



Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing

Bible Study Guide

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Introduction

On the Mountain Side

More than fourteen centuries before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the children of Israel gathered in the fair vale of Shechem, and from the mountains on either side the voices of the priests were heard proclaiming the blessings and the curses—“a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God: . . . and a curse, if ye will not obey.” Deuteronomy 11:27, 28. And thus the mountain from which the words of benediction were spoken came to be known as the mount of blessing. But it was not upon Gerizim that the words were spoken which have come as a benediction to a sinning and sorrowing world. Israel fell short of the high ideal which had been set before her. Another than Joshua must guide His people to the true rest of faith. No longer is Gerizim known as the mount of the Beatitudes, but that unnamed mountain beside the Lake of Gennesaret, where Jesus spoke the words of blessing to His disciples and the multitude.

Let us in imagination go back to that scene, and, as we sit with the disciples on the mountainside, enter into the thoughts and feelings that filled their hearts. Understanding what the words of Jesus meant to those who heard them, we may discern in them a new vividness and beauty, and may also gather for ourselves their deeper lessons.

When the Saviour began His ministry, the popular conception of the Messiah and His work was such as wholly unfitted the people to receive Him. The spirit of true devotion had been lost in tradition and ceremonialism, and the prophecies were interpreted at the dictate of proud, world-loving hearts. The Jews looked for the coming One, not as a Saviour from sin, but as a great prince who should bring all nations under the supremacy

of the Lion of the tribe of Judah. In vain had John the Baptist, with the heart-searching power of the ancient prophets, called them to repentance. In vain had he, beside the Jordan, pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. God was seeking to direct their minds to Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering Saviour, but they would not hear.

Had the teachers and leaders in Israel yielded to His transforming grace, Jesus would have made them His ambassadors among men. In Judea first the coming of the kingdom had been proclaimed, and the call to repentance had been given. In the act of driving out the desecrators from the temple at Jerusalem, Jesus had announced Himself as the Messiah—the One who should cleanse the soul from the defilement of sin and make His people a holy temple unto the Lord. But the Jewish leaders would not humble themselves to receive the lowly Teacher from Nazareth. At His second visit to Jerusalem He was arraigned before the Sanhedrin, and fear of the people alone prevented these dignitaries from trying to take His life. Then it was that, leaving Judea, He entered upon His ministry in Galilee.

His work there had continued some months before the Sermon on the Mount was given. The message He had proclaimed throughout the land, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17), had arrested the attention of all classes, and had still further fanned the flame of their ambitious hopes. The fame of the new Teacher had spread beyond the limits of Palestine, and, notwithstanding the attitude of the hierarchy, the feeling was widespread that this might be the hoped-for Deliverer. Great multitudes thronged the steps of Jesus, and the popular enthusiasm ran high.

The time had come for the Disciples who had been most closely associated with Christ to unite more directly in His work, that these

vast throngs might not be left uncared for, as sheep without a shepherd. Some of these disciples had joined themselves to Him at the beginning of His ministry, and nearly all the twelve had been associated together as members of the family of Jesus. Yet they also, misled by the teaching of the rabbis, shared the popular expectation of an earthly kingdom. They could not comprehend the movements of Jesus. Already they had been perplexed and troubled that He made no effort to strengthen His cause by securing the support of the priests and rabbis, that He did nothing to establish His authority as an earthly king. A great work was yet to be accomplished for these disciples before they would be prepared for the sacred trust that would be theirs when Jesus should ascend to heaven. Yet they had responded to the love of Christ, and, though slow of heart to believe, Jesus saw in them those whom He could train and discipline for His great work. And now that they had been long enough with Him to establish, in a measure, their faith in the divine character of His mission, and the people also had received evidence of His power which they could not question, the way was prepared for an avowal of the principles of His kingdom that would help them to comprehend its true nature.

Alone upon a mountain near the Sea of Galilee, Jesus had spent all night in prayer for these chosen ones. At the dawn He called them to Him, and, with words of prayer and instruction, laid His hands upon their heads in benediction, setting them apart to the gospel work. Then He repaired with them to the seaside, where in the early morning a great multitude had already begun to assemble.

Besides the usual crowd from the Galilean towns, there were great numbers from Judea, and from Jerusalem itself; from Perea, and from the half-heathen population of Decapolis; from Idumea, away to the south of Judea, and from Tyre and Sidon, the Phoeni-

cian cities on the shore of the Mediterranean. "Hearing what great things He did," they "came to hear Him, and to be healed of their diseases; and . . . power came forth from Him, and healed them all." Mark 3:8, R.V.; Luke 6:17-19, R.V.

Then, as the narrow beach did not afford even standing room within reach of His voice for all who desired to hear Him, Jesus led the way back to the mountainside. Reaching a level space that afforded a pleasant gathering place for the vast assembly, He seated Himself upon the grass, and His disciples and the multitude followed His example.

With a feeling that something more than usual might be expected, the disciples had pressed about their Master. From the events of the morning they gathered assurance that some announcement was about to be made in regard to the kingdom which, as they fondly hoped, He was soon to establish. A feeling of expectancy pervaded the multitude also, and eager faces gave evidence of the deep interest.

As they sat upon the green hillside, awaiting the words of the divine Teacher, their hearts were filled with thoughts of future glory. There were scribes and Pharisees who looked forward to the day when they should have dominion over the hated Romans and possess the riches and splendor of the world's great empire. The poor peasants and fishermen hoped to hear the assurance that their wretched hovels, the scanty food, the life of toil, and fear of want, were to be exchanged for mansions of plenty and days of ease. In place of the one coarse garment which was their covering by day and their blanket at night, they hoped that Christ would give them the rich and costly robes of their conquerors.

All hearts thrilled with the proud hope that Israel was soon to be honored before the nations as the chosen of the Lord, and Jerusalem exalted as the head of a universal kingdom.



Blessed are the Poor in Spirit - 1

This lesson is based on Matthew 5:2, 3.

(1) WHAT METHOD DID CHRIST OFTEN EMPLOY TO UNFOLD SPIRITUAL LESSONS AND THE MYSTERIES OF HEAVEN TO THE SPELLBOUND MULTITUDES?

that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: “I WILL OPEN MY MOUTH IN PARABLES; I WILL UTTER THINGS KEPT SECRET FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.” (Matthew 13:35 NKJV)

Related Texts: Mark 4:33, 34; Psalm 78:2; Romans 16:25, 26

(2) WHAT STRANGE NEW CONCEPT AND ACCOMPANYING PROMISE DID CHRIST FIRST

PRESENT THAT DAY ON THE MOUNT?

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:3 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 9:12; 10:17; Proverbs 29:23; Isaiah 57:15

As something strange and new, these words fall upon the ears of the wondering multitude. Such teaching is contrary to all they have ever heard from priest or rabbi. They see in it nothing to flatter their pride or to feed their ambitious hopes. But there is about this new Teacher a power that holds them spell-bound. The sweetness of divine love flows from His very presence as the fragrance from a flower. His words fall like “rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.” Psalm 72:6. All feel instinctively that here is One who reads the secrets of the soul, yet who comes near to them with tender compassion. Their hearts open to Him, and, as they listen, the Holy Spirit unfolds to them something of the meaning of that lesson which humanity in all ages so needs to learn.

(3) IN THE PRAYER OF THE PHARISEE, WHAT COMMENT PORTRAYED THE PREVALENT SELF-RIGHTEOUS ATTITUDES AND TEACHINGS OF THE NATIONS RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF CHRIST’S DAY?

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. (Luke 18:11 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 6:5; Isaiah 65:1-5; Ezekiel 33:31

In the days of Christ the religious leaders of the people felt that they were rich in spiritual treasure. The prayer of the Pharisee, “God, I thank Thee, that I am not as the rest of men,” expressed the feeling of his class and, to a great degree, of the whole nation.

(4) LIKE THE TAX COLLECTOR, WHAT WILL BE THE HEART-FELT PRAYER AND ACTION OF THOSE WHO SENSE AND ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR SPIRITUAL POVERTY?

And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ (Luke 18:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 7:6, 7; Psalm 51:1-3; 40:12; Ezra 9:6; Hebrews 4:16

In the throng that surrounded Jesus there were some who had a sense of their spiritual poverty. When in the miraculous draft of fishes the divine power of Christ was revealed, Peter fell at the Saviour’s feet, exclaiming, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord” (Luke 5:8); so in the multitude gathered upon the mount there were souls who, in the presence of His purity, felt that they were “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Revelation 3:17); and they longed for “the grace of God that bringeth salvation” (Titus 2:11). In these souls, Christ’s words of greeting awakened hope; they saw that their lives were under the benediction [blessing] of God.

(5) WHAT STERN WARNING DOES THIS SCRIPTURE GIVE TO THOSE WHO ARE RICH IN PRIDE AND FEEL THEIR NEED OF NOTHING?

Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall. (Proverbs 16:18 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 11:2; 16:5, 19; 17:19; 18:12; 21:4; Psalm 138:6

Jesus had presented the cup of blessing to those who felt that they were “rich, and increased with goods” (Revelation 3:17), and had need of nothing, and they had turned with scorn from the gracious gift. He who feels whole, who thinks that he is reasonably good, and is contented with his condition, does not seek to become a partaker of the grace and righteousness of Christ. Pride feels no need, and so it closes the heart against Christ and the infinite blessings He came to give. There is no room for Jesus in the heart of such a person. Those who are rich and honorable in their own eyes do not ask in faith, and receive the blessing of God. They feel that they are full, therefore they go away empty.

(6) WHAT DOES JESUS PROMISE TO THOSE WHO TURN FROM THE DECEITFUL SPIRIT OF SELF-RIGHTEOUS PRIDE AND ACCEPT HIS OFFER OF FORGIVENESS?

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit. (Psalms 32:1-2 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 1:1, 2; 40:4; Isaiah 1:18; Romans 4:6-8

Those who know that they cannot possibly save themselves, or of themselves do any righteous action, are the ones who appreciate the help that Christ can bestow. They are the poor in spirit, whom He declares to be blessed.

(7) HOW WILL THOSE WHO RECOGNIZE THEIR SPIRITUAL CONDITION VIEW THEMSELVES?

And there you shall remember your ways and all your doings with which you were defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight because of all the evils that you have committed. (Ezekiel 20:43 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ezekiel 36:31; Leviticus 26:40-42; 2 Corinthians 7:11

Whom Christ pardons, He first makes penitent, and it is the office of the Holy Spirit to convince of sin. Those whose hearts have been moved by the convicting Spirit of God see that there is nothing good in themselves. They see that all they have ever done is mingled with self and sin. Like the poor publican, they stand afar off, not daring to lift up so much as their eyes to heaven, and cry, "God, be merciful to me the sinner." Luke 18:13, R.V., margin. And they are blessed. There is forgiveness for the penitent; for Christ is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. God's promise is: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "A new heart also will I give you. . . . And I will put

My Spirit within you.” Isaiah 1:18;
Ezekiel 36:26, 27.

(8) WHILE ON THIS EARTH, HOW DO THE POOR IN SPIRIT EXPERIENCE THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

*for the kingdom of God is not eating
and drinking, but righteousness and
peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Ro-
mans 14:17 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Luke 17:20, 21; Micah
6:8; Matthew 19:14; 6:33

Of the poor in spirit Jesus says,
“Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” This
kingdom is not, as Christ’s hearers had
hoped, a temporal and earthly dominion.
Christ was opening to men the spiritual
kingdom of His love, His grace, His
righteousness. The ensign of the Mes-
siah’s reign is distinguished by the like-
ness of the Son of man. His subjects are
the poor in spirit, the meek, the perse-
cuted for righteousness’ sake. The king-
dom of heaven is theirs. Though not yet
fully accomplished, the work is begun in
them which will make them “meet to be
partakers of the inheritance of the saints
in light.” Colossians 1:12.

(9) AFTER REALIZING OUR SPIRITUAL POVERTY, HOW CAN WE FIND REST IN THE RIGH- TEOUSNESS, STRENGTH, AND RICHES OF CHRIST’S GRACE?

*Come to Me, all you who labor and are
heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
Take My yoke upon you and learn from
Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.
(Matthew 11:28-29 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Isaiah 45:22; 55:1-3; John 6:37; 7:37; Revelation 22:17

All who have a sense of their deep soul poverty, who feel that they have nothing good in themselves, may find righteousness and strength by looking unto Jesus . . . He bids you exchange your poverty for the riches of His grace. We are not worthy of God's love, but Christ, our surety, is worthy, and is abundantly able to save all who shall come unto Him. Whatever may have been your past experience, however discouraging your present circumstances, if you will come to Jesus just as you are, weak, helpless, and despairing, our compassionate Saviour will meet you a great way off, and will throw about you His arms of love and His robe of righteousness.

(10) AFTER EXCHANGING OUR SPIRITUAL POVERTY FOR HIS ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHAT DOES CHRIST JOYFULLY DO FOR US BEFORE HIS FATHER?

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, (Jude 1:24 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 41:10; 54:17; Ephesians 3:20; 5:27; John 10:29

He presents us to the Father clothed in the white raiment of His own character. He pleads before God in our behalf, saying: I have taken the sinner's place. Look not upon this wayward child, but look on Me. Does Satan plead loudly against our souls, accusing of sin, and claiming us as his prey, the blood of Christ pleads with greater power.

(11) AFTER THOSE WHO REALIZE THEY ARE POOR IN SPIRIT EXPERIENCE THE RICHES OF CHRIST'S GRACE, WHAT WILL BE THEIR TESTIMONY?

He shall say, 'Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength. To Him men shall come, And all shall be ashamed Who are incensed against Him. In the LORD all the descendants of Israel Shall be justified, and shall glory.' “ (Isaiah 45:24-25 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 61:10; 2 Corinthians 12:9, 10

As I spend time with Jesus, read His Word, and contemplate the purity of His character, I am realizing that what the world calls spiritual and the example Christ lived are not the same.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I look around today and see the same self-righteous, pride filled attitudes in many of the self proclaimed “Christians” that existed in the hearts of those in the days of Christ.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Like Peter, I see that my own condition is that of spiritual poverty. I realize I am wretched, poor, blind, and naked.

Circle: Yes Undecided

My first reaction is like Peter and to pray, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful person, O Lord.” But instead I am choosing to pray, “Lord draw yet closer to me and please remove from me the self-righteous pride. Help me not to be

like the pharisee—content with my condition. Help me to be like you.”

Circle: Yes Undecided

I pray this prayer and ask in faith for Your Spirit to continue to open my eyes to help me see, confess, and change. My desire is to receive the blessing of God's promise to the "poor in spirit" that day long ago on the Mount of Blessings.

Circle: Yes Undecided

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Blessed are Those Who Mourn - 2

This lesson is based on Matthew 5:4.

(1) WHAT WAS THE SECOND STRANGE CONCEPT AND ACCOMPANYING PROMISE PRESENTED BY CHRIST THAT DAY ON THE “MOUNT OF BLESSING?”

Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. (Matthew 5:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 30:7-11; 32:3-5; 40:1-3; Jeremiah 31:9

The mourning here brought to view is true heart sorrow for sin. Jesus says, “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.” John 12:32. And as one is drawn to behold Jesus uplifted on the cross, he discerns the sinfulness of humanity. He sees that it is sin which scourged and crucified the Lord of glo-

ry. He sees that, while he has been loved with unspeakable tenderness, his life has been a continual scene of ingratitude and rebellion. He has forsaken his best Friend and abused heaven's most precious gift. He has crucified to himself the Son of God afresh and pierced anew that bleeding and stricken heart. He is separated from God by a gulf of sin that is broad and black and deep, and he mourns in brokenness of heart.

(2) LIKE KING DAVID, WHAT WILL BE THE PRAYER OF THOSE WHO COME TO THE FOOT OF THE CROSS WITH A CONTRITE HEART MOURNING THEIR SIN?

But You, O GOD the Lord, Deal with me for Your name's sake; Because Your mercy is good, deliver me. For I am poor and needy, And my heart is wounded within me. (Psalms 109:21-22 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 69:29, 30; 51:1-15; 38:18; 40:12

Such mourning" shall be comforted." God reveals to us our guilt that we may flee to Christ, and through Him be set free from the bondage of sin, and rejoice in the liberty of the sons of God. In true contrition we may come to the foot of the cross, and there leave our burdens.

(3) WHAT DID CHRIST COME TO EARTH TO GIVE TO THOSE WHO MOURN FOR SIN?

To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise

for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.” (Isaiah 61:2-3 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 57:18; 25:8; Psalm 30:11; Jeremiah 31:13

(4) WHY DOES GOD AT TIMES ALLOW OUR CHASTENING AND THE MOURNING THAT COMES WITH THE TRIAL OF OUR FAITH?

For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. (Hebrews 12:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: Hebrews 12:11; 1 Peter 4:12, 13; Proverbs 17:3; Isaiah 48:10, 11; Jeremiah 9:7

The Saviour's words have a message of comfort to those also who are suffering affliction or bereavement. Our sorrows do not spring out of the ground. God “doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.” Lamentations 3:33. When He permits trials and afflictions, it is “for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.” . . . If received in faith, the trial that seems so bitter and hard to bear will prove a blessing. The cruel blow that blights the joys of earth will be the means of turning our eyes to heaven. How many there are who would never have known Jesus had not sorrow led them to seek comfort in Him!

(5) WHEN FIERY TRIALS COME WHAT IS BEING TESTED; AND IF WE ALLOW, WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT?

that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, (1 Peter 1:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: Job 23:10; Psalm 66:10-12; Zechariah 13:9; Malachi 3:3; Romans 5:3, 4; James 1:3, 4, 12

The trials of life are God's workmen, to remove the impurities and roughness from our character. Their hewing, squaring, and chiseling, their burnishing and polishing, is a painful process; it is hard to be pressed down to the grinding wheel. But the stone is brought forth prepared to fill its place in the heavenly temple. Upon no useless material does the Master bestow such careful, thorough work. Only His precious stones are polished after the similitude of a palace.

(6) WHEN WE KEEP OUR EYE OF FAITH FIXED ON CHRIST, WHAT ARE WE PROMISED?

You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You. (Isaiah 26:3 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 9:10; 36:7; 40:4; 59:15, 16; Nahum 1:7; Proverbs 3:5, 6; 29:25; 30:5

The Lord will work for all who put their trust in Him. Precious victories will be gained by the faithful. Precious lessons will be learned. Precious experiences will be realized.

(7) WHEN WE COME TO GOD WITH A CONTRITE HEART, AND CONSCIENCE SMITTEN WITH

SORROW FOR SIN, WHAT PROMISE MAY WE CLAIM?

The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit. (Psalms 34:18 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 51:17; Isaiah 57:15; 2 Corinthians 7:10

Our heavenly Father is never unmindful of those whom sorrow has touched. When David went up the Mount Olivet, “and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot” (2 Samuel 15:30), the Lord was looking pityingly upon him. David was clothed in sackcloth, and his conscience was scourging him. The outward signs of humiliation testified of his contrition. In tearful, heartbroken utterances he presented his case to God, and the Lord did not forsake His servant. Never was David dearer to the heart of Infinite Love than when, conscience-smitten, he fled for his life from his enemies, who had been stirred to rebellion by his own son. The Lord says, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.” Revelation 3:19. Christ lifts up the contrite heart and refines the mourning soul until it becomes His abode.

(8) WITH CHRIST ABIDING IN US, HOW WILL WE REACT TO THE TESTING OF OUR FAITH THAT COMES THROUGH TRIAL, TRIBULATION, OR HIS CHASTENING?

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. (James 1:2-3 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Corinthians 12:9, 10; Hebrews 12:1-12; Romans 5:3, 4

But when tribulation comes upon us, how many of us are like Jacob! We think it the hand of an enemy; and in the darkness we wrestle blindly until our strength is spent, and we find no comfort or deliverance. To Jacob the divine touch at break of day revealed the One with whom he had been contending—the Angel of the covenant; and, weeping and helpless, he fell upon the breast of Infinite Love, to receive the blessing for which his soul longed. We also need to learn that trials mean benefit, and not to despise the chastening of the Lord nor faint when we are rebuked of Him.

**(9) IF WE PATIENTLY AND HUM-
BLY ENDURE THE LORD’S
CHASTENING, WHAT WILL BE
THE END RESULT?**

“Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty. (Job 5:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: Job 5:17-19; Hebrews 12:5-11; Proverbs 3:11, 12; James 5:11; Revelation 3:19

“Happy is the man whom God correcteth: . . . He maketh sore, and bindeth up: He woundeth, and His hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.” . . . To every stricken one, Jesus comes with the ministry of healing. The life of bereavement, pain, and suffering may be brightened by precious revealing of His presence.

**(10) WHAT WONDERFUL PROM-
ISE MAY WE, IN FAITH, CLAIM**

WHEN IN SORROW AND GRIEF FOR SIN?

Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all. (Psalms 34:19 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 24:16; John 16:33; 2 Timothy 3:11, 12

God would not have us remain pressed down by dumb sorrow, with sore and breaking hearts. He would have us look up and behold His dear face of love. The blessed Saviour stands by many whose eyes are so blinded by tears that they do not discern Him. He longs to clasp our hands, to have us look to Him in simple faith, permitting Him to guide us. His heart is open to our griefs, our sorrows, and our trials. He has loved us with an everlasting love and with loving-kindness compassed us about. We may keep the heart stayed upon Him and meditate upon His loving-kindness all the day. He will lift the soul above the daily sorrow and perplexity, into a realm of peace.

Think of this, children of suffering and sorrow, and rejoice in hope. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4.

**(11) AFTER WE HAVE FOUND
COMFORT IN CHRIST FROM
MOURNING OUR SIN, LIKE
MOSES, FOR WHOM WILL
WE ALSO UNSELFISHLY, BY
PRAYER, INTERCEDE?**

Therefore I prayed to the LORD, and said: 'O Lord GOD, do not destroy Your people and Your inheritance whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have

brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. (Deuteronomy 9:26 NKJV)

Related Texts: Deuteronomy 9:24, 25; 2 Chronicles 30:18-20; Genesis 18:31, 32; 1 Samuel 15:11; Daniel 9:4-19

Blessed are they also who weep with Jesus in sympathy with the world's sorrow and in sorrow for its sin. In such mourning there is intermingled no thought of self. Jesus was the Man of Sorrows, enduring heart anguish such as no language can portray. His spirit was torn and bruised by the transgressions of men. He toiled with self-consuming zeal to relieve the wants and woes of humanity, and His heart was heavy with sorrow as He saw multitudes refuse to come to Him that they might have life. All who are followers of Christ will share in this experience. As they partake of His love they will enter into His travail for the saving of the lost. They share in the sufferings of Christ, and they will share also in the glory that shall be revealed. One with Him in His work, drinking with Him the cup of sorrow, they are partakers also of His joy.

(12) WHAT IS OUR PRIVILEGE AND RESPONSIBILITY TO DO AFTER WE FIND COMFORT FROM GOD AFTER MOURNING OUR SINS?

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 15:5; Isaiah 40:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:11

It was through suffering that Jesus obtained the ministry of consolation. In all the affliction of humanity He is afflicted; and “in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.” Isaiah 63:9; Hebrews 2:18. In this ministry every soul that has entered into the fellowship of His sufferings is privileged to share. “As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.” 2 Corinthians 1:5. The Lord has special grace for the mourner, and its power is to melt hearts, to win souls. His love opens a channel into the wounded and bruised soul, and becomes a healing balm to those who sorrow. “The Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort . . . comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3,4.

As I am being drawn to Jesus, I see my desperate sinfulness. I realize my life has been one of ingratitude and rebellion. I have often forsaken and abused heaven's most precious Gift and crucified the Son of God over and over again.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that at times God permits trials and afflictions for my good that my character may be molded like His and that I may become a partakers of His holiness.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I pray for wisdom and faith to accept these with an accepting spirit. I realize

that, though it is a painful process, the hewing, chiseling and polishing is shaping my character. I pray that through it my life can be a witness to others and that will bring glorify Christ.

Circle: Yes Undecided

*I plead for the power of the Holy Spirit
in my life that I may continue to see my
spiritual poverty and be comforted by
Christ and grow in Him.*

Circle: Yes Undecided

[illegible]



Blessed are the Meek - 3

This lesson is based on Matthew 5:5.

(1) WHAT WAS THE THIRD STRANGE CONCEPT AND ACCOMPANYING PROMISE PRESENTED BY CHRIST THAT DAY ON THE “MOUNT OF BLESSING?”

Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. (Matthew 5:5 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 25:9; 69:32; 147:6; 149:4; Isaiah 11:4; 29:19

Throughout the Beatitudes there is an advancing line of Christian experience. Those who have felt their need of Christ, those who have mourned because of sin and have sat with Christ in the school of affliction, will learn meekness from the divine Teacher.

(2) HOW DOES THE SCRIPTURES DESCRIBE MOSES?

Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth. (Numbers 12:3 NKJV)

Patience and gentleness under wrong were not characteristics prized by the heathen or by the Jews. The statement made by Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that he was the meekest man upon the earth, would not have been regarded by the people of his time as a commendation; it would rather have excited pity or contempt. But Jesus places meekness among the first qualifications for His kingdom. In His own life and character the divine beauty of this precious grace is revealed.

(3) HOW DOES THIS SCRIPTURE DESCRIBE THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST?

Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:29 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 22:26, 27; 2 Corinthians 10:1; Isaiah 53:2, 3

Jesus, the brightness of the Father's glory, thought "it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant." Philippians 2:6, 7. Through all the lowly experiences of life He consented to pass, walking among the children of men, not as a king, to demand homage, but as one whose mission it was to serve others. There was in His manner no taint of bigotry, no cold austerity. The world's Redeemer had a greater than angelic nature, yet united with His divine maj-

esty were meekness and humility that attracted all to Himself.

(4) HOW DID CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE, IN MEEKNESS AND HUMILITY, ALWAYS SHOW THE SURRENDER OF HIS WILL TO THE FATHER?

And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.” (John 8:29 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 14:31

Jesus emptied Himself, and in all that He did, self did not appear. He subordinated all things to the will of His Father. When His mission on earth was about to close, He could say, “I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.” John 17:4.

(5) IN THE PROCESS OF TAKING CHRIST’S YOKE UPON US, WHAT DOES HE DESIRE US TO LEARN?

Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:29 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 13:15-17; Philippians 2:3; Romans 15:1-6

And He bids us, “Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.” “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself” (Matthew 11:29; 16:24); let self be dethroned and no longer hold the supremacy of the soul.

(6) WITH HUMAN NATURE EVER STRUGGLING FOR SUPREMA-

CY, LIKE THE APOSTLE PAUL, WHAT MUST WE CHOOSE AND EXPERIENCE BEFORE WE CAN EXHIBIT THE TRUE MEEKNESS OF CHRIST IN OUR LIVES?

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 5:24; Romans 6:6; Colossians 2:13; 3:3, 4

He who beholds Christ in His self-denial, His lowliness of heart, will be constrained to say, as did Daniel, when he beheld One like the sons of men, “My comeliness was turned in me into corruption.” Daniel 10:8. The independence and self-supremacy in which we glory are seen in their true vileness as tokens of servitude to Satan.

Human nature is ever struggling for expression, ready for contest; but he who learns of Christ is emptied of self, of pride, of love of supremacy, and there is silence in the soul. Self is yielded to the disposal of the Holy Spirit. Then we are not anxious to have the highest place. We have no ambition to crowd and elbow ourselves into notice; but we feel that our highest place is at the feet of our Saviour. We look to Jesus, waiting for His hand to lead, listening for His voice to guide. The apostle Paul had this experience, and he said, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20.

(7) ONCE SELF IS CRUCIFIED AND OUR FOCUS IS ALWAYS ON CHRIST, WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT?

*You will keep him in perfect peace,
Whose mind is stayed on You, Because
he trusts in You. (Isaiah 26:3 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Philippians 4:6, 7; Psalm 85:8; John 14:27; 16:33; Romans 5:1

When we receive Christ as an abiding guest in the soul, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. The Saviour's life on earth, though lived in the midst of conflict, was a life of peace. While angry enemies were constantly pursuing Him, He said, "He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." John 8:29. No storm of human or satanic wrath could disturb the calm of that perfect communion with God. And He says to us, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest." John 14:27; Matthew 11:29. Bear with Me the yoke of service for the glory of God and the uplifting of humanity, and you will find the yoke easy and the burden light.

(8) WHAT MUST WE CONTINUALLY DO TO KEEP THE LOVE OF SELF FROM RISING AND DESTROYING OUR PEACE?

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; (1 Peter 1:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: Hebrews 12:1, 2; Isaiah 45:22; Jude 1:21; Colossians 3:2

It is the love of self that destroys our peace. While self is all alive, we stand ready continually to guard it from mortification and insult; but when we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God, we shall not take neglects or slights to heart. We shall be deaf to reproach and blind to scorn and insult. "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth." 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, R.V.

(9) WHAT COUNSEL GIVEN IN THIS VERSE, IF WISELY FOLLOWED, WILL BRING TRUE AND CONSISTENT HAPPINESS?

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Matthew 6:33 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 3:9, 10; John 6:27; 1 Kings 3:11-13

Happiness drawn from earthly sources is as changeable as varying circumstances can make it; but the peace of Christ is a constant and abiding peace. It does not depend upon any circumstances in life, on the amount of worldly goods or the number of earthly friends. Christ is the fountain of living water, and happiness drawn from Him can never fail.

(10) WHAT PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION OF MEEKNESS DESCRIBED IN THIS VERSE PROMOTES A PEACEFUL AND TRANQUIL ATMOSPHERE?

A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. (Proverbs 15:1 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 10:12

The meekness of Christ, manifested in the home, will make the inmates happy; it provokes no quarrel, gives back no angry answer, but soothes the irritated temper and diffuses a gentleness that is felt by all within its charmed circle. Wherever cherished, it makes the families of earth a part of the one great family above.

(11) INSTEAD OF VENGEANCE, HOW DO THOSE WHO ARE FILLED WITH THE MEEK SPIRIT OF CHRIST RESPOND WHEN UNJUSTLY TREATED?

Therefore “IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM; IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP COALS OF FIRE ON HIS HEAD.” (Romans 12:20 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 12:19; Proverbs 25:22; Hebrews 10:30; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:12

Far better would it be for us to suffer under false accusation than to inflict upon ourselves the torture of retaliation upon our enemies. The spirit of hatred and revenge originated with Satan, and can bring only evil to him who cherishes it.

Lowliness of heart, that meekness which is the fruit of abiding in Christ, is the true secret of blessing. “He will beautify the meek with salvation.” Psalm 149:4.

(12) WHAT AWESOME PROMISE FROM CHRIST DID KING DAVID REITERATE AND WILL BLESS THOSE WHO FOLLOW CHRIST IN MEEKNESS AND SELF-SURRENDER?

But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. (Psalms 37:11 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 25:9; 69:32; Isaiah 29:19; Zephaniah 2:3

The meek “shall inherit the earth.” It was through the desire for self-exaltation that sin entered into the world, and our first parents lost the dominion over this fair earth, their kingdom. It is through self-abnegation that Christ redeems what was lost. And He says we are to overcome as He did. Revelation 3:21. Through humility and self-surrender we may become heirs with Him when “the meek shall inherit the earth.”

The earth promised to the meek will not be like this, darkened with the shadow of death and the curse. “We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” “There shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him.” 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 22:3.

(13) TO THE FULFILLMENT OF WHAT PROMISE CAN THE MEEK LOOK FORWARD TO IN THE NEW EARTH?

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” (Revelation 21:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Revelation 7:17; Isaiah 25:8; 30:19; 35:10; 61:3

There is no disappointment, no sorrow, no sin, no one who shall say, I am sick; there are no burial trains, no mourning, no death, no partings, no broken hearts; but Jesus is there, peace is there. There “they shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them.” Isaiah 49:10.

I am so very thankful to my Lord and Saviour Jesus who choose to walk among us taking the form of man; not as a king to demand homage, but as a servant with a mission to humbly serve others.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that the love of self destroys my peace and while self is alive I stand continually to guard it from insult; but when I am dead, and my life is hid in Christ, I shall be deaf to reproach, blind to scorn, and turn away insult. Please Lord do this in me now!

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am grateful Christ taught us by word and example that true happiness comes from surrendering self-supremacy to the will of God and, in meekness, living our lives for the good of others.

Circle: Yes Undecided

My prayer is that, by God's grace, I can learn day-by-day to allow the Holy Spirit to crucify my fleshly nature. I want to allow Christ to live in me, and by faith, be conformed more into His holy likeness.

Circle: Yes Undecided

[illegible]



Blessed are they that Hunger and Thirst - 4

This lesson is based on Matthew 5:6.

(1) WHAT WAS THE FOURTH CONCEPT AND ACCOMPANYING PROMISE PRESENTED BY CHRIST THAT DAY ON THE “MOUNT OF BLESSING?”

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. (Matthew 5:6 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 1:53; John 4:14; Isaiah 49:10

(2) HOW DOES THE BIBLE DEFINE “RIGHTEOUSNESS”?

My tongue shall speak of Your word, For all Your commandments are righteousness. (Psalms 119:172 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 1:6; 10:26, 27;

Deuteronomy 6:25; Psalm 45:6; Romans 6:19

Righteousness is holiness, likeness to God, and “God is love.” 1 John 4:16. It is conformity to the law of God, for “all Thy commandments are righteousness,” and “love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:10). Righteousness is love, and love is the light and the life of God.

(3) UNLESS THE SPIRIT INTERVENES, HOW MANY NATURALLY SEEK GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS?

As it is written: “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NO, NOT ONE; THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS; THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS AFTER GOD. THEY HAVE ALL TURNED ASIDE; THEY HAVE TOGETHER BECOME UNPROFITABLE; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, NO, NOT ONE.” (Romans 3:10-12 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 3:23; Job 14:4; 15:14, 16; 25:4; Jeremiah 17:9

(4) WHAT IS THE FIRST STEP IN RECEIVING IT?

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: (John 1:12 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 45:24; 61:10; Romans 3:22; Psalm 71:16, 19

The righteousness of God is embodied in Christ. We receive righteousness by receiving Him.

(5) WHO IS THE SOURCE OF ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS?

...This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their righteousness is from Me,” Says the LORD. (Isaiah 54:17 NKJV)

Not by painful struggles or wearisome toil, not by gift or sacrifice, is righteousness obtained; but it is freely given to every soul who hungers and thirsts to receive it. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat, . . . without money and without price.” “Their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord,” and, “This is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness.” Isaiah 55:1; 54:17; Jeremiah 23:6.

(6) WHAT IS THE SECOND STEP IN EXPERIENCING THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD WITHIN US?

...the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; (Romans 3:22 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 1:17; Galatians 5:5; Philippians 3:9; Hebrews 11:7

(7) IF WE HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM?

And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. (John 6:35 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 7:37, 38; 4:13, 14; Matthew 11:28-30; Revelation 22:17

No human agent can supply that which will satisfy the hunger and thirst of the soul. But Jesus says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.” Revelation 3:20; John 6:35.

(8) HOW IS THE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS SUSTAINED IN US?

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. (John 15:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 5:8; 36:10; 37:6; 1 John 2:29; Titus 3:5; Colossians 1:23; 2:6

As we need food to sustain our physical strength, so do we need Christ, the Bread from heaven, to sustain spiritual life and impart strength to work the works of God. As the body is continually receiving the nourishment that sustains life and vigor, so the soul must be constantly communing with Christ, submitting to Him and depending wholly upon Him.

(9) WHAT IS THE RESULT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS?

In the way of righteousness is life, And in its pathway there is no death. (Proverbs 12:28 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 32:17; James 3:18; Ephesians 4:24; Psalm 32:11; Ezekiel 18:5-9

As the weary traveler seeks the spring in the desert and, finding it, quenches his burning thirst, so will the Christian thirst for and obtain the pure water of life, of which Christ is the fountain.

(10) WHO IS THE STANDARD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND OUR FAITHFUL ADVOCATE?

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. (1 John 2:1 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 11:7; 36:6, 10; 48:10; 71:15, 16, 19

As we discern the perfection of our Saviour's character we shall desire to become wholly transformed and renewed in the image of His purity. The more we know of God, the higher will be our ideal of character and the more earnest our longing to reflect His likeness. A divine element combines with the human when the soul reaches out after God and the longing heart can say, "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him."

(11) WHO GIVES US THE DESIRE FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS?

My soul, wait silently for God alone, For my expectation is from Him. (Psalms 62:5 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 26:9; 42:6; 45:13; Psalm 119:40, 144; 88:12; Hebrews 12:2

If you have a sense of need in your soul, if you hunger and thirst after righteousness, this is an evidence that Christ

has wrought upon your heart, in order that He may be sought unto to do for you, through the endowment of the Holy Spirit, those things which it is impossible for you to do for yourself. We need not seek to quench our thirst at shallow streams; for the great fountain is just above us, of whose abundant waters we may freely drink, if we will rise a little higher in the pathway of faith.

(12) AS WE SEEK THE LIVING SPRING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHO WILL BRING THE SPIRITUAL TRUTHS OF GOD'S WORD TO OUR RECOLLECTION IN OUR TIME OF NEED?

*For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”
(Luke 12:12 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Luke 21:15; Exodus 4:11, 12; Acts 6:10

The words of God are the well-springs of life. As you seek unto those living springs you will, through the Holy Spirit, be brought into communion with Christ. Familiar truths will present themselves to your mind in a new aspect, texts of Scripture will burst upon you with a new meaning as a flash of light, you will see the relation of other truths to the work of redemption, and you will know that Christ is leading you, a divine Teacher is at your side.

(13) AS WE THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, DRINK FROM THE WELL-SPRING OF LIFE, AND THEN SEEK TO SHARE IT WITH OTHERS, WHAT PRINCIPLE OF BLESSING WILL WE EXPERIENCE?

Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.” (Luke 6:38 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 58:6-9; 55:11; 32:20; 52:7; Romans 2:10

Jesus said, “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” John 4:14. As the Holy Spirit opens to you the truth you will treasure up the most precious experiences and will long to speak to others of the comforting things that have been revealed to you. When brought into association with them, you will communicate some fresh thought in regard to the character or the work of Christ. You will have some fresh revelation of His pitying love to impart to those who love Him, and to those who love Him not.

