-35. Mere professors cannot pass the love test.

The Love Test

Has man the capacity to love as commanded? No, unsaved people do not because they cannot. There is a human love that people have naturally, but it is limited. Jesus asked His Father to give His people the love that He gave Him. This marvelous love fills the heart of a saint, as we read in John 17:26. The actual love of God cannot be imitated.

In 1 John 4:7-8 we find that God is love and love is of God. It takes more than human love to qualify one as born of God. Jesus said even publicans love those who love them (Matthew 5:46). We must love with the love of God. Human love has neither the quality nor the quantity to fill our need. We are told to love. We try, and we fail, because to love, we must be born of God, must have Him who is love. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God" (1 John 4:16). When we have love we can use love, but we cannot manufacture love.

The Working of Love

In 1 John 4:18 we read that perfect love casteth out fear. Love comes in when one is freed from sin, and born again, and it increases toward perfection as one grows in Christ. Peace reigns. Fear is cast out of the heart. Does this mean nothing can frighten us?

There are two kinds of fear. (1) Inward fear that abides, constantly, in the heart. Love casts this fear out. (2) Outward fear caused by a frightening circumstance. This fear will be lessened by the trust in God that love brings. One may still be frightened by a fierce dog or a violent storm. Such fear passes.

Galatians 5:6 says that outward forms do not increase our spirit-uality nor gain favor with God. He looks on the heart. He seeks faith, which works by love. Love nourishes faith, activates it, and opens the way for faith to work. Galatians 5:14 lets us know that all the Law is fulfilled in one word—love. How can one sin in any way against one he loves? When the love of God fills one's heart, it nourishes all other forms of righteousness. Love is composed of honesty, purity, reverence, faithfulness, etc. The love of God is not given to certain chosen ones only. It was at one time, but now,

thank God, it is for whosoever will. God's love flows out upon all. He causes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust, alike.

Finding and Keeping Love

In Romans 5:5 we find that the love of God is not ours naturally. It must be an operation of God. One first repents and puts faith in Christ. He is born of the Spirit. Love comes in. It enters all we do. God teaches us how to use it (1 Thessalonians 4:9).

Jude 21 instructs us to keep ourselves in the love of God. God puts it there, but there is a part we must do to keep it true within our lives. Obey its impulses; obey the Spirit's leadings. Keep praying, trusting God, studying and obeying the Bible. "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" (1 John 2:5).

More Than a Social Gospel

God's requirement of love is not fulfilled in the "social Gospel." This is the widespread theory that the purpose of the church is to raise the present condition of people. It seeks their social and economic good. This is not the goal Christ set. (Read Mark 16:15-16.)

Acts of charity—feeding the hungry, helping the troubled, comforting the sorrowing—do not fill the whole measure required of Christian love. The world is easily touched by these needs. They are natural, which is where the world lives. Worldly people tend to feel this is real Christianity; this is all there is to it. These acts hold a sure place in a Christian's duty, but more is required.

The purpose of the church is to supply the spiritual and eternal needs also. The love of God dictates this right along with the physical or natural needs. This love brings us glory in the Cross of Christ and in suffering for His cause.

JUST A THOUGHT

"No man works harder against his own interests than the man who works for them exclusively."



LESSON 11

Except Your Righteousness Exceed

*Scripture Texts: Isaiah 28:17; Matthew 5:20, 7:21; Romans 8:1; Philip-
pians 3:8-9; Ephesians 4:11-24; 1 John 3:2-9*

A doctrine held by those who do not believe in holiness is that all Christians sin more or less. In our lesson today we will study what the Scriptures have to say in regard to this doctrine. How much sin does God excuse? How much sin do the people of the world excuse?

The world's people have a standard by which they measure professing Christians. If they see one commit a questionable act, they are usually quick to doubt his profession. How much sin does God have power to cleanse from a person's life? What is His promise?

MEMORY VERSE: For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. —Matthew 5:20

What God Calls Righteousness

In Isaiah 28:17 we see that perfect righteousness is required. This speaks of God's sharp eye for judging. He sees clearly, closely, and accurately. We cannot lie to Him. We cannot hide, for He sees and knows all. He requires perfection (Matthew 5:48).

