A DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAM TO ACCOMPLISH THE MANDATE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST



"...GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS."

DISCIPLESHIP

TEACHING NEW BELIEVERS HOW TO FOLLOW CHRIST

The **DISCIPLESHIP** course is a ministry of the
CENTER OF LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH, Houston, Texas.

Written by Richard P. Robinson

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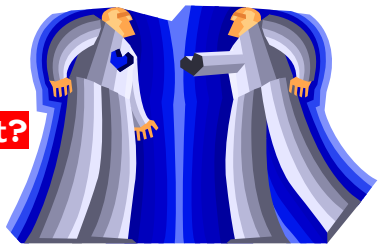
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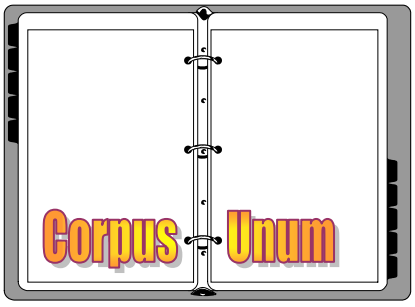
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DISCIPLESHIP

SERIES ONE: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A PERSON RECEIVES CHRIST?

LESSON ONE: WE BECOME THE CHILDREN OF GOD

INTRODUCTION: No doubt, most of us know Christians who live as though the only advantage to having received Christ as Savior **A "Savior" is someone who saves or rescues another from death or destruction.** is that they will no longer spend eternity in hell. This contradicts what the scriptures teach because the Bible clearly says that a number of events take place when a person asks Jesus to come into their heart.

Today we want to focus on three things that take place in the precise moment that one accepts Jesus. In that very instant, one's life is completely changed, because he is born of the Spirit of God, he ceases to belong to the "world", and is made a citizen of heaven.

I. BORN OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD

According to John 1:12-13, **"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: -who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."** those who receive Christ as Savior become reborn as "children of God." They are not born physically (of blood), by self desire (the will of the flesh), or by the desire of another person (the will of man). They are born of God! The moment a person asks Jesus to forgive him and come into his life and be his Savior, God (by His own will), adopts him into His family by way of *spiritual birth*. God's Spirit comes into our human spirit and gives us spiritual life.

In John 3:1-7, **"There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, 'Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.' 3 Jesus answered and said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' 4 Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?' 5 Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, You must be born again.'"** a man who was considered very religious by the Jews did not know of this truth. Jesus explained to him that if he wanted to see the Kingdom of God, he would have to be **"born again."** Jesus told him not to confuse spiritual birth with the physical birth. He explained to Nicodemus that one must first be born physically (of water in the womb), and then spiritually (of the Spirit of God). This birth had to take place before he could enter the Kingdom of God. Then Jesus went on to tell him that this spiritual birth would take place if Nicodemus "believed on" Him. John 3:16. **"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

This birth is not something that takes place in the future. It occurs the minute one believes in Jesus with all his heart. I John 3:1-2 **"Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God."** tells us that God calls us "His children". Surely no one would object to being able to call God

"Father". But for God to want to call us "His children"; this is truly an honor and something to be very grateful for. We are not His children simply because we call ourselves His children, but because He says we are His children.

This is something the unbelieving world will not understand. The world did not understand Jesus as God in the flesh. Satan, who is the god of this world, has its occupants blinded. Therefore, we should not be offended when the world makes fun of us. **"The world" refers to Satan's kingdom and domain and all unbelievers who are a part of it.**

Because **"NOW WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD",** it would be wise for us to find out what our obligations and responsibilities are. We find this out by going to God's WORD, t*he Bible*. The Holy Spirit Who lives in us (remember He came into our human spirit when we received Christ), will lead us as we study the Word. We will dig deeper into this subject in another lesson.

We are now children of God, but this does not mean we have become perfect. We still have much spiritual growing to do. As long as we live in the world, it remains our responsibility to grow spiritually every day. As we are growing, we will be led by the Spirit to help others in their spiritual growth. One day, our Lord Jesus will come back for us, and we will see Him exactly as He is. That day we will be transformed in a twinkling of an eye, and will be just like Him. Until then, we must always be spiritually growing.

II. WE DO NOT BELONG TO THE WORLD ANY MORE

Suppose you were planning to move to another place. It would be foolish to invest all that you had in the place you were moving away from. It would be better to place all of your investments into the new place, because that is where your future lies.