(14) IF WE ALLOW HIM, WHAT HAS CHRIST PROMISED TO DO FOR US IF WE SEEK FOR HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS?

He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake. (Psalms 23:3 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 37:5; 115:9-11; Proverbs 3:5, 6; Isaiah 26:3, 4

“Give, and it shall be given unto you” ...for the word of God is “a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams of Lebanon” (Song of Solomon 4:15). The heart that has once tasted the love of Christ, cries out continually for a deeper draft, and as you impart

you will receive in richer and more abundant measure. Every revelation of God to the soul increases the capacity to know and to love. The continual cry of the heart is, “More of Thee,” and ever the Spirit’s answer is, “Much more.” Romans 5:9,10. For our God delights to do “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.” Ephesians 3:20.

To Jesus, who emptied Himself for the salvation of lost humanity, the Holy Spirit was given without measure. So it will be given to every follower of Christ when the whole heart is surrendered for His indwelling. Our Lord Himself has given the command, “Be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18), and this command is also a promise of its fulfillment. It was the good pleasure of the Father that in Christ should “all the fullness dwell,” and “in Him ye are made full.” Colossians 1:19; 2:10.

(15) WHAT WILL BE THE TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRITUALLY POOR AND NEEDY WHO DESPERATELY SEEK TO BE COVERED BY CHRIST’S ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS?

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. (Isaiah 61:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Timothy 4:8; Psalm 17:5; Hebrews 12:11; Titus 2:12

God has poured out His love unstintedly, as the showers that refresh the earth. He says, “Let the skies pour down

righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together.” “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.” Isaiah 45:8; 41:17, 18.

I realize that there are none who are naturally righteous and that righteousness can only be obtained through the merits of Christ.

Circle: Yes Undecided

As I have spent time in His Word and discerned the perfection of the Saviour, I have sensed my need. He has given me the hunger and thirst of His righteousness and to become wholly transformed into His image of purity.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I understand that the only way to continue to walk in this path is to abide continually in Christ and I pray He will help me stay connected to Him.

Circle: Yes Undecided

As I am drinking daily from Christ's well-spring of life, my desire is to lead other thirsty travelers to the Source. I ask for the Holy Spirit to guide my mind to the right words and Scriptures that I may encourage them to hunger and thirst after righteousness and to seek an abiding relationship with Him.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am thankful for, and claim the promise, that Christ will fill me and cover me with His robe of righteousness as I continue to hunger and thirst for Him.

Circle: Yes Undecided

[illegible]



Blessed are the Merciful - 5

This lesson is based on Matthew 5:7.

(1) WHAT WAS THE FIFTH CONCEPT AND ACCOMPANYING PROMISE PRESENTED BY CHRIST THAT DAY ON THE “MOUNT OF BLESSING?”

Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. (Matthew 5:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 21:21; 3:3; 11:17; 19:17; 16:6; 2 Samuel 22:26; Ephesians 4:32

(2) WHAT IS THE HEART OF MANKIND LIKE WITHOUT THE INTERVENTION OF CHRIST?

“The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Genesis 6:5; 8:21; Job 15:14-16; Psalm 53:2, 3; Ecclesiastes 9:3

The heart of man is by nature cold and dark and unloving; whenever one manifests a spirit of mercy and forgiveness, he does it not of himself, but through the influence of the divine Spirit moving upon his heart. “We love, because He first loved us.” 1 John 4:19, R.V.

(3) WHAT IS THE FIRST CHARACTERISTIC GIVEN BY GOD IN HIS DESCRIPTION OF HIMSELF?

And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, (Exodus 34:6 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 6:36; 2 Chronicle 30:9; Psalm 86:5, 15; 103:8-13

God is Himself the source of all mercy. His name is “merciful and gracious.” He does not treat us according to our desert. He does not ask if we are worthy of His love, but He pours upon us the riches of His love, to make us worthy. He is not vindictive. He seeks not to punish, but to redeem. Even the severity which He manifests through His providences is manifested for the salvation of the wayward. He yearns with intense desire to relieve the woes of men and to apply His balsam to their wounds. It is true that God “will by no means clear the guilty” (Exodus 34:7), but He would take away the guilt.

(4) WHOM DOES THE APOSTLE PAUL ENCOURAGE US TO IMITATE?

Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. (Ephesians 5:1 NKJV)

Related Texts: Leviticus 11:45; Matthew 5:48; 1 Peter 1:15, 16; 2 Peter 1:4

The merciful are “partakers of the divine nature,” and in them the compassionate love of God finds expression. All whose hearts are in sympathy with the heart of Infinite Love will seek to reclaim and not to condemn. Christ dwelling in the soul is a spring that never runs dry. Where He abides, there will be an overflowing of beneficence.

**(5) AS HIS REPRESENTATIVES,
WHAT MINISTRY HAS GOD GIVEN
TO EACH OF US?**

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, (2 Corinthians 5:18 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Corinthians 5:19, 20; Ephesians 4:32; Psalm 82:2-4

To the appeal of the erring, the tempted, the wretched victims of want and sin, the Christian does not ask, Are they worthy? But, How can I benefit them? In the most wretched, the most debased, he sees souls whom Christ died to save and for whom God has given to His children the ministry of reconciliation.

The merciful are those who manifest compassion to the poor, the suffering, and the oppressed. Job declares, “I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I

was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out.” Job 29:12-16.

(6) WHAT IS A PRACTICAL WAY WE CAN EXPRESS THE LOVE OF CHRIST TO LOST HUMANITY?

He answered and said to them, “He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise.” (Luke 3:11 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 14:31; Isaiah 58:7-10; Ezekiel 18:7-9

There are many to whom life is a painful struggle; they feel their deficiencies and are miserable and unbelieving; they think they have nothing for which to be grateful. Kind words, looks of sympathy, expressions of appreciation, would be to many a struggling and lonely one as the cup of cold water to a thirsty soul. A word of sympathy, an act of kindness, would lift burdens that rest heavily upon weary shoulders. And every word or deed of unselfish kindness is an expression of the love of Christ for lost humanity.

(7) WHAT IS THE PROMISED RESULT WHEN WE LIVE A LIFE OF SELF-FORGETFUL SERVICE FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS?

The generous soul will be made rich, And he who waters will also be watered himself. (Proverbs 11:25 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 10:16; 14:21; Romans 2:10; Isaiah 32:20; 58:10-12; John 4:36

The merciful “shall obtain mercy.” There is sweet peace for the compassionate spirit, a blessed satisfaction in the life of self-forgetful service for the good of others. The Holy Spirit that abides in the soul and is manifest in the life will soften hard hearts and awaken sympathy and tenderness. You will reap that which you sow. “Blessed is he that considereth the poor. . . . The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and Thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.” Psalm 41:1-3.

(8) WHEN WE DO THE WORKS OF CHRIST IN BRINGING RELIEF TO THE SUFFERING, WHAT HAS GOD PROMISED TO SUPPLY?

And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Corinthians 9:8; Proverbs 3:9, 10; Matthew 6:33

He who has given his life to God in ministry to His children is linked with Him who has all the resources of the universe at His command. His life is bound up by the golden chain of the immutable promises with the life of God. The Lord will not fail him in the hour of suffering and need. “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

(9) WHAT AWESOME WORDS WILL THOSE WHO ARE FAITHFUL AND MERCIFUL HEAR AT CHRIST’S RETURN?

His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' (Matthew 25:23 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 25:34

And in the hour of final need the merciful shall find refuge in the mercy of the compassionate Saviour and shall be received into everlasting habitations.

I realize that without the intervention of God through the influence of the Holy Spirit, the heart of man is by nature cold, dark, and unloving.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I see that God is the Source of all mercy and I am thankful that He does not treat us according to what we deserve, but instead pours out upon us the riches of His love.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I now see the awesome privilege that we, by God's grace, can abide in Him and become partakers of His divine nature thus allowing us to exhibit His love and benevolence to a suffering and lost world.

Circle: Yes Undecided

It is my prayer that the Lord will live and work through me that I may be His hands and feet on earth. That I may, by words and unselfish acts, be His expression of kindness and love to all lost humanity.

Circle: Yes Undecided



Blessed are the Pure in Heart - 6

This lesson is based on Matthew 5:8.

(1) WHAT WAS THE SIXTH CONCEPT AND ACCOMPANYING PROMISE PRESENTED BY CHRIST THAT DAY ON THE “MOUNT OF BLESSING?”

Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. (Matthew 5:8 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Chronicles 29:17, 18; Psalm 51:10; 73:1; 1 Peter 1:22; Ezekiel 36:25-27

(2) WHAT STERN REBUKE DID CHRIST GIVE TO THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES CONCERNING THE STATE OF THEIR HEARTS?

Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. (Matthew 23:28)

Related Texts: Matthew 23:25-27; 15:19, 20; Luke 11:39, 40

The Jews were so exacting in regard to ceremonial purity that their regulations were extremely burdensome. Their minds were occupied with rules and restrictions and the fear of outward defilement, and they did not perceive the stain that selfishness and malice impart to the soul.

(3) WHAT ANALOGY DID CHRIST USE TO EMPHASIS WHERE TRUE PURITY ORIGINATES?

Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. (Matthew 23:26 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 12:33

(4) WHAT WAS JOHN THE REVELATOR SHOWN THAT WILL NOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN?

But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. (Revelation 21:27 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 35:8; 52:1; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Ephesians 5:5

Jesus does not mention this ceremonial purity as one of the conditions of entering into His kingdom, but points out the need of purity of heart. The wisdom that is from above “is first pure.” James 3:17. Into the city of God there will enter nothing that defiles. All who are to be dwellers there will here have become pure in

heart. In one who is learning of Jesus, there will be manifest a growing distaste for careless manners, unseemly language, and coarse thought. When Christ abides in the heart, there will be purity and refinement of thought and manner.

(5) WHAT, BY THE GRACE OF CHRIST, MUST WE PURSUE BEFORE WE CAN ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN?

Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: (Hebrews 12:14 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 34:14; Romans 14:19; Galatians 5:22, 23; 1 Timothy 6:11

But the words of Jesus, “Blessed are the pure in heart,” have a deeper meaning—not merely pure in the sense in which the world understands purity, free from that which is sensual, pure from lust, but true in the hidden purposes and motives of the soul, free from pride and self-seeking, be humble, unselfish, childlike.

(6) HOW MANY CAN BRING ABOUT PURITY OF HEART BY THEIR OWN HUMAN DEVISING?

Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No one! (Job 14:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Jeremiah 17:9; Proverbs 21:2; Psalm 130:3, 4; Genesis 6:5

(7) WHO IS THE ONLY SOURCE FROM WHOM PURITY OF HEART CAN BE RECEIVED?

Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying: I will give you

a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. (Ezekiel 36:16, 26 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ezekiel 11:19; Deuteronomy 30:6

(8) WHAT PROMISE MAY WE CLAIM IF WE SINCERELY SEEK A CLEAN HEART?

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ezekiel 36:25-27; Isaiah 1:18; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Leviticus 26:40-42; Proverbs 28:13

(9) LIKE KING DAVID, WHAT SHOULD BE OUR EARNEST PRAYER ?

Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. (Psalms 51:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 51:3-5; 32:5; 38:18; 2 Samuel 24:10

(10) WHAT ACCUSING QUESTION DID THE PHARISEES ASK THAT REVEALED THEIR SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS TO THE PURE CHARACTER OF CHRIST?

Then the Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?” (John 8:48 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 12:24; 10:25

Only like can appreciate like. Unless you accept in your own life the principle of self-sacrificing love, which is the principle of His character, you cannot know God. The heart that is deceived by Satan, looks upon God as a tyrannical, relentless being; the selfish characteristics of humanity, even of Satan himself, are attributed to the loving Creator. “You thought,” He says, “that I was altogether like you.” Psalm 50:21.

His providences are interpreted as the expression of an arbitrary, vindictive nature. So with the Bible, the treasure house of the riches of His grace. The glory of its truths, that are as high as heaven and compass eternity, are not discerned. To the great mass of mankind, Christ Himself is “as a root out of a dry ground,” and they see in Him “no beauty that” they “should desire Him.” Isaiah 53:2. When Jesus was among men, the revelation of God in humanity, the scribes and Pharisees declared to Him, “Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil.” John 8:48.

(11) IN REALITY WHOM, IN PURITY OF CHARACTER, DID CHRIST PERFECTLY REPRESENT?

Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? (John 14:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 14:7, 20; Colossians 1:15; Philippians 2:6

Even His disciples were so blinded by the selfishness of their hearts that they

were slow to understand Him who had come to manifest to them the Father's love. This was why Jesus walked in solitude in the midst of men. He was understood fully in heaven alone.

(12) WHAT WILL BE THE REACTION OF THE WICKED WHEN, AT CHRIST'S SECOND COMING, THEIR VEIL OF SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS IS REMOVED?

and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! (Revelation 6:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Revelation 6:14-17; Jeremiah 8:3; Hosea 10:8; Luke 23:30

When Christ shall come in His glory, the wicked cannot endure to behold Him. The light of His presence, which is life to those who love Him, is death to the ungodly. The expectation of His coming is to them a "fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." Hebrews 10:27. When He shall appear, they will pray to be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them.

(13) AT CHRIST'S COMING, WHAT WILL BE THE REACTION OF THOSE WHO, BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, HAVE RECEIVED PURITY OF HEART?

And it will be said in that day: "Behold, this is our God; We have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the LORD; We have waited for Him; We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." (Isaiah 25:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Titus 2:13; Revelation 19:7

But to hearts that have become purified through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, all is changed. These can know God. Moses was hid in the cleft of the rock when the glory of the Lord was revealed to him; and it is when we are hid in Christ that we behold the love of God.

“He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the King shall be his friend.” Proverbs 22:11. By faith we behold Him here and now. In our daily experience we discern His goodness and compassion in the manifestation of His providence. We recognize Him in the character of His Son. The Holy Spirit takes the truth concerning God and Him whom He has sent, and opens it to the understanding and to the heart. The pure in heart see God in a new and endearing relation, as their Redeemer; and while they discern the purity and loveliness of His character, they long to reflect His image. They see Him as a Father longing to embrace a repenting son, and their hearts are filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

(14) AS CHRIST PURIFIES THE HEART, THROUGH WHOM DOES HE IMPART TO US SPIRITUAL EYESIGHT?

But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Corinthians 2:9-16; Matthew 11:25; Psalm 146:8

The pure in heart discern the Creator in the works of His mighty hand, in the things of beauty that comprise the uni-

verse. In His written word they read in clearer lines the revelation of His mercy, His goodness, and His grace. The truths that are hidden from the wise and prudent are revealed to babes. The beauty and preciousness of truth, which are undiscerned by the worldly-wise, are constantly unfolding to those who have a trusting, childlike desire to know and to do the will of God. We discern the truth by becoming, ourselves, partakers of the divine nature.

The pure in heart live as in the visible presence of God during the time He apportions them in this world. And they will also see Him face to face in the future, immortal state, as did Adam when he walked and talked with God in Eden. "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face." 1 Corinthians 13:12.

I understand that Christ desires my purity, but not merely pure in the sense in which the world understands purity. He desires true purity in the hidden purposes and motives of the heart—freedom from pride and self-seeking, humble, unselfish, and childlike.

Circle: Yes Undecided

As I look to the Bible and observe the principle of pure, self-sacrificing love in the life and character of Christ, it is my hearts longing to become more and more like Him.

Circle: Yes Undecided

When Christ abides in the heart, there is purity and refinement in both thought and manner. I want to learn to abide in Him that I may represent Him and bring glory to His name.

Circle: Yes Undecided



Blessed are the Peacemakers - 7

This lesson is based on Matthew 5:9.

(1) WHAT WAS THE SEVENTH CONCEPT AND ACCOMPANYING PROMISE PRESENTED BY CHRIST THAT DAY ON THE “MOUNT OF BLESSING?”

Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. (Matthew 5:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 12:18; 14:17-19; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Galatians 5:22

(2) BECAUSE OF CHRIST’S MISSION FROM HEAVEN TO OFFER EACH ONE OF US PEACE, WHAT ROYAL TITLE DOES HE BEAR?

...And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6 NKJV) (last part)

Related Texts: 1 Thessalonians 5:23

Christ is “the Prince of Peace,” and it is His mission to restore to earth and heaven the peace that sin has broken. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:1. Whoever consents to renounce sin and open his heart to the love of Christ, becomes a partaker of this heavenly peace.

(3) WHAT PROMISE MAY WE CLAIM IF WE, WITH TRUST AND FAITH, RECEIVE THE GRACE OF CHRIST INTO OUR HEARTS?

*You will keep him in perfect peace,
Whose mind is stayed on You, Because
he trusts in You. (Isaiah 26:3 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Psalm 85:7, 8; John 16:33

There is no other ground of peace than this. The grace of Christ received into the heart, subdues enmity; it allays strife and fills the soul with love. He who is at peace with God and his fellow men cannot be made miserable. Envy will not be in his heart; evil surmisings will find no room there; hatred cannot exist. The heart that is in harmony with God is a partaker of the peace of heaven and will diffuse its blessed influence on all around. The spirit of peace will rest like dew upon hearts weary and troubled with worldly strife.

(4) AS CHRIST ASCENDED TO HEAVEN, WHAT BLESSING DID HE LEAVE WITH ALL HIS FOLLOWERS?

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give

to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John 14:27 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 20:21; 16:33

(5) WHO IS THE AGENT GOD USES TO INSTILL HIS PEACE IN HIS CHILDREN?

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 14:17; 8:6

(6) HOW IS CHRIST'S PEACE TO BE REVEALED AND THEN PASSED ON BY HIS FOLLOWERS TO THE WORLD?

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:35 NKJV)

Related Texts: James 3:18; Isaiah 32:17

Christ's followers are sent to the world with the message of peace. Whoever, by the quiet, unconscious influence of a holy life, shall reveal the love of Christ; whoever, by word or deed, shall lead another to renounce sin and yield his heart to God, is a peacemaker.

(7) WHAT WILL PEACEMAKERS BE CALLED GIVING EVIDENCE TO THEIR CONNECTION WITH HEAVEN?

Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. (Matthew 5:9 NKJV)

And “blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” The spirit of peace is evidence of their connection with heaven. The sweet savor of Christ surrounds them. The fragrance of the life, the loveliness of the character, reveal to the world the fact that they are children of God. Men take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus. “Everyone that loveth is born of God.” “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His;” but “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” 1 John 4:7; Romans 8:9, 14. “Then the remnant of Jacob Shall be in the midst of many peoples, Like dew from the Lord, Like showers on the grass, That tarry for no man Nor wait for the sons of men.” Micah 5:7

(8) THOUGH THE MOUNTAINS MAY CRUMBLE, WHAT AWESOME COVENANT CAN WE CLAIM FROM THE LORD?

For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,” Says the LORD, who has mercy on you. (Isaiah 54:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 55:12; Philippians 4:6, 7

I am very thankful that Christ left the splendor of heaven on a mission to restore to earth the peace that sin has broken.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I understand that He who is at peace with God and his fellow man cannot be

made miserable. Envy and hatred cannot exist in the heart that is in harmony with God.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that to renounce sin and open ones heart to the grace and love of Christ is the beginning of peace in ones life. When we choose to allow Christ in, the Spirit of peace will rest like dew upon hearts weary and troubled with worldly Strife.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I feel privileged to be a follower of Christ and to be given the mission to take Christ's message of peace to the world. My prayer is, "Dear Heavenly Father, I claim your covenant of peace. Please surround me with the sweet savor of Christ that your spirit of peace in me may give evidence of my connection with You. Please work through me that I may be a channel of Your peace to the world. "

Circle: Yes Undecided

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Blessed are the Persecuted - 8

This lesson is based on Matthew 5:10.

(1) WHAT WAS THE EIGHT STRANGE NEW CONCEPT AND ACCOMPANYING PROMISE PRESENTED BY CHRIST THAT DAY ON THE “MOUNT OF BLESSING?”

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: Mark 10:29, 30; Luke 6:22, 23; 21:12, 13; 2 Corinthians 4:8-17

Jesus does not present to His followers the hope of attaining earthly glory and riches, and of having a life free from trial, but He presents to them the privilege of walking with their Master in the paths of self-denial and reproach, because the world knows them not.

(2) WHO ARE THE FORCES LEADING THE CONFEDERACY OF REBELLION AND EVIL AGAINST THE KINGDOM OF AND GOD?

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 8:38, 39

He who came to redeem the lost world was opposed by the united forces of the adversaries of God and man. In an unpitying confederacy, evil men and evil angels arrayed themselves against the Prince of Peace.

(3) HOW WAS CHRIST TREATED BY THE REBELLIOUS RACE HE CAME TO SAVE?

He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. (Isaiah 53:3 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 53:4-12; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 Corinthians 15:3; John 8:59

Though His every word and act breathed of divine compassion, His unlikeness to the world provoked the bitterest hostility. Because He would give no license for the exercise of the evil passions of our nature, He aroused the fiercest opposition and enmity. So it is with all who will live godly in Christ Jesus. Between righteousness and sin, love and hatred, truth and falsehood, there is an irrepressible conflict.

(4) HOW DID CHRIST DESCRIBE HIS TREATMENT AND THE TREATMENT THAT WILL BE GIVEN TO THOSE WHO, IMBUED WITH HIS SPIRIT, SEEK TO ADVANCE HIS KINGDOM?

Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. (John 15:20 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 6:40; 21:12

When one presents the love of Christ and the beauty of holiness, he is drawing away the subjects of Satan's kingdom, and the prince of evil is aroused to resist it. Persecution and reproach await all who are imbued with the Spirit of Christ. The character of the persecution changes with the times, but the principle—the spirit that underlies it—is the same that has slain the chosen of the Lord ever since the days of Abel.

(5) HOW DOES JAMES ADVISE US TO VIEW THE TRIALS AND TESTS OF FAITH THAT PRODUCE PATIENCE AND PERFECTING OF OUR CHARACTER?

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, (James 1:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: Acts 5:41; Luke 6:23; 2 Corinthians 12:10; Philippians 1:29

As men seek to come into harmony with God, they will find that the offense of the cross has not ceased. Principalities and powers and wicked spirits in

high places are arrayed against all who yield obedience to the law of heaven. Therefore, so far from causing grief, persecution should bring joy to the disciples of Christ, for it is an evidence that they are following in the steps of their Master.

(6) WHEN WE ENCOUNTER THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF PERSECUTION, WHAT PROMISE MAY WE CLAIM?

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets. (Luke 6:22, 23 NKJV)

Related Texts: Mark 10:30; Hebrews 10:34; 1 Peter 3:14

While the Lord has not promised His people exemption from trials, He has promised that which is far better. He has said, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” “My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Deuteronomy 33:25; 2 Corinthians 12:9. If you are called to go through the fiery furnace for His sake, Jesus will be by your side even as He was with the faithful three in Babylon. Those who love their Redeemer will rejoice at every opportunity of sharing with Him humiliation and reproach. The love they bear their Lord makes suffering for His sake sweet.

(7) WHO ARE THE PERSECUTED PEOPLE OF GOD WARNED TO FEAR MORE THEN THOSE WHO WOULD TORTURE AND KILL THE BODY?

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 51:7, 12; Daniel 3:17- 25; Luke 12:4, 5; Revelation 2:10

In all ages Satan has persecuted the people of God. He has tortured them and put them to death, but in dying they became conquerors. They revealed in their steadfast faith a mightier One than Satan. Satan could torture and kill the body, but he could not touch the life that was hid with Christ in God. He could incarcerate in prison walls, but he could not bind the spirit. They could look beyond the gloom to the glory, saying, “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17.

(8) WHAT IS ULTIMATELY REVEALED THROUGH US WHEN, BY THE GRACE OF CHRIST, WE PATIENTLY ENDURE TRIALS AND PERSECUTION?

but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. (1 Peter 4:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Peter 1:7; 1 Corinthians 3:13; Romans 1:17; Mark 13:11

Through trials and persecution, the glory—character—of God is revealed

in His chosen ones. The church of God, hated and persecuted by the world, are educated and disciplined in the school of Christ. They walk in narrow paths on earth; they are purified in the furnace of affliction. They follow Christ through sore conflicts; they endure self-denial and experience bitter disappointments; but their painful experience teaches them the guilt and woe of sin, and they look upon it with abhorrence.

Being partakers of Christ's sufferings, they are destined to be partakers of His glory. In holy vision the prophet saw the triumph of the people of God. He says, "I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory, . . . stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints." "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." Rev. 15:2, 3; 7:14, 15.

(9) WHEN, IN THE END OF TIME, GOD'S PEOPLE WILL FACE PERSECUTION FOR THEIR FAITH, WHAT OPPORTUNITY WILL THIS PROVIDE?

But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. (Luke 21:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 21:12; Mark 13:11

(10) AS WE, THE CHILDREN OF GOD, ENDURE TRIBULA-

TION, WHAT CAN WE HAVE THE PEACE OF KNOWING THAT CHRIST HAS ALREADY DONE?

Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. (Colossians 2:15 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ephesians 1:20, 21; John 10:28; 2 Corinthians 12:9

Jesus does not present to His followers the hope of attaining earthly glory and riches. He offers them the privilege of walking with Him on the path of selflessness and self-denial that He trod. I understand that to live my life as Christ lived—in the beauty of holiness, will evoke hostility with the forces of evil and those who are led by them.

Circle: Yes Undecided

When I am called to encounter the evil of persecution, by God's grace, I pray that He will give me the strength to suffer for Him. It is my prayer to use the opportunity as a witness for Him and bring glory to His name.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I consider this high calling a privilege and I resolve to, like the three Hebrew men in Babylon, say, "My God can deliver me if He so chooses but, even if not, I will not bow down to the gods of this world in thought or deed though I may perish."

Circle: Yes Undecided



Blessed are the Reviled - 9

This lesson is based on Matthew 5:11, 12.

(1) WHAT WAS THE NINTH STRANGE NEW CONCEPT AND ACCOMPANYING PROMISE PRESENTED BY CHRIST ON THE “MOUNT OF BLESSING?”

“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:11-12 NKJV)

To “revile” means verbal abuse. Synonyms for revile are to condemn, criticize, attack, censure, decry, vilify, discredit, denounce, or to betray.

(2) BECAUSE OF HIS ZEAL FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST, HOW WAS KING DAVID TREATED?

Because for Your sake I have borne reproach; Shame has covered my face. I have become a stranger to my brothers, And an alien to my mother's children; Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me. (Psalms 69:7-9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 22:6-8; 44:22; Jeremiah 15:15; John 15:21, 22

Ever since his fall, Satan has worked by means of deception. As he has misrepresented God, so, through his agents, he misrepresents the children of God.

(3) WHEN STANDING BEFORE HEROD, WHAT TYPE OF ABUSE DID CHRIST ENDURE FOR HIS UNWAVERING OBEDIENCE TO RIGHTEOUSNESS?

Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. (Luke 23:11 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 22:64, 65; Matthew 27:27, 30; John 19:5

There was never one who walked among men more cruelly slandered than the Son of man. He was derided and mocked because of His unswerving obedience to the principles of God's holy law. They hated Him without a cause. Yet He stood calmly before His enemies, declaring that reproach is a part of the Christian's legacy, counseling His followers how to meet the arrows of malice, bidding them not to faint under persecution.

**(4) THOUGH WE MAY BE RE-
VILED AND SLANDERED FOR
THE SAKE OF CHRIST, IF OUR
CHARACTERS AND CONDUCT
ARE HONORABLE, WHAT WILL
BE THE RESULT?**

*having your conduct honorable among
the Gentiles, that when they speak
against you as evildoers, they may, by
your good works which they observe,
glorify God in the day of visitation. (1
Peter 2:12 NKJV)*

Related Texts: 1 Peter 2:11; Matthew
5:16; Titus 2:8

While slander may blacken the reputa-
tion, it cannot stain the character. That
is in God's keeping. So long as we do
not consent to sin, there is no power,
whether human or satanic, that can bring
a stain upon the soul.

**(5) WHEN WE ARE REVILED AND
THE AFFLICTING TRIALS OF
MISREPRESENTATION COME,
TO WHOM MAY WE LOOK TO
STRENGTHEN OUR FAITH?**

*looking unto Jesus, the author and fin-
isher of our faith, who for the joy that
was set before Him endured the cross,
despising the shame, and has sat down
at the right hand of the throne of God.
(Hebrews 12:2 NKJV)*

*You will keep him in perfect peace,
Whose mind is stayed on You, Because
he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD for-
ever, For in YAH, the LORD, is everlast-
ing strength. (Isaiah 26:3-4 NKJV)*

Related Texts: 2 Corinthians 12:10;
Micah 7:7

A man whose heart is stayed upon God is just the same in the hour of his most afflicting trials and most discouraging surroundings as when he was in prosperity, when the light and favor of God seemed to be upon him. His words, his motives, his actions, may be misrepresented and falsified, but he does not mind it, because he has greater interests at stake. Like Moses, he endures as “seeing Him who is invisible” (Heb. 11:27); looking “not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen” (2 Cor. 4:18).

(6) WHEN OUR MOTIVES AND ACTIONS ARE FALSIFIED, WHAT CAN WE REST ASSURED KNOWING WILL ONE DAY BE REVEALED?

For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light. (Luke 8:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 12:2, 3; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 10:26; 1 Corinthians 4:5

Christ is acquainted with all that is misunderstood and misrepresented by men. His children can afford to wait in calm patience and trust, no matter how much maligned and despised; for nothing is secret that shall not be made manifest, and those who honor God shall be honored by Him in the presence of men and angels.

(7) WHAT WILL ALL WHO DESIRE TO LIVE GODLY IN CHRIST JESUS INEVITABLY SUFFER?

Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. (2 Timothy 3:12 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 16:33; 17:14

“When men shall revile you, and persecute you,” said Jesus, “rejoice, and be exceeding glad.” And He pointed His hearers to the prophets who had spoken in the name of the Lord, as “an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.” James 5:10. Abel, the very first Christian of Adam’s children, died a martyr. Enoch walked with God, and the world knew him not. Noah was mocked as a fanatic and an alarmist. “Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment.” “Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.” Hebrews 11:36, 35.

In every age God’s chosen messengers have been reviled and persecuted, yet through their affliction the knowledge of God has been spread abroad. Every disciple of Christ is to step into the ranks and carry forward the same work, knowing that its foes can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. God means that truth shall be brought to the front and become the subject of examination and discussion, even through the contempt placed upon it. The minds of the people must be agitated; every controversy, every reproach, every effort to restrict liberty of conscience, is God’s means of awakening minds that otherwise might slumber.

(8) WHEN OUR FAITH IS TESTED BY THE FIERY TRIALS OF PERSECUTION AND, BY THE GRACE OF CHRIST WE ENDURE, WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT?

that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may

be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, (1 Peter 1:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Peter 4:13; 1 Corinthians 3:13

How often this result has been seen in the history of God's messengers! When the noble and eloquent Stephen was stoned to death at the instigation of the Sanhedrin council, there was no loss to the cause of the gospel. The light of heaven that glorified his face, the divine compassion breathed in his dying prayer, were as a sharp arrow of conviction to the bigoted Sanhedrist who stood by, and Saul, the persecuting Pharisee, became a chosen vessel to bear the name of Christ before Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.

And long afterward Paul the aged wrote from his prison house at Rome: "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife: . . . not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds. . . . Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached." Philippians 1:15-18. Through Paul's imprisonment the gospel was spread abroad, and souls were won for Christ in the very palace of the Caesars. By the efforts of Satan to destroy it, the "incorruptible" seed of the word of God, "which liveth and abideth forever" (1 Peter 1:23), is sown in the hearts of men; through the reproach and persecution of His children the name of Christ is magnified and souls are saved.

(9) WHAT DOES CHRIST ASK US TO DO FOR THOSE WHO REVILE AND PERSECUTE US?

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to

those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, (Matthew 5:44 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 25:21, 22; Luke 6:27, 28, 34, 35; Romans 12:14, 20, 21

(10) WHAT DOES CHRIST PROMISE TO THOSE WHO ARE FAITHFUL THOUGH REPROACHED FOR HIS SAKE?

Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: Acts 14:22; James 1:12; Matthew 5:12; Mark 10:30; 1 Peter 3:14

Great is the reward in heaven of those who are witnesses for Christ through persecution and reproach. While the people are looking for earthly good, Jesus points them to a heavenly reward. But He does not place it all in the future life; it begins here. The Lord appeared of old time to Abraham and said, “I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” Genesis 15:1.

This is the reward of all who follow Christ. Jehovah Immanuel—He “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” in whom dwells “all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:3, 9)—to be brought into sympathy with Him, to know Him, to possess Him, as the heart opens more and more to receive His attributes; to know His love and power, to possess the unsearchable riches of Christ, to

comprehend more and more “what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:18, 19)—”this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord.” Isaiah 54:17.

(11) HOW, EVEN DURING PERSECUTION, DO THE FAITHFUL EXPERIENCE THE KINGDOM OF GOD WHILE ON THIS EARTH?

for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 17:21; Matthew 12:28; Mark 9:1; 10:14, 15

It was this joy that filled the hearts of Paul and Silas when they prayed and sang praises to God at midnight in the Philippian dungeon. Christ was beside them there, and the light of His presence irradiated the gloom with the glory of the courts above. From Rome, Paul wrote, unmindful of his fetters as he saw the spread of the gospel, “I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.” Philippians 1:18. And the very words of Christ upon the mount are re-echoed in Paul’s message to the Philippian church, in the midst of their persecutions, “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.” Philippians 4:4.

I realize that ever since his fall, Satan has worked by means of deception. As he has misrepresented God, so, through his agents, he misrepresents the children of God.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I understand that there was never one who walked among men more cruelly slandered than Christ. He was derided and mocked because of His unswerving obedience to the principles of God's holy law. My prayer is for this in my life.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that slander may blacken the reputation, but it cannot stain the character; that is in God's keeping. So long as we do not consent to sin, there is no power, human or satanic, that can bring a stain upon the soul.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that when we are unfairly reviled for Christ's sake it gives opportunity to give testimony to the praise, honor, and glory of Jesus Christ.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am so grateful to Christ who left the glory of heaven to come to this earth and be reviled and persecuted that I might live.

Circle: Yes Undecided

It is my prayer that when I am reviled for Christ's sake I can, even at the cost of death, bring glory to Him. For Great is the reward in heaven of those who are witnesses for Christ through persecution and reproach.

Circle: Yes Undecided



The Salt of the Earth - 10

This lesson is based on Matthew 5:13.

(1) WHAT WAS THE TENTH STRANGE NEW CONCEPT AND WARNING PRESENTED BY CHRIST ON THE “MOUNT OF BLESSING?”

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. (Matthew 5:13 NKJV)

Salt is valued for its preservative properties; and when God calls His children salt, He would teach them that His purpose in making them the subjects of His grace is that they may become agents in saving others.

(2) WHAT SPECIFIC MISSION HAS GOD GIVEN HIS CHOSEN

PEOPLE AND WITH WHAT FREQUENCY?

Sing to the LORD, bless His name; Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples. (Psalms 96:2-3 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 58:6-11; 49:6; 60:1-3; Matthew 28:19, 20

The object of God in choosing a people before all the world was not only that He might adopt them as His sons and daughters, but that through them the world might receive the grace that brings salvation. Titus 2:11. When the Lord chose Abraham, it was not simply to be the special friend of God, but to be a medium of the peculiar privileges the Lord desired to bestow upon the nations.

(3) WHAT IS THE MEDIUM GOD USES TO SANCTIFY HIS PEOPLE THAT THEY MAY BECOME EFFECTIVE “SALT” TO THE WORLD?

Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. (John 17:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 15:3; Ephesians 5:26; Psalm 19:7-9; 1 Peter 1:22, 23

Jesus, in that last prayer with His disciples before His crucifixion, said, “For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.” John 17:19. In like manner Christians who are purified through the truth will possess saving qualities that preserve the world from utter moral corruption.

(4) WHAT IS A PRACTICAL WAY THAT WE CAN BE SALT TO THE WORLD?

He answered and said to them, “He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise.” (Luke 3:11 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 25:35; Proverbs 14:31; 19:17; James 1:27

Salt must be mingled with the substance to which it is added; it must penetrate and infuse in order to preserve. So it is through personal contact and association that men are reached by the saving power of the gospel. They are not saved in masses, but as individuals. Personal influence is a power. We must come close to those whom we desire to benefit.

(5) WHO IS THE MEDIUM THROUGH WHICH THE SALT RECEIVES THE SAVOR OF TRANSFORMING POWER TO DIFFUSE TO THE WORLD?

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 5:22, 23; 1 John 3:24; 2 Timothy 1:14

The savor of the salt represents the vital power of the Christian—the love of Jesus in the heart, the righteousness of Christ pervading the life. The love of Christ is diffusive and aggressive. If it is dwelling in us, it will flow out to others. We shall come close to them till

their hearts are warmed by our unselfish interest and love. The sincere believers diffuse vital energy, which is penetrating and imparts new moral power to the souls for whom they labor. It is not the power of the man himself, but the power of the Holy Spirit that does the transforming work.

(6) WHAT DOES CHRIST SAY TO THOSE WHO ARE COLD IN THEIR EXPERIENCE AND ARE AS FLAVORLESS SALT TO THE WORLD?

“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. (Revelation 3:15-16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Mark 9:49, 50; Leviticus 2:13; Colossians 4:6

Jesus added the solemn warning: “If the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden underfoot of men.”

As they listened to the words of Christ, the people could see the white salt glistening in the pathways where it had been cast out because it had lost its savor and was therefore useless. It well represented the condition of the Pharisees and the effect of their religion upon society. It represents the life of every soul from whom the power of the grace of God has departed and who has become cold and Christless. Whatever may be his profession, such a one is looked upon by men and angels as insipid and disagreeable. It is to such that Christ say: “I would thou wert cold or

hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth.”

(7) WHAT DOES CHRIST CALL US TO DO THAT PUTS SAVOR IN OUR SALT SO WE MAY BECOME GOD- LY INFLUENCES AND BEAR FRUIT IN THIS SKEPTICAL WORLD?

