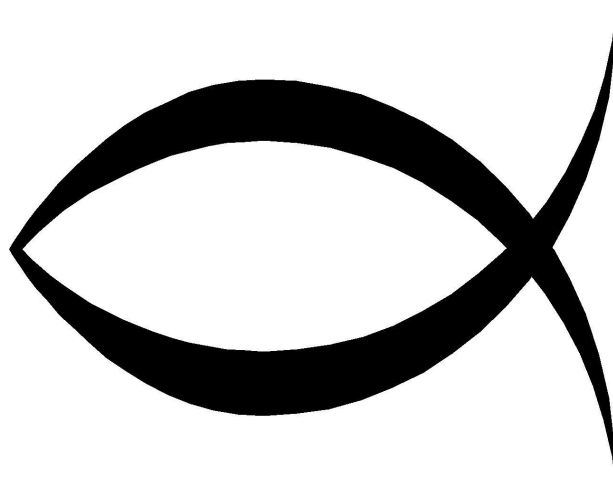


STUDENT'S GUIDE

FREEDOM DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



*"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."
(John 8:36)*

A Conservative Approach to Christian
Principles and Discipleship - April 2008

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 - Salvation _____	2
Chapter 2 - Sin and Temptation _____	12
Chapter 3 - The Word of God _____	22
Chapter 4 - Prayer _____	33
Chapter 5 - Holy Spirit _____	44
Chapter 6 - God's Requirements _____	55
Chapter 7 - Sanctification _____	65
Chapter 8 - The Church _____	76
Chapter 9 - The Family _____	86
Chapter 10 - Spiritual Warfare _____	97
Chapter 11 - Perseverance of the Saints _____	108
Chapter 12 - Evangelism _____	119

All Scripture References in this Guide are from the
English Standard Version of the Bible.

The compilers of this Guide encourage copying and free distribution - April 2008

Chapter 1 - Salvation

God and You

The Bible or Holy Scripture is unlike any other book. It is not primarily a history book or a rulebook. It is far more than a "roadmap" for life. It is first and foremost the *self-revelation* of God. God actually reveals himself to us through the Holy Spirit and Scripture. He has chosen to communicate Himself to you in this manner.

We want to begin with several foundational truths about God. These are some of the attributes of God that show how great He really is:

- God is eternal - without start or end (Psalm 90:2).
- God is holy - He is set apart from everything that exists and is perfect and pure and sinless (Isaiah 6:3).
- God is all-knowing - omniscience (Psalm 33:13-15, Hebrews 4:13).
- God is all-powerful - omnipotence (Psalm 86:10, Deuteronomy 3:24).
- God is everywhere - omnipresence (Jeremiah 23:23-24).
- God is good (Psalm 86:5).
- God is absolutely just - everything He does is right (Deuteronomy 32:4).
- God is love (1 John 4:8).

Scripture assumes God's existence and reveals Him to be the Creator of everything that exists. Acknowledging God as the Creator of all is essential to everything else Scripture teaches.

Read Genesis 1:1. What does it say? _____

Scripture teaches clearly and repeatedly that "*[a]ll things were made through him [Christ], and without him was not any thing made that was made*" (John 1:3).

Psalm 19:1 tells us that the heavens and all of creation "*declare the glory of God.*" Romans 1:20 concurs, saying that creation teaches two key lessons about God: that He exists and that He is powerful. It concludes by saying that those who reject God and His creative power are "*without _____.*"

Genesis 1:27 says God created man in His own image. Although it is commonly taught today that mankind is the result of countless years of evolution, the Bible says God created man.

The Bible's teaching that you are created by God is not intended merely to solve the question of man's origin. When God made you, He made you for Himself. Therefore we are accountable to Him.

Principle: *Because God made you, you are accountable to Him.*

If you were merely the product of "chance" as evolution teaches, you would be your own master. You would be answerable to no one. But because you are a creature, you must give an account of your life to your Creator.

Hebrews 9:27 says "it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment..." We must take heed and live our lives with this in mind.

God created us to have fellowship with Him.

- Read the Bible's account of creation in Genesis 1-3. As far back as the garden of Eden, God's pleasure was to walk and talk with His creatures (Genesis 3:8-9).
- The Shorter Westminster Catechism - a statement of Bible doctrine that has been especially useful for the instruction of new believers since the 17th century, asks students the purpose of God in creation: "What is the chief end of man?" The pupils respond with an answer that is Biblically accurate and personally challenging:

"Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever."

To glorify God is to worship and praise Him. It's to align our hearts and lives under His divine authority. It is lifting Him up through our lives.

- Read Revelation 4:11, a record of the worship of God in heaven. Why is God worthy to receive worship - "glory and honor and power"? _____
- Psalm 104:1 says: "Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty..." What does this mean to you? _____

Principle: *God created you to glorify Him. We are not our own, but belong to God.*

You and Sin

Adam and Eve *broke* their fellowship with God when they sinned (Genesis 3:6). Because of their sin, you are now *born* a sinner (Psalm 51:5). This is what is known as original sin. Romans 5:12 clearly states:

"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned"

You are not only a sinner by *birth* - you are a sinner by *choice*. Explain Romans 3:10-11 in your own words. _____

According to Romans 3:23 *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..."*

1 John 3:4 defines sin as *breaking God's law: "Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness."* God's laws are found throughout the Bible and are summed up well in the Ten Commandments. When we sin, we actually sin against God.

Give a few examples of specific sins. _____

It is popular today to say that man is "basically good," but the Scripture teaches that everyone is born a sinner. How does Jeremiah 17:9 describe the condition of the human heart? _____

Isaiah 53:6 summarizes the sinfulness of all men as intentional and determined *rebellion against God*. Like sheep, we have each *"gone astray"* from God and chosen our *"own way"* rather than His way.

The following verses talk about the *effects* of sin.

- Isaiah 59:2 tells us that our sins have separated us from God, and have hidden God's face from us so that He won't hear us.
- Romans 6:23 says that *"the wages of sin is death."*

According to this verse, because of your sin, what do you deserve? _____

The Bible speaks of two deaths. The first is physical death. God promised Adam and Eve that if they sinned, they would *"surely die,"* and they did (Genesis 2:17). This is the sense in which we usually think of death.

Far worse than the first death is the second. It is *spiritual, eternal* death. How does the Bible describe the second death in Revelation 20:14-15 and 21:8? _____

The truth of eternal damnation is hard for most people to swallow, but *the Bible teaches that everyone who has sinned deserves to be punished for that sin forever in hell*. Many people think that hell is just for men like Adolf Hitler or Charles Manson. But the Bible says that hell is not just for murderers; it is for *sinners!* The fact is, because you sin, you deserve to be punished for eternity.

Principle: *Sin separates you from God and makes you deserving of hell.*

Many people try to compensate for their sin by doing good works. They reason that if they do more good things than bad, they'll go to heaven. The problem is that Scripture teaches that no one can earn heaven.

Romans 6:23 teaches that eternal life (with God in heaven) is a "gift." Can you earn a gift? _____

Read Ephesians 2:8-9. The Bible teaches that salvation is by grace. Grace is "*underserved kindness*" or "*unmerited favor*." Something that is free can't be earned. If it could be earned it would no longer be a gift.

People are constantly trying to find a way to make up for everything they do wrong. These verses clearly show that salvation can not be earned by us, yet there are many who still try to find a way to do it.

- Why do you think people try to earn their salvation? _____

- What are some things that people do to try to *earn* heaven? _____

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ actually lived on this earth, died on the cross and resurrected from the grave.

- He is the only begotten Son of God (John 1:18) and He is God (John 1:1).
- He is eternal (John 1:1, 2).
- He is the Creator (John 1:3).
- He became "flesh" (John 1:14). He was born of a virgin (Matthew 1:23).
- He is absolutely sinless (Hebrews 4:15).

Romans 5:8 teaches something else about Jesus. It says that He loves us, His creatures.

How did He *show* His love for us in this verse? _____

Most people know that Jesus died, but very few understand *why* He died. 1 Peter 3:18 answers that question: "*For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit...*" He died for our sins that He might bring us to God.

- It says that "*Christ suffered once for sins.*" He did this at the cross.

-
- Scripture teaches that Jesus never sinned, so for whose sins did He die? _____
 - This verse teaches that Christ died, "*the righteous for the unrighteous.*"

Who is the "*just*" (righteous) One? _____

Who are the "unjust" (*unrighteous*) ones? _____

Don't miss this important point: Jesus (*the righteous One*) died for you (*the unrighteous one*). He was your substitute. He paid the penalty that you deserve! His death on the cross is the atonement for the sins of mankind, that is to all who believe.

Remember Romans 6:23. Because of sin, you deserve *death*. Jesus paid that penalty by dying on the cross! Instead of *you* paying for your sins in hell, Jesus suffered death one time on Calvary. He paid for your sins!

Principle: *Because of God's love, He sent Jesus Christ to die on the cross as your substitute.*

Romans 5:18 says "*Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.*"

Who is the remedy for the offense of Adam? _____

Salvation

The Bible teaches that the soul is eternal. It also teaches that you will spend eternity either in heaven or hell. Although people teach that there are *many ways* to heaven, the Bible teaches that there is only *one*.

John 14:6 says: "*Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'*"

Jesus offers salvation (saving a person's soul), but He is the only way.

There are two aspects to receiving salvation through Christ:

1. You must repent of your sins.

You have offended God by sinning. You now need to turn *from* that sin and *to* God - that is what Scripture calls *repentance*. It is not just cleaning up or reforming yourself. Instead, repentance is "changing your mind" about God and sin. It is desiring God instead of your sin. You now see that your ways have been wrong.

C. S. Lewis puts it this way:

"Fallen man is not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement: he is a rebel who must lay down his arms... This process of surrender... is what Christians call repentance." (1)

As we lay down our arms and surrender, we give up our own ways, and come under the direction of Christ.

Matthew 21:28-30 tells a story:

"What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' And he answered, 'I will not,' but afterward he changed his mind and went. And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, 'I go, sir,' but did not go."

In verse 31 Jesus asks a question. Which of them did the will of his father? _____

"Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19-20).

What happens when a person truly repents? _____

1 Thessalonians 1:9 shows us *"you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God..."*

- This verse shows repentance and conversion as turning to " _____ " and away *"from _____."*
- The very move toward Christ demands a move away from sin and idols. Christ replaces your way. He will not be merely added to it.

"She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

It is a wonderful thing to be saved from sin, liberated from the chains and set free.

There are some people who believe they are forgiven, yet have never turned from sin. They believe that they have the best of both worlds: they can "bear-hug" their sin and refuse to let it go, then they can go to heaven. Yet, according to Matthew 1:21, Christ saves His people from their sin, not just hell.

Anyone who has not repented of his sin has not been saved!

That is not to say that a saved man will not struggle with sin. However, a saved man has *"changed his mind"* about sin. After conversion he no longer *serves* sin. That means he no longer

practices sin as a way of life. He has a new attitude concerning sin and is constantly looking to Christ for deliverance from it.

Isaiah 55:7 also gives a clear picture of repentance:

"...let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

Explain this verse in your own words. _____

If you have not yet turned from your wicked way, you have not yet been saved!

2. You must put your faith in Jesus Christ alone.

John 3:16 is probably the most well known verse of the Bible. It says:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

- This teaches that you must *believe* in Jesus. That means more than just acknowledging that he lived and died.
- The Bible word "believe" means to *be convinced*, to *trust* or to *place your faith in someone*. It changes you!

You must realize that Jesus is your *only hope* of salvation and place your faith completely in Him.

Not Jesus and good works...not Jesus and baptism...not Jesus and church...but Jesus alone.

The Heidelberg Catechism's answer to "*What is true faith*" is:

"True faith is not only a certain knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in his word, but also an assured confidence, which the Holy Ghost works by the gospel in my heart; that not only to others, but to me also, remission of sin, everlasting righteousness and salvation, are freely given by God, merely of grace, only for the sake of Christ's merits."

Principle: *Your only hope of salvation is to repent of your sins and put your faith in Jesus Christ alone.*

Faith and repentance cannot be separated. Genuine faith includes repentance, and genuine repentance includes faith.

Think of it this way...

Before Conversion - Our Way

Before you are saved you insist on following your own way - and this is the exact opposite of God's way. God instructs you to abandon your old way (*repentance*) and believe, trust and follow Him (*faith*).

After Conversion - God's Way

In Acts 16:30, a sinful man asks the Apostle Paul and Silas a vital question: "*What must I do to be saved?*"

What was their simple answer in Acts 16:31? _____

John 3:36 says, "*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.*"

- Notice that the Bible divides all of humanity into two groups - there is no middle ground.
- How do the two groups respond to Christ? _____

- What happens to each of these groups? _____

According to 1 John 5:13, those people that believe in Him may *know* that they have eternal life.

"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life."

This assurance is something no money can buy. It is something you can *know*. Do you have this assurance?

Principle: *God promises eternal life to all that believe in Him.*

In Conclusion

God stands willing to forgive you for your life of sin and selfishness, no matter how bad it has been, if you come to Him and are truly sorry for all you have done. You have to be truly sorry and turn from your sin!

God will forgive and save you, if it is in your heart to serve Him from this point forward. *God knows your heart!*

Look at the story of the Pharisee and the publican for illustration:

“Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’” (Luke 18:10-13).

Which one, the Pharisee or the publican, is justified in verse 14? _____

Why is he justified? _____

Salvation is heart work. Charles Spurgeon talked about this:

"We can learn nothing of the gospel except by feeling its truths. There are some sciences that may be learned by the head, but the science of Christ crucified can only be learned by the heart." (2)

We must turn to Christ because He is worthy to be praised!

"But I am afflicted and in pain; let your salvation, O God, set me on high! I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving" (Psalm 69: 29-30).

Scripture Memory

Ephesians 2:8-9

*"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, **not** a result of works, so that no one may boast."*

Check Your Progress

What are some of the significant things that you have learned in this chapter? _____

Name some of the implications that arise from the fact that God created you. (p. 3) _____

Explain original sin. (p. 3) _____

What are some of the effects of sin? (p. 4) _____

In what sense was Jesus your Substitute? (p. 6) _____

What is repentance? (p. 6) _____

What is faith? (p. 8) _____

(1) C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1952), 59

(2) *The Best of C. H. Spurgeon* (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1991), 49

Chapter 2 - Sin and Temptation

Old Man - New Man

As a Christian, you receive a new heart. God's Spirit comes to live inside you. You are now "born-again." This is a wonderful, miraculous change! The Bible describes it like this:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself" (2 Corinthians 5:17-18).

Because you are a "new creation," and God's Holy Spirit lives in you, you now have the inward ability to have *victory over sin and your old selfish ways*. You have the *power* to live in a way that is pleasing to God.

Principle: *As a Christian, you have the power to have victory over sin and self.*

That having been said, this does *not* mean that you will no longer sin! Christians do still sin - but it's different. The only sin that remains is the sin that we strive to overcome. By God's grace we overcome sin as we grow.

Even though you have a *new nature*, you still also have your *old nature*. This may seem rather confusing at first, but it can be explained like this.

- You have a *new nature* that lives to serve God.
- The *old nature* is the old you that once served yourself and sin.
- The old nature is still around, but it is *crucified*. It no longer reigns supremely in your life.

This is explained in Romans, chapter 6. It would be a good idea to read this chapter. The basic idea is, that when Jesus died on the cross, your *old self* was crucified with him.

"We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.... So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus... But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life" (Romans 6:6, 11, 22).

So when you were born again, you were *crucified* with Christ. This is what gives you the power to live right! Your *old self* was nailed to the cross. The new you (*the new self*) was born! As we live our lives each day we need to "*consider ourselves dead to sin.*"

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Galatians 2:20).

Principle: *Your old nature is crucified with Christ.*

Where does sin come in then? Sin comes in because you do still have your old nature. It is also called *the flesh*. This is the part of you that is still around to tempt you to sin. It still tempts you, and sometimes it gets the best of you, but the good news is, it no longer *controls* you like it did before you were a Christian.

Even though the old man no longer rules, you still must resist temptation. That is what the Bible is constantly telling us to do. God requires that we fight against any propensity to do something we know is wrong. God tells us to flee from sin!

"Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul" (1 Peter 2:11).

This verse tells us to abstain from the passions of the flesh.

"...let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely" (Hebrews 12:1).

Here we are instructed to _____ sin.

Sources of Temptation

1. The devil tempts you to sin.

This will be covered later in more detail in the chapter on spiritual warfare. But be aware of the fact that the devil tempts you to sin! His goal is to draw us away from God.

We must always remember that God does not tempt anyone to sin.

"Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God" (James 1:13).

The devil came to Jesus in the wilderness and "*unsuccessfully*" tried to tempt Him. Read Matthew 4:1-11.

- The devil came to Jesus after He had fasted 40 days and nights, and was very weak.
- What offer did Satan make in verses 8-9? _____
- Jesus responded to Satan by quoting from the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy. (Deuteronomy 8:3, 6:16, 6:13)
- What happened when the devil left? _____

In James 4:7 it says to *"Resist the devil and he will flee from you."* Resisting is the key.

2. As stated earlier, the old nature or "the flesh" will tempt you.

We can be tempted by our own lust. Take a look at what happens if it is not stopped right away:

"But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death" (James 1:14-15).

3. We are tempted by the world.

This world offers many things that can draw us away from God. Look at what it says in the Epistle of 1 John about the world:

"For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world" (1 John 2:16).

The things of the world are not of the Father. Satan is the ruler of this world.

Confessing and Repenting

1. When you do sin, you are to confess the sin to God.

Even after we are saved we still need to confess. Confessing sin is vital. Always confess to God in prayer. The word "confess" means to admit, to acknowledge guilt.

Many people believe that confession is something done before a priest. However Biblical confession is a matter between the sinner and God alone.

Look at David's definition of confession in Psalm 32:5.

- *"I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' and you forgave the iniquity of my sin."*
- What is David saying here? _____

In the Lord's Prayer we pray that God would *"forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors"* (Matthew 6:12).

- Explain the meaning of this verse. _____

-
- Why should this be our daily prayer? _____

Sins are not to be covered up. " *Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy*" (Proverbs 28:13).

So if you conceal your transgressions you will not_____.

When you have wronged someone else, confessing the sin to that person is often a part of making things right between you and that person, *and* you and God. God wants us to keep a clean slate with others. Matthew 5:23-24 says,

- "So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."
- Before coming to the Lord, what should we do? _____

2. Not only do we confess, but we repent.

Repenting is also vital! Repenting is being sorry for your sin. Someone once said: "to repent is to be sorry enough to quit."

Confessing and repenting does not stop at conversion. It is something we keep doing until the day we die. As we do this, we are more and more delivered from sin.

Principle: Confess and repent when you do sin.

God's Help in Overcoming Temptation

Ask for God's help in overcoming sin and temptation. He will give you *His* strength. It is God who keeps us from being overtaken by sin. We need His help!

What is temptation? _____

In the Lord's Prayer we pray "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13).

- God helps us overcome the devil, the world and our own flesh.
- We are weak by ourselves and can not do it without God. As we pray we are strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

The wonderfully encouraging thing is that we are *"by God's power are being guarded"* (1 Peter 1:5). It is God that works inside of us causing us to *want* to do his will, and giving us the *ability* to actually do it.

"...for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure"
(Philippians 2:13). He works in us both to will and to work.

God is faithful to us. He won't allow you to be tempted more than you will be able to handle. He will always give you a "way of escape."

"God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Principle: *We will not be tempted more than we are able to handle.*

Sin and Your Heart

As a Christian, any sin that remains in you will not *have the approval of your heart*. Your sin will grieve and sadden your heart. This is because you have a new heart that longs to serve and please God. You will strive to please God in thought, word and deed. The only sin that remains is the sin you hate!

Inward sin is when you sin on the inside. *Outward sins* are outward acts committed. Inward sin includes your thoughts and inner feelings and outward sins are the specific acts.

Jesus shows how inward thoughts can become like the outward acts in Matthew 5:27-28:

" You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. "

- What are some other things that could be classified as *inward sin*? _____

- What are some things that could be classified as *outward sin*? _____

A Christian's heart is *soft* toward God, and willing to do His will. Prior to conversion, we all had a heart that was "desperately sick" (Jeremiah 17:9). Part of conversion is a new heart that is radically different.

In the Old Testament, the prophet Ezekiel predicted a remedy for man's *heart of stone*.

- *"And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them"* (Ezekiel 11:19-20)

-
- God's plan was to one day give us a remedy for our heart problem. Christ's death and resurrection is the New Testament remedy. He has put a *new spirit* in us.

Remember that God looks on the heart. This is very encouraging for a genuine believer and very discouraging to hypocrites. A genuine new Christian, though still struggling, has a heart that wants to please God, and God sees this.

