

## **BEGINNING WITH CHRIST**

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(HOW DO WE FORGIVE OURSELVES?)
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(THE BATTLE OF THE TWO SUPERPOWERS!)
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13. "I'D LIKE TO GET INVOLVED, BUT WHERE DO I START?"

## **“BEGINNING WITH CHRIST”**

Mission: ***To assist New Christians in becoming mature reproducing members of our local fellowship***

### Objectives:

1. To develop an environment of love and care
2. To build relationships with others
3. To develop in our relationship with Christ
4. To embrace the purpose of the Church, i.e., to win, grow and reproduce (The Great Commission)
5. To encourage each other in our prayer life
6. To assist in personal Bible Study
7. To grasp the basics of the Christian life (basic theology)
8. To become comfortably familiar with the Old and New Testaments
9. To form Care Groups from the BWC Discipleship track
10. To develop future Care Group leaders

# ***WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT ABOUT SPIRITUAL GROWTH?***

(Lesson 1 - Teacher's Notes)

Introduction: This class is for the benefit of young Christians - if you recently invited Christ into your life... congratulations! Welcome to the family of God!

Illustration: Compare nurturing and growth of spiritual babes with a newborn baby

## **I. WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

A. Ephesians 4:15 "Grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even  
a. Christ"

B. II Thessalonians 1:3 "Your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love  
a. of each one of you toward one another grows even greater."

C. Hebrews 6:1 "Let us press on to maturity."

D. I Peter 2:2 "Grow in respect to salvation."

E. II Peter 3:18 "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"

## **II. SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS GOD'S WILL FOR YOUR LIFE**

A. Sounds exciting, doesn't it?

B. Sadly, many Christians never mature  
1. Satisfied in being saved but never grow beyond that experience

Illustration: How sad parents would be if their child never grew up physically and never matured. (The point) how sad our heavenly Father might feel if we never grew up spiritually.

### III. WITH GOD'S HELP YOU CAN GROW SPIRITUALLY!

The Parable of "The Seed and The Sower" (Mark 4:1-20)

1. Jesus desires to teach us through the Word/Bible

a. this is God's message (love letter) to mankind

2. A closer look at the 4 types of "soil" (Discuss)

a. "the path" = hard; no penetration; non-receptive

b. "the rocky soil" = receive joyfully with zeal but short lived

1) Perhaps they rely too much on feelings; the need for an emotional "experience"

c. "among thorns" = too concerned with "worldly" things to grow spiritually

e.g. - Prestige (pursuit of wealth)

- Power (getting to the "top")

- Pleasure (do your own thing without respect to God's will for your life)

d. "good soil" = grows and produces good "fruit", beneficial to God's kingdom

3. God desires that every heart be "good soil"

- Will you let Him make the soil of your heart rich?

#### IV. How will it happen? What can I do?

##### Application:

- 1) An open/receptive attitude towards God's instructions from His Word as you hear or read it
  
- 2) A willing attitude to apply it to your life

## ***"I CAN WORSHIP GOD AT THE BEACH...CAN'T I?"***

(Lesson 2 - Teacher's Notes)

Opening Question:  
(10 min.)

**What is your favorite outside recreation activity?**

Many have said, "But I don't have to go to church to be a Christian". Yes, that's true. But going to church should be like going to the bus station. It doesn't take you to your destination (heaven), but it's a good place to meet the bus (Jesus Christ) who will take you there! Whereas attending church isn't a ticket to heaven, it should be a "training ground" in preparation for heaven! Think of the student who doesn't show up for classes; the athlete who doesn't come to practice; the soldier who is absent without leave... If our faith is strong enough to get to heaven, it should be strong enough to get us to church.

I. WHAT IS THE CHURCH ? [Make this a discussion question: What would you say... What do you think?]

A. What it is not:

1. It's not a " building " but a group of born again believers meeting for worship, fellowship, etc.  
(Look up and read Acts 2:42-47)

- a. There are local churches (fellowships) like Westgate Chapel
- b. Then there is God's "universal" church comprised of all in this world who have trusted in Jesus (see Acts 4:12)

B. What it is:

1. "Church" means "the Lord's "; the cherished possession of Jesus Christ
  - a. Jesus calls it, "My church" - Matthew 16:18 "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."
2. Metaphors that describe the church:
  - a. The body of Christ - Colossians 1:18 "And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy."
    - 1) Jesus is the head, we are the body parts  
[Illustration] just like a body the parts are important and not to remain in isolation... a finger needs the rest of the body to survive! Toe, eye, ear, etc..

- b. The bride of Christ - Revelation 19:7-8 "Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)  
(also 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:22-23)  
1) He loves her (the church); so should we
- c. The branches of Christ - Look up John 15:1-8  
1) where the fruit is produced
- d. As the building of Christ - Ephesians 2:19-22 "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit."  
1) a place where someone lives and works
- e. Sheep who need to stay together in one flock - Luke 15:4-6 "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'"
- f. Soldiers who are active in God's army - 2 Timothy 2:3 "Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus."
- g. Citizens of God's kingdom, where our citizenship is in Heaven.  
Philippians 3:20 - "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ"
- h. Priests who serve in the same temple entered into the "Holy of Holies" (the presence of God) in behalf of others. God didn't create us to live and serve Him in isolation, He desires us to care and serve one another.  
- 1 Peter 2:5 "You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

## II. WHAT KIND OF CHURCH SHOULD WE BE (ATTEND)?

- A. A Christ centered church

1. Worship focused on the Lord Jesus Christ
  2. Where Christ is not merely looked upon as a good Teacher or moral example but as the crucified Savior and living Lord
- B. A church that emphasizes the new birth in Christ
1. Where it is clear that people are made aware of the necessity of a conversion experience
- C. A church that teaches and preaches the Word of God
1. To build your faith, give you wisdom, train in godliness, and help you grow
- D. A loving church
1. John 13:35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another"
    - a) where "outsiders" easily become "insiders"
- E. A church with a sense of mission
1. "A Great Commission Church" - Matthew 28:19-20 "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
    - a) outreaching
    - b) growing
    - c) not satisfied to nurture itself without seeking to win lost people to Christ

### III. DON'T LOOK FOR THE PERFECT CHURCH

- A. There's no such thing; the church is made up of fallen, sinful, imperfect people

Caring Time: From our study today, it is easy to see that God desires for us to come together not only for worship, but also to care for one another. It is a privilege we have and it's by God's design. One way we care for one another is to pray for others.

