

Christian Life NT Bible study series

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Lesson 1: The Bible: the Word of God

It is so important for a young Christian to start right; therefore, the first lesson is designed to help establish your faith in the Bible, for it is the Word of God.

Keep in mind that the Bible is not a book of philosophy, although it is philosophical. Do not go to the Bible for a scientific treatise. However, there is no discrepancy between ascertained facts of science and the Bible. The Bible is not a book of history, but is found to be accurate when recording history. The Bible was given to man from God, revealing Jesus Christ, the son of God, and God the Son, the only Savior (John 14:6). He is the center and the circumference. It is Christ from Genesis to Revelation (Jn 5:39)

The Bible is as high above all other books as the heavens are above the earth. Someone has said of the Bible: “Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be right.”

I – The Bible Claims to be the Inspired Word of God

II Tim 3:16,17 Upon this statement of fact, historical Christianity stands. By ‘inspiration’ we mean that the Holy Spirit exerted his supernatural influence upon the writers of the Bible. The writings were inspired – not necessarily the writers, for the Bible nowhere claims to have been written by inspired men.

1. The Holy Spirit is the Author of the Bible. II Pet 1:21 – Christ told his disciples that he had more to tell them that they were not prepared to receive as yet but the Holy Spirit would come and guide them into all the Truth and that the Spirit would reveal God’s will to them and be their teacher. Jn 16:12-15
2. Man is the instrument used by God the Spirit to write the Bible
3. Results: the infallible word of God.

Therefore, the Bible is free from error and absolutely trustworthy. Psalm 119:89; Matt 24:35

II -- The Bible is a Difficult book.

I Cor 2:14 The Bible is a difficult book because it came from the infinite to the finite – from the unlimited, all powerful God to limited man. Therefore, you cannot understand the Bible as you would understand the writings of Plato or Socrates. You can study the great philosophers with the natural mind. And by diligent application grasp their profound meanings. If the Bible could be understood by natural man, it would be a natural book, and could not be the word of God. Since the Bible is from God, and therefore spiritual, before you can receive its teachings, you need to be born of the

Spirit (Jn 3:6 and filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18). Always approach the Bible praying that the Spirit will be your teacher and will guide you to a better understanding of his holy Word, or it will remain a difficult closed book (Jn 16: 12-15)

III – The Bible is a book of Oneness

II Peter 1:2 The oneness or unity of the Bible is a miracle. It is a library of 66 books, written by over 35 different authors, in a period of approximately 1500 years. Represented in the authors is a cross section of humanity, educated and uneducated, including kings, fishermen, public officials, farmers, teachers and physicians. Included in the subjects are religion, history, law, science, poetry, drama, biography and prophecy. Yet its various parts are as harmoniously unified as the parts that make up the human body.

For 35 authors, with such varied backgrounds, to write on so many subjects over such a long period in absolute harmony is a mathematical impossibility. It could not happen! So how do we account for the Bible? The only adequate explanation is: “Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

IV – The Bible Claims Special Power

Heb 4:12

(1) the Bible claims **dividing** power as a sword. The Bible will separate man from sin (Ps 119:11) or sin will separate man from the Bible (Isa 59:2)

(2) The Bible claims **reflecting** power as a mirror (Js 1:22-25). In the Bible we see ourselves as God sees us – as sinners yet truly valuable and loved by Him (Rom 3:23).

(3) The Bible claims **cleansing** power as water (Eph 5:26) David prayed that God would wash him from iniquity and cleanse him from sin (Ps 51:2)

(4) The Bible claims **reproductive** power as seed (I Pet 1:23). We are children of God because we have been born into the family of God by the incorruptible seed of God. This is the new birth (Jn 3:1-7).

(5) The Bible claims **nourishing** power as food (I Pet 2:2). The Bible is spiritual food for the soul. No Christian can remain strong in the Lord and not study the Word of God.

V – The Bible Commands the Believer to Study the Scriptures

II Tim 2:15 “Study to show thyself approved unto God.” is a command. As you study the Bible you will discover that it does not just contain the Word of God – it IS the Word of God. You must also keep in mind that the Word of God records the **words** of God, as well as the words of Satan, demons, angels, and man – both good and bad. God is truth and cannot lie. Satan is a “liar and the father of lies” (Jn 8:44). Man is natural and is therefore limited, and does not always speak the truth. To illustrate, (Mt 22:15-46). In this portion of Scripture we have the words of Jesus, the Pharisees, the Herodians, and the Sadducees. The Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees were trying to entangle Jesus in His teachings, that they might accuse Him of breaking God’s law. Their words were spoken with evil intent, revealing the thinking of the natural man, along with the words of God that came from the lips of Jesus.

As you study the Bible ask yourself these questions:

1. Who is speaking: God, demons, angels or man?

2. To whom is he speaking: to the nation Israel, to the Gentiles, to the church, to man in general or to a particular individual?
3. How can this Scripture be applied to my own life to make me a better Christian?

Lesson 2: God

The Bible reveals God as the only Infinite and eternal Being, having no beginning and no ending. He is creator and sustainer of all things He is the Supreme Personal Intelligence, and Righteous Ruler of His universe. He is life, and therefore, the only source of life (Jn 5:26).

Man is natural and cannot know God by wisdom. “Can you fathom the mysteries of God?” (Job 11:7) God is a person and can only be known by revelation. In the Old Testament He revealed Himself to and through his prophets. In the New Testament, He reveals himself through his Son, Jesus Christ. (Heb 1:1-3)

I – The Existence of God

Heb 11:5,6 The Bible nowhere attempts to prove or argue the existence of God. “For he that cometh to God must believe that he is.” The existence of God is a fact taken for granted by the writers of both Old and New Testaments. “In the beginning God” (Gen 1:1) The Bible opens by announcing the sublime fact of God and His existence. There are arguments for the existence of God; they are not conclusive, but are food for thought:

- 1) Universal belief in God comes from within man. It is innate in man and comes from rational intuition. Rom 1:19, 20
- 2) The argument from ‘Cause and effect’. Everything that began owes its existence to a cause. We have a watch; we must have a watchmaker. We have a building; we must have a builder. We have a creation; then we must have a creator. This creation could not have come into existence without an intelligent, personal creator, any more than the alphabet could produce a book itself without an author.
- 3) The argument from Anthropology. Man’s moral and intellectual nature argues for a moral and intellectual creator.
- 4) The Bible and the Christ that it reveals, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His vicarious death and His bodily resurrection—all of this and much, much more—argue for the existence of God.

II – The Personality of God

I Thess 1:9 The Bible reveals God as a personality. He is called “the living and true God” – One possessing self consciousness and self determination. His personality is shown in what He does, such as:

- 1) God loves. “God so loved the world” (Jn 3:16)

- 2) God hates. "These six things does the Lord hate" (Pro 6:16)
- 3) God cares. "He cares for you." (I Pet. 5:7)
- 4) God grieves. "It grieved Him at His heart." (Gen 6:6)

Only a personality can love, hate, care and grieve; therefore, God must be a living, eternal, personal being.

III – The Nature of God

There are four definitions of God in the Bible. Since God cannot be defined, they are incomplete. However, they do throw light upon the nature of God. They are:

- 1) "God is love" – (I John 4:8) This is the nature of God, His divine compassion
- 2) "God is light" – (I John 1:5) This is the nature of God in His divine character; in Him there is no darkness.
- 3) "God is consuming fire" – (Heb 12:29) This is the nature of God in His divine holiness. (Frequently the OT refers to God as 'holy' or unapproachable in moral perfection)
- 4) "God is Spirit" – (Jn 4:24) This is the nature of God in His divine essence.

The attributes of God reveal His nature. Do not think of His attributes as abstract, but as vital mediums through which His holy nature is unveiled.—attributes ascribed to Him such as:

- a) Life is ascribed to God – John 5:26
- b) All knowledge is ascribed to God – Ps. 147:5
- c) All power is ascribed to God – Rev. 19:6
- d) Filling the universe with His presence is ascribed to God – Ps 139:7-10

God is everywhere present, but He is not in everything. If God were in everything man could worship any object and he would be worshipping God. God is a spirit being. "And they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth"

IV – The Grace of God

Eph 2: 8-9 Grace is the love and mercy of God in action. Love is positive and Mercy is negative; both together mean grace. To show mercy in love is grace. God showed mercy in love when He did not give us what we deserved, but instead sent His son to bear in His own body our sins on the cross. Jn 3:16

- 1) The grace of God saves us from the wrath of God; that is, it is a gift and given unconditionally to those who receive it – Eph 2:8; Jn 1:12; Rev 22:17
- 2) The grace of God forgives – I Jn 1:9
- 3) The grace of God justifies – Rom 3:23,24
- 4) The grace of God regenerates (gives new spiritual life) – II Cor 5:17
- 5) The grace of God makes every believer an heir – Titus 3:7
- 6) The grace of God teaches the believer how to live – Titus 2:11,12

The grace of God is nothing less than the unlimited love of God expressed in the gift of His Son, our Savior. It is the undeserved love of God toward sinners.

V – The Trinity of God

Matt 3: 16-17 By the trinity of God we mean His tri-personal existence as Father, Son and Holy Spirit—three distinct persons in one God.