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. (John 15:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 2:20; John 6:56; 9:33; Ephesians 3:17

Without a living faith in Christ as a personal Saviour it is impossible to make our influence felt in a skeptical world. We cannot give to others that which we do not ourselves possess. It is in proportion to our own devotion and consecration to Christ that we exert an influence for the blessing and uplifting of mankind.

(8) HOW DOES GOD ASK US TO TREAT OTHERS WHICH SHOWS WE ARE BORN OF HIM AND IS WHAT KEEPS THE SAVOR IN OUR SALT?

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. (1 John 4:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 4:21; 2:10; 3:17, 18; 1 Thessalonians 4:9

If there is no actual service, no genuine love, no reality of experience, there

is no power to help, no connection with heaven, no savor of Christ in the life. Unless the Holy Spirit can use us as agents through whom to communicate to the world the truth as it is in Jesus, we are as salt that has lost its savor and is entirely worthless. By our lack of the grace of Christ we testify to the world that the truth which we claim to believe has no sanctifying power; and thus, so far as our influence goes, we make of no effect the word of God. "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing." 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, A.R.V.

(9) WHAT IS THE ULTIMATE EVIDENCE THAT WE ARE GOOD SALT FOR CHRIST?

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:35 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 2:10; 3:13

When love fills the heart, it will flow out to others, not because of favors received from them, but because love is the principle of action. Love modifies the character, governs the impulses, subdues enmity, and ennobles the affections. This love is as broad as the universe, and is in harmony with that of the angel workers. Cherished in the heart, it sweetens the entire life and sheds its blessing upon all around. It is

this, and this only, that can make us the salt of the earth.

I understand that the savor of the salt spoken of by Christ represents the vital power of the Christian—the love of Jesus in the heart, the righteousness of Christ pervading the life.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that the object of God in choosing a people was not only that He might adopt them as His sons and daughters; but that, like salt gives savor to food, so through His children He might diffuse His love and the good news of salvation to the world.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that salt must be mingled with the substance to which it is added; it must penetrate and infuse in order to preserve. So it is through personal contact that the lost are reached by the saving power of the gospel.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I pray for the love of Christ to fill my heart that I may, like salt, diffuse His love to others. I pray for love to be the principle action in my life to mold my character, govern my impulses, and ennoble my affections that Christ can use me to be salt to the earth.

Circle: Yes Undecided



The Light of the World - 11

This lesson is based on Matthew 5:14.

**(1) WHAT WAS THE ELEVENTH
CONCEPT PRESENTED BY
CHRIST ON THE “MOUNT OF
BLESSING?”**

*“You are the light of the world. A city
that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.
(Matthew 5:14 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Proverbs 4:18, 19; John
12:36; Romans 2:19; 2 Corinthians 6:14

As Jesus taught the people, He made His lessons interesting and held the attention of His hearers by frequent illustrations from the scenes of nature about them. The people had come together while it was yet morning. The glorious sun, climbing higher and higher in the

blue sky, was chasing away the shadows that lurked in the valleys and among the narrow defiles of the mountains. The glory of the eastern heavens had not yet faded out. The sunlight flooded the land with its splendor; the placid surface of the lake reflected the golden light and mirrored the rosy clouds of morning. Every bud and flower and leafy spray glistened with dewdrops. Nature smiled under the benediction of a new day, and the birds sang sweetly among the trees.

The Saviour looked upon the company before Him, and then to the rising sun, and said to His disciples, "You are the light of the world." As the sun goes forth on its errand of love, dispelling the shades of night and awakening the world to life, so the followers of Christ are to go forth on their mission, diffusing the light of heaven upon those who are in the darkness of error and sin.

(2) WHAT DID CHRIST TEACH IS THE PURPOSE OF A LAMP?

Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. (Matthew 5:15 NKJV)

Related Texts: Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16

In the brilliant light of the morning, the towns and villages upon the surrounding hills stood forth clearly, making an attractive feature of the scene. Pointing to them, Jesus said, "A city set on a hill cannot be hid." And he added, "Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house." R.V. Most of those who listened to the words of Jesus were peasants and fishermen whose lowly dwellings contained

but one room, in which the single lamp on its stand shone to all in the house.

(3) WHAT COMMISSION DID CHRIST GIVE TO THE PEOPLE THAT DAY WHO WERE HIS FOLLOWERS?

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ephesians 5:8; 1 Peter 2:9; Isaiah 58:8; 60:1-3

(4) WHO IS THE ULTIMATE SOURCE OF LIGHT AND THE ONE WHO EQUIPS US TO BECOME LIGHT BEARERS?

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. (John 1:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 1:7-9; 1:29; 8:12; 9:5; 12:46; Psalm 84:11

No other light ever has shone or ever will shine upon fallen man save that which emanates from Christ. Jesus, the Saviour, is the only light that can illuminate the darkness of a world lying in sin. Of Christ it is written, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." It was by receiving of His life that His disciples could become light bearers. The life of Christ in the soul, His love revealed in the character, would make them the light of the world.

Humanity has in itself no light. Apart from Christ we are like an unkindled taper, like the moon when her face is turned away from the sun; we have not a single ray of brightness to shed into the darkness of the world. But when we turn

toward the Sun of Righteousness, when we come in touch with Christ, the whole soul is aglow with the brightness of the divine presence.

(5) AS THE FATHER SENT CHRIST TO THE WORLD TO REPRESENT HIM, WHAT HAS CHRIST LIKEWISE DONE WITH US?

As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. (John 17:18 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 20:21; Isaiah 61:1-3

Christ's followers are to be more than a light in the midst of men. They are the light of the world. Jesus says to all who have named His name, You have given yourselves to Me, and I have given you to the world as My representatives. As the Father had sent Him into the world, so, He declares, "have I also sent them into the world." John 17:18. As Christ is the channel for the revelation of the Father, so we are to be the channel for the revelation of Christ. While our Saviour is the great source of illumination, forget not, O Christian, that He is revealed through humanity. God's blessings are bestowed through human instrumentality. Christ Himself came to the world as the Son of man. Humanity, united to the divine nature, must touch humanity.

The church of Christ, every individual disciple of the Master, is heaven's appointed channel for the revelation of God to men. Angels of glory wait to communicate through you heaven's light and power to souls that are ready to perish. Shall the human agent fail of accomplishing his

appointed work? Oh, then to that degree is the world robbed of the promised influence of the Holy Spirit!

(6) WHO IS THE AGENT FOR CHRIST THROUGH WHOM WE ABIDE IN HIM, AND THROUGH WHOM HE IMPARTS HIS LIGHT THROUGH US TO THE WORLD?

By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. (1 John 4:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 3:24; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Ezekiel 36:27

But Jesus did not bid the disciples, “Strive to make your light shine;” He said, “Let it shine.” If Christ is dwelling in the heart, it is impossible to conceal the light of His presence. If those who profess to be followers of Christ are not the light of the world, it is because the vital power has left them; if they have no light to give, it is because they have no connection with the Source of light.

(7) IN A PRACTICAL WAY, WHAT IS THE LIGHT WE ARE TO BEAR THAT WE MAY GLORIFY OUR HEAVENLY FATHER?

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16 NKJV)

He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. (1 John 2:10 NKJV)

In all ages the “Spirit of Christ which was in them” (1 Peter 1:11) has made God’s true children the light of the

people of their generation. Joseph was a light bearer in Egypt. In his purity and benevolence and filial love he represented Christ in the midst of a nation of idolaters. While the Israelites were on their way from Egypt to the Promised Land, the true-hearted among them were a light to the surrounding nations. Through them God was revealed to the world. From Daniel and his companions in Babylon, and from Mordecai in Persia, bright beams of light shone out amid the darkness of the kingly courts.

In like manner the disciples of Christ are set as light bearers on the way to heaven; through them the Father's mercy and goodness are made manifest to a world enshrouded in the darkness of misapprehension of God. By seeing their good works, others are led to glorify the Father who is above; for it is made manifest that there is a God on the throne of the universe whose character is worthy of praise and imitation. The divine love glowing in the heart, the Christlike harmony manifested in the life, are as a glimpse of heaven granted to men of the world, that they may appreciate its excellence.

It is thus that men are led to believe "the love that God hath to us." 1 John 4:16. Thus hearts once sinful and corrupt are purified and transformed, to be presented "faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." Jude 24.

(8) WHAT PRINCIPLE MUST WE BE CAREFUL TO PRACTICE IF WE ARE TO TRULY REVEAL THE LIGHT OF CHRIST TO THE WORLD?

'You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor,

***nor honor the person of the mighty.
In righteousness you shall judge your
neighbor. (Leviticus 19:15 NKJV)***

Related Texts: James 2:1-9

The Saviour's words, "You are the light of the world," point to the fact that He has committed to His followers a world-wide mission. In the days of Christ, selfishness and pride and prejudice had built strong and high the wall of partition between the appointed guardians of the sacred oracles and every other nation on the globe. But the Saviour had come to change all this.

The words which the people were hearing from His lips were unlike anything to which they had ever listened from priest or rabbi. Christ tears away the wall of partition, the self-love, the dividing prejudice of nationality, and teaches a love for all the human family. He lifts men from the narrow circle that their selfishness prescribes; He abolishes all territorial lines and artificial distinctions of society. He makes no difference between neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies. He teaches us to look upon every needy souls as our neighbor and the world as our field.

(9) WHAT WAS THE CALLING OF CHRIST AND IS THE METHOD OF HIS CHURCH IN TAKING THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL TO THE WORLD?

"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; To

proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, (Isaiah 61:1-2 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 58:6-14

As the rays of the sun penetrate to the remotest corners of the globe, so God designs that the light of the gospel shall extend to every soul upon the earth. If the church of Christ were fulfilling the purpose of our Lord, light would be shed upon all that sit in darkness and in the region and shadow of death. Instead of congregating together and shunning responsibility and cross bearing, the members of the church would scatter into all lands, letting the light of Christ shine out from them, working as He did for the salvation of souls, and this “gospel of the kingdom” would speedily be carried to all the world.

(10) LIKE ABRAHAM, AFTER WE HAVE ACCEPTED GOD’S BLESSING, WHAT WILL WE BE TO OTHERS BY THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL?

I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. (Genesis 12:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: Genesis 18:18; 17:6; 26:4; Romans 4:11

It is thus that God’s purpose in calling His people, from Abraham on the plains of Mesopotamia to us in this age, is to reach its fulfillment. He says, “I will bless thee, . . . and thou shalt be a blessing.” The words of Christ through the gospel prophet, which are but re-

echoed in the Sermon on the Mount, are for us in this last generation: “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” Isaiah 60:1.

If upon your spirit the glory of the Lord is risen, if you have beheld His beauty who is “the chiefest among ten thousand” and the One “altogether lovely,” if your souls has become radiant in the presence of His glory, to you is this word from the Master sent. Have you stood with Christ on the mount of transfiguration? Down in the plain there are souls enslaved by Satan; they are waiting for the word of faith and prayer to set them free.

(11) LIKE WITH PETER AND JOHN, WHAT IS THE NATURAL REACTION OF THOSE WHO CONTEMPLATE AND EXPERIENCE THE LOVE OF CHRIST?

For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” (Acts 4:20 NKJV)

Related Texts: Acts 18:5; 1:8; Jeremiah 20:9; Psalm 39:3

We are not only to contemplate the glory of Christ, but also to speak of His excellences. Isaiah not only beheld the glory of Christ, but he also spoke of Him. While David mused, the fire burned; then spoke he with his tongue. While he mused upon the wondrous love of God he could not but speak of that which he saw and felt. [Ps.39:3].

Who can by faith behold the wonderful plan of redemption, the glory of the only-begotten Son of God, and not speak of it? Who can contemplate the unfathomable love that was manifested

upon the cross of Calvary in the death of Christ, that we might not perish, but have everlasting life—who can behold this and have no words with which to extol the Saviour’s glory?

“In His temple doth everyone speak of His glory.” Psalm 29:9. The sweet singer of Israel praised Him upon the harp, saying, “I will speak of the glorious honor of Thy majesty, and of Thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of Thy terrible acts: and I will declare Thy greatness.” Psalm 145:5, 6.

(12) LIKE PAUL, WHAT SHOULD BE OUR THEME AS WE GO FORTH AS CHRIST’S AGENTS TO ENLIGHTEN THE EARTH?

For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. (1 Corinthians 2:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Corinthians 1:23; Galatians 6:14; Matthew 28:18-20

The cross of Calvary is to be lifted high above the people, absorbing their minds and concentrating their thoughts. Then all the spiritual faculties will be charged with divine power direct from God. Then there will be a concentration of the energies in genuine work for the Master. The workers will send forth to the world beams of light, as living agencies to enlighten the earth.

Christ accepts, oh, so gladly, every human agency that is surrendered to Him. He brings the human into union with the divine, that He may communicate to the world the mysteries of incarnate love. Talk it, pray it, sing it; proclaim abroad the message of His glory, and keep pressing onward to the regions beyond.

Trials patiently borne, blessings gratefully received, temptations manfully resisted, meekness, kindness, mercy, and love habitually revealed, are the lights that shine forth in the character in contrast with the darkness of the selfish heart, into which the light of life has never shone.

I realize it is the privilege and high calling of the followers of Christ to go forth and diffuse the light of heaven to a world and that His blessings are bestowed through human instrumentality.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that I cannot in myself produce this light. Jesus is the only Source of light that can illuminate this world that is lost in darkness and I long for it to shire through me.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I choose to turn toward the Sun of Righteousness that my soul will become aglow with the brightness of His presence.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I gladly surrender self to Him that He may communicate to the world the mysteries of His incarnate love through my life.

Circle: Yes Undecided

It is my prayer for an extra measure of His Spirit that I may boldly talk of it, sing of it, and proclaim it abroad-- the message of His glory!

Circle: Yes Undecided



The Spirituality of the Law - 12

This lesson is based on Matthew 5:17.

(1) UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS DID THE LORD GIVE THE PRINCIPLES OF THE LAW TO HIS PEOPLE AT MOUNT SINAI?

Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. (Exodus 19:18 NKJV)

Related Texts: Exodus 20:18; Psalm 68:8; Deut. 4:11, 12; 5:22; Nehemiah 9:13-15

It was Christ who, amid thunder and flame, had proclaimed the law upon Mount Sinai. The glory of God, like

devouring fire, rested upon its summit, and the mountain quaked at the presence of the Lord. The hosts of Israel, lying prostrate upon the earth, had listened in awe to the sacred precepts of the law. What a contrast to the scene upon the mount of the Beatitudes! Under the summer sky, with no sound to break the stillness but the song of birds, Jesus unfolded the principles of His kingdom. Yet He who spoke to the people that day in accents of love, was opening to them the principles of the law proclaimed upon Sinai.

(2) WHAT CHARACTER TRAIT OF GOD WAS, AND STILL IS, REVEALED IN THE RESTORATION OF HIS EARTHLY CHILDREN?

He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1 John 4:8 NKJV)

Related Texts: Deuteronomy 33:2, 3; Psalm 86:5, 15; Ephesians 2:4

When the law was given, Israel, degraded by the long bondage in Egypt, had need to be impressed with the power and majesty of God; yet He revealed Himself to them no less as a God of love.

It was to Moses that God revealed His glory in those wonderful words that have been the treasured heritage of the ages: “The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.” Exodus 34:6, 7.

(3) WHAT TWO HEAVEN-BASED PRINCIPLES DID THE LAW REIN- STATED AT SINAI REINFORCE?

AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH. 'This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these. (Mark 12:30-31 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 John 5; 1 Timothy 1:5; Matthew 7:12; 22:37-40; 1 John 3:11

The law given upon Sinai was the enunciation of the principle of love, a revelation to earth of the law of heaven. It was ordained in the hand of a Mediator—spoken by Him through whose power the hearts of men could be brought into harmony with its principles. God had revealed the purpose of the law when He declared to Israel, “Ye shall be holy men unto Me.” Exodus 22:31.

(4) IN THEIR ZEALOUS KEEPING OF THE LETTER OF THE LAW WHAT IMPORTANT ASPECTS HAD THE JEWISH LEADERS OVERLOOKED?

“But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. (Luke 11:42 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 23:23; Deuteronomy 10:12, 13; Micah 6:8

But Israel had not perceived the spiritual nature of the law, and too often their professed obedience was but an observance of forms and ceremonies, rather

than a surrender of the heart to the sovereignty of love. As Jesus in His character and work represented to men the holy, benevolent, and paternal attributes of God, and presented the worthlessness of mere ceremonial obedience, the Jewish leaders did not receive or understand His words. They thought that He dwelt too lightly upon the requirements of the law; and when He set before them the very truths that were the soul of their divinely appointed service, they, looking only at the external, accused Him of seeking to overthrow it.

(5) HOW DID CHRIST PRESENT HIS TEACHINGS WHICH WAS IN NOTED CONTRAST TO THAT OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES?

And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. (Matthew 7:28-29 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 28:18

The words of Christ, though calmly spoken, were uttered with an earnestness and power that stirred the hearts of the people. They listened for a repetition of the lifeless traditions and exactions of the rabbis, but in vain. They “were astonished at His teaching: for He taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.” The Pharisees noted the vast difference between their manner of instruction and that of Christ. They saw that the majesty and purity and beauty of the truth, with its deep and gentle influence, was taking firm hold upon many minds. The Saviour’s divine love and tenderness drew the hearts of

men to Him. The rabbis saw that by His teaching the whole tenor of the instruction they had given to the people was set at nought. He was tearing down the partition wall that had been so flattering to their pride and exclusiveness; and they feared that, if permitted, He would draw the people entirely away from them. Therefore they followed Him with determined hostility, hoping to find some occasion for bringing Him into disfavor with the multitudes and thus enabling the Sanhedrin to secure His condemnation and death.

(6) WHAT WAS THE FOUNDATION OF CHRIST'S MISSION ON EARTH?

“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. (Matthew 5:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 3:15; Romans 3:31; 8:4; 10:4; Isaiah 42:21

On the mount, Jesus was closely watched by spies; and as He unfolded the principles of righteousness, the Pharisees caused it to be whispered about that His teaching was in opposition to the precepts that God had given from Sinai. The Saviour said nothing to unsettle faith in the religion and institutions that had been given through Moses; for every ray of divine light that Israel's great leader communicated to his people was received from Christ. While many are saying in their hearts that He has come to do away with the law, Jesus in unmistakable language reveals His attitude toward the divine statutes. “Think not,” He said, “that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets.”

(7) WHAT DOES EVEN THE FORCES OF NATURE, IN ORDER AND PERFECT HARMONY, OBEY?

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deep in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast. (Psalms 33:6-9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 78:23-28; Psalm 107:25-30; 147:15-18; 148:1-13

It is the Creator of men, the Giver of the law, who declares that it is not His purpose to set aside its precepts. Everything in nature, from the mote in the sunbeam to the worlds on high, is under law. And upon obedience to these laws the order and harmony of the natural world depend.

So there are great principles of righteousness to control the life of all intelligent beings, and upon conformity to these principles the well-being of the universe depends. Before this earth was called into being, God's law existed. Angels are governed by its principles, and in order for earth to be in harmony with heaven, man also must obey the divine statutes.

(8) WHEN DID THE LORD REVEAL TO THE INHABITANTS OF EARTH THE ETERNAL LAW TO WHICH HE DESIRES OUR OBEDIENCE?

Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment

which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. (1 John 2:7 NKJV)

To man in Eden Christ made known the precepts of the law “when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” Job 38:7. The mission of Christ on earth was not to destroy the law, but by His grace to bring man back to obedience to its precepts.

The beloved disciple, who listened to the words of Jesus on the mount, writing long afterward under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, speaks of the law as of perpetual obligation. He says that “sin is the transgression of the law” and that “whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law.” 1 John 3:4. He makes it plain that the law to which he refers is “an old commandment which ye had from the beginning.” 1 John 2:7. He is speaking of the law that existed at the creation and was reiterated upon Mount Sinai.

(9) IN HIS TIME ON EARTH, WHAT DID CHRIST DO CONCERNING THE LAW?

The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will exalt the law and make it honorable. (Isaiah 42:21 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 71:19; John 15:10; 8:29; Matthew 5:17-20

Speaking of the law, Jesus said, “I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.” He here used the word “fulfill” in the same sense as when He declared to John the Baptist His purpose to “fulfill all righteousness” that is, to fill up the measure of the law’s requirement, to give

an example of perfect conformity to the will of God.

His mission was to “magnify the law, and make it honorable.” Isaiah 42:21. He was to show the spiritual nature of the law, to present its far-reaching principles, and to make plain its eternal obligation.

The divine beauty of the character of Christ, of whom the noblest and most gentle among men are but a faint reflection; of whom Solomon by the Spirit of inspiration wrote, He is “the chiefest among ten thousand, . . . yea, He is altogether lovely” (Song of Solomon 5:10-16); of whom David, seeing Him in prophetic vision, said, “Thou art fairer than the children of men” (Psalm 45:2); Jesus, the express image of the Father’s person, the effulgence of His glory; the self-denying Redeemer, throughout His pilgrimage of love on earth, was a living representation of the character of the law of God. In His life it is made manifest that heaven-born love, Christlike principles, underlie the laws of eternal rectitude.

(10) WHAT STATEMENT DID CHRIST MAKE THAT CONFIRMED THE ETERNAL EXISTENCE OF GOD’S LAW?

And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail. (Luke 16:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 119:160; Luke 21:33; Galatians 3:17-24; Isaiah 51:6; 40:8; Matthew 5:18

“Till heaven and earth pass,” said Jesus, “one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” By His own obedience to the law, Christ

testified to its immutable character and proved that through His grace it could be perfectly obeyed by every son and daughter of Adam. On the mount He declared that not the smallest iota should pass from the law till all things should be accomplished—all things that concern the human race, all that relates to the plan of redemption. He does not teach that the law is ever to be abrogated, but He fixes the eye upon the utmost verge of man's horizon and assures us that until this point is reached the law will retain its authority so that none may suppose it was His mission to abolish the precepts of the law. So long as heaven and earth continue, the holy principles of God's law will remain. His righteousness, "like the great mountains" (Psalm 36:6), will continue, a source of blessing, sending forth streams to refresh the earth.

(11) UNDER DIVINE INSPIRATION, HOW DID DAVID DESCRIBE THE ETERNAL LAW OF GOD?

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; (Psalms 19:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: Hebrews 7:19; James 1:25

Because the law of the Lord is perfect, and therefore changeless, it is impossible for sinful men, in themselves, to meet the standard of its requirement. This was why Jesus came as our Redeemer. It was His mission, by making men partakers of the divine nature, to bring them into harmony with the principles of the law of heaven. When we forsake our sins and receive Christ as our Saviour, the law is exalted. The apostle

Paul asks, “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.” Romans 3:31.

(12) SINCE AS SINNERS WE ARE NOT CAPABLE OF KEEPING THE LAW OF OURSELVES, WHAT HAS CHRIST PROMISED TO DO IN US THAT, BY HIS GRACE, WE MAY OBEY?

“THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR HEARTS, AND IN THEIR MINDS I WILL WRITE THEM,” (Hebrews 10:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Hebrews 8:8-12; Jeremiah 31:33

The new-covenant promise is, “I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.” ... While the system of types which pointed to Christ as the Lamb of God that should take away the sin of the world was to pass away at His death, the principles of righteousness embodied in the Decalogue are as immutable as the eternal throne. Not one command has been annulled, not a jot or tittle has been changed. Those principles that were made known to man in Paradise as the great law of life will exist unchanged in Paradise restored. When Eden shall bloom on earth again, God’s law of love will be obeyed by all beneath the sun.

“Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven.” “All His commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.” “Concerning Thy testimonies, I have known of old that Thou

hast founded them forever.” Ps. 119:89; 111:7, 8; 119:152.

(13) WHAT FEARFUL WARNING IS GIVEN TO THOSE WHO WOULD TRAMPLE UPON EVEN ONE OF GOD’S SACRED COMMANDS?

*‘Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law.’ “And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’ “
(Deuteronomy 27:26 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Psalm 119:6, 128; Galatians 3:10-12; Deuteronomy 12:32

“Whosoever . . . shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:19.

That is, he shall have no place therein. For he who willfully breaks one commandment, does not, in spirit and truth, keep any of them. “Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” James 2:10.

It is not the greatness of the act of disobedience that constitutes sin, but the fact of variance from God’s expressed will in the least particular; for this shows that there is yet communion between the soul and sin. The heart is divided in its service. There is a virtual denial of God, a rebellion against the laws of His government.

(14) WHY MUST OUR WILLS BE SURRENDER FULLY TO THE WILL OF GOD—HIS LAW, BEFORE WE CAN ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN?

*There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.
(Proverbs 14:12 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Proverbs 16:25; Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9; 13:23

Were men free to depart from the Lord's requirements and to set up a standard of duty for themselves, there would be a variety of standards to suit different minds and the government would be taken out of the Lord's hands. The will of man would be made supreme, and the high and holy will of God—His purpose of love toward His creatures—would be dishonored, disrespected.

Whenever men choose their own way, they place themselves in controversy with God. They will have no place in the kingdom of heaven, for they are at war with the very principles of heaven. In disregarding the will of God, they are placing themselves on the side of Satan, the enemy of God and man. Not by one word, not by many words, but by every word that God has spoken, shall man live. We cannot disregard one word, however trifling it may seem to us, and be safe.

(15) WHAT BLESSING IS PROMISED TO THOSE WHO, IN LOVE, SURRENDER TO THE WILL OF GOD AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS?

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. (Revelation 22:14 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 112:1; 119:1-3; 119:165; Proverbs 3:1, 2; Matthew 7:21-23; 1 Cor. 7:19; Deuter. 26:16-19; 7:11-15

There is not a commandment of the law that is not for the good and happi-

ness of man, both in this life and in the life to come. In obedience to God's law, man is surrounded as with a hedge and kept from the evil. He who breaks down this divinely erected barrier at one point has destroyed its power to protect him; for he has opened a way by which the enemy can enter to waste and ruin.

By venturing to disregard the will of God upon one point, our first parents opened the floodgates of woe upon the world. And every individual who follows their example will reap a similar result. The love of God underlies every precept of His law, and he who departs from the commandment is working his own unhappiness and ruin.

(16) HOW DOES GOD ASK US TO SHOW OUR LOVE FOR HIM?

“If you love Me, keep My commandments. (John 14:15 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 14:21-23; 15:10, 11; 1 John 2:3-5; 5:2, 3; 3:22, 23

I realize that everything in nature is under law; and upon obedience to these laws the order and harmony of the natural world depend. In the same way God ordained great principles of righteousness to govern the welfare of all intelligent beings.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I understand that the law given upon Sinai was the a revelation to earth of the changeless law of heaven. The Bible is clear that this law of love is perfect and therefore impossible for sinful men, in themselves, to meet the standards of its requirements.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am so thankful it was ordained in the hand of a Mediator—spoken by Him through whose power the hearts of men could be brought into harmony with its principles.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I love Christ and want to show my love for Him as He has asked—obedience to His loved-based commandments.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am so grateful that by His new-covenant promise, “I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them” this can become a reality in my life. It is my prayer that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, He will cause me to love His laws and walk in them that I may bring honor to His name.

Circle: Yes Undecided

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.



The Meaning of Righteousness - 13

This lesson is based on Matthew 5:20.

(1) WHAT WARNING DID CHRIST GIVE CONCERNING THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES?

For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:20 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 23:23-28; Luke 11:39, 40, 44; Romans 10:2, 3

The scribes and Pharisees had accused not only Christ but His disciples as sinners because of their disregard of the rabbinical rites and observances. Often the disciples had been perplexed and troubled by censure and accusation from those whom they had been accustomed

to revere as religious teachers. Jesus unveiled the deception. He declared that the righteousness upon which the Pharisees set so great value was worthless.

The Jewish nation had claimed to be the special, loyal people who were favored of God; but Christ represented their religion as devoid of saving faith. All their pretensions of piety, their human inventions and ceremonies, and even their boasted performance of the outward requirements of the law, could not avail to make them holy. They were not pure in heart or noble and Christlike in character.

(2) BY WHAT POWERFUL PRINCIPLE WILL FAITH WORK RIGHTEOUSNESS IN OUR SOUL?

For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love. (Galatians 5:5-6 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 3:14-17; 1 Corinthians 13:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:8

A legal religion is insufficient to bring the soul into harmony with God. The hard, rigid orthodoxy of the Pharisees, destitute of contrition, tenderness, or love, was only a stumbling block to sinners. They were like the salt that had lost its savor; for their influence had no power to preserve the world from corruption. The only true faith is that which “worketh by love” purify the soul. It is as leaven that transforms the character.

(3) WHAT THREE REMEDIES DID GOD, THROUGH THE PROPHET MICAH, PRESCRIBE FOR THE

SOUL SEEKING JUSTIFICATION WITH GOD?

He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8 NKJV)

Related Texts: James 2:20

All this the Jews should have learned from the teachings of the prophets. Centuries before, the cry of the soul for justification with God had found voice and answer in the words of the prophet Micah: “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? . . . He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” Micah 6:6-8.

(4) WHY IS IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR MANKIND, BY THE FRUIT OF THEIR OWN EFFORTS, TO KEEP THE RIGHTEOUS AND HOLY LAW OF GOD?

Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No one! (Job 14:4 NKJV)

But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away. (Isaiah 64:6 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 3:23; Jeremiah 17:9; 13:23; Ephesians 2:5

The prophet Hosea had pointed out what constitutes the very essence of Pharisaism, in the words, “Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself.” Hosea 10:1. In their professed service to God, the Jews were really working for self. Their righteousness was the fruit of their own efforts to keep the law according to their own ideas and for their own selfish benefit. Hence it could be no better than they were. In their endeavor to make themselves holy, they were trying to bring a clean thing out of an unclean. The law of God is as holy as He is holy, as perfect as He is perfect. It presents to men the righteousness of God. It is impossible for man, of himself, to keep this law; for the nature of man is depraved, deformed, and wholly unlike the character of God. The works of the selfish heart are “as an unclean thing;” and “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.”

(5) WHY DID THE PHARISEES FAIL TO ATTAIN TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS?

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. (Romans 10:3 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 9:30-32; Isaiah 64:6; Luke 16:15; Galatians 5:4

While the law is holy, the Jews could not attain righteousness by their own efforts to keep the law.

(6) HOW IS IT POSSIBLE FOR SINFUL HUMANS TO KEEP THE RIGHTEOUS AND HOLY COMMANDMENTS OF GOD?

and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; (Philippians 3:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 1:17; 3:22-26; Isaiah 51:8; 2 Peter 1:1

The Disciples of Christ must obtain righteousness of a different character from that of the Pharisees, if they would enter the kingdom of heaven. God offered them, in His Son, the perfect righteousness of the law. If they would open their hearts fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, would dwell in them, transforming them into His own likeness; and thus through God's free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires. But the Pharisees rejected Christ; "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness," they would not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God.

Jesus proceeded to show His hearers what it means to keep the commandments of God—that it is a reproduction in themselves of the character of Christ. For in Him, God was daily made manifest before them.

(7) LIKE PAUL, WHAT MUST WE CHOOSE EACH DAY TO DO SO THAT THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST CAN BE CONTINUALLY DEMONSTRATED IN OUR LIVES?

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God,

*who loved me and gave Himself for me.
(Galatians 2:20 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Galatians 5:24; 6:14;
Romans 6:4-6

**(8) WHEN WE LIVE IN SUBMIS-
SION TO HIS PLAN, WHAT WON-
DERFUL PROMISE MAY WE
CLAIM FROM CHRIST?**

*Fear not, for I am with you; Be not
dismayed, for I am your God. I will
strengthen you, Yes, I will help you,
I will uphold you with My righteous
right hand.’ (Isaiah 41:10 NKJV)*

*I realize that the law of God is as holy
as He is holy, as perfect as He is perfect.
It presents to men the standard of righ-
teousness of a pure and perfect God.*

Circle: Yes Undecided

*I realize that I cannot bring a clean
thing out of an unclean. It is impossible
for me, of myself, to keep God’s holy
law; for the nature I have is depraved,
deformed, and wholly unlike His char-
acter. Of myself, my righteousness can
never attain to His perfect standard.*

Circle: Yes Undecided

*I see the dangers of, like the Pharisees,
becoming self-righteousness by a le-
galistic religion which is not able to
bring the soul into harmony with God. I
understand that true religion and righ-
teousness is based on faith which “wor-
keth by love” purify the soul. It is as
leaven that transforms the character.*

Circle: Yes Undecided

In humble faith I choose to open my heart fully to receive Christ, and let the very life of God, His love, dwell in me. I claim His promises to transform me into His own likeness; and thus through faith in Him and His free gift, to possess the blessing of righteousness which the law requires.

Circle: Yes Undecided

[illegible]



Harboring Malice and Hatred - 14

This lesson is based on Matthew 5:21, 22.

(1) WHAT PREVIOUS PRINCIPLE CONCERNING THE TREATMENT OF OTHERS WAS CHRIST RE-ITERATING THAT DAY ON THE MOUNTAIN SIDE?

‘You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. (Leviticus 19:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 2:9, 11; 3:13-15

Through Moses the Lord had said, “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart. . . . Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy

neighbor as thyself.” ...The truths which Christ presented were the same that had been taught by the prophets, but they had become obscured through hardness of heart and love of sin.

The Saviour’s words revealed to His hearers the fact that, while they were condemning others as transgressors, they were themselves equally guilty; for they were cherishing malice and hatred.

(2) IN THEIR CHERISHED HATRED TOWARDS THE ROMANS, WHAT FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPT OF GOD’S HOLY LAW WERE THEY, IN HEART, VIOLATING?

“You shall not murder. (Exodus 20:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: Exodus 21:14; Genesis 9:6; Deuteronomy 5:17

Across the sea from the place where they were assembled was the country of Bashan, a lonely region, whose wild gorges and wooded hills had long been a favorite lurking ground for criminals of all descriptions. Reports of robbery and murder committed there were fresh in the minds of the people, and many were zealous in denouncing these evildoers. At the same time they were themselves passionate and contentious; they cherished the most bitter hatred of their Roman oppressors and felt themselves at liberty to hate and despise all other peoples, and even their own countrymen who did not in all things conform to their ideas. In all this they were violating the law which declares, “Thou shalt not kill.”

(3) WHAT DOES NOT ABIDE IN US IF WE, LIKE ISRAEL, CHOOSE

TO HARBOR HATRED TOWARDS OUR FELLOW MAN?

Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. (1 John 3:15 NKJV)

Related Texts: Revelation 21:8; 22:14, 15; Galatians 5:21

The spirit of hatred and revenge originated with Satan, and it led him to put to death the Son of God. Whoever cherishes malice or unkindness is cherishing the same spirit, and its fruit will be unto death. In the revengeful thought the evil deed lies enfolded, as the plant in the seed. “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.” .

..
**(4) BECAUSE EVERY PERSON
IS CREATED IN HIS IMAGE,
HOW DOES GOD ASK US TO
TREAT OTHERS, EVEN WITH
OUR WORDS?**

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. (Philippians 2:3-4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 14:4; 1 Corinthians 4:7

“Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca [vain fellow], shall be in danger of the council.” In the gift of His Son for our redemption, God has shown how high a value He places upon every human soul, and He gives to no man lib-

erty to speak contemptuously of another. We shall see faults and weaknesses in those about us, but God claims every soul as His property—His by creation, and doubly His as purchased by the precious blood of Christ. All were created in His image, and even the most degraded are to be treated with respect and tenderness. God will hold us accountable for even a word spoken in contempt of one soul for whom Christ laid down His life.

(5) WHAT DOES THE BIBLE CALL ONE WHO CHOOSES THE COURSE OF ANGER OR HATRED TOWARDS HIS BROTHER?

Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, For anger rests in the bosom of fools. (Ecclesiastes 7:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 14:17; 16:32; 26:23-26; James 1:19

“Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire.” R.V. In the Old Testament the word “fool” is used to designate an apostate, or one who has abandoned himself to wickedness. Jesus says that whoever shall condemn his brother as an apostate or a despiser of God shows that he himself is worthy of the same condemnation.

(6) WHAT TITLE HAS SATAN BEEN GIVEN AS A RESULT OF HIS HATE-DRIVEN, VERBAL ATTACKS OF THE BRETHREN?

Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our

brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. (Revelation 12:10 NKJV)

Christ Himself, when contending with Satan about the body of Moses, “dared not bring against him a reviling accusation.” Jude 9. Had He done this, He would have placed Himself on Satan’s ground, for accusation is the weapon of the evil one. He is called in Scripture, “the accuser of our brethren.”

Jesus would employ none of Satan’s weapons. He met him with the words, “The Lord rebuke thee.” Jude 9.

(7) WHAT WILL ULTIMATELY BE REVEALED WHEN HATRED AND DECEIT ARE PRESENT IN THE HEART?

Though his hatred is covered by deceit, His wickedness will be revealed before the assembly. (Proverbs 26:26 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 26:24, 25; 12:5; 20; Psalm 28:3

(8) HOW DOES THE HARBORING OF BITTERNESS AFFECT OUR ABILITY TO WALK IN SPIRITUAL LIGHT?

But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes. (1 John 2:11 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 3:15; 4:20; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3; Proverbs 10:12; 14:17

(9) LIKE CHRIST WHEN SUFFERING ON THE CROSS, WHAT SHOULD BE OUR RE-

SPONSE WHEN TEMPTED TO RETALIATION?

Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” And they divided His garments and cast lots. (Luke 23:34 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 6:27, 28; 1 Peter 2:20-23; Acts 7:60; Romans 12:14

His example is for us. When we are brought in conflict with the enemies of Christ, we should say nothing in a spirit of retaliation or that would bear even the appearance of a railing accusation. He who stands as a mouthpiece for God should not utter words which even the Majesty of heaven would not use when contending with Satan. We are to leave with God the work of judging and condemning.

(10) WHEN PETER CAME TO CHRIST ASKING HOW MANY TIMES WE SHOULD FORGIVE, WHAT WAS CHRIST’S RESPONSE?

Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. (Matthew 18:22 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 18:21; Ephesians 4:31, 32; Colossians 3:13

(11) HOW DOES GOD DETERMINE HIS MEASURE OF FORGIVENESS TO US?

“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will

your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” (Mark 11:25-26 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 6:12, 14, 15;
Romans 12:21

As I study the loving character of Christ, I realize that love is the foundation of God’s kingdom and His purpose for all His created beings.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that the opposite of love is to cherish malice or hatred. The same principle of darkness which Satan, in its fullness, demonstrated at the cross.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I see that in every vengeful thought the evil deed lies enfolded, as the plant in the seed. Whoever cherishes malice or unkindness is cherishing the same spirit as the devil and its fruit will lead unto death.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that all were created in God’s image and even the most degraded human is to be treated with respect and tenderness. God will hold us accountable for even a word spoken in contempt of a soul for whom Christ died.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I pray that I can follow Christ’s example of love and compassion for all mankind. By your grace Lord, please help me not to say a word or harbor a thought of malice or retaliation to my fellow man created in Your image.

Circle: Yes Undecided



Love and Reconciliation - 15

This lesson is based on Matthew 5:24.

(1) WHAT DID CHRIST SAY IS THE SECOND GREATEST COMMANDMENT?

And the second, like it, is this: ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:31 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 7:12; 22:39; Luke 10:27; Romans 13:8, 9

(2) HOW DID THE GOOD SAMARITAN IN CHRIST’S PARABLE DEMONSTRATE LOVE?

So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?” And he said, “He who

showed mercy on him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.” (Luke 10:36-37 NKJV)

Related Texts: James 2:15, 16; 1 John 3:17, 18; Luke 6:32-36; Micah 6:8

The love of God is something more than a mere negation; it is a positive and active principle, a living spring, ever flowing to bless others. If the love of Christ dwells in us, we shall not only cherish no hatred toward our fellows, but we shall seek in every way to manifest love toward them.

(3) WHAT DID CHRIST SAY SHOULD BE OUR REACTION TOWARDS THOSE WHO OFFEND US?

But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. (Matthew 5:39 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 5:44; Leviticus 19:18; Proverbs 24:29; Romans 12:17-19; 1 Corinthians 6:7

(4) AS OUR EXAMPLE, WHAT WAS CHRIST’S REACTION TO THOSE WHO INSULTED AND ABUSED HIM?

Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” And they divided His garments and cast lots. (Luke 23:34 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Peter 3:9; 2:20-23; 1 Corinthians 4:12; Acts 7:58-60

(5) WHAT SHOULD WE DO BEFORE CALLING UPON THE MERCY OF GOD AND HIS PARDONING GRACE?

Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. (James 5:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Acts 19:18; Matthew 3:6; Leviticus 5:5; Psalm 32:5; Proverbs 28:13

Jesus said, “If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” [Matt. 5:24]. The sacrificial offerings expressed faith that through Christ the offerer had become a partaker of the mercy and love of God. But for one to express faith in God’s pardoning love, while he himself indulged an unloving spirit, would be a mere farce.

(6) WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FORGIVENESS WE DEMONSTRATE TO OTHERS AND GOD’S FORGIVENESS TO US?

“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew 6:14-15 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9; Mark 11:26

(7) WHAT CHARACTERISTIC OF GOD ARE WE, AS HIS EARTHLY CHILDREN, TO REPRESENT IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS?

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and

he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. (1 John 4:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 4:20

When one who professes to serve God wrongs or injures a brother, he misrepresents the character of God to that brother, and the wrong must be confessed, he must acknowledge it to be sin, in order to be in harmony with God. Our brother may have done us a greater wrong than we have done him, but this does not lessen our responsibility. If when we come before God we remember that another has aught against us, we are to leave our gift of prayer, of thanksgiving, of freewill offering, and go to the brother with whom we are at variance, and in humility confess our own sin and ask to be forgiven.

(8) WHAT EXAMPLE OF RESTITUTION DID ZACCHAEUS--THE TAX COLLECTOR, DEMONSTRATE FOLLOWING HIS CONVERSION?

Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." (Luke 19:8 NKJV)

Related Texts: Numbers 5:7; Leviticus 6:4-7; 5:16; Exodus 22:1, 4, 7, 9

If we have in any manner defrauded or injured our brother, we should make restitution. If we have unwittingly borne false witness, if we have misstated his words, if we have injured his influence in any way, we should go to the ones with whom we have conversed about

him, and take back all our injurious mis-statements.

(9) WHAT BIBLICAL APPROACH TO RECONCILIATION SHOULD WE FOLLOW WHEN SOMEONE HAS OFFENDED US?

Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him.” (Luke 17:3-4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 6:6-8; Colossians 3:13; Leviticus 19:17; Psalm 141:5

If matters of difficulty between brethren were not laid open before others, but frankly spoken of between themselves in the spirit of Christian love, how much evil might be prevented! How many roots of bitterness whereby many are defiled would be destroyed, and how closely and tenderly might the followers of Christ be united in His love!

(10) BY GOD’S GRACE, WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT WHEN WE FOLLOW CHRIST’S METHOD OF RECONCILIATION WITH OUR BROTHER?

“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. (Matthew 18:15 NKJV)

Related Texts: James 5:20; Romans 12:21; 1 Corinthians 9:19-21

(11) BY GOD'S GRACE, WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT OF RECONCILIATION BETWEEN US AND HIM?

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, (Acts 3:19 NKJV)

Related Texts: Acts 2:28; 2 Timothy 2:25; Isaiah 1:18-20; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Romans 4:7; Micah 7:19

In the example of Christ's life, I see that love is something more than a mere negation; it is a positive and active principle, a living spring flowing through us, ever flowing to bless others.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I see how, as a Christian, this principle should be the foundation to every relationship and interaction with God and our fellow man.

Circle: Yes Undecided

It is logical that when one who professes to serve God wrongs or injures a brother, he misrepresents the character of God to that brother, and the wrong must be confessed, he must acknowledge it to be sin, in order to be in harmony with God.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I understand why it is imperative that I go to any brother or sister that I have been in conflict with or have defrauded and do my best to make reconciliation before expecting God to do the same for me.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Circle: Yes Undecided

Circle: Yes Undecided

[illegible]



The Origin of Sin - 16

This lesson is based on Matthew 5:28.

(1) WHAT INDICATES THE TRUE STATE OF THE CHARACTER?

*For as he thinks in his heart, so is he...
(Proverbs 23:7 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Proverbs 4:23; Luke 11:39; Matthew 23:26

The Jews prided themselves on their morality and looked with horror upon the sensual practices of the heathen. The presence of the Roman officers whom the imperial rule had brought into Palestine was a continual offense to the people, for with these foreigners had come in a flood of heathen customs, lust, and dissipation. In Capernaum, Roman officials with their gay paramours haunted the parades and promenades, and often the sound of revelry broke

upon the stillness of the lake as their pleasure boats glided over the quiet waters. The people expected to hear from Jesus a stern denunciation of this class, but what was their astonishment as they listened to words that laid bare the evil of their own hearts!

(2) WHERE DOES THE CHOICE TO SIN ORIGINATE?

And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled (Colossians 1:21 NKJV)

Related Texts: Hosea 4:8; Jeremiah 17:1; Daniel 11:27; Colossians 1:21

(3) WHERE DOES THE SIN OF HATRED ORIGINATE?

‘You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. (Leviticus 19:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: Zechariah 8:17; Matthew 5:22

(4) HOW AND WHERE DOES THE SIN OF ADULTERY ORIGINATE?

But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:28 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Peter 2:14; Proverbs 6:25; 1 John 2:16

When the thought of evil is loved and cherished, however secretly, said Jesus, it shows that sin still reigns in the heart. The soul is still in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.

He who finds pleasure in dwelling upon scenes of impurity, who indulges the evil thought, the lustful look, may behold in the open sin, with its burden of shame and heart-breaking grief, the true nature of the evil which he has hidden in the chambers of the soul. The season of temptation, under which, it may be, one falls into grievous sin, does not create the evil that is revealed, but only develops or makes manifest that which was hidden and latent in the heart. As a man “thinketh in his heart, so is he;” for out of the heart “are the issues of life.”

(5) WHERE DOES GOD LOOK TO PERFORM HIS RIGHTEOUS JUDGEMENT?

I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings. (Jer 17:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 7:9; 24:3, 4; 1 Samuel 16:7; 1 Chronicles 28:9; Jeremiah 11:20; 20:12

(6) WHAT DOES PAUL ADMONISH THE CHRISTIAN TO DO WITH THEIR MIND?

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1Pet 1:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 12:2; 15:5; Mark 12:30; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:2

(7) WHOSE MIND SHOULD WE AS CHRISTIANS HAVE WITHIN US?

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, (Php 2:5 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Corinthians 2:16

(8) IN THE BATTLE FOR OUR HEARTS AND MINDS, WHAT PROMISE MAY WE CLAIM?

But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (Jer 31:33 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 26:3; Philippians 4:7; Deuteronomy 30:6

I realize that when Scripture refers to the “heart” or the “mind” it is referring to the decision making portion of the brain where our God-given freedom of the will is exercised.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I understand that the great controversy between good and evil is in, and for the loyalty of, my heart and mind.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I understand that a thought dwelt upon will later, if given the opportunity, manifest itself by action—as a man “thinketh in his heart, so is he.”

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize my mind is carnal and needs to be crucified anew each day. I choose to follow the advice of Paul

*and, by the grace of Christ, gird up
the loins of my mind.*

Circle: Yes Undecided

It is my prayer for the mind of Christ to be within me and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, that I may bring Him glory with my every thought and action.

Circle: Yes Undecided

[illegible]



Sinful Habits and the Will - 17

This lesson is based on Matthew 5:29, 30.

(1) COMPARING THE PHYSICAL TO THE SPIRITUAL, WHAT DID CHRIST SAY IS BETTER TO DO WITH ANYTHING THAT COULD CAUSE THE LOSS OF OUR SOUL?

And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. (Mat 5:30 NKJV)

Related Texts: Mark 9:43-48; 1 John 2:15-17; Galatians 5:24, 25; Titus 2:12

To prevent disease from spreading to the body and destroying life, a man would submit to part even with his right hand. Much more should we be

willing to surrender that which imperils the life of the soul.

(2) WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF THE “CORDS” (HABITS) THAT ENTRAP US FROM WHICH CHRIST SEEKS TO DELIVER?

His own iniquities entrap the wicked man, And he is caught in the cords of his sin. (Pro 5:22 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 29:6; 1:31; 11:5, 6; Psalm 7:15, 16; 9:15; Jeremiah 2:19

(3) THROUGH THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL, WHAT PROMISE OF VICTORY OVER THE BONDAGE OF SIN MAY WE CLAIM?

And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.” (Mat 1:21 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 6:14; 8:2; Micah 7:19; John 10:10

Through the gospel, souls that are degraded and enslaved by Satan are to be redeemed to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. God’s purpose is not merely to deliver from the suffering that is the inevitable result of sin, but to save from sin itself.

(4) IN WHOSE IMAGE WAS MANKIND ORIGINALLY CREATED AND IS GOD’S DESIRE TO RESTORE?

God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Gen 1:27 NKJV)

Related Texts: Genesis 9:6; Psalm 139:14; Ephesians 4:24

The soul, corrupted and deformed, is to be purified, transformed, that it may be clothed in “the beauty of the Lord our God,” “conformed to the image of His Son.” “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” Psalm 90:17; Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 2:9. Eternity alone can reveal the glorious destiny to which man, restored to God’s image, may attain.

(5) WHAT MUST WE ALLOW CHRIST TO DO WITH OUR WILL AND MIND SO HE CAN FREE US FROM THE BONDAGE OF SIN AND RESTORE US?

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Rom 12:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 2:15-17; Romans 12:1; 6:11-13; James 1:21, 22; Psalm 32:5; 143:10, 11

In order for us to reach this high ideal, that which causes the soul to stumble must be sacrificed. It is through the will that sin retains its hold upon us. The surrender of the will is represented as plucking out the eye or cutting off the hand. Often it seems to us that to surrender the will to God is to consent to go through life maimed or crippled. But it is better, says Christ, for self to be maimed, wounded, crippled, if thus you may enter into life. That which you look upon as disaster is the door to highest benefit.

(6) WHO WILL BE THE ONE TO DELIVER US FROM SIN AND WORK THE RESTORATION IN US?

O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!... (Rom 7:24-25 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Corinthians 15:57; 1 John 5:4, 5; Philippians 3:20, 21; 1:6; Psalm 107:16; 116:16

(7) WHAT IS OUR ROLE IN THE RESTORATION PROCESS?

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (Jam 4:7-8 NKJV)

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (Eph 6:11 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ephesians 6:12-18; Romans 13:14; Luke 10:27; 1 Peter 4:19

(8) WHAT MUST WE DO TO RETAIN THE GIFT OF ABUNDANT LIFE GIVEN TO US BY CHRIST?

“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. (Joh 15:5-6 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 5:16; Hebrews 10:38; Colossians 2:6-8

God is the fountain of life, and we can have life only as we are in communion with Him. Separated from God, existence may be ours for a little time, but we do not possess life. “She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.” 1 Timothy 5:6.

(9) WHEN WE HAVE VICTORY OVER SIN AND TRULY EXPERIENCE LIFE, LIKE PAUL, WHAT WILL BE OUR TESTIMONY?

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Gal 2:20 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 5:24, 25; Romans 6:5-8, 13; 8:2; Colossians 2:11-13; 3:3, 4

Only through the surrender of our will to God is it possible for Him to impart life to us. Only by receiving His life through self-surrender is it possible, said Jesus, for these hidden sins, which I have pointed out, to be overcome. It is possible that you may bury them in your hearts and conceal them from human eyes, but how will you stand in God’s presence?

(10) WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE SOUL WHO CLINGS TO THE SELFISHNESS OF SIN REFUSING TO YIELD THEIR WILL TO GOD?

The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son.

The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. (Eze 18:20 NKJV)

Related Texts: Jeremiah 31:30; Leviticus 5:17; Job 31:3

If you cling to self, refusing to yield your will to God, you are choosing death. To sin, wherever found, God is a consuming fire. If you choose sin, and refuse to separate from it, the presence of God, which consumes sin, must consume you.

(11) WHEN THE WILL IS YIELDED AND PURIFIED BY GOD, WHO BEARS THE BURDEN OF OUR SIN?

Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation. (Heb 9:28 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Peter 3:18; 1 Peter 2:21-24; 1 John 3:5; Matthew 26:28; Isaiah 53:4-6; Romans 5:6-8; 8:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4

It will require a sacrifice to give yourself to God; but it is a sacrifice of the lower for the higher, the earthly for the spiritual, the perishable for the eternal. God does not design that our will should be destroyed, for it is only through its exercise that we can accomplish what He would have us do. Our will is to be yielded to Him, that we may receive it again, purified and refined, and so linked in sympathy with the Divine that He can pour through us the tides of His love and power. How-

ever bitter and painful this surrender may appear to the willful, wayward heart, yet “it is profitable for thee.”

(12) WHEN THE WILL IS FULLY SURRENDERED TO HIM, FROM WHOM WILL OUR STRENGTH COME?

O God, You are more awesome than Your holy places. The God of Israel is He who gives strength and power to His people. Blessed be God! (Psa 68:35 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 29:11; 2 Corinthians 12:9, 10; Isaiah 40:29-31; Colossians 1:11; Philippians 4:13

Not until he fell crippled and helpless upon the breast of the covenant angel did Jacob know the victory of conquering faith and receive the title of a prince with God. It was when he “halted upon his thigh” (Genesis 32:31) that the armed bands of Esau were stilled before him, and the Pharaoh, proud heir of a kingly line, stooped to crave his blessing. So the Captain of our salvation was made “perfect through sufferings” (Hebrews 2:10), and the children of faith “out of weakness were made strong,” and “turned to flight the armies of the aliens” (Hebrews 11:34). So do “the lame take the prey” (Isaiah 33:23), and the weak become “as David,” and “the house of David . . . as the angel of the Lord” (Zechariah 12:8).

(13) IF WE COME TO THE LORD IN HUMBLE REPENTANCE AND SURRENDER THE WILL TO GOD, WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT?

*To console those who mourn in Zion,
To give them beauty for ashes, The oil*

of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.” (Isa 61:3 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 11:28-30; Romans 6:22; 8:2; 2 Corinthians 3:17

I realize it is through the will that sin retains its hold upon me; and only through the surrender of my will to God is it possible for Him to impart life and redeem my degraded soul to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I choose to give my will to God; giving the earthly for the spiritual, the perishable for the eternal. I yield my will to Him that I may receive it again, purified and refined that He can pour through me the tides of His love and power.

Circle: Yes Undecided

[illegible]



The Blessing of Marriage - 18

This lesson is based on Matthew 19:3.

(1) WHAT WAS GOD’S REASON FOR THE CREATION OF THE IN- STITUTION OF MARRIAGE?

And the LORD God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.” (Gen 2:18 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 18:22; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 4:10

(2) IN GOD’S INTIMATE DESIGN, HOW IS THE EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL BOND OF MARRIAGE CONSUMMATED AND NURTURED?

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Gen 2:24 NKJV)

Related Texts: Mark 10:6-9

(3) WITH HOW MANY PARTNERS AND BETWEEN WHAT GENDERS DID GOD CREATE AND BLESS MARRIAGE?

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Gen 2:24 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Timothy 3:2; Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:25-32

(4) HOW LONG DID GOD DESIGN THE UNION OF MARRIAGE TO LAST?

A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. (1Co 7:39 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 7:1-3

(5) WHAT IS THE BENEFIT IN HAVING THE RIGHT COMPANION AS WE TRAVEL THE JOURNEY OF LIFE?

Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up. (Ecc 4:9-10 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ecclesiastes 4:11, 12; Galatians 6:2; 1 Corinthians 7:2; Proverbs 18:22

(6) HOW DOES GOD DESIRE US TO VIEW THE MARRIAGE UNION THAT HE CREATED; AND, HOW

ARE WE TO RESPECT AND MAINTAIN THE BEAUTIFUL PHYSICAL INTIMACY DESIGNED WITHIN IT?

Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge. (Heb 13:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 5:15-23

(7) THOUGH GOD'S PLAN IS FOR MARRIAGE TO LAST A LIFE TIME, IF THE VOW TO EXCLUSIVE INTIMACY IS BROKEN, WHAT DOES HE ALLOW?

And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.” (Mat 19:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Mark 10:11, 12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7:10-16

(8) HOW DOES GOD FEEL ABOUT THE TERMINATION OF THIS SACRED UNION BY DIVORCE?

“For the LORD God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one's garment with violence,” Says the LORD of hosts. Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously.” (Mal 2:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 19:4-6

Among the Jews a man was permitted to put away his wife for the most trivial offenses, and the woman was then at liberty to marry again. This practice led to great wretchedness and sin. In the Sermon on the

Mount Jesus declared plainly that there could be no dissolution of the marriage tie, except for unfaithfulness to the marriage vow. “Everyone,” He said, “that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery.”

(9) WHAT ARE THOSE WHO PRACTICE ANY TYPE OF SEXUAL ACTIVITY OUTSIDE OF THE UNION OF MARRIAGE CALLED, AND WHAT WILL THEY NOT INHERIT?

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. (1Co 6:9-10 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 5:19, 21; Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5, 6; Revelation 22:15

(10) WHAT GOOD COUNSEL DOES SCRIPTURE GIVE THAT CAN WISELY BE APPLIED IN THE SELECTION OF A LIFE-LONG COMPANION AND WHY?

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? (2Co 6:14-15 NKJV)

Related Texts: Deuteronomy 7:3, 4; Nehemiah 13:1-3, 23-26; Psalm 106:35; 1 Corinthians 15:33; Ephesians 5:7-11

(11) WHEN, BY WHOM, AND BETWEEN WHOM, WAS THE FIRST MARRIAGE UNION PERFORMED?

God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Gen 1:27 NKJV)

Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day. (Gen 1:31 NKJV)

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Gen 2:21-24 NKJV)

When the Pharisees afterward questioned Him concerning the lawfulness of divorce, Jesus pointed His hearers back to the marriage institution as ordained at creation. "Because of the hardness of your hearts," He said, Moses "suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so." Matthew 19:8. He referred them to the blessed days of Eden, when God pronounced all things "very good."

Then marriage and the Sabbath had their origin, twin institutions for the glory of God in the benefit of humanity. Then, as the Creator joined the hands of the holy pair in wedlock, saying, A man shall “leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one” (Genesis 2:24), He enunciated the law of marriage for all the children of Adam to the close of time. That which the Eternal Father Himself had pronounced good was the law of highest blessing and development for man.

(12) WHAT METAPHOR IS EMPLOYED BY SCRIPTURE AS A SYMBOL OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH?

Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” (Rev 19:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 9:15; 2 Corinthians 11:2; John 3:29; Isaiah 62:5; 61:10; Hosea 2:20; Mark 2:19

Like every other one of God’s good gifts entrusted to the keeping of humanity, marriage has been perverted by sin; but it is the purpose of the gospel to restore its purity and beauty. In both the Old and the New Testament the marriage relation is employed to represent the tender and sacred union that exists between Christ and His people, the redeemed ones whom He has purchased at the cost of Calvary. “Fear not,” He says; “thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.” “Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you.” Isaiah 54:4, 5; Jeremiah 3:14. In

the “Song of Songs” we hear the bride’s voice saying, “My Beloved is mine, and I am His.” And He who is to her “the chiefest among ten thousand,” speaks to His chosen one, “Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee.” Song of Solomon 2:16; 5:10; 4:7.

(13) WHAT INSTRUCTION IS GIVEN TO HUSBANDS BY CHRIST’S EXAMPLE FOR THE TREATMENT OF THEIR WIVES?

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, (Eph 5:25 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ephesians 5:25-32; Proverbs 5:18, 19; Colossians 3:19; 1 Peter 3:7

In later times Paul the apostle, writing to the Ephesian Christians, declares that the Lord has constituted the husband the head of the wife, to be her protector, the house-band, binding the members of the family together, even as Christ is the head of the church and the Saviour of the mystical body. Therefore he says, “As the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives.” Ephesians 5:24-28.

(14) WHEN SHE RECEIVES LOVE, WHAT WILL THE WIFE RECIPROCATATE BACK TO THE HUS-

BAND IN A CHRIST-CENTERED MARRIAGE?

Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (Eph 5:33 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ephesians 5:22

(15) WHAT IS THE KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE AND A BLESSED HOME AS DESCRIBED IN PSALM 128?

Blessed is every one who fears the LORD, Who walks in His ways. (Psa 128:1 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 3:5, 6; 24:3, 4; Joshua 24:15, 16; Luke 11:17; Hebrews 13:4

The grace of Christ, and this alone, can make this institution what God designed it should be—an agent for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. And thus the families of earth, in their unity and peace and love, may represent the family of heaven.

(16) WHERE CAN THE BROKEN-HEARTED, DUE TO THE BETRAYAL OF THE MARRIAGE COVENANT, FIND COMFORT AND HOPE?

This is my comfort in my affliction, For Your word has given me life. (Psa 119:50 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 54:5; 1 Peter 5:7; Romans 15:4; 8:28; Hebrews 13:5; Philippians 4:4-7

Now, as in Christ's day, the condition of society presents a sad comment upon

heaven's ideal of this sacred relation. Yet even for those who have found bitterness and disappointment where they had hoped for companionship and joy, the gospel of Christ offers a solace. The patience and gentleness which His Spirit can impart will sweeten the bitter lot.

The heart in which Christ dwells will be so filled, so satisfied, with His love that it will not be consumed with longing to attract sympathy and attention to itself. And through the surrender of the soul to God, His wisdom can accomplish what human wisdom fails to do.

(17) IF, BY THE GRACE OF GOD, THERE IS THE SPIRIT OF REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS SHARED BETWEEN SPOUSES, WHAT DOES GOD HAVE THE POWER TO DO FOR A BROKEN MARRIAGE?

For the LORD will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy and gladness will be found in it, Thanksgiving and the voice of melody. (Isa 51:3 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 58:12; 61:1-7; 2 Corinthians 5:17, 18; 2 Chronicles 7:14

Through the revelation of His grace, hearts that were once indifferent or estranged may be united in bonds that are firmer and more enduring than those of earth—the golden bonds of a love that will bear the test of trial.

I realize that marriage is a special life-long, intimate bond given as a gift from God to be shared between a man and a woman.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I understand that, though God designed it and desires marriage to last for a life-time, if the sacred covenant is broken by an unfaithful spouse the injured party has His permission to be released from its bond.

Circle: Yes Undecided

*I also realize that, when by God's grace,
repentance and forgiveness is exhibited
He can mend the broken bonds.*

Circle: Yes Undecided

I see that when marriage and the home is structured the way God has ordered and His example and advice in the treatment of one another is followed—the sharing of love and respect—the result will be a blessing to those who are a part of that home and a blessing to all who are brought into association with it.

Circle: Yes Undecided

[illegible]



Swear Not at All - 19

This lesson is based on Matthew 5:33-37.

(1) WHAT ARE TWO PURPOSES OF SWEARING OR OATH GIVING?

For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. (Heb 6:16 NKJV)

So they said, "We will restore it, and will require nothing from them; we will do as you say." Then I called the priests, and required an oath from them that they would do according to this promise. (Neh 5:12 NKJV)

Related Texts: Num. 30:2, 10; Ezra 10:5

(2) WHAT SPECIFICALLY DID CHRIST COMMAND THAT WE ARE NOT TO DO WHEN GIVING A PLEDGE FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF OUR WORD?

But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. (Mat 5:34-35 NKJV)

Related Texts: James 5:12; Deuteronomy 23:22, 23

(3) WHAT WAS THE REASON FOR THIS COMMAND?

But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and your "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment. (Jas 5:12 NKJV)

Related Texts: Leviticus 5:4; Matthew 5:37

The reason for this command is given: We are not to swear "by the heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black." R.V.

All things come of God. We have nothing that we have not received; and, more than this, we have nothing that has not been purchased for us by the blood of Christ. Everything we possess comes to us stamped with the cross, bought with the blood that is precious above all estimate, because it is the life of God. Hence there is nothing that we have a right to pledge, as if it were our own, for the fulfillment of our word.

(4) WHAT DOES THE 4TH COMMANDMENT FORBID?

"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD

will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain. (Exo 20:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: Leviticus 19:12

The Jews understood the third commandment as prohibiting the profane use of the name of God; but they thought themselves at liberty to employ other oaths. Oath taking was common among them. Through Moses they had been forbidden to swear falsely, but they had many devices for freeing themselves from the obligation imposed by an oath. They did not fear to indulge in what was really profanity, nor did they shrink from perjury so long as it was veiled by some technical evasion of the law.

Jesus condemned their practices, declaring that their custom in oath taking [*the pledging of things as if it were their own, for the fulfillment of their word*] was a transgression of the commandment of God.

(5) IN A JUDICIAL SETTING, UNDER WHAT STIPULATION DID CHRIST ANSWER THE QUESTIONING OF THE HIGH PRIEST?

But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, “I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!” (Mat 26:63 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 22:70; Mark 14:61

Our Saviour did not, however, forbid the use of the judicial oath, in which God is solemnly called to witness that what is said is truth and nothing but the truth. Jesus Himself, at His trial before the Sanhedrin, did not refuse to testify under oath. The high priest said

unto Him, “I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God.” Jesus answered, “Thou hast said.” Had Christ in the Sermon on the Mount condemned the judicial oath, He would at His trial have reproved the high priest and thus, for the benefit of His followers, have enforced His own teaching.

(6) WHAT RESULT WILL COME TO THOSE WHO BEAR FALSE WITNESS TO GOD OR TO MAN?

*A false witness will not go unpunished,
And he who speaks lies will not escape.
(Pro 19:5 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Proverbs 21:28; 12:19; Exodus 23:1; Daniel 6:24; Matthew 12:36

There are very many who do not fear to deceive their fellow men, but they have been taught, and have been impressed by the Spirit of God, that it is a fearful thing to lie to their Maker. When put under oath they are made to feel that they are not testifying merely before men, but before God; that if they bear false witness, it is to Him who reads the heart and who knows the exact truth. The knowledge of the fearful judgments that have followed this sin has a restraining influence upon them.

(7) WHAT PRINCIPLE IS DECLARED WHEN HONESTY IS SPOKEN?

*He who speaks truth declares righteousness, But a false witness, deceit.
(Pro 12:17 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Proverbs 14:25; 13:5; 12:22

If there is anyone who can consistently testify under oath, it is the Christian. He lives constantly as in the presence of God, knowing that every thought is open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do; and when required to do so in a lawful manner, it is right for him to appeal to God as a witness that what he says is the truth, and nothing but the truth.

(8) WHAT PRINCIPLE DID CHRIST GIVE THAT RENDERS OATH TAKING UNNECESSARY?

But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one. (Mat 5:37 NKJV)

Related Texts: James 5:12; Colossians 4:6; 2 Corinthians 1:17

Jesus proceeded to lay down a principle that would make oath taking needless. He teaches that the exact truth should be the law of speech. "Let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one."

These words condemn all those meaningless phrases and expletives that border on profanity. They condemn the deceptive compliments, the evasion of truth, the flattering phrases, the exaggerations, the misrepresentations in trade, that are current in society and in the business world. They teach that no one who tries to appear what he is not, or whose words do not convey the real sentiment of his heart, can be called truthful.

If these words of Christ were heeded, they would check the utterance of evil surmising and unkind criticism; for in commenting upon the actions and motives of another, who can be certain of speaking the exact truth? How often

pride, passion, personal resentment, color the impression given! A glance, a word, even an intonation of the voice, may be vital with falsehood. Even facts may be so stated as to convey a false impression. And “whatsoever is more than” truth, “is of the evil one.”

(9) WHO IS THE SAFE GUIDE THAT LEADS CHRIST’S FOLLOWERS INTO ALL TRUTH?

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth... (Joh 16:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 14:17; 15:26; 14:26; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13

Everything that Christians do should be as transparent as the sunlight. Truth is of God; deception, in every one of its myriad forms, is of Satan; and whoever in any way departs from the straight line of truth is betraying himself into the power of the wicked one. Yet it is not a light or an easy thing to speak the exact truth. We cannot speak the truth unless we know the truth; and how often pre-conceived opinions, mental bias, imperfect knowledge, errors of judgment, prevent a right understanding of matters with which we have to do! We cannot speak the truth unless our minds are continually guided by Him who is truth.

(10) WHAT TYPE OF SPEECH SHOULD ALWAYS BE SPOKEN FROM THE LIPS OF CHRIST’S FOLLOWERS AND WHY?

Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. (Eph 4:29 NKJV)

Related Texts: Colossians 3:8, 9; Zechariah 8:16, 17; James 3:9-12

Through the apostle Paul, Christ bids us, “Let your speech be always with grace.” ... Colossians 4:6. In the light of these scriptures the words of Christ upon the mount are seen to condemn jesting, trifling, and unchaste conversation. They require that our words should be not only truthful, but pure.

(11) WHAT SHOULD BE THE DAILY PRAYER OF THE CHRISTIAN?

Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips And from a deceitful tongue. (Psa 120:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 141:3; 49:3; Proverbs 8:6, 7; 10:19

(12) HOW WILL INTEGRITY OF SPEECH BE PRACTICALLY DEMONSTRATED IN THE BUSINESS PRACTICES OF A CHRISTIAN?

‘You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. (Lev 19:35-36 NKJV)

Related Texts: Deuteronomy 25:13, 15; Proverbs 11:1; 16:11; 20:10; Ezekiel 22:12, 13

Those who have learned of Christ will “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.” Ephesians 5:11. In speech, as in life, they will be simple, straightforward, and true; for they are preparing for the fellowship of

those holy ones in whose mouth “was found no guile.” Revelation 14:5.

I understand the reason for not oath taking is that all things come from God and are purchased at the cost of Christ’s blood. We do not have the right to pledge as if it were for the fulfillment of our own word swearing by things in heaven or earth.

Circle: Yes Undecided

With God’s help, I determine not to break the 4th commandment by taking the Lord’s name in vain.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that, because of Christ’s example, oath taking in a judicial setting is okay. As a Christian it is my privilege to have God as my witness and to declare the truth knowing that every thought is open to the eyes of God.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I also understand in a non-judicial setting Christ teaches that oath taking is needless. We should always be truthful in our words so these types of oaths are unneeded. That everything a Christians says and does should be transparent as sunlight and reflect the principles of truth given by God.

Circle: Yes Undecided



The Extra Mile - 20

This lesson is based on Matthew 5:38-42.

Occasions of irritation to the Jews were constantly arising from their contact with the Roman soldiery. Detachments of troops were stationed at different points throughout Judea and Galilee, and their presence reminded the people of their own degradation as a nation. With bitterness of soul they heard the loud blast of the trumpet and saw the troops forming around the standard of Rome and bowing in homage to this symbol of her power. Collisions between the people and the soldiers were frequent, and these inflamed the popular hatred.

(1) WHAT WAS SIMON CYRENE FORCED TO DO BY ROMAN SOLDIERS?

...they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross. (Mat 27:32 NKJV)

Related Texts: Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26

Often as some Roman official with his guard of soldiers hastened from point to point, he would seize upon the Jewish peasants who were laboring in the field and compel them to carry burdens up the mountainside or render any other service that might be needed. This was in accordance with the Roman law and custom, and resistance to such demands only called forth taunts and cruelty.

Every day deepened in the hearts of the people the longing to cast off the Roman yoke. Especially among the bold, rough-handed Galileans the spirit of insurrection was rife. Capernaum, being a border town, was the seat of a Roman garrison, and even while Jesus was teaching, the sight of a company of soldiers recalled to His hearers the bitter thought of Israel's humiliation. The people looked eagerly of Christ, hoping that He was the One who was to humble the pride of Rome.

(2) IN DIRECT OPPOSITION TO THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE PEOPLE, HOW DID CHRIST INSTRUCT THEM TO REACT TOWARDS THEIR PERSECUTORS?

But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. (Mat 5:39 NKJV)

Related Texts: Leviticus 19:18; Romans 12:17

With sadness Jesus looks into the upturned faces before Him. He notes the spirit of revenge that has stamped its evil imprint upon them, and knows how

bitterly the people long for power to crush their oppressors. Mournfully He bids them, “Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.”

(3) HOW DOES THE BOOK OF PROVERBS DESCRIBE THE REACTION OF CHRIST’S FOLLOWERS TO EVIL TREATMENT?

Do not say, “I will recompense evil”; Wait for the LORD, and He will save you. (Pro 20:22 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 24:29; 24:17

These words were but a reiteration of the teaching of the Old Testament. It is true that the rule, “Eye for eye, tooth for tooth” (Leviticus 24:20), was a provision in the laws given through Moses; but it was a civil statute. None were justified in avenging themselves, for they had the words of the Lord: “Say not thou, I will recompense evil.” “Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me.”

(4) HOW DID CHRIST INSTRUCT US TO TREAT OUR “ENEMIES”?

If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; (Pro 25:21 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 5:44; Exodus 23:4, 5; Romans 12:20, 21

The whole earthly life of Jesus was a manifestation of this principle. It was to bring the bread of life to His enemies that our Saviour left His home in heaven. Though calumny and persecution were heaped upon Him from the cradle

to the grave, they called forth from Him only the expression of forgiving love.

Through the prophet Isaiah He says, “I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting.” “He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.” Isaiah 50:6; 53:7. And from the cross of Calvary there come down through the ages His prayer for His murderers and the message of hope to the dying thief.

(5) NO MATTER THE CIRCUMSTANCE, WHAT PROMISE CAN THOSE WHO LOVE THE LORD CLAIM?

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Rom 8:28 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 8:35-39; Genesis 50:20; Psalm 46:1, 2; 1 Peter 1:7, 8

The Father’s presence encircled Christ, and nothing befell Him but that which infinite love permitted for the blessing of the world. Here was His source of comfort, and it is for us. He who is imbued with the Spirit of Christ abides in Christ. The blow that is aimed at him falls upon the Saviour, who surrounds him with His presence. Whatever comes to him comes from Christ. He has no need to resist evil, for Christ is his defense. Nothing can touch him except by our Lord’s permission, and “all things” that are permitted “work together for good to them that love God.”

(6) HOW SHOULD WE AS CHRIST'S FOLLOWERS REGARD OUR GOVERNING AUTHORITIES AND WHY?

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. (Rom 13:1 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 13:7; Luke 20:25; Proverbs 24:21

(7) IF THE LAWS OF MAN CONFLICT WITH GOD'S LAW, LIKE PETER, WHAT SHOULD BE OUR RESPONSE?

But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men. (Act 5:29 NKJV)

Related Texts: Acts 4:19; 1 Samuel 15:24; Mark 7:7-9

(8) IN PRACTICAL APPLICATION, HOW DOES THIS VERSE DESCRIBE THAT WE SHOULD GO THE EXTRA MILE?

If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. (Mat 5:40 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 6:29; 1 Corinthians 6:7; Psalm 37:21; Proverbs 3:27, 28

Jesus bade His disciples, instead of resisting the demands of those in authority, to do even more than was required of them. And, so far as possible, they should discharge every obligation, even if it were beyond what the law of the land required. The law, as given through Mo-

ses, enjoined a very tender regard for the poor. When a poor man gave his garment as a pledge, or as security for a debt, the creditor was not permitted to enter the dwelling to obtain it; he must wait in the street for the pledge to be brought to him. And whatever the circumstances the pledge must be returned to its owner at nightfall. Deuteronomy 24:10-13.

In the days of Christ these merciful provisions were little regarded; but Jesus taught His disciples to submit to the decision of the court, even though this should demand more than the law of Moses authorized. Though it should demand a part of their raiment, they were to yield. More than this, they were to give to the creditor his due, if necessary surrendering even more than the court gave him authority to seize.

(9) WHEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE REVERSED AND WE AS CHRISTIANS ARE IN THE POSITION OF THE CREDITOR, HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND?

Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. (Mat 5:42 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 25:35-40

The same lesson had been taught through Moses: “Thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth.” Deuteronomy 15:7, 8.

(10) AS POTENTIAL CREDITORS, HOW ARE WE INSTRUCTED TO GO THE EXTRA MILE FOR EVEN OUR NEEDY ENEMIES?