Today, how can we care and be of help to one another through prayer?



## ***"LORD, TEACH ME TO PRAY"***

(Lesson 3 - Teacher's Notes)

Introduction: [Generally speaking, when you are involved in a conversation, do you tend to do more of the talking or more of the listening? Are you realizing some struggles with praying? What are they?]

In this lesson we will be talking about what prayer is, why it is necessary, and some of the conditions and suggestions for praying.

### I. THE NATURE OF PRAYER - COMMUNICATION

- A. First, God speaks to man through His Word
- B. Second, man responds to God in prayer

### II. HOW DID JESUS PRAY? SOME CLASSIC EXAMPLES.

- A. Early in the morning - Mark 1:35 "Very early in the morning, While it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed."
- B. For extended periods of time - Luke 6:12 "One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God."
- C. At a time of great decision - Luke 6:13 "When morning came, he called his disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles."
- D. Luke 11:1-4 - His model prayer
  - 1. "A-C-T-S"
    - a. A - adoration
    - b. C - confession
    - c. T - thanksgiving
    - d. S - supplication
- F. Hebrews 7:25 - and He's still praying!

### III. WHAT KINDS OF THINGS SHOULD I PRAY ABOUT?

- A. Hebrews 4:16 - the need for prayer "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

1. Philippians 4:6,7 - to combat anxiety
2. James 1:5 - to obtain wisdom
3. Romans 10:1 - to see people we love saved
4. James 5:14 - to see Christians who are sick healed
5. Colossians 4:12 - to discover God's will for our lives
6. Matthew 9:37,38 - to raise up workers for God
7. Matthew 17:20,21 - to meet many other situations which Christ likens unto "mountains"

#### IV. WHY DOES IT SEEM THAT MY PRAYERS ARE "BOUNCING OFF THE CEILING"? ARE THERE SOME CONDITIONS REGARDING PRAYER?

- A. A right relationship with God - Psalm 66:18
- B. A right relationship with others - Matthew 5:23,24
- C. Pray as specifically as you can about a situation - Philippians 4:6
- D. Claim the promises of God for you personally  
 Illustration: Like cashing a check at the bank that is written to you and also endorsed by you (you claim it... it's for you; it's yours)  
 e.g. - James 1:5-8 "wisdom"
- E. Praying unselfishly - for others (intercession)
  - those who do not know Christ
  - pastors, spiritual leaders
  - missionaries
  - government leaders
  - sick, elderly, shut-ins
  - those with special needs; jobs, school, death, divorce, etc.
  - even our enemies (Luke 23:24)
- F. Live in an attitude of prayer
  1. "practicing the presence of Christ" ; living in the spirit of prayer
  2. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 - "pray without ceasing"
  3. God wants us to support everything with a spirit of prayer that allows Him to influence and control our thoughts, words, and actions
- G. Praying in faith that God will answer - James 1:6,7  
 [Illustration] A woman prayed for \$337.00 to pay her utility bill... soon the mailman delivered a check from the IRS for exactly that amount... the lady lifted her eyes toward heaven and prayed, "Lord, remember that prayer request I made for \$337.00? Well, never mind. Someone else provided it!"

She didn't expect God to answer and when the answer came she was blind to it!

H. Asking according to God's will - James 4:3

I. Sometimes the answer is "no"

1. Luke 22:42 (Jesus asking the Father to forego his suffering)
2. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (Paul requesting that the painful "thorn in the flesh" be removed)
3. We need to pray in submission to God's will; acceptance without bitterness

V. ANY PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS ON PRAYER?

- A. You learn to pray by praying
- B. Pray about little things as well as big
- C. Develop a prayer and answers list
- D. Make it a regular part of your life if it already isn't

**"CAN I BE SURE OF MY SALVATION?"**  
**FACTS OR FEELINGS?**  
(Lesson 4 - Teacher's Notes)

*Introduction:* [Opening Question: What is a promise that either you have made or someone made to you that "fell through"? Discuss: What is a promise?]

*Illustration:* A woman was sick in the hospital with cancer. A pastor went to visit her and realized that she was a Christian but lacked the assurance that she would go to heaven when she died. The lady had chosen to trust in Christ for her salvation and had invited Him into her life but she had no peace in her heart.

Christians who aren't certain of their relationship with Christ aren't going to have fullness of joy nor are they prepared to freely and fully serve the Lord. We should not be satisfied until we know, without a doubt, we're children of God on the way to heaven.

*[Get responses to the 2 diagnostic questions 1) Do you know for sure you will go to be with God in heaven? 2) If God asked you, "Why should I let you into my heaven, what would you say? (use 3X5 cards and collect them). Then share the Gospel and give opportunity for people to silently pray to accept Christ as you lead in prayer. Do follow-up visits in the near future with those who had answers on their cards that indicate they don't have assurance of their salvation.]*

I. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

A. Revelation 3:20 (a promise of God) "Behold, I stand at the door and knock [think of that as the door of your heart] ; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him and he with Me."

1. He promised to come in

B. I John 5:11-13 "And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son does not have the life."

1. People who have Jesus living in them possess eternal life

C. I John 5: 13 [Look up] "These things are written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God in order that you may know that you have eternal life."

1. Note the present tense; our heavenly father wants you to know that you **HAVE** eternal life!

2. It doesn't say, "hope, think, wish, suppose, or dream"

D. John 6:47 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life."

1. There's no "wishing" or "hoping" here. We have it! Our Lord's word's couldn't be any clearer!

## II. WHAT ABOUT THOSE TIMES WHEN I DON'T FEEL LIKE A CHRISTIAN?

A. It doesn't change a thing regarding our destiny. It's not our feelings that settle the issue but rather the facts of God's Word.

Illustration: of a train to show the proper place of feelings [have students draw a picture of a train comprised of an engine, coal car, and a caboose]

"engine" = faith which is inspired or fuel by

"coal car" = facts (or promises) of God's Word

"caboose" = feelings

\* faith should not be based on feelings but on the Word of God

\* move ahead in faith based on the promises of God and the feelings will follow

"So faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God"  
Romans 10:17

## III. SO WHAT IS THE TRUE NATURE OF "SAVING FAITH"?

A. It's not just a "head knowledge" that Jesus existed

Illustration: Suppose I ask a man, "Do you believe in communism?" If he answers "yes", that could imply one of two things.

1) He might mean that he believes communism exists, or

2) He might mean that he is a communist

What an enormous difference! You know communism exists but that doesn't mean you are one!