- 1) The Father is recognized as God – I Peter 1:2 and is all the fullness of the Godhead invisible. John 1:18
- 2) The Son is recognized as God – Heb 1:8 and is all the fullness of the Godhead manifested in the flesh. John 1:14
- 3) The Holy Spirit is recognized as God – Acts 5:3,4 and is all the fullness of the Godhead acting upon man, convicting him of sin (Jn 16:7-11), and guiding the believer into all truth. John 16:12-15.
- 4) The doctrine of the Trinity is not explicit in the Old Testament but is rather implied. “And God said, let US make man...” Gen 1:26 is plural in Hebrew.
- 5) The doctrine of the Trinity is revealed in the NT. In the above Scripture, we have Christ being baptized with the Father speaking from heaven, and the Spirit descending as a dove. We are to baptize in the Name (not names) of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19)
- 6) Creation itself implies the doctrine of the Trinity. In creation we have space, matter and time in one creation. In space we have length, breadth and height in one space. In matter we have energy, motion and phenomena in one substance. In time we have past, present and future in one time. In man we have body, soul and spirit in one man. I Thess 5:23.
- 7) In the Holy Trinity we have Father, Son and Holy Spirit in one God.

Lesson 3: Jesus Christ the Son of God

Christianity differs from all religions, however because it is more than a religion – it is the life of the Son of God made living in man. Christ is Christianity and Christianity is Christ. He is the Supreme subject of each book of the New Testament, and fulfills all the promises of God in the Old Testament, from His incarnation to His second coming as the Lord of Lord and King of Kings (Rev 17:14) He is the God-man Christ Jesus in glory exalted above all creatures, having “all power in heaven and earth” (Mt 28:18).

During His earthly ministry, He claimed to be God incarnate (in human flesh). He is all that He claimed to be, or He is a liar and rogue less than the least (Rev 1:8). Before His claim can be denied, there are some things that must be accounted for:

His virgin birth
His holy sinless life
His many miracles
His vicarious death and bodily resurrection

I THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

Luke 1:26-35 The virgin birth of Jesus Christ is without parallel in human history. It was by the virgin birth that God became man, one perfect person but two natures: one nature being that of Almighty God, the other being that of man—man without sin (Heb 4:15). The union of the two natures became the God-man Christ Jesus.

- 1) The first hint of the virgin birth is found in Gen 3:15. The one to be defeat Satan was to be born of the 'seed of the woman' (notice, not man). This is a biological miracle as there is no seed of a woman. From this we understand that the Deliverer would be One without a human father (Lk 1:34,35).
- 2) Isaiah prophesied that a 'virgin would conceive and bear a son and shall call His name Immanuel - God with us. (Isa 7:14)
- 3) Again Isaiah prophesied saying "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" (Isa 9:6,7). This means that God gave His only begotten Son who was with Him from eternity, and the child Jesus was born of a virgin. God gave His son "unto us".
- 4) According to prophecy He was to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2); and we see the Scripture fulfilled – over which the child to be born had no control - in Luke 2:1-7.

II THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST

John 1:1 The deity of Jesus Christ, or His God nature, is well established in the New Testament. Some of the facts are:

- 1) He is called God by the Apostle John (above verse)
- 2) He is called God by the Apostle Thomas (Jn 20:28)
- 3) He is called God by God the Father (Heb 1:8)
- 4) He claimed to be God in that He was with the Father before creation (John 17:5)
- 5) He claimed to be God in that He was before Abraham (John 8:51-59)
- 6) He received worship and only God is to be worshipped (Mt 14:33). Angels refused worship (Rev 22:8,9)
- 7) He forgives sin (Mk 2:5-11) and only God can forgive sin.
- 8) He is Creator and Maker of all things (Col 1:16)
- 9) He is Sustainer of all things (Heb 1:3) Only God can control the universe.
- 10) He claimed to have all power in heaven and in earth (Mt 28:18) only God has this.
- 11) He walked the blue waters of Galilee. Suspending the laws of nature, the winds and the waves obeyed His command. He healed the sick and raised the dead. He gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf. He cast out

demons, made the lame to walk, turned the water into wine, and fed five thousand with the lunch of a lad. These miracles and the reactions of those who witnessed them are all recorded in the historical narratives of the gospel – preserved for us today.

III THE HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST

Rom 1:3, 4 The humanity of Jesus Christ is seen in His human parentage (Matt 2:11).

- 1) He developed as a normal human being (Lk 2:52)
- 2) He was subject to all the ordinary infirmities of the human nature in that He hungered (Mt 4:2); He was thirsty (Jn 19:28); He was weary (Jn 4:6); He wept (Jn 11:35); He was tempted (Heb 4:15).

Jesus was a man. He was 100% human, yet He was more than a man. He was also God. God in flesh, God-man. His two natures bound together in such a way as He possessed a single consciousness and will (Jn 4:34).

IV THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

Phil 2:8 The death of Jesus Christ is mentioned more than 120 times in the NT, and is spoken of many times by the Prophets in the OT.

- 1) The death of Jesus Christ was vicarious (Matt 20:28). He was God's substitute for sinners (II Cor 5:21). On the Cross, Christ was made sin for the sinner. By faith in Him, the sinner is made righteous in the sight of God.
- 2) The death of Jesus Christ was natural (Jn 19:31-37). By a natural death we mean that His spirit and soul were separated from his body.
- 3) The death of Jesus Christ was unnatural (Rom 6:23). By an unnatural death we mean that since He was sinless in that He "did no sin" (I Pet 2:22), "had no sin" (Jn 3:5), and "knew no sin" (II Cor 5:21) before He could die, He had to "be made sin for us." Therefore His death was unnatural.
- 4) The death of Jesus Christ was preternatural (Rev 13:8). By this we mean the death of Christ was not an afterthought with God. It was the forethought of God.
- 5) The death of Jesus Christ was supernatural (Jn 10:17,18). Jesus said "No man takes my life from me". Then He said "I lay it down of myself." "I have power to lay it down and take it up again myself" (supernaturally). This He did on the cross, And three days later He took life up again when He arose from the dead. Only God in the form of man could die a vicarious, unnatural, natural, preternatural and supernatural death.

V THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

Matt 28:1-20 Jesus said "I am the Resurrection and life" (Jn 11:25). The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the doctrine of every disciple, the faith of every true believer, the courage of every martyr, the theme of every sermon and the power of every evangelist.

Luke tells us that we have "many infallible proofs" of His resurrection (Acts 1:3). Let us look at some of these 'infallible proofs' according to the eyewitnesses:

- 1) After His resurrection He appeared first to Mary Magdalene (Jn 20:11-18).
- 2) He appeared to the women returning from the sepulcher (Mt 28:5-10).
- 3) Then He appeared to Peter (Lk 24:34)
- 4) To the Emmaus disciples (Lk 24:13-31).
- 5) To the Apostles, Thomas not present (Lk 24:36-43)
- 6) Again to the Apostles, Thomas present (Jn 20:24-29).
- 7) To the seven by the Sea of Tiberias (Jn 21:1-23).
- 8) To over 500 brethren (I Cor 15:6).
- 9) He was seen of James (I Cor 15:7).
- 10) He was seen again by the eleven apostles (Mt 28:16, 20).
- 11) He was seen of Stephen, the first martyr (Acts 7:55).
- 12) He was seen of Saul in the Damascus Rd (Acts 9:3-6; I Cor 15:8) resulting in his conversion and subsequent powerful life.

Many of these eyewitnesses died martyr deaths because they preached the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They were glad to die for the living Christ. They had the infallible proofs.

When Jesus was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane, all of His disciples “forsook him and fled” (Mt 26:56). From this time until after His resurrection, the disciples lived in fear. They did not believe that He would rise from the dead (Jn 20:9). Had Jesus not risen from the dead, the Cross would have been the end of Christianity. After the death of Jesus, we see His disciples dejected, discouraged and defeated. The death of Jesus meant but one thing to them: the end.

How do we account for the great change that came into their lives three days later?

The only explanation is that they had the infallible proofs that He had risen from the dead and was alive forevermore. They saw him, talked with Him, touched Him and ate with Him. Now look at some ‘infallible proofs’ according to circumstantial evidence:

- 1) The change from fear to unlimited courage. They rejoiced in persecution (Acts 5:40-42). They chose death, with faith in the resurrected Christ, rather than to deny that faith and be delivered (Heb 11:35).
- 2) The early church began to worship on the first day of the week, the day of the resurrection. It was not a law – it was spontaneous (Acts 20:7). For almost two thousand years, the church has worshipped on the first day. For the Christian, every Sunday is Easter.
- 3) The early Christians went everywhere with the word of the resurrection. (Acts 8:1-4).
- 4) The empty tomb- for if Jesus is not alive, what happened to His body? The Roman guards were paid to say “His disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept” (Mt 28:12,13). First, the disciples lacked the courage. Had the disciples stolen His body, how can we account for the fact they all suffered and most died a martyr’s death? Second, no one was arrested or tried for stealing the body of Jesus. It is evident the governing officials did not believe the story of the guards. Third, the guard could have been put to death for sleeping on duty. Fourth, if they were asleep how could they know it was the disciples that stole his body? Fifth, had the enemies of Jesus moved the

body, they could have produced it and brought a quick end of Christianity – and they would have!