As children of God, our interests and motivation are going to be different from what they were before we were born again. The world and the pleasure we received from it was most important to us then. **Material things refer to the wealth and possessions and things we own.** Now, however, we should be interested in the Kingdom of our Lord. The following truths show why these new interests in spiritual matters have become alive to us.

I John 2:17 "And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." teaches us that material things will soon cease to exist. The world and its fleshly desires will pass away. We realize that the only things that are eternal are those we do for God.

I John 2:15-16 "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world." says that everything that belongs to the world does not come from God. Therefore, to love the things of this world, is to push God aside. Our task is to free others from the world and bring them to God for salvation.

James 4:4 "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." says that we cannot walk down two different roads. To be friends with the world is to be God's enemy.

Matthew 6:19-20 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal." shows that the accumulation of treasures here on earth is a lost cause. Thieves might steal from us. And if they do not, our treasures will soon turn to dust. It is wiser to accumulate treasures in heaven where there are no thieves and where things are everlasting.

Philippians 3:20-21 **"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself."** Before we became children of God, we felt "at ease" with the world. But now that has changed. We no longer belong to the world. It is now our battlefield where we fight for the salvation of souls and the honor and glory of our God. Our desire is to fight with all our might and destroy Satan and his army of fallen angels who desire to destroy mankind and all of God's creation.

Jesus teaches us in **John 15:18-20** **"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also."** that the world is not going to like us, because we no longer are a part of, or belong to it. But the world did not like Jesus either. Our Lord came to the world to save us from Satan and eternal separation from God. He gave His life to save sinners. He has placed His army (the church), in the world to carry out the task of enlarging His Kingdom by preaching the gospel to every man, woman, boy, and girl. The world does not understand this. **I Corinthians 2:14** **"But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them,* because they are spiritually discerned."** teaches us that the "natural man (the person who has not received Christ), cannot understand spiritual matters because they seem foolish to him.

Even though we do not belong to the world, we still live in the world. This will only be for a short while however, because someday our Lord will return to take us home. For this reason and until then, we must fight against Satan with all our might.

III. HEAVEN IS OUR HOME

It would be a horrible thing if you were required to spend the next five years as someone's slave. But if after the end of those five years you were to receive a million dollars, you might not consider it such a bad thing. You might not even think of it as slavery. Likewise, our task here on earth should seem relatively easy, when we consider what is waiting for us in heaven.

Romans 8:16-18 **"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him,* that we may also be glorified together. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us."** teaches us that as children of God we are His heirs. In other words, everything that belongs to Him is ours! It also tells us that, even as our Lord Jesus suffered, we will also have to go through some of the trials and tribulations that this world will throw our way. Why? Because the spiritual battle we are involved in is not over. But the thought of heaven and all it holds for us makes the things we must put up with here on earth seem small and insignificant.

Knowing that we are God's heirs, and that everything that is His is ours, we might wonder why it is necessary to spend so much time here on earth going through hardships and persecution. It is true that we should look forward to spending eternity with Jesus in heaven, but there are two important reasons why we should also look forward to serving our time here on earth.

First, this is the only place where we have the opportunity to show God how much we truly love Him and where we thank Him for all He has done for us. Once we are in heaven all will be perfect. No sin, or anything which can detour us from God will be permitted there. We will

be like Jesus, perfect in every sense of the word. Here on earth is the only place we can truly show God how much we love Him. And it is our faith **Hebrews 11:6a** **"But without faith it is impossible to please Him."** that pleases God. Exercising faith is one way we show Him we love Him. **Faith is trusting God.**

Second, it is here on earth where we build up treasures in heaven. **I Corinthians 3:9-15** paints us a picture of Christians, both lazy and hard working. The day will come when the works of both will pass through fire to be tested. The bad works of lazy Christians will be burned up. The good works of hard working Christians will be rewarded. The lazy Christians will be saved, yet will have no reward or "treasure." **"Treasures" are those rewards we will receive for being faithful in serving God.**

The idea of serving the Lord for the purpose of receiving rewards might sound selfish. We should be willing to work for Him just because He did so much for us. But when we receive those rewards, we will have the opportunity to lay them at Jesus' feet in appreciation for all He has done for us. There will be those who have many rewards to give back to Him, and there will also be those who have no rewards.