1) Faith or believing the truth that God exists or that Jesus lived and died doesn't make a person a Christian

a) even the demons believe!

"You believe in God, you do well, even the demons believe and shudder." James 2:19

b) they certainly aren't going to heaven because they neither love Him or are dedicated to Him

B. To believe or trust in Christ is to love Him and place our whole life into His care; it's an act of the will

Illustration: EE "chair illustration" = resting in Christ

1. And, our response to God should be one of love and *gratitude* for what Christ has done for us

Illustration: a President of Princeton who said, "When I realized what Christ had done for me, the rest of my life was like a 'PS' saying 'thank you' for what You did for me!"

Conclusion: If you are trusting in Christ as your personal Savior, and if this faith results in a sincere love for Him and commitment to Him, then our heavenly Father wants you to know that you are His child. And if you should die today, you would go to be with Him in heaven.

If this is the case for you, go in the joy of the assurance of your eternal destiny!

If not, it can be by simply praying from the sincerity of your heart, asking Jesus to come into your life to forgive you for your sins and trusting or yielding your life into His care.

Assurance verses:

John 3:16  
John 10:27-30  
Galatians 5:1-5  
I Corinthians 3:10-15  
Acts 4:12  
Romans 1:16

# **"WHEN DOES GOD GET EVEN?" (HOW DO WE FORGIVE OURSELVES?)**

(Lesson 5 - Teacher's Notes)

Introduction: [Thinking back to your childhood, think of a time when you were "let off the hook" for something you did ... when you really deserved to be punished... Who let you off... How did you feel towards that person?]

Many times new Christians are troubled by their pasts and carry a burdensome baggage of guilt in their hearts.

[Illustration] A woman was grateful for God's pardon but still felt troubled by her past. She confessed to living with several men in her past outside of marriage. She was pregnant twice and aborted both babies. She said to the pastor, "I know I'm forgiven, but I'm also afraid that one of these days God is going to get even!"

That fear will surely stunt one's growth. The purpose of this lesson is to help lift the burden of guilt off one's heart; to help a person have a clear conscience.

## **I. GOD GETS EVEN AT THE CROSS**

A. Because our heavenly Father is just, He must punish sin

1. He does not say, "I'll just forget all about your sin. Or, I'll ignore the whole thing and pretend it didn't happen."
  - a. That would be mercy, but not justice.
  - b. So sin must be punished

B. But God's law was satisfied when Jesus died on the Cross

1. If Christ died for us, for the penalty of our sins, would it be just (or unjust) for God to punish the same crime or sin twice?
2. No, it would be unfair for the Judge of the universe to punish us a second time.
3. Romans 8:1 [Look up] "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."
  - a. If you're in Christ, God won't condemn you, because He already punished Jesus in your place.

[Illustration] Think of an old-fashioned shower with a bucket of water above it. A man gets into the shower and pulls the rope. The bucket turns over, spilling all its water on him. Now a second man

steps into that same shower and pulls the rope. But he remains perfectly dry, because the water has already been poured out! Jesus is the first man, God poured out His wrath on Him for our sin. Since by faith we stand in Jesus, there's no wrath left over for us. There is no need to fear that God will get even for He did that 2000 years ago at Calvary!

## II. WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

- A. Psalm 103:12 "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us"
- B. Isaiah 43:25 "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins"
- C. Micah 7:19 "He will tread our iniquities underfoot. Yes, You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea"
- D. John 1:29 "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

[Illustration/joke] You heard about the husband who asked his wife why she kept reminding him of a certain sin he had committed years ago. "You promised to forgive and forget that," he complained. She said, "I have forgiven and forgotten, but I don't want you to forget that I've forgiven and forgotten!"

[the devil is like this wife reminding you... ]

God got even all right - at the Cross. Then He forgives and forgets!

## III. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONDEMNATION AND DISCIPLINE

- A. Think of discipline as correction not condemnation
  - 1. Discipline is given in love (Hebrews 12:6) "because the Lord disciplines those He loves"
  - 2. Condemnation is the outbreak of wrath and is reserved for unrepentant rebels



B. Discipline proves we're forgiven children of God

1. Hebrews 12:7-8 "Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons."

C. God disciplines us for our good that we may share His holiness

(Hebrews 12:9-10 "Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it, How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness."

D. Condemnation has no redeeming value

[Illustration: it would be like sending a child who had told a lie to the electric chair. Rather we choose to discipline them by "sending them to their room, etc.]

Application: Forgiving yourself

A. How? By looking to the Cross

1. Understand that your unwillingness to let yourself off the hook is another sin for which Christ died.
2. Take it to the Cross and leave it there.
3. Accept God's pardoning love.

B. Memorize Romans 8:1

Conclusion: To grow spiritually you must know that God got even with you two thousand years ago, when His Son Jesus was punished in your place. He unleashed all His wrath on Him. Since your faith is in Christ, there is no condemnation - no punishment - waiting for you (Romans 8:1). Your conscience can and should be free from guilt.

# **"WHY DO I FEEL LIKE A WALKING CIVIL WAR? (THE BATTLE OF THE TWO SUPERPOWERS!)"**

(Lesson 6 - Teacher's Notes)

Introduction:

*Tell us about a "fight" you had as a child - who won?*

*Or*

*What was something you struggled with as a child?*

Jim, a new Christian, came to discover as he was reading his Bible that he was involved in a battle - a spiritual warfare! He confessed to thinking that being a Christian should be more like a walk in the park than a battle.

Many new Christians make this discovery soon after becoming a Christian as they struggle with decisions and conflicts of lifestyle.

The purpose of this lesson is to help you understand that you now have two natures. Yes, God has given you new life in Christ, yet the old nature does not want to surrender. It will constantly try to divert you from fellowship with Christ.

## **I. GOD'S GIFT TO YOU - A NEW NATURE**

### **A. The source of the new nature - Holy Spirit**

1. 1 Corinthians 6:19 "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?"
2. John 14:16-17 [look up] "... He lives with you will be in you."

### **B. The role of the Holy Spirit (new nature)**

1. John 14:26 [Look Up] "... will teach you..."

## **II. THE CONFLICT**

### **A. Galatians 5:17 (Living Bible)**

"For we naturally love to do evil things that are just the opposite from the things that the Holy Spirit tells us to do; and the good things we want to do when the Spirit has His way with us are just the opposite of our natural desire. These two forces within us are constantly fighting each other to win control over us, and our wishes are never free from their pressures."