One preacher gives an illustration that explains this very well:

He says that a new Christian is like a little boy whose thirsty father has asked him to get him a glass of water. The little boy, anxious to please his father, runs and gets the glass of water. But being a little boy, his hands are dirty, and one of his fingers touches the top of the water in the glass. His father, seeing the murky water, drinks it down anyway because he is pleased with his son's attitude to please.

Principle: *As a Christian, you have a new heart that longs to please God.*

Avoiding Sin

Galatians 5:19-21 gives us a list of sins and says " *those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*" This means if you *practice* these sins, or they are part of your *lifestyle*, you can't enter into heaven. In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and Revelation 21:8 you will find similar lists.

Included in these three lists are:

- Adultery and sexual immorality (*sexual relations outside of marriage*) (Exodus 20:14, Ephesians 5:3)
- Homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1:26-28)
- Witchcraft (*or anything related - like tarot cards, etc.*) (Exodus 22:18, Leviticus 19:26)
- Drunkenness (*including drug abuse*) (Proverbs 20:1, Ephesians 5:18)
- Theft (Ephesians 4:28, 1 Peter 4:15)
- Hatred (Leviticus 19:17, 1 John 2:11)
- Reveling (*wild partying*) (Romans 13:13, 1 Peter 4:3-4)
- Liars (Revelation 21:27, Exodus 20:16)

You are to avoid sin, and you are to make a *specific point* of avoiding such sins as those listed above.

Principle: *There are certain sins you need to avoid immediately!*

Steps for Overcoming Temptation and Sin

1. Retain a Healthy Fear of God.

To fear God is to show Him reverence and honor. It's to understand His love and His wrath.

You will hear many today that say God is *all love*. They mock at a healthy fear of God. They act as though they don't have to worry much about what God thinks, but God says:

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Proverbs 1:7).

Why do you think the fear of God is the beginning of knowledge? _____

2. Avoid Tempting Situations.

Avoiding tempting situations is very important. We must be careful to conduct our lives so as to minimize temptation.

- We should avoid *old friends* that entice us to do what is wrong. Why do you think this is important? _____
- We should avoid *places* that will entice us to do wrong. Why do you think this is important? _____
- When people say: I can handle it, don't worry, I won't fall - beware! *"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall"* (Proverbs 16:18).

3. Christian Fellowship and Accountability.

It is important to find a good local church. We need the fellowship of believers.

Hebrews 10:24-25 tells us to *"consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together..."* What does this mean? _____

We are also told to *"exhort one another every day"* in Hebrew 3:13.

- We need to be accountable for our actions, and there is accountability in the fellowship of believers.

-
- Fellow Christians help to warn us concerning sin, and encourage us in the way of holiness.

4. Bible Study.

Remember that the Bible is God's written Word. God speaks to us through His written Word. We will be talking more about the Bible in another chapter, but first let's remember,

- We should study the Bible and make personal application.
- We should meditate on the Scriptures so they become a part of us. In Psalms 1:2 it says "*and on his law he meditates day and night.*"

5. Prayer.

Prayer is essential to the Christian life. We will be talking more about prayer, but now let's look at the following:

- Prayer brings God's assistance, power, protection and blessing. It is talking to God. A healthy prayer life is essential to maintaining a close walk with God.
- In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 it says to "*pray without ceasing.*" This can be done throughout the day. In our thoughts and in our verbal prayers we commune with God.
- What can you do to focus more on prayer? _____

6. Follow your Conscience.

The conscience is our sense of "right and wrong." It is God's inner voice to us. We need to guard it so it is sensitive to God.

The Bible speaks of a "*good conscience and a sincere faith*" (1 Timothy 1:5). To have a *good conscience* is to have a conscience that does not condemn us.

In 2 Timothy 1:3 it talks about a "*clear conscience.*" How is this obtained? _____

7. Learn to Deny Yourself.

"*And he said to all, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me'*" (Luke 9:23).

What does self-denial mean? _____

There is a blessing in denying self. There is inner joy and satisfaction. Our burden is lifted as we look away from ourselves and toward Christ. Look at the words of Christ:

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:30).

To explain a little further:

"Christ's cross is the sweetest burden that I ever bore; it is such a burden as wings are to a bird, or sails to a ship to carry me forward to my harbor." (Samuel Rutherford) (1)

Don't be Discouraged

If you are doing your best to live for God, and not willfully persisting in known sin, don't be overly discouraged by your remaining weaknesses and infirmities, especially as a new Christian.

Remember: *"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).*

Again, God knows your heart motive. He is tender, and will have compassion when he knows you are weak, but sincerely trying.

"He will pity us under our weaknesses and infirmities...will make the best of our performances, though very defective." (Matthew Henry) (2)

"Though we have not attained, but in many things fail and come short, sincere seeking is accepted" (Matthew Henry) (3)

Principle: *God is tender and compassionate with those who are sincere.*

"Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

What does this verse mean to you? _____

Scripture Memory

Hebrews 12:1-2

"...let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith."

Check Your Progress

What are some of the significant things you have learned in this chapter? _____

Explain the old nature and the new nature. (p. 12) _____

Our old self was "crucified" with Christ? What does this mean for a Christian's life? (p. 12) _____

How are we tempted? (p. 13) _____

Explain the Old Testament prophecy concerning the stony heart. (p. 16) _____

What are some steps for overcoming temptation and sin? (p. 18) _____

What does it mean to fear God? (p. 18) _____

(1) *Spurgeon's Sermon Notes* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1970), 184

(2) Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids Michigan, 1961), Matthew 6:9-15

(3) *Ibid.*, Matthew 6:25-34

Chapter 3 – The Word of God

The Bible and You

To say that the Bible is important is an understatement. Indeed, it is central to every part of Christianity. But why is it important? Where did it come from? How can you understand it? How does it apply to you?

The answers to these questions are vital to your continued spiritual growth. The Bible is God's communication to you. You need to learn to understand the Bible and apply it to your everyday life, and there is no better place to learn about it than from the Bible itself.

The Bible is Divinely Inspired

The *inspiration of the Bible* refers to the process by which God gave us the words of Scripture through human instruments - the writers. The result is that the Bible is God's Word, not merely man's.

"All Scripture is breathed out by God" (2 Timothy 3:16).

How could the Bible be God's Word when it was actually put to paper and ink by men? In 2 Peter 1:20-21 it tells us:

"...knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

- The phrase "*no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation*" means that Scripture did not originate with men. The writers of Scripture did not write their own (*private*) opinions; they wrote God's Word.
- When they wrote, these men were moved by the _____.

Scripture writers didn't write of their own volition (*will*). Rather, they were moved by the Holy Spirit. They picked up pens to write, but the words were God's.

Because the Bible is the Word of God, it is without error - a teaching referred to as the *inerrancy* of Scripture. In John 17:17 Jesus states that God's Word is _____.

It is very comforting to know that every word in the Bible is directly from God. We can place strong trust in that.

"Believe God's word and power more than you believe your own feelings and experiences. Your Rock is Christ, and it is not the Rock which ebbs and flows, but your sea." (Samuel Rutherford) (1)

Benefits of Scripture

In 2 Timothy 3:16 we see that the Bible is inspired. The verse goes on to say that the Bible is profitable - it is a benefit to those who read it - *"and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."*

According to the last part of this verse, there are four areas the Bible helps you with:

- Teaching - *truth about God.*
- Reproof - *rebuke, to prick our consciences about our sin.*
- Correction - *correcting us or setting us right.*
- Training in righteousness - *teaching us how to live righteously for God.*

1. The Bible is essential in the plan of salvation.

In 2 Timothy 3:15 we see that the Scripture is able to *"make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."*

Our very faith comes through hearing the Bible preached.

2. The Bible is essential for Christian growth.

When you become a new Christian you need to grow. The Scripture compares us to newborn babes. *"Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation"* (1 Peter 2:2).

- From what do babies get nourished and how often do they eat? _____
What would happen to a baby who didn't eat? _____
- As a newborn Christian, what is your spiritual milk? _____

In Hebrews 5:13-14 it shows how we must eventually move on to *solid food* so we are skilled in the "word of righteousness" and able to distinguish "good from evil."

3. The Bible is essential for godly living.

The writer of Psalm 119:9 asked a question that every Christian struggles with. The question is: *how can I be pure from sin?* What is the answer at the end of the verse? _____

Read Psalm 119:25-40. Explain the Psalmist's attitude towards God's Word. _____

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He prayed for His disciples and all future Christians, as recorded in John 17. One request was that we would be "sanctified" - made holy. How are Christians sanctified according to John 17:17? _____

4. The Bible is essential for knowing God.

Remember, the Bible is not merely a book; it is God's Word. It is God's self-revelation; what He has chosen to tell us about Himself.

Jesus tells us in John 5:39 that the Bible - even the Old Testament, written before His physical birth - "bear witness" of Him. To know God personally and intimately, you need to study about Him in His Word.

Accordingly, what is Christ's command in John 5:39? _____

Scripture teaches us about sin and salvation. It addresses relationships with spouses, employers, children, servants and persecutors. It tells us what God expects. It is full of His promises. Yet the Bible is first and foremost *God's revelation of Himself*.

When you read the Bible, don't just look for commands, promises and examples; look for God and what He is like!

"The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His Presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts." (A. W. Tozer) (2)

Scripture is Revealed by the Holy Spirit

Many read the Bible, and to them it is just words on paper. This is because the Holy Spirit is not "bringing it to life" so-to-speak, to their spirits. When God's Spirit ministers to you as you read the Bible, it touches more than your intellect. It touches your spirit. It is then that you truly understand it. This is why the unconverted cannot understand - they do not have the Holy Spirit living inside of them.

"Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God" (1 Corinthians 2:12).

- Our understanding comes to us in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Don't count on your own human intellect and logic alone.

The unsaved (natural) man cannot receive the things of God. *"The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him" 1 Corinthians 2:14).* A person rejects the things of God, because they are _____ unto him.

By contrast, as a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit living in you. Now you can understand. Even so, *we still must pray:*

"Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law" (Psalm 119:18).

Embrace all of Scripture

It is popular today for people to pick and choose the parts of the Bible they want to believe or obey. This will never do! Some try to say that certain parts of the Bible (usually the parts they don't like) were only for the culture back then. Don't believe this! God is the same and His Word is unchanging.

There are many ways that people try to alter the plain meaning of Scripture. You will find preachers that do this too. Be on your guard and watch out for this.

Remember:

- All of the Bible is true - and it is for us today (2 Timothy 3:16).
- We must believe *it means what it says* and be careful not to manipulate the interpretation.

"Forever, O Lord, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens" (Psalm 119:89).

What are some reasons people "pick and choose" certain verses when they read the Bible? _____

There are warnings about altering God's Word.

"You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2).

This verse tells us not to _____ to God's Word or _____ from it.

Revelation 22:19 says, *"and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book."*

"Every year, I might almost say every day, that I live, I seem to see more clearly how all the rest and gladness and power of our Christian life hinges on one thing; and that is, taking God at His word, believing that He really means exactly what He says, and accepting the very words in which he reveals His goodness and grace, without substituting others or altering the precise modes and tenses which He sees fit to use." (Havergal) (3)

Sufficiency of Scripture

For years, Bible-believers have stated that "the Bible is our only rule of faith and practice." Today however, many men and churches teach that the Bible is a good starting place, but must be supplemented by tradition, psychology, etc. They say that the Bible is not enough to guide us in our daily lives.

2 Peter 1:3 teaches that God has given us *"all things that pertain to life and godliness."*

What does this mean to you? _____

We looked at 2 Timothy 3:16 in our discussion about inspiration. It goes on to say that the Bible will make Christians spiritually mature ("perfect") and fully prepared ("thoroughly furnished") for ministry.

"...that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work"
(2 Timothy 3:17).

Based on the fact that Scripture can do all of those things, what "charge" does Paul give to the young pastor (Timothy) in 2 Timothy 4:1-2? _____

Sadly, many preachers today seem to preach anything but the Bible. There is a reason for that.

"For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths." (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

This says that there will be a time when people will refuse sound doctrine. What will they want instead? _____

Although the Bible is thought by many to be antiquated or out of touch, Scripture teaches that God's Word alone contains everything we need to know about how to live. Those in the city of Berea were commended for their attitude toward the Bible and Bible teachers.

Listen to how they responded to the preaching of God's word:

"Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

- They received the word with readiness of mind.
- They searched the Scriptures daily.
- They determined whether or not what was being preached was true.

Let us do likewise!

Application of Scripture

Now that you know your need for Scripture, let's be very practical: How do you go about Bible study? Joshua 1:8 gives a **three-step process**:

"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."

1. Read it. " *This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth*" (Joshua 1:8).

What are some excuses people give for not reading the Bible consistently? _____

How would you refute those excuses from Joshua 1:8? _____

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 is a similar passage.

According to verse 7, when and how often should you place yourself under the influence of the Bible? _____

2. Think about it. "...*but you shall meditate on it day and night*" (Joshua 1:8).

Meditation in Scripture is not thoughtless, casual or lazy. Rather, it is thinking about what you read with an emphasis on personal application. Pray and ask God to help you to understand what you read, and apply it to your life.

"Texts will often refuse to reveal their treasures till you open them with the key of prayer." (C.H. Spurgeon) (4)

Included in meditation is Scripture memory. You cannot always carry a Bible, but you can carry portions of it in your memory.

Read Psalm 119:11 and explain how it addresses Scripture memory. _____

3. Obey it. "...that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it." (Joshua 1:8).

Here is the most difficult step of the three, yet the most important. Reading the Bible is good, but doing it must follow directly on its heels. You must apply what you read in Scripture to your everyday life!

James 1:22-25 discuss two different kinds of people: *doers* and *forgetful hearers*.

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing."

What is the difference between a doer and a hearer? _____

Obedience to Scripture demands a difficult thing - *change*. You must begin doing things the Bible commands and stop doing things the Bible forbids. This process of change has a final goal: that you should become more and more like Jesus Christ (see 2 Corinthians 3:18). Your goal every time you read the Bible should be to make your life more pleasing to God!

"What is in the Bible is not there just to give you historical background or theological precision; it's there to make you what you should be and to mold your understanding of Scripture so that it may mold your character and transform you in to the kind of person that God wants you to be." (Stewart Custer) (5)

We've seen that Joshua 1:8 gives a command to obey the law. It then ends with a promise: "*For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.*"

If you read, apply, and obey the Bible, you will be rewarded with *spiritual* prosperity and success!

Old Testament and New Testament

The Bible has two divisions: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament contains a record of God's dealing with man before Christ's birth. The New Testament records the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the lives and acts of the Apostles and the early church, and God's Word to us after Christ's earthly ministry.

The Old Testament tells of God's creation of the world and His earliest dealing with man. A major part of the Old Testament contains God's calling out and forming a Hebrew nation (Israel). It has a record of God's Law which was given at Mt. Sinai. There was a system of sacrifices given to atone for sin, but it all pointed to Christ.

Jesus brought us a new and better way. The New Testament is the revelation of Jesus Christ.

- *"This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant"* (Hebrews 7:22).

A "guarantor" is one who confirms something. This verse tells us that Christ is a "guarantor" of a **better** testament.

- *"But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption"* (Hebrew 9:11-12).

When Jesus died on the cross, it was the *once for all sacrifice*. There is no more need for Old Testament sacrifices. Christ's death on the cross is the atonement for our sins.

The Old Testament "ceremonial and sacrificial system" was lacking:

- *"For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near"* (Hebrew 10:1).

The Law was a _____ of good things to come.

- *"For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins"* (Hebrews 10:4).

Did these Old Testament sacrifices really take away sins? _____

- *"He does away with the first in order to establish the second"* (Hebrews 10:9).

The "second" is the New Testament: *"And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all"* (Hebrews 10:10).

- The Old Testament sacrificial system ends with Christ. This can be seen by what we have already stated above. Even though the ceremonial and sacrificial aspects of the Old Testament do not carry into the New Testament, the moral aspects do.

God's moral law is not abolished.

The New Testament affirms God's moral law.

There are some today that say we no longer have to follow the moral law. That's not true. We have freedom in Christ but are still subject to God's moral law.

- The moral law of God is not abolished. The "Law of Christ" is God's moral law, but in the hands of the Mediator - Christ.

In Galatians 6:2 we are to *"fulfill the law of Christ."*

- The Apostle Paul clearly states in 1 Corinthians 9:21, *that he was "not being outside the law of God," for he was "under the law to Christ."*
- Christ said: *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them"* (Matthew 5:17).

He then proceeded to expound and enforce the moral law.

Read Matthew 5:21-48 for a better understanding of the "law of Christ." We will be talking more about this in Chapter 6.

In Conclusion

"No language ever stirs the depths of my nature like the Word of God; and none produces such a profound calm within my spirit. As no other voice can, it melts me to tears, it humbles me in the dust, it fires me with enthusiasm, it fills me with felicity, it elevates me to holiness. Every faculty of my being owns the power of the sacred Word: it sweetens my memory, it brightens my hope, it stimulates my imagination, it directs my judgment, it commands my will, it cheers my heart. The word of man charms me for the time, but I outlive and outgrow its power; it is altogether the reverse with the Word of the King of kings: it rules me more sovereignly, more practically, more habitually, more completely every day. Its power is for all seasons: for sickness and for health, for solitude and for company, for personal emergencies and for public assemblies."
(Charles Spurgeon) (6)

Just a few more helps:

- Attend a good Church.
- Get involved in Sunday School Class.

-
- Get involved in Bible Studies.
 - Purchase a good Bible Commentary. Matthew Henry's Commentary is one of the best.
 - Seek out more mature Christians to help you in your spiritual growth.
 - Read your Bible and pray every day.

Scripture Memory

2 Peter 1:20-21

"...knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

Check Your Progress

What are some of the significant things you have learned in this chapter? _____

What do we mean when we say the Bible is divinely inspired? (p. 22) _____

In 2 Timothy 3:16 (the last part of the verse) it tells us four areas that the Bible helps us with. What are they? (p. 23) _____

How do you go about Bible Study (three steps)? (p. 27) _____

What does Joshua 1:8 promise, and to whom does this promise belong? (p. 28) _____

Explain how God's Moral Law is not abolished. (p. 29) _____

(1) Mrs. Chas. E. Cowman, *Streams in the Desert* (Cowman Publishing Company, Inc., Los Angeles, California, 1950), 78

(2) A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God* (Christian Publications, Camp Hill, PA, 1982), 10

(3) Mrs. Chas. E. Cowman, *Streams in the Desert* (Cowman Publishing Company, Inc., Los Angeles, California, 1950), 93

(4) C. H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (Pilgrim Publications, Pasadena, TX, 1990) 42

(5) Stewart Custer, "*Biblical Balance*" in *Balance*, vol. 20, No. 4, p. 2

(6) *Spurgeon's Sermon Notes* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1970), 96

Chapter 4 - Prayer

Prayer and Our Need of Prayer

- Everything good comes from God. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17).
- We look to God to supply all of our needs, physical and spiritual. "And my God will supply every need" (Philippians 4:19).
- Prayer is communicating with God. It is talking to God and listening to Him. It is drawing near to Him, and Him drawing near to you.

We were made to commune with God. We are to be in constant, daily communication with Him. We need God more than we need the food we eat or the air we breathe. We must ask of Him, listen to Him, and thank Him on a daily basis. Christians sense this in their souls, and want to learn the art of prayer.

"You may as soon find a living man that does not breathe, as a living Christian that does not pray. If prayerless, then graceless." (Matthew Henry) (1)

The old hymn, *Sweet Hour of Prayer*, says it well:

"Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, that calls me from a world of care,
And bids me at my Father's throne, make all my wants and wishes known;
In seasons of distress and grief, my soul has often found relief
And oft escaped the tempter's snare, by thy return, sweet hour of prayer."

When we pray we need to be sure to understand the proper basis of our prayers. We must come before Him understanding that:

"For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy" (Daniel 9:18).

- We present ourselves before Christ, *not because of our righteousness*, but because of His *great mercies*.
- We come on the basis of Christ's person and work. He is God's holy Son, and on the basis of His death on the Cross for your sins, you have access to the Father.

On what basis do we bring our prayers before God the Father? _____

Many Christians close their prayer by saying, *"In Jesus' name, Amen,"* without having any idea what the statement means.

It means:

- It is to pray with Christ's authority.
- Christ is our Mediator - our access to God the Father.

Purposes of Prayer

1. To thank and praise and worship God.

"Praise the Lord! Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good" (Psalm 106:1).

We come to God in prayer to thank Him for His many blessings, etc. We praise Him, and we simply worship Him because *He is worthy to be worshipped*. To worship God is to give honor and reverence to God. It is in a Christian's heart to do these things.