Before returning to heaven, Jesus told us of a beautiful place He was going to prepare for us. In **John 14:2-3** **"In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not *so,* I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also."** our Master said that He would come to take us with Him. In **Revelation 21:9-22**, the apostle John describes our new home. After considering it, and all the marvelous things that await us, whatever temporary treasure the world has to offer suddenly loses its appeal.

CONCLUSION: As children of God, we must accept these truths by faith just as we accepted Jesus by faith. We must live our lives, while here on earth in obedience to our Lord, showing our loyalty to Him. While we have the chance, we must be thankful and show our gratitude by being obedient to Him in all we do.

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SPIRITUAL NOTEBOOK

LESSON ONE: WE BECOME THE CHILDREN OF GOD

BIBLE EXERCISE:

I. James 1:18 "Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

a. Whose will is it that we are born into the family of God? b. What method did God use for this to happen? c. Why is it important for us to share God's Word with others?

2. I Corinthians 13:11 "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

a. If you have just been born into God's family, what should be your spiritual conduct? b. Should you feel bad for not understanding all there is to know about spiritual matters? c. How are you supposed to become spiritually mature?

3. Philippians 3:20-21 "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

a. Where is our citizenship? b. What is going to happen to our physical bodies when Jesus comes for us? c. Where would you prefer to have your citizenship? Why?

4. Galatians 4:1-7 "Now I say *that* the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, 2 but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. 3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. 4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

a. Why isn't there a substantial difference between the heir when he is a child, and the slave? b. Should a child be under his parent's authority until he is old enough to handle the inheritance? Why? c. Compare and write down the difference between the slave's service to God and the children's service to God.

5. REVIEW… Go over your notes for this week and write a summary of what you have learned in general.

PRAYER:

FELLOWSHIP: (Any activity done with fellow Christians.)

WITNESSING: (Any activity done to share Christ with those who are lost.)

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DISCIPLESHIP

SERIES ONE: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A PERSON RECEIVES CHRIST?

LESSON TWO: WE BECOME SATAN'S ENEMY

INTRODUCTION: If you were fighting and trying to hurt your enemy, yet you could not get close to him because he was so well protected, what else would you do in order to harm him? You probably would agree that your next move could be to cause your enemy pain by destroying something he considered of much value, something very close to his heart.

This is the position that Satan is in. He cannot touch God, therefore the next best thing that he can do is cause Him pain by attacking His children.

The day you received Christ as your Savior, the heavens celebrated the event. But Satan's demons trembled in pain and desperation. No doubt, some of them were severely scolded for permitting you to come to the knowledge of the Truth. It was *their* responsibility to keep you away from Jesus and His forgiveness.

Since we became children of God, our enemy's tactics against us have changed. Their responsibility, now, is to prevent us from growing spiritually by keeping us tied up or occupied with things of the world. They do this in order to keep us from growing and becoming strong warriors and from showing others how to find freedom from their evil grasp. They will do everything they can to ruin our testimony, so that we will be a hindrance instead of a help to the cause of our Lord. **Your testimony is what causes others to identify you as a Christian.**

I. SATAN IS OUR FATHER'S ENEMY

The devil was not always the evil entity we know him to be. Originally, he was an angel – the most beautiful angel in heaven. He held the highest rank in God's celestial army. But **Isaiah 14:12-15 "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *How* you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! 13 For you have said in your heart: ' I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' 15 Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit."** tells us that Satan was not happy with his rank, and he used his position to attempt to exalt himself and be like God the Creator.

Revelation 12:7-9 "And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." describes the political campaign that Satan launched in heaven. He was able to convince one third of the angels to join his army.

Jude 6 "And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great

day." Because of his rebellion, the archangel Michael was given instructions to throw him and his army out of heaven. Michael and his squadron of angels accomplished their mission, throwing Satan and his followers to earth. There he quickly set up his headquarters, and the earth became his domain.

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The devil was not able to overtake God's throne, so has purposed in his heart to destroy all that God has created. He descended on the earth with great hate, realizing that his days were numbered. He hates God, but cannot get near Him. He has spent his time here going after everything close to God's heart.