(pair up with another person and answer)

*Galatians 5:16-26*

*What do you think:*

- *what 2 things would you say are "in conflict"? (v.17)*
- *if we were "made alive" by the Spirit, why do you think we still struggle with sin?*
- *how would you say a person can be "led" by the Holy Spirit?*
- *does Paul seem to be declaring wrong:*
  - a) everyone who sins*
  - b) those whose sin is part of their lifestyle*
  - c) both*

## B. The Christian is pulled in two directions

1. by the old nature towards sinfulness
2. by the divine nature God has implanted in you towards holiness

[Illustration] Suppose someone hurts your feelings. Something inside you says, "You should never forgive him for what he did!" That's the old nature talking. At this point your Christian nature interrupts, "I'm not going to let you feel comfortable with that attitude! God could have taken revenge against you for all your sins against Him, but He pardoned you instead, Now it's your turn to forgive." And thus the Christian is pulled in two directions - sinfulness and holiness.

(It would be good to use a personal illustration at this point)

4. A missionary explained the conflict as, "two dogs fighting inside your heart, a good dog and a bad dog." When he was asked by a new believer, "Which dog wins?" The missionary thought for a moment and said "The one you feed the most"

## III. WHICH NATURE ARE YOU FEEDING THE MOST?

### A. The old nature that hungers after sin

(turn to another person and answer) *What are some ways that feed the old nature?*

1. watching unwholesome movies, television programs
2. reading lustful books and magazines
3. seeking to be "in" with the wrong crowd, etc.

B. The new nature that Christ gives you that desires for holiness

(turn to another person and answer) *What are some ways to feed the new nature?*

1. investing time in the Word of God
2. prayer
3. worship
4. Christian fellowship
5. Christian literature, etc.

C. Which of the two alternatives sounds more attractive to you?  
What might your response reveal?

IV. THE SINFUL NATURE IS NO LONGER OUR MASTER, BUT IT IS STILL  
OUR ENEMY !

A. The old nature is dead to sin's domination

1. Romans 6:6 " know (reckon or acknowledge) that our old self was crucified with Christ so that the body of sin might be rendered (cause to become) powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin."
2. Romans 6:11 "...count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

B. Don't be discouraged when the battle rages inside you

1. Quote of Charles Spurgeon (great 19th-century London preacher) "I have a daily fighting of my better self against the old self, the newborn nature against the old nature, which will, if it can, still keep its hold upon me."

C. Don't give up!

[Illustration] a Christian is like a water faucet that continues to drip cold water. No matter how hard you turn that "cold" nozzle to the off position, you can't stop the flow of the cold water. But by turning the "hot" nozzle to the on position, you can send out a stream of hot water that dominates the cold. That hot water is like the power of our Christian nature. If we give it full play, it can win the victory over the unending trickle of sin and self.

Application:

- feed the new nature and starve the old
- soak your mind and heart in God's Word
- cultivate fellowship and friendships with other Christians
- avoid places, people, and things that will interfere with your spiritual walk

*What steps might God have you take this week to "feed the new nature", i.e., to be "led by the Spirit" more?*

**"WHAT DO YOU MEAN...  
FIFTEEN MINUTES A DAY WILL CHANGE MY LIFE?"**  
(Lesson 7 - Teacher's Notes)

Opening Question:

**What surgery have you experienced personally?  
(or someone near to you)**  
**or**  
**Who was the best teacher you ever had?**  
**What did you most like about him/her?**

We've talked about how the Holy Spirit has come to guide and teach us, i.e., give us instruction on how to live life!

I have found many people who come to me for counseling from a Biblical perspective...that's OK but many their questions could have easily been answered if they had only spent some of their own time in God's Word! I promise them that if they just committed some time each day for the study of Scripture, God will change their lives! (And eliminate a lot of personal pastoral counseling.) Yes, the Holy Spirit has been given to us to give us guidance, but the Bible is the instruction manual He draws from to give us direction.

**I. WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS**

A) 2 Timothy 3:16-17 [Look Up] - "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

<b>In groups of 3</b>	<b>II Timothy 3:16-17</b>
<b>In 3 minutes list how many things you learn about the Bible from these verses:</b>	
-	-
-	-
-	-

- 1) The Holy Spirit is the author
- 2) Man is the instrument used by the HS to write...
  - a) 2 Peter 1:21 "Men (35 over 1500 years) moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."
- 3) Therefore the Bible is the Word of God

B) Hebrews 4:12 "For the Word of God is living and active, and sharper

than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (It's alive! It's active!"

C) Titus 1:1 "... the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness..."

D) 2 Timothy 2:15 "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling correctly the Word God."

1) Believers are instructed by God to study the Scriptures

## II. WILL "A CHAPTER A DAY KEEP THE DEVIL AWAY?" (Make this a brief discussion question. Ask "What do you think?")

A) Not a "lucky charm"; it doesn't exempt us from difficulties; temptation will not cease

1) Illustration: Testimony of a new Christian who was going through some very trying times which even caused Him to ask God, "Why me, Lord?" He picked up his "Daily Bread" which directed him to Isaiah 53 and after reading about the suffering Christ went through, he didn't feel so bad!

a) God was speaking to this new Christian to comfort him

b) As we regularly listen to the voice of our Lord through the Scriptures, we will gain wisdom and strength to deal with life's problems and even be joyful in the midst of them!

## III. WHEN WILL I FIND THE TIME TO READ THE BIBLE?

A) You'll never find the time; you'll have to make time.

1) sign on a secretaries desk: "You always have time for what you put first." Is getting into the Bible on a daily basis your number-one priority?

B) [Take a calculator to class or have students round off and divide to calculate how much you would have to read each day to get through the New Testament in a year. The whole Bible?]

- divide the # of pages by 365

- approx. how long would it take to read those portions?

- just think how much you could cover in 5/10 yrs.!

Consider your schedule, what would be a reasonable maximum goal for you to read each week? \_\_\_\_\_

A minimum goal? \_\_\_\_\_

(Teacher: You will want to help students be as realistic as possible at this point so they don't get set up for defeat)

#### IV. BUT I HAVE SUCH TROUBLE REMEMBERING WHAT I'VE READ?

A) Illustration: A man wanted to fill a tank with water. He turned on a faucet, filled up his bucket, and carried it over to the tank. He made many trips back and forth. But there was one problem - his bucket had holes in it. By the time he walked over to the tank, all the water had leaked out. That's how some of us feel when we read the Bible - it all leaks out!  
BUT the work wasn't a total waste. At least he had a *clean bucket!*

So even if some facts leak out of your memory while reading Scripture, at least you're going to have your mind, heart, and life continually cleansed! And no doubt, over the course of time, the "bucket" will have fewer holes in it.