Jesus spoke of the scribes and the Pharisees in Matthew 5:20. The scribes were students of the Law of Moses and Old Testament Scriptures. They were better at knowing than at obeying them. The Pharisees were strict keepers of the forms of the Law. They were sticklers for the letter of doctrine. They added details (traditions) that were supposed to make observance of forms more exact. In them, outward form crowded out inward purity.

Both the scribes and the Pharisees were self-righteous and hypocritical. Both had a habit of judging and condemning others. Therefore, Jesus said our righteousness must be of better quality than that of the scribes and the Pharisees. Theirs was outward. Ours must be both outward and inward, spiritual, sincere, complete, and holy or we will miss the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 7:21).

One can say Lord, Lord, from his lips, and it avails nothing. When it comes from the heart, it means that one obeys Jesus as his Lord. Only those

who DO the will of God will enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Romans 8:1 tells us that there are some who have no condemnation. They are not guilty before God. This is a holy position. They reach it by being new creatures in Jesus Christ. They are led and taught by the Holy Spirit. They have crucified the flesh (Galatians 5:24, 6:14). This is not done in one's own human power (as the Pharisees obeyed forms). It is by the work of God in the heart.

In Philippians 3:8-9 we find that Paul had been trying to keep the Law and did (verses 4-6). This was his own righteousness, an attainment he earned by his own efforts. But when he saw God's righteousness and knew that he could have it not by working but by grace, he cast away his own as nothing to take God's by putting faith in Christ. This was righteousness of the heart, not of outward works.

By a person's own efforts, he can overcome some bad impulses and habits, but he cannot change these impulses into holy ones. If he succeeds in ordering his life after earthly standards of goodness, honesty, kindness, helpfulness, and generosity, these will never carry him into the Kingdom of Heaven. It will never serve as the wedding garment at the marriage of the Lamb. It is only righteousness that God accepts as the old song of Zion expresses: "When he shall come with trumpet sound, Oh, may I then in him be found; Dressed in his righteousness alone, Faultless to stand before the throne."

Good works have a place in a Christian's life. "They which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3:8). In other words, keep doing the works God has generated. If Heaven were to be earned, we could never do enough good works to earn an eternity of perfect joy. Jesus purchased the right and power for us to live holy. He purchased it with His own blood. He paid with His life. What remains for us to pay? The song is true that says, "Jesus paid it all, All to Him I owe."

Reaching the Standard

In Ephesians 4:11-12 we see that Christ has given the church certain leaders or servants qualified by Him to teach and lead the saints to the state God has set for them, the state of perfection. This does not mean that we can ever know all, or that we will never make a mistake. It is not human perfection, but a perfect heart that God wants, perfect in motive, in purity, in love. How perfect? Unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. No higher standard could be set. The only way one can reach it is to have Christ within. Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which

strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

Ephesians 4:24 tells us we must put off the old man of sin and put on the new man. This is the spiritual transformation that changes one from a child of the devil to a child of God. As the inward life is changed, so is the outward conduct. God's children are trustworthy, honest, true, pure, kind, helpful, and loving. Their righteousness comes from God. It is His goodness living in human lives.

In 1 John 3:2-9 John was speaking of the hope of seeing God's appearing and seeing Him as He is. He brings the plain teaching that one makes himself as pure as Jesus, and as sinless as He. This is done by being born of God—the only way to be separated from sin. This is not the work of man by himself. His part is to submit to the work of God. When God does His part, the man ceases to sin. He does not sin because the seed of God lives in his heart. It is holiness. It is the life of God and the direct opposite of sin. God and sin cannot live in the same place at the same time.

This is the righteousness God requires. He not only requires it, but He provides it. Our part is to repent, put faith in Christ, yield ourselves all to Him through obedience to His Word, and the leading of the Holy Spirit. We provide the vessel. He provides the righteousness. Can there be any doubt that righteousness is necessary for us to please God?

Present Need

In these perilous times we hear that "Times have changed" and "We must have new methods, new standards; the old are outdated." This is not true. Christianity cannot succeed with shifting standards. We do have an absolute and changeless standard of right and wrong that does not change according to circumstances. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3). "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89). Who set the standard? Where do we find it? Who will finally judge our measuring to it?