- 5) The grave clothes found in the empty tomb are proof of the resurrection (Jn 20:1-10). Had friend or foe stolen the body, they would not have removed the grave clothes, since He had been dead three days. When John saw the grave clothes and recognized they were folded the same as when they were wrapped about the body, he knew that a miracle had taken place. Jesus came out of the clothes and they had collapsed without disturbing the folds. They were left as 'infallible proof' and when John saw this and understood, he believed that Jesus had risen from the dead.

VI THE ASCENSION AND SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

Acts 1:9-11 After 40 days of instructing His disciples, the risen Christ ascended up on high and is seated at the right hand of the Father (Heb 10:12). Two men brought the message of His second coming to the Apostles: "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall also come in like manner." The message of Jesus' second Coming is so important that it is mentioned some 300 times in the NT.

- 1) He is coming to take His church to be with Him (I Thess 4:16,17; Jn.14:1-6).
- 2) He is coming to judge the nations (Mt 25:31-46)
- 3) He is coming to save Israel (Rom 11:25,26).
- 4) He is coming to sit upon the throne of David (Lk 1:31-33; Isa 9:6,7).
- 5) He is coming to bring righteous government to this earth (Heb 1:8)

Lesson 4: The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is God and is equal to the Father and the Son. Don't speak of Him as 'It' or refer to Him as an influence.

I The Deity of the Holy Spirit

Acts 5:3,4 In dealing with Ananias, Peter revealed the Deity of the Holy Spirit. In this Scripture it is very clear that the Holy Spirit is God and that He is co-equal, co-eternal and co-existent with God the Father and God the Son. His deity is also set forth in that He has divine attributes:

- 1) He is everywhere present in the universe (Ps 139:7-10)
- 2) He has all power (Lk 1:35)
- 3) He has all knowledge (I Cor 2:10,11)
- 4) He is eternal (Heb 9:14)

His Deity is revealed in that His name is coupled as equal with the Father and the Son in the baptism of the believer (Matt 28:19) and in the Apostolic benediction (II Cor 13:14).

His Deity is recognized as in relation to the life and ministry of Jesus by the following:

- 1) He was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Lk 1:35)
- 2) He was anointed by the Holy Spirit. for service (Acts 10:38)

- 3) He was led by the Holy Spirit. (Matt 4:1)
- 4) He was crucified in the power of the Holy Spirit. (Heb 9:14)
- 5) Jesus gave commandments to the apostles and the church through the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:2)

If Jesus needed to depend solely on the Holy Spirit during His life and ministry here on earth, can we afford to do less?

II The Emblems of the Holy Spirit

Luke 3:16 It is often difficult to impart truth by the use of words. Frequently, they reveal only a half truth, leaving the other half hidden. The writers of the Bible used certain emblems when unfolding the mysteries of the Holy Spirit because they illustrate more about Him than volumes can contain. They are:

- 1) Fire as an emblem. Fire speaks of His consuming, purifying power in the life of the believer (Acts 2:3; Isa 6:1-7)
- 2) Wind as an emblem (John 3:8; Acts 2). Wind speaks of His hidden depth of regenerating power.
- 3) Water as an emblem (Jn 7:37-39). Water speaks of His power to fill the believer to overflowing with spiritual life.
- 4) Seal as an emblem (Eph 1:13). Seal speaks of His ownership of the believer.
- 5) Oil as an emblem (Acts 10:38). Oil speaks of His power to anoint for service.
- 6) Dove as an emblem (Mark 1:10). The dove speaks of His gentle, peaceful nature. WE can know the peace of God which passes all understanding – only when fully surrendered to God (Phil 4:7).

III Sins against the Holy Spirit

Matt 12:31,32 This is a solemn study, because the Holy Spirit is God and can be sinned against by both the believer and the unbeliever. May He help you search your heart as you consider:

- 1) The sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit. This sin is committed by unbelievers. Often called the ‘unpardonable’ sin, it has no forgiveness. It was committed by the enemies of Jesus when they accused Him of casting out devils by the power of Satan (Matt 12:24) when Jesus claimed to cast them out by the “Spirit of God.” (Matt 12:28)
- 2) The sin of resisting the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51). This sin is committed by the unbeliever when rejecting Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
- 3) The sin of grieving the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30-32). This sin is committed by believers when our words and conduct are unbecoming of the Lord. He is grieved by us unless He has our sovereign allegiance (Eph 4:22-24).
- 4) The sin of quenching the Holy Spirit (I Thess 5:19). This sin is committed by Christians when known sin allowed to go unconfessed (I John 1:9; Isa. 59:1,2)

- 5) The sin of lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-11). The sin of Ananias and Saphira was deception born in jealousy. They tried to mock God (Gal 6:7). The Holy Spirit can be sinned against because He is God.

IV The Work of the Holy Spirit

John 16:7-14 In instructing His disciples regarding the coming of the Holy Spirit, Jesus said "...If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you. And when He is come He will...":

- 1) Convict men of the sin of unbelief (verse 9)
- 2) Convict men that Jesus is the righteousness of God (Jn 16:10; Rom 10:3,4)
- 3) Convict men that the power of Satan has been broken (verse 11)
- 4) Regenerate the believer (Jn 3:5; Titus 3:5).
- 5) Indwell the believer (I Cor 6:19,20).
- 6) Seal the believer (Eph 1:13,14).
- 7) Baptize the believer (Acts 1:5; I Cor 12:13).
- 8) Infill the believer (Eph 5:18)
- 9) Empower the believer (Acts 1:8)
- 10) Lead the believer (Gal 5:16-18).
- 11) Administer spiritual gifts to the believer (I Cor 12:1-11)

The Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, and remains with the church, the "called out ones" (ekklesia) until it is complete and presented to the Lord Jesus at His coming. Just as Jesus Christ finished the work He came to do in the flesh, so the Holy Spirit will finish the work He came to do in the church.

V The Fruit of the Holy Spirit

Gal 5:22,23 "The fruit of the Spirit is love". Only as we live in love can we fulfill the will of God in our lives. The believer must become love inspired, love mastered, and love driven (II Cor 5:14). Without the fruit of the Spirit (love) we are just a religious noise (I Cor 13:1).

"The fruit of the Spirit is love" and it is manifested in joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance:

1. Joy is loves strength
2. Peace is loves security
3. Longsuffering is loves patience
4. Kindness is loves conduct
5. Goodness is loves character
6. Faithfulness is loves confidence
7. Gentleness is loves humility
8. Self control is loves victory

A Holy Spirit controlled man needs no law to cause him to live a righteous life. The secret of a Spirit controlled life is found in Rom 12:1,2. Give your whole self to God – piece by piece -- and the Holy Spirit will fill your heart with the love of God (Rom 5:5).

Lesson 5: The New Birth

It is of the utmost importance that we have a clear understanding of what Jesus meant when speaking with Nicodemus said “You must be born again”. The new birth is a spiritual birth. It is as much a birth as the natural birth; it is not just a figure of speech. The first birth is of the ‘seed of man’. The second birth is of the ‘seed of God’ (I Pet 1:23). Therefore you cannot become a child of God by joining the church any more than a monkey could become a man by joining the human race. He may act like a man, dress like a man and try to live like a man – but he would still be a monkey. Now if by some miracle the monkey could be born again by the ‘seed of man’, then – and only then—could he become a man. The only way to become a child of God is to “born from above” by the “incorruptible seed of God.” What is the new birth?

The new birth is a new creation (II Cor 5:17)

The new birth is a spiritual resurrection (Eph 2:1-9)

The new birth is regeneration (Titus 3:5)

The new birth is partaking of the divine nature of God (II Peter 1:4)

The new birth is receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, by faith (Jn 1:12)

The new birth is being made “the righteousness of God” (II Cor 5:21)

The new birth is compulsory if you are to become a child of God: “You MUST be born again.”

I JESUS AND THE TWO BIRTHS

John 3:1-8 In the Scripture we see Jesus and Nicodemus face to face – Jesus, the Son of God and Nicodemus, the very religious son of a natural man, but he was not a child of God. What a shock it must have been to learn his religion was not enough! It never is. He came to Jesus addressing him as a ‘teacher sent from God’ (Jn 2:24, 25). Jesus knew Nicodemus as He knows all men and Jesus knew he needed more than a teacher. He needed a Savior. He needed more than a religion; he needed regeneration. He needed more than law; he needed life. Jesus began by going straight to the point – “You must be born again.” Nicodemus asked “How can a man be born when he is old? Jesus pointed out the dissimilarity between the two births. Let us look at the 2 births:

The flesh birth produces a physical being with the old, Adamic nature (Psalm 51:5); it produces a corruptible nature (I Pet 1:23); It produces the nature that is under the sentence of death (Rom 6:23); it produces a nature that makes every unsaved person a child of the devil (I John 3:10; Jn 8:44); The new birth produces a nature that desires to please God and does not 'enjoy' or want to sin (I John 3:9), a nature that resists the practice or habit of sinning (I Jn 3:9); it produces a righteous nature (II Cor 5:21); it produces a divine nature, a nature like God in its core motives (II Pet 1:4).