- 1) Look up and highlight (underline, circle) Ephesians 5:26 speaks of the cleansing work of the Scriptures to those who consult it

#### V. SOME TIPS ON READING THE BIBLE

- A) Get the big picture; don't struggle with the details at this point
- B) Be systematic; try to read daily and through the NT
- C) Pray first Psalm 119:18 [Look Up]
- D) As you read, answer 3 simple questions:
  - 1) What does the passage say? (main facts, key verses)
  - 2) What does it mean to me personally? (how does it apply to you or how is God speaking to you)
  - 3) What am I specifically going to do as a result of this truth? (applying it in your life)
- E) Close in prayer
- F) The goal is to hear God speak to you personally (It might help to pretend that Jesus is reading to you) - "You go through the Bible so that the Bible goes through you"
  - What do you learn, or what are you reminded of about God?
  - What do you learn about yourself?

G) Mastering the Scripture (memorization) isn't nearly as important as allowing the Scripture to master you

Conclusion: God desires to speak to you personally through His Word. A daily discipline of Bible reading will put you in touch with the living Christ and change your life. This can make the difference in spiritual victory or defeat, fulfillment or frustration, joy or weariness. While reading the Scriptures claim God's promises, seek to obey His revealed will, and take seriously His warnings against sin and you will find wisdom for living in 'God's love letter' to you!

Caring Time:

**What would be a reasonable way to pray for you this week:**

- A) That God would give me a desire to read the Bible**
- B) That God would help me make Bible reading a higher priority**
- C) That God would help me find the time to read the Bible**
- D) That God would become more personal as I read the Bible this week**

How else might we help each other through prayer today?



# **"I'VE TRIED TO LIVE FOR CHRIST - BUT IT DIDN'T WORK!"**

(Lesson 8 - Teacher's Notes)

Introduction:

**As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?  
or  
What plant best describes you now: Towering Oak?  
Weeping Willow? Tumbleweed? Crab Apple Tree?  
Explain.**

All too often, in talking with new Christians, we hear confessions that go like this, "Yes, I've received Christ as my Savior but nothing ever came of it. I tried to live *for* Christ, but it didn't work."

Whenever one utters these words, you know that they are living in spiritual defeat. This causes great frustration for there is *only one person who can live as a Christian should - that is, Jesus*. In this lesson we will see that honoring God with our lives is to let Christ - who has come to live in you - live *through* you.

## **I. WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS**

- A. Philippians 4:13 The apostle Paul wrote, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."
- B. Hebrews 13:20-21 it is "the God of peace" who is "working in us that which is pleasing in His sight."
- C. Ephesians 3:20 teaches that God "is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us."

## **II. THE FULFILLING CHRISTIAN LIFE ISN'T A MATTER OF BRUTE DETERMINATION! IT'S A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST LIVING IN AND THROUGH YOU.**

- A. If you've been trying your best to live for Christ - forget it - only Christ can please the heavenly Father.
- B. [Look Up & Read John 15:1-17] John 15:4-5,11 speaks of a relationship that will bring about "fruit" and joy as we allow Christ to live through us

(Pair up with another person)

**What do you think?"**

**Who represents the "Vine"?**

**Who are the "Branches"?**

**What does Jesus command? (v. 12)**

**How much has Jesus loved you? (v. 13)**

**How's your "fruit" (love for others): Grade A-1? Juicy? Green?**

**Wormy? Why?**

**Do you feel more like Jesus' servant or his beloved friend?**

- C. [Hudson Taylor - missionary] "I used to ask God to help me. Then I asked if I might help Him. I ended up by asking Him to do His work through me."
- D. [Donald Barnhouse - Bible teacher] "It is not what you do for Christ that counts; it's what you *let* Him do through you!" (use a personal illustration)

### III. SO WHAT'S OUR "JOB"?

- A. To quit trying to live for Jesus and simply become a channel through which He can live His own life
- B. Galatians 2:20 Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me"
1. Stop trying to "imitate" Christ (or simply following a book of "do's and don'ts")
  2. Yield to your "friend", the indwelling Christ that He might live His life and love through us
  3. Look up Revelation 3:20

(Pair up with another person)  
**think?"**

Rev. 3:20

**"What do you**

**Who was the last person(s) you invited over for dinner?**

**What does God mean by "I will come in and eat with him, and he with me"?**

**How far off or close is God in your life: Outer Space? Next door?**

**Knocking at my door? Had lunch with Him today!!**

#### IV. WHAT ABOUT THE COMMANDS OF THE BIBLE AND CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE?

- A. "strive, wrestle, train, make every effort, be disciplined" (e.g. reading Bible, prayer, etc.)
1. These speak of our attitude of yieldness to the spirit of God which allows us to respond to His leadings (the Bible helps us to understand who is the Christ that lives within - a primary means in developing our relationship with Christ)
  2. Labor for the Lord - but in His strength
  3. [Illustration] Suppose you have a serious illness. Your doctor prescribes some pills for you and says, "Be sure to take these every four hours. If you do, you'll get well." You don't want to remain ill, so you discipline yourself to follow his orders. You live on schedule of taking the pills every four hours around the clock. You even get up at midnight and four in the morning. And sure enough, you get well. Now then, what was the power that brought about your healing? Was it your personal discipline? No, it was the medicine! And so it is in our Christian lives. God commands us to be disciplined. But it's not our practice of discipline that brings spiritual growth. It's the power of the indwelling Christ.

#### V. UNLEASHING GOD'S POWER IN YOUR LIFE - SURRENDER

- A. Make this commitment in prayer:
- "Lord Jesus, I surrender the control of my body over to You. I want You to look through my eyes. From now on You will think through my mind. My ears will now be Your ears. Use my tongue as Your mouthpiece. Here are my hands. Reach out to other people by means of them. And I ask You to love through my heart. May it be Your feelings and emotions that motivate me."*
- B. Remember the "old nature" doesn't like to give in that easily that's why Jesus said that His followers must "take up their crosses daily" Luke 9:23 (Make a conscious commitment each day to be a channel through which Jesus can bear His own fruit of holiness and love)
- C. Ask, "Lord, what would You desire to do through me in this situation?" Then let Him live out through you.