II. SATAN WANTS TO HURT THE FATHER BY HURTING HIS CHILDREN

We are the most important part of God's creation. Everything of this earth will one day pass away. But there is something very different about man. Man has a soul. That soul is eternal (we will study about that in another lesson). It is because man is special to God that Satan tries to deceive him and cause his soul to be sent to hell for all eternity.

In spite of all this, you must understand that Satan is not interested in you. The only reason he is against you is because he wants to hurt God. Satan is willing to offer you the whole world in order to prevent you from serving God. He is even willing to do some good things for you if it will serve his purposes and ultimately cause our heavenly Father some pain.

You are already saved. Therefore, Satan cannot send your soul to hell. Your soul belongs to God because you accepted His Son as your Savior. NO ONE can take your soul from God! In order to do so he or she would have to be bigger than God. *Satan is certainly not big enough.* However, he can use you to hinder others from coming to God for salvation. When you allow yourself to be manipulated by him, you betray God and His desire to work through you to spread the plan of His salvation. This is a victory for Satan, and you can only imagine how he snickers at God when he has his way in your life. One day however, God will have His way and Satan will be destroyed.

CONCLUSION: It is important to realize that because you are a child of God, you are also Satan's enemy. If Satan is your Father's enemy he is also your enemy. You must not ignore this truth. If you do not take it seriously you will regret it, because Satan will use you for the rest of your life here on earth as an obstacle to detain the advances of Christ's Kingdom.

To fight your enemy effectively, you need to be disciplined spiritually. One way you can accomplish this is by keeping your **Spiritual Notebook**. Doing the activities in your notebook will keep you involved in the spiritual battle that is going on around you.

SPIRITUAL NOTEBOOK

LESSON TWO: WE BECOME SATAN'S ENEMY

BIBLE EXERCISE:

1. Matthew 4:1-11 "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. 3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." 4 But He answered and said, "It is written, *'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.* 5 Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: *' He shall give His angels charge over you,* and, *' In their hands they shall bear you up,* l*est you dash your foot against a stone.'"* 7 Jesus said to him, "It is written again, *'You shall not tempt the LORD your God."* 8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, *'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve."'* 11 Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

a. Who did the devil tempt in these verses? b. How many different ways did the devil tempt Jesus? c. What did Jesus use to defeat the devil?

2. Luke 8:4-15 "And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: 5 "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. 6 Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. 7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. 8 But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundred-old." When He had said these things He cried, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" 9 Then His disciples asked Him, saying, "What does this parable mean?" 10 And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest *it is given* in parables, that *' Seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'* 11 "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. 13 But the ones on the rock *are those* who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. 14 Now the ones *that* fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. 15 But the ones *that* fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep *it* and bear fruit with patience.

a. In this parable, what is the seed being sown by the sower? b. Who tries to take the seed from different people's heart? c. How does the devil try to do this?

3. James 4:7 "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

a. To whom should one submit in order to make the devil run? B. What does "resist the devil" mean? C. Will the devil run from a child of God who is being disobedient?

4. Ephesians 6:11-17 "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age,[a] against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places.* 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

a. What should the Christian wear to protect himself from Satan's attacks? b. Why is it necessary to wear ALL the armor of God? c. What are the different pieces of armor?

5. Review… Go over the four Scripture readings of this week and write down what you have learned in general from all of them.

PRAYER:

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DISCIPLESHIP

SERIES ONE: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A PERSON RECEIVES CHRIST?

LESSON THREE: WE OBTAIN A DOUBLE NATURE

INTRODUCTION: We all know how the world accuses Christians of being hypocrites. For many Christians this is true, but it should not be that way. We are not going to try to excuse this reality. Rather, we can try to understand the conflict within us between being like the world and being like Jesus. Understanding this, we can set the example God requires of us.

In today's lesson, we desire to take a look at ourselves, and analyze our physical/spiritual structure. This is necessary so that we can make the changes in order to be more like what God wants us to be. We will come to the knowledge that even though we are "new creatures" in Christ we have not lost our fleshly nature, and because of this we will be involved in a battle between these two natures for the rest of our lives.