But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. (Luk 6:35 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 6:27-31; Matthew 7:12

This scripture makes plain the meaning of the Saviour's words. Christ does not teach us to give indiscriminately to all who ask for charity; but He says, "Thou shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need;" and this is to be a gift, rather than a loan; for we are to "lend, hoping for nothing again." Luke 6:35.

"Who gives himself with his alms feeds three, Himself, his hungering neighbor, and Me." "Love your enemies." Matthew 5:44.

(11) IN WHAT THREE SPECIFIC WAYS DID JESUS, BY BOTH EXAMPLE AND INSTRUCTION, TEACH US TO LOVE OUR ENEMIES?

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, (Mat 5:44 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 5:40-43

The Saviour's lesson, "Resist not him that is evil," was a hard saying for the revengeful Jews, and they murmured against it among themselves. But Jesus now made a still stronger declaration:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that

curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.”

Such was the spirit of the law which the rabbis had misinterpreted as a cold and rigid code of exactions.

(12) THE ISRAELITES JUSTIFIED THEIR PREJUDICE AND MISTREATMENT OF OTHERS BY VIRTUE OF THEIR LINAGE TO WHOM?

and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. (Mat 3:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 3:8; Acts 13:26

The rabbis regarded themselves as better than other men, and as entitled to the special favor of God by virtue of their birth as Israelites; but Jesus pointed to the spirit of forgiving love as that which would give evidence that they were actuated by any higher motives than even the publicans and sinners, whom they despised.

(13) BY WHAT LOVING TERM OF ENDEARMENT DOES EVERY MEMBER OF THE HUMAN RACE HAVE THE PRIVILEGE TO CALL GOD?

In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. (Mat 6:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 6:1, 6, 14; 5:16, 48; Luke 11:2

Christ pointed His hearers to the Ruler of the universe, under the new name, "Our Father." He would have them understand how tenderly the heart of God yearned over them. He teaches that God cares for every lost soul; that "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." Psalm 103:13.

Such a conception of God was never given to the world by any religion but that of the Bible. Heathenism teaches men to look upon the Supreme Being as an object of fear rather than of love--a malign deity to be appeased by sacrifices, rather than a Father pouring upon His children the gift of His love. Even the people of Israel had become so blinded to the precious teaching of the prophets concerning God that this revelation of His paternal love was as an original subject, a new gift to the world.

(14) HOW DID GOD THE FATHER GO THE EXTRA MILE IN DEMONSTRATING HIS INFINITE LOVE FOR EVERY LOST SOUL?

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (Joh 3:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9, 10; 1 John 2:2

The Jews held that God loved those who served Him,--according to their view, those who fulfilled the requirements of the rabbis,--and that all the rest of the world lay under His frown and curse. Not so, said Jesus; the whole world, the evil and the good, lies in the sunshine of His love. This truth you

should have learned from nature itself; for God “maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”

(15) HOW DOES GOD OUR HEAVENLY FATHER DAILY GO THE EXTRA MILE TO REVEAL HIS LOVE FOR ALL HIS EARTHLY CREATURES?

He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, And vegetation for the service of man, That he may bring forth food from the earth, (Psa 104:14 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 104:1-35; 103:1-22

It is not because of inherent power that year by year the earth produces her bounties and continues her motion round the sun. The hand of God guides the planets and keeps them in position in their orderly march through the heavens. It is through His power that summer and winter, seedtime and harvest, day and night follow each other in their regular succession. It is by His word that vegetation flourishes, that the leaves appear and the flowers bloom. Every good thing we have, each ray of sunshine and shower of rain, every morsel of food, every moment of life, is a gift of love.

(16) WHAT STATE WERE WE IN WHEN GOD THE FATHER DEMONSTRATED HIS AMAZING LOVE TOWARDS US?

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom 5:8 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 53:6; 1 Peter 3:18

While we were yet unloving and unlovely in character, “hateful, and hating one another,” our heavenly Father had mercy on us. “After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.” Titus 3:3-5. His love received, will make us, in like manner, kind and tender, not merely toward those who please us, but to the most faulty and erring and sinful.

(17) WHAT IS THE ULTIMATE INDICATION THAT WE ARE TRULY CHILDREN OF GOD?

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (Joh 13:35 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 17:21; 1 John 2:5, 10; 3:10-14; 4:20, 21

The children of God are those who are partakers of His nature. It is not earthly rank, nor birth, nor nationality, nor religious privilege, which proves that we are members of the family of God; it is love, a love that embraces all humanity. Even sinners whose hearts are not utterly closed to God’s Spirit, will respond to kindness; while they may give hate for hate, they will also give love for love. But it is only the Spirit of God that gives love for hatred. To be kind to the unthankful and to the evil, to do good hoping for nothing again, is the insignia of the royalty of heaven, the sure token by which the children of the Highest reveal their high estate.

I understand from Scripture that the reason for the earthly life of Jesus was to bring the bread of life to His

enemies. That nothing happened to Him except what Infinite Love permitted for our blessing and it is the same in our lives.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I see how Christ taught that we, as Christians, should follow His example and go the extra mile by giving to those in need expecting nothing in return.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I see that by example and precept Christ taught that we should not only reach out to the poor but also to love our enemies. To go the extra mile by praying for those who persecute and spitefully use us.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am so thankful that God the Father went the extra mile for me in sending His Son to die for my sins. It is my prayer that by the power of His Holy Spirit in me, that I can live my life going the extra mile for others.

Circle: Yes Undecided

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Be Like Your Heavenly Father - 21

This lesson is based on Matthew 5:48.

(1) TO WHAT STANDARD OF LOVE, MERCY, AND CHARACTER DOES CHRIST CALL THE CHRISTIAN?

Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. (Mat 5:48 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 6:36, 40; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Philippians 3:12-15; James 1:4

The word “therefore” implies a conclusion, an inference from what has gone before. Jesus has been describing to His hearers the unfailing mercy and love of God, and He bids them therefore to be perfect. Because your heavenly Father “is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil” (Luke 6:35), because He has stooped to lift you up, therefore, said Jesus, you may become like Him in character, and stand without fault in the presence of men and angels.

(2) WHAT IS PROMISED TO THOSE WHO PRACTICE GOD'S LOVE-BASED PRECEPTS OF LOVE FOR HIM AND TO OTHERS?

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. (Rev 22:14 NKJV)

Related Texts: Revelation 22:15; 1 John 5:3; 1 John 4:20

The conditions of eternal life, under grace, are just what they were in Eden—perfect righteousness, harmony with God, perfect conformity to the principles of His law. The standard of character presented in the Old Testament is the same that is presented in the New Testament. This standard is not one to which we cannot attain. In every command or injunction that God gives there is a promise, the most positive, underlying the command. God has made provision that we may become like unto Him, and He will accomplish this for all who do not interpose a perverse will and thus frustrate His grace.

(3) WHAT AMAZING DEMONSTRATION OF LOVE, IF NOT RESISTED, WILL AWAKEN OUR LOVE TOWARD CHRIST AND TRANSFORM OUR LIVES?

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom 5:8 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 4:19; John 15:13; Ephesians 3:17-19; 2 Corinthians 3:18

With untold love our God has loved us, and our love awakens toward Him as

we comprehend something of the length and breadth and depth and height of this love that passeth knowledge. By the revelation of the attractive loveliness of Christ, by the knowledge of His love expressed to us while we were yet sinners, the stubborn heart is melted and subdued, and the sinner is transformed and becomes a child of heaven. God does not employ compulsory measures; love is the agent which He uses to expel sin from the heart. By it He changes pride into humility, and enmity and unbelief into love and faith.

(4) WHAT IS THE BIBLICAL DEFINITION OF LOVE?

He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. (1Jn 4:8 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 4:7, 16

(5) THEREFORE TO WHOM DID CHRIST POINT HIS LISTENERS AS THEIR EXAMPLE OF HOW TO LOVE PERFECTLY?

Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. (Mat 5:48 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 6:36; Ephesians 5:1, 2

The Jews had been wearily toiling to reach perfection by their own efforts, and they had failed. Christ had already told them that their righteousness could never enter the kingdom of heaven. Now He points out to them the character of the righteousness that all who enter heaven will possess. Throughout the Sermon on the Mount He describes its fruits, and now in one sentence He points out its source and its nature: Be

perfect as God is perfect. The law is but a transcript of the character of God. Behold in your heavenly Father a perfect manifestation of the principles which are the foundation of His government.

(6) AS WE WALK WITH THE LORD, ABIDE IN HIS LOVE, AND REFLECT HIS CHARACTER, WHAT TWO POWERFUL INFLUENCES WILL WE BECOME LIKE TO THE WORLD?

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. (Mat 5:13-14 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 5:15, 16; Proverbs 4:18; Philippians 2:15

God is love. Like rays of light from the sun, love and light and joy flow out from Him to all His creatures. It is His nature to give. His very life is the outflow of unselfish love.

“His glory is His children’s good; His joy, His tender Fatherhood.”

He tells us to be perfect as He is, in the same manner. We are to be centers of light and blessing to our little circle, even as He is to the universe. We have nothing of ourselves, but the light of His love shines upon us, and we are to reflect its brightness. “In His borrowed goodness,” we may be perfect in our sphere, even as God is perfect in His.

(7) THOUGH OUR NATURES WILL NEVER BE DIVINE, WHAT

ARE WE PROMISED WE CAN BE PARTAKERS OF, AS WE ALLOW CHRIST TO ABIDE IN US AND HIS DIVINE POWER TO WORK WITHIN US?

by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature... (2Pe 1:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Peter 1:1-3; 1 John 3:2

Jesus said, Be perfect as your Father is perfect. If you are the children of God you are partakers of His nature, and you cannot but be like Him. Every child lives by the life of his father. If you are God's children, begotten by His Spirit, you live by the life of God. In Christ dwells "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9); and the life of Jesus is made manifest "in our mortal flesh" (2 Corinthians 4:11). That life in you will produce the same character and manifest the same works as it did in Him.

(8) WHAT WILL WE ESCAPE IF WE ALLOW HIM TO LIVE OUT HIS DIVINE NATURE THROUGH US CAUSING OUR LIVES TO MANIFEST THE SAME CHARACTER AND WORKS AS IN CHRIST?

...having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. (2Pe 1:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ezekiel 36:25-27

Thus you will be in harmony with every precept of His law; for "the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul." Psalm 19:7, margin. Through love "the

righteousness of the law” will be “fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:4.

As I spend time in God's Word, I see His unfailing mercy revealed in "Perfect" love and I long to be like Him.

Circle: Yes Undecided

*I realize I cannot produce love in myself
and I can in no way obtain it from any
other source but from our God of love.*

Circle: Yes Undecided

It is my hearts desire to know and abide with Christ that His divine nature and perfect righteousness can be reflected through me as light unto the world and salt to the earth.

Circle: Yes Undecided

It is my hearts desire to love perfectly as my Heavenly Father loves perfectly, and to one day be able to enter through the gates of the city to meet Him face to face.

Circle: Yes Undecided

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The True Motive in Service - 22

This lesson is based on Matthew 6:1.

(1) WHAT DOES THE BIBLE WARN US NOT TO SEEK IN OUR OWN BEHALF?

*...to seek one's own glory is not glory.
(Pro 25:27 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Proverbs 27:2; John 5:44; Philippians 2:3

The words of Christ on the mount were an expression of that which had been the unspoken teaching of His life, but which the people had failed to comprehend. They could not understand how, having such great power, He neglected to use it in securing what they regarded as the chief good. Their spirit and motives and methods were the opposite of His. While they claimed to be

very jealous for the honor of the law, self-glory was the real object which they sought; and Christ would make it manifest to them that the lover of self is a transgressor of the law.

But the principles cherished by the Pharisees are such as are characteristic of humanity in all ages. The spirit of Pharisaism is the spirit of human nature; and as the Saviour showed the contrast between His own Spirit and methods and those of the rabbis, His teaching is equally applicable to the people of all time.

(2) WHAT WARNING DID CHRIST GIVE CONCERNING CHARITABLE DEEDS?

“Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. (Mat 6:1 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 11:35

In the days of Christ the Pharisees were continually trying to earn the favor of Heaven in order to secure the worldly honor and prosperity which they regarded as the reward of virtue. At the same time they paraded their acts of charity before the people in order to attract their attention and gain a reputation for sanctity.

Jesus rebuked their ostentation, declaring that God does not recognize such service and that the flattery and admiration of the people, which they so eagerly sought, was the only reward they would ever receive.

“When thou doest alms,” He said, “let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret...”

(3) WHEN ACTS OF KINDNESS ARE DONE WITH THE RIGHT MOTIVE, FROM WHOM AND HOW DOES THE REAL REWARD COME?

that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly. (Mat 6:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 6:18; Psalm 44:21; Jeremiah 17:10

In these words Jesus did not teach that acts of kindness should always be kept secret. Paul the apostle, writing by the Holy Spirit, did not conceal the generous self-sacrifice of the Macedonian Christians, but told of the grace that Christ had wrought in them, and thus others were imbued with the same spirit. He also wrote to the church at Corinth and said, “Your zeal hath stirred up very many.” 2 Corinthians 9:2, R.V.

(4) WHEN CHRIST’S FOLLOWERS MINISTER WITH PURE MOTIVES AT HEART, TO WHOM WILL THE GLORY BE GIVEN?

If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1Pet 4:11 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 115:1; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17

Christ’s own words make His meaning plain, that in acts of charity the aim should not be to secure praise and

honor from men (Matthew 6:2, 3). Real godliness never prompts an effort at display. Those who desire words of praise and flattery, and feed upon them as a sweet morsel, are Christians in name only.

By their good works, Christ's followers are to bring glory, not to themselves, but to Him through whose grace and power they have wrought. It is through the Holy Spirit that every good work is accomplished, and the Spirit is given to glorify, not the receiver, but the Giver. When the light of Christ is shining in the soul, the lips will be filled with praise and thanksgiving to God. Your prayers, your performance of duty, your benevolence, your self-denial, will not be the theme of your thought or conversation. Jesus will be magnified, self will be hidden, and Christ will appear as all in all.

(5) HOW DOES SCRIPTURE CALL US TO SERVE THE LORD?

“Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth... (Jos 24:14 NKJV)

Related Texts: Philippians 1:10, 11; Titus 2:7; Deuteronomy 10:12, 13

We are to give in sincerity, not to make a show of our good deeds, but from pity and love to the suffering ones. Sincerity of purpose, real kindness of heart, is the motive that Heaven values. The soul that is sincere in its love, wholehearted in its devotion, God regards as more precious than the golden wedge of Ophir.

(6) WHEN WE GIVE OURSELVES IN SERVICE TO HUMANITY IN

SINCERITY AND TRUTH, WHAT IS THE PROMISED RESULT?

...glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Rom 2:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 112:9; Luke 12:37; John 12:26; Matthew 25:34-36

We are not to think of reward, but of service; yet kindness shown in this spirit will not fail of its recompense. “Thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly.” While it is true that God Himself is the great Reward, that embraces every other, the soul receives and enjoys Him only as it becomes assimilated to Him in character. Only like can appreciate like. It is as we give ourselves to God for the service of humanity that He gives Himself to us.

No one can give place in his own heart and life for the stream of God’s blessing to flow to others, without receiving in himself a rich reward. The hillsides and plains that furnish a channel for the mountain streams to reach the sea suffer no loss thereby. That which they give is repaid a hundredfold. For the stream that goes singing on its way leaves behind its gift of verdure and fruitfulness. The grass on its banks is a fresher green, the trees have a richer verdure, the flowers are more abundant.

When the earth lies bare and brown under the summer’s parching heat, a line of verdure marks the river’s course; and the plain that opened her bosom to bear the mountain’s treasure to the sea is clothed with freshness and beauty, a witness to the recompense that God’s grace imparts to all who give themselves as a channel for its outflow to the world.

(7) WHAT TEN PROMISED BLESSINGS COME TO THOSE WHO SHOW MERCY BY UNSELFISH SERVICE TO OTHERS?

Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily, And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' "If you take away the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, If you extend your soul to the hungry And satisfy the afflicted soul, Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, And your darkness shall be as the noonday. The LORD will guide you continually, And satisfy your soul in drought, And strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. (Isa 58:8-11 NKJV)

The work of beneficence is twice blessed. While he that gives to the needy blesses others, he himself is blessed in a still greater degree. The grace of Christ in the soul is developing traits of character that are the opposite of selfishness, - traits that will refine, ennoble, and enrich the life. Acts of kindness performed in secret will bind hearts together, and will draw them closer to the heart of Him from whom every generous impulse springs.

The little attentions, the small acts of love and self-sacrifice, that flow out from the life as quietly as the fragrance from a flower--these constitute no small share of the blessings and happiness of life. And it will be found at last that the denial of self for the good and happiness

of others, however humble and uncommended here, is recognized in heaven as the token of our union with Him, the King of glory, who was rich, yet for our sake became poor.

(8) BY WHOM AND WITH WHAT CAN WE BE EMPOWERED THAT WE MAY BE IN HARMONY WITH HEAVEN'S COMMISSION TO DO DEEDS OF KINDNESS FOR OTHERS?

how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. (Act 10:38 NKJV)

Related Texts: Acts 2:22; Isaiah 61:1-3; 42:1; Matthew 12:28

The deeds of kindness may have been done in secret, but the result upon the character of the doer cannot be hidden. If we work with wholehearted interest as a follower of Christ, the heart will be in close sympathy with God, and the Spirit of God, moving upon our spirit, will call forth the sacred harmonies of the soul in answer to the divine touch.

(9) WHEN WE, BY GOD'S GRACE, HAVE BEEN FAITHFUL TO MAKE WISE USE OF THE TALENTS AND RESOURCES HE HAS GIVEN US, WHAT WILL HE DO?

'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. (Mat 25:29 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 13:12

He who gives increased talents to those who have made a wise improvement of the gifts entrusted to them is pleased to acknowledge the service of His believing people in the Beloved, through whose grace and strength they have wrought. Those who have sought for the development and perfection of Christian character by exercising their faculties in good works, will, in the world to come, reap that which they have sown. The work begun upon earth will reach its consummation in that higher and holier life to endure throughout eternity.

(10) WHAT IS THE ULTIMATE BLESSING THAT WILL BE GIVEN TO THOSE WHO SERVE OTHERS?

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' (Mat 25:34-36 NKJV)

I realize that, along with all humanity, I struggle with the tendency to seek my own glory. It is my desire to be like Christ and humbly seek to bring glory to the Father.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I see how this tendency towards seeking ones own glory carries especially over in spiritual matters. It is my prayer that I can do the good works God has

ordained for me with a pure and humble heart without self righteous motives but with love for the Lord from my heart.

Circle: Yes Undecided

*I pray for a pure heart that I may serve
the Lord in sincerity and truth after
Christ's example and as Scripture calls
us to do.*

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am thankful for the peace that comes from faithful service to the Lord and I desire more of this in my life. My prayer is that all the glory and honour be given back to the Father.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I long for the day to hear those precious words from the Father, “Well done thou good and faithful servant, come and inherit the kingdom prepared for you.”

Circle: Yes Undecided

[illegible]



Prayer - 23

This lesson is based on Matthew 6:5.

(1) WHAT DID CHRIST CALL THE PROUD WHO PRAY IN PUBLIC PLACES FOR SELF GLORIFICATION?

“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. (Mat 6:5 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 23:14; Proverbs 15:8; Luke 20:47

The Pharisees had stated hours for prayer; and when, as often came to pass, they were abroad at the appointed time, they would pause wherever they might be--perhaps in the street or the market place, amid the hurrying throngs of

men--and there in a loud voice rehearse their formal prayers.

Such worship, offered merely for self-glorification, called forth unsparing rebuke from Jesus. He did not, however, discountenance public prayer, for He Himself prayed with His disciples and in the presence of the multitude. But He teaches that private prayer is not to be made public. In secret devotion our prayers are to reach the ears of none but the prayer-hearing God. No curious ear is to receive the burden of such petitions.

(2) THOUGH WE CAN PRAY AT ANY TIME AND ANYWHERE, WHEN POSSIBLE, WHERE DID JESUS RECOMMEND THAT WE HAVE COMMUNION WITH GOD?

*But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.
(Mat 6:6 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Matthew 14:23; 2 Kings 4:33

“When thou prayest, enter into thy closet.” Have a place for secret prayer. Jesus had select places for communion with God, and so should we. We need often to retire to some spot, however humble, where we can be alone with God.

“Pray to thy Father which is in secret.” In the name of Jesus we may come into God’s presence with the confidence of a child. No man is needed to act as a mediator. Through Jesus we may open our hearts to God as to one who knows and loves us.

In the secret place of prayer, where no eye but God’s can see, no ear but His can hear, we may pour out our most hid-

den desires and longings to the Father of infinite pity, and in the hush and silence of the soul that voice which never fails to answer the cry of human need will speak to our hearts.

(3) WHEN WE COME HUMBLY TO THE LORD IN SINCERE REPENTANCE PRESENTING OUR PRAISE, WANTS, AND NEEDS, WHAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM?

if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. (2Ch 7:14 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 50:15; 107:6-9; 34:4

“The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” James 5:11. He waits with unwearied love to hear the confessions of the wayward and to accept their penitence. He watches for some return of gratitude from us, as the mother watches for the smile of recognition from her beloved child. He would have us understand how earnestly and tenderly His heart yearns over us. He invites us to take our trials to His sympathy, our sorrows to His love, our wounds to His healing, our weakness to His strength, our emptiness to His fullness. Never has one been disappointed who came unto Him. “They looked unto Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.” Psalm 34:5.

(4) WHAT HAPPENS WHEN, IN PRAYER AND BY HIS WRITTEN WORD, WE BEHOLD THE GLORY OF THE LORD?

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2Cor 3:18 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Corinthians 15:49; Colossians 3:10

Those who seek God in secret telling the Lord their needs and pleading for help, will not plead in vain. “Thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly.” As we make Christ our daily companion we shall feel that the powers of an unseen world are all around us; and by looking unto Jesus we shall become assimilated to His image. By beholding we become changed. The character is softened, refined, and ennobled for the heavenly kingdom. The sure result of our intercourse and fellowship with our Lord will be to increase piety, purity, and fervor. There will be a growing intelligence in prayer. We are receiving a divine education, and this is illustrated in a life of diligence and zeal.

(5) WHAT THREE THINGS CAN WE DO TO MAINTAIN A CONSTANT CONNECTION WITH GOD THAT WE MAY OVERCOME TEMPTATION, PREPARE FOR DAILY DUTIES, AND HAVE PEACE IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES?

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1Th 5:16-18 NKJV)

Related Texts: Hebrews 4:16: Acts 6:4

The soul that turns to God for its help, its support, its power, by daily, ear-

nest prayer, will have noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth and duty, lofty purposes of action, and a continual hungering and thirsting after righteousness. By maintaining a connection with God, we shall be enabled to diffuse to others, through our association with them, the light, the peace, the serenity, that rule in our hearts. The strength acquired in prayer to God, united with persevering effort in training the mind in thoughtfulness and care-taking, prepares one for daily duties and keeps the spirit in peace under all circumstances.

(6) IF WE KEEP OUR MINDS IN CONSTANT CONNECTION WITH CHRIST AND LEARN TO TRUST HIM, WHEN THE TROUBLES OF LIFE SURROUND US, WHAT WILL WE HAVE?

*You will keep him in perfect peace,
Whose mind is stayed on You, Because
he trusts in You. (Isa 26:3 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Isaiah 57:19-21; Psalm 85:7, 8; John 14:27; 16:33; Philip 4:6, 7

If we draw near to God, He will put a word in our mouth to speak for Him, even praise unto His name. He will teach us a strain from the song of the angels, even thanksgiving to our heavenly Father. In every act of life, the light and love of an indwelling Saviour will be revealed. Outward troubles cannot reach the life that is lived by faith in the Son of God.

(7) WHEN WE PRAY, WHAT DID CHRIST WARN US NOT TO DO?

And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they

think that they will be heard for their many words. (Mat 6:7 NKJV)

The heathen looked upon their prayers as having in themselves merit to atone for sin. Hence the longer the prayer the greater the merit. If they could become holy by their own efforts they would have something in themselves in which to rejoice, some ground for boasting. This idea of prayer is an outworking of the principle of self-expiation which lies at the foundation of all systems of false religion. The Pharisees had adopted this pagan idea of prayer, and it is by no means extinct in our day, even among those who profess to be Christians. The repetition of set, customary phrases, when the heart feels no need of God, is of the same character as the “vain repetitions” of the heathen.

Prayer is not an expiation for sin; it has no virtue or merit of itself. All the flowery words at our command are not equivalent to one holy desire. The most eloquent prayers are but idle words if they do not express the true sentiments of the heart. But the prayer that comes from an earnest heart, when the simple wants of the soul are expressed, as we would ask an earthly friend for a favor, expecting it to be granted--this is the prayer of faith. God does not desire our ceremonial compliments, but the unspoken cry of the heart broken and subdued with a sense of its sin and utter weakness finds its way to the Father of all mercy.

(8) WHAT TWO ACTS, DONE WITH SINCERITY OF HEART, WILL ALLOW GOD TO MAKE OUR PRAYERS AND FASTING EFFECTIVE?

So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness... (Joel 2:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 34:18; 51:1-4, 17; Isaiah 66:2; Matthew 5:3, 4

“When you fast, be not, as the hypocrites.” Matthew 6:16. {NP} The fasting which the word of God enjoins is something more than a form. It does not consist merely in refusing food, in wearing sackcloth, in sprinkling ashes upon the head. He who fasts in real sorrow for sin will never court display.

The object of the fast which God calls upon us to keep is not to afflict the body for the sin of the soul, but to aid us in perceiving the grievous character of sin, in humbling the heart before God and receiving His pardoning grace. His command to Israel was, “Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God.” Joel 2:13.

It will avail nothing for us to do penance or to flatter ourselves that by our own works we shall merit or purchase an inheritance among the saints.

(9) WHAT ARE TWO CRUCIAL GOD-GIVEN STAGES OF TRUE REPENTANCE WHICH, IF WE ALLOW, WILL DRAW US TO HIM IN PRAYER?

And there you shall remember your ways and all your doings with which you were defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight because of all the evils that you have committed. (Ezekiel 20:43 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ezekiel 36:31; Psalm 38:17, 18

Repentance is turning from self to Christ; and when we receive Christ so that through faith He can live His life in us, good works will be manifest.

(10) WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADS US TO FAST, TO WHOM SHOULD OUR FASTING BE APPARENT?

But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. (Matthew 6:17-18 NKJV)

Related Texts: Daniel 10:2, 3

Whatever is done to the glory of God is to be done with cheerfulness, not with sadness and gloom. There is nothing gloomy in the religion of Jesus. If Christians give the impression by a mournful attitude that they have been disappointed in their Lord, they misrepresent His character and put arguments into the mouth of His enemies. Though in words they may claim God as their Father, yet in gloom and sorrow they present to the world the aspect of orphans.

(11) WHEN STRUGGLING WITH OUTWARD TRIBULATION OR INWARD SPIRITUAL CONVICTIONS OF THE HEART, WHAT THREE THINGS WILL KEEP US STRONG IN THE LORD AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS?

rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; (Romans 12:12 NKJV)

Related Texts: Philippians 4:4

Christ desires us to make His service appear attractive, as it really is. Let the self-denials and the secret heart trials be revealed to the compassionate Saviour. Let the burdens be left at the foot of the cross, and go on your way rejoicing in His love who first loved you. Men may never know of the work going on secretly between the soul and God, but the result of the Spirit's work upon the heart will be manifest to all, for He "which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

I am thankful I can commune with my Heavenly Father at any time and at anyplace.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize there are different kinds of prayers and appropriate times for each. These include private prayers in a secret place; abiding prayers that I can pray at any time or place; and public prayers prayed at appropriate times and places with pure motives.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I see the importance of having a private place that my deepest heart-felt petitions are only heard by my prayer-hearing, loving, faithful, Father in heaven.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am so thankful God loves me as if I were His only child and always hears and answers my petitions as He sees best.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Circle: Yes Undecided

Circle: Yes Undecided

[illegible]



Where is Your Treasure? - 24

This lessons based on Matthew 6:19, 20.

(1) WHERE IS THE WISEST PLACE TO INVESTMENT OUR EARTHLY “TREASURES”?

but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. (Matthew 6:20 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 19:21; Luke 12:33, 34; 1 Timothy 6:17-19

Treasure laid up on earth will not endure; thieves break through and steal; moth and rust corrupt; fire and storm sweep away your possessions.

(2) WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LOCATION OF OUR TREASURE AND OUR HEART?

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:21 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Corinthians 4:18; Colossians 3:2

And “where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Treasure laid up on the earth will engross the mind to the exclusion of heavenly things.

(3) WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE WARN IS THE ROOT OF ALL KINDS OF EVIL AND HAS CAUSED MANY TO STRAY FROM THE FAITH?

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. (1 Timothy 6:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 1:19, 31; Micah 3:11; Titus 1:11

The love of money was the ruling passion in the Jewish age. Worldliness usurped the place of God and religion in the soul. So it is now. Avaricious greed for wealth exerts such a fascinating, bewitching influence over the life that it results in perverting the nobility and corrupting the humanity of men until they are drowned in perdition. The service of Satan is full of care, perplexity, and wearing labor, and the treasure men toil to accumulate on earth is only for a season.

(4) WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE WARN NOT TO ALLOW TO BE THE MOTIVE OF OUR WORKS AND WHY?

Do not overwork to be rich; Because of your own understanding, cease! Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; They fly away like an eagle toward heaven. (Proverbs 23:4-5 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 119:36, 37

Jesus said, “Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

The instruction is to “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” It is for your own interest to secure heavenly riches. These alone, of all that you possess, are really yours. The treasure laid up in heaven is imperishable. No fire or flood can destroy it, no thief despoil it, no moth or rust corrupt it; for it is in the keeping of God.

(5) WHAT DOES THE LORD ESTEEM ABOVE ALL TREASURES AND LONGS TO IMPART AS A RICH INHERITANCE TO HIS CHILDREN?

rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. (1 Peter 3:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 51:5; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:10

This treasure, which Christ esteems as precious above all estimate, is “the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.” Ephesians 1:18. The Disciples of Christ are called His jewels,

His precious and peculiar treasure. He says, "They shall be as the stones of a crown." "I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir." Zechariah 9:16; Isaiah 13:12. Christ looks upon His people in their purity and perfection as the reward of all His sufferings, His humiliation, and His love, and the supplement of His glory--Christ, the great Center, from whom radiates all glory.

(6) HOW IS IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO OBTAIN THE GREAT TREASURE OF A PURE CHARACTER THAT WE MAY HAVE A PART IN THE WORK OF REDEMPTION AND BE READY FOR HIS COMING?

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, (Philippians 2:5 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Peter 1:13; 1 Corinthians 2:16; Colossians 3:12

And we are permitted to unite with Him in the great work of redemption and to be sharers with Him in the riches which His death and suffering have won. The apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonian Christians: "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? for ye are our glory and joy." 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20. This is the treasure for which Christ bids us labor. Character is the great harvest of life. And every word or deed that through the grace of Christ shall kindle in one soul an impulse that reaches heavenward, every effort that tends to the formation of a Christlike character, is laying up treasure in heaven.

(7) WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE SHARE OUR TIME AND MONEY TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL FOR THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS?

*If you extend your soul to the hungry
And satisfy the afflicted soul, Then
your light shall dawn in the darkness,
And your darkness shall be as the
noonday. The LORD will guide you
continually, And satisfy your soul in
drought, And strengthen your bones;
You shall be like a watered garden, And
like a spring of water, whose waters do
not fail. (Isaiah 58:10-11 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Isaiah 58:6-9; Ecclesiastes 11:1

Where the treasure is, there the heart will be. In every effort to benefit others, we benefit ourselves. He who gives money or time for spreading the gospel enlists his own interest and prayers for the work, and for the souls to be reached through it; his affections go out to others, and he is stimulated to greater devotion to God, that he may be enabled to do them the greatest good.

(8) WHEN IN HEAVEN, WE GATHER AROUND THE THRONE OF GOD AND SEE THE TREASURE OF PRECIOUS SOULS THERE BY OUR INFLUENCE, ALONG WITH THE “ELDERS,” WHAT WILL WE DO TO GIVE ALL CREDIT TO THE LORD?

the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and

power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.” (Revelation 4:10-11 NKJV)

Related Texts: Revelation 7:11

And at the final day, when the wealth of earth shall perish, he who has laid up treasure in heaven will behold that which his life has gained. If we have given heed to the words of Christ, then, as we gather around the great white throne, we shall see souls who have been saved through our agency, and shall know that one has saved others, and these still others--a large company brought into the haven of rest as the result of our labors, there to lay their crowns at Jesus' feet, and praise Him through the ceaseless ages of eternity. With what joy will the worker for Christ behold these redeemed ones, who share the glory of the Redeemer! How precious will heaven be to those who have been faithful in the work of saving souls!

I realize that my heart will be where my treasure is invested and that treasures on earth do not endure and are in danger of theft and destruction.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am thankful that I can have the privilege and I choose to invest my time and my earthly provisions in heaven by investing in the kingdom of God on this earth.

Circle: Yes Undecided

It is my hearts longing to receive from the Lord the greatest treasure of all--a

Circle: Yes Undecided

Circle: Yes Undecided

[illegible]



Seek Light and Serve One Master - 25

This lesson is based on Matthew 6:22, 24.

(1) WHEN WE TOTALLY COMMIT OUR LIVES TO CHRIST, LIKE PAUL, WHAT WILL BE OUR RESPONSE WHEN TRIBULATION COMES?

...the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. (Act 20:23-24 NKJV)

Related Texts: Acts 21:13; 2 Corinthians 12:10; 4:10-17

Singleness of purpose, wholehearted devotion to God, is the condition point-

ed out by the Saviour's words. Let the purpose be sincere and unwavering to discern the truth and to obey it at whatever cost, and you will receive divine enlightenment. Real piety begins when all compromise with sin is at an end. Then the language of the heart will be that of the apostle Paul: "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Philippians 3:13, 14, 8.

(2) WHAT ARE CHRIST FOLLOWERS CALLED TO DO SO THAT THOSE WHO ARE BLINDED BY THE LOVE OF SELF CAN DISCERN SPIRITUAL LIGHT?

To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house. (Isa 42:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 42:6; 35:5; 9:2; 61:1

When the eye is blinded by the love of self, there is only darkness. "If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." It was this fearful darkness that wrapped the Jews in stubborn unbelief, making it impossible for them to appreciate the character and mission of Him who came to save them from their sins.

(3) WHAT CAN WE DO TO HAVE STRENGTH TO OVERCOME

TEMPTATION AND MAINTAIN PERFECT PEACE AND RELIANCE ON GOD?

*You will keep him in perfect peace,
Whose mind is stayed on You, Because
he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD
forever, For in YAH, the LORD, is ev-
erlasting strength. (Isa 26:3-4 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Isaiah 57:19-21

Yielding to temptation begins in permitting the mind to waver, to not be inconsistent in your trust in God. If we do not choose to give ourselves fully to God then we are in darkness. When we make any reserve we are leaving open a door through which Satan can enter to lead us astray by his temptations. He knows that if he can obscure our vision, so that the eye of faith cannot see God, there will be no barrier against sin.

(4) WHAT IS THE RESULT IF WE CHOOSE TO CONTINUE DOWN THE DARK PATH OF INDUL- GENCE TO IMPURE DESIRES?

*His own iniquities entrap the wicked
man, And he is caught in the cords of
his sin. (Pro 5:22 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Proverbs 1:18; 11:3, 5;
Psalm 7:15, 16; Galatians 6:7, 8

The prevalence of a sinful desire shows the delusion of the soul. Every indulgence of that desire strengthens the soul's aversion to God. In following the path of Satan's choosing, we are encompassed by the shadows of evil, and every step leads into deeper darkness and increases the blindness of the heart.

The same law applies in the spiritual as in the natural world. He who abides in darkness will at last lose the power of vision. He is shut in by a deeper than midnight blackness; and to him the brightest noontide can bring no light. He “walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.” 1 John 2:11. Through persistently cherishing evil, willfully disregarding the pleadings of divine love, the sinner loses the love for good, the desire for God, the very capacity to receive the light of heaven. The invitation of mercy is still full of love, the light is shining as brightly as when it first dawned upon his soul; but the voice falls on deaf ears, the light on blinded eyes.

(5) HOW DOES GOD FEEL ABOUT THE LOSS OF EVEN ONE OF HIS CHILDREN?

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. (2Pe 3:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Exodus 34:6; Psalm 86:15; Romans 2:4; 1 Timothy 1:16

No soul is ever finally deserted of God, given up to his own ways, so long as there is any hope of his salvation. “Man turns from God, not God from him.” Our heavenly Father follows us with appeals and warnings and assurances of compassion, until further opportunities and privileges would be wholly in vain. The responsibility rests with the sinner. By resisting the Spirit of God today, he prepares the way for a second resistance of light when it comes with mightier power. Thus he passes on

from one stage of resistance to another, until at last the light will fail to impress, and he will cease to respond in any measure to the Spirit of God. Then even “the light that is in thee” has become darkness. The very truth we do know has become so perverted as to increase the blindness of the soul.

(6) WHAT WONDERFUL PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM AS WE PRAYERFULLY SPREAD THE SEEDS OF THE GOSPEL WITH THOSE BLINDED BY SIN?

He who continually goes forth weeping, Bearing seed for sowing, Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, Bringing his sheaves with him. (Psa 126:6 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 55:11; 32:20; Job 11:13-17; John 4:36

(7) WHAT MUST WE REALIZE AND HELP BLINDED SOULS TO UNDERSTAND?

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. (Mat 6:24 NKJV)

Related Texts: Joshua 24:15; Luke 16:13

Christ does not say that man will not or shall not serve two masters, but that he cannot. The interests of God and the interests of mammon have no union or sympathy. Just where the conscience of the Christian warns him to forbear, to deny himself, to stop, just there the worldling steps over the line, to indulge his selfish propensities. On

one side of the line is the self-denying follower of Christ; on the other side is the self-indulgent world lover, pandering to fashion, engaging in frivolity, and pampering himself in forbidden pleasure. On that side of the line the Christian cannot go.