Conclusion:

**What situations in your life could you use Gods' insight and wisdom**

**this week?**

**In what way could you use Christ to live through you this week?**

# **"WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TEMPTATION AND SIN?"**

(Lesson 9 - Teacher's Notes)

Opening Question:

Has anyone mistaken you for someone else or said you look like some "famous" person? Who?

or

If you were on a diet, what food would be your greatest temptation?

Introduction: We all have known twins in our lives. Many of them look and even act very much alike. Temptation and sin are a lot alike, often masquerading as twins, but there is quite a lot of difference between them. A lack of understanding between the two has caused a lack of spiritual growth in many Christians.

In this chapter we will look at four distinctions between temptation and sin.

## I. TEMPTATION IS A SUGGESTION; SIN IS A YIELDING TO THE SUGGESTION

A. True or False? What do you think? Temptation takes place in our minds while sin takes place in our actions? [False]

- 1) not always; we can sin in our thought lives without lifting a finger
- 2) both the suggestion and the yielding to the suggestion can take place in our minds

[Illustration] You're sitting at a red light. A man who recently humiliated you in public walks across the street. The thought to step on the gas and run over him flashes through your mind. That's temptation! It's a suggestion.

Now you don't want to be a murderer so you resist the urge to kill him. You may even smile and nod at him as he walks by but in your heart and mind you're mowing him down with your car! And enjoying every bit of your fantasy! Now that's sin! You haven't done a thing outwardly but you've done plenty inwardly. All in your thought life. And that's enough to make you guilty in God's eyes. We must be aware that the Devil seeks to take advantage of our weaknesses.

3) Matthew 5:22a Jesus said, "But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother (without cause) will be subject judgment."

4) Matthew 5:28 "... anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

- a. it's not just the outward act that God looks at, He judges the heart

B) To avoid sinning in this situation you have to say " no " to the suggestion. (Apply to the previous illustration)

- 1) "No! I won't indulge in vengeful thoughts."
- 2) Christ forgave me my sins; now I need to be willing to forgive.
- 3) Seek to get your mind on another "track", perhaps praying or reciting Scripture
- 4) It's not easy! But sin can be avoided--God's Promise to you!
  - a. 1 Corinthians 10:13 "God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."

## II. TEMPTATION DOESN'T INVOLVE GUILT; SIN DOES

A) Hebrews 4:15b "but (Jesus) has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin."

- 1) Whatever temptation you might experience, our Lord has experienced it, too, yet without sin
- 2) We don't need to feel guilty just because we're tempted
  - a. becoming discouraged and losing your joy
  - e.g. - "I must be way out of fellowship with God because of all the filthy thoughts that enter my mind"
- 3) Only when we yield to temptation and sin do we incur guilt
- 4) God's solution to guilt is forgiveness; we need to confess it (Agree with God and yield to Him) and He will forgive you. I John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

## III. HOW CAN I DEAL WITH TEMPTATION?

A) A look at Christ's example (Luke 4:1-12) [Look Up and read]

Teacher: Inform the students that:

- \* In v. 3 Jesus is tempted in "Material Self-interest Possessions"
- \* In vs. 5-7 The temptation is one of "Power"
- \* In vs. 9-11 The temptation is one of "Pride & Invincibility"

*Now although Jesus was God in the flesh, let's consider how He dealt with temptation as a man walking this earth.*

**In groups of 3      Luke 4:1-12      What do you think:**

(multiple choice)

**How would you describe the power struggle going on here?**

- a. this is the classic struggle between good and evil
- b. Satan is trying to conquer Jesus when He seems weak and powerless
- c. this power struggle is no different than those we face daily
- d. Satan is trying to conquer Jesus by tempting Him on the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual levels

**When do you find yourself most vulnerable to the tempter?**

- a. when I'm tired or under stress
- b. when I'm alone or away from home
- c. when I'm not expecting it
- d. when I let my mind dwell on certain things

**What tactics does Jesus use to conquer Satan?**

- a. quote Scripture to refute claims
- b. appeal to higher authority
- c. tell Satan to "beat it"

1) Christ withstood Satan's temptations because He was filled with the Scriptures

- a. Satan backed off and tried another approach  
(We must always be on guard)
- b. the Bible is a great weapon against temptation
- c. the more familiar we become with the Bible the greater victory we can enjoy over sin
  - 1. Psalm 119:11 "I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.
  - 2. We may not be able to quote specific scriptures in resisting temptation as Jesus did but it will be most helpful to become more and more aware of what is pleasing and displeasing to God as we read the Bible

2) Christ won the victory over temptation because He was filled with the Spirit (vv.1,14)

- a. We need to submit or yield to the Holy Spirit's leading

- b. The real problem with many of us is not that we're too weak, but that we're too strong!
- 3) These same two weapons that Jesus used against temptation are available to us today
  - a. James 4:7 [Have students look up & highlight]

#### IV. ARE TEMPTATIONS NECESSARY?

- A) Another look at Christ's example
  - 1) Hebrews 2:18 "Because He Himself suffered (endured) when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted."
  - Hebrews 5:8 "Although He was a son, He learned obedience from what He suffered..."
    - a. Temptations benefited our Lord; He learned (obedience) from His temptations
- B) They help us, too, by:
  - 1) stretching our spiritual muscles
  - 2) driving us to prayer
  - 3) build compassion for others who are struggling, etc.
- C) But don't go looking for temptations, for you will encounter enough suggestions without inviting them

*Conclusion:* No one NEEDS to experience sin. It only tears down, hinders fellowship with Christ, and ruins one's testimony. Jesus Himself was tempted in every way as you are, yet He never sinned. You can experience victory over temptation, because God always provides a way of escape. Utilize the two weapons the Lord provides - the instruction of the Scriptures and the yielding to the Holy Spirit.

Caring Time:

**What 1 or 2 "shots of temptation" can you expect the Devil to fire your way this week?**

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How else can we help one another through prayer this week?

(closing prayer)

## **"DESTINATION HEAVEN - AN ENJOYABLE TRIP OR A ROUGH RIDE?"**

(Lesson 10 - Teacher's Notes)

Introduction: What was the most interesting airplane (or other mode of transportation) flight that you have ever taken?

[Story of a college freshman on first commercial airlines flight]

When asked if he cared for lunch he politely declined the meal thinking he would have to pay for it. He didn't realize that it was already included in the price of the ticket. While everyone arrived at the same destination the others had a more enjoyable trip than himself. Their stomachs were satisfied while he was hungry.