I. WE ARE BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT

You are a soul that has a body and a spirit. Your soul is made up of mind, will, and emotions. *Your soul is what you truly are.* When you were a child, you could not distinguish the difference between good and evil. But eventually, you reached a point in your life when intellectually (mind), you understood the difference between good and evil, and voluntarily (will), chose to do wrong. That was something that caused conflict within you (emotion), because you knew that you were not supposed to do wrong, but you chose to do wrong anyway. You became guilty and responsible for your sin. The Bible clearly states in **Ezekiel 18:4b** **"The soul who sins shall die."** At that moment you were separated from God and condemned to suffer for eternity in hell.

Your soul has a body and a spirit. Even though your soul was condemned to spend eternity away from God the moment you willingly went against Him, in His love, God made a way for you to escape your just sentence. He sent His Son Jesus to pay the consequences for your sins. When you acknowledged (mind) that you had sinned against God, you felt sorry for what you had done (emotions) and chose (will) to turn your back on sin. You asked God for forgiveness and received Jesus as your Lord and Savior. God then sent His Holy Spirit into your human spirit, and gave you eternal life, God's Spirit took permanent residence in your spirit and will never leave, because now your soul belongs to Him. This is why you can say "my soul is saved", or that you are "born again", because now by God's Spirit you have been spiritually born into His family. You are now His child and all of this, as we have already studied, was brought about by your having accepted Jesus as Savior.

Your soul and spirit is the part of you that was saved. You must understand that your spiritual birth was a work of God. It was holy and permanent. The part of you that was born of God cannot sin. Why? Because it was born of God's seed, and it cannot sin. This truth is expressed in **I John 3:9** **"Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God."**

II. WE ARE NEW CREATURES, BUT WE STILL HAVE OUR FLESH NATURE

Even though you cannot sin spiritually (after receiving Christ as Savior), you can sin physically, because you did not lose your "flesh nature" when you received Christ. The Apostle Paul explained this truth in **Romans 7:14-25,** **"For we know that the law is spiritual**

but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. 16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that *it is* good. 17 But now, *it is* no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but *how* to perform what is good I do not find. 19 For the good that I will *to do,* I do not do; but the evil I will not *to do,* that I practice. 20 Now if I do what I will not *to do,* it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. where he taught that even though in his "inner man" (spirit), he wanted to serve God, he found another "law" in the members of his body that waged war against the "law" of his mind (soul). He then stated, **"I myself in my mind (soul), am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature (body), a slave to the law of sin."**

It is important that you understand the significant difference between your physical being and your spiritual nature. Failure to understand the difference between the two can cause us to be spiritually defeated by our physical or flesh nature. The two do not mix with each other as Jesus stated in **John 3:6**. **"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."** In the case of the believer, one nature will have to submit to the other.

III. THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE BODY

Galatians 5:17 "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish." teaches that the desires of your flesh (body), and the desires of the Spirit (who lives in your human spirit), will constantly be confronting each other in such a manner that you (the soul) will have a hard time doing what is right.

The only way you will ever gain victory in the conflict is by making one of your natures give in to the other. The vast majority of Christians today are giving in to the flesh nature simply because it is easier to do so. But there is a price to pay for going against the will of God, and those who constantly do this, will be miserable. What you should do is make your flesh nature become subject to the will of the Spirit inside you as taught in **Galatians 5:16**. **"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."** Even though you will go through some rough times of conflict you will still find the peace and satisfaction of having done God's will, and you will be content because God has made you for this purpose. To accomplish this feat certain spiritual weapons will have to be put into use. We will study about them in future lessons.

When will this battle be over? It will end the day you die, or the day Jesus comes back for us. As long as you have a physical body Satan will constantly wage war against your soul (mind, will, and emotions) to prevent you from "conquering more territory" or expanding the gospel for our Lord Jesus Christ. At the same time the Holy Spirit will strengthen your inner man and lead you from victory to victory.

CONCLUSION: There are times in our lives when we do things we should not do, or feel ways we should not feel. It is during these times Satan, who is the "father of lies", comes to us and Implants thoughts that we are no longer children of God because of our wrong actions or

thoughts. And it is during these times that we need to remember that we have a double nature. We must tell the devil to take his lies elsewhere, ask our Father to forgive us when we have done wrong, and then determine to make our fleshly desires give in to the Spirit's leadership. When we learn to do this we will become strengthened spiritually and begin to live the life of a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

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SPIRITUAL NOTEBOOK

LESSON THREE: WE OBTAIN A DOUBLE NATURE

BIBLE EXERCISE

1. Romans 8:5-9 "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

a.What does the sinful nature think about? b. Why can't a person who thinks according to the flesh nature, please God? c. By what nature should a child of God live?