Every born again person has two natures – the old from the old birth and the new from the new birth. By the old birth, we are children of the flesh; by the new birth, we are children of God. That is why we must be born again.

Lloyd Ogilvie, Chaplain of the US Senate, said “The greatest miracle in the world is the calling, conditioning and commissioning of a disciple of Jesus Christ.”

It is true because for one to be born again, he must come to the end of himself, recognize he is a sinner lost and without hope before God, and be willing to humble himself and ask for forgiveness through the blood of the Son of God.

II THE NEW BIRTH ISSUES A NEW NATURE

I John 3:9-10 (the Message) “People conceived and brought into life by God don’t make a practice of sin. How could they? God’s seed is deep within them, making them who they are. It’s not in the nature of the God-begotten to practice and parade sin. Here’s how you tell the difference between God’s children and the Devil’s children: The one who won’t practice righteous ways isn’t from God, nor is the one who won’t love brother or sister. The old nature is born of fallen man, and is depraved. The new nature is born of God.

See what this verse says about the new nature:

- 1) Does the new nature enjoy sinning? Read it again above. Does it enjoy sinning? No. Why? Because it is the product of the seed of God.
- 2) The new nature does not enjoy practicing the old sin patterns because it is against the nature of God. (I Pet 1:4)

About the old nature: 1) the old nature is a **foreign master** which is at work to enslave you and dominate everyone under its control (Rom 6:14-23); 2) the old nature is an **unfit companion** (Rom 7:1-6); the old nature desires evil continually (Rom 6:12) but by offering the parts of your body to God, you stop yielding to the desire of the flesh and sin loses its tyranny. A defeated Christian life is not for you! The power to live in victory is found in the new nature (Gal 2:20).

If you have been born again, you have 2 natures- the old and the new – and you are walking according to one of the two. Examine your Christian walk in the light of (Rom 8:5,6).

III THE NEW BIRTH IS INCORRUPTIBLE

I Peter 1:23 Here we see 2 seeds, 2 births and 2 natures. The corruptible seed issues a corruptible nature (Rom 1:23). The seed of man became depraved in the loins of Adam when he sinned in the garden of Eden (Gen 3). Corruptible man can only produce corruptible seed (Matt 7:18). All have sinned because all are born in sin (Ps 51:5). You are not a sinner because you sin. You sin because you are a sinner.

The incorruptible seed issues an incorruptible nature (II Pet 1:4). You cannot corrupt that which is incorruptible. Therefore the incorruptible seed of God issues a new nature that resists corruption. The new birth produces the life of Christ, and this life is made living in man by the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom 8:8-10). The believer seeks to live by the Spirit.

IV THE NEW BIRTH -- ITS MEANS

John 3:14-18 This reference to Moses (Num 21:5) points to the choice of the Israelites. When anyone was bitten by a serpent, he had a choice: He could refuse to humble himself and die or he could humble himself by looking on the brass serpent and live (Isa 45:22).

“Even so must the son of man be lifted up” Just as the serpent in the wilderness was the only means for the healing of Israel, so the death of Jesus is the only means for the new birth. And the only way to appropriate the regenerating power of God is by faith in the vicarious death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Cor 15:1-4).

The sinner must come to God by faith, believing:

- 1- That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures (Isa 53:1-12; Zech 13:6)
- 2- And that He was buried. This is the proof of his death. He was in the sepulcher three days and nights.
- 3- And that he rose again the third day according to Scriptures. This is the Gospel that saves – but it is powerless to save until the sinner believes it. (Rom 1:16).

The means of the new birth is found in that:

- 1- John 3:16; Acts 4:12 Jesus Christ was the Anointed Messiah, sent by God
- 2- Jesus Christ gladly came into the world to become the only means of the new birth (Jn 12:27; John 17:1-5)
- 3- The Holy Spirit came into the world on the Day of Pentecost to convince men of their need of the new birth (Jn 16:7-11). A personal faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Christ of God is the only means of the new birth.

V THE NEW BIRTH -- ITS THREEFOLD PROOF

I John 5:1 Every 'born again' child of God has the threefold proof of the new birth—proof that he is a child of God. This proof is threefold: first, inward proof; second, outgoing proof; and third, outward proof.

- 1- 'Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God' My faith in Christ – that He is God – is personal evidence that I am a child of God (I John 5:10,13). This is inward proof of the new birth.
- 2- Everyone that loves is born of God (I Jn 4:7-11). We are to love our neighbor with the love of God. This we are not capable of doing in the flesh; we must let God love man through us (Rom 5:5). This is outgoing proof of the new birth.
- 3- "Every one that does righteousness is born of God" (Jn 2:29). If you are born of God, you will make a practice of doing right at all times and at all cost (II Cor 5:17). This is outward proof of the new birth.

If you do not have the threefold proof of the new birth, now is the time to get on your knees and accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior- by faith in His vicarious death, burial and resurrection.

Lesson 6. Prayer

Prayer is as old as man, as universal as religion and as instinctive as breathing (Gen 4:26). It is practiced in some form by all men of all faiths. Prayer springs from the heart with a need—a need greater than man's ability to encounter. Prayer is man's acknowledgement of a being higher than himself.

Most men try to pray, yet so few know how. There are two kinds of prayers: the prayer that does not reach God and the prayer that does reach God. This is illustrated by our Lord in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Lk 18:9-14). Both men went to the same place, at the same time, for the same purpose—to pray.

The Pharisee prayed in his religious pride, expecting God to answer because he thought himself worthy. He informed God of his own goodness, that he was better than others. He boasted of his good works. He said "I fast, I give." This is the kind of prayer that does not reach God. It is self-righteous prayer.

Now look at the publican and his prayer. He came to God in great humility, conscious of his unworthiness, confessing himself a sinner and begging for mercy. This is the kind of prayer that does reach God. This is righteous prayer. It is a rare privilege to pray because it brings you into close fellowship with God, admitting your need for Him and your utter dependence upon Him.

I WHAT IS PRAYER?

Matt 7:7-11 Prayer is asking and receiving; it is talking with God; it is making your request known to Him in faith. This Scripture is so simple on the surface that we are in danger of failing to recognize its immensity. Our Lord instructs the believer to ask, seek and knock, because these three words cover the whole spectrum of prayer.

- 1- Prayer is asking and receiving. When you know the will of God regarding a need, whether it be spiritual or material, you can ask and receive. This is prayer according to the revealed will of God (I Jn 5:14,15).
- 2- Prayer is seeking and finding. When you do not know the will of God regarding a need, whether it be material or spiritual, then you are to seek His will in prayer concerning this need until you find it. This is prayer for a knowledge of the unrevealed will of God in a specific need (Col 3:1; Jer 29:12,13)
- 3- Prayer is knocking and opening. When you know the will of God and yet you find a closed door, you are to knock and keep on knocking until God opens the door. This is tenacious prayer – prayer for mountain moving faith. Knocking prayer perseveres until the impossible becomes the possible. This is miracle working prayer (Mt 17:14-21) All things are possible when you ask, seek and knock.

II WHY PRAY?

Luke 18:1 Because Jesus said “Men ought always to pray”. Prayer is imperative. Men are commanded to pray. (Mt 26:41); Second, because prayer is the only way to get things from God. James 4:2 “You have not because you ask not.”

Third, because there is joy in prayer (John 16:24). Fourth, because prayer will deliver you out of all your troubles (Psalm 34:6); Fifth, because prayer can unlock the treasure chest of God’s wisdom (James 1:5);

Sixth, because prayer is a channel of power (Jer 33:3)

Seven, it’s a sin Not to pray (I Sam 12:23)

Eight, because sinners can be saved when they pray in faith, and

Nine, because Jesus himself often prayed.

III HOW TO PRAY

Matt 6:9-13 Our Lord gave this as a model prayer after one of the disciples asked (Lk.11:1) Jesus to teach them to pray.

We are to pray to “Our Father in heaven” because He is all wise, all loving, and all powerful. We are also instructed to pray in the Name of Jesus (Jn 14:13,14) depending on the influence of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:26,27); We are to pray for His will to be done in all things; we are to pray for the coming of His kingdom (Mt 25:31-46); we are to pray for our daily necessities; pray for forgiveness and practice forgiving; and we are to pray for His leading and deliverance from evil.

We are to pray in faith (Heb 11:5,6), for without faith it is impossible to please God.

IV WHERE TO PRAY

Acts 12:5 There was a remarkable change in the prayer life of the disciples following the resurrection and noted again after Pentecost. Before the death of Jesus, the disciples slept while Jesus prayed in the garden (Mt. 26:36-46). After the resurrection they assembled in the Upper room, waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:13,14) and they prayed. We should always pray when we are assembled with believers. They prayed as they went from house to house (Acts 2:42-47). They prayed in the church when Peter was in prison (Acts 12:5-19). Paul and Silas prayed in prison. Here we see Christians praying in the presence of unbelievers but not to be heard of them. Never pray to be heard or please others. Pray only to please God. The most important place to pray is any place you can be alone with God (Matt 6:6). We are instructed to pray in all places at all times (I Tim 2:8).