This is like two types of Christians. All believers are going to heaven but some enjoy the trip while others make it a tough ride! Does it need to be? Ours is to be an abundant life (John 10:10).

### I. THE CARNAL CHRISTIAN

A) A person who belongs to Christ but doesn't live like it

- 1) 1 Corinthians 3:1 [Look Up] "Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly (carnal) - mere infants in Christ."

- a) "brothers", "in Christ" yet worldly (carnal)

B) They are not growing spiritually

- 1) 1 Corinthians 3:2-3 [Look Up] "I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly."

- a) It's natural to be milk fed at birth

- b) but unnatural to remain an infant

C) A carnal Christian is a disappointment to Christ

- 1) v.3 "You are still worldly...Are you not acting like mere men?"

- a) Paul was saying that they were still, after many years, living like non-believers!

- b) They reduce the church's strength

D) A carnal Christian is not a victorious believer

- 1) v.3 "For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly (fleshly)?"

- a) we should be known for our love and unity; John 13:35 "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."



E) Some symptoms:

- 1) little or no prayer life
- 2) not reading the Bible
- 3) perhaps worrying about problems rather than trusting the Lord to solve them, etc.

## II. THE SPIRITUAL CHRISTIAN

A) Seeks to see things from God's point of view

- 1) 1 Corinthians 2:15-16 "The spiritual man makes judgments (appraises things)" ... as if with "the mind of Christ"
- 2) Instead of getting bitter towards God when trials come, they take comfort in the fact that "God works all things together for His good". (Romans 8:28)
  - a) They understand that the Lord is shaping them into the image of Christ

B) Servants of Christ (1 Corinthians 4:1) [Look Up]

- 1) "entrusted" with the things (truth) of God
- 2) [Read 2 Corinthians 5:15-21]

C) Their character is evidenced by the increasing "fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22-23) [Look Up]

- 1) [compare the sinful nature to the fruit of the Spirit - Gal. 5:16,19-21 & 22-23]

D) The spiritual Christian is led by and filled with the Holy Spirit

- 1) Ephesians 5:18 "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit."
  - a) "filled" = when someone is under the Holy Spirit's control
  - b) like being "under the influence" of alcohol
- 2) It's not as if we need more of the HS because we received all there is of Him when we trusted Christ as Savior. But often He doesn't possess all there is of us. (You have all of Him, but does He have all of you?)

[Illustration] - Think of a glove and a hand. The glove is lifeless by itself. But when the hand fills it, the glove can do great things! Now what if the glove is filled with paper? There's no room for the hand. And, as a result, the glove can't fulfill its purpose.

You are the glove and the Holy Spirit is the hand. God created you to be filled with His Spirit that you might bear the "fruit" of His Spirit, living life more abundantly (John 10:10). A Christian who makes a difference that will last throughout eternity.

Conclusion: All Christians are not the same. There are two kinds - the carnal and the spiritual. Both belong to Christ. But there is an enormous difference in their life-styles. The carnal Christian is under the control of his old, sinful nature, while the spiritual Christian lives under the control of the Holy Spirit.

Memorize: Galatians 5:22-23

## **"LORD, DO I REALLY NEED TO BE BAPTIZED?"**

(Lesson 11 - Teacher's Notes)

Introduction:

Tell us about one of the most difficult things that you were asked to do in a public setting?

or

How do you react when you are asked to do something you don't want to do?

The concept of "baptism" is quite foreign to our culture. To many new Christians it comes as surprise and a challenge. In this session we will look at the Bible to see what God has said about baptism and how that might apply to you.

### I. I'VE HEARD IT SAID THAT BAPTISM IS COMMANDED BY CHRIST, IS THAT TRUE?

A. Mark 16:15,16 "He (Jesus) said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

1. also Matthew 28:19 "Go and make disciples, baptizing ..."

### II. DID JESUS EVEN MODEL BAPTISM FOR US?

A. Matthew 3:13-17 Jesus sets the example

(Pair up with another person and answer) Read Matthew 3:13-17

#### **"What do you think"**

Picture yourself watching this scene from a rowboat:

What do you see and hear?

How does this make you feel?

In what ways do you "see" God in this situation?

What might this tell you about Christ's internal spiritual experience?

B. Baptism was a common practice in those days. It was like taking an oath or pledge of allegiance

### III. BAPTISM DEFINED AND CLARIFIED

- A. In our church we consider baptism as an ordinance or divine instruction to be administered by His church as an outward, visible sign (testimony) of a believer's inner experience of God's saving grace.

(Turn to another person)

Read Acts 2:38-41

Who should be baptized? (v.41)

- B. It does not mean that we are saved by baptism
1. John 1:12 [Look Up]
  2. Luke 23:42,43 [Look Up]
    - a) The thief on the cross was saved without it
- C. It is the outer, public confession of Christ as Savior and Lord
1. Acts 2:38 - "Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"
    - a) It is the final act of the "repentance- belief-baptism" response to the Gospel
- D. It signifies our identification with Christ in His saving act, i.e., death and resurrection unto new life
1. Romans 6:3,4 - "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."
- E. It symbolizes our identification with the Church
1. 1 Corinthians 12:12,13 - "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body- -whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free - and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."
- F. It symbolizes the baptism of the Holy Spirit who comes reside in the new believer
1. Mark 1:8 - "I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit"

#### IV. HOW IS BAPTISM ADMINISTERED?

- A. The Greek word for baptism used in the New Testament is "baptizo" meaning to dip or immerse
1. As when a garment was dipped into liquid for dyeing
  2. Or the drawing of wine by dipping the cup into the bowl

[Illustration] When a red garment is dipped into bleach it comes out white. Likewise, baptism is symbolic to the sin in our lives being washed away when we trust in Christ.

- B. We see baptism by immersion depicting or "picturing" the believers identity with Christs' death on the cross, His burial, and His resurrection or victory over the power of sin. Romans 6:3,4
- C. Baptism was in the Jordan River, Mark 1:5, where there was sufficient water to immerse individuals

Have you followed the Lord in Baptism?

If not:

What steps might God have you take this week to further determine if He would have you take this public profession?  
What answers do you need; questions you have?

## ***"LORD, WHY AM I HERE?"***

(Lesson 12 - Teacher's Notes)

Introduction: [What is one of the most unbelievable events that you have witnessed? On a scale of 1-10 (1 = not too well, 10 = very well), how well do you feel you understand what your purpose in life is supposed to be?]

The Christian's purpose in life is quite specific. Some believers who call themselves The Navigators put it: "Our purpose in life is to know Christ and to make Him known."