2. Romans 13:11-14 "And *do* this, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we *first* believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts."

a. What does the Bible mean when it says we should "awake out of sleep"? b. In verse twelve, to what does Paul compare the flesh and the spirit? c. How do we gratify the desires of our sinful nature?

3. Colossians 3:1-17 "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ *who is* our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. 5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. 8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all. 12 Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do.* 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts

to the Lord. 17 And *whatever* you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

a. In whom is our life hidden? b. How does a person take off the "old man" and put on the "new man"? c. According to verse twelve, what should God's people wear?

4. Ephesians 4:22-32 "that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. 25 Therefore, putting away lying, *" Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,"* for we are members of one another. 26 *"Be angry, and do not sin"*: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 nor give place to the devil. 28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with *his* hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. 29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."

a. Why should a Christian want to get rid of his "old man"? b. What should our attitude be concerning the "old man" (our sinful nature)? c. What kinds of things should God's children no longer do?

REVIEW: Go over your Scripture studies this week and write down what you learned from them.

PRAYER:

FELLOWSHIP: (Any activity done with fellow Christians.)

WITNESSING: (Any activity done to share Christ with those who are lost.)

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DISCIPLESHIP

SERIES TWO: A NEW PERSPECTIVE

LESSON FOUR: FORMULA FOR GROWTH

INTRODUCTION: We all know that if we want to be healthy, we must follow certain disciplines. We must watch what we eat, allow our bodies rest, and get plenty of good exercise. If we are negligent in any of these areas we more than likely jeopardize our physical growth.

The new Christian has to be careful too, if he wants to grow and become a strong warrior for the Lord. As with our physical bodies, there are things that will either help or that will stunt his spiritual growth.

In our lesson today, we will see spiritual truths that will help us understand spiritual development. We will then be able to take positive steps toward living a healthy life as disciples of Christ. This will enable us to be good examples for others.

Ephesians 4:22-24 **"That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."** speaks of this process of spiritual growth. We cannot look at things, or think the way we did before we became believers. Each day we need to practice the process of (1) "taking off the old man", (2) having a renewing mentality, and (3) "putting on the new man". As we practice this process, we will soon see positive results and will know that we have grown spiritually.

We must understand that even though we are children now, in the spiritual sense, we will soon cease to be children, because we will be exercising the formula for growth that will help us grow to be strong and powerful disciples of our Lord.

I. CHILDREN MUST GROW

No matter what age you are, when you receive Christ as your Savior, you are born again. You are simply a child when it comes to spiritual matters. In fact, the only thing you really know, is that you have been saved because you repented of your sins and accepted Jesus.

In **I Corinthians 13:11**, **"When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things."** the Apostle Paul explained that while a person is a child, he talks and thinks like a child. It is natural that you have questions concerning your new life in Christ. For your older brothers and sisters – those who have been saved longer than you – some of the questions you will ask will sound childish. But you must not let this discourage you, nor should you fail to ask questions. If you do, you will cease to grow.

There is one thing we can be sure of; *there are no shortcuts in Christian growth*. You cannot sleep with a Bible under your pillow and wake up as a spiritual giant. Even Jesus had to grow physically, mentally, and spiritually. If there were no shortcuts for Him, there will be none for you. If you are going to grow, you will need to force yourself to push forward, being very careful as you go along.

It is important that you understand that, as a brand new believer, you are at the most vulnerable time of your Christian life. Your knowledge of spiritual things is limited and you will have difficulty defending yourself from Satan's schemes and attacks. But the Lord is not going to abandon you. He has placed His Holy Spirit in your life to lead you and protect you. In

addition, the responsibility of helping you grow rests with your older brothers and sisters in the faith.

Many of them have not accepted this responsibility because no one ever felt responsible for their growth. Even though they might feel that it is not their responsibility, that does not change the truth. **Matthew 28:19** **"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."** is very clear concerning the fact that our responsibility is to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them to keep all the commandments of our Lord.