Prayer is, above all else, worship. It is not rushing to God with requests, but bowing before Him in reverence. Prayers throughout Scripture are saturated with praise and thanksgiving.

The Book of Psalms is your worship textbook. Read the Psalms with praise in your heart towards God!

- Praise the Lord for who He is! We are to praise God for the essence of His being. The character of God should cause us to worship.

What are God's character traits described in Psalm 86:5, 15? _____

What are God's character traits described Psalm 36:5-7 _____

- Praise the Lord for what He has done! God has given us great blessings through all of the things that He has done for us.

What are some of God's blessings listed in Psalm 103:1-5? _____

What are some of God's blessings listed in Psalm 18:27-28, 32? _____

2. Listening to God's instructions and finding God's will.

We need God's leading in our life. Besides His clear instructions found in Scripture, we also need to hear His instructions to us inwardly for other decisions we have to make, etc. This is something you will learn to do more accurately as you grow in Christ. But for now, learn to take time to try to hear *what God is saying to you* when you pray.

God speaks to us, in our spirit. We want to find out God's will, through prayer, not simply try to get God to answer our requests and desires. Part of prayer is getting *our will* in line with *God's will*.

3. To obtain God's help, supply and protection.

How we need God's help at all times! How we need Him to supply our needs, both physical and spiritual. And how we need His protection, both physical and spiritual protection.

Bring these needs to God in your prayers. He wants you to.

"...in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6).

"Is any among you afflicted, let him pray...Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him" (James 5:13-14).

4. To obtain God's presence.

A sense of God's presence, an inward joy and peace that comes when God draws very near, is a choice treasure of every Christian. This you can ask God for in prayer. Draw close to God often in prayer, and He promises that He will draw close to you.

"Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you" (James 4:8). How do you draw near to God? **humbling ourselves, praying, listening to God**

5. Praying for others.

We are to pray for those we know and love, family and friends. We are to pray for one another.

Even the Lord's Prayer uses words like give "us" this day our daily bread. This reminds us to pray for the needs of others, and not just our own needs. In particular, we should pray for other fellow believers, and for the souls of those who are lost.

We are also to pray for our leaders.

"First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way" (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

-
- We are told here to pray for all men and kings, and those in _____.
 - Why do we pray for leaders? _____

6. Confessing our sins and asking God's forgiveness.

We covered this in an earlier chapter. We must daily confess our sins and ask God's forgiveness.

"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).

How to Pray

1. The Lord's Prayer.

Jesus taught us a perfect prayer that is to be used as our pattern. It is the Lord's Prayer.

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." [For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen]" (Matthew 6:9-13)

- *"Our Father"* - We pray to our Heavenly Father. This is a great comfort and encouragement to us. He is the Almighty! But He is also our Father! We come to Him as His children, knowing He has a father's love and concern for us.
- *"in heaven"* - This brings us to remembrance of God's position of power and majesty above us. It causes us humility. It reminds us that our home too is in heaven, not on this earth.
- *"hallowed be your name"* - This is our reverence for God, and a lifting up in exaltation His name.
- *"Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven"* - We are to pray for and desire God's kingdom to be advanced in this world, and also we are to pray for and desire Christ's return, and eternity in Heaven. We too, are to pray for and desire *God's will* to be done, not our will, or the will of men.

Don't think of prayer as a way to have your own will to be done, but pray for God's will to be done in your life and in the life of others.

- *"Give us this day our daily bread"* - We are to pray for our basic needs to be met by God.

- "*and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors*" - Again, we are to confess our sins, and ask God's forgiveness. We are to remember that our sins will be forgiven, in the same measure that we forgive other people their sins against us. This is a strong reminder to have a forgiving heart ourselves.
- "*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*" - We are to pray for God's protection against temptation and sin, and for His powerful protection against the devil and all other evil.
- "*For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen*" (Some manuscripts add this) - This is lifting up an acknowledgment that God's Kingdom is God's alone! And that all power and glory are His, and due Him.

The Lord's Prayer is short. But it is powerful and all comprehensive. It summarizes all that we should pray for. Pray it often as a prayer, and pattern your other prayers by it. Jesus tells us to "*Pray then like this*" (Matthew 6:9).

2. Pray from your heart with all humility.

Jesus warned us not to pray as the hypocrites pray. He said "*For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others*" (Matthew 6:5).

A hypocrite prays to be seen of _____.

When we pray it is to be *from our heart*, with all humility.

What would be some indications that a person is not really praying sincerely from his heart? _____

"Therefore your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you" (2 Samuel 7:27).

Charles Spurgeon tells us that David, in this verse, found prayer "*in his heart - not in a book, nor in his memory, nor in his head, nor in his imagination, nor only on his tongue.*" (2)

A young person was once asked the difference between her prayers now and her prayers before conversion. She replied:

"Then I said my prayers, but now I mean them. Then I said the prayers which other people taught me, but now I find them in my heart." (3)

3. Take time to be alone with God.

There is a need for secret, alone time with God. Jesus tells us to *"go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret"* (Matthew 6:6). God sees this!

"There is not a secret sudden breathing after God, but he observes it."
(Matthew Henry) (4)

Jesus promises us, that when we pray to God in secret, He will reward us (Matthew 6:6). The beauty of this is, that we pray secretly to God, and He, in front of the world, rewards us.

"Sometimes secret prayers are rewarded openly in this world by signal answers to them, which manifests God's praying people in the consciences of their adversaries." (Matthew Henry) (5)

Can you give an example where God rewarded someone's prayer openly? _____

4. Prepare for prayer.

We must also prepare ourselves for prayer. Robert Murray M'Cheyne said, *"a great part of my time is spent in getting my heart in tune for prayer."* (6)

We need to aside time and clear our minds!

There are times when we just don't feel like praying. Even mature Christians go through dry spells, so-to-speak. When this happens we must be patient. We should ask God to help us. These times always pass.

"If it be not in my heart to pray, I must pray until it is." (C. H. Spurgeon) (7)

What should we do when we don't feel like praying? _____

5. Pray in faith.

"For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20).

Learning to pray in faith is something that takes time. All Christians have faith. Some have great faith; some have small faith. Faith is an assurance in your heart that God will answer your prayer.

One once said to Jesus: *"I believe; help my unbelief!"* (Mark 9:24). Until you obtain strong faith, pray this prayer too.

What can you do to help increase your faith? _____

6. Pray in God's will.

God says, if we ask anything "according to his will" he hears us (1 John 5:14). The key in prayer is getting *our will* in line with *God's will*, so that our prayers will be heard and answered.

- Ask of God with the assurance of His power, but with submission to His will.
- When we cannot be sure of His will, *wait patiently*, and be sure of His wisdom and mercy.

7. Pray simply.

Just talk to God. It is not a matter of long or fancy prayers.

Matthew Henry says, "*The God we pray to is our Father. Children do not make long speeches to their parents when they want anything.*" (8)

8. Pray with others.

The Bible says much about private prayer - times when you are alone with God and seeking His face (Matthew 6:6; Psalm 27:8). Yet, it also stresses the necessity of gathering with other believers for joint prayer.

Notice Christ's words concerning prayer with other believers:

"Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them" (Matthew 18:19-20).

- This verse holds a strong promise. Praying with others and agreeing on the subject matter of the prayer is a powerful thing. This should encourage us to pray with others.
- Who does Jesus say will be "*among*" two or three Christians gathered together in His name? Jesus

If your hesitation is praying out loud in front of others, you can join a prayer group and pray silently. Find a prayer group in your local church, or find a small group of fellow Christians to pray regularly with. Most good churches have regular prayer meetings.

The Power of Prayer

*"Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory"
(Ephesians 3:20-21).*

Prayer is an extremely powerful thing. This is because God is all-powerful. In James God tells us: *"The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working"* (James 5:16).

So many try to do God's work, but without God's power. God's power is the key. Pray! God says to us:

"Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known" (Jeremiah 33:3). This should be great motivation to pray!

George Mueller was a man of great faith and great prayer. He started many orphanages for children, simply relying on praying to God to provide all of the support. He never told a human being about any of their financial needs, but only God, and God worked great miracles in his life. One such miracle is described below by the captain of a steamer who had George Mueller as one of his passengers.

*"I had been on the bridge twenty four hours and never left it. George Mueller came to me and said, "Captain, I have come to tell you that I must be in Quebec Saturday afternoon." "It is impossible," I said. "Very well, if your ship cannot take me, God will find some other way. I have never broken an engagement for fifty-seven years. Let us go down into the chart-room and pray."
I looked at that man of God, and thought to myself, what lunatic asylum can that man have come from? I never heard of such a thing as this. "Mr. Mueller," I said, "do you know how dense this fog is?" "No," he replied, "my eye is not on the density of the fog, but on the living God who controls every circumstance of my life."
He knelt down and prayed one of the most simple prayers, and when he was finished I was going to pray; but he put his hand on my shoulder, and told me not to pray. "First, you do not believe He will answer; and second, I believe he has, and there is no need whatever for you to pray about it."
I looked at him and he said, "Captain, I have known my Lord for fifty-seven years, and there has never been a single day that I have failed to get audience with the King. Get up captain, and open the door, and you will find the fog gone." I got up, and the fog was indeed gone." (9)*

Holy Spirit Needed in Prayer

More will be spoken of in the next chapter about the help of the Holy Spirit in our prayer life, and in every other part of our lives, but for now it is important for you to know that you need to

have the help of the Holy Spirit when you pray. Ask God to help you to pray with the help of His Spirit.

"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:26-27).

- God's Spirit helps our weaknesses.
- This verse says the Spirit prays within us with "*groanings too deep for words.*" This is *silent praying within our spirit by God's Holy Spirit.* What glorious help, and what power!

God's Spirit lives in us. He helps us to pray according to God's will and in God's power. When we pray under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we can be certain God hears our prayers, and will answer them.

Hindrances to Prayer

God will not hear the prayers of wicked men (1 Peter 3:12). God will not hear the prayers of those who cherish iniquity in their hearts (Psalm 66:18).

But there are other reasons that prayer can be "hindered." There are things that prevent prayers from being heard and answered.

1. Asking with wrong motives.

If you ask for things, and are not seeing your prayers answered, consider the possibility that you are asking with selfish motive. Guard against prayers for selfish, worldly things.

"You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions" (James 4:3).

2. Having unresolved issues with another person.

In a previous chapter we talked about Matthew 5:23-24. In verse 24 it says, "*First be reconciled to your brother...*"

If we do not reconcile with our brother our prayers are hindered.

3. Husbands that abuse their authority.

“Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered” (1 Peter 3:7).

Can you think of *specific examples* where your prayers have been hindered?

Bible Examples of Prayer

For a better understanding of Biblical prayer; spend some of your Bible study time reading and meditating on some of the prayers recorded in Scripture.

Read these exemplary prayers from the Bible.

- 1 Samuel 2:1-10 - Who is praying here? _____
- Ezra 9:1-10:1 - Who is praying here? _____
- Psalm 51 - What is David asking for here (verse 1)? _____

Scripture Memory

James 5:16

"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working."

Check Your Progress

What are some of the significant things you have learned in this chapter? _____

What is prayer? (p. 33) _____

Name some of the purposes of prayer. (p. 34) _____

Write out the Lord's Prayer. (p. 36) _____

What are the 8 helps given for how to pray? (p. 36) _____

What are some hindrances to prayer? (p. 41) _____

(1) Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1961), Matthew 6:5-8

(2) *Spurgeon's Sermon Notes* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1970), 39

(3) *Ibid.*, 40

(4) Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1961), Matthew 6:5-8

(5) *Ibid.*

(6) *Spurgeon's Sermon Notes* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1970), 40

(7) *Ibid.*

(8) Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1961), Matthew 6:5-8

(9) Mrs. Chas. E. Cowman, *Streams in the Desert* (Cowman Publications, Inc., 1950), 241

Chapter 5 - Holy Spirit

The Person of the Holy Spirit

Scripture teaches that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity, co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father and God the Son.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

- The Holy Spirit is not merely some sort of force.
- The Holy Spirit is God's own Spirit.

After Jesus was baptized it says,

"...and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16-17).

Here the Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus. Does this verse confirm the distinction between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit? _____

The Holy Spirit is sometimes referred to as the silent member of the Trinity. That is not to say that He is any less God than the Father or the Son. Rather, it means that He is not prominent: He does not gather attention to Himself.

"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come" (John 16:13).

The Holy Spirit doesn't speak about Himself, but He speaks about Jesus. According to this verse, what does the Holy Spirit guide you into? _____

Holy Spirit - Old Testament and New Testament

1. The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, God had two unique dwelling places. He lived in the tabernacle from the time of Moses to the time of Solomon, David's son. He then began living in the temple. Whereas the tabernacle was a temporary place (literally a tent), the temple was more permanent.

For God to dwell in any specific location was special. In order to prove to His people that He

was indeed in their midst, God performed special signs, both at His entrance into the tabernacle and His entrance into the temple.

Those signs are described in Exodus 40:34-38 as a pillar of cloud or fire which hovered over the tabernacle and in 1 Kings 8:10-11 as a cloud which filled the temple.

In the Old Testament the Spirit of God would typically come upon leaders to enable them to carry out an important ministry.

In the following Old Testament illustrations, who did God's Spirit come upon - for what purpose and what followed?

- Judges 15:14-16 _____

- 2 Kings 2:9-15 _____

- 2 Chronicles 24:20-21 _____

- Isaiah 61:1 _____

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit came upon people at particular times and for particular purposes. In the New Testament the Spirit is going to come in a different way.

The prophet Joel gives an Old Testament prophecy (Joel 2:28) of what was going to happen in the New Testament on the day of Pentecost.

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh"

2. Christ's promise to His disciples.

Before Jesus died on the Cross, He told His disciples that after He went away (to Heaven), the "Comforter" would come. He was referring to the Holy Spirit.

"Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7).

He told them that they would receive new power from God; God's own Holy Spirit living in them!

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1:8).

3. Pentecost.

On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit of God came down in a new and special way to dwell in the hearts of Christians. This was something the Old Testament saints didn't have.

Jesus had told the disciples to wait for the promise of the Father and that they would be "*baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now*" (Acts 1:5).

"When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4).

- This is the day of Pentecost! The mighty wind signifies the powerful influence of the Spirit of God.
- They were baptized with the Holy Ghost and with _____. (See Matthew 3:11)
- Each one there was able to understand those *speaking in tongues* in their own language. (Acts 2:6)

The apostle Peter tells the people who witnessed this happening that it was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (read Acts 2:16-18).

The number of people that were added to the church that day was 3,000! (See Acts 2:41)

4. The disciples after Pentecost.

There was a *big change* that occurred in the disciples of Jesus after the day of Pentecost.

Before the coming of the Holy Spirit the disciples often were weak and fearful. After the day of Pentecost, after they received God's Holy Spirit to *indwell* them, they were strong (spiritually), bold, and lived consistent, holy lives for the Lord.

According to church historians, many of them even died a martyr's death for Christ.

The Holy Spirit in You

You were born once physically. If you are saved, you have also been born spiritually. The Holy Spirit brought spiritual life where there was spiritual death. And that spiritual life was the Holy Spirit Himself!

In John 3 Nicodemus enquired about being born again, and Jesus answered,

"Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, "You must be born again"'" (John 3:5-7).

The new birth is accomplished by the Holy Spirit. How does Jesus describe that new birth in the above passage? _____

God now dwells in Christians. They are His temple. God does not live in a building. He lives in you if you are a Christian!

Romans 8:16 says, *"The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God..."*

What does it mean when it says the Spirit *bears witness* with our spirit? _____

Romans 8:9 says, *" You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him."*

- Every Christian has the Holy Spirit residing within. This happens at conversion. Some people will tell you that the Holy Spirit comes inside a Christian sometime after conversion - but this is not true.
- What does this say concerning someone who does not have the Holy Spirit within? _____

The Work of the Holy Spirit in us

1. He seals and keeps us.

All believers have been sealed with the Holy Spirit.

To seal something in the ancient world was to make an impression in wax with an insignia often contained in a ring. A letter would be closed (or rolled), have hot wax dripped onto its edge, then sealed. The seal was used to show ownership of an object. The sealed letter was not to be opened by anyone other than the person for whom it was intended. We are sealed and kept by God.

2 Corinthians 1:22 says God has *" put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee."*

What does this mean to you? _____

2. He comforts us.

"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:18).

The Holy Spirit is called the Comforter. God knows our frailties and sorrow, and provides great comfort to us in tough times through His Holy Spirit. He gives peace that *passeth understanding*.

"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

3. He convicts us of sin.

Conviction is when God sets our sin before the eyes of our soul, and makes it powerful upon our conscience. Each of us has known the feeling of a guilty conscience.

This was the work of the Holy Spirit before our conversion. Each of us knows about this! But it is also the work of the Holy Spirit after our conversion, within us, as God makes us more and more into His image. He will take our sin and bring it before our eyes, bringing us godly sorrow and repentance.

From what you have learned so far, what would you say a Christian's response will be when the Holy Spirit convicts them of some sin? _____

4. He teaches us.

1 Corinthians 2:14-16 teaches that the Holy Spirit of God *illumines* you. He enables you to understand the Bible and spiritual things. Whereas unsaved (natural) people don't have spiritual understanding, you do if you are a Christian.

Your prayer each time you open your Bible or hear a sermon should be the prayer contained in Psalm 119:18. What is it? _____

When studying a book, it would be a tremendous help to have the author explain its meaning to you. The Bible is not merely a human book that can be understood and applied through human effort or reason alone; it is inspired, the very Word of God. God Himself, by His Holy Spirit is the one who teaches you as you read the Bible.

"There is no doctrine of the Bible which can be safely, thoroughly, or truly learned without the one authoritative Teacher. Tell me not of systems of divinity, of schemes of theology...of the most learned people, or of the most arrogant doctors, but tell me of the great Teacher who will instruct the sons of God and make us wise to understand all things. The Holy Ghost is the Teacher."
(C. H. Spurgeon) (1)

5. He sanctifies us.

"And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules" (Ezekiel 36:27).

We are set apart for service to God. When the Holy Spirit lives inside a person, it causes him to follow God's law. He does not obey because he has to, grudgingly. He obeys because he *wants* to.

"If a man is whipped into obedience, it is of little worth, but when obedience springs out of a life within, it is a priceless breastplate of jewels. If you have a lantern, you cannot make it shine by polishing the glass outside. You must put a candle within it, and this is what God does." (C. H. Spurgeon) (2)

2 Corinthians 3:18 describes the process by which Christians are transformed into the image of Christ:

"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

This verse is a picture of a person looking into a mirror, and seeing in that mirror the "glory of the Lord." Throughout your whole lifetime, God will continue to sanctify you, to conform you more and more into His own image. This means He will make you more and more holy.

According to the above verse, who accomplishes this work in you? _____

6. He helps us to pray.

"But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 20).

The Holy Spirit helps us to pray. We are told here to pray "in the Holy Spirit." Ask God to help you to pray in His Spirit.

"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us" (Romans 8:26). We talked about this verse in the last chapter.

What are some reasons we need the Holy Spirit's help in prayer? _____

7. He gives us His power.

The empowering of the Spirit is the special blessing of the Spirit on a believer's life. Everything we do is for the Lord's glory and it is also by His power and might. No glory goes to us.

God's tells us that when we are weak, He is strong. Paul put it like this concerning himself:

"For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10).

2 Corinthians 12:9 says, *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."* How will this verse be a help in your life? _____

A clear example of the Spirit's helping Paul in his preaching is seen in 1 Corinthians 2:4:

"...my speech and my message were not in plausible words of _____, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power..."

As we live our lives we must always understand that it is *"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts"* (Zechariah 4:6).

8. He makes us effective witnesses.

Without the help of the Holy Spirit, we could not move a single soul toward God. Their hearts are too hard, the world and the devil too powerful against our puny efforts. Our human logic will not be enough! Neither will our passion, or even our example. We need God's Holy Spirit to breathe upon the words we say and breathe upon the sinner we are trying to reach, for there to be any effect.

Let us remember this, and pray to God for His Holy Spirit empowerment in our witnessing.

"Men's hearts... can be very hard to affect. If you want to get them for any worldly object, you can do it. A cheating world can win man's heart; and a little gold can win man's heart. A trump of fame and a little clamor of applause can win a man's heart. But there is not a minister breathing that can win man's heart by himself. He can win his ears and make them listen; and he can win his eyes, and fix them upon him. He can win his attention, but the heart is very slippery. The heart is a fish that all gospel fishermen have trouble holding. You may sometimes pull it almost all the way out of the water; but, slimy as an eel, it slips between your fingers, and you have not captured it after all. Many a man has fancied that he has caught the heart, but he has been disappointed... The Spirit alone has power over a man's heart. (C. H. Spurgeon) (3)

The Holy Spirit's Leading - Knowing God's Will

God by His Holy Spirit will lead and direct you in your daily life. As you grow as a Christian, you will become more and more able to recognize the voice of the Holy Spirit in guidance.