(8) SINCE THERE IS NO NEUTRAL GROUND, WHAT MUST BE THE SINCERE TESTIMONY OF OUR HEART IF WE ARE TO BE FREE FROM THE CONTROL OF SATAN?

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Gal 2:20 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 5:24; Romans 6:4-6; Colossians 2:13

No one can occupy a neutral position; there is no middle class, who neither love God nor serve the enemy of righteousness. Christ is to live in His human agents and work through their faculties and act through their capabilities. They must be submitted to His will; they must act with His Spirit. Then it is no more they that live, but Christ that lives in them. He who does not give himself wholly to God is under the control of another power, listening to another voice, whose suggestions are of an entirely different character.

Half-and-half service places the human agent on the side of the enemy as a successful ally of the hosts of darkness. When men who claim to be soldiers of Christ engage with the confederacy of Satan, and help along his side, they

prove themselves enemies of Christ. They betray sacred trusts. They form a link between Satan and the true soldiers, so that through these agencies the enemy is constantly working to steal away the hearts of Christ's soldiers.

(9) WHAT FEARFUL WARNING DID CHRIST HIMSELF GIVE TO THOSE WHO WOULD INFLUENCE A STRUGGLING SOUL TO SIN?

“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. (Mat 18:6 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 14:21; 15:1, 2; 1 Corinthians 8:9-13; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9

The strongest bulwark of vice in our world is not the iniquitous life of the abandoned sinner or the degraded outcast; it is that life which otherwise appears virtuous, honorable, and noble, but in which one sin is fostered, one vice indulged. To the soul that is struggling in secret against some giant temptation, trembling upon the very verge of the precipice, such an example is one of the most powerful enticements to sin. He who, endowed with high conceptions of life and truth and honor, does yet willfully transgress one precept of God's holy law, has perverted His noble gifts into a lure to sin. Genius, talent, sympathy, even generous and kindly deeds, may become decoys of Satan to entice other souls over the precipice of ruin for this life and the life to come.

(10) IF EACH DAY WE SEEK THE LIGHT BY CHOOSING CHRIST

AS OUR MASTER, WHAT THREE TRAPS OF SATAN WILL WE AVOID?

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. (1Jn 2:15-16 NKJV)

I pray for the power of the Holy Spirit in my life that I may keep my focus on the Light who is Christ and abide in Him. I choose the blessings of heaven over the indulgence of self.

Circle: Yes Undecided

It is my hearts desire to be used by the Lord to open the eyes of the spiritually blind and point prisoners of sin to the freedom they may find in Christ.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I know and believe that it is the longing of my Heavenly Father that not one of his earthly children to be lost. It is my privilege to help others realize that there is no neutral ground, we must choose Him as master or by default we are under Satan's mastery.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I choose to commit my life totally to Christ and pray that I follow the Light and choose Christ as my master that I may finish the race with joy and in joyful service to Him.

Circle: Yes Undecided



Be Anxious in Nothing - 26

This lesson is based on Matthew 6:25, 33.

(1) WHAT DID CHRIST TELL US NOT TO DO CONCERNING OUR DAILY NEEDS?

“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? (Mat 6:25 NKJV)

Related Texts: Philippians 4:6, 7

He who has given you life knows your need of food to sustain it. He who created the body is not unmindful of your need of raiment. Will not He who has bestowed the greater Gift bestow also what is needed to make it complete?

(2) WHO IS THE GREAT PROVIDER OF ALL GOOD THINGS?

Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty... These all wait for You, That You may give them their food in due season. (Psa 104:1, 27 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 104; 103:5; Genesis 1:30; Job 38:41

(3) TO WHAT CREATURE DID CHRIST SAY WE CAN LOOK TO AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE FATHERS CARE FOR US?

Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? (Mat 6:26 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 10:29-31

Jesus pointed His hearers to the birds as they warbled their carols of praise, unencumbered with thoughts of care, for “they sow not, neither do they reap;” and yet the great Father provides for their needs. And He asks, “Are not you of much more value than they?”

“No sparrow falls without His care,
No soul bows low but Jesus knows;
For He is with us everywhere,
And marks each bitter tear that flows.
And He will never, never, never
Forsake the soul that trusts Him ever.”

(4) TO WHAT OTHER EXAMPLE IN NATURE DID CHRIST POINT TO SHOW THE WATCH CARE OF OUR HEAVENLY FATHER?

Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (Luk 12:27 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 6:28

The hillsides and the fields were bright with flowers, and, pointing to them in the dewy freshness of the morning, Jesus said, “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow.” The graceful forms and delicate hues of the plants and flowers may be copied by human skill, but what touch can impart life to even one flower or blade of grass? Every wayside blossom owes its being to the same power that set the starry worlds on high.

Through all created things thrills one pulse of life from the great heart of God. The flowers of the field are clothed by His hand in richer robes than have ever graced the forms of earthly kings. And “if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?”

It is He who made the flowers and who gave to the sparrow its song who says, “Consider the lilies,” “Behold the birds.”

(5) WHAT DOES GOD HAVE THE ABILITY TO DO THAT NO OTHER PRINCIPALITY, POWER OR BEING CAN ACCOMPLISH?

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” (Gen 1:26 NKJV)

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. (Gen 2:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Corinthians 8:6; Hebrews 1:2; John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16

(6) WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BLESSINGS OF NATURE THAT GOD, IN HIS INFINITE SKILL AND GREAT LOVE, HAS LAVISHED UPON MANKIND FOR OUR JOY, HAPPINESS AND WISDOM?

***He sends the springs into the valleys;
They flow among the hills...He causes
the grass to grow for the cattle, And
vegetation for the service of man, That
he may bring forth food from the earth,
And wine that makes glad the heart
of man, Oil to make his face shine,
And bread which strengthens man's
heart. The trees of the LORD are full
of sap, The cedars of Lebanon which
He planted...He appointed the moon
for seasons; The sun knows its go-
ing down...This great and wide sea, In
which are innumerable teeming things,
Living things both small and great.
Psalm 104:10, 14-16, 19, 25***

In the loveliness of the things of nature you may learn more of the wisdom of God than the scholars know. On the lily's petals, God has written a message for you, written in language that your heart can read only as it unlearns the lessons of distrust and selfishness and corroding care.

Why has He given you the singing birds and the gentle blossoms, but from the overflowing love of a Father's heart, that would brighten and gladden your path of life? All that was needed for ex-

istence would have been yours without the flowers and birds, but God was not content to provide what would suffice for mere existence. He has filled earth and air and sky with glimpses of beauty to tell you of His loving thought for you. The beauty of all created things is but a gleam from the shining of His glory. If He has lavished such infinite skill upon the things of nature, for your happiness and joy, can you doubt that He will give you every needed blessing?

(7) SINCE THE FALL OF MANKIND, WHAT DOES GOD LONG TO RECREATE WITHIN HIS CHILDREN?

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. (Eze 36:26 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ezekiel 11:19; 18:31

“Consider the lilies.” Every flower that opens its petals to the sunshine obeys the same great laws that guide the stars, and how simple and beautiful and how sweet its life! Through the flowers, God would call our attention to the loveliness of Christlike character. He who has given such beauty to the blossoms desires far more that the soul should be clothed with the beauty of the character of Christ.

Consider, says Jesus, how the lilies grow; how, springing from the cold, dark earth, or from the mud of the river bed, the plants unfold in loveliness and fragrance. Who would dream of the possibilities of beauty in the rough brown bulb of the lily? But when the life of God, hidden therein, unfolds at His call in the rain and the sunshine, men mar-

vel at the vision of grace and loveliness. Even so will the life of God unfold in every human soul that will yield itself to the ministry of His grace, which, free as the rain and the sunshine, comes with its blessing to all.

(8) WHERE ELSE CAN WE LOOK FOR EVIDENCE OF THE GREATNESS AND LOVE OF GOD?

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. (Psa 19:1 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 97:6; 50:6; 36:5, 6

(9) WHAT ARE THE THREE OPENING WORDS OF THESE PASSAGES THAT ARE EVIDENCE WHERE THE CREATIVE POWER OF GOD IS FOUND?

Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. (Gen 1:3 NKJV)

Then God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.” (Gen 1:6 NKJV)

Then God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so. (Gen 1:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Genesis 1:11, 14, 20, 24, 29

It is the word of God that creates the flowers, and the same word will produce in you the graces of His Spirit.

(10) AS NATURE WAS CREATED TO FOLLOW GOD’S LAW OF LOVE AND PROVIDE FOR ALL

LIVING CREATURES, WHAT IS THE RESULT WHEN HIS CHILDREN FOLLOW THESE UNSELFISH PRINCIPLES?

But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. (Jas 1:25 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 13:10

God's law is the law of love. He has surrounded you with beauty to teach you that you are not placed on earth merely to delve for self, to dig and build, to toil and spin, but to make life bright and joyous and beautiful with the love of Christ--like the flowers, to gladden other lives by the ministry of love.

(11) WHERE ELSE CAN WE LOOK TO LEARN THE MESSAGE OF GOD'S LOVE FOR US THAT PERMEATES ALL OF HIS CREATION?

“But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you; And the birds of the air, and they will tell you; Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you; And the fish of the sea will explain to you. Who among all these does not know That the hand of the LORD has done this, In whose hand is the life of every living thing, And the breath of all mankind? (Job 12:7-10 NKJV)

Related Texts: Jeremiah 8:7; Isaiah 1:3; Proverbs 6:6

Fathers and mothers, let your children learn from the flowers. Take them with you into garden and field and under the leafy trees, and teach them to read

in nature the message of God's love. Let the thoughts of Him be linked with bird and flower and tree. Lead the children to see in every pleasant and beautiful thing an expression of God's love for them. Recommend your religion to them by its pleasantness. Let the law of kindness be in your lips.

Teach the children that because of God's great love their natures may be changed and brought into harmony with His. Teach them that He would have their lives beautiful with the graces of the flowers. Teach them, as they gather the sweet blossoms, that He who made the flowers is more beautiful than they. Thus the tendrils of their hearts will be entwined about Him. He who is "altogether lovely" will become to them as a daily companion and familiar friend, and their lives will be transformed into the image of His purity.

I see that God is not only my Creator, but also my loving Provider. I am thankful I do not have to worry about my needs being met when I trust my life in His hands.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am grateful to my Heavenly Father who is the Giver of life and for the springs in the valleys, the trees, the mountains, the vegetation He has provided for my food and so much more!

Circle: Yes Undecided

Most of all I am grateful for a new heart that He has created in me. I pray that by His Spirit, like nature, I always follow the principles of giving for the benefit of others.

Circle: Yes Undecided



Kingdom of Heaven - 27

This lesson is based on Matthew 6:33.

(1) WHERE DID CHRIST TEACH THAT THE KINGDOM OF GOD MUST FIRST BEGIN?

nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." (Luk 17:21 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 12:34; 2 Corinthians 4:18

The people who listened to the words of Christ were still anxiously watching for some announcement of the earthly kingdom. While Jesus was opening to them the treasures of heaven, the question uppermost in many minds was, How will a connection with Him advance our prospects in the world? Jesus shows that in making the things of the

world their supreme anxiety they were like the heathen nations about them, living as if there were no God, whose tender care is over His creatures.

(2) LIKE THE WORLDLY NATIONS AROUND THEM, WHAT WAS ISRAEL LAYING UP FOR THEMSELVES WHEN THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN SEEKING GOD’S SPIRITUAL KINGDOM FIRST?

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; (Mat 6:19 NKJV)

Related Texts: Hebrews 13:5; Luke 19:11

(3) WHERE HAS CHRIST ASKED US TO PUT OUR PRIORITIES AND, IF WE DO THIS, WHAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM?

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Mat 6:33 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 6:25-32, 1 Kings 3:11-13; John 6:27

“All these things,” said Jesus, “do the nations of the world seek after.” “Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Luke 12: 30; Matt. 6:32, 33. I have come to open to you the kingdom of love and righteousness and peace. Open your hearts to receive this kingdom, and make its service your highest interest. Though it is a spiritual kingdom, fear not that your needs for this life will be uncared-for. If you give

yourself to God's service, He who has all power in heaven and earth will provide for your needs.

(4) IN SEEKING GOD'S KINGDOM, WHAT DID PAUL SAY THAT INDICATES HOW WE SHOULD CONDUCT ALL THAT WE DO?

And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (Col 3:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: Colossians 3:23

Jesus does not release us from the necessity of effort, but He teaches that we are to make Him first and last and best in everything. We are to engage in no business, follow no pursuit, seek no pleasure, that would hinder the out-working of His righteousness in our character and life. Whatever we do is to be done heartily, as unto the Lord.

Jesus, while He dwelt on earth, dignified life in all its details by keeping before men the glory of God, and by subordinating everything to the will of His Father. If we follow His example, His assurance to us is that all things needful in this life "shall be added." Poverty or wealth, sickness or health, simplicity or wisdom--all are provided for in the promise of His grace.

(5) WHAT THREE SPECIFIC CHOICES CAN WE MAKE THAT WILL ALLOW THE LORD TO DIRECT OUR PATHS AS WE ARE SEEKING THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN?

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understand-*

ing; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. (Pro 3:5-6 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 3:1-35; Psalm 37:5-7; 62:8; 115:11; 146:3-9

God's everlasting arm encircles the soul that turns to Him for aid, however feeble that soul may be. The precious things of the hills shall perish, but the soul that lives for God shall abide with Him. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." 1 John 2:17.

The city of God will open its golden gates to receive him who learned while on earth to lean on God for guidance and wisdom, for comfort and hope, amid loss and affliction. The songs of the angels will welcome him there, and for him the tree of life shall yield its fruit. "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Isaiah 54:10.

(6) WHEN WE ARE TRUSTING GOD AND SEEKING FIRST HIS KINGDOM, WHAT DID CHRIST SAY NOT TO DO CONCERNING TOMORROW?

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Mat 6:34 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 6:25; Psalm 104

If you have given yourself to God, to do His work, you have no need to be anxious for tomorrow. He whose servant

you are, knows the end from the beginning. The events of tomorrow, which are hidden from your view, are open to the eyes of Him who is omnipotent.

(7) WHAT TWO-PART INVITATION WITH PROMISE DOES CHRIST GIVE TO THOSE WHO ARE HEAVY LADEN WITH THE CARES OF THIS WORLD?

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Mat 11:28-30 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 116:7; Hebrews 4:1

When we take into our hands the management of things with which we have to do, and depend upon our own wisdom for success, we are taking a burden which God has not given us, and are trying to bear it without His aid. We are taking upon ourselves the responsibility that belongs to God, and thus are really putting ourselves in His place. We may well have anxiety and anticipate danger and loss, for it is certain to befall us. But when we really believe that God loves us and means to do us good we shall cease to worry about the future. We shall trust God as a child trusts a loving parent. Then our troubles and torments will disappear, for our will is swallowed up in the will of God.

(8) WHAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM NOT ONLY FOR OUR DAILY PHYSICAL NEEDS BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY OUR DAILY SPIRITUAL NEEDS?

Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. (Lam 3:22-23 NKJV)

Related Texts: Hebrews 10:23; Isaiah 33:2; Psalm 103:4, 11, 17

Christ has given us no promise of help in bearing today the burdens of tomorrow. He has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Corinthians 12:9); but, like the manna given in the wilderness, His grace is bestowed daily, for the day's need. Like the hosts of Israel in their pilgrim life, we may find morning by morning the bread of heaven for the day's supply.

(9) BECAUSE HE CARES FOR US, WHAT DOES THE LORD CALL US TO DO ONE DAY AT A TIME?

casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. (1Pet 5:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 55:22; 56:3, 4; 37:5

One day alone is ours, and during this day we are to live for God. For this one day we are to place in the hand of Christ, in solemn service, all our purposes and plans, casting all our care upon Him, for He careth for us. "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." Jeremiah 29:11; Isaiah 30:15.

(10) WHEN WE DAILY GIVE CHRIST OUR ANXIETIES AND

SEEK HIS KINGDOM, WHAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM?

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Php 4:6-7 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 29:11; 62:8; 55:17

If you will seek the Lord and be converted every day; if you will of your own spiritual choice be free and joyous in God; if with gladsome consent of heart to His gracious call you come wearing the yoke of Christ,--the yoke of obedience and service,--all your murmurings will be stilled, all your difficulties will be removed, all the perplexing problems that now confront you will be solved.

I choose to trust in the Lord with all my heart, lean not unto my own understanding, and in all my ways acknowledge Him so He can work in my life and direct my paths.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I choose not to fear the future, to daily seek first God's kingdom, and to trust my life in His hands. Thank you Father for meeting my daily needs and leading me into Your kingdom.

Circle: Yes Undecided



The Lord's Prayer - 28

“After this manner therefore pray...”
Matthew 6:9

The Lord's Prayer was twice given by our Saviour, first to the multitude in the Sermon on the Mount, and again, some months later, to the disciples alone. The disciples had been for a short time absent from their Lord, when on their return they found Him absorbed in communion with God. Seeming unconscious of their presence, He continued praying aloud. The Saviour's face was irradiated with a celestial brightness. He seemed to be in the very presence of the Unseen, and there was a living power in His words as of one who spoke with God.

**(1) AFTER WITNESSING
CHRIST'S BLESSED COMMU-
NION WITH HIS HEAVENLY FA-
THER, AND SEEING THE PEACE
AND POWER THIS GAVE IN HIS**

LIFE, WHAT WAS THE DISCIPLES REQUEST?

...one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.” (Luk 11:1 NKJV)

The hearts of the listening disciples were deeply moved. They had marked how often He spent long hours in solitude in communion with His Father. His days were passed in ministry to the crowds that pressed upon Him, and in unveiling the treacherous sophistry of the rabbis, and this incessant labor often left Him so utterly wearied that His mother and brothers, and even His disciples, had feared that His life would be sacrificed.

But as He returned from the hours of prayer that closed the toilsome day, they marked the look of peace upon His face, the sense of refreshment that seemed to pervade His presence. It was from hours spent with God that He came forth, morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. The disciples had come to connect His hours of prayer with the power of His words and works. Now, as they listened to His supplication, their hearts were awed and humbled. As He ceased praying, it was with a conviction of their own deep need that they exclaimed, “Lord, teach us to pray.” Luke 11:1.

(2) WHAT WAS JESUS’ RESPONSE TO THE CROWD DURING HIS SERMON ON THE MOUNT AND TO THIS REQUEST OF THE DISCIPLES?

In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. (Mat 6:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 11:1; Matthew 6:6

Jesus gives them no new form of prayer. That which He has before taught them He repeats, as if He would say, You need to understand what I have already given. It has a depth of meaning you have not yet fathomed.

The Saviour does not, however, restrict us to the use of these exact words. As one with humanity, He presents His own ideal of prayer, words so simple that they may be adopted by the little child, yet so comprehensive that their significance can never be fully grasped by the greatest minds.

(3) WHAT ARE THREE IMPORTANT COMPONENTS OF PRAYER TAUGHT BY CHRIST IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT, IN THE LORD'S PRAYER, AND LATER BY PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS?

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; (Php 4:6 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 4:2; 3:15, 17; 1 Thess 5:17, 18; Psa 51

We are taught to come to God with our tribute of thanksgiving, to make known our wants, to confess our sins, and to claim His mercy in accordance with His promise.

(4) WITH WHAT ENDEARING NAME DID CHRIST TEACH THAT WE HAVE THE PRIVILEGE TO ADDRESS GOD?

... "When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name... (Luk 11:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 3:1, 2; Romans 8:15; Matthew 6:9; Galatians 4:6

Jesus teaches us to call His Father our Father. He is not ashamed to call us brethren. Hebrews 2:11. So ready, so eager, is the Saviour's heart to welcome us as members of the family of God, that in the very first words we are to use in approaching God He places the assurance of our divine relationship, "Our Father."

(5) JUST BEFORE GIVING HIS LIFE TO REDEEM US, WHAT DID JESUS PRAY THAT INDICATES OUR ASSURANCE OF THIS DIVINE FATHER-TO-CHILD RELATIONSHIP?

...You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. (Joh 17:23 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 1:12; Jeremiah 3:19; Hosea 1:10; 1 John 1:3

Here is the announcement of that wonderful truth, so full of encouragement and comfort, that God loves us as He loves His Son. This is what Jesus said in His last prayer for His disciples, Thou "hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." John 17:23.

The world that Satan has claimed and has ruled over with cruel tyranny, the Son of God has, by one vast achievement, encircled in His love and connected again with the throne of Jehovah. Cherubim and seraphim, and the unnumbered hosts of all the unfallen worlds, sang anthems of praise to God and the Lamb when this triumph was assured. They rejoiced that the way of salvation had been opened to the fallen race and that the earth would be

redeemed from the curse of sin. How much more should those rejoice who are the objects of such amazing love!

(6) NEITHER THE FATHER NOR THE SON WILL FORCE THEMSELVES UPON US, BUT IF WE CHOOSE TO ACCEPT THEM, WHAT TITLE ARE WE PRIVILEGED TO RECEIVE?

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: (Joh 1:12 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 10:40; Isaiah 56:5; Galatians 3:26; 4:6

How can we ever be in doubt and uncertainty, and feel that we are orphans? It was in behalf of those who had transgressed the law that Jesus took upon Him human nature; He became like unto us, that we might have everlasting peace and assurance. We have an Advocate in the heavens, and whoever accepts Him as a personal Saviour is not left an orphan to bear the burden of his own sins.

(7) WHEN WE CHOOSE TO BE REUNITED TO THE FAMILY OF GOD, WHAT BLESSING ARE WE PROMISED?

an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, (1Pe 1:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 25:34; Acts 20:32; Colossians 1:12

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God.” “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if

so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.” “It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.” 1 John 3:2; Romans 8:17.

(8) WHAT DOES GOD DO FIRST FOR US SO THAT WE MAY HAVE THE DESIRE AND COURAGE TO APPROACH HIM?

No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him... (Joh 6:44 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 12:32; Jeremiah 31:3; Hosea 11:4; Ephesians 2:4, 5

The very first step in approaching God is to know and believe the love that He has to us (1 John 4:16); for it is through the drawing of His love that we are led to come to Him.

(9) AS CHILDREN OF GOD, FOR WHOM WILL HE PUT IT UPON OUR HEARTS TO PRAY?

Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. (Jas 5:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Colossians 1:9; Matthew 5:44; 9:38; 15:22; 1 John 5:15, 16; 1 Timothy 2:1, 2

The perception of God's love works the renunciation of selfishness. In calling God our Father, we recognize all His children as our brethren. We are all a part of the great web of humanity, all members of one family. In our petitions

we are to include our neighbors as well as ourselves. No one prays aright who seeks a blessing for himself alone.

(10) WHAT WONDERFUL PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM WHEN WE APPROACH OUR HEAVENLY FATHER'S THRONE IN PRAYER?

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (1Jn 5:14-15 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 145:18; 1 John 3:22; Jeremiah 29:12, 13; Matthew 7:7-11

The infinite God, said Jesus, makes it your privilege to approach Him by the name of Father. Understand all that this implies. No earthly parent ever pleaded so earnestly with an erring child as He who made you pleads with the transgressor. No human, loving interest ever followed the impenitent with such tender invitations. God dwells in every abode; He hears every word that is spoken, listens to every prayer that is offered, tastes the sorrows and disappointments of every soul, regards the treatment that is given to father, mother, sister, friend, and neighbor. He cares for our necessities, and His love and mercy and grace are continually flowing to satisfy our need.

(11) WHAT WILL BE THE NATURAL RESPONSE OF A HEART WHO HAS RESPONDED TO THE DRAWING OF GOD?

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understand-*

ing; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. (Pro 3:5-6 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 16:3; 23:17

But if you call God your Father you acknowledge yourselves His children, to be guided by His wisdom and to be obedient in all things, knowing that His love is changeless. You will accept His plan for your life. As children of God, you will hold His honor, His character, His family, His work, as the objects of your highest interest. It will be your joy to recognize and honor your relation to your Father and to every member of His family. You will rejoice to do any act, however humble, that will tend to His glory or to the well-being of your kindred.

(12) WHERE DID JESUS DESCRIBE AS THE DWELLING PLACE OF GOD?

...Our Father in heaven... (Luk 11:2 NKJV)

He to whom Christ bids us look as “our Father” “is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased.” In His care we may safely rest, saying, “What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.” Psalms 115:3; 56:3.

(13) WITH WHAT WORDS OF REVERENCE ARE WE TO REFER TO THE NAME OF THE FATHER?

In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. (Mat 6:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 111:9; Nehemiah 9:5

To hallow the name of the Lord requires that the words in which we speak of the Supreme Being be uttered with reverence. “Holy and reverend is His name.” Psalm 111:9. We are never in any manner to treat lightly the titles or appellations of the Deity. In prayer we enter the audience chamber of the Most High; and we should come before Him with holy awe. The angels veil their faces in His presence. The cherubim and the bright and holy seraphim approach His throne with solemn reverence. How much more should we, finite, sinful beings, come in a reverent manner before the Lord, our Maker! But to hallow the name of the Lord means much more than this.

(14) AS CHRISTIANS TAKING ON THE NAME OF CHRIST, WHAT MUST WE BE CAREFUL NOT TO DO?

“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain. (Exo 20:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: Deuteronomy 5:11

We may, like the Jews in Christ’s day, manifest the greatest outward reverence for God, and yet profane His name continually. “The name of the Lord” is “merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, . . .forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.” Exodus 34:5-7. Of the church of Christ it is written, “This is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.” Jeremiah 33:16. This name is put upon every follower of Christ. It is the heritage of the child of God. The family are called after the Fa-

ther. The prophet Jeremiah, in the time of Israel's sore distress and tribulation, prayed, "We are called by Thy name; leave us not." Jeremiah 14:9.

(15) WHEN WE TAKE ON THE NAME OF THE LORD, WHAT ARE WE TO THE WORLD, WRITTEN NOT BY INK BUT BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD?

You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart. (2Cor 3:2-3 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 1:8;
1 Corinthians 10:31; 6:19, 20

This name is hallowed by the angels of heaven, by the inhabitants of unfallen worlds. When you pray, "Hallowed be Thy name," you ask that it may be hallowed in this world, hallowed in you. God has acknowledged you before men and angels as His child; pray that you may do no dishonor to the "worthy name by which ye are called." James 2:7.

God sends you into the world as His representative. In every act of life you are to make manifest the name of God. This petition calls upon you to possess His character. You cannot hallow His name, you cannot represent Him to the world, unless in life and character you represent the very life and character of God. This you can do only through the acceptance of the grace and righteousness of Christ.

(16) WHEN OUR SPIRITUAL EYES ARE OPENED TO THE DEV-

ASTATION OF SIN, WHAT WILL BE OUR PRAYER AND GOVERN OUR ACTIONS CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

*Your kingdom come. Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven. (Mat 6:10
NKJV)*

Related Texts: Mark 11:10; Daniel 2:44

God is our Father, who loves and cares for us as His children; He is also the great King of the universe. The interests of His kingdom are our interests, and we are to work for its upbuilding.

The disciples of Christ were looking for the immediate coming of the kingdom of His glory, but in giving them this prayer Jesus taught that the kingdom was not then to be established. They were to pray for its coming as an event yet future. But this petition was also an assurance to them. While they were not to behold the coming of the kingdom in their day, the fact that Jesus bade them pray for it is evidence that in God's own time it will surely come.

**(17) AT THE SECOND COMING
THE PHYSICAL KINGDOM OF
GOD WILL BE SETUP ON EARTH,
BUT FOR US TO BE PARTAKERS,
WHERE MUST IT FIRST BE ES-
TABLISHED?**

*...For indeed, the kingdom of God is
within you.” (Luk 17:21 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Matthew 12:28; Mark 10:14, 15; Luke 11:20

The kingdom of God's grace is now being established, as day by day hearts that have been full of sin and rebellion

yield to the sovereignty of His love. But the full establishment of the kingdom of His glory will not take place until the second coming of Christ to this world. “The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven,” is to be given to “the people of the saints of the Most High.” Daniel 7:27. They shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them “from the foundation of the world.” Matthew 25:34. And Christ will take to Himself His great power and will reign.

(18) WHAT THREE GOD-GIVEN BLESSINGS MAKE IT EVIDENT WHEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN US?

the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Rom 14:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 3:16

(19) WHAT PHYSICAL BLESSING WILL GOD’S CHILDREN ONE DAY SOON INHERIT?

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: (Mat 25:34 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Timothy 2:12; James 2:5

The heavenly gates are again to be lifted up, and with ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of holy ones, our Saviour will come forth as King of kings and Lord of lords. Jehovah Emmanuel “shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there

be one Lord, and His name one.” “The tabernacle of God” shall be with men, “and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.” Zechariah 14:9; Revelation 21:3.

(20) AS MEMBERS OF THE KINGDOM, WHAT PROPHECY IS OUR PRIVILEGE TO HELP FULFILL AND TO WHOM?

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. (Mat 24:14 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 10:7

But before that coming, Jesus said, “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations.” ... His kingdom will not come until the good tidings of His grace have been carried to all the earth. Hence, as we give ourselves to God, and win other souls to Him, we hasten the coming of His kingdom.

Only those who devote themselves to His service, saying, “Here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:8), to open blind eyes, to turn men “from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified” (Acts 26:18)--they alone pray in sincerity, “Thy kingdom come.”

(21) AFTER TEACHING US TO PRAY FOR GOD’S KINGDOM TO COME, WHAT ARE WE TO PRAY CONCERNING GOD’S WILL?

...Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. (Luk 11:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 6:10

(22) HOW HAS GOD EXPRESSED HIS WILL AND THE PRINCIPLES OF HEAVEN TO US SO THAT WE, LIKE THE ANGELS OF HEAVEN, MAY JOYFULLY SERVE HIM IN LOVE?

that you may fear [or respect] the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments—which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—'a land flowing with milk and honey.' (Deu 6:2-3 NKJV)

Related Texts: Deuteronomy 6:3-18; James 1:21-27; 2:16; Romans 2:13

The will of God is expressed in the precepts of His holy law, and the principles of this law are the principles of heaven. The angels of heaven attain unto no higher knowledge than to know the will of God, and to do His will is the highest service that can engage their powers.

But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy. So in every soul wherein Christ, the hope of glory, dwells, His words are re-echoed, "I delight to

do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.” Psalm 40:8.

The petition, “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,” is a prayer that the reign of evil on this earth may be ended, that sin may be forever destroyed, and the kingdom of righteousness be established. Then in earth as in heaven will be fulfilled “all the good pleasure of His goodness.” 2 Thessalonians 1:11.

(23) AS CHRIST CONTINUED OUR LESSON ON PRAYER, KNOWING THAT SATAN SEEKS TO DEVOUR-ER THE RESOURCES OF GOD’S CHILDREN, FOR WHAT DID HE ENCOURAGE US TO PRAY?

Give us this day our daily bread. (Mat 6:11 NKJV)

The first half of the prayer Jesus has taught us is in regard to the name and kingdom and will of God--that His name may be honored, His kingdom established, His will performed. When you have thus made God’s service your first interest, you may ask with confidence that your own needs may be supplied. If you have renounced self and given yourself to Christ you are a member of the family of God, and everything in the Father’s house is for you. All the treasures of God are opened to you, both the world that now is and that which is to come. The ministry of angels, the gift of His Spirit, the labors of His servants--all are for you. The world, with everything in it, is yours so far as it can do you good. Even the enmity of the wicked will prove a blessing by disciplining you for heaven. If “you are Christ’s,” “all things are yours.” 1 Corinthians 3:23, 21.

(24) WHAT PROMISE FROM GOD'S WORD CAN WE CONFIDENTLY CLAIM CONCERNING OUR DAILY NEEDS?

Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him. The young lions lack and suffer hunger; But those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing. (Psa 34:9-10 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 33:18, 19; Matthew 7:7-11; 1 Timothy 6:8; Isaiah 33:15, 16

But you are as a child who is not yet placed in control of his inheritance. God does not entrust to you your precious possession, lest Satan by his wily arts should beguile you, as he did the first pair in Eden. Christ holds it for you, safe beyond the spoiler's reach. Like the child, you shall receive day by day what is required for the day's need. Every day you are to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." Be not dismayed if you have not sufficient for tomorrow. You have the assurance of His promise, "So shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." David says, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Psalm 37:3, 25.

God who sent the ravens to feed Elijah by the brook Cherith will not pass by one of His faithful, self-sacrificing children. Of him that walketh righteously it is written: "Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." "They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied." "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Isaiah 33:16; Psalm 37:19; Romans 8:32.

(25) AS CHRIST'S FOLLOWERS COMMISSIONED TO CARRY FORTH HIS MISSION, WHAT WILL OUR RESPONSE BE TO THOSE WHO SUFFER FROM HUNGER?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh? (Isa 58:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 112:9; James 2:15, 16; 1 John 3:17, 18; Proverbs 22:9

He who lightened the cares and anxieties of His widowed mother and helped her to provide for the household at Nazareth, sympathizes with every mother in her struggle to provide her children food. He who had compassion on the multitude because they “fainted, and were scattered abroad” (Matthew 9:36), still has compassion on the suffering poor. His hand is stretched out toward them in blessing; and in the very prayer which He gave His disciples, He teaches us to remember the poor.

(26) WHO IS THE ULTIMATE PROVIDER OF ALL OUR RESOURCES?

As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor—this is the gift of God. (Ecc 5:19 NKJV)

Related Texts: Deuteronomy 8:17, 18; Psalm 104

When we pray, “Give us this day our daily bread,” we ask for others as well

as ourselves. And we acknowledge that what God gives us is not for ourselves alone. God gives to us in trust, that we may feed the hungry. Of His goodness He has prepared for the poor. Psalm 68:10. And He says, “When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors.... But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.” Luke 14:12-14.

(27) WHAT IS THE PROMISED RESULT WHEN WE ACT IN THE LORD’S BEHALF IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF OTHERS?

*If you extend your soul to the hungry
And satisfy the afflicted soul, Then
your light shall dawn in the darkness,
And your darkness shall be as the
noonday. The LORD will guide you
continually, And satisfy your soul in
drought, And strengthen your bones;
You shall be like a watered garden,
And like a spring of water, whose wa-
ters do not fail. (Isa 58:10-11 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Isaiah 58:12; Ecclesiastes 11:1-2; Proverbs 28:27

“God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.” “He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.” 2 Corinthians 9:8, 6.

(28) FOR WHAT OTHER TYPE OF “BREAD” SHOULD WE EAR-

NESTLY PRAY THAT LEADS TO ETERNAL LIFE?

I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.” (Joh 6:51 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 6:32, 33, 50, 54-58

The prayer for daily bread includes not only food to sustain the body, but that spiritual bread which will nourish the soul unto life everlasting. Jesus bids us, “Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.” John 6:27. He says, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever.” Verse 51. Our Saviour is the bread of life, and it is by beholding His love, by receiving it into the soul, that we feed upon the bread which came down from heaven.

(29) WHAT IS ANOTHER NAME OF JESUS WHO IS THE SOURCE OF OUR DAILY “LIVING BREAD”?

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. (Joh 1:1-2 NKJV)

Related Texts: Jeremiah 15:16; John 1:14; 1 John 5:7

We receive Christ through His word, and the Holy Spirit is given to open the word of God to our understanding, and bring home its truths to our hearts. We are to pray day by day that as we read His word, God will send His Spirit to

reveal to us the truth that will strengthen our souls for the day's need.

(30) WHAT IS GOD'S WORD CALLED AND IS THE SOURCE THAT SHALL SATISFY OUR SPIRITUAL HUNGER AND THIRST?

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2Tim 2:15 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Corinthians 6:7

In teaching us to ask every day for what we need--both temporal and spiritual blessings--God has a purpose to accomplish for our good. He would have us realize our dependence upon His constant care, for He is seeking to draw us into communion with Himself. In this communion with Christ, through prayer and the study of the great and precious truths of His word, we shall as hungry souls be fed; as those that thirst, we shall be refreshed at the fountain of life.

(31) CHRIST INSTRUCTS US TO FORGIVE THOSE WHO HAVE SINNED AGAINST US. WHAT IS ONE BARRIER THAT LIMITS GOD'S ABILITY TO FORGIVE OUR TRESPASSES?

*"Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us."
Luke 11:4*

"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive

men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Mat 6:14-15 NKJV)

Related Texts: Mark 11:25, 26; Luke 6:37, 38

Jesus teaches that we can receive forgiveness from God only as we forgive others. It is the love of God that draws us unto Him, and that love cannot touch our hearts without creating love for our brethren.

After completing the Lord's Prayer, Jesus added: "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." He who is unforgiving cuts off the very channel through which alone he can receive mercy from God.

(32) WHAT EXAMPLE DID CHRIST SET FOR US ON HOW TO DEAL WITH THOSE WHO HAVE SINNED AGAINST US, BUT DO NOT ASK FOR FORGIVENESS?

Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots. (Luk 23:34 NKJV)

Related Texts: Acts 7:54-60

We should not think that unless those who have injured us confess the wrong we are justified in withholding from them our forgiveness. It is their part, no doubt, to humble their hearts by repentance and confession; but we are to have a spirit of compassion toward those who have trespassed against us, whether or not they confess their faults. However sorely they may have wounded us,

we are not to cherish our grievances and sympathize with ourselves over our injuries; but as we hope to be pardoned for our offenses against God we are to pardon all who have done evil to us.

(33) WHAT IS THE RESULT IF WE CHOOSE A BROKEN SPIRIT OF UNFORGIVENESS TOWARDS THOSE WHO HAVE WRONGED US?

*A merry heart does good, like medicine,
But a broken spirit dries the bones.
(Pro 17:22 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Proverbs 12:25; 15:13

(34) TO HELP US UNDERSTAND THE BROADER MEANING OF FORGIVENESS AND TRANSFORM OUR HEARTS, TO WHAT GIFT DOES GOD IN HIS GOODNESS LEAD US?

Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? (Rom 2:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ezekiel 36:31; 20:43; Romans 6:15; Acts 5:31

But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He “will abundantly pardon,” He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:7-9.

God’s forgiveness is not merely a

judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” Psalm 51:10. And again he says, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.” Psalm 103:12.

(35) AFTER REALIZING OUR OWN UNWORTHINESS OF FORGIVENESS, IF WE ASK HIM, WHAT WILL THE LORD PUT WITHIN OUR HEARTS TOWARD OTHERS?

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. (Col 3:12-13 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 19:11; James 1:19; Matthew 5:39-45

God in Christ gave Himself for our sins. He suffered the cruel death of the cross, bore for us the burden of guilt, “the just for the unjust,” that He might reveal to us His love and draw us to Himself. And He says, “Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you.” Ephesians 4:32, R.V.

Let Christ, the divine Life, dwell in you and through you reveal the heaven-born love that will inspire hope in the hopeless and bring heaven’s peace to

the sin-stricken heart. As we come to God, this is the condition which meets us at the threshold, that, receiving mercy from Him, we yield ourselves to reveal His grace to others.

(36) WHAT IS THE ONE THING THAT IS CRUCIAL FOR US TO UNDERSTAND IN THE FORGIVENESS PROCESS, AND IS THE ONE THING SATAN RELENTLESSLY TRIES TO DECEIVE US ABOUT?

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love... (1Jn 4:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 4:9, 10; 3:16

The one thing essential for us in order that we may receive and impart the forgiving love of God is to know and believe the love that He has to us. Satan is working by every deception he can command, in order that we may not discern that love. He will lead us to think that our mistakes and transgressions have been so grievous that the Lord will not have respect unto our prayers and will not bless and save us.

In ourselves we can see nothing but weakness, nothing to recommend us to God, and Satan tells us that it is of no use; we cannot remedy our defects of character. When we try to come to God, the enemy will whisper, It is of no use for you to pray; did not you do that evil thing? Have you not sinned against God and violated your own conscience? But we may tell the enemy that “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7.

When we feel that we have sinned and cannot pray, it is then the time to pray. Ashamed we may be deeply

humbled, but we must pray and believe. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” 1 Timothy 1:15. Forgiveness, reconciliation with God, comes to us, not as a reward for our works, it is not bestowed because of the merit of sinful men, but it is a gift unto us, having in the spotless righteousness of Christ its foundation for bestowal.

(37) IF WE COME TO CHRIST AND CONFESS WITH TRUE SORROW FOR SIN, WHAT WONDERFUL PROMISE MAY WE CLAIM?

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1Jn 1:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 103:3, 10-14; 2 Chronicles 7:14

We should not try to lessen our guilt by excusing sin. We must accept God’s estimate of sin, and that is heavy indeed. Calvary alone can reveal the terrible enormity of sin. If we had to bear our own guilt, it would crush us. But the sinless One has taken our place; though undeserving, He has borne our iniquity. “If we confess our sins,” God “is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9. Glorious truth!--just to His own law, and yet the Justifier of all that believe in Jesus. “Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger forever, because He delighteth in mercy.” Micah 7:18.

(38) FROM WHOM DOES TEMPTATION TO EVIL ORIGINATE?

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (Mat 4:1 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 4:3; Luke 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 3:5

(39) WHOM CAN WE BE CONFIDENT IS NOT TEMPTED AND DOES NOT TEMPT ANYONE?

Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. (Jas 1:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: James 1:14, 15

Temptation is enticement to sin, and this does not proceed from God, but from Satan and from the evil of our own hearts. “God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man.”

(40) WHAT IS SATAN CALLED BECAUSE OF HIS RELENTLESS ATTACKS ON THE CHARACTER OF GOD’S CHILDREN?

...the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. (Rev 12:10 NKJV)

Satan seeks to bring us into temptation, that the evil of our characters may be revealed before men and angels, that he may claim us as his own. In the symbolic prophecy of Zechariah, Satan is seen standing at the right hand of the Angel of the Lord, accusing Joshua, the high priest, who is clothed in filthy gar-

ments, and resisting the work that the Angel desires to do for him. This represents the attitude of Satan toward every soul whom Christ is seeking to draw unto Himself.

(41) WHAT DOES THE POWER OF CHRIST DO TO SATAN AND HOW IS HE OVERCOME?

Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony,... (Rev 12:10-11 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:57; Romans 8:37; 1 Peter 1:5

The enemy leads us into sin, and then he accuses us before the heavenly universe as unworthy of the love of God. But “the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” And unto Joshua He said, “Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.” Zechariah 3:1-4.

(42) THOUGH GOD IS NOT THE AUTHOR OF TEMPTATION OR TRIAL, WHY DOES HE, IN HIS WISDOM, AT TIMES ALLOW THEM?

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,

that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, (1Pet 1:6-7 NKJV)

Related Texts: James 1:2-4; Malachi 3:3

God in His great love is seeking to develop in us the precious graces of His Spirit. He permits us to encounter obstacles, persecution, and hardships, not as a curse, but as the greatest blessing of our lives. Every temptation resisted, every trial bravely borne, gives us a new experience and advances us in the work of character building. The soul that through divine power resists temptation reveals to the world and to the heavenly universe the efficiency of the grace of Christ.

(43) WHO IS OFTEN THE CAUSE OF TRIAL AND TEMPTATION AND MUST SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES?

Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the LORD, They would have none of my counsel And despised my every rebuke. Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, And be filled to the full with their own fancies. For the turning away of the simple will slay them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them; But whoever listens to me will dwell safely, And will be secure, without fear of evil.” (Pro 1:29-33 NKJV)

(44) WHY, AT TIMES, DO INNOCENT PEOPLE SUFFER TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS THAT THEY DID NOT CAUSE THEMSELVES?

All things come alike to all: One event happens to the righteous and the wicked; To the good, the clean, and the unclean; To him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice. As is the good, so is the sinner; He who takes an oath as he who fears an oath.
(Ecc 9:2 NKJV)

I returned and saw under the sun that—The race is not to the swift, Nor the battle to the strong, Nor bread to the wise, Nor riches to men of understanding, Nor favor to men of skill; But time and chance happen to them all.
(Ecc 9:11 NKJV)

(45) WHAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM AND BE CONFIDENT GOD WILL FULFILL?

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1Cor 10:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 124:7; James 5:11

(46) TO BE ABLE TO EXPERIENCE VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION THROUGH CHRIST, WHAT TWO THINGS SHOULD WE DO?

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. (Rom 13:14 NKJV)

Related Texts: James 4:7

But while we are not to be dismayed by trial, bitter though it be, we

should pray that God will not permit us to be brought where we shall be drawn away by the desires of our own evil hearts. In offering the prayer that Christ has given, we surrender ourselves to the guidance of God, asking Him to lead us in safe paths. We cannot offer this prayer in sincerity, and yet decide to walk in any way of our own choosing. We shall wait for His hand to lead us; we shall listen to His voice, saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it.” Isaiah 30:21.

It is not safe for us to linger to contemplate the advantages to be reaped through yielding to Satan’s suggestions. Sin means dishonor and disaster to every soul that indulges in it; but it is blinding and deceiving in its nature, and it will entice us with flattering presentations. If we venture on Satan’s ground we have no assurance of protection from his power. So far as in us lies, we should close every avenue by which the tempter may find access to us.

(47) WHAT CAN WE HAVE FULL CONFIDENCE THAT GOD WILL DO FOR US WHEN HAVE COMMITTED OUR LIFE TO HIS KEEPING?

then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, (2Pet 2:9 NKJV)

The prayer, “Bring us not into temptation,” is itself a promise. If we commit ourselves to God we have the assurance, He “will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” 1 Corinthians 10:13.

(48) WHAT IS THE ONLY SAFE-GUARD AGAINST TEMPTATION?

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (Joh 15:4-5 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 5:4; John 8:31, 32; 1 John 4:16; Ephesians 6:12-18; Luke 8:15

The only safeguard against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. It is because selfishness exists in our hearts that temptation has power over us. But when we behold the great love of God, selfishness appears to us in its hideous and repulsive character, and we desire to have it expelled from the soul. As the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ, our hearts are softened and subdued, the temptation loses its power, and the grace of Christ transforms the character.

(49) AS LONG AS WE SEEK HEAVENS HELP, WHO DOES THE LORD SEND TO RESCUE US WHEN WE ARE ON THE BRINK OF A PRECIPICE OF SIN?

The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them. (Psa 34:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: Revelation 3:10; 2 Corinthians 10:4, 5; Hebrews 1:14

Christ will never abandon the soul for whom He has died. The soul may

leave Him and be overwhelmed with temptation, but Christ can never turn from one for whom He has paid the ransom of His own life. Could our spiritual vision be quickened, we should see souls bowed under oppression and burdened with grief, pressed as a cart beneath sheaves and ready to die in discouragement.

We should see angels flying swiftly to aid these tempted ones, who are standing as on the brink of a precipice. The angels from heaven force back the hosts of evil that encompass these souls, and guide them to plant their feet on the sure foundation. The battles waging between the two armies are as real as those fought by the armies of this world, and on the issue of the spiritual conflict eternal destinies depend.

(50) WHO HAS OVERCOME ALL TEMPTATION AND THE POWERS OF EVIL, AND IS WILLING TO EXERCISE HIS POWER IN OUR BEHALF FOR VICTORY AND GIVE US PEACE?

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” (Joh 16:33 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 14:27; Psalm 85:8-11

To us, as to Peter, the word is spoken, “Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” Luke 22:31, 32. Thank God, we are not left alone. He who “so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16), will

not desert us in the battle with the adversary of God and man. “Behold,” He says, “I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” Luke 10:19.

(51) WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL WAYS WE CAN, BY CHRIST IN US, OVERCOME TEMPTATION?

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. (Jas 4:7-8 NKJV)

I will set nothing wicked before my eyes... (Psa 101:3 NKJV)

A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, But the simple pass on and are punished. (Pro 22:3 NKJV)

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. (Php 4:8 NKJV)

Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You. (Psa 119:11 NKJV)

Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Mat 26:41 NKJV)

Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had

pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. (Eze 16:49 NKJV)

I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. (Psa 34:1 NKJV)

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Php 4:6-7 NKJV)

(52) WHAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM IF WE CHOOSE TO LIVE IN CONSTANT CONTACT WITH CHRIST?

...To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ: Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. (Jud 1:1-2 NKJV)

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, (Jud 1:24 NKJV)

Related Texts: Hebrews 2:18; Micah 7:19; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Isaiah 59:19; 2 Corinthians 10:4

Live in contact with the living Christ, and He will hold you firmly by a hand that will never let go. Know and believe the love that God has to us, and you are secure; that love is a fortress impregnable to all the delusions and assaults of Satan. “The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.” Proverbs 18:10.

(53) IF DURING THE BATTLE WE STUMBLE AND FALL INTO SIN, WHAT AMAZING PROMISES CAN WE CLAIM?

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1Jn 1:9 NKJV)

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. (1Jn 2:1 NKJV)

“Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory.” Matthew 6:13

(54) AS JESUS CLOSED HIS PRAYER, WHAT WORDS OF PROMISE DID HE GIVE AND ASK US TO PRAY TO STRENGTHEN OUR FAITH AND HOPE IN THE COMING KINGDOM OF GOD?

...For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. (Mat 6:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: Revelation 19:1; 5:13

The last like the first sentence of the Lord's Prayer, points to our Father as above all power and authority and every name that is named. The Saviour beheld the years that stretched out before His disciples, not, as they had dreamed, lying in the sunshine of worldly prosperity and honor, but dark with the tempests of human hatred and satanic wrath. Amid national strife and ruin, the steps of the disciples would be beset with perils, and often their hearts would be oppressed by fear. They were to see Je-

Jerusalem a desolation, the temple swept away, its worship forever ended, and Israel scattered to all lands, like wrecks on a desert shore.

Jesus said, “Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars.” “Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.” Matthew 24:6-8. Yet Christ’s followers were not to fear that their hope was lost or that God had forsaken the earth. The power and the glory belong unto Him whose great purposes would still move on unthwarted toward their consummation. In the prayer that breathes their daily wants, the disciples of Christ were directed to look above all the power and dominion of evil, unto the Lord their God, whose kingdom ruleth over all and who is their Father and everlasting Friend.

(55) THOUGH BEFORE THE CONCLUSION OF EARTH’S HISTORY IT WILL APPEAR GOD’S KINGDOM MAY BE DEFEATED, WHAT PROMISE CAN WE AS HIS FOLLOWERS CLAIM?

...the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. (Mat 16:18 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 54:17; John 10:27-30; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 11:15

The ruin of Jerusalem was a symbol of the final ruin that shall overwhelm the world. The prophecies that received a partial fulfillment in the overthrow of Jerusalem have a more direct application to the last days. We are now standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. A crisis is before us, such as the

world has never witnessed. And sweetly to us, as to the first disciples, comes the assurance that God's kingdom ruleth over all.

The program of coming events is in the hands of our Maker. The Majesty of heaven has the destiny of nations, as well as the concerns of His church, in His own charge. The divine Instructor is saying to every agent in the accomplishment of His plans, as He said to Cyrus, "I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me." Isaiah 45:5.

(56) WHEN CHRIST'S FOLLOWERS CARRY FORTH THE COMMISSION AND PRIVILEGE OF TAKING THE GOSPEL TO THE WORLD, BY WHOM WILL SUCCESS ULTIMATELY COME?

... 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts. (Zec 4:6 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 33:16; 44:3-7

In the vision of the prophet Ezekiel there was the appearance of a hand beneath the wings of the cherubim. This is to teach His servants that it is divine power which gives them success. Those whom God employs as His messengers are not to feel that His work is dependent upon them. Finite beings are not left to carry this burden of responsibility. He who slumbers not, who is continually at work for the accomplishment of His designs, will carry forward His own work.

God will thwart the purposes of wicked men, and will bring to confusion the counsels of those who plot mischief against His people. He who is the King, the Lord of hosts, sitteth between the

cherubim, and amid the strife and tumult of nations He guards His children still. He who ruleth in the heavens is our Saviour. He measures every trial, He watches the furnace fire that must test every soul. When the strongholds of kings shall be overthrown, when the arrows of wrath shall strike through the hearts of His enemies, His people will be safe in His hands.

(57) ONE DAY SOON WHAT WILL THE KNEE OF EVERY CREATED BEING DO, AND WHAT WORDS WILL EVERY MOUTH PROCLAIM?

at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Php 2:10-11 NKJV)

“Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine. . . . In Thine hand is power and might; and in Thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.” 1 Chronicles 29:11, 12.

I am so thankful for Christ's counsel on how to effectively pray and to now better understand the practical aspects of life that are positively influenced when, by faith, I pray to my Heavenly Father.

Circle: Yes Undecided

This lesson has helped me better understand and trust that the Father is all powerful, all almighty, and ultimately His kingdom will prevail on earth as

well as in heaven.

Circle: Yes Undecided

My heart longs for the day and my prayer is, “Come soon and set up Your Kingdom Lord Jesus!”

Circle: Yes Undecided

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Not Judging but Doing - 29

This lesson is based on Matthew 7:1-3.

(1) WHAT WARNING DID CHRIST GIVE CONCERNING THE OPINIONS WE FORM TOWARDS OTHERS?

*“Judge not, that you be not judged.
(Mat 7:1 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Luke 6:37

(2) WHAT DOES NOT BRING SALVATION LEST WE SHOULD BOAST?

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ

Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Eph 2:8-10 NKJV)

Related Texts: Titus 3:5; Romans 4:2; 11:6; 2 Timothy 1:9

The effort to earn salvation by one's own works inevitably leads men to pile up human exactions as a barrier against sin. For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, they will devise rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey. All this turns the mind away from God to self. His love dies out of the heart, and with it perishes love for his fellow men.

A system of human invention, with its multitudinous exactions, will lead its advocates to judge all who come short of the prescribed human standard. The atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism stifles the noble and generous emotions, and causes men to become self-centered judges and petty spies.

(3) WHAT IS THE ROOT CAUSE OF OUR FAILURE TO SENSE OUR OWN WEAKNESS, AND THEN CRITICIZE AND CONDEMN OTHERS?

Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: (Luk 18:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 16:15; Proverbs 30:12; Romans 10:3, 4

The Pharisees were of this class. They came forth from their religious services, not humbled with a sense of their own weakness, not grateful for the great privileges that God had given them. They

came forth filled with spiritual pride, and their theme was, “Myself, my feelings, my knowledge, my ways.” Their own attainments became the standard by which they judged others. Putting on the robes of self-dignity, they mounted the judgment seat to criticize and condemn.

(4) WHAT ADVICE DOES PAUL GIVE IN HIS LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS THAT, IF FOLLOWED, WILL PREVENT US FROM BECOMING SELF-CENTERED JUDGES OF OTHERS?

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. (Php 2:3 NKJV)

Related Texts: Galatians 5:26; James 4:5, 6; 1 Timothy 6:4; Luke 18:14

The people partook largely of the same spirit, intruding upon the province of conscience and judging one another in matters that lay between the soul and God. It was in reference to this spirit and practice that Jesus said, “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” That is, do not set yourself up as a standard. Do not make your opinions, your views of duty, your interpretations of Scripture, a criterion for others and in your heart condemn them if they do not come up to your ideal. Do not criticize others, conjecturing as to their motives and passing judgment upon them.

(5) WHO IS THE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS JUDGE, AND IN HIS TIME, WILL BRING ALL THINGS INTO THEIR TRUE LIGHT?

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will

both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God. (1Cor 4:5 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Corinthians 4:3-5; Romans 2:16; Proverbs 29:26

We cannot read the heart. Ourselves faulty, we are not qualified to sit in judgment upon others. Finite men can judge only from outward appearance. To Him alone who knows the secret springs of action, and who deals tenderly and compassionately, is it given to decide the case of every soul.

(6) WHEN WE JUDGE OTHERS, WHAT ARE WE ULTIMATELY DOING TO OURSELVES?

Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. (Rom 2:1 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 2:2, 3; Job 9:20

Thus those who condemn or criticize others, proclaim themselves guilty, for they do the same things. In condemning others, they are passing sentence upon themselves, and God declares that this sentence is just. He accepts their own verdict against themselves.

(7) WHAT PRACTICAL EXAMPLE DID CHRIST USE TO MAKE OBVIOUS THE HYPOCRISY THAT LAYS AT THE DOOR WHEN WE PASS JUDGEMENT ON OTHERS?

And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider

the plank in your own eye? (Mat 7:3 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 7:4, 5;

Even the sentence, “Thou that judgest doest the same things,” does not reach the magnitude of his sin who presumes to criticize and condemn his brother. Jesus said, “Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?”

His words describe one who is swift to discern a defect in others. When he thinks he has detected a flaw in the character or the life he is exceedingly zealous in trying to point it out; but Jesus declares that the very trait of character developed in doing this un-Christlike work, is, in comparison with the fault criticized, as a beam in proportion to a mote. It is one’s own lack of the spirit of forbearance and love that leads him to make a world of an atom.

(8) WHAT MUST WE FIRST DO TO BE ABLE TO PRACTICE CHRIST’S NON JUDGEMENTAL LOVE TOWARDS OTHERS?

And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Gal 5:24 NKJV)

Related Texts: James 4:7-10; Romans 10:3; Philippians 3:9

Those who have never experienced the contrition of an entire surrender to Christ do not in their life make manifest the softening influence of the Saviour’s love. They misrepresent the gentle, courteous spirit of the gospel and wound precious souls, for whom Christ died. According to the figure that our Saviour uses, he

who indulges a censorious spirit is guilty of greater sin than is the one he accuses, for he not only commits the same sin, but adds to it conceit and censoriousness.

(9) WHEN WE JUDGE OTHERS BY OUR OWN STANDARD, IN WHOSE PLACE ARE WE SETTING OURSELVES TO BE?

who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (2Th 2:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ezekiel 28:2

Christ is the only true standard of character, and he who sets himself up as a standard for others is putting himself in the place of Christ. And since the Father “hath committed all judgment unto the Son” (John 5:22), whoever presumes to judge the motives of others is again usurping the prerogative of the Son of God. These would-be judges and critics are placing themselves on the side of antichrist, “who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” 2 Thessalonians 2:4.

The sin that leads to the most unhappy results is the cold, critical, unforgiving spirit that characterizes Pharisaism. When the religious experience is devoid of love, Jesus is not there; the sunshine of His presence is not there. No busy activity or Christ less zeal can supply the lack. There may be a wonderful keenness of perception to discover the defects of others; but to everyone who indulges this spirit, Jesus says, “Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of

thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

(10) SOON AFTER THEIR FALL, WHO DID ADAM AND EVE BLAME FOR THEIR SIN?

Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (Gen 3:12-13 NKJV)

Related Texts: Exodus 32:21-24; 1 Samuel 15:3, 20, 21; Luke 10:29

He who is guilty of wrong is the first to suspect wrong. By condemning another he is trying to conceal or excuse the evil of his own heart. It was through sin that men gained the knowledge of evil; no sooner had the first pair sinned than they began to accuse each other; and this is what human nature will inevitably do when not controlled by the grace of Christ.

(11) TO WHAT DOES AN UN-FORGIVING, ACCUSING SPIRIT EVENTUALLY LEAD, AND WHAT BLESSING WILL COME TO THOSE WHO ENDURE IT WITH PURENESS OF HEART?

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Mat 5:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 37:12; Luke 6:22; 21:12; John 15:20

When men indulge this accusing spirit, they are not satisfied with point-

ing out what they suppose to be a defect in their brother. If milder means fail of making him do what they think ought to be done, they will resort to compulsion. Just as far as lies in their power they will force men to comply with their ideas of what is right. This is what the Jews did in the days of Christ and what the church has done ever since whenever she has lost the grace of Christ. Finding herself destitute of the power of love, she has reached out for the strong arm of the state to enforce her dogmas and execute her decrees. Here is the secret of all religious laws that have ever been enacted, and the secret of all persecution from the days of Abel to our own time.

(12) INSTEAD APPLYING FORCE OUT OF JUDGEMENTAL CONDEMNATION, WHAT DOES THE LORD ASK OF US IN THE SPIRIT OF HIS LOVE AND IS OUR EXAMPLE?

“Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool. (Isa 1:18 NKJV)

Christ does not drive but draws men unto Him. The only compulsion which He employs is the constraint of love. When the church begins to seek for the support of secular power, it is evident that she is devoid of the power of Christ--the constraint of divine love.

(13) WHAT DOES THE LORD LONG TO DO IN THE HEARTS OF HIS PEOPLE?

Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh,

and give them a heart of flesh, (Eze 11:19 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ezekiel 36:26; Jeremiah 31:33; Ephesians 4:23, 24

The difficulty lies with the individual members of the church, and it is here that the cure must be wrought. Jesus bids the accuser first cast the beam out of his own eye, renounce his censorious spirit, confess and forsake his own sin, before trying to correct others. For “a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.” Luke 6:43. This accusing spirit which you indulge is evil fruit, and shows that the tree is evil. It is useless for you to build yourselves up in self-righteousness. What you need is a change of heart. You must have this experience before you are fitted to correct others; for “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Matthew 12:34.

(14) WHAT SINCERE PRAYER MUST WE PRAY TO BE DELIVERED FROM A CRITICAL SPIRIT, AND TO HAVE A POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON OTHERS?

Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit. (Psa 51:10-12 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 51

When a crisis comes in the life of any soul, and you attempt to give counsel or admonition, your words will have only the weight of influence for good

that your own example and spirit have gained for you. You must be good before you can do good. You cannot exert an influence that will transform others until your own heart has been humbled and refined and made tender by the grace of Christ. When this change has been wrought in you, it will be as natural for you to live to bless others as it is for the rosebush to yield its fragrant bloom or the vine its purple clusters.

(15) WHEN CHRIST DWELLS IN THE HEART, WHAT WILL OUR WORDS BE LIKE AS WE SEEK TO HELP OTHERS?

*A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold
In settings of silver. (Pro 25:11 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Proverbs 15:23; 24:26; Ecclesiastes 12:10, 11; Isaiah 50:4

If Christ is in you “the hope of glory,” you will have no disposition to watch others, to expose their errors. Instead of seeking to accuse and condemn, it will be your object to help, to bless, and to save. In dealing with those who are in error, you will heed the injunction, Consider “thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Galatians 6:1. You will call to mind the many times you have erred and how hard it was to find the right way when you had once left it. You will not push your brother into greater darkness, but with a heart full of pity will tell him of his danger.

(16) TO WHOM MUST WE LOOK TO KEEP FROM HAVING A SPIRIT OF CRITICISM OR SELF-EXALTATION?

looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that

was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb 12:2 NKJV)

Related Texts: Hebrews 12:3; Jude 21

He who looks often upon the cross of Calvary, remembering that his sins placed the Saviour there, will never try to estimate the degree of his guilt in comparison with that of others. He will not climb upon the judgment seat to bring accusation against another. There can be no spirit of criticism or self-exaltation on the part of those who walk in the shadow of Calvary's cross.

(17) WHAT PRAYERFUL ATTITUDE SHOULD WE POSSESS IF WE ARE IN A POSITION TO COUNSEL THOSE WHO HAVE OBVIOUSLY GONE ASTRAY?

You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; (2Pe 3:17 NKJV)

Not until you feel that you could sacrifice your own self-dignity, and even lay down your life in order to save an erring brother, have you cast the beam out of your own eye so that you are prepared to help your brother. Then you can approach him and touch his heart. No one has ever been reclaimed from a wrong position by censure and reproach; but many have thus been driven from Christ and led to seal their hearts against conviction.

A tender spirit, a gentle, winning deportment, may save the erring and hide a multitude of sins. The revelation of Christ in your own character will have a

transforming power upon all with whom you come in contact. Let Christ be daily made manifest in you, and He will reveal through you the creative energy of His word--a gentle, persuasive, yet mighty influence to re-create other souls in the beauty of the Lord our God.

*I ask for the Lord to cleanse my heart
and give me His love for others that I
may see them through His eyes and love
them for who they are with out being
critical or condemning.*

Circle: Yes Undecided

When I am called upon to counsel others who have gone astray, I ask for the Lord to give me His Spirit that I may not stumble into the same sin.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I choose to leave the act of judging to Him who will reveal all and bring all to justice.

Circle: Yes Undecided

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Cast Not Your Pearls Before Swine - 30

This lessons is based on Matthew 7:6.

(1) WHAT ADVICE DID CHRIST GIVE ABOUT DEBATING WITH THOSE WHOSE OBJECT IS TO RIDICULE THE GOSPEL?

“Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces. (Mat 7:6 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 22:3-6; 2 Timothy 4:14, 15; Hebrews 10:29

Jesus here refers to a class who have no desire to escape from the slavery of sin. By indulgence in the corrupt and vile their natures have become so degraded that they cling to the evil and will not be separated from it. The servants of Christ should not allow themselves to be hindered by those who

would make the gospel only a matter of contention and ridicule.

(2) TO WHAT DOES DEBATING WITH THE FOOLISH LEAD, AND WHAT IS THE CHRIST-LIKE APPROACH WE SHOULD TAKE?

And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, (2Tim 2:24-25 NKJV)

(3) INSTEAD OF TAKING IT UPON OURSELVES TO JUDGE WHO WILL ACCEPT THE GOSPEL OR NOT, WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. (Col 4:3-4 NKJV)

But the Saviour never passed by one soul, however sunken in sin, who was willing to receive the precious truths of heaven. To publicans and harlots His words were the beginning of a new life. Mary Magdalene, out of whom He cast seven devils, was the last at the Saviour's tomb and the first whom He greeted in the morning of His resurrection. It was Saul of Tarsus, one of the most determined enemies of the gospel, who became Paul the devoted minister of Christ. Beneath an appearance of hatred and contempt, even beneath crime and degradation, may be hidden a soul that the grace of Christ will rescue to shine as a jewel in the Redeemer's crown.

(4) BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHAT WILL THE LORD DO IN ANSWER TO OUR PRAYER FOR HIS LEADING?

Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one. (Col 4:6 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Peter 3:4

(5) WHEN WORDS ARE NOT EFFECTIVE, WHAT WILL PUT TO SILENCE THE IGNORANCE OF FOOLISH MEN?

For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— (1Pet 2:15 NKJV)

(6) WHEN WE HUMBLY AND WISELY FULFILL THE GREAT COMMISSION OF SHARING THE GOSPEL, WHAT PROMISES CAN WE CLAIM?

who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (2Co 3:6 NKJV)

So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. (Isa 55:11 NKJV)

The labor of the righteous leads to life, The wages of the wicked to sin. (Pro 10:16 NKJV)

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always

having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. (2Cor 9:8 NKJV)

Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, (2Co 9:10 NKJV)

but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God.” (Act 5:39 NKJV)

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth...teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. (Mat 28:18, 20 NKJV)

(7) THOUGH WE HAVE THE PRIVILEGE TO BE THE VESSELS, WE MUST REMEMBER THAT ALL INCREASE COMES FROM WHOM?

So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building. (1Co 3:7-9 NKJV)

I now understand the counsel of Jesus in teaching me not to enter into controversy concerning the gospel. I pray for wisdom to know when to speak and when not to speak; and for Him to guide my tongue with the words to say when I should.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Circle: Yes Undecided

Circle: Yes Undecided

Circle: Yes Undecided

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Ask, Seek and Knock - 31

This lesson is based on Matthew 7:7.

(1) WHAT THREE PART PROMISE DID CHRIST GIVE TO ALL WHO WILL CLAIM IT?

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. (Mat 7:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 21:22; 6:33

To leave no chance for unbelief, misunderstanding, or misinterpretation of His words, the Lord repeats the thrice-given promise. He longs to have those who would seek after God and believe in Him who is able to do all things. Therefore He adds, “For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”

(2) WHAT PRIVILEGE IS PROVIDED FOR US, THOUGH WE ARE UNDESERVING?

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Heb 4:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ephesians 3;12; 2:18

The Lord specifies no conditions except that you hunger for His mercy, desire His counsel, and long for His love. “Ask.” The asking, makes it manifest that you realize your necessity; and if you ask in faith you will receive. The Lord has pledged His word, and it cannot fail. If you come with true contrition you need not feel that you are presumptuous in asking for what the Lord has promised. When you ask for the blessings you need, that you may perfect a character after Christ’s likeness, the Lord assures you that you are asking according to a promise that will be verified.

(3) WHEN WE CONFESS OUR SINS AND ASK WITH A SINCERE HEART, WHAT WONDERFUL PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM?

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1Jn 1:9 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Chronicles 7:14, 15

That you feel and know you are a sinner is sufficient ground for asking for His mercy and compassion. The condition upon which you may come to God is not that you shall be holy, but that you desire Him to cleanse you from all sin

and purify you from all iniquity. The argument that we may plead now and ever is our great need, our utterly helpless state, that makes Him and His redeeming power a necessity.

(4) WHEN WE SEEK THE LORD, WHAT WONDERFUL PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM?

For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. (Mat 7:8 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 6:37; Psalm 102:17; Isaiah 55:7

“Seek.” Desire not merely His blessing, but Himself. “Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace.” Job 22:21. Seek, and you shall find. God is seeking you, and the very desire you feel to come to Him is but the drawing of His Spirit. Yield to that drawing. Christ is pleading the cause of the tempted, the erring, and the faithless. He is seeking to lift them into companionship with Himself. “If thou seek Him, He will be found of thee.” 1 Chronicles 28:9.

(5) ONCE WE HEAR HIS VOICE OF INVITATION, HOW SHOULD WE SEEK THE LORD IF WE TRULY DESIRE TO FIND HIM?

And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. (Jer 29:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: Psalm 119:2; Joel 2:12

“Knock.” We come to God by special invitation, and He waits to welcome us to His audience chamber. The first disciples who followed Jesus were not satis-

fied with a hurried conversation with Him by the way; they said, “Rabbi, . . . where dwellest Thou? . . . They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day.” John 1:38, 39. So we may be admitted into closest intimacy and communion with God. “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” Psalm 91:1.

Let those who desire the blessing of God knock and wait at the door of mercy with firm assurance, saying, For Thou, O Lord, hast said, “Everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”

(6) IN REALITY WHO IS THE ONE FIRST TO KNOCK?

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. (Rev 3:20 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 12:36; John 14:23

(7) TO HELP US UNDERSTAND, TO WHAT EARTHLY RELATIONSHIP DID JESUS COMPARE THE FATHER’S WILLINGNESS TO MEET THE SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL NEEDS OF HIS CHILDREN?

Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ... If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! (Mat 7:9, 11 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 11:11-13

Jesus looked upon those who were assembled to hear His words, and earnestly desired that the great multitude might appreciate the mercy and loving-kindness of God. As an illustration of their need, and of God's willingness to give, He presents before them a hungry child asking his earthly parent for bread. "What man is there of you," He said, "whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?" He appeals to the tender, natural affection of a parent for his child and then says, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"

No man with a father's heart would turn from his son who is hungry and is asking for bread. Would they think him capable of trifling with his child, of tantalizing him by raising his expectations only to disappoint him? Would he promise to give him good and nourishing food, and then give him a stone? And should anyone dishonor God by imagining that He would not respond to the appeals of His children?

(8) WHAT DOES OUR HEAVENLY FATHER DESIRE TO LAVISH UPON US?

*If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!
(Mat 7:11 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Matthew 6:30; John 4:10

(9) WHAT IS THE GREATEST OF ALL GIFTS AND THE ONE HE DESIRES TO GIVE TO US THE MOST?

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Luk 11:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 1:23; John 7:37-39; James 1:17

If you, then, being human and evil, “know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” Luke 11:13. The Holy Spirit, the representative of Himself, is the greatest of all gifts. All “good things” are comprised in this. The Creator Himself can give us nothing greater, nothing better. When we beseech the Lord to pity us in our distress, and to guide us by His Holy Spirit, He will never turn away our prayer.

(10) THOUGH OUR EARTHLY PARENTS MAY, WHAT WILL THE LORD NEVER DO?

“Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you. (Isa 49:15 NKJV)

Related Texts: Hebrews 13:5; Psalm 139:13-18; 94:14; 37:28; 27:10

It is possible even for a parent to turn away from his hungry child, but God can never reject the cry of the needy and longing heart. With what wonderful tenderness He has described His love! To those who in days of darkness feel that God is unmindful of them, this is the message from the Father’s heart: “Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a

woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands.” Isaiah 49:14-16.

(11) AS LONG AS WE ASK ACCORDING TO GOD’S WILL, WHAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM?

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (1Jn 5:14-15 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 John 3:22; Jeremiah 33:3; Ephesians 3:20

Every promise in the word of God furnishes us with subject matter for prayer, presenting the pledged word of Jehovah as our assurance. Whatever spiritual blessing we need, it is our privilege to claim through Jesus. We may tell the Lord, with the simplicity of a child, exactly what we need. We may state to Him our temporal matters, asking Him for bread and raiment as well as for the bread of life and the robe of Christ’s righteousness. Your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things, and you are invited to ask Him concerning them. It is through the name of Jesus that every favor is received. God will honor that name, and will supply your necessities from the riches of His liberality.

(12) THOUGH THE MOUNTAINS MAY CRUMBLE AROUND US, WHAT CAN WE KNOW FOR CER-

TAIN ABOUT THE COMPASSION AND MERCY OF GOD?

They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. (Lam 3:23 NKJV)

Related Texts: Lamentations 3:21-26

But do not forget that in coming to God as a father you acknowledge your relation to Him as a child. You not only trust His goodness, but in all things yield to His will, knowing that His love is changeless. You give yourself to do His work. It was to those whom He had bidden to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness that Jesus gave the promise, “Ask, and ye shall receive.” John 16:24.

**(13) WHAT INDESCRIBABLE GIFT
DID GOD GIVE THAT TAKES
AWAY ANY SHADOW OF DOUBT
THAT HE LONGS TO FREELY
GIVE US ALL GOOD THINGS?**

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? (Rom 8:32 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Corinthians 5:21

The gifts of Him who has all power in heaven and earth are in store for the children of God. Gifts so precious that they come to us through the costly sacrifice of the Redeemer’s blood; gifts that will satisfy the deepest craving of the heart, gifts lasting as eternity, will be received and enjoyed by all who will come to God as little children. Take God’s promises as your own, plead them before Him as His own words, and you will receive fullness of joy.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Circle: Yes Undecided

Circle: Yes Undecided

Circle: Yes Undecided

[illegible]



The Golden Rule - 32

This lesson is based on Matthew 7:12.

(1) WHAT BASIC YET COMPREHENSIVE PRINCIPLE DID CHRIST GIVE CONCERNING OUR RELATIONS WITH OTHERS?

Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Mat 7:12 NKJV)

Related Texts: Luke 6:31

On the assurance of the love of God toward us, Jesus enjoins love to one another, in one comprehensive principle covering all the relations of human fellowship.

The Jews had been concerned about what they should receive; the burden of their anxiety was to secure what they thought their due of power and respect and service. But Christ teaches that our anxiety should not be, How much are we to receive? but, How much can we

give? The standard of our obligation to others is found in what we ourselves would regard as their obligation to us.

(2) SO THAT OUR SELF-CENTERED MINDS COULD COMPREHEND, WHAT DESCRIPTION DID CHRIST LATER USE TO REINFORCEMENT THE PRINCIPLE REFERRED TO AS THE GOLDEN RULE?

And the second is like it: 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' (Mat 22:39 NKJV)

Related Texts: Leviticus 19:18; Zechariah 7:10; 8:16, 17

In your association with others, put yourself in their place. Enter into their feelings, their difficulties, their disappointments, their joys, and their sorrows. Identify yourself with them, and then do to them as, were you to exchange places with them, you would wish them to deal with you. This is the true rule of honesty. It is another expression of the law. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Matthew 22:39. And it is the substance of the teaching of the prophets. It is a principle of heaven, and will be developed in all who are fitted for its holy companionship.

(3) HOW DID THE PROPHET MICAH DESCRIBE THIS PRINCIPLE?

He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God? (Mic 6:8 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Timothy 1:5; James 2:20

(4) WHEN, BY THE POWER OF GOD'S SPIRIT, THE LIGHT OF GOOD WORKS ARE WITNESSED IN OUR DAILY LIVES, WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT?