In the midst of rapidly skidding moral conditions, blasphemies, mounting crime, drugs, sexual permissiveness, rebellion against authority, neglect of the Bible, failure of the home and of the nominal church, what can we do? We must hold up before our youth a standard of righteousness that works.

JUST A THOUGHT

**"The tragedy of our day is not unanswered prayer
but unoffered prayer."**

LESSON 12

Except Ye Be Holy

Scripture Texts: Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:15-16; Romans 6:14, 8:1; 1 John 1:9; Titus 2:11-12

In the time of the Law, God commanded the high priest to wear on his forehead a golden plate bearing the words, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. Holiness is the offering God desires and requires from His people. His church is made up of holy people. God does not accept anything short of holiness. One is either holy or unholy, righteous or unrighteous.

Today we study, very briefly, Bible teachings on holiness. We may find that holiness is a deeper experience than righteousness, which we studied in Lesson 11. Most people believe in holiness. The question is, How and when and where are we made holy?

MEMORY VERSE: Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. —Hebrews 12:14

The Necessity of Holiness

Ephesians 1:4—The holiness of man has been God's plan from the first. Man with his nature, abilities, and desires was made to suit a holy life and no other. Unholy living brings pain, for it does not fit.

1 Peter 1:15-16—God's children are born of Him and must be like Him. Holiness is of such great necessity that no man shall see the Lord without it. Unholiness of the heart damns. This answers the question "Is holiness necessary?" (Hebrews 12:14).

Romans 6:14—When Jesus died as our sacrifice for sin, He broke sin's dominion over everyone who accepts His sacrifice. But He did even more than save us from our sins. He brought in a dispensation of grace in which God's life is put into men to enable them to do what they never could do in their own power. The Law commanded righteousness but gave no power to help them do it. He not only saves us, but through consecration of ourselves and setting ourselves apart for His holy use, we are given power to live holy every day.

The Possibility of Holiness

Some differ with teachers of holiness because they are really opposed to the doctrine. Ask these ones, "If it were possible to live holy, would you desire to?" Note the answer that you receive. Others differ because of misunderstanding of terms. Holiness is sinlessness, we say. Yes, but it is more. Negatively, it is sinlessness, or the absence of sin. Positively, it is the presence of godliness—of the nature of God. God is holy. Holiness is God-likeness.

God's nature in a man makes his character holy. The saint has the power of God at his disposal to enable him to have victory over sin. If we are continually conscious of this fact, we will continually depend upon God for victory over trials and temptations, which Satan is sure to send.

1 John 1:9—God meets the repentant sinner with forgiveness and cleansing from all that is contrary to God. When that is done, the man is holy.

Romans 8:1—There is a people who are not condemned—no blame, no guilt, no accusation from God. They live holy lives because they are in Christ Jesus. They are still on earth just as other people; eating, sleeping, and working as usual. But they do not walk after, that is, they do not follow the lust of the flesh. The best argument for holiness is a holy life. God requires holiness, but He provides all we need to obtain it.

The Meaning of Holiness

Titus 2:11-12—Holiness is simply being godly right here in this present world. Not in some future time, but now. Holiness is not freedom from mistakes. We all make mistakes. A godly person corrects them when possible. An oft heard remark is, "No one is perfect." No, not perfect from mistakes, but perfect regarding sin. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Some may believe that sinless living is impossible because of misunderstanding the difference between sin and mistakes.

Mistakes may bring undesirable results but never guilt. Examples: Giving wrong information while thinking it is true; having an auto accident; etc. These are mistakes not sins. Sins are done from wrong motives, knowing it is wrong with a disregard for God's will.

Holiness is not the impossibility of sinning. Anyone can turn from God and sin if he chooses. Holiness is the ability to keep from sinning, made possible by the power of God within. Our hearts can be perfectly clean, our motives perfectly pure, and the love of our hearts perfectly set upon God.

What we do may not be much, but it must be pure all through to meet God's approval. We are all weak and make many mistakes. That is why God has not left the issue depending upon our own strength, but upon HIS.