Here are some guidelines to help you to discern God's leading, or in other words, know God's will.

1. It is never contrary to Scriptures.

- God's leading will be consistent with what the Bible says (Psalm 119:133, 2 John 9).
- The Holy Spirit will never lead you to do anything immoral (1 Thessalonians 4:7).

2. Recognize the voice and confirmation of the Holy Spirit. *The Holy Spirit:*

- Gives life not death (2 Corinthians 3:6, Romans 8:10)
- Light not darkness (1 John 1:5)
- Clarity not confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33, James 3:16)
- Peace (2 Thessalonians 3:16, Romans 8:6)
- Will not produce fear (2 Timothy 1:7)
- Doesn't depend on man's wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:13)
- Doesn't contradict your conscience (Romans 9:1)

Watch for God's direction in providence (doors opening or closing). *If you are not sure what to do, wait!*

3. Don't get ahead of the Spirit's leading.

Be patient and wait on God before you act. This quote says it very well:

"In times of uncertainty, wait. Always, if you have any doubt, wait. Do not force yourself to any action. If you have a restraint in your spirit, wait until all is clear, and do not go against it." (L. Cowman) (4)

4. Test the spirits and beware of being deceived. (1 John 4:1)

- Beware of mistaking your own strong desires with the Spirit's leading (Proverbs 16:25). God's leading is not sensual (Jude 19, James 3:15).
- Don't generally expect the rosy path. Expect trials (Hebrews 12:6).

-
- If you have no rest in your spirit, this *could be* an indication you need to be making some kind of a change. Always pray first - get a clear leading from God (2 Corinthians 2:13).

5. Don't grieve the Holy Spirit.

The Bible tells us not to grieve the Holy Spirit. *"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption"* (Ephesians 4:30).

- We should not do things contrary to His nature or will. We should listen to our inner "checks" - follow our conscience - and the good advice of mature Christians.
- When the Spirit is grieved, it withdraws. We need the abundant presence of God. Never do anything that would cause God's Spirit to withdraw from you.

List some things you believe could grieve the Holy Spirit. _____

The Fruits and Gifts of the Holy Spirit

1. The Fruit of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit produces "fruit" or godly qualities in your life. The "fruit" He produces in you is an evidence of the life He has given you.

"Thus you will recognize them by their fruits." (See Matthew 7:15-20)

This shows that we can recognize true Christians by how they live their lives. True Christians, like good fruit trees, produce good fruit. Unsaved people are like the thistle, or thorn tree. They do not produce fruit. All they produce are corrupt things, thorns.

Galatians 5:22-23 tells us what some of the fruits of the Holy Spirit are:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control"

These qualities are manifested in true Christians. Do you see *fruit of the Spirit* in your life?

2. Spiritual Gifts.

The church is the body of Christ and individual Christians are members of that body. God gives various spiritual gifts to individuals in the church. These gifts are bestowed upon Christians to *strengthen and edify* the church.

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace" (1 Peter 4:10).

These spiritual gifts are listed primarily in:

Romans 12:4-8 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 Ephesians 4:11

Below are *some* of the spiritual gifts briefly described:

- Pastor - the ability and call to shepherd the flock of God.
- Preaching - the ability to preach.
- Teaching - the ability to understand and teach the Word of God.
- Serving - the ability and desire to see needs and provide help.
- Administration - the ability to provide leadership and organization.
- Giving - the ability, desire and means to meet physical needs.
- Mercy - the ability and desire to comfort the afflicted.
- Exhortation - the ability to encourage and move people to action.
- Evangelist - the ability to communicate the gospel to the lost.

God has given you at least one of the spiritual gifts, although it may take some time, prayer and discernment for you to discover your gifts. Look to God to reveal this to you, in His time and way. Don't be mechanical about it.

You must remember that God gives spiritual gifts for His purposes and for His glory.

"Our gifts and talents should also be turned over to Him. They should be recognized for what they are, God's loan to us, and should never be considered in any sense our own. We have no more right to claim credit for special abilities than for blue eyes or strong muscles." (A. W. Tozer) (5)

Scripture Memory

Romans 8:9

"You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him."

Check Your Progress

What are some of the significant things you have learned in this chapter? _____

Explain the Person of the Holy Spirit. (p. 44) _____

Explain the difference in the Holy Spirit in Old and New Testament. (p. 44) _____

List 3 or 4 of the ways the Holy Spirit works in us. (p. 47) _____

What are some of the ways to know the Spirit's leading (knowing God's will)? (p. 50) _____

What are some of the fruits of the Spirit? (p. 52) _____

(1) Charles Spurgeon, *Holy Spirit Power* (Whitacker House, New Kensington, PA, 1996), 11

(2) *Ibid.*, 127

(3) *Ibid.*, 42

(4) Mrs. Chas. E. Cowman, *Streams in the Desert* (Cowman Publications, Inc., 1950), 122

(5) A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God* (Christian Publications, Camp Hill, PA, 1982), 28

Chapter 6 - God's Requirements

Old Testament Law

God gave His Law in the Old Testament, to the nation of Israel. This Law was to regulate their lives. Many of our laws in the United States originated from English common law which was influenced by the Old Testament law.

The ceremonial and sacrificial laws governed the ceremonies the people were to follow and the sacrifices they were to offer to God. One example of this is seen in the trespass offering.

"And he shall bring to the priest as his compensation to the Lord a ram without blemish out of the flock, or its equivalent for a guilt offering" (Leviticus 6:6).

These ceremonies and sacrifices ended with Christ's ultimate, once for all sacrifice.

The moral law shows God's moral requirements for man or how God requires man to live. This also includes civil laws that deal with the nation of Israel and how they were to function. The moral law is summed up well in the Ten Commandments.

These *moral principles* from the Old Testament law carry forward for us today. There are some Old Testament statutes that we don't follow literally today, but the principle can be established still.

Leviticus 19:10 says:

"And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God."

- This law said that when the people reaped their harvest of crops, they were not to go back afterwards and "glean" the field, or pick up all the leftover fallen grain, etc. They were to leave this laying in the field for the poor to come and freely gather.
 - Although farmers are not required to do this, *literally*, today, the *moral principle* carries forward - that we are to have mercy on, and help provide for, the basic needs of the poor.
 - The stranger and the poor still had to go out and pick the crop. A work ethic is also established. How do you think we can learn from this in America today? _____
-

There are penalties that we no longer inflict upon guilty parties as they did in the Old Testament, but the underlying moral principle is still valid today. For example:

"If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and, though they discipline him, will not listen to them... Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones. So you shall purge the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear, and fear" (Deuteronomy 21:18, 21).

Obviously this seems harsh - we don't stone kids today! But, what does this tell us about God's view of rebellious children? _____

"A man or a woman who is a medium or a necromancer [sorcerer] shall surely be put to death. They shall be stoned with stones; their blood shall be upon them" (Leviticus 20:27).

This falls under what we might call witchcraft today. The demon gives the power.

We obviously don't kill witches today - but you can see God is against witchcraft. What types of things could be considered in this category today? _____

The Ten Commandments

These are God's ten great universal laws for all of mankind. He first gave them to the Jewish nation. When God gave the Ten Commandments, it was with *great power and authority*. He came down upon Mount Sinai Himself, and actually spoke audibly His Laws for the people to hear! What an awe-inspiring thing it was. Read Exodus 19:17-20.

The Ten Commandments then follow in Exodus 20. A brief summary is below:

1. No Other Gods. (Exodus 20:3)
2. No Idols. (Exodus 20:4-6)
3. Do Not Take God's Name in Vain. (Exodus 20:7)
4. Remember the Sabbath Day. (Exodus 20:8-11)
5. Honor Your Parents. (Exodus 20:12)
6. Do Not Kill. (Exodus 20:13)
7. Do Not Commit Adultery. (Exodus 20:14)
8. Do Not Steal. (Exodus 20:15)
9. Do Not Bear False Witness. Do not lie. (Exodus 20:16)
10. Do Not Covet. Covet means to "strongly desire." (Exodus 20:17)

Purpose of the Law

One of the purposes of the Old Testament law is to *drive us* to Christ. It defines sin. It shows us we are sinners and need to be saved. Look at the two verses below:

- *"So then, the law was our guardian [schoolmaster] until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24).*
- In Romans 7:7 it says *"Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin."*

How does the law drive a person to Christ? _____

Once we are saved we "put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). Now we are no longer under the schoolmaster of the law. The law shows us our sin and *Christ is our remedy*. The burden of our sin, exposed by the law, has been lifted.

Now the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us. See Romans 8:4:

- *" that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us"*
- Through Christ - we keep the spirit of the law.

The New Testament

1. The Law of Christ.

The New Testament does not do away with the moral law of the Old Testament. The moral law of God is also in the New Testament. Remember in Chapter 3 we talked about this. The "Law of Christ" is God's moral law, but in the hands of the Mediator - Christ.

Galatians 6:2 tell us we are to *"fulfill the law of Christ."*

Jesus' instructions to us in the New Testament, as well as the moral law of the Old Testament, are *our commandments*. We must do and obey them. Jesus says:

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

"Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me" (John 14:21).

"If anyone loves me, he will keep my word" (John 14:23).

What do these verses tell you about a person who is not obeying Jesus' commandments? _____

"All the sayings of Christ, not only the laws he enacted, but the truths he has revealed must be done by us...we must hear and do them...Those only that hear and do are blessed" (Matthew Henry). (1)

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22).

2. The standard was raised in the New Testament - Sermon on the Mount.

More is required of us as New Testament Christians. This is because we have so many more spiritual advantages.

- Jesus lived and gave us His example.
- Jesus died on the cross and resurrected from the grave.
- We have the Holy Spirit residing permanently within us, strengthening us spiritually.
- We have the New Testament.

Because of all of these things, Christ raised the standard of holy living requirements for us. Some examples of this are seen in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Jesus tells those listening what the Old Testament said, then He tells them *what He now requires!*

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:27-28).

Explain this verse in your own words. _____

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder' ...But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment" (Matthew 5:21-22).

Explain this in your own words. _____

Many today like to compare themselves to those living in the Old Testament times. This can make a person feel better about their own sins. They might reason like this...if the great king David fell into adultery, then maybe it's not so bad when I look at pornography.

This logic is wrong. David repented of his adultery and we must consider the advantages we have in New Testament times.

Let's compare ourselves to the apostles and the New Testament church in the book of Acts. We aren't living in the old times. We need to be New Testament examples.

Christ took the Old Testament standard and raised it to a higher level.

3. The great commandment - love.

When Christ was asked "*which is the great commandment in the law?*" in Matthew 22:36, He answered:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-39).

- *"On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets"* (verse 40). This is the summary of the law.
- These are the two great commandments. All the other commandments revolve around these two: to love God supremely, and to love our neighbor as our self. God draws us away from our own self-centered world, to this life of love.

Love is best defined in 1 Corinthians 13, which lists the attributes of love.

- Love is more than a "feeling" - *it goes much deeper than that*. It's an unselfish well-wishing to others. Love is fellowship between people with an act of self-surrender.
- *"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth"* (1 Corinthians 13:4-6).

What do you think it means when it says "*Love is patient*"? **Love is patient - even under bad treatment from others.**

Definition of love: "Having the best interest at heart of another person without contemplation of reward....willing the highest good of another with no selfish motive." (2)

Love is all important! It should be remembered that nothing we do will be of any value if we do not have love. Look at what it says in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.

"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing."

List some things a person can do - and still have nothing without love. _____

The Heart's Intention

We are to love God with all of our heart. He is concerned with our heart's intention, our *willingness* to do what we know to be right. *Intentionally* doing what you know to be wrong is different from *unintentionally* sinning or sinning out of weakness.

"...serve the Lord with all your heart" (1 Samuel 12:20).

"...the Lord looks on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

A person can break a moral law of God and not know he has done so. This is unintentional sin. Here's an example:

A little boy may repeat a swear word, and not feel guilty, because he doesn't know what he's doing. He didn't intend to say something bad. Then his mother tells him not repeat the word. *Now* if he says the word, he feels guilty.

What is the difference before and after here? _____

A person can also break a moral law of God out of weakness.

- One example of this could be "loosing your temper" or getting angry without cause or just getting too angry. (See Ephesians 4:26)
- Another example could be overeating, or overdoing it when exercising. Over indulging is not good - moderation is key. (See Philippians 4:5)
- Should you still ask for forgiveness when you sin out of weakness? _____

Remember, Christians do not willfully persist in sin. They have new hearts. Their one overriding desire is to please God.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

- If you are constantly striving to do better, and praying for God's help for deliverance, if you slip into sin, this is not the same as the person who is *willfully practicing known sin*.
- You can't claim you commit adultery out of weakness. You can't claim you steal out of weakness.

-
- What are some other things that you can't claim you do out of weakness? _____
-

"But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness"
(Romans 6:17-18).

What if a professing Christian backslides into outright sin like fornication? *The answer is* - They need to repent and be restored with God!

God requires a pure heart.

"You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). This verse tells us that there is a type of perfection that is required.

- God does not require us to be perfect in all of our actions. He does require a perfect heart.
- A perfect heart shows a primary motive to please God.
- A person with a perfect heart obeys God to *best of their ability*. He may not execute perfectly, but as a way of life does what God tells him to do.

"Jesus says - If you are My disciples you must be right not only in your living, but in your motives, in your dreams, in the recesses of your mind. You must be so pure in your motives that God Almighty can see nothing to censure...Jesus Christ claims that by His redemption He can put into any man His own disposition, and make him as unsullied and as simple as a child. The purity which God demands is impossible unless I be remade within." (Oswald Chambers) (3)

What would you say the difference is between *perfection* and a *perfect heart*? _____

Practical Application

The Bible is a very practical Book. It helps to guide us in all areas of our lives. Here are some practical areas in which you can begin aligning your life according to the Bible. You will find that God's instructions are often very different from what you have heard in the world concerning these things.

1. Employers and employees. (Ephesians 6:5-9)

These verses are referring to the relationship between servants and masters, but speak to employees and employers in the same way.

-
- Employers are not to abuse their positions of authority, being considerate of their employees.
 - Employees are to be obedient to their employers, and work hard with a good attitude.

What is the attitude of many employees in America today? _____

2. Government and citizens. (Romans 13:1-7, 1 Timothy 2:1-2)

We are to be good citizens and pray for our leaders.

3. Parents and children.

- Children are to honor and obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3).
- Children are to be disciplined; including *controlled* spanking (Proverbs 19:18, 22:15).

How does this stand in contrast to society's view today? _____

4. Husbands and wives. (Ephesians 5:22-29)

- A wife is to be under the authority of her husband.
- A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church, and is not to abuse that authority.

How does society differ with the Biblical view? _____

5. Marriage and Divorce.

- Sexual relations are to be within marriage. (See Exodus 20:14, 1 Corinthians 6:15-18)
- A traditional Protestant view of divorce and remarriage is:

Divorce is not permitted, except in the case of the innocent party to adultery, and possibly in the case of an unbeliever wanting to divorce a believer. (See Matthew 5:32 and 1 Corinthians 7:15)

Remarriage to another person is only permitted in the case of the innocent party to adultery.

6. Remember the Bible names certain sins, that if persisted in, will keep you out of Heaven.

Avoid these sins:

Fornication, idolatry, adultery, effeminacy, homosexuality, theft, covetousness, drunkenness, a reviler (*railing*), extortion, uncleanness (*morally impure*), lasciviousness (*lustful*), witchcraft, hatred, variance (*contention*), wrath, strife, seditions, heresy, envying, murder, reveling, emulations (*jealous rivalry*), whoremonger, fearful, unbelieving, being abominable, sorcery, lying.

(See 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:5-6, Revelation 21:8)

In Conclusion

Christians love God and do their best to obey Him. If you are saved, this is now the intention of your heart. God has made His requirements known to you through the Bible. Begin the lifelong process of learning it and obeying it!

Don't let anyone persuade you that you can love God and be a Christian without obeying Him.

"Therefore, I must be frank in my feeling that a notable heresy has come into being throughout our evangelical Christian circles - the widely-accepted concept that we humans can choose to accept Christ only because we need him as Savior and that we have the right to postpone our obedience to Him as Lord as long as we want to!...The truth is that salvation apart from obedience is unknown in the sacred Scriptures....Apart from obedience, there can be no salvation, for salvation without obedience is a self-contradictory impossibility."
(A. W. Tozer) (4)

God does not expect us to live up to His requirements *by our own strength*. He is the one who gives us the power to live as we should!

"When we choose deliberately to obey Him, then He will tax the remotest star and the last grain of sand to assist us with His almighty power."
(Oswald Chambers) (5)

Scripture Memory

Ecclesiastes 12:13

"The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

Check Your Progress

What are some of the significant things you have learned in this chapter? _____

List the Ten Commandments. (p. 56) _____

Explain the law of Christ. (p. 57) _____

Give the reasons why the standard is raised in the New Testament. (p.58) _____

What is love? (p. 59) _____

Explain what it means to have a pure heart. (p. 61) _____

(1) Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1961), Matthew 7:21-29

(2) From glossary added by editor, Charles Finney, *Finney's Systematic Theology* (Bethany Fellowship, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1976), 431

(3) Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest* (Dodd, Mead and Company, New York, 1963), 206

(4) A.W. Tozer, *I Call It Heresy!* (Christian Publications, Inc., Harrisburg, PA, 1974), 9-11

(5) Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest* (Dodd, Mead and Company, New York, 1963), 336

Chapter 7 - Sanctification

What is Sanctification?

"Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

"You shall be holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16).

The word sanctification sounds very theological and is therefore somewhat intimidating. In reality, the concept is very simple. Sanctification means to be set apart. To sanctify something is simply to make it set apart unto God, to make it holy.

According to 1 Peter 1:16 would you say that holiness is optional? _____

1. Through sanctification, you are separated *from* sin and *unto* God and holiness.

An example of this separation from one thing and to another is seen in marriage. The man and woman agree to be faithful to each other, forsaking all others, until death do they part. The bride has separated herself from all other men and the groom has separated himself from all other women.

- With a Christian it works in a similar way. We are separated from the world and our old ways - unto God.
- In 2 Corinthians 6:17 it says "*be separate*" and God will receive us.

2. We are set apart unto God (sanctified) at conversion.

Some call this initial or positional sanctification. This is when the process starts.

3. We are also *continually* being sanctified, or made more holy, throughout our lifetime.

Some call this progressive sanctification. We are constantly putting off the *old self* (our old nature) and putting on the *new self*, throughout our lifetime - becomingly increasingly set apart from sin and to God (Ephesians 4:22-24).

When does sanctification begin and how long does it take? _____

Some people believe in a "second work of grace." They believe in being filled with the Holy Spirit after conversion, as a second work of grace, and this is when you receive the Holy Spirit.

Others believe in an instantaneous second work of grace called "entire sanctification" whereby the sin nature is "eradicated" or destroyed. *But let's remember,*

- You receive the Holy Spirit at conversion! (See Romans 8:9)
- Even though the sin nature no longer controls you - it's still around!

The Process of Sanctification

1. God's part.

Sanctification is a work of God. It is *God* who accomplishes our sanctification. Christians are:

"...according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience" (1 Peter 1:2).

The Bible teaches us that, if we are a Christian, everything that happens to us throughout our life time is under God's direct control, and it is working for our good.

"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

This should give us great comfort, especially when things are tough. God is working something good, and for our further sanctification, even through our trials.

George Mueller once put it like this:

"In one thousand trials, it is not five hundred of them that work for the believer's good, but nine hundred and ninety-nine of them, and one besides." (1)

What a tremendous encouragement to know that God is actively working in you even today!

"Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

Many years since I saw that 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' I began by following after it...Ten years after, God gave me a clearer view... of the way to obtain it; namely, by faith...I have continued to declare this for above thirty years." (John Wesley) (2)

2. Our part.

Sanctification also requires our participation. Although it is God who does the work of sanctifying us, and making us more conformed to His image, *we are not passive.*

In Ephesians 4:23-24 it says "*be renewed in the spirit of your minds*" and "*put on the new self...*" When we are told to do something, our part can not be passive. Why can't we just sit around and let God do everything? **God requires us to do our part. Not to work at it is irresponsible.**

This is our part - to "*always seek to do good*" (1 Thessalonians 5:15).

A good illustration of this comes from farming. God sends the rain, provides the rich soil and the sunshine. It is God who causes the plants to grow, but the farmer must also do his part. He must plow the field, plant the seed, and tend to his crop – or there will be no harvest!

A young person may ask you to pray for them to do well on an exam. A good answer back would be: "I'll pray for you *if* you promise to study."

We must do our part, diligently!