V HINDRANCES TO PRAYER?

I Peter 3:7 When prayers are not answered, you should examine yourself in the light of God's word. If you find anything not pleasing to God confess it believing God for forgiveness, that your prayers may be answered (I Jn 1:9).

1—an unharmonious relationship between husband and wife will hinder prayer (I Pet 3:1-7).

2—Selfishness will hinder prayer (James 4:3)

3— An unforgiving spirit will hinder prayer (Mt 5:22,24)

4—Unbelief will hinder prayer (Heb 11:6).

5—Known sin in the heart will hinder prayer (Isa 59:1,2; Psalm 66:18)

When you pray, go to God in all humility. Ask Him to reveal anything in your life that is displeasing to Him. Then judge it; confess it; calling it by name; and forsake it. Pray in all simplicity and earnestness, believing and God will hear and answer.

VI DOES GOD ANSWER ALL PRAYERS?

John 15:7 The Bible is filled with answered prayers from Genesis to Revelation. You are commanded to pray, and God has promised to answer (Jer 33:3). In the Scripture above, there are two requirements for answers to prayer: First, you are to abide in Him; that is to continue in Him. It means to remain in His perfect will at all costs (Rom 12:1,2). Second, His words are to abide in you, they are to become a vital part of your life. You are to be filled with, and guided by, His words (Col 3:16,17). Meet these two requirements and your prayers will be answered!

1—the answer is sometimes immediate. Peter walked on water at the invitation of Jesus. When he was about to sink, he cried out "Lord, save me". The answer was immediate (Mt.14:22-31)

2—the answer is sometimes delayed. The delay is according to His will (Rom 8:28). The resurrection of Lazarus is a good example of delayed – but not denied – prayer (John 11:1-44).

3—The answer is sometimes ‘No’. when God answers with a no He always accompanies the answer with peace (Phil 4:6,7) and grace (II Cor 12:7-10).

4—The answer is sometimes different from what you expect. You pray for patience and God sends tribulation – because “Tribulation works patience” (Rom 5:3). God answers all your prayers – not according to your wishes, but according to His perfect will.

Lesson 7: Faith

“The just shall live by faith.” This declaration of the Christian’s principle of life is found four times in the Bible: Hab 2:1-5 ; Rom 1:17; Gal 3:10,11; Heb 10:38. In Habakkuk we see the difference between the lives of the unjust and the just. The unjust are puffed up and live by their own self-sufficiency. But the just live by faith – their confidence is in God. To them, faith is more than a philosophy of life; it is the very principle of life (Hab 2:4). The righteous shall live his whole life by faith. He is saved by faith (Acts 16:31); he is kept by faith (I Peter 1:5); and he lives by faith (Gal 2:20). His faith shall be tried many times and in many ways (I Pet1:7), but faith will always be vindicated, because it is more than equal to any occasion. Faith knows how to wait on the Lord (Isa 40:31), and it is always victorious (I John 5:4).

I WHAT IS FAITH?

Faith is the ability to believe and ACT on that belief. Spiritual faith is the ability to believe God and ACT on that belief. Everyone has faith in something: I believe this chair will hold me up so I sit down on it. The believer has God as the OBJECT of his faith. Heb. 11:1-3 Your faith is your title deed to eternal life. Just as a title deed is evidence of real estate, so your faith is evidence of your eternal estate in God (II Cor 4:18). Faith is taking God at His word (Heb 11:6); Faith is knowing that all things work together for good to them that love God (Rom 8:28); Faith does not believe all things are good or that all things work well; but that God is working to bring good out of all things.

Faith has 2 sides. One has to do with the intellect; It is an intellectual conviction that Jesus is the Christ of God. The other has to do with the will. It is a volitional surrender of the will to Jesus as Master. This is seen when Thomas believed and confessed “My Lord and my God” (Jn 20:28). “My Lord” indicates volitional surrender; “My God” – this was intellectual conviction. Together you have saving faith (Jn 20:31). By faith, the mind trusts in God, the heart responds to the love of God, the will submits to the commands of God and the life obeys in the service of God. Faith is paradoxical. It goes beyond reason. It believes without

understanding 'why'. It sings in prison; it glories in tribulation; it chooses to suffer (Heb 11:25); it accepts all things as part of God's will (Phil 1:12).

You are not born with spiritual faith. It comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom 10:17). This is why we are commanded to preach the Gospel that they may hear and believe (Rom 10:13,14).

II THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH

Eph. 6:16 The shield of faith is a vital part of the Christian's armor. You are to put on the whole armor of God because the Christian life is a kind of warfare, a spiritual conflict. Here, Paul – the master warrior - emphasizes the importance of faith writing "Above all, taking the shield of faith..." For with the shield of faith, nothing can hurt you. You are more than conquerors through Him (Rom 8:27).

The importance of faith is seen in that:

- 1) You cannot be saved without faith (Jn 3:36).
- 2) You cannot live victoriously over the world without faith (I Jn 5:4).
- 3) You cannot please God without faith (Heb 11:6).
- 4) You cannot pray without faith (Js 1:6).
- 5) You cannot have peace with God without faith (Rom 5:1).
- 6) You cannot have joy without faith (I Pet 1:8).
- 7) You are justified by faith (Gal 2:16).
- 8) You are to live by faith (Gal 2:20).
- 9) You are made righteous by faith (Rom 10:1-4).
- 10) Christ dwells in your heart by faith (Eph 3:17)
- 11) The Holy Spirit is received by faith (Gal 3:2).
- 12) "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom 14:23).

Faith is important because faith honors God and God always honors faith.

III LITTLE FAITH

Matt 14:28-33 At this stage in the spiritual growth of Peter, he was a man of 'little faith'. However, after Pentecost, he became a spiritual giant. Let us take a good look at his 'little faith' and profit from it. Jesus came to his distressed disciples walking on the water in the midst of a storm. Peter asked to come to Jesus on the water. Jesus said 'Come' and Peter must have thrilled to put his foot down on the water and actually do the impossible. Peter walked on the water by faith!

Next Peter did the conceivable thing, looked around and had second thoughts. He doubted. For a moment he lost sight of Jesus (Lk 9:62). Now Peter did the natural thing. He doubted and doubt breeds fear. He feared for his destruction and then began to sink. Peter failed. It's astounding that he actually walked on water; yet, failing, he did the right thing – he called out to Jesus "Lord save me!" Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him. Once more, Peter made contact with Jesus by faith. Here we see both the success and failure of "little faith".

To recap, you need a faith that is bigger than the elements that would drag you down to defeat. You can have BIG faith by 'prayer and fasting' (Mt 17:20,21) and by feeding your faith on the Word of God (Rom 10:17). You can have mountain moving faith.

IV THREE KINDS OF FAITH

John 11:21-44 In these verse we see the faith of Martha in connection with the resurrection of her younger brother Lazarus. To begin, Martha's faith was limited: She said "If you (Jesus) had been here, my brother would not have died." The death of Lazarus meant the end of Martha's faith. She believed Jesus had power to raise her brother from the sick bed, but not from the dead. Her limited faith restricted the power of Christ (Mt 13:58). Limited faith is controlled by circumstance and overcome by fear of failure.

Martha's faith was fundamental. Jesus challenged Martha's limited faith stating he had power over life and death and asking her "Do you believe this?" Martha evaded the question posed by Jesus by acknowledging her fundamental faith in a creed. But it is not enough to believe in a creed only; faith must go beyond your creed to the living and all powerful Christ. Her faith limited the power of Christ (Mk 10:27) and "Jesus wept."

At last, unlimited faith came to Martha when she consented to have the stone removed from the tomb (verse 41). When Jesus first ordered the stone removed, Martha objected in unbelief. Again Jesus challenged her, saying "Didn't I tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?" At last she consented and her unlimited faith was not disappointed! Some people say "Seeing is believing", but not so. Faith comes before sight. The Lord Jesus challenged Martha's faith and in a brief time we see her faith grow from a limited, fundamental faith to an unlimited faith in the power of God to reveal His glory. Do not be satisfied with a limited, fundamental faith.

V THE HALL OF FAITH

Heb 11:32-39 This chapter is called the "Hall of Faith". You need to come here often and linger long that your faith may become strong in the Lord; for in this Scripture we get a view of the history of Israel and the church as it is written by faith in the blood of the saints.

They worshiped by faith as Abel. They walked by faith as Enoch. They worked by faith like Noah. They lived by faith as Abraham. They governed by faith as Moses. They followed by faith as Israel. They fought by faith as Joshua. They conquered by faith as Gideon. They subdued kingdoms by faith as David. They closed the mouths of lions by faith as Daniel. They walked through the fire by faith as the Three Hebrew children. They suffered by faith as Paul. They died by faith as Stephen, the first Christian martyr (Acts 7:54-60).