JUST A THOUGHT

**The fellow who is pulling the oars does not have
any time to rock the boat.**



LESSON 13

Except Ye Hold Steadfast

Scripture Texts: 1 Peter 5:8-10; Matthew 24:9-13; Luke 9:62; Hebrews 3:14; James 1:12; 2 Timothy 1:13-14

In our lesson today we will learn that God will have a tried people, tested and proven qualified for His purposes. He does not promise to spare us from suffering or persecution (2 Timothy 3:12). He will send a shaking time. We shall find that it is possible for a person once saved to be lost afterward and go to hell. The man not fit for the kingdom had put his hand to the plow, but looked back. Jesus said the love of many shall wax cold. We find that there are many conditional promises in our lesson Scriptures.

There is courage and strength to be gained from knowing of others' sufferings and persecutions, their successes or failures.

MEMORY VERSE: For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end. —Hebrews 3:14

The Battle

The moment we are saved, we place ourselves upon the battlefield for Christ. We declare war on Satan and his forces. First Peter 5:8-10 tells us that the devil and his servants are set for the turning back of EVERY child of God. He walketh about. In other words, he is present everywhere, ready to deceive and trip us unexpectedly. In this world we are never free from the liability of temptation. If we yield, we are lost.

There is but one defense in this spiritual battle—God. We are to *resist*, to be sober and vigilant, ever watchful. One must always beware of trusting in his own strength (1 Corinthians 10:12). Resistance must be in the faith, in the God of all grace. We must take our stand and make a start, then God will come with His strength. Keep steadfast, trust in Him, and He will make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle you. This is God's way to bring you out of the temptation stronger in Christ than before.

After reading Matthew 24:9-13, can anyone doubt that the Christian life is a battle? Some shall survive true to Christ, but *many* will be offended, turned aside, shall betray and hate one another. The love of many shall wax cold. Many will be deceived by false teachings.

Jesus said many false prophets would arise. Do we have any now? These

are not honest Christian brethren who see some points of belief differently than other brothers do. These are deliberate opposers of Jesus Christ. To follow them is to be deceived, or led into darkness. Such are any disbelievers in Christ and the Bible posing as Christian ministers who teach doctrines that will keep one from life in Christ. God's Word tells us how we can keep ourselves free and help protect others from deceptive teachings (Matthew 7:15-20; 2 Timothy 4:3-4; 2 Peter 2:1-2; and 2 John 1:7-11).

The battle is not reserved for some future time, it is happening now. Over one-third of earth's people now live under Communism, whose purpose is to stamp out Christianity. Christians there experience opposition, hardship, suffering, prison, torture, and death.

The battle is spiritual. Thus, carnal weapons will not gain us victory. The devil has many methods of turning us from Christ. One is the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches that we read of in Matthew 13:22. James 1:12 speaks of the crown of life. *Crowns* imply victory, honor, power, and authority. This is an incorruptible crown. It is for those who endure faithfully. It is eternal life in Christ Jesus.

Strength to Overcome

2 Timothy 1:13-14—These verses outline requirements for holding true to Christ. Two instructions cover it. (1) Hold fast the form of sound words. We must study, heed, love, and obey God's Word. The way we obey is through faith and love, which are by Christ Jesus. Not our own failing human striving, but by that faith and love that Jesus brings into our hearts. (2) That good thing . . . keep by the Holy Ghost. The good thing is the life received from God when He saved us.

The Holy Spirit will guide so as to keep our union with God strong. He is the greatest safeguard we have. Obey Him. "Not to the strong is the battle, Not to the swift is the race, Yet to the true and the faithful Victory is promised through grace."

JUST A THOUGHT

**"It's a lot more fun to stop adding up your troubles,
and turn to counting your blessings."**



NOTES

NOTES

**These lessons are adapted from lessons by Mary Lehmann.
Revised and published with written permission from
© Bible Paths Publications
P.O. Box 299
Keithville, LA 71047**

**This quarterly has been published by
The Church of God, God's Acres
675 N. Cedar Street
Newark, OH 43055
GodsAcres.org**

**For copies of this quarterly, contact:
The Gospel Trumpeter
Attn: Sunday School Dept.
675 N. Cedar Street
Newark, OH 43055**

**Compiled July 1988
Reprinted April 2003**