3. The balance.

The balance between God's work and your participation can be seen in the following verses.

"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12-13).

We are indeed to work out our own salvation, but who is working in us? _____

"For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Romans 8:13).

By whose power do we "mortify the deeds of the body"? _____

Give God your *whole heart*. With *all your desire - desire godliness*. Work toward this end, and then look to God, in prayer, to accomplish this in you!

"I knew Jesus, and He was very precious to my soul; but I found something in me that would not keep sweet and patient and kind. I did what I could to keep it down, but it was there. I besought Jesus to do something for me, and, when I gave Him my will, He came to my heart, and took out all that would not be sweet, all that would not be kind, all that would not be patient, and then He shut the door."
(George Fox) (3)

4. Sanctification is a process.

You will be continually progressing in your Christlikeness from the moment of your salvation, to the moment you are with Christ in heaven. Sanctification takes time.

According to Philippians 1:6, when will God finish the work in you? _____

Sanctification is comparable to the work a sculptor performs on a piece of stone. The sculptor carefully, though firmly, chisels away what is harsh and unbecoming in order to produce a work of art. The Holy Spirit of God is progressively chiseling away your remaining carnality in order to make you like Christ. Having your rough edges chiseled away is often painful, but always rewarding.

5. From the inside out.

Sanctification works from the inside out.

Sanctification is not merely looking or acting holy - it is *becoming* holy. God repeatedly states in Scripture that He desires, first and foremost, a godly heart.

In the Old Testament, there was a time when the people had withdrawn their hearts from God, but continued their outward forms of worship.

Read Isaiah 29:13.

- This is a good example of hypocrisy. They honored God with their lips but their hearts were far from Him.
 - Read Job 8:13-15. What will happen to a hypocrite's hope and trust? _____
-

Our actions must be the result of a sanctified heart, not a substitute for it. God's desire for your life is not *merely* a change of habit - it is a change of heart.

Scriptural Guidelines

Here are some Scriptural guidelines to help you in deciding whether certain activities *will* or *will not* help you in your *sanctified* walk with Christ:

1. Will this activity bring glory to God?

In 1 Corinthians 10:31 it says, "*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*" Think of this verse as you consider what you should and should not do.

2. Is this activity edifying?

In other words, will it help me to grow closer to Christ? Some things are not actually sinful, but they simply are a waste of time, and do nothing to help you or anyone else, spiritually.

Another term for these unnecessary activities could be "weights." They weigh us down, spiritually. We should be as the marathon runner. We should free ourselves of anything that would slow our spiritual progress down.

In Hebrews 12:1 it says, "*let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely...*"

What are some things that could be considered unnecessary weights? _____

"*All things are lawful, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful, but not all things build up*" (1 Corinthians 10:23).

In this verse we see that something may be lawful but not _____.

We have *freedom in Christ* but this freedom should never be used as a license to disregard our responsibility to God.

3. Would this activity tend to help bring me under the power of anything other than God?

We need to stay away from activities that would tend to get a *grip on us*.

1 Corinthians 6:12 brings up lawful things that may not be expedient, and then goes on to say we should not be "*enslaved by anything.*"

What are some activities that tend to grip people, bringing them under their control? _____

4. Would this activity actually lead me into temptation?

In the Lord's Prayer, we pray for God to "*lead us not into temptation*" (Matthew 6:13).

What do you think of a person that prays *not to be led into temptation* and then keeps putting himself in tempting situations? _____

Those that invite temptation will fall.

5. Is this activity of the world?

The Bible tells us very clearly "*Do not love the world*" - and if we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us (1 John 2:15).

One may ask "but I live in the world, so how does this work?"

- Jesus tells us we are "*in the world*" (John 17:11) but not "*of the world*" (John 17:16). There is a big difference!

-
- How would you describe this difference? _____
-

We cannot go out of the world. There are daily circumstances where we are obligated to have contact with it. But do not get caught up in the spirit of it, and do not linger longer than you have to.

An example of not lingering is as follows.

A farmer, during a violent thunderstorm, may need to go out into the storm, to close his barn door to keep his animals safe. Once he gets that door closed though, what does he then do? He does not linger out in the violent wind and rain. He runs quickly back inside his farmhouse.

So you too, once your necessary contact with the world is done, don't hang around any longer than you have to. Don't linger!

Practical Application

The Bible instructs us in all areas of our lives.

As well as giving *general principles* as to how to live our lives, there are many *specific instructions* given in the Bible relating to the issues of life.

Consider some of the following topics and what the Bible says:

Angry, and sin not - Eph. 4:26,31, Matt. 5:22	Lying - Eph. 4:25
Bitterness - Eph. 4:31	Moderation - 1 Cor. 9:25, Phil. 4:5
Bless enemies - Rom. 12:14, 19-21, Matt. 5:39-47	Patience - 1 Cor. 13:4
Children obey parents - Eph. 6:1-3, Ex. 20:12	Patient in tribulation - Rom. 12:12
Debt, no - Rom. 13:8	Pray always - Eph. 6:18, Col. 4:2, 1 Thess.5:17
Eating, don't overeat - Prov. 23:21, 23:2	Pride, don't have - Prov. 21:4
Envy - 1 Cor. 3:3, 1 Cor. 13:4	Provoked, don't be easily - 1 Cor. 13:5
Evil, abstain from the appearance of - 1 Thess. 5:22	Rich people, don't prefer - Rom. 12:16, James 2:1-9
Evil, thinking about - 1 Cor. 13:5, Matt. 5:28, Phil. 4:8	Self, not to think highly of - Rom. 12:3
Forgiving - Eph. 4:32, Col. 3:13	Sexual sin - 1 Cor. 6:18-19, 1 Thess. 4:3
Giving, cheerfully - 2 Cor. 9:6-7	Speech - Eph. 4:29,31
Good works, don't do to be seen - Matt. 6:1-5, 16-18	Suing other Christians, don't - 1 Cor. 6:1-7
Government, obey - Rom. 13:1-7	Thanks, give - Eph. 5:4,20, Phil. 4:6
Honesty - Rom. 12:17, 2 Cor. 13:7	Time, use wisely - Eph. 5:16, Col. 4:5
Hospitality - Rom. 12:13	Treasures on earth - Matt. 6:19-21
Husbands and wives - Eph. 5:22-33	Walk, Christian (in wisdom) - Col. 4:5-6
Kindness to others - Eph. 4:32	Well doing - Gal. 6:9
Love - 1 Cor. 13, Rom. 12:9	Work ethic - Rom. 12:11, Col. 3:23
Love neighbor - Rom. 12:10, Rom. 13:9, Phil. 2:3-4	Worry, too much - Matt. 6:25-34, Phil. 4:6

Give particular attention to sexual purity. Sexual sin is given specific attention in the Scripture. *"For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality"* (1 Thessalonians 4:3).

In this verse it says that it is the *will of God* and *your sanctification* that we abstain from _____.

Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own" (1 Corinthians 6:18-19)

- Other sin is "outside the body" but sexual sin is _____
- Your body is the "temple of the Holy Spirit." Be careful to treat it with care.

Your Conscience

In striving to live a set apart, holy life, you need to live within the guidelines of your conscience.

"The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith " (1 Timothy 1:5).

"I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience" (2 Timothy 1:3).

There is an idea today that God and spiritual things aren't related to your conscience. This is not true. One way God deals with us is through our conscience.

When people live in violation of conscience on a regular basis, it's a pretty good indication they're not saved.

- The Bible is written for everyone and speaks to everyone.
- The conscience is God dealing with people individually.
- You have to obey your own conscience!

God often requires exactness in one person that He doesn't in another. This is not for you to worry about. Your job is to obey what God tells you, *on the inside*, is right for you.

Whose voice is the voice of conscience? _____

Don't listen to society.

- What is alright in society's eyes *may not* be right in the eyes of God. God's standards are

so much higher than ours. What we might feel free to do by the world's standards, God may tell us not to do.

- Walking with God could make you unpopular with people you know. It could even make you the target of their jokes, or their downright hatred. None of this matters. All that counts is that you do what you know to be right in the eyes of God.
- People often listen to worldly friends when they are trying to ignore their conscience. Friends generally won't be as hard on us as our guilty conscience is. *But what people tell you won't change God's mind.* You've got to do what *He's* telling you to do.

What should you do when friends are telling you one thing and your conscience is telling you another? Why? _____

Guilt is from God.

One theme today, brought into the church by psychology, is that guilt *may not be coming from God.* But the plain truth is that *conscience is a voice of God within.*

Some try to say, if you have made a profession of faith, and still feel guilty, this guilt comes from yourself or the devil, contrary to the will of God. Do not listen to such people.

True guilt is always there for a good reason. Don't dismiss it. If you still feel guilty about something, you most likely are guilty! What you need to do is repent.

It is true that at times your own emotions can play tricks on you or Satan may falsely accuse you and make you feel a false sense of guilt over something you are not guilty of. If you believe this may be the case, take this to God in prayer. He will help you to sort it out.

Modern psychology is structured to shift the blame. Instead of taking responsibility many times a person is told "it's not your fault." Something from their past is found and this becomes the reason for their problems. People want an excuse. We need a syndrome.

Why do you think people like to blame something else, but not themselves? _____

What should you do if you feel guilt in some area of your life? _____

The Vine and the Branches

Jesus gives us very encouraging words concerning the fact that all the resources we need to continue in this process of sanctification come directly from Him.

"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned" (John 15:5-6).

- Jesus is the vine. We are the branches.
- Just like with a grape vine, whose many branches take all their life and nutrients for growth and production from it, Christians get all they need for spiritual life and growth from Christ. We are attached to Him!
- Without Him we can do _____. This is a very important concept to learn. We, within our own strength and resources, can do nothing. Everything we are able to do is through Christ. He is our source of power and strength.

We must learn to abide in Christ. As we abide in Christ we are able to grow. As we grow in grace we are sanctified.

In Conclusion

Oswald Chambers speaks of the mystery of sanctification:

"The mystery of sanctification is that the perfections of Jesus Christ are imparted to me...the holiness of Jesus being made mine, manifestly....The one marvelous secret of a holy life lies not in imitating Jesus, but in letting the perfections of Jesus manifest themselves in my mortal flesh. Sanctification is 'Christ in you'....His patience, His love, His holiness, His faith, His purity, His godliness." (4)

Trials will come, but growth in grace is a result of sanctified trials. We are not to be surprised at the trials we go through.

Look at what Charles Spurgeon says about troubles and ease and luxury:

"God trains His soldiers, not in tents of ease and luxury, but by turning them out and using them to forced marches and hard service. He makes them ford through streams, and swim through rivers and climb mountains, and walk many a weary mile with heavy knapsacks on their backs. Well, Christian, may not this account for the troubles through which you are passing?" (5)

Jonathan Edwards talks of how holiness seemed to him:

"Holiness...appeared to me to be of a sweet, calm, pleasant, charming, serene nature, which brought an inexpressible purity, brightness, peacefulness, ravishment to the soul; in other words, that it made the soul like a field or garden of God, with all manner of pleasant fruits and flowers, all delightful and undisturbed, enjoying a sweet calm and the gentle vivifying beams of the sun." (6)

Holiness brings great peace and joy! *Seek it with all diligence - and with your entire heart!*

Scripture Memory

1 Peter 1:15-16

"...but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'"

Check Your Progress

What are some of the significant things you have learned in this chapter? _____

What is sanctification? (p. 65) _____

Explain God's part and our part in sanctification. (p. 66) _____

Name five "Scriptural Guidelines" for deciding if any activity will or will not help in your sanctification. (p. 68) _____

Choose two of the topics listed in "Practical Application" and give the Biblical view. (p. 70) _____

Explain the concept of the vine and the branches. (p. 72) _____

(1) Mrs. Chas. E. Cowman, *Streams in the Desert* (Cowman Publications, Inc., 1950), 173

(2) Ibid., 360

(3) Ibid.

(4) Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest* (Dodd, Mead and Company, New York, 1963), 205

(5) Mrs. Chas. E. Cowman, *Streams in the Desert* (Cowman Publications, Inc., 1950), 111

(6) Ibid., 361

Chapter 8 - The Church

The True Church and the Local Church

1. The true church (sometimes called the universal church) is comprised of *all true born-again Christians*. It is not limited to a particular denomination. Indeed, Scripture teaches that there is only one true church.

2. The local church is made up of groups of individual believers who meet together in specific geographical locations all around the world. Each denomination has its own local churches.

The Book of Acts tells of the founding and activity of the first generation of local churches.

Not all of today's local church members in various denominations are part of the *true church*. Can you explain this? _____

Christ and the Church

1. The church is the Body of Christ.

- *"Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it"* (1 Corinthians 12:27).
- Christ is the head of the church. *"And he is the head of the body, the church"* (Colossians 1:18).

The human body, although one whole entity, has many parts. The many parts *all function for the good of the whole body*. In the same way, the many individual members of the church (Christ's body) have different functions, for the good of the whole church. Christians have their various gifts and callings within the church that are used for the edification of the church.

1 Corinthians 12 explains that just as all the parts of a human body are important, all of the various gifts and callings of all of the members of the church (even the ones that seem small and insignificant) are important.

Give an example of a small part of the human body that is very important, and why. _____

2. Christ's relationship to the church is symbolized by marriage.

In the New Testament the relationship between Christ and His church is compared to that of a husband and wife.

Ephesians 5:22-33 shows the human marriage relationship *and* the relationship between Christ and the church.

- A wife's submission to her husband symbolizes the church's submission to Christ.
- A husband's love for his wife symbolizes Christ's love for the church.

How did Christ demonstrate His love for the church (verse 25)? _____

Purpose of the Local Church

1. Teaching, preaching and building up of believers.

The church is a place where Christians come to hear the Word of God preached and taught. This is a big part of spiritual growth. God gave the gifts of preaching and teaching to the church for this purpose.

- Preachers - "*preach the word...reprove, rebuke, exhort with...teaching*" (2 Timothy 4:2).
- Teachers - explain and teach the Scriptures. Pastors and teachers are given to the church (see Ephesians 4:11).

Preaching and teaching edifies. This means it builds us up, helping us to grow spiritually, gaining in spiritual knowledge and holiness.

Why is it important to attend a church where there is sound Biblical preaching and teaching? _____

2. Fellowship of believers.

Fellowship with other Christians is a big part of Christianity. In Acts 2:42 it says the early church "*devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship.*"

Christians are to come out of the world, and have "*no part in the unfruitful works of darkness*" (Ephesians 5:11). Our close friends and companions are to be other Christians. Why is this so important? _____

3. Accountability.

Christians are to be accountable to one another. Those within the church are to live pure lives. The church has the obligation to see to it that its members are not involved in scandalous sins.

Sins are to be confessed: "*Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another*" (James 5:16).

Church members are told to submit to the leadership of the church. Hebrews 13:17 says,

"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you."

Why do you think accountability is important? _____

4. Worship.

One of the primary reasons for church services is the worship of God. Our singing of hymns and spiritual songs is a part of this worship. So are our prayers. So is the preaching!

Be sure you come to church in a reverent and worshipful frame, and with a pure heart. Remember, we worship in spirit and in truth. Without a true spirit of worship in your heart, worshipping with your lips is worthless.

"God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

5. Baptism and communion. (These two ordinances of the local church will be explained below.)

Leadership in the Church

The basic qualifications for church leadership are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:6-9. The two main positions of leadership in the church are:

- *Overseers* (often referring to pastors and elders - a bishop is an elder)
- *Deacons* (often referring to church board members)

Leadership qualifications include:

- Church leaders are to be men (1 Timothy 3:1-2, 12 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12).
- They are to live exemplary lives. The Bible uses terms like: *above reproach, sober-minded, self-controlled* and *respectable* (1 Timothy 3:2).
- Pastors are to be "*the husband of one wife*" which means they can not be divorced and remarried (1 Timothy 3:2).

Why do you think it's important that pastors live their lives above reproach? _____

Pastors are to watch over the spiritual well-being of their congregations. They are to help them to grow in grace, and in Biblical knowledge and wisdom, and are to protect them from false doctrine, and false teachers.

Christ often refers to His followers as sheep, and He specifically calls the church His flock. Paul addresses the church leaders as follows:

"Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

- The leaders are told to *"pay careful attention"* or be watchful, over themselves, and over the flock. They are told to do this because of false teachers (wolves) that would be coming to try to deceive and draw away people unto themselves and their false doctrines.
- Paul goes on to say: *"I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them"* (Acts 20:29-30).

It is important to get into a solid Bible-believing church where pastors and others will warn you in this way, *especially in these times!*

Can you give a few examples of false teachers you see today? _____

Baptism and Communion

Baptism and Communion are the two ordinances, or sacraments, of the Protestant Church.

1. The first ordinance of the church is baptism.

Christ gave His disciples a command to baptize believers:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

Baptism is literally being immersed in water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Baptism is an *outward symbol* of an *inward reality*. When you were saved, your old man died, was buried, and a new life was born. Baptism symbolizes this: our death, burial, and resurrection with Christ! Being submerged into water pictures Christ's death and burial and our death to sin. Emerging from the water pictures Christ's resurrection and our new life.

Romans 6:4 shows this:

"We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."

Baptism is your testimony for Jesus Christ. It identifies you with Jesus Christ. Baptism shows to others that you are a Christian. *Baptism does not save you.*

Some churches teach that we are not saved (regenerated) until we are baptized. This is called "baptismal regeneration." This is a false doctrine. We are saved by faith in Christ. Baptism is an act of obedience subsequent to salvation.

Other churches believe in infant baptism. An infant is not old enough to understand. Baptism should take place after a person acknowledges their conversion. Acts 8:26-39 gives an example of a man's baptism - after conversion.

Why do you think it's important to be baptized? _____

2. The second ordinance of the church is communion, or the Lord's Supper.

"And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood'" (Luke 22:19-20).

- Communion is a memorial of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross. Christ led His disciples in this observance at the Last Supper.
- Christ used bread to represent or symbolize His body and He used the cup (or fruit of the vine) to represent or symbolize His blood.

1 Corinthians 11:26 says *"For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."*

When we take communion we remember the Lord's death. Through it we show the Lord's death until He returns.

"Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself" (1 Corinthians 11:27-29).

- Paul warns against taking communion, "*unworthy manner.*" There are consequences to taking communion if you are not worthy. It says you drink damnation to yourself. Many

today take communion without much thought - but you can see that this is not a very wise thing to do.

- We should examine ourselves prior to taking communion. We need to be right with God. In verse 31 it goes on to say if we judge ourselves we will not be judged.

A few errors about communion:

- The Catholic Church believes in what is called "transubstantiation." They believe that after the consecration of the bread and wine Christ is "truly" and "really" present in the sacrament. In other words - the bread and wine transform into Christ.
- The Catholic Church also believes that during every observance of the Eucharist or the Mass a true and proper "sacrifice" is offered to God - or Christ is crucified again.

According to 1 Peter 3:18, how many times did Christ suffer and die? _____

Church Discipline

Church discipline is a practice whereby churches discipline, or call to account, members of their congregations that are continuing in blatant sin.

Read 1 Corinthians 5, the entire chapter. There was a man having sexual relations with his father's wife. The instructions to the church were to remove him from the church.

It seems, from what we read in 2 Corinthians 2, that this man eventually *repented*, and was restored to fellowship. This is the purpose of church discipline, to hopefully bring repentance.

In Matthew 18:15-17 we have the steps for church discipline explained:

- The person in sin is first to be approached privately (*by the offended party*). If he will not listen, the next step is to approach him with two or three. If he still won't listen, he is to be approached by the church.
- If the person in sin will not listen to the church, the members are to disassociate themselves from that person until he repents.

"If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector" (verse 17).

There are many today who don't like church discipline. They think it's too judgmental or harsh. *But there are reasons for church discipline:*

- The church is the body of Christ. When the church is defiled by sin in its members, this reflects badly on Christ.

How does this reflect badly on Christ? _____

- Other people in the church could be affected by this sinful member. There is a Scripture that says that *"a little leaven leavens the whole lump"* (1 Corinthians 5:6). A little bit of yeast will spread throughout the entire lump of bread dough. Sin spreads too.

The Bible tells us to *"cleanse out the old leaven"* (1 Corinthians 5:7). This means we should remove the sinful member, until they repent.

- Another reason for church discipline is so that the sinful person may feel ashamed, and hopefully repent.

"...have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed" (2 Thessalonians 3:14).

Feeling ashamed when you haven't repented is a good thing, contrary to some modern thinking. The ultimate hope is to bring a person back into fellowship.

Why do you think church discipline is not practiced very much in many churches today? _____

Church Giving

The Bible teaches that all you possess belongs to God. As a member of a church you have a responsibility to help support that church - if you are financially able to do so. The financial needs of a church should be met by the church members.