By faith they were patient in suffering, courageous in battle, made strong out of weakness and were victorious in defeat. They were more than conquerors by

faith. It is only by faith in the all-powerful Christ that you can be superior to circumstances and victorious over all the evil forces that that would destroy you. “Looking unto Jesus, the Author and finisher of our faith” (Heb 12:2). The faith of the saints inspires us to persevere to victory

Lesson 8: Sin

In considering the question of sin, we are faced with two startling facts. The first is that man makes so little of sin. To some it is an illusion – a religious mirage, the invention of religion or of some fanatic. It is denied, joked about and laughed at by man. And many who do believe sin is a fact give little thought to it and still continue in it as though there is no penalty.

The second fact is that God makes so much of sin. God said “The soul that sins, it shall die” (Eze 18:20); “The wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23); All sins are an abomination unto God (Pro 6:16-19); and He hates those who work iniquity (Ps 5:5); Moses said “All that do unrighteously are an abomination unto the Lord (Deut 25:16). Sin is an evil force. Its presence cannot be escaped in this life but it can be overcome by the power of God.

I THE ORIGIN OF SIN

Jude 1:6 The origin of sin is one of the mysteries of the Bible. “The secret things belong unto the Lord our God (Deut 29:29). Its origin is one of the secret things that will remain wrapped in obscurity. Sin is first noted in the heart of Satan. He was first created a perfect being “...till iniquity was found in Thee” (Eze 28:11-19). Satan fell from perfection when he exerted his own will above the will of God. Five times he said “I will” (Isa 14:12-17). His will above God’s will. This is sin. It is believed that Satan, when first created, was the ruler of earth (Gen 1:1) and that he fell through self will; and at his fall the earth became “without form and void” (Gen 1:2). Isaiah tells us God created the earth “not in vain” (Isa 45:18). “He did not create it a chaos”. The earth was a perfect creation at the beginning. Something happened that caused a catastrophe and the earth ‘became without form and void’ (Gen 1:2). Here, Jude implies that other angels joined Satan in his rebellion and lost their first estate. Taken together, this reveals sin in the heart of Satan before God created man.

II WHAT IS SIN

I John 3:4 It is impossible to deny the existence of sin when the whole world is in conflict between good and evil. If sin were not a fact, there would be no crime, nor criminals, jails, prisons, locks on our doors, or vaults for our valuables. To some, sin is a trifling thing, indiscretion, or a weakness of the flesh. To others, it is the absence from good. To the so-called scholar, sin is ignorance, and to the

evolutionist, it is the nature of the beast. The latest theory is that sin is a disease to be treated by science because man is not a sinner – he is only sick. To others, sin is a form of selfishness but God declares that:

- 1) Sin is a transgression of the law (above verse)
- 2) Sin is coming short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23)
- 3) Sin is rebellion against God (Isa 1:2)
- 4) Sin is unbelief and makes God a liar (I Jn 5:10)
- 5) Sin is going your own way, planning your life according to your own will without seeking the will of God (Isa 53:6).
- 6) “All unrighteousness is sin” (I Jn 5:17).

Sin is a folly to deceive you, a force to destroy you, and a fact to condemn you. Sin is a volitional act of disobedience against the revealed will of God as we see in Genesis 3.

III HOW SIN ENTERED INTO THE WORLD

The fall of man is found in Gen 3:1-24. When Adam sinned, his seed became corrupt (I Pet 1:23), therefore we are sinners because we are born in sin (Ps 51:5). You do not have to teach children to be bad, but you do have to teach them to be good. You don't have to teach them to lie but you do have to teach them to tell the truth. “Therefore by the offence of one (Adam), judgement came unto all men to condemnation”. (Rom 5:18). The Bible teaches that sin is a powerful infection (Rom 5:12).

Sin entered the world through our first parents in the garden of Eden, and “all have sinned” because all are sinners (Rom 3:23). By nature man is a sinner, thus he sins by choice and is condemned for his choices (Jn 3:18). The dominion sin has over a person is revealed by the delight he has in it.

IV THE RESULTS OF SIN

Eph 2:1 “The wages of sin is death.” As a result of man's sin, there are 3 deaths. Keep in mind that death does not annihilate; it only separates. In the garden of Eden, it separated God from man; This is spiritual death. In natural death, it separates the spirit and the soul from the body; This is physical death. In final death, it separates man from the mercy of God; This is eternal death.

The wages of sin is spiritual death. Just as sin separated man from God spiritually and drove him from the presence of God out of the garden, so sin will separate you from God (Isa 59:1,2). The only way back to God is confess your sins to him (I Jn 1:9), and forsake your sins (Isa 55:7) that you may be restored to fellowship with God.

The wages of sin is physical death. Physical death is a result of sin. Death had no chain on man until man sinned. Now all die because all are in sin. Death is universal, and since we have a universal effect, we must have a universal cause,

and that cause is universal sin. All men die—the good and bad – the young and old – and man will continue to die until death is destroyed by the Lord Jesus Christ. (I Cor 15:26) and is swallowed up in victory (I Cor 15:54-57).

The wages of sin is eternal death. “The soul that sins, it shall die” (Eze 18:20). This is eternal separation from the love of God (Rev 20:14). Once the soul passes beyond the portal of hell, he is lost and lost forever. He will continue to exist but without hope. He is damned and damned to all eternity. Eternal death is eternal separation from God. (Lk 16:19-31).

V GOD’S REMEDY FOR SIN

II Cor 5:21 Man, not willing to accept God’s remedy for his ruin, strives to bring about his own salvation by human means.

- 1- he strives to be righteous, when he needs to be made righteous of God (also Isa 64:6).
- 2- He strives to reform, when he needs to be regenerated (Titus 3:5)
- 3- He strives to turn over a new leaf, but he needs a new life (Jn 10:10)
- 4- He strives to be justified by the law, when he needs to be justified by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal 2:16).
- 5- He strives to clean up the old man, when he needs to be made a new man in Christ (Eph 4:24).
- 6- He strives to be saved by good works when he needs salvation by the grace of God (Eph 2:8,9).

The only remedy for the ruin of man is the Son of God being made sin for us on the cross. The only way to receive this remedy is by faith in Him as personal Savior (Jn 20:30,31).

Lesson 9. The Abundant Life

“... I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly (John 10:10). The only way into eternal life is through faith in Christ as personal Savior (John 3:15). But do not stop here; to have eternal life is great – but there is more. Christ came that you might have life more abundantly. All believers have life, but not all believers have abundant life. You are living beneath your privilege if you are a believer and not enjoying the abundant life.

For life to be abundant, it must have abundant resources, and the only unlimited source of life is in the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Jn 14:6). To possess this fuller life, the believer must abide in Him (Jn 15:1-5). Dynamic, abundant living is not for just a few – it is God’s norm for all believers. It is spiritual life in depth, and without it the Christian life becomes inane and meaningless.

If you do not have abundant life within you, you will soon yield to the carnal (fleshly) life around you (I Cor 3:1-4). The carnal life is circumstance controlled; the abundant life is Holy Spirit controlled. The carnal Christian life tends to defeat; the abundant life leads to victory in Christ. Man seems to know everything about life except how to live it abundantly. From this moment on, determine not to be satisfied with anything less than God's best. Live life abundantly!

I THE ABUNDANT LIFE IS A YEILDED LIFE

Rom 6:10-13 How to live the abundant life is no secret; it is revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ. "... In that He died he died to sin once; but in that he lives, He lives unto God (Rom 6:10). Saving faith identifies you with Christ in His death – He died for you and in your place and you receive His payment for your sin; Abundant Life faith identifies you with Christ's resurrection – Jesus yielded his life unto God, He chose to live for God instead of for self and so God powered and raised him from the dead and so it is for us who yield (obey, give preference or place) to God, He raises us to abundant living as well (Col 3:1-4).

It is one thing to have eternal life by faith; it is quite another to have abundant life by faith!

It is one thing for you to be made the righteousness of God in Him (II Cor 5:21); it is yet another for you to realize His righteous life is in you (I John 3:7).

It is one thing for you to live in Christ (II Cor 5:17); it is another for Christ to live His life through you (Col 1:27; Gal 2:20).

In the verses above the believer has a choice: he may yield unto God by faith and enjoy abundant life, or he may yield unto sin and endure a defeated life (Rev 3:1). God would have you know the power of a yielded life; it will lift you above circumstances that circumvent abundant living. The abundant life begins as you yield to Him as Master, allowing Him to live His life through you as by faith.

II THE ABUNDANT LIFE IS A SERVICE LIFE

Rom 12:1,2 To live abundantly, you must serve the Lord Jesus Christ, who Himself became our example. He served all the way to Calvary – where He was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil 2:7,8).

In the above verses, the believer is urged to take the necessary steps for abundant living.

- 1- You are to **present**. This is volitional surrender to the perfect will of God. Even though you may not know God's perfect will at this time, it is on your part an act of faith (John 7:17).
- 2- You are to **present "your body"**. God must control and use the whole person. "I pray God your whole spirit, and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Your whole man was redeemed on the cross and sanctified (set apart for service) -- I Thess 5:23.
- 3- You are to **"present your bodies a living sacrifice."** This is exemplified in the Apostle Paul. He was a "living sacrifice". In life, he was a 'servant of Jesus

Christ” Rom 1:1. In battle he was a warrior (Eph 6:10-18). In the will of God he was a “prisoner of Jesus Christ” (Eph 3:1). These words were spoken from a Roman prison. He never referred to himself as a prisoner of Rome. To the Apostle, prison was part of the perfect will of God. With this conviction he lived abundantly (Phil 1:12). In death he was victorious (II Tim. 4:7,8).