### I. WHAT GOAL SHOULD WE SET FOR OURSELVES IN LIFE?

#### A. To Know Christ

1. Philippians 3:10 The apostle Paul said, "I want to know Christ..."

a. Paul had been a believer nearly 30 years when he said this!

b. You might be thinking that since you're a Christian you already know Christ...true, but... because Jesus is the infinite God, we human beings can never know Him fully

[Illustration] Do you know America? Maybe you have lived here for awhile... know all 50 states and capitals... even visited them. But you could spend the rest of your life exploring America's lakes, canyons, forests, caves, farmlands, rivers and mountains, etc.. The U.S. has over 250 million people, most of whom you've never met... in a very real sense, we don't know America.

c. There is always more to discover about Christ

#### B. What is the " eternal life " that Jesus gives?

1. John 17:3 "that they may know You (God/Christ)"

2. God has revealed Himself in the Bible; that means He wants to be known!

3. While we can't know the Lord completely, we can know Him well

### II. WHAT WILL BRING ME THE GREATEST JOY IN MY CHRISTIAN LIFE?

#### A. To Make Him Known

1. The privilege of introducing someone to the Lord Jesus

2. Many are not sharing their faith; they may be consistent in church attendance, prayer, Bible reading, but not making Him known

[Illustration] ... like a person who eats a lot but doesn't exercise... out of shape... need to do both. Christians need to take in but also give out... reading Bible etc. balanced with proper spiritual exercise which occurs when we share our faith, knowledge, and love of Christ with other. "The Gospel is not just something to go to church to hear, but to go from church to tell!"

B. What was Jesus' first command to His disciples?

1. Mark 1:17 "Come, follow Me, Jesus said, and I will make you fishers of men"

C. Well, what about His last command, what was it?

1. Mark 16:15 "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."

D. How about His last words before ascending into heaven?

1. Acts 1:8 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
2. When you trusted Christ and received the gift of eternal life, why didn't He immediately take you home to heaven?

E. Is it natural to want to tell others about their faith in Christ?

1. John 1:40-42 [Look Up]

F. Ok, what's it really mean to "witness"?

1. The word "witness" means to bear testimony, to give a first-hand account of an event, to declare publicly your belief. (His love, forgiveness, peace, life changing power, etc.)
  - a. Telling what Jesus has done for us and what He can do for them
2. A distinction: we are not called to be a lawyer, but a witness.
3. Also a living testimony, i.e., how we live

### III. HOW ABOUT SOME EXAMPLES FROM SCRIPTURE?

A. Even when told not to - Acts 4:18-20

B. In the face of persecution - Acts 1:1-4

C. As modeled for us by a layman, Philip - Acts 8:26-40

D. (Read the Book of Acts!)

#### IV. ANY OTHER REASONS I SHOULD BE A WILLING WITNESS?

A. There are born approximately 138,000 more lost people into the world yesterday!

1. (1 million per week, 52 million per year)
2. A line consisting of the lost people would circle the earth 30 times!

B. Why try? That seems to be a hopeless task!

[Illustration] A man was walking the beach ... where there were thousands of starfish washed up... he began tossing starfish back into the ocean. Someone came along and said, "That's a hopeless task. What good could you possibly be doing?" The first man having just thrown a starfish into the water, replied, "To that one starfish, I just did a lot of good!" ("... you are worth more than many sparrows" Luke 12:7)

#### V. LIKE MANY CHRISTIANS, I KNOW I SHOULD SHARE MY FAITH, BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW!

A. The church offers a training course on witnessing called E-vangelism E-xplosion (EE). I would invite and urge you to enroll that you might become better equipped to witness

B. Develop a "testimony"

1. "Before - how you received eternal life - After"

B. Begin praying for unsaved friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors for opportunities to witness to them

C. Develop a life-style of witnessing and discover one of the greatest joys in the Christian life



## ***"I'D LIKE TO GET INVOLVED, BUT WHERE DO I START?"***

(Lesson 13 - Teacher's Notes)

Introduction: [If there were a job or position that you could have (other than what you presently do) what would it be? Why?]

Rhetorical question: Do you want your life to count for Christ?

Jesus said that anyone who desires to follow Him must "take up his cross daily" (Luke 9:23). In the first century, the cross was used for one thing - killing people. It was an instrument of death. Jesus Himself was executed on one. Therefore, to take up your cross as a follower of Christ means you're willing to die for Him. That's commitment! Our Lord wants us to be willing to go to the limit for Him.

But what are you committing to the Lord? What do you have to offer to Him? What should I consider in becoming involved in serving the Lord?

In the New Testament, besides being called believers, brethren, saints, servants, sheep, soldiers, etc., Christians are also called "stewards". Today we will look at how we can and are responsible to) become involved in serving the Lord.

### **I. A STEWARD IS A MANAGER OF A HOUSEHOLD OR ESTATE TO WHOM IS ENTRUSTED VARIOUS GOODS TO BE USED OR INVESTED FOR THEIR OWNER'S PURPOSES AND PROFIT.**

Illustration] A hiredhand who is put in charge of taking care of the farm while the owner is away on vacation.

#### **A. The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)**

1. We have been entrusted with certain "goods" to invest for His purposes: spiritual gifts, time, and financial/material resources.

### **II. SPIRITUAL GIFTS . WOW! WHERE DO I GET THEM?**

A. I Peter 4:10,11

B. Romans 12:4-6a (7-8; ministry gifts)

C. Ephesians 4:11,12 positions to prepare God's people for works of service

D. I Corinthians 12:1-6,11 (7-10; manifestations of gifts)

E. Definition - A God-given spiritual capacity arising out of the grace of God and given for service.

F. They are given universally, "to each one" I Cor.12:7

G. Why are they given by God? "for the common good" I Cor. 12:7

H. They are given " selectively " I Cor. 12:11

### III. WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT OUR "TIME" ?

A. The importance to God (Ephesians 5:15-17)

B. The Lord's Day (Exodus 20:8-11)  
- a time set apart for God in keeping with His character

C. In general, because of God's mercy towards you (Romans 12:1,2)

### IV. WHAT ARE THE BIBLICAL INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING OUR GIVING?

A. I Corinthians 16:1,2 It should be regular, by all, and as God has prospered us.

B. What is to be our attitude in giving?  
1. II Corinthians 9:6-8 (cheerfully)

C. God's promise and the church's benefit  
1. Malachi 3:8-10 (God's blessing)