Some things the local church provides for are:

- The pastor and church facilities. A full time pastor depends upon the church to supply for his living needs (1 Timothy 5:17-18). The church building also needs to be provided for and maintained.
- The financial needs of its missionaries in other countries and evangelistic outreaches at home. This is all part of spreading the gospel.
- The physical needs of its poor or needy members (*widows and orphans*). The government has taken over much of the responsibility of this today, but it was meant to be a

responsibility of the church. In other countries there still is a very great need to provide for the poor. (See 1 Timothy 5:16, 1 Corinthians 16:1)

In the Old Testament God established the tithe - giving one tenth to the Lord of your increase.

"Every tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the Lord's; it is holy to the Lord" (Leviticus 27:30).

This is also the basis for New Testament giving. The New Testament upholds the tithe, but stresses the heart attitude of the giver.

- In 2 Corinthians 8:3-4 it says the givers *"beyond their means, of their own accord..."* They wanted to give and did so beyond their means!
- In 2 Corinthians 8:12 it says, *"For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have."*

If you *first* have a readiness or willingness to give - God accepts your giving based upon what you have - even if you don't have much.

- God rewards a generous giver (2 Corinthians 9:6) and *"God loves a cheerful giver"* (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Look at the illustration of the poor widow in Mark 12:41-44:

"And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.'"

Jesus commended a widow who gave only two small copper coins (less than a cent). According to verse 44, why was her small gift more acceptable than the other large gifts? _____

There are hindrances to giving.

"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils" (1 Timothy 6:10).

- The love of money and materialism can be a hindrance to giving.

Why do you think it's the "love of money" and not just "money" that's the root of all evil? _____

- Having money and nice possessions is not necessarily a sin, and giving away all you own is not necessarily a virtue. The question is: does your money hold a wrongful place in your heart?
- You don't have to be rich to love money - a poor person can love it too!

How is it that a poor person can love money when he doesn't have much money? _____

"There can be no doubt that...possessive clinging to things is one of the most harmful habits in life. Because it is so natural, it is rarely recognized for the evil that it is." (A.W. Tozer) (1)

In Conclusion

Listen to what J. C. Ryle says concerning the church:

I want you to belong to the one true Church: to the Church outside of which there is no salvation...

The one true Church is composed of all believers in the Lord Jesus... It is a Church of which all the members have the same marks. They are all born again of the Spirit; they all possess "repentance towards God, faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ," and holiness of life and conversation. They all hate sin, and they all love Christ. They worship differently, and after various fashions...but they all worship with one heart. They are all led by one Spirit; they all build upon one foundation; they all draw their religion from one single book - that is the Bible...

Once let a man repent and believe the gospel, and that moment he becomes a member of this Church...

It is a Church whose existence does not depend on forms, ceremonies, cathedrals, churches, chapels, pulpits, fonts, vestments, organs, endowments, money, kings, governments, magistrates or any act of favor whatsoever from the hand of man. It has often lived on and continued when all these things have been taken from it. It has often been driven into the wilderness, or into dens and caves of the earth, by those who ought to have been its friends. Its existence depends on nothing but the presence of Christ and His Spirit... This is the Church which does the work of Christ upon earth. Its members are a little flock, and few in number, compared with the children of the world...

This is the Church which shall be truly glorious at the end. When all earthly glory is passed away then shall this Church be presented without spot before God the Father's throne...

Reader, this is the true Church to which a man must belong, if he would be saved. Till you belong to this, you are nothing better than a lost soul. (2)

Scripture Memory

Colossians 1:18

"And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent."

Check Your Progress

What are some of the significant things you have learned in this chapter? _____

Explain the difference between the true Church and the local Church. (p. 76) _____

In what ways does the marriage relationship symbolize the relationship between Christ and the church? (p. 76) _____

Name five purposes of the local church. (p. 77) _____

List three basic qualifications of church leaders. (p. 78) _____

What are some of the reasons for church discipline? (p. 81) _____

(1) A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God* (Christian Publications, Inc., Camp Hill, PA, 1982), 28

(2) J. C. Ryle, *The True Church*

Chapter 9 - The Family

The Christian Family

There is a great breakdown in the family today. This is a direct result of society's turn away from God and His principles. This chapter covers God's design for the family.

"God settles the solitary in a home" (Psalm 68:6).

A home in which God is the center, where both husband and wife are true Christians, raising the children by Christian principles, is a rare and wonderful thing. But even if you're *alone* in your family, recently converted to Christ, you too can make a big difference. You can pray for your family, and give an example and testimony by your life, to the other family members. Your life of honoring God can work great good for your family.

Why do you think the family is important to society? _____

Marriage

Marriage is designed by God to be the union one man and one woman, for life. A Christ-centered marriage can be a rich blessing from God.

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:31-32).

The two people become "one flesh" - and this is a mystery. Marriage symbolizes Christ and His church, and is to be entered into reverently.

Honesty and Fidelity - These are two very important elements in a good and successful marriage. Be honest with each other in all things, *even when it's painful*, and be faithful! *"You shall not commit adultery"* (Exodus 20:14). Adultery is one of the biggest destroyers of marriage.

Resolve and Commitment - A couple should enter into marriage with the resolve that "divorce is not an option." They should be committed to staying together in good times and bad. There needs to be an unwavering commitment to the marriage. People today are too quick to walk out of the marriage when times get a little hard. *Just look at the divorce rate today.*

The World's Influences - The world's view of marriage is "it's not necessarily for life." At least this seems to be the attitude of many that get married today.

Psychology today tends to say - God's principles are not sufficient, and modern psychology has more of today's answers. The simplicity of Biblical instruction is played down, and as a result the family has broken down.

If marriage is designed to be a blessing from God, why do so many fail today? _____

Responsibility of the Husband

1. The husband is to love his wife.

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:25).

- A husband is to love his wife *"as Christ loved the church."* This is sacrificial love. It's not measured by feelings, *but by the sacrifice of one's self.* Sacrificial love does not use the position of authority for selfish ends or to just get what it wants. If a husband loves his wife like this, it makes a wife's role of submission so much easier!
- As the head of the family, a husband is the leader. But this position of leadership is not given to puff him up, or to be abused. A good leader is not a tyrant. With leadership comes great responsibility, and accountability to God. The position is to be used for the glory of God and good of the family.

2. He is to be head of the household.

A man is to be the spiritual leader of his family. This responsibility is not to be "passed off" to the wife. A husband and father is to be a spiritual man himself, and guide his family in spiritual things. When the family is not Christ-centered, it is first of all the husband's fault.

3. He is to be faithful.

No man who is cheating on his wife can really say that he loves his wife. Adultery is a breach of love and trust. If you love your wife you will be faithful to her.

Being faithful in what you look at and think about is also important. Men in general have more temptation in this area, but they are to guard their thoughts - keeping in mind Christ's words of warning against lust (Matthew 5:27-28).

Close relationships with other women are never good. It is easy to make excuses for such relationships, but the truth is, you are *inviting temptation*. Men, be careful here.

4. He is to be a provider.

"But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8).

A man has the responsibility to provide for his family. Some men are lazy, and the primary responsibility to provide for the family ends up falling on the wife.

The father should show a good example to his children through his work ethic. By working hard, being on time, not complaining about the boss, and following orders, he shows a good example (Ephesians 6:5-8).

5. He should be considerate.

"Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life" (1 Peter 3:7).

A husband should be considerate and kind to his wife, never bitter against her, and remembering she is the weaker vessel.

How does a husband's love make it easier for the wife to do her part? _____

Responsibility of the Wife

The responsibility of a wife is to: *"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord...Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands"* (Ephesians 5:22, 24).

- This is usually *not* easy to do, but God gives a woman grace to do this if she commits herself to it. The Bible is clear. It's not confusing. It only goes against our *self-will*.
- Society tells us marriage is an equal partnership, a 50/50 relationship. Any husband who tries to take spiritual leadership, they say, is too controlling. It's true that there is give and take in a marriage, but the husband is *supposed to* be the head of the house. In fact, if a husband is letting his wife call the shots, he's not living up to one of his God-given responsibilities.

Submission is a part of Christianity. God has set up chains of authority on this earth. In submitting to her husband's authority, a woman is in reality submitting to God's authority. It is good for our souls to learn to cheerfully submit to earthly authority. It naturally combats pride and selfishness.

If a woman is cheerfully submitting, how does this make it easier for the husband to love? _____

What about a woman with an unsaved husband?

In this case, a wife is still to remain under her husband's authority. It causes her to look to God, especially when her husband abuses his position. Hard things can work rich spiritual blessings in your soul. God is very near to his downtrodden and brokenhearted children.

The Bible says that an unsaved husband can be brought to salvation through the godly example of his wife.

"Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct" (1 Peter 3:1-2).

One exception to submission: A wife should not submit to her husband if what he requires of her would be a direct violation of the Bible, or her own sense of right and wrong. In such a case she should obey God instead.

Women's equality - The movement for women's equality has also affected many churches today. This is easy to spot, for this way of thinking disregards or plays down the woman's role of submission to her husband, and often devalues a woman as a homemaker.

Read Proverbs 31:10-31 for an inspiring example of a virtuous woman.

Children

Children are to honor and obey their parents. This is an important part of God's order.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' (this is the first commandment with a promise), 'that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land'" (Ephesians 6:1-3).

The modern methods of child-raising stress a give and take between parent and child. But God's orders are for the child to be under parental authority. When children obey their parents, it is obedience to God. (See also Proverbs 1:8 and Proverbs 6:20)

Proverbs 22:6 says, *"Train up a child in the way he should go: even when he is old he will not depart from it."* Training a child in godly principles includes *character training*. Here are a few things to teach and develop in your children.

1. *Obedience* - A child should be trained to submit to your authority, and to all other authorities.
2. *Work ethic* - A child should be trained to work hard and not complain. Even young children can be given chores. Older teens should have part-time jobs, etc. (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

3. *Truthfulness* - Your children should be taught at a very young age to tell the truth. You need to show a good example by always being honest with them. Require them to be honest - always!

4. *Modesty* - This is especially important when raising girls, and it should be obvious to everyone as to why (1 Timothy 2:9).

5. *Respect for adults* - Many children and especially teens today have lost this concept, and it's because it was not instilled in them by their parents. Children should be made to respect their parents, teachers, and other adults (Proverbs 23:22).

6. *Self-control and self-denial* - Most children have very little self-control today. They need to be trained to overcome their feelings and cravings for the sake of a higher good; to use moderation in all things. They need to be trained to stick to a boring or difficult task, until its completion.

7. *Handling money* - Teach them how to handle money. Make them pay for some of their own things. Show them how to save-up first, before getting something they want.

To build character children need to be disciplined.

Society leans more toward *positive encouragement and reinforcement*. The Bible stresses the need for the punishment of disobedience, including *controlled* spanking.

"Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die. If you strike him with the rod, you will save his soul from Sheol." (Proverbs 23:13-14).

- Spanking should be measured, and never administered when you have lost your temper!
- Spanking is on the bottom. It is meant to sting, not hurt the child. Child abuse is a terrible thing!
- When can a *controlled* spanking be more effective than positive encouragement? _____

"Be obeyed at all costs. Disobedient children are unhappy children." (C. H. Spurgeon) (1)

Parenting takes time and commitment. In today's world of working moms, day care has become a big part of many children's lives. If you can manage it financially, having the children at home with their mother, or in the care of a loving relative, is *much better than day care*. Early years are important years.

Society's answer to the many disciplinary problems we are having with today's children is to medicate them. They do this by labeling problem children (especially young boys) as having some type of behavioral or mental "disorder."

- Although there are true mental disorders, many times the child has no real disorder at all - or at least nothing that can be diagnosed biologically through a medical doctor.

-
- Many children exhibit a lack of self-control because they were never disciplined properly.

Name some Christian principles for raising children. _____

On a lighter note, the Police Department of Houston, Texas put out this list many years ago.

"Twelve Rules for Raising Delinquent Children"

1. Begin with infancy to give the child everything he wants. In this way he will grow up to believe the world owes him a living.
2. When he picks up bad words, laugh at him. This will make him think he's cute. It will also encourage him to pick up "cuter" phrases that will blow off the top of your head later.
3. Never give him any spiritual training. Wait till he is 21 and then let him "decide for himself."
4. Avoid use of the word "wrong." It may develop a guilt complex. This will condition him to believe later, when he is arrested for stealing a car, that society is against him and he is being persecuted.
5. Pick up everything he leaves lying around... Do everything for him so he will be experienced in throwing all responsibility on to others.
6. Let him read any printed material he can get his hands on. Be careful that the silverware and drinking glasses are sterilized, but let his mind feast on garbage.
7. Quarrel frequently in the presence of your children. In this way they will not be too shocked when the home is broken up later.
8. Give a child all the spending money he wants. Never let him earn his own. Why should he have things as tough as YOU had them?
9. Satisfy his every craving for food, drink and comfort. See that every sensual desire is gratified. Denial may lead to harmful frustration.
10. Take his part against neighbors, teachers and policemen. They are all prejudiced against your child.
11. When he gets into real trouble, apologize for yourself by saying "I never could do anything with him."
12. Prepare for a life of grief. You will be apt to have it. (2)

Finances

Being responsible and careful in the area of finances is a great contributor to a good marriage, and a good family. In many divorces, poor financial decisions are a contributing factor.

1. Stay out of debt.

The Bible says "*the borrower is the slave of the lender*" (Proverbs 22:7).

- This means when you borrow, you make yourself obligated to another person. When you do this you are in a way a servant. Servants are not free.
- Although it may be necessary to accumulate some debt, like to buy a house, in many cases debt can be avoided. Learn how to do without some things and don't buy something unless you have the money.

-
- If you have debt - work to get out of debt. If you are behind in your bills and monthly payments - work to get current. Being behind or past due is a poor example to others.

There is no quick fix to getting out of debt. It takes time, discipline and effort. You have to start some time and then follow through. If you need help budgeting, get help. It's well worth the effort. In Romans 13:8 it says, "*Owe no one any thing.*"

2. Don't lend foolishly or be surety for another.

"He that his money lends, loses both his gold and his friends." (C. H. Spurgeon) (3)

"He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretyship is sure" (Proverbs 11:15).

- As a "surety" you make yourself liable for another person's debt. It's a cosigner. This is not a wise thing to do, especially if you have a family to support. Your family is your first priority, and you shouldn't put their welfare at risk with more debt.

How can cosigning for someone cause bad feelings? _____

- If you believe you are to help someone, it's better to give money without expecting anything in return.

3. Don't center your family on material things.

Center your family more on God and less on materialism. Indulging less in material things makes more time for spiritual things. You will save money too. *The best things in life are free!*

Name some family activities that don't cost anything. _____

4. Don't waste.

"Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys [wastes]" (Proverbs 18:9).

This Proverb says that if we are wasteful, it's like being lazy.

"A *slothful man* neglects his work, and the materials go to ruin; *the waster*, he destroys the materials. They are both destroyers." (Adam Clarke) (4)

Americans are great wasters. There is an old saying that would do us good, but that has been long forgotten - "*waste not, want not.*"

"Hundreds would never have known want if they had not first known waste." (C. H. Spurgeon) (5)

Name some ways in which Americans are wasteful. _____

5. Plan for your future.

Today's motto is *"live for today."* This is not wise. It is wise to live within your means, and put away something for your future. You can do this and still be faithful in your giving to the Lord.

We are not to lay up treasures on earth (Matthew 6:19). This means we are not to hoard money, or love money.

Many people today have the opposite problem. They spend all their money foolishly, not saving for a rainy day, or for their retirement. They live materialistically for what money can buy right now.

The Bible says *"A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children"* (Proverbs 13:22).

- This is not a command to try to get rich, or hoard money. The principle behind it, however, is to provide for the future, saving prudently.
- Look at what Matthew Henry says concerning this verse:

"A good man's estate lasts....he is thoughtful for posterity. He is careful, both by justice and charity, to obtain the blessing of God upon what he has, and to entail that blessing upon his children." (6)

Divorce and Remarriage

Scriptural principles on divorce and remarriage can be found in Matthew 19:4-9, Luke 16:18 and 1 Corinthians 7:10-15.

These principles have been long forgotten by our society. We are in mess today. A traditional Protestant view of divorce and remarriage was covered in chapter 6 (see below).

Divorce is not permitted, except in the case of the innocent party to adultery, and possibly in the case of an unbeliever wanting to divorce a believer. (See Matthew 5:32 and 1 Corinthians 7:15)

Remarriage to another person is only permitted in the case of the innocent party to adultery.

The best advice that can be given to those who are already divorced, but not remarried, is to remain single, or be reconciled to your spouse.

To those who are already divorced and remarried, without Scriptural grounds, the best general advice is to prayerfully read the Bible on this, and go to God for His directions to you. This is a very difficult subject with many different opinions, but only God's opinion matters.

Single or Dating

The Bible says that it is good to stay single. Not everyone is meant to be married. The Apostle Paul, who was single himself, says:

"To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am" (1 Corinthians 7:8).

But he adds, that if a person is weak, so-to-speak, and would "burn" in lust if they stayed single, it is better for them to get married (1 Corinthians 7:9).

1. The first thing you should figure out is: Am I supposed to get married?

- If you believe the answer is no, then don't even date.
- Some people say they don't think they're supposed to get married - but then date around all the time. Does this seem wise and consistent to you? _____

2. If you are not sure if you are supposed to get married, then:

Wait on God for direction. Pray and be patient.

3. If you think you are supposed to get married, then:

- You should only date with the intent of finding a spouse. Anything else is inviting unnecessary temptation. Again, pray and be patient.
- Don't date like people in society. Since premarital sex is *completely off limits*, the dating process is different with Christians. It is structured in a way to avoid tempting situations.

What are some boundaries Christians should have when dating? _____

- A Christian can only marry another Christian. 2 Corinthians 6:14 says *"Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers."*

Why do you think we have this command? _____

-
- Dating an unsaved person with the idea of "bringing them to Christ" is very foolish. When you do this you are being disobedient to God at the very start. Only date Christians!

There is only one person meant to be your spouse. There are many fine Christian men and women - but only one is for you! Pray to God for help in finding a spouse and wait patiently. By rushing or forcing this process you can end up in an unhappy marriage.

How is the world's view of dating different from that of a Christian? _____

*"He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord."
(Proverbs 18:22)*

Scripture Memory

Proverbs 3:5-6

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

Check Your Progress

What are some of the significant things you have learned in this chapter? _____

Explain God's design for marriage. (p. 86) _____

Discuss briefly the husband's role and the wife's role in marriage. (p. 87) _____

How should children be trained? (p. 89) _____

How should you handle your finances? (p. 91) _____

What did you learn about dating? (p. 94) _____

(1) C. H. Spurgeon, *John Ploughman's Talk* (Pilgrim Publications, Pasadena, Texas, 1975), 38

(2) Larry Christenson, *The Christian Family* (Bethany Fellowship, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1970), 88

(3) C. H. Spurgeon, *John Ploughman's Talk* (Pilgrim Publications, Pasadena, Texas, 1975), 34

(4) Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary*, One-Volume Edition, (Beacon Hill Press, Kansas City, 1967), Proverb 18:9

(5) C. H. Spurgeon, *John Ploughman's Talk* (Pilgrim Publications, Pasadena, Texas, 1975), 79

(6) Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1961), Proverbs 13:22

Chapter 10 - Spiritual Warfare

The Enemy

In this world are good and evil. God is all that is good, and right and pure. Satan is behind all that is evil. Who is Satan, and what is his nature?

1. Satan's fall.

- Satan and his angels fell from heaven. In Isaiah 14:12-15 some say the reference to Lucifer is Satan in his pre-fall splendor, and the fall. (Luke 10:18, Ezekiel 28:12-17)
- Jude 6 talks about angels that left their first estate and are now reserved for everlasting punishment. Fallen angels are called devils or demons and Satan is their leader.

2. He is the prince of this world. (2 Corinthians 4:4, John 16:11)

3. He is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44, Revelation 12:9)

4. He was behind man's original fall. (Genesis 3:1)

5. He is wicked. (Matthew 13:19, 38)

6. Demons are under his command. (Matthew 12:43-45)

7. His end will be in hell for eternity. (Revelation 20:10)

The Enemy's Goal

Satan is opposed to God. He works to capture the souls of men.

"Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

He works in the lives of unbelievers, who are under his influence.

- Ephesians 2:2 tells us that people who aren't saved live *"following the course of this world..."* They live their lives *"following the prince of the power of the air"* (Satan).
- Jesus said concerning the unsaved Jews in his day, *"You are doing the works your father did... You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires"* (John 8:41-44).

-
- The devil has blinded the minds of the unsaved - "*In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers*" (2 Corinthians 4:4).
 - The devil promotes the world with its pleasures. But he is a liar, and when he gives, he also takes - with the ultimate goal of taking a person's soul to hell with him.