You have been transformed – changed by the power of God, and no longer ‘conformed to this world’; but now you can be conformed to the will of God -- and live abundantly!

III THE ABUNDANT LIFE IS A SEPARATED LIFE

Rom 1:1 Separation is both positive and negative. You are to be “separated unto the Gospel of God” – this is the positive aspect (above verse). You are to be separated from sin - come out from things you know are contrary to God (II Cor. 6:17) – this is negative.

To be separated means to be sanctified (set apart) for salvation and service. The Word of God has the power to separate the believer from sin (Jn 17:17; Ps119:11)

God the Father has the power to separate the believer unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Thess 5:23)

God the Son has the power to separate the believer unto righteousness “not having spot or wrinkle” (Eph 5:24-27)

God the Spirit has the power to separate the believer unto salvation and service (II Thess 2:13)

Without being separated, you may know who God is, but you cannot have fellowship with Him. (Isa 59:1,2). Without separation, you can have a form of religion without power, movement without achievement; you may try but not trust; serve but not succeed; war but not win. Without separation unto God from sin, your whole Christian life will be “wood, hay, stubble.” The abundant life is made possible by the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and made a reality by being separated unto Him.

IV THE ABUNDANT LIFE IS A SPIRIT FILLED LIFE

Eph 5: 18-20 The Holy Spirit indwells every believer. You may be weak, immature and imperfect, but if you have been born again of the Spirit (Jn 3:3-7), He dwells in you (I Cor 6:19; Rom 8:9). It is one thing to have the Holy Spirit dwell in you, but does the Holy Spirit have you that He may fill you with the abundant life? The abundant life is not found in the environment or circumstances, or in the things you may possess. It is found in the infilling of the Holy Spirit. “Be filled with the Spirit” is a command (verse 18). You may be filled many, many times (Acts 2:4; 4:31). The Apostles that were filled in Acts 2 were filled again in Acts 4. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be Spirit possessed, Spirit empowered, Spirit led and Spirit controlled (Acts 8:26-40).

1- You are filled with the Spirit that you may have joy (Eph 5:19,20)

- 2- You are filled with the Spirit for service (Acts 6:3; 11:22-24)
- 3- You are filled with the Holy Spirit for power to be a witness (Acts 1:8; 2:4-7)
- 4- You are filled with the Spirit for the hour of persecution (Acts 7:54-60)
- 5- You are filled with the Spirit that you may “walk in the Spirit” (Gal 5:16-26)
- 6- You are filled with the Spirit that you may be led by the Spirit (Rom 8:14)

How can you be filled with the Spirit? First you must desire to be filled by Him; Second, you must ask Him to fill you; Third, you must believe that He does fill you (Jn 4:14; 7:37,38).

V THE ABUNDANT LIFE IS A MATURE LIFE

II Pet 3:18 The Scriptures reveal 4 stages of growth in the Christian life:

- 1- **The baby stage** (I Cor 3:1-4). A baby thinks only of self and if denied the things desired will raise a rumpus. It seeks its own; it's feelings are easily hurt and it is often jealous. A baby lives to be served. It never serves; it drinks milk and cannot eat strong meat; it cries but never sings; it tries to talk but never makes sense; these infant characteristics are so prominent in the lives of many church members. They have been born into the family of God, but have failed to develop spiritually. They are spiritual babies – carnal Christians.
- 2- **The little child stage** (I Jn 2:12). Some Christians grow to be little children spiritually, but stop there. Here are some of the characteristics of children: they are often untruthful, envious and cruel. If rebuked they become martyrs; if crossed they are resentful and often make a scene. They are talebearers repeating everything they hear (In adults this is called gossip). They are given to emotional outbursts and are easily puffed up. They love praise and will accept it from any source. They seek only things that appeal to self. Are you a spiritual child?
- 3- **The young man stage** (I Jn 2:13). Spiritual growth to that of a young man is not reached by very many. He is strong and virile and well able to overcome his enemy. He has a vision for the future and the faith and courage to tackle it. He is preparing for his productive years. You too can be a young man spiritually by “putting away childish things” (I Cor 13:11) and grow.
- 4- **The father stage** (I Jn 2:13). This stage of spiritual development can be reached by all but so few ever attain it. The spiritual father has “peace with God” (Rom 5:1). He knows the “peace of God” (Phil 4:7). He rejoices in his spiritual children (I Thess 2:19; I Tim 1:2). He has learned contentment under all circumstances (Phil 4:11). He knows the only true source of strength (Phil 4:13). He does not brood over the past but looks to the future (Phil 3:13,14). He knows that God is working all things together for his eternal good (Rom 8:28). He enjoys abundant life now and will enjoy it in the life to come (Eph 2:7).

Lesson 10: Judgements

In the Scriptures, we are instructed to “rightly divide the word of truth (II Tim 2:15). This is most essential when studying the judgements. Do not endeavor to make all the judgements conform to the theory of one ‘general judgement’. The ‘general judgement’ theory is the invention of religion and is not taught in the Word of God. There are five separate judgements revealed in the Bible and they differ as to time, place, and purpose. Yet they have one thing in common: the Lord Jesus Christ is the Judge (John 5:22).

Everyone – from Adam to the last one to be born on this earth – will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ to be judged.

In the first judgement, the sins of the believers have already been judged in Christ on the cross. In the second judgement, the believer is to judge self, or he will be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ and disciplined.

In the third judgement, all believers must appear at the “judgement seat of Christ”, where their works are to be judged.

In the fourth judgement, all nations are to be judged at the second coming of Christ.

In the fifth judgement, the wicked dead are to be judged at the Great White Throne.

I THE JUDGEMENT OF THE BELIEVER’S SINS

John 5:24 In the above verse, our Lord tells us that the believer “comes not into condemnation (judgement)”, The word ‘condemnation’ is the same word rendered judgement (Mt 10:15). Our sins were judged in Christ on Calvary and every believer “has passed out of death into life”. This is present salvation – Christ paid for our sins. He was judged in the believer’s stead. The believer will not come into condemnation because:

- 1- Jesus Christ paid the penalty, and on the grounds of his substitutional death, the believer is separated from his sins forever (Ps 103:12).
- 2- The sins of the believer have been ‘blotted out’ and God has promised that he ‘will not remember his sins’ (Isa 43:25).
- 3- Our Lord suffered for our sins, “the just for the unjust” that we might be saved and never come into the wrath of God as sinners (I Pet 3:18).
- 4- The believer will never be condemned with the world because Christ was condemned in his place. He was “made to be sin for us” and “has redeemed us from the curse of the law” (Gal 3:13). “He came to put away sin by the

sacrifice of Himself" (Heb 9:26). The believer will not come into judgement because his sins have been purged (Heb 1:3).

II THE JUDGEMENT OF THE BELIEVER'S SELF

I Cor 11:31,32 The judgement of the believer's self is more than judging things in the believers life. When the believer judges self, the right and wrong in his life comes to light, and he confesses the wrong (I Jn 1:9) and forsakes it (Isa 55:7). However, it is not enough just to judge sin in the believer, he must judge self.

- 1- To judge self is to practice self denial. For when the believer sees self as God sees him, he will renounce self. It is taking up our cross and following Him (Mk 8:34-38).
- 2- To judge self is to replace the self life with the Christ life (Col 3:4). Christ is the believer's life (Gal 2:20)
- 3- To judge self is to become Christ conscious in place of being self conscious (Mt 28:20).
- 4- To judge self is to no longer be self controlled but to become Christ controlled (Acts 9:6).
- 5- To judge self is to no longer practice self esteem, but to esteem others more important than self (Phil 2:3).

III THE JUDGEMENT OF THE BELIEVER'S WORKS

II Cor 5:10 The believers works will be judged at the "Judgement seat of Christ". This term is found only twice in the Bible but is referred to many times. (also Rom 14:10). A careful reading both verse in context reveals that only believers will appear at the judgement seat of Christ". Their works will be judged and not their sins, for we have already seen that the sins of the believer were judged in Christ on Calvary and "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:1).

- 1- This judgement will take place in the air following the first resurrection. "The dead in Christ shall rise first" (I Thess 4:14-18). There will be a thousand years between the resurrection of the saved and the unsaved (Rev 20:4,5); and there will be a thousand years between the 'Judgement seat of Christ" where only saved will appear and the "Great White Throne" judgement where only unsaved will appear.
- 2- At the judgement seat of Christ the believer will give an account of himself to God. Therefore we should look to our own works and not judge the works of others (Rom 14:10-13).
- 3- It is a most humbling thought to know that some day the believer will face all of his works- good or bad. Some will be ashamed (I Jn 2:28) and suffer loss – not the loss of salvation, but the loss of rewards (I Cor 3:11-15). So whatever you do, do it to the glory of God (Col 3:17).