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Mat 5:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 4:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:5; Philippians 2:15

The golden rule is the principle of true courtesy, and its truest illustration is seen in the life and character of Jesus. Oh, what rays of softness and beauty shone forth in the daily life of our Saviour! What sweetness flowed from His very presence! The same spirit will be revealed in His children. Those with whom Christ dwells will be surrounded with a divine atmosphere. Their white robes of purity will be fragrant with perfume from the garden of the Lord. Their faces will reflect light from His, brightening the path for stumbling and weary feet.

(5) TO HELP US STAY FOCUSED ON MANIFESTING THE SYMPATHY AND THE TENDERNESS OF CHRIST, WHAT SHOULD OUR MIND-SET TOWARDS OTHERS BE?

'...inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' (Mat 25:40 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 19:17; 1 John 4:20, 21; Ephesians 5:30

No man who has the true ideal of what constitutes a perfect character will fail to manifest the sympathy and tenderness of Christ. The influence of grace

is to soften the heart, to refine and purify the feelings, giving a heaven-born delicacy and sense of propriety.

(6) WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL WAYS WE CAN PRACTICE THE GOLDEN RULE?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh? (Isa 58:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 58:6-11; James 2:14-20; Proverbs 3:27, 28

(7) HOW DOES APPLICATION OF THE GOLDEN RULE EXTEND BEYOND THE PHYSICAL TO THE SPIRITUAL REALM?

As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (1Pet 4:10 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Corinthians 3:10; 15:10; Hebrews 6:10; Ephesians 3:8; Isaiah 58:6, 7

But there is a yet deeper significance to the golden rule. Everyone who has been made a steward of the manifold grace of God is called upon to impart to souls in ignorance and darkness, even as, were he in their place, he would desire them to impart to him. The apostle Paul said, "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise." Romans 1:14.

By all that you have known of the love of God, by all that you have re-

ceived of the rich gifts of His grace above the most benighted and degraded soul upon the earth are you in debt to that soul to impart these gifts unto him.

(8) WHO IN SOCIETY IS IN PARTICULAR NEED OF PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION OF LOVE?

Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. (Jas 1:27 NKJV)

Related Texts: Job 29:12, 13; Psalm 68:5; Isaiah 1:17; Proverbs 24:11

So also with the gifts and blessings of this life: whatever you may possess above your fellows places you in debt, to that degree, to all who are less favored. Have we wealth, or even the comforts of life, then we are under the most solemn obligation to care for the suffering sick, the widow, and the fatherless exactly as we would desire them to care for us were our condition and theirs to be reversed.

(9) WHEN WE MINISTER TO THE NEEDS OF THE HUNGRY AND AFFLICTED, WHAT IS THE BLESSED RESULT?

If you extend your soul to the hungry And satisfy the afflicted soul, Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, And your darkness shall be as the noonday. The LORD will guide you continually, And satisfy your soul in drought, And strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. (Isa 58:10-11 NKJV)

Related Texts: Ecclesiastes 11:1; Proverbs 11:24, 25; 22:9

The golden rule teaches, by implication, the same truth which is taught elsewhere in the Sermon on the Mount, that “with what measure you measure, it shall be measured to you again.” That which we do to others, whether it be good or evil, will surely react upon ourselves, in blessing or in cursing. Whatever we give, we shall receive again. The earthly blessings which we impart to others may be, and often are, repaid in kind. What we give does, in time of need, often come back to us in fourfold measure in the coin of the realm. But, besides this, all gifts are repaid, even in this life, in the fuller inflowing of His love, which is the sum of all heaven’s glory and its treasure.

(10) HOW DOES THIS PRINCIPLE AFFECT THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO BE SELFISH AND PRACTICE GREED?

*He who gives to the poor will not lack,
But he who hides his eyes will have
many curses. (Pro 28:27 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Proverbs 11:26; 2 Cor. 9:6

(11) WHEN CRUELTY TO OTHERS REIGNS OVER MERCY, WHAT IS THE RESULT?

*The merciful man does good for his
own soul, But he who is cruel troubles
his own flesh. (Pro 11:17 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Proverbs 11:27; 17:5

And evil imparted also returns again. Everyone who has been free to condemn

or discourage, will in his own experience be brought over the ground where he has caused others to pass; he will feel what they have suffered because of his want of sympathy and tenderness.

(12) WHEN WE FAIL TO SHOW COMPASSION TOWARDS OTHERS, TO WHAT GIFT DOES GOD IN HIS GOODNESS LEAD US?

Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? (Rom 2:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: Acts 5:31; Revelation 3:19

It is the love of God toward us that has decreed this. He would lead us to abhor our own hardness of heart and to open our hearts to let Jesus abide in them. And thus, out of evil, good is brought, and what appeared a curse becomes a blessing.

(13) WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE CALL “RELIGION” AND IS THE GOLDEN RULE IN PRACTICE?

Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. (Jas 1:27 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 58:6-11; Matthew 25:34-40; James 2:15-17

The standard of the golden rule is the true standard of Christianity; anything short of it is a deception. A religion that leads men to place a low estimate upon human beings, whom Christ has esteemed of such value as to give Himself

for them; a religion that would lead us to be careless of human needs, sufferings, or rights, is a spurious religion. In slighting the claims of the poor, the suffering, and the sinful, we are proving ourselves traitors to Christ.

It is because men take upon themselves the name of Christ, while in life they deny His character, that Christianity has so little power in the world. The name of the Lord is blasphemed because of these things.

(14) HOW DID THE EARLY CHURCH LIVE THIS MODEL OF CHRISTIANITY, AND IS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF UNSELFISHNESS FOR US TODAY ?

Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. (Act 2:44-45 NKJV)

Related Texts: Acts 11:29; Luke 18:22;

Of the apostolic church, in those bright days when the glory of the risen Christ shone upon them, it is written that no man said “that aught of the things which he possessed was his own.” “Neither was there any among them that lacked.” “And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.” “And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” Acts 4:32, 34, 33; 2:46, 47.

Search heaven and earth, and there

is no truth revealed more powerful than that which is made manifest in works of mercy to those who need our sympathy and aid. This is the truth as it is in Jesus. When those who profess the name of Christ shall practice the principles of the golden rule, the same power will attend the gospel as in apostolic times.

I see that the fundamental principles of heaven can be summed up in two simple actions. First, I need to love the Lord my God with all my heart. The second is referred to as “The Golden Rule” and is to love my neighbor as myself and treat them as I want to be treated.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I do love the Lord and want to please Him with all my heart, but I am not capable of my own power to practice this principle. I ask Him to live in me and manifest His sympathy and compassion in and through me.

Circle: Yes Undecided

My prayer is, “Lord help me to see others through Your eyes and to be Your hands to feed the hungry, cloth the naked, shelter the homeless, and share the gospel.”

Circle: Yes Undecided



Narrow is the Gate - 33

This lesson is based on Matthew 7:14.

In the time of Christ the people of Palestine lived in walled towns, which were mostly situated upon hills or mountains. The gates, which were closed at sunset, were approached by steep, rocky roads, and the traveler journeying homeward at the close of the day often had to press his way in eager haste up the difficult ascent in order to reach the gate before nightfall. The loiterer was left without.

(1) HOW DID JESUS COMPARE THIS REAL LIFE SITUATION TO THE SPIRITUAL PATH OF THE CHRISTIAN?

Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Mat 7:14 NKJV)

Related Texts: Isaiah 35:8; Proverbs 4:26, 27; Matthew 16:24, 25

The narrow, upward road leading to home and rest furnished Jesus with an impressive figure of the Christian way. The path which I have set before you, He said, is narrow; the gate is difficult of entrance; for the golden rule excludes all pride and self-seeking. There is, indeed, a wider road; but its end is destruction. If you would climb the path of spiritual life, you must constantly ascend; for it is an upward way. You must go with the few; for the multitude will choose the downward path.

(2) THOUGH THE LORD JESUS CHRIST HAS PROVIDED A WAY, HOW MANY ARE WILLING TO DENY SELF TO FIND IT?

Then one said to Him, “Lord, are there few who are saved?” And He said to them, “Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. (Luk 13:23-24 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 7:14; Romans 9:32

In the road to death the whole race may go, with all their worldliness, all their selfishness, all their pride, dishonesty, and moral debasement. There is room for every man's opinions and doctrines, space to follow his inclinations, to do whatever his self-love may dictate. In order to go in the path that leads to destruction, there is no need of searching for the way; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad, and the feet naturally turn into the path that ends in death.

(3) WHAT THREE CONTINUAL CHOICES MUST WE MAKE TO ENTER INTO THE STRAIGHT

GATE AND CONTINUE DOWN THE NARROW PATH?

Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. (Luk 9:23 NKJV)

Related Texts: Mark 10:21; 8:34

The way to life is narrow and the entrance strait. If you cling to any besetting sin you will find the way too narrow for you to enter. Your own ways, your own will, your evil habits and practices, must be given up if you would keep the way of the Lord. He who would serve Christ cannot follow the world's opinions or meet the world's standard. Heaven's path is too narrow for rank and riches to ride in state, too narrow for the play of self-centered ambition, too steep and rugged for lovers of ease to climb. Toil, patience, self-sacrifice, reproach, poverty, the contradiction of sinners against Himself, was the portion of Christ, and it must be our portion, if we ever enter the Paradise of God.

(4) WHAT DOES GOD FAITHFULLY PROVIDE WHEN TEMPTATION COMES AND, IF CHOSEN, WILL SAVE US FROM THE WIDE ROAD LEADING TO DESTRUCTION?

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1Cor 10:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: Jude 24; Philippians 1:6

(5) THOUGH OUR NATURAL INCLINATIONS LEAD US TOWARD THE BROAD PATH TO DESTRUCTION, WHAT IS THIS WAY REALLY LIKE?

Good understanding gains favor, But the way of the unfaithful is hard. (Pro 13:15 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 15:10; Jeremiah 2:19; Romans 6:21

Yet do not therefore conclude that the upward path is the hard and the downward road the easy way. All along the road that leads to death there are pains and penalties, there are sorrows and disappointments, there are warnings not to go on. God's love has made it hard for the heedless and headstrong to destroy themselves.

(6) WHAT THREE MAJOR, CLEVERLY DISGUISED METHODS OF TEMPTATION DOES THE DEVIL USE TO MAKE HIS PATH APPEAR ATTRACTIVE BUT ALL LEAD TO A BITTER END?

For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. (1Jn 2:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: James 3:15; Psalm 119:36, 37; 1 Peter 2:11; Galatians 5:17

It is true that Satan's path is made to appear attractive, but it is all a deception; in the way of evil there are bitter remorse and cankering care. We may think it pleasant to follow pride and

worldly ambition, but the end is pain and sorrow. Selfish plans may present flattering promises and hold out the hope of enjoyment, but we shall find that our happiness is poisoned and our life embittered by hopes that center in self. In the downward road the gateway may be bright with flowers, but thorns are in the path. The light of hope which shines from its entrance fades into the darkness of despair, and the soul who follows that path descends into the shadows of unending night.

(7) IF WE ALLOW THE LORD TO BE OUR GUIDE DOWN THE NARROW PATH, WHAT TWO THINGS WILL BE THE RESULT?

To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace.” (Luk 1:79 NKJV)

Related Texts: Proverbs 3:5, 6; 3:17; Psalm 25:10; 37:11; Isaiah 26:3

Every act of obedience to Christ, every act of self-denial for His sake, every trial well endured, every victory gained over temptation, is a step in the march to the glory of final victory. If we take Christ for our guide, He will lead us safely. The veriest sinner need not miss his way. Not one trembling seeker need fail of walking in pure and holy light. Though the path is so narrow, so holy that sin cannot be tolerated therein, yet access has been secured for all, and not one doubting, trembling soul need say, “God cares nought for me.”

(8) THOUGH THE NARROW PATH OF SELF-DENIAL MAY SEEM DIFFICULT, IF BY FAITH,

**WE ALLOW CHRIST TO DWELL
IN US AND BE OUR GUIDE, WHAT
WILL BE THE FINAL RESULT?**

*And God will wipe away every tear
from their eyes; there shall be no more
death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There
shall be no more pain, for the former
things have passed away.” Then He
who sat on the throne said, “Behold,
I make all things new.” And He said
to me, “Write, for these words are true
and faithful.” (Rev 21:4-5 NKJV)*

*Blessed are those who do His com-
mandments, that they may have the
right to the tree of life, and may enter
through the gates into the city. (Rev
22:14 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Luke 12:32; 1 Peter 1:6, 7

The road may be rough and the ascent steep; there may be pitfalls upon the right hand and upon the left; we may have to endure toil in our journey; when weary, when longing for rest, we may have to toil on; when faint, we may have to fight; when discouraged, we must still hope; but with Christ as our guide we shall not fail of reaching the desired haven at last. Christ Himself has trodden the rough way before us and has smoothed the path for our feet.

**(9) TO WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE
COMPARE THE PATH OF THOSE
WHO ARE JUSTIFIED THROUGH
FAITH THROUGH THE BLOOD
OF CHRIST?**

*But the path of the just is like the shin-
ing sun, That shines ever brighter unto
the perfect day. (Pro 4:18 NKJV)*

Related Texts: Job 11:17; Hosea 6:3

And all the way up the steep road leading to eternal life are well-springs of joy to refresh the weary. Those who walk in wisdom's ways are, even in tribulation, exceeding joyful; for He whom their soul loveth, walks, invisible, beside them. At each upward step they discern more distinctly the touch of His hand; at every step brighter gleamings of glory from the Unseen fall upon their path; and their songs of praise, reaching ever a higher note, ascend to join the songs of angels before the throne. "The path of the righteous is as the light of dawn, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Prv 4:18.

I now better understand how not to follow my natural inclinations towards the broad and destructive path of the world.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am so thankful that God loves me so much that He allows trials to wake me up when I take a wrong turn down the road that leads to self destruction.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize from experience that I cannot save myself by my own efforts. I must choose the narrow path to life and allow Christ to abide in me and to live a victorious life over the inclinations of my nature.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am longing for the day that God will call me into His kingdom where true peace and happiness will be experienced by all who walk with Him.

Circle: Yes Undecided



Striving for the Narrow Gate - 34

This lessons is based on Luke 13:24.

(1) FOLLOWED BY WORDS OF WARNING, WITH WHAT PHRASE DID CHRIST STRONGLY ENCOURAGE HIS FOLLOWERS TO SEEK ENTRANCE INTO HIS KINGDOM?

“Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. (Luk 13:24 NKJV)

Related Texts: Colossians 1:29; Romans 10:3

The belated traveler, hurrying to reach the city gate by the going down of the sun, could not turn aside for any attractions by the way. His whole mind was bent on the one purpose of entering the gate. The same intensity of purpose, said Jesus, is required in the Christian life.

I have opened to you the glory of character, which is the true glory of My kingdom. It offers you no promise of earthly dominion; yet it is worthy of your supreme desire and effort. I do not call you to battle for the supremacy of the world's great empire, but do not therefore conclude that there is no battle to be fought nor victories to be won. I bid you strive, agonize, to enter into My spiritual kingdom.

(2) IT IS IRONIC THAT THE ONLY WAY TO ACHIEVE SPIRITUAL VICTORY IN THE HUMAN HEART IS TO SURRENDER IT FULLY. HOW WILL THIS BATTLE OVER SELF ULTIMATELY BE WON?

... “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ Says the LORD of hosts. (Zec 4:6 NKJV)

Related Texts: Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:22

The Christian life is a battle and a march. But the victory to be gained is not won by human power. The field of conflict is the domain of the heart. The battle which we have to fight--the greatest battle that was ever fought by man--is the surrender of self to the will of God, the yielding of the heart to the sovereignty of love. The old nature, born of blood and of the will of the flesh, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The hereditary tendencies, the former habits, must be given up.

(3) WHAT IS THE END RESULT IF WE ALLOW THE PASSION OF OUR CARNAL NATURE TO BE OUR GUIDE INSTEAD OF GOD'S SPIRIT?

His own iniquities entrap the wicked man, And he is caught in the cords of his sin. (Pro 5:22 NKJV)

Related Texts: James 1:14, 15; Proverbs 1:31; 11:3; 1:18; Psalm 7:15, 16; 9:15

He who determines to enter the spiritual kingdom will find that all the powers and passions of an unregenerate nature, backed by the forces of the kingdom of darkness, are arrayed against him. Selfishness and pride will make a stand against anything that would show them to be sinful. We cannot, of ourselves, conquer the evil desires and habits that strive for the mastery. We cannot overcome the mighty foe who holds us in his thrall.

(4) WHAT TWO STEP PROCESS DOES JAMES DESCRIBE IN OBTAINING VICTORY? NOTICE THE ORDER THESE MUST BE DONE FOR VICTORIOUS RESULTS.

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. (Jas 4:7 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 10:3

God alone can give us the victory. He desires us to have the mastery over ourselves, our own will and ways. But He cannot work in us without our consent and cooperation. The divine Spirit works through the faculties and powers given to man. Our energies are required to cooperate with God.

(5) WITH WHAT INTENSITY SHOULD WE STRIVE IN THIS BATTLE AGAINST SIN?

You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. (Heb 12:4 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Timothy 4:6, 7; Revelation 12:11; Matthew 16:25

(6) WHAT ADVICE DID CHRIST GIVE TO OVERCOME THE STRONGHOLDS OF SATAN THAT LIE WITHIN OUR CARNAL MIND AND FLESH?

Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Mat 26:41 NKJV)

So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.” (Mar 9:29 NKJV)

The victory is not won without much earnest prayer, without the humbling of self at every step.

(7) WHAT MUST WE BE WILLING TO ALLOW GOD TO DO IN US BEFORE VICTORY OVER SELF CAN BE WON?

for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. (Php 2:13 NKJV)

Related Texts: Philippians 2:12

Our will is not to be forced into co-operation with divine agencies, but it must be voluntarily submitted. Were it possible to force upon you with a hundredfold greater intensity the influence of the Spirit of God, it would not make you a Christian, a fit subject for heaven. The stronghold of Satan would not be broken.

The will must be placed on the side of God's will. You are not able, of yourself, to bring your purposes and desires and inclinations into submission to the

will of God; but if you are “willing to be made willing,” God will accomplish the work for you, even “casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:5. Then you will “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” Philippians 2:12, 13.

(8) WHAT THREE ENTICEMENTS ULTIMATELY OVERCOME THOSE WHO MAY BE ATTRACTED TO THE BEAUTY OF CHRIST, BUT DO NOT FULLY RENOUNCE THEIR WILL?

For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. (1Jn 2:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Numbers 11:34; Romans 13:14; 1 Corinthians 10:6

But many are attracted by the beauty of Christ and the glory of heaven, who yet shrink from the conditions by which alone these can become their own. There are many in the broad way who are not fully satisfied with the path in which they walk. They long to break from the slavery of sin, and in their own strength they seek to make a stand against their sinful practices. They look toward the narrow way and the strait gate; but selfish pleasure, love of the world, pride, unsanctified ambition, place a barrier between them and the Saviour.

To renounce their own will, their chosen objects of affection or pursuit, requires a sacrifice at which they hesi-

tate and falter and turn back. Many “will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” Luke 13:24. They desire the good, they make some effort to obtain it; but they do not choose it; they have not a settled purpose to secure it at the cost of all things.

(9) WHAT DID CHRIST PRAY WHILE IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE, AND MUST BE OUR PRAYER, IF WE ARE TO REMAIN ON THE NARROW PATH THAT LEADS TO ETERNAL LIFE?

He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” ... Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.” (Mat 26:39, 42 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 5:30; 6:38

The only hope for us if we would overcome is to unite our will to God’s will and work in cooperation with Him, hour by hour and day by day. We cannot retain self and yet enter the kingdom of God. If we ever attain unto holiness, it will be through the renunciation of self and the reception of the mind of Christ. Pride and self-sufficiency must be crucified. Are we willing to pay the price required of us? Are we willing to have our will brought into perfect conformity to the will of God? Until we are willing, the transforming grace of God cannot be manifest upon us.

(10) TO WHAT DOES THE APOSTLE PAUL COMPARE OUR SPIRITUAL STRUGGLES?

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (1Ti 6:12 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Timothy 4:7

The warfare which we are to wage is the “good fight of faith.” “I also labor,” said the apostle Paul, “striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily.” Colossians 1:29.

(11) WHAT WAS JACOBS PLEA WHEN STRIVING WITH HIS SAVIOUR IN PRAYER, AND MUST BE OURS IF WE ARE TO BE OVERCOMERS?

And He said, “Let Me go, for the day breaks.” But he said, “I will not let You go unless You bless me!” (Gen 32:26 NKJV)

Related Texts: 1 Chronicles 4:10

Jacob, in the great crisis of his life, turned aside to pray. He was filled with one overmastering purpose--to seek for transformation of character. But while he was pleading with God, an enemy, as he supposed, placed his hand upon him, and all night he wrestled for his life. But the purpose of his soul was not changed by peril of life itself. When his strength was nearly spent, the Angel put forth His divine power, and at His touch Jacob knew Him with whom he had been contending.

Wounded and helpless, he fell upon the Saviour's breast, pleading for a blessing. He would not be turned aside nor cease his intercession, and Christ granted the petition of this helpless, penitent soul, according to His promise, “Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make

peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me.” Isaiah 27:5. Jacob pleaded with determined spirit, “I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.” Genesis 32:26.

(12) FROM WHOM WILL THE VICTORY OVER OUR CHARACTER FLAWS AND DESIRES OF SELF-SUPREMACY COME?

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1Cor 15:57 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 15:5; 2 Corinthians 2:14; Jude 1:24; Isaiah 42:6

This spirit of persistence was inspired by Him who wrestled with the patriarch. It was He who gave him the victory, and He changed his name from Jacob to Israel, saying, “As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.” Genesis 32:28. That for which Jacob had vainly wrestled in his own strength was won through self-surrender and steadfast faith. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” 1 John 5:4.

Because of Christ’s amazing love and sacrifice for me, I want to follow His calling to enter through the straight and narrow gate into His kingdom.

Circle: Yes Undecided

The narrow gate is the renouncing of self to His will and the purification of my character. I realize that this decision involves a major spiritual war and my mind is the battleground.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I see the irony in the fact that for me to be, through the blood of Christ, victorious, I must first surrender all that I have and all that I am to Him.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Right now I choose to make that surrender and pray for the wisdom and conviction to continually strive for the narrow gate. I desire to bring glory to His name with my life and one day enter into His physical kingdom.

Circle: Yes Undecided

[illegible]



Beware of False Prophets - 35

This lesson is based on Matthew 7:15.

**(1) AS WE TRAVEL ALONG
THE NARROW PATH TOWARDS
THE STRAIT GATE, WHAT DID
CHRIST WARN US TO AVOID?**

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. (Mat 7:15 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 24:11; 1 John 4:1; 2 Peter 2:1, 2

Teachers of falsehood will arise to draw you away from the narrow path and the strait gate. Beware of them; though concealed in sheep’s clothing, inwardly they are ravaging wolves.

**(2) HOW DID JESUS SAY THAT
WE CAN DISTINGUISH THE**

FALSE FROM THE TRUE SO WE WON'T BE DECEIVED?

You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? (Mat 7:16 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 7:20; 12:33; Luke 6:43-45; James 3:12

Jesus gives a test by which false teachers may be distinguished from the true. “Ye shall know them by their fruits,” He says. “Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?”

(3) WHAT IS A BIBLICAL TEST FOR PROPHETS, SPIRITUAL, MENTORS AND TEACHERS?

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. (Isa 8:20 NKJV)

We are not bidden to prove them by their fair speeches and exalted professions. They are to be judged by the word of God. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them.” “Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.” Isaiah 8:20; Proverbs 19:27.

What message do these teachers bring? Does it lead you to reverence and fear God? Does it lead you to manifest your love for Him by loyalty to His commandments? If men do not feel the weight of the moral law; if they make light of God’s precepts; if they break one of the least of His commandments, and teach men so, they shall be of no esteem in the sight of heaven (*Matt 5:19:*

Jam 2:10). We may know that their claims are without foundation. They are doing the very work that originated with the prince of darkness, the enemy of God.

(4) WHAT IS OUR PART TO DO SO WE CAN APPLY THE BIBLICAL TEST?

...received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. (Act 17:11 NKJV)

Related Texts: 2 Timothy 3:15; John 8:32; 7:17; Acts 11:1; Job 23:12

(5) WHAT WILL CHRIST SAY AT THE FINAL JUDGEMENT TO MANY WHO BELIEVED THEY WERE ON THE NARROW PATH AND TEACHING TRUTH BUT WERE NOT?

And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ (Mat 7:23 NKJV)

Related Texts: Matthew 25:12; Luke 13:25; 2 Timothy 2:19

Not all who profess His name and wear His badge are Christ's. Many who have taught in My name, said Jesus, will be found wanting at last. “Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.”

(6) AFTER REJECTING TRUTH AND HIS GIFT OF REPENTANCE

FOR REJECTION OF IT, WHAT WILL GOD EVENTUALLY DO?

So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, To walk in their own counsels. (Psa 81:12 NKJV)

Related Texts: Romans 1:24; Acts 14:16

There are persons who believe that they are right, when they are wrong. While claiming Christ as their Lord, and professedly doing great works in His name, they are workers of iniquity. “With their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.” He who declares God’s word is to them “as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear Thy words, but they do them not.” Ezekiel 33:31, 32.

(7) IF, WITH SINCERITY OF HEART, WE SEEK AND OBEY GOD’S WILL, WHICH IS TRUTH, WHAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM?

If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority. (Joh 7:17 NKJV)

Related Texts: John 8:31, 32; Psalm 25:8, 9

(8) WHAT STATEMENT FROM CHRIST VALIDATES THAT ALL OF GOD’S COMMANDMENTS ARE TRUTH AND STILL RELEVANT AS A TRUE TEST OF LOVE AND DISCIPLESHIP TODAY?

If ye love me, keep my commandments. (Joh 14:15)

Related Texts: 1 John 5:2, 3; 2:3-5; Psalm 40:8

A mere profession of discipleship is of no value. The faith in Christ which saves the soul is not what it is represented to be by many. "Believe, believe," they say, "and you need not keep the law." But a belief that does not lead to obedience is presumption.

(9) WHAT DOES CHRIST, THROUGH GOD'S WORD, TEACH THAT REFUTES THE FALSE AND DANGEROUS TEACHING THAT ALL, OR EVEN ONE, OF GOD'S COMMANDMENTS ARE NO LONGER VALID?

For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. (Mat 5:18)

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. (Jas 2:10)

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever. (Isa 40:8)

Related Texts: Psalm 119:152; 1 Peter 1:25; Luke 21:33; 16:17

The apostle John says, "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 1 John 2:4. Let none cherish the idea that special providences or miraculous manifestations are to be the proof of the genuineness of their work or of the ideas they advocate (2 Pet 1:20). When persons will speak lightly of the word of God, and set their impressions, feelings, and exercises above the divine standard, we may know that they have no light in them.

(10) OUR ONLY SAFETY IS TO MAKE SCRIPTURE OUR FINAL AUTHORITY BECAUSE OPINIONS ARE MANY. WHAT CAUTION IS GIVEN ABOUT ALLOWING TRADITION TO REPLACE THE TEACHINGS OF GOD’S WORD?

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. (Col 2:8)

Related Texts: Colossians 2:22; 2 Peter 3:17; Matthew 16:6; Ephesians 5:6; Hebrews 13:9; Romans 16:18

(11) IF INTELLECTUALLY WE SEE TRUTH BUT DON’T HAVE THE DEEP CONVICTION TO FOLLOW IT, WHAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM?

...I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. (Eze 36:26-27)

Related Texts: Ezekiel 11:19, 20; Deuteronomy 30:6; Ephesians 4:23, 24

Obedience is the test of discipleship. It is the keeping of the commandments that proves the sincerity of our professions of love. When the doctrine we accept kills sin in the heart, purifies the soul from defilement, bears fruit unto holiness, we may know that it is the truth of God. When benevolence, kindness, tenderheartedness, sympathy, are manifest in our lives; when the joy of right doing is in our hearts; when we exalt Christ, and not self, we may know that our faith is of the right order. “Here-

by we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.” 1 John 2:3.

(12) WHAT STATEMENT IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION CONFIRMS THAT GOD’S LAST DAY REMNANT CHURCH WILL BE KEEPING GOD’S COMMANDMENTS?

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Rev 12:17)

Related Texts: Revelation 14:12; 22:14

(13) WHAT IS THE DECIDING FACTOR THAT DETERMINES IF WE ARE DECEIVED AND LOST, OR FOLLOW THE TRUTH AND ARE SAVED?

And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (2Th 2:10)

Related Texts: Proverbs 1:7; 4:5, 6; Romans 6:17; John 8:32

I now understand the danger of being led away from truth by false teachers and prophets. I choose to make the Bible my final word of authority and confirm what I am taught by it.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I love the Lord and want to show it by obedience to truth and His commands. I pray for an earnest love for the truth in my heart that only He can give.

Circle: Yes Undecided



Founded upon the Rock - 36

This lesson is based on Matthew 7:25.

(1) WHAT DID CHRIST WARN THE PEOPLE CONCERNING THE SPIRITUAL LEADERS AND THEIR TEACHINGS NOT ONLY ON THAT DAY ON THE MOUNTAIN, BUT CONSISTENTLY THROUGHOUT HIS MINISTRY?

Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. (Mat 16:12)

Related Texts: Matthew 16:6; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1

The people had been deeply moved by the words of Christ. The divine beauty of the principles of truth attracted

them; and Christ's solemn warnings had come to them as the voice of the heart-searching God. His words had struck at the very root of their former ideas and opinions; to obey His teaching would require a change in all their habits of thought and action. It would bring them into collision with their religious teachers; for it would involve the overthrow of the whole structure which for generations the rabbis had been rearing. Therefore, while the hearts of the people responded to His words, few were ready to accept them as the guide of life.

(2) IN CONCLUSION OF HIS SERMON ON THE MOUNT, WHERE DID CHRIST SAY TO BUILD OUR FOUNDATION OF FAITH AND BELIEFS SO THEY WILL NOT FAIL WHEN THE WINDS OF SPIRITUAL STRIFE BLOW?

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. (Mat 7:25)

Related Texts: Psalm 71:3; 31:3; 18:2

Jesus ended His teaching on the mount with an illustration that presented with startling vividness the importance of putting in practice the words He had spoken. Among the crowds that thronged about the Saviour were many who had spent their lives about the Sea of Galilee. As they sat upon the hillside, listening to the words of Christ, they could see valleys and ravines through which the mountain streams found their way to the sea. In summer these streams often wholly disappeared, leaving only a dry and dusty channel. But when the wintry storms burst upon the hills, the

rivers became fierce, raging torrents, at times overspreading the valleys and bearing everything away on their resistless flood. Often, then, the hovels reared by the peasants on the grassy plain, apparently beyond the reach of danger, were swept away.

But high upon the hills were houses built upon the rock. In some parts of the land were dwellings built wholly of rock, and many of them had withstood the tempests of a thousand years. These houses were reared with toil and difficulty. They were not easy of access, and their location appeared less inviting than the grassy plain. But they were founded upon the rock, and wind and flood and tempest beat upon them in vain.

(3) WHAT IS THE INFALLIBLE ROCK UPON WHICH WE CAN FIRMLY TRUST OUR SALVATION, AND WHY?

As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him. (Psa 18:30)

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. (1Pet 1:25)

Like the builders of these houses on the rock, said Jesus, is he who shall receive the words that I have spoken to you, and make them the foundation of his character and life. Centuries before, the prophet Isaiah had written, "The word of our God shall stand forever" (Isaiah 40:8); and Peter, long after the Sermon on the Mount was given, quoting these words of Isaiah added, "This is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:25). The word of God is the only steadfast thing

our world knows. It is the sure foundation. "Heaven and earth shall pass away," said Jesus, "but My words shall not pass away." Matthew 24:35.

(4) WHO IS THE WORD AND THE SPIRITUAL ROCK THAT WE CAN SAFELY BUILD UPON?

And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. (1Cor 10:4)

Related Texts: John 1:1; Psalm 92:15

The great principles of the law, of the very nature of God, are embodied in the words of Christ on the mount. Whoever builds upon them is building upon Christ, the Rock of Ages. In receiving the word, we receive Christ. And only those who thus receive His words are building upon Him. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 3:11. "There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12. Christ, the Word, the revelation of God,--the manifestation of His character, His law, His love, His life,--is the only foundation upon which we can build a character that will endure.

(5) HOW DO WE BUILD UPON THE FIRM FOUNDATION OF CHRIST--THE SPIRITUAL ROCK, AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? (Rom 6:16)

Related Texts: Acts 5:29; Hebrews 5:9

We build on Christ by obeying His word. It is not he who merely enjoys righteousness, that is righteous, but he who does righteousness. Holiness is not rapture; it is the result of surrendering all to God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father. When the children of Israel were encamped on the borders of the Promised Land, it was not enough for them to have a knowledge of Canaan, or to sing the songs of Canaan. This alone would not bring them into possession of the vineyards and olive groves of the good land. They could make it theirs in truth only by occupation, by complying with the conditions, by exercising living faith in God, by appropriating His promises to themselves, while they obeyed His instruction.

(6) WHAT MUST BE COMBINED WITH OUR FAITH TO BE EFFECTIVE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST?

Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. (Jas 2:17)

Related Texts: James 2:14-26; 1:27

Religion consists in doing the words of Christ; not doing to earn God's favor, but because, all undeserving, we have received the gift of His love. Christ places the salvation of man, not upon profession merely, but upon faith that is made manifest in works of righteousness. Doing, not saying merely, is expected of the followers of Christ. It is through action that character is built.

(7) TO WHOM DOES GOD GIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT EMPOWERS THEM TO DO GOOD WORKS WITH PURE MOTIVES?

And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. (Act 5:32)

Related Texts: Acts 1:8; Romans 8:5, 9

“As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Romans 8:14. Not those whose hearts are touched by the Spirit, not those who now and then yield to its power, but they that are led by the Spirit, are the sons of God.

(8) HOW CAN WE GROW IN FAITH AND IN LIKENESS TO THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST?

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Rom 10:17)

Related Texts: 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; James 1:21

Do you desire to become a follower of Christ, yet know not how to begin? Are you in darkness and know not how to find the light? Follow the light you have. Set your heart to obey what you do know of the word of God. His power, His very life, dwells in His word. As you receive the word in faith, it will give you power to obey. As you give heed to the light you have, greater light will come. You are building on God's word, and your character will be built after the similitude of the character of Christ.

(9) WHEN WE SEEK TO BUILD THE STONE OF OUR CHARACTER UPON THE FOUNDATION OF THE ROCK OF CHRIST, BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: (Eph 2:21)

Related Texts: Ephesians 2:19-22

Christ, the true foundation, is a living stone; His life is imparted to all that are built upon Him. “Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house.” “Each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord.” 1 Peter 2:5, R.V.; Ephesians 2:21, R.V. The stones became one with the foundation; for a common life dwells in all. That building no tempest can overthrow; for--

“That which shares the life of God,
With Him surviveth all.”

(10) WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE FAITH OF THOSE WHO BUILD THEIR CHARACTERS ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE SHIFTING SANDS OF THIS WORLD?

Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. (Isa 28:17)

Related Texts: Isaiah 28:2

But every building erected on other foundation than God's word will fall. He who, like the Jews in Christ's day, builds on the foundation of human ideas and opinions, of forms and ceremonies of man's invention, or on any works that he can do independently of the grace of Christ, is erecting his structure of character upon the shifting sand. The fierce tempests of temptation will sweep

away the sandy foundation and leave his house a wreck on the shores of time.

“Therefore thus saith the Lord God, ... Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.” Isaiah 28:16, 17.

(11) HOW DOES GOD FEEL ABOUT HIS CHILDREN WHO CHOOSE TO BUILD THEIR FOUNDATION ON THE SANDS OF DESTRUCTION?

Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? (Eze 33:11)

Related Texts: Ezekiel 18:21-24

But today mercy pleads with the sinner. ..The voice that speaks to the impenitent today is the voice of Him who in heart anguish exclaimed as He beheld the city of His love: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her own brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” Luke 13:34, 35, R.V. In Jerusalem, Jesus beheld a symbol of the world that had rejected and despised His grace. He was weeping, O stubborn heart, for you! Even when Jesus’ tears were shed upon the mount, Jerusalem might yet have repented, and escaped her doom. For a little space the Gift of heaven still waited her acceptance.

(12) WHAT IS THE LORD STILL PATIENTLY DOING AT OUR

HEARTS DOOR SO THAT WE CAN STAND FIRM ON HIM-- THE ROCK, BEFORE THE FINAL STORM COMES?

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. (Rev 3:20)

Related Texts: Luke 12:36; John 14:23; Revelation 19:9

O heart, to you Christ is still speaking in accents of love: “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” “Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” Revelation 3:20; 2 Corinthians 6:2.

(13) WHAT AMAZING INVITATION DOES GOD STILL OFFER EACH OF US?

Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. (Isa 45:22)

Related Texts: Isaiah 45:21; 55:1; John 10:28, 29; Matthew 11:28-30

You who are resting your hope on self are building on the sand. But it is not yet too late to escape the impending ruin. Before the tempest breaks, flee to the sure foundation. “Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, of sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.” “Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” “Fear thou not; for

I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.” “Ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.” Isaiah 28:16, R.V.; 45:22; 41:10; 45:17.

I realize the danger of accepting the opinions, traditions and teachings of man over the firm foundation of God's Word. This is like building a house on sand. The foundation will shift when exposed to the storms and raging torrents of life.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I have learned that the way to build on the Rock is to abide in Him and obey his voice. It is not he who merely enjoys righteousness, that is righteous, but he who does righteousness. Holiness is not rapture; it is the result of surrendering all to God; it is doing the will of our heavenly Father.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I now understand that the “house” is my character and the Rock is Jesus Christ and His Word. It is my desire and prayer that, by His grace, my character will stand strong and firm on Jesus the infallible Rock.

Circle: Yes Undecided

It is my commitment and prayer to follow the light that I have with all my heart so that God can trust me with greater light. This the key to have a character built after the similitude of Christ.

Circle: Yes Undecided