Give some examples where Satan gives temporary pleasure, then takes later. _____

- Satan can even possess a person. A demon possessed person has demons that reside within him and control him. This seems to be more apparent in primitive cultures. You can find many missionaries that have first hand knowledge of this.

Jesus cast demons out of people during His earthly ministry. Look at Matthew 17:15-18 for one example of this.

Could this be a reality in America too? Maybe we're better able to mask our problems than the primitive world. Could it be through the overuse of medication and psychiatry that we just *seem* to have things under control? _____

The Christian's Response

Christians have been delivered from the kingdom of Satan to God's Kingdom. They no longer serve Satan, and he no longer has them under his control!

"...to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God" (Acts 26:18).

"He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son" (Colossians 1:13).

Because we love and serve God now, Satan is at war with Christians. He would like to fill our minds with lies and distortion. He will appeal to our emotions to try to trick us. This world is full of all kinds of things that he uses to do this.

Satan must now work with subtly and deception to trip up or hinder Christians because they now serve only God. He tries to get us off track and render us ineffective in our spiritual life.

Some of Satan's methods and tactics against Christians include:

1. He tries to leads us away from the simplicity of Christ and the Bible.

"But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3).

Satan will try to get us to confuse and question the simple truths of the Bible. He will try to persuade us that something isn't really that bad or suggest a truth is really more flexible.

Can you give an example of this? _____

2. He plays down the seriousness of sin.

We see this everywhere in the world today. Look at all the euphemisms that are used. Bad things are called something that doesn't sound so bad. Sin is called a mistake, adultery is called a relationship.

Can you think of another example of this? _____

3. He tries to get you to hide your sin.

James 5:16 tells us to *"Therefore, confess your sins to one another..."* Satan wants us to keep our faults and sins to ourselves. He doesn't want us to admit to anything.

Christianity is based on honesty and truth. We must confess and admit to our faults. If we do not - we weaken ourselves and the church body. Do you believe this is true? _____

Why don't you confess your faults? _____

4. He tries to turn us against one another.

We need to be aware of the fact that Satan would like to divide us. He wants to set us against other believers or even our spouse. We need to be quick to repair any divisions among us.

If we get too angry with someone, Ephesians 4:26-27 says,

"Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil."

5. He tempts us using our remaining pride.

In 1 Timothy 3:6 it says a church leader is not to be a new Christian, *"he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil."* Pride can bring a fall.

We should guard against following after anything that puffs our head or plays to pride. Do not listen to flattery! The devil will flatter you - to try to get you to fall.

"The Devil is for nothing that is humbling, but for everything that is assuming... God casts down that he may raise up; the Devil raises up that he may cast down."
(Matthew Henry) (1)

6. He tempts us to rebel against authority.

Authority is put upon this earth *by God*. We need to be careful not to rebel against the authorities in our lives.

Remember, from Romans 13:1-2 we know that to resist government authority is to resist God. The devil is going tempt you to rebel - as he did!

Name another authority that God has placed in your life? _____

7. He tempts us to be dissatisfied.

Discontentment is never good. Learn like Paul to say, "*in whatever situation I am to be content*" (Philippians 4:11).

- The devil wants you to grumble about problems and circumstances in your life. This is displeasing to God.
- Don't listen to those that encourage you to complain.

If you start to feel dissatisfied look at the example of Job. Satan had already killed his children and now smote him with boils. Job's wife told him to "*curse God and die*" (Job 2:9). Job replied to his wife,

"But he said to her, 'You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?' In all this Job did not sin with his lips" (Job 2:10).

Job would later say, "*Though he slay me, I will hope in him*" (Job 13:15). What does this verse mean to you? _____

8. He appears as an angel of light.

Satan can come looking like an angel of light. He often comes in "sheep's clothing." This is because he can't get Christians to do his bidding if they know it's him! He comes disguised as a worker of righteousness. 2 Corinthians 11:14 says,

"And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light"

Satan is very tricky here. This accounts for the rise of so many cults and false doctrines. Don't be surprised about this - we need to be wise.

9. He wants to make us lose heart and be discouraged.

Be watchful against discouragement. Satan would have you lose heart and pull into your shell, so-to-speak. When you feel despair or discouragement, go to God in prayer, and also, seek

Christian fellowship. You may feel like withdrawing, but it is the worst thing to do. We encourage one another.

Why do you think withdrawing is not good? _____

Martin Luther, who went through times of depression, said that at such times it is not good to be alone. He found that it was better for him, if no human company was around, to go and hang out with his pigs, rather than to be alone!

10. He hinders us.

When Satan cannot get us to sin, he tries to hinder us in our work.

"...because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us"
(1 Thessalonians 2:18).

When our work is hindered we must pray to God and press on.

11. He persecutes us.

Satan will persecute us. This can come in many different ways. Always remember that Satan can do nothing to you that God does not allow. God is still in control.

Paul says about himself: *"a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited"* (2 Corinthians 12:7).

- Although we don't know what his *thorn in the flesh* was, we do know it was from Satan. In verse 8 Paul asked God how many times for deliverance? _____
- *God allowed* this "thorn" so that Paul would not be lifted up too much. It was to keep him humble. Sometimes we must bear our own *thorn in the flesh*, if after seeking God for deliverance, we see it is His will that we bear it.

"We must expect to be set upon by Satan. The enriched soul must double its guard. The Devil has a particular spite at useful persons, who are not only good, but given to do good." (Matthew Henry) (2)

God's Protection

The best defense we can have against Satan is a holy life. The battle going on is not always easily seen. Satan has limited power to rule this world. This world is his domain. Always remember that it's a *spiritual* battle we're involved in.

As we walk in our daily lives and have interaction with other people, try to remember that our real battle is not with the other people, but with Satan. Understanding this will help to give us more compassion for other people and to realize our need for God.

We find the answer to God's protection in Ephesians 6:11-12:

"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

In order to stand against Satan we need the "armor of God." We are to be equipped as a soldier for battle. This armor is explained in Ephesians 6:13-18:

- Truth - *"having fastened on the belt of truth"* (verse 14).
- Righteousness - *"breastplate of righteousness"* (verse 14).
- Peace - *"as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace"* (verse 15).
- Faith - *"shield of faith"* (verse 16). Through faith we quench the flaming darts of the devil.
- Salvation - *"helmet of salvation"* (verse 17).
- Spirit, Word of God - *"the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"* (verse 17).
- Prayer - *"praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication"* (verse 18).

This spiritual armor is reflected in our life. Satan can't touch or hurt us spiritually if we live for God. 1 John 5:18 says,

"We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him."

Let's also remember a few more things about God's power and protection.

1. God is all-powerful. (Deuteronomy 32:39, Exodus 15:2-9)

2. God protects us. (2 Chronicles 16:9, Psalm 33:16-20)

We don't have to fear the enemy if we are serving God faithfully.

3. God limits Satan - and all of Satan's devices end up working for good in us.
(Job 1:8-12, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, 1 Peter 5:8-10)

"The devil, though he is an enemy to all the saints, is a conquered enemy."
(Matthew Henry) (3)

Some Errors in Teaching

"There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them." (C. S. Lewis) (4)

What is dangerous about both of these views? _____

There are some errors in teaching out there today concerning the devil and "spiritual warfare." There is an over-emphasis on this subject in some circles and the wrong advise is being given to many. Here are a few things to watch for.

1. Watch out for the notion that demons can possess or reside in believers.

- This is not true! Christians have the Holy Spirit of God living within them.
- Those that believe Christians can be possessed or strongly influenced by demons must also believe that Christians can live their lives in habitual sin, exhibit bizarre and satanic behavior, and still be a Christian. This also is not true.
- Some also say a Christian can be subject to a "generational curse" or some kind of curse from their ancestors. In Exodus 20:5 it talks about God visiting the *"iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."* This is God's vengeance, not Satan's.

When a person becomes a Christian he is delivered from all such things. God blesses Christians. They are never "cursed."

2. There are those who believe that sickness is from Satan and always contrary to God's will.

- Remember, God is all-powerful - nothing can happen to you that is outside of God's control.
- In Job 2:1-7 the devil had to get permission from God before he could do anything to Job. We should pray for healing when we are sick, but always within God's will.
- Satan has the power to heal too. When he heals he can give a person a false sense of security. But Satan takes away spiritually from a person when he gives. Beware of some of the so-called faith healers today.

Where do witch doctors in primitive cultures get their power from? _____

3. Some movements emphasize that you should "command" or "rebuke" Satan.

We need to be careful about this. These teachers tell you that *you* have authority over Satan. They will pray a prayer for you, or tell you to pray it yourself, exercising the authority you have over Satan, and then command Satan in this way or that way.

Here is an example of one of these prayers from one of the proponents of these teachings, Mark Bubeck. Here he is praying for another.

"Exercising my authority which is given to me in my union with the Lord Jesus Christ, I pull down the strongholds which the kingdom of darkness has formed...I smash and break and destroy all those plans formed against (John's) mind, his will, his emotions and his body. I destroy in prayer the spiritual blindness and deafness that Satan keeps upon him." (5)

Look at the emphasize on *me and I* in this prayer. We should pray to God for help and not boss Satan around on our own. John MacArthur says concerning this prayer:

"Who is he kidding? Does he think his words will be more effective than God's Word against Satan?...Are believers to destroy plans formed against another person's mind, emotions, will and body? That seems like some kind of telepathic effort...To pray that God would...do a spiritual work...is a far cry from saying, '*I resist, I pull down or I smash, break and destroy.*'" (6)

Sometimes people living in habitual sin want to be delivered from the sin. They may go to someone to pray a prayer of deliverance for them - commanding or binding Satan.

- They are living in sin and want to be delivered - but will not repent. If they would repent and be converted their deliverance from sin would come.
- We can't blame Satan for our sin. Do you remember how sin works?

"But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death" (James 1:14-15).

What is the source of sin in verse 14? _____

God is our only means of deliverance. We pray to Him for our help and in accordance with his will.

4. These movements today will also say you cast out demons using the *name of Jesus*.

They seem to find demons everywhere. They have a demon for this sin and for that sin - and find them in professing Christians too. This is a prime example of what C. S. Lewis was talking about in the above quote when he referred to those that have an "*excessive and unhealthy interest*."

Some vagabond Jews, which were exorcists, took it upon themselves to "command" evil spirits (Acts 19:13). They even did this in the name of Jesus whom Paul preached!

Look at what happened when they did this.

"But the evil spirit answered them, 'Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?' And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded" (Acts 19:15-16).

- This evil spirit knew Jesus and Paul, but not the Jewish exorcists. The evil spirit would have fled before the word of Jesus or Paul - *but not these ill equipped impostors*. Simply using the name of Jesus is not enough.
- Approaching demons without being properly equipped is dangerous.

How did the evil spirit prevail in verse 16? _____

- We see the physical damage done in this example, but Satan does spiritual damage to people as well. Playing around with Satan is very foolish.

Why should we be cautious about this? _____

Michael the Archangel had an encounter with Satan and simply said, "*The Lord rebuke you*" (Jude 9).

- Here there are no formulas or forced prayers, only the power of God.
- God rebukes Satan (Zechariah 3:2).

In Conclusion

In Psalm 57, the Psalmist's "soul is among lions" (those that would torment and distress him). His answer is to cry out to God and exalt Him. He knows that his deliverance will come.

"I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me. He will send from heaven and save me; he will put to shame him who tramples on me. Selah. God will send out his steadfast love and his faithfulness!"
(Psalm 57:2-3)

When your soul is among lions, always remember there is another lion, the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Revelation 5:5). He may seem to be sitting quietly at the moment, but He sees everything. When he chooses, He will rise up and defeat your adversary the devil. Christ always prevails!

Scripture Memory

Ephesians 6:12

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

Check Your Progress

What are some of the significant things you have learned in this chapter? _____

Describe the nature of the enemy. (p. 97) _____

Describe 3 of Satan's tactics against Christians. (p. 98) _____

What did you learn from Paul's "thorn in the flesh" that would be helpful in your own life?
(p. 101) _____

List the 7 parts of the armor of God. (p. 102) _____

List 3 things concerning God's protection and power. (p. 102) _____

(1) Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1961), Matthew 4:1-11

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid.

(4) C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*, (Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., New York, NY, 1961), 3

(5) John MacArthur, Jr., *How to Meet the Enemy* (Cook Communications Ministries, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 1995), 157

(6) Ibid.

Chapter 11 - Perseverance of the Saints

Perseverance of the Saints

Perseverance of the Saints is a doctrine that says that Christians are eternally secure and cannot lose their salvation. They will persevere in the Christian life. It is a "Calvinist" doctrine, or interpretation of the Bible.

The opposite point of view is the "Arminian" interpretation. Arminians believe that although God gives a Christian grace to remain steadfast, this grace may be neglected and a Christian can lose his salvation.

The Calvinistic and Arminian points of view are both traditional protestant ways of interpreting Scripture. Some doctrines are not essential for one's salvation, and Christians can disagree. The position in this guide will be Calvinistic concerning the perseverance of the saints.

Most Calvinists and Arminians alike believe that a person has to be right with God when he dies, if he's going to go to heaven. This is an important point.

- Some people say the Calvinistic view can encourage a life of sin, because you're saved no matter what. The truth is, traditional Calvinists believe that the person who turns away from his profession of faith back into a sinful lifestyle, and dies that way, *was never truly saved to begin with*.

How is it that the Calvinistic position *does not* encourage a life of sin? _____

- Most Arminians believe that those who backslide into a sinful lifestyle, and do not repent before they die, *lose their salvation*.

The Westminster Confession shows the Calvinistic view of perseverance:

"They, whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved."

A wonderful truth about the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is - God keeps us!

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand" (John 10:27-28).

As Christians we receive *eternal life*. We will never perish - that is, we will never die and go to hell. Nothing can pluck us out of God's hand.

The work God has begun in us, He will finish.

"And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

Christians Persevere

In John 10:27-28 and Philippians 1:6 (above) we see that God keeps us, but they also show that we have a part to do. We must persevere in our obedience and faithfulness to Christ.

- *"My sheep hear my voice... and they follow me"* (John 10:27). We will hear and follow our Lord. What does it mean "they follow me"? _____
- In Philippians 1:6, there is also a reference to our part. There is a *good work* being *performed* in us; the good work is performed in our life. We are progressing in the Christian life. We are not passive.

Matthew 10:22 says, *"...the one who endures to the end will be saved."* Charles Spurgeon comments on this verse:

"He that endureth to the end, and only he, shall be saved...for only thus can they prove they are believers... Without perseverance they cannot be saved...it is perseverance which must mark the Christian." (1)

John 8:31 says, *"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples..."*

Jonathan Edwards said concerning this verse that the very definition of a Christian is *one who continues in the word of Christ.* (2)

Hebrews 3:14 says, *"For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end."*

What does this verse mean to you? _____

A jet airplane starts on a flight to England from America. If the jet turns back to America after getting only halfway there, would you consider it a successful flight? _____

The ant is a small but persistent little creature (Proverbs 6:6-8). Have you ever observed an ant at work? This same persistence we need to apply to all the tasks we undertake in life. We also need to apply it to the care of our eternal soul.

Here is a small, but powerful example, described by a Christian named Tammerlane:

"I once was forced to take shelter from my enemies in a ruined building, where I sat alone for many hours. Desiring to divert my mind...I fixed my eyes on an ant that was carrying a grain of corn larger than itself up a high wall. I numbered the efforts it made...The grain fell sixty-nine times to the ground, but the insect persevered, and the seventieth time it reached the top." (3)

Why do you think persistence is a valuable character trait? _____

Jesus once, upon seeing many turning back from following Him, asked his disciples: "*Do you want to go away as well?*" Peter answered and said, "*Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life*" (John 6:67-68).

This reflects the heart of a Christian and shows why they persevere. This life holds no charm for them anymore, and Christ has the words of life.

Parable of the Sower

Jesus gave us the *parable of the sower*. Here it is:

"A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty" (Matthew 13:3-8).

Here we have a sower, sowing seed. He casts the seed upon four types of ground. And there are four different results. This is a picture of the Word of God coming to *four types of people*. It shows what happens to these four people as a result of hearing the Word of God.

Jesus Himself gives the interpretation of the parable later on in the chapter (verses 18-23). Here is what the four types of ground represent:

1. The *path* - This represents those who don't profess anything. They hear God's Word, but do nothing. They don't understand it and the devil snatches it away (verse 19).
2. The *rocky ground* - This represents those that profess Christianity, but fall away due to tribulation and persecution. These hear with joy and follow for awhile, maybe even enthusiastically, then fall away (verse 20-21).

A person has as much true Christianity as they can maintain during times of trouble. When things get hard we can't quit.

3. *Among thorns* - This represents those that profess Christianity, but fall away due to worldliness and riches - *"the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful"* (verse 22).

4. *Good soil* - These are real Christians that stay true to the end. Their lives are holy and fruitful - *"He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty"* (verse 23).

In this parable it's clearly seen that only one is a genuine Christian. Four heard and three began in some fashion, but only one stayed true to the end. It's the same in this life.

"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few" (Matthew 7:13-14).

What does this verse say to you? _____

Backsliding and Falling Away From God

When a professing Christian falls away from a godly life, into a life of sin, it is called backsliding. Those who backslide need to repent. The message is simple:

"Return, O faithless children, declares the Lord" (Jeremiah 3:14).

- Although Christians can backslide, they will repent and return to God before they die. If they do not, they prove that they were never truly saved.
- Never take comfort that you are saved if you are backslidden and living habitually in sin. Never give another person comfort who is living in such a state. The Bible never gives comfort to a person living in sin and rebelling against God.

The Westminster Confession talks about the possibility of backsliding into sin:

"Nevertheless, they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and, for a time, continue therein: whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve His Holy Spirit, come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves."

- Note in the Westminster Confession it refers to those who backslide "for a time."
- These backsliders may suffer temporal consequences in this life as a result of their sin, but woe to the man that dies in a backslidden condition.

There are some that look like Christians for a time, but then fall away, *never to return*. Look at what it says in 1 John 2:19:

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us."

These people "*went out from us*" because they _____

2 Peter 2:20-22 talks about people who hear about Jesus, turn away from their sins, but then turn back to their sins, and are *overcome*.

"For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. What the true proverb says has happened to them: 'The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.'" (2 Peter 2:21-22).

- Those that turn away from the truth are here described as a dog that vomits, and then eats it's own vomit, or as a pig that you wash and clean, but then goes back and rolls in the mud again.
- It says that such people are now in worse shape than they were before they looked like Christians. It says, "*the last state has become worse for them than the first*" (verse 20).

Listen to Charles Spurgeon commenting on 1 John 2:19 and on 2 Peter 2:22.

"Scripture is plain enough. What says John? "They went out from us." Why? Were they ever saints? Oh no - "they went out from us because they were not of us, for if they had been of us, doubtless they would have continued with us, but they went out from us that it might be manifest that they were not of us." They were no Christians, or else they had not thus apostatized. Peter saith, "it happeneth to them according to the proverb, the dog hath returned to it's vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire," indicating at once most clearly that the dog, though it did vomit, always was a dog... The sow that was washed - ay bring her into the parlour... on the first occasion will be found wallowing in the mire. Why? because it was not a man, but a sow... Those who go back into perdition are not saints at all, for perseverance is the badge of the righteous." (4)

Many times when a professing Christian backslides into sin, there are many who run to their aid giving words of comfort and assuring them that they are still saved.

- Backsliders may be told about a list of things that could happen to them if they don't come back to God. This list usually includes - less rewards in heaven, more of God's judgments in this life, and so on - but not the possibility of dying and going to hell. The backslider can then reason with himself, "no matter - I will still go to heaven." Can you see how this encourages a backslider to continue in his backslidden condition? _____
- The false prophets in Jeremiah 6:14 falsely comforted Israel in their sins by saying "peace, peace" when God said "there is no peace." Telling someone they are alright with God if they in fact are not - is the wrong thing to do. We must be careful to counsel backsliders wisely.

What counsel would you give to a backslider? _____

Never Another Chance

There are very serious warnings concerning falling away from God. There are Scriptures that tell us that there comes *a certain point* where, if a person falls away, he will not have *another chance to be saved* or restored. We don't know where that point is in a person's life - but God knows.

"For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt" (Hebrews 6:4-6).

- Note here how far this person went in religion. He was *enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, shared in the Holy Ghost, and tasted the word of God.*
- This person then turned away, and went back into sin, and now, *"it is impossible... to restore them again to repentance."* This is an apostate condition, beyond hope..

Hebrews 10:26-27 says,

"For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries."

These have sinned willfully and there is no more sacrifice.