IV THE JUDGEMENT OF THE NATIONS

Matt 25: 31-46 This judgement is not the judgement of the “Great White Throne” (Rev 20:11-15). A careful comparison of the two judgements will establish the following:

- 1- The judgement of the nations will take place “when the Son of man shall come in his glory...then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory (Rev 20:11-15).
- 2- At this judgement He shall judge the living nations (Joel 3:11-16). At the White Throne Judgement He will judge the wicked dead.
- 3- At this judgement there will be no resurrection of the dead. At the Great White Throne, all the wicked dead are raised. “the sea gave up the dead which were in it ; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them (rev 20:13).
- 4- At this judgement, the Judge is God “the King” judging the living nations in His earthly Kingdom. At the great white throne, the judge is God judging only the wicked dead.
- 5- At this judgement there are no books opened. At the great white throne, the “books were opened.”
- 6- At this judgement, there are three classes judged: “sheep” – the saved (Rev 7:9-17); “goats” – the unsaved (II Thess 1:7-10); “brethren” – the elect of Israel (Rev 7:1-8; also Rom 11:25-28). At the great white throne there is only one class – “the dead”.
- 7- At this judgement, the King gives the kingdom to those who have eternal life. At the great white throne there are no saved and no kingdom. They are all “cast into the lake of fire”.

V THE JUDGEMENT OF THE WICKED

Rev 20:11-15 The Great White Throne judgement will follow the thousand year reign of Christ. This is the final judgement and only the wicked dead are to be judged. According to Rev 20:5 the believers were resurrected a thousand years before this judgement and their works were judged at the judgement seat of Christ (II Cor 5:10).

- 1- At this judgement the wicked dead will seek a hiding place from the face of the Lord Jesus Christ, the judge. But there is no hiding place.
- 2- At this judgement, the ‘dead – small and great’ will stand before God. But the greatness of the great will be of no value. “There is none that does good, no not one” (Rom 3:12).
- 3- At this judgement the “Book of Life” will be opened. Why the “Book of Life” if there are no saved at this judgement? The wicked will be shown that God in His mercy provided space for them in the Book of Life so that they are without excuse (Rom 1:18-20).
- 4- At this judgement, the dead will be judged “according to their works”. God is a just God, and since there are degrees of punishment in hell, some will be punished more than others (Luke 12:42,48).
- 5- At this judgement, there will be no acquittal, no higher court to which the lost may appeal. It is lost and lost forever; it is damned to all eternity – and that without hope. There is a hell (Lk 16:19-31), and in hell there is no hope, no

sympathy, no love; even the love of God does not extend beyond the portals of hell.

Lesson 11. Rewards

There is a vast difference in the doctrine of salvation for the lost, and the doctrine of rewards for the saved. Salvation is the “gift of God, not of works” (Eph 2:8,9). Salvation is received by faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn 3:36). Not so with rewards.

A most revealing scripture on rewards is found in I Cor 3:8-15. First, every believer will be rewarded according to his own labor (v. 8). Rewards are according to the works of the believer (Matt 16:27).

Second, “we are laborers together with God” (verse 9), not for salvation but for rewards.

Third, the believer is to build on the Lord Jesus Christ, the only foundation (verse 11).

Fourth, the believer has two kinds of building materials: “gold, silver, precious stones”- this is building with eternal materials; or “wood, hay and stubble” – this is building with temporal materials (verse 12). (II Cor 4:18).

The believer who builds on Christ with eternal materials shall receive a reward. Those who build on Christ with temporal materials will receive no reward. The ‘wood, hay and stubble’ will be destroyed at the judgement seat of Christ, and the believer will suffer loss – not the loss of salvation, but the loss of eternal reward.

Some believers will be ashamed at the judgement seat of Christ (I Jn 2:28) – ashamed of their works of wood, hay and stubble.

Porter Barrington shares this story “In the first year of my ministry, I sat at the bedside of a dying friend. As we talked of his homegoing, tears filled his eyes. Being young in the Lord, I thought he was afraid to die, and attempted to speak words of encouragement to him. He said “I am not afraid to die. I am ashamed to die.” He went on to say that Christ was his Savior, but he had lived for self, and now had to meet the Lord Jesus Christ empty handed. His life looked up before him as “wood, hay and stubble”.

Rewards are called ‘crowns’ in the New Testament.

I THE CROWN OF LIFE

James 1:12 This crown could also be called the lover's crown. Upon examination of the verse, we discover that the believer finds strength to overcome temptation and endure trials through the love of God. Paul said, "We glory in tribulations also." The question is: do we today glory in tribulations? We can only if the "love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Rom 5:3-5). Without the love of God in the heart of the believer, trials can cause him to become bitter and critical.

All believers have eternal life (John 3:15,16), but not all believers will be rewarded with the "crown of life". This crown will be given to those who are "faithful unto death" (Rev 2:10). To receive the "crown of life" the believer must love the Lord more than his own life. "Whosoever shall save his life (live for self) shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel, the same shall save it" (Mark 8:35). This reward will be given to those who endure temptations in the power of the love of God (I Cor 10:13).

II THE CROWN INCORRUPTIBLE

I Cor 9:24-27 Paul makes use of the Greek games to illustrate the spiritual race of the believer. They ran to win a "corruptible" crown; but we an "incorruptible" crown. No young man could contend in the games unless he was a Greek citizen born of Greek parents. No unsaved person can participate in the service of the Lord for rewards; only those 'born of God' are eligible (John 3:3).

Just as the athlete must deny himself many gratifications of the body, so the believer must "keep under his body and bring it unto subjection" or he will become a castaway. He will not lose his salvation, but he will lose the "incorruptible crown".

The Greek games had hard and fast rules for all participants. The New Testament contains the rules for believers who would enter the spiritual race to win the "incorruptible crown".

- 1- The believer must deny self of anything that would weigh him down and hold him back (Heb 12:1)
- 2- The believer must keep his eyes fixed on Christ, and not look to the right or left (Heb 12:2)
- 3- The believer must find his strength in the Lord (Eph 6:10-18).
- 4- The believer must place his all upon the altar of the Lord (Rom 12:1,2).
- 5- The believer must, by faith, refuse anything that would impede spiritual progress (Heb 11:24-29).

Do not be a spiritual spectator. Enter the race and run to win the "incorruptible crown."

III THE CROWN OF REJOICING

I Thess 2: 19,20 The “crown of rejoicing” is the soul winner’s crown. The greatest work you are privileged to do for the Lord is to bring others to a knowledge of Christ as personal Savior. The degree of your joy in heaven will be determined by the souls you have had a part in bringing to Christ. Paul tells the Thessalonian believers that they are his “hope or joy or crown of rejoicing” now and when Jesus comes.

- 1- It is wise to win souls to Christ (Pro 11:30)
- 2- It is a work against sin to win souls to Christ (Luke 15:10).
- 3- It is a cause for joy in heaven to win souls to Christ (Luke 15:10).
- 4- Every soul winner will shine as the stars forever (Dan 12:3)

How you can win souls:

Witness with your life; live so that others may see Christ in you (II Cor 3:2).

Witness with your mouth trusting the Holy Spirit to give power to the spoken word (Acts 1:8)

Witness by tithes and offerings that others may be saved and you will have fruit (reward) that may abound to your account (Phil 4:15-17; II Cor 9:6)

God has promised that your labor would not be in vain in the Lord (I Cor 15:58). The soul winner will not rejoice alone. All of heaven will rejoice with him when he receives the “crown of rejoicing” (John 4:36).

IV THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

II Tim 4: 5-8 The “crown of righteousness” is a reward and it is not to be confused with the “righteousness of God” which the believer receives when he becomes a Christian. For at that time the believer is made “the righteousness of God in him” (II Cor 5:21). This saving righteousness is a gift to be accepted by the lost. The “crown of righteousness” is a reward to be earned by the saved. If the believer looks for and loves the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ, it will affect his whole life. Look at the dynamic impact this truth had on the life of the Apostle Paul. He could say:

- 1- I have fought a good fight (above; also I Cor 15:32); He fought a spiritual battle throughout his Christian life, and won. He never surrendered to the enemies of righteousness (Eph 6:12).
- 2- “I have finished the course”. He had a course to travel, and he did not detour the hard places; neither did he look back (Luke 9:61,62). He finished his course with his eyes fixed on Christ (Phil 1:6).
- 3- “I have kept the faith”. He preached “all the counsel of God”, never betraying any of the great doctrines (Acts 20:24-31). The Apostle looked ahead at the “judgement seat of Christ” where the “Crown of Righteousness” will be given to those who “love his appearing” How important it is for the believer to look with a heart of love for the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that he may receive the “Crown of Righteousness” (verse 8).

V THE CROWN OF GLORY

I Pet 5:2-4 The "Crown of glory" is a special reward for the faithful, God called pastor. He will receive this reward when the "Chief Shepherd" shall appear. It is eternal; it "fades not away". He that receives a prophet shall receive a prophets reward (Matt 10:41). Every believer may share in the pastor's "crown of glory". Support your God-called pastor by praying for him and encouraging him in the work of the Lord. Undergird his ministry with God's "tithes and your offerings" (Mal 3:10).

Following the completion of the 11 studies, you are invited to email us and a certificate will be sent noting your exceptional accomplishment. Thank you and God bless you.

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