"The sin here mentioned is a total and final apostasy, when men reject Christ, the only Saviour, and renounce the gospel, the only way of salvation...after they have professed the Christian religion." (Matthew Henry) (5)

There is a famous Christian allegory by the name of *Pilgrim's Progress*. It was written in the mid-1600s by a man named John Bunyan. He wrote it while in prison for his faith.

It is the story of "Christian" and his journey to the "Celestial City" (heaven). Along the way Christian meets with many characters, good and bad, genuine and fake, representing the various types of people we meet with in real life. The story is also filled with illustrations of Biblical truths.

In *Pilgrim's Progress*, there is a vivid picture of a "man in an iron cage." Look at how this man describes his condition. He once professed Christianity, and fell away from it:

"I was once a fair and flourishing professor, both in mine own eyes and also in the eyes of others...I am now a man of despair, and am shut up in it, as in this iron cage. I cannot get out. Oh, now I cannot!...I left off to watch and be sober. I laid the reins upon the neck of my lusts; I sinned against the light of the Word and the goodness of God; I have grieved the Holy Spirit, and He is gone...I have provoked God to anger and He has left me; I have so hardened my heart that I cannot repent."

When asked what things he went after to bring himself into this condition, he says: *"For the lusts, pleasures and profits of this world."*

What a sad state, and one to be very watchful against in our own lives.

"The very worst of men are those who begin and then give up. There are none so bad as those who once seemed to be good." (C. H. Spurgeon) (6)

Why do you think Spurgeon says this? _____

Trials, Purpose of

The trials in this life have a two-fold purpose. One is to purify us and the other is to "test" or "prove" the reality of our faith.

In *Pilgrim's Progress*, two people heading toward the "Celestial City" (heaven) came to a dangerous mud pit called the "slough of despond." One character, Pliable, turned back. It was too hard for him. The true believer, Christian, pressed on despite the difficulty.

The Bible tells us that our trials "try" or test us, like fire tries gold.

"...now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:6-7).

What does this verse mean to you? _____

Here is the testimony of a village blacksmith. He tells about how he tempers (tests) steel in his blacksmith's shop, to see if it is worthy of using. He then applies it to God testing him!

"When I am tempering a piece of steel, I first heat it, hammer it, and then suddenly plunge it into this bucket of cold water. I very soon find whether it will take temper or go to pieces in the process. When I discover after one or two tests that it is not going to allow itself to be tempered, I throw it on the scrap heap... So I find the Lord tests me, too, by fire and water and heavy blows of His heavy hammer, and If I am not willing to stand the test... I am afraid He may throw me on the scrap heap." (7)

Some are only willing to follow Christ when times are good. They will be weeded out by trials.

In *Pilgrim's Progress* there was a fellow named "By-ends" who did this. He said concerning himself and the people of his town, "Fair-speech":

"We never strive against wind and tide...we are always most zealous when Religion goes in his silver slippers: we love much to walk with him in the street if the sun shines and the people applaud him."

But "Christian" (the hero of this allegory) refutes him and replies:

"You must go against wind and tide...you must also own Religion in his rags, as well as in his silver slippers; and stand by him, too, when bound in irons, as well as when he walketh the streets with applause."

What does it mean to own *Religion in his rags*? _____

Trials and tests show if we are true. They reveal the false. They show whether or not we have built our foundation on Christ. Jesus pictured this for us:

"Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man

who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great" (Luke 6:47-49).

The Rock is Christ. If we have truly built our life on him; if we have *true saving faith*, we will stand when the trials come, and we will persevere.

What do you think the flood symbolizes in this parable? _____

Read through Hebrews 11:7-35 to see examples of Old Testament heroes of the faith. Their testimony gives us courage, faith and hope. At the end of the chapter it tells of others who kept their faith under severe persecutions.

"Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Hebrews 11:36-38).

All of these kept their faith, and through faith were able to stand.

Christians throughout history have withstood severe persecutions, and remained true to God. John Foxe, in his famous book *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, records many of them. Here are some inspiring examples from it.

- Polycarp (around 160 A.D.) - He was burned at the stake. When told to reproach Christ, he said, *"Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never once wronged me; how then shall I blaspheme my King, Who hath saved me?"*
- Ignatius - Bishop of Antioch (2nd century). They say he was thrown to wild beasts, and when he heard the lions roar he said: *"I am the wheat of Christ: I am going to be ground with the teeth of wild beasts, that I may be found pure bread."*
- William Tyndale - He was strangled and burned in 1536 - He cried at the stake, *"Lord, open the King of England's eyes!"*
- Hugh Latimer - Burned to death in 1555. Latimer said to Ridley (a man who was to die along with him), as they lit the fire, *"Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man."*

Describe how these examples inspire you. _____

In Conclusion

In 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 we learn that the Christian life is like a race. We are to run this race the best we can.

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified."

Paul runs the race to receive an incorruptible crown. He keeps his own body under subjection to Christ. He does not want to be one who falls away and ends up rejected on Judgment Day. Even though true Christians will not lose their salvation, they should live as though they can.

"Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12).

Proverbs 4:18

"But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day."

Check Your Progress

What are some of the significant things you have learned in this chapter? _____

What is the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints? (p. 108) _____

What do the four types of ground in the parable of the sower represent? (p. 110) _____

What is a backslider, and what does it tell you if a backslider never returns to God? (p. 111) _____

What are two purposes of trials in a Christian's life? (p. 114) _____

Name two martyrs from *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, and how they died. (p. 116) _____

(1) C. H. Spurgeon, "Enduring to the End," *Spurgeon's Expository Encyclopedia*, Volume 12, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1996)

(2) *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1960), 404

(3) Mrs. Chas. E. Cowman, *Streams in the Desert* (Cowman Publishing Company, Inc., Los Angeles, California, 1950), 21

(4) C. H. Spurgeon, "Enduring to the End," *Spurgeon's Expository Encyclopedia*, Volume 12, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1996)

(5) Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids Michigan, 1961), Hebrews 10:19-39

(6) C. H. Spurgeon, "Enduring to the End," *Spurgeon's Expository Encyclopedia*, Volume 12, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1996)

(7) Mrs. Chas. E. Cowman, *Streams in the Desert* (Cowman Publishing Company, Inc., Los Angeles, California, 1950), 71

Chapter 12 - Evangelism

The Great Commission

Just prior to Jesus Christ's ascension into heaven, He gave His disciples important instructions often called the *Great Commission*.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age"
(Matthew 28:19-20).

Proclaiming the *Gospel*, or good news of Christ, is the responsibility of the church and all Christians. This is evangelism!

Because it is of utmost importance to God, it must be of utmost importance to His people. Charles Spurgeon writes,

"Soulwinning is the chief business of the Christian minister; indeed, it should be the main pursuit of every true believer." (1)

"Conversion is most fully displayed when it leads converts to seek the conversion of others: we most truly follow Christ when we become fishers of men." (2)

Colossians 4:5 says, *"Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time."* People all around us are dying and going to hell for eternity. We should make the best of our time and opportunities while we live. There is no time for laziness and self-indulgence.

What are some activities or personal indulgences people could cut back on to make *the best use of the time*? _____

We should be moved by compassion to reach the lost.

"I cared not where or how I lived, or what hardships I went through, so that I could but gain souls to Christ." (David Brainerd, missionary to American Indians)

"I would think it a greater happiness to gain one soul to Christ than mountains of silver and gold to myself." (Matthew Henry) (3)

What do you think of those who call themselves Christians yet have no compassion to reach others for Christ? _____

Some make the mistake of secluding themselves and withdrawing from all contact with the lost world. Although you, as a new Christian, *should be careful about what company you keep*, you should, *in God's time*, reach out to your unsaved family, personal acquaintances and others.

"Those men who keep themselves to themselves, like hermits, and live a supposed sanctified life of self-absorption, are not likely to have any influence in the world, or to do good to their fellow creatures. You must love the people, and mix with them, if you are to be of service to them." (C. H. Spurgeon) (4)

Bringing the gospel to the poor and destitute, the homeless and the hurting, is very important work. More prosperous worldly sinners also need help. We should go where we see the need.

In Matthew 9:10-13 Jesus spent time with publicans (tax-collectors) and sinners. Why?

Fear should not deter us. Pray to God for boldness. Christ's description in Matthew 7:13 of all the people who are on the wide road to eternal destruction is motivation to reach out. Richard Baxter, the 17th century English preacher, writes:

"It should cast us into great distress to see so many men in such plain danger of being everlastingly undone. And if we by faith did indeed look upon them as within a step of hell, it would more effectively untie our tongues." (5)

What should override our fear of proclaiming the gospel? _____

Sharing the Gospel

Many people mistake evangelism for "getting someone saved." They believe they should argue, convince or manipulate a sinner into praying the "sinner's prayer."

Evangelism is simply *proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ*. Telling people about Christ (witnessing) is the work of the believer. God convicts people of their sins, and saves their souls.

1. Your life can be an effective witness for Christ.

In order for you to share the gospel effectively, unsaved people need to see Christ in you. Jesus tells us to: "*let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven*" (Matthew 5:16).

The example of a good and godly life is one of the most effective witnessing tools we have. Our life *shows* the power of God. It bears witness to God's transforming power.

- Your own life and faithful witness are very important in drawing people to Christ. People should be able to look at you, and think to themselves, "*there is something different about this person - there is something real in his life - there is something I do not have.*"

-
- Sinners are quick to pick up on hypocrisy. If your own life is not consistent with something you are telling them, they will see it. It is wrong to tell someone *not to do something* that you are doing yourself.

What do you think of a person that tells you *not to do something* when they are doing something just as bad or worse? _____

- Ultimately our enemies may even *glorify God* because of our godly lives.

"Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation" (1 Peter 2:12).

As you share the gospel, be humble toward those you are witnessing to. Don't be afraid to admit your shortcomings, but be sure that your overall life *is consistent with your profession*.

2. Your personal testimony can be an effective witness for Christ.

Sharing your personal testimony of what God has done in your own life can help to win the lost.

- God will often use your testimony of salvation to cause others to realize their own need. A truly changed life makes a very strong case for what Christ can do.
- Even baby Christians can echo the words of the man whom Jesus healed of blindness, *"One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see"* (John 9:25).

Why do you think a personal testimony can be so effective? _____

3. The law - as presented with the gospel.

God's law serves an important purpose in evangelism. People need to be convicted of sin to repent of their sin. They can't be convicted until they see how they have broken God's laws and sinned against Him.

Charles Spurgeon said,

"I do not believe that any man can preach the gospel who does not preach the Law... Lower the Law and you dim the light by which man perceives his guilt... it lessens the likelihood of his conviction and conversion... They will never accept grace til they have trembled before a just and holy Law. Therefore the Law serves a most necessary purpose, and must not be removed from its place" (6)

- God's law defines sin and drives people to Christ.

-
- *"So then, the law was our guardian [schoolmaster] until Christ came" (Galatians 3:24).
" Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin" (Romans 7:7).*

How did the law bring you to Christ? _____

- Jesus raised the standard in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). He applies the law *to the heart*. Now, not only can you not kill - you can't even think about killing. This will bring conviction of sin.
- A sinner needs to see the dreadful condition he is in before you show Him Christ's wonderful solution. As Spurgeon writes, you must *"throw sinners down in utter helplessness, that they may be compelled to look up to Him who alone can help them."* (7)

Christ is then presented as the way to be saved - the remedy for our fallen condition.

4. Some basic truths to consider when you present the gospel:

- *God's Purpose* - Man was created by God to honor and serve Him (Revelation 4:11 and Colossians 1:16).
- *The Sinful Condition of Man* - All men are sinners, both by birth and by choice (Romans 3:10, 23).
- *Sin's Consequences* - Sin separates man from God (Isaiah 59:2), and makes him deserving of hell (Romans 6:23 and Revelation 20:15).
- *Christ's Atonement* - Because of His love for us, God sent Jesus Christ to die on the cross for our sins (John 3:16, Romans 5:8 and 1 Peter 3:18).
- *Repentance and Faith* - We must repent! That is, we must turn away from our sin and turn to Christ (Acts 3:19, Luke 13:3). We must believe in Christ to be saved (Acts 16:31), and faith is believing. By faith we are saved through grace and not by our own works (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- *God's Promise* - God promises eternal life in heaven to all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and serve him faithfully to the end (2 Peter 1:10-11, Romans 6:22-23).

Don't Change the Gospel

The message of the gospel is God's. We don't have the right to *alter or change it*. Many presumptuously do this today. Trying to be compassionate toward sinners many end up misrepresenting God. They remove what they feel are the more offensive parts of the gospel like God's wrath and the need for repentance.

This is dishonest and doesn't help sinners to be *truly* converted. All sides of God need to be proclaimed! Both God's love and God's wrath can draw people to Christ!

- God is love. God showed great love and compassion for sinners by sending His own Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins. This great love of God is available to us.
- God is also just. He will show great wrath and destroy all that is evil. Those who reject Christ will end up in hell, forever. We need to honestly and faithfully tell people this.

Why is it important to show both sides of God? _____

Many times today God *is not* represented in all of His majesty. He is presented as a *friend* or *helper* who will make your life *on this earth* better now.

- This can draw people to Christ for selfish reasons.
- These make a profession of Christianity, but have come just to *get something*. They have not repented. When they don't get as much as they think they should, they fall away.

What are some selfish reasons why people may *give Christianity a try*? _____

A person should come to Christ drawn by His greatness and majesty.

- They now see how they have offended an Almighty God!
- They are now sorry for their sins. They want to repent and turn away from their sin and follow Christ. By faith they now trust in Christ alone.

"Have mercy on me, O God...according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin...Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight"
(Psalm 51:1-4).

We must show compassion, love and concern for souls - but we must proclaim the *whole* gospel.

We Need the Holy Spirit!

Conversion is a miracle. Only God can save a soul. When giving the gospel message always keep this in mind.

Proclaim the message faithfully, but don't depend on your own powers of persuasion or logic. Pray for God's Spirit to soften the person's heart and do the work.

We can put the truth before people but we can't make them see. God must give them *eyes to see*.

"God's grace can save souls without any preaching; but all the preaching in the world cannot save souls without God's grace." (B. Beddome) (8)

What do you think this quote means? _____

Only God can convict a person of their sins. Here is a good illustration of this:

"As the ant-hill, when stirred, sets in motion its living insects in every direction, so the conscience of the sinner, disturbed by the Spirit, or judgments of God, calls up before it's vision thousands of deeds which fill the soul with agony and woe."
(McCosh) (9)

Can you recall a similar experience as God was drawing and convicting you? _____

We need to pray! We need to wait on God! Don't be afraid to speak, but don't *forge ahead in your own strength, logic and reasoning*. Pray for God's leading, and for the Holy Spirit to work.

Some people, instead of waiting on God, *push ahead* and try to *logically persuade* sinners to accept Christ by making some kind of on-the-spot decision.

They may lead them through a few "steps" and have them pray a "sinner's prayer." Those they get to make a "profession" of Christianity in this way many times do not last.

Why do you think these types of decisions often don't last? _____

If there wasn't a genuine conversion, harm can be done. The person now thinks he's saved, when he's not! They now have a false sense of security and could be lost forever.

Ray Comfort, in *Hell's Best Kept Secret*, speaks about how he used to make this mistake.

"As a new Christian in misguided zeal, with the "Four Easy Steps" type booklet in hand, I led twenty to thirty people in the sinner's prayer. Unfortunately 95 percent of them backslid. I can see now that, although I was sincere, those I led in prayer were not crying out for mercy - they were just 'giving this thing a try to see if it is as good as Ray says it is.'" (10)

Why do you think he calls this "misguided zeal"? _____

When God is bringing someone under conviction, don't try to rush the process. Don't try to get a quick (and possibly insincere) decision out of them. Let the process take the time it needs, no matter how painful or frustrating it may seem.

- The process of *physical birth* (when a baby is born) takes time and involves pain. Spiritual birth is often the same. It is misguided compassion to try to push the process along and get a hasty decision.
- What could be the result of cracking open a bird's egg prematurely to try to *help the baby bird along*? _____

The Early Church - Our Pattern

The early church in the Book of Acts should be our pattern for evangelism. The early church evangelized:

- With God's power and grace - *"And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all"* (Acts 4:33).
- With the Holy Spirit and boldness - *"And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness"* (Acts 4:31).
- Daily and constantly - *"And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ"* (Acts 5:42).
- Even though persecuted - *"And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church"* (Acts 8:1).
- And God saved people - *"And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved"* (Acts 2:47).

Read Acts 4:1-21 to see how Peter and John evangelized despite persecution. Acts 16:12-40 shows how Paul and Silas had similar experiences. Do these accounts inspire you?

The early church is our pattern for today. We should be inspired by it. Read the Book of Acts and see the zeal and commitment of the early church.

Revival - The Need For

A revival is a time of great spiritual awakening throughout an entire area. We should pray for God to revive our land, or bring revival. This is mass evangelization!

This is a time when God moves, and sends His Holy Spirit in a powerful way amid a whole group of people, and many are converted to Christ.

One of the most well known revivals in America was the "*Great Awakening*" of the 18th Century. At the same time, in England, a great revival also took place.

- Under the preaching of such men as Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley and George Whitefield, America and England were revived spiritually.
- Great Crowds of up to 20,000 people were drawn to hear Whitefield and Wesley, as they preached out in open fields! When they preached, the Spirit of God came down with such power that great numbers were powerfully convicted of their sins and converted.
- Jonathan Edwards preached one of the most famous sermons ever at this time, "*Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*." Although he preached it in a more monotone style, so much of God's Spirit was upon the preaching that people were powerfully convicted of sins.
- George Whitefield once preached to about 200 men at Kingswood Common out in the open. By the fifth time he preached there, 10,000 people had been drawn to hear him.

It has been a long time since America has seen a true revival. Usually there is a great deal of prayer that precedes a revival. We as Christians need to be praying for revival.

Eternity

There's a cathedral somewhere, it's been said, with these three statements written over its three entrances:

- All that pleases is but for a moment.
- All that troubles is but for a moment.
- Nothing is important save that which is eternal.

Eternity should be our focus. We should have a heart for the unsaved because there is a *heaven to be gained, and a hell to be shunned*. We are in the last days. The time is short and the end is near. We need to use our time wisely.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 says,

" But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure

rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people."

You can see these things happening today. List some of the things you see: _____

When Jesus comes back, the lost will be cast into hell. They will not have another chance to be saved.

- They *"their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death"* (Revelation 21:8).
- This is a fearful and terrible truth. It should give us great cause for concern for those we know and love who are lost!

"The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price" (Revelation 22:17).

- God is giving His invitation now!
- When a person dies or Christ returns - it will be too late.
- There will be no second chances. A person can not plead his cause on Judgment Day.

Our minds need to be focused on eternal things. All of the pleasures and troubles of this life are temporal; eternity is not - its forever. We need to keep everything in its proper perspective.

When eternal things are always kept in view, it will help us to more earnestly desire the conversion of the lost.

In Conclusion

This Charles Spurgeon quote is a good conclusion to this matter of evangelism.

"The saving of souls, if a man has once gained love to perishing sinners and his blessed master, will be an all-absorbing passion to him. It will so carry him away that he will almost forget himself in the saving of others. He will be like the brave fireman, who cares not for the scorch or the heat, so that he may rescue the poor creature...If sinners will be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our bodies...If hell must be filled...let not one go there unwarned and unprayed for." (11)

Scripture Memory

Matthew 5:16

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Check Your Progress

What are some of the significant things you have learned in this chapter? _____

Why is it important to spread the gospel? (p. 119) _____

Why is it important to present God's law when witnessing? (p. 121) _____

Describe 2 or 3 of the basic truths that should be considered when presenting the gospel. (p. 122)

What is a revival? (p. 125) _____

Describe the Great Awakening. (p. 126) _____

(1) C.H. Spurgeon, *The Soulwinner* (Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, 1895), 9

(2) *Spurgeon's Sermon Notes* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1970), 176

-
- (3) Both quotes from, Ray Comfort, *Hell's Best Kept Secret*, (Whitaker House, New Kensington, PA, 1989), 188
- (4) C.H. Spurgeon, *The Soulwinner*, (Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, 1895), 72
- (5) Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (The National Foundation for Christian Education, Marshallton, DE), 15
- (6) Kirk Cameron and Ray Comfort, *The Way of the Master* (Genesis Publishing Group, Bartlesville, OK, 2006), 23
- (7) C.H. Spurgeon, *The Soulwinner* (Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, 1895), 18
- (8) *Spurgeon's Sermon Notes* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1970), 103
- (9) *Ibid.*, 133
- (10) Ray Comfort, *Hell's Best Kept Secret*, (Whitaker House, New Kensington, PA, 1989), 43
- (11) Kirk Cameron and Ray Comfort, *The Way of the Master* (Genesis Publishing Group, Bartlesville, OK, 2006), 13