If no one is willing to disciple you, you might have to grow in the Lord on your own. You can do so if you will be obedient to the direction given to you by the Holy Spirit. As you are obedient to the Spirit's leadership, you need to be very careful of your enemy the devil. He is not going to wait around until you learn how to defend yourself. He is going to attack you, and he is going to begin immediately after you are saved, while you are still a baby Christian.

When Satan attacks you he will do so with a well thought out plan. He will not come as your enemy, but as an "angel of light". He will tell you half-truths and half-lies in order to seduce you and make you fall into his traps. As you walk forward in the footsteps of Jesus, you must be very careful to listen closely to what the Spirit tells you.

II. LEARNING TO WALK

When a child is learning to walk, he is afraid, because walking is a new experience for him. He is even more afraid after he falls down. As a new Christian, you are only able to "crawl". But eventually, you will learn to "walk" and even to run because you are constantly maturing.

As a new believer learning to walk, there are two things to which you can hold: the Bible, and God's precious Holy Spirit. These are necessary because Satan is always near you doing everything he can to deceive you.

Because of the churches endeavor to grow, Satan has not been able to fight it from the outside, but from the inside. In other words, he *joined* the church. This is why there are hundreds of organizations today who call themselves "Christian," and who practice exactly the opposite of Christianity. These organizations claim to have the truth and most of them have leaders who are smart and enthusiastic. This is why **2 Corinthians 11:13** **"For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ."** says that we must be very careful because even though they look and sound good, they are actually false "apostles" who can lead you astray if you allow them. How can we tell if they are true or false? *By measuring their lives with the Bible.* If what they are teaching is not scriptural, then they are false teachers, and you must not hear them. Remember that these teachers are intelligent, and will feed you half-truths in order to mislead you. **2 Timothy 4:3-4** **"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."** teaches us that there is coming a time when false teachers will teach only what people want to hear. That time is here.

2 Peter 3:16 **"as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures."** shows us that there are a few doctrines in the Bible that are somewhat difficult to understand or explain, and that because of this there will always be someone willing to twist and turn these doctrines to mean whatever they want. You must be very careful that you do not do the same. As a disciple of Jesus, your responsibility is to assure that the spiritual things you learn are based upon the Word of God. This is the only way you can be sure that you are walking the way God wants you to.

As you study the Word of God the Holy Spirit will help you to understand what you read, and will impress upon you the need to make changes in your life so that you can grow. **John 14:26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."** explains that the Holy Spirit has been sent by the Father to teach us all things and remind us of Jesus' teachings. He will lead us to the formula we need to grow up strong and healthy in spiritual matters.

III. THE FORMULA FOR GROWTH

In order for you to grow spiritually, you must place yourself on a special, balanced diet consisting of four ingredients: (1) Bible Study, (2) Prayer, (3) Fellowship, and (4) Witnessing.
(1) Bible Study is important because it is the only way by which you can learn about our Lord and what He expects of you, His disciple. The Bible is the "Manual" by which you live. In it you can find the steps that you need to take so that you can live the way your heavenly Father wants you to live. **2 Timothy 3:16-17 "All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."** tells us that the Bible is inspired of God, and is designed to instruct us, so that we can be totally prepared to serve God. **The scriptures were "inspired" or "God-breathed".**

While you are learning to walk, you can hold to a minimum the number of times you make mistakes or "fall down" by knowing the scriptures. In **Matthew 22:29, "Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God."** Jesus had an encounter with the Pharisees of His time where He told them that the reason they made so many mistakes, was because they were ignorant of what the Bible taught.
(2) Prayer is important because it is the way by which we communicate with God. We all know that the way to build a strong relationship with someone is by having good communications with them. Likewise, the way to have a strong relationship with our Lord is by communicating with Him.

This communication must be constant. **I Thessalonians 5:17** tells us to **"Pray without ceasing."** Your mind should always be in communication with God. You must always think of Him, thank Him, ask for His help and be obedient to Him. Remember though, that if there is habitual sin in your life, your prayers will be hindered. You must always try to keep yourself as pure as possible. When you make a mistake you should confess it and ask God's forgiveness so that it will not be a hindrance to your prayers.
(3) Fellowship with other believers is important because, like you, they have a spiritual nature, something you can identify with. No one can understand you and know what is going on in your life better than a fellow brother or sister in Christ. **To "fellowship" is to mingle, associate, and converse with other believers** **Galatians 6:1-10 "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who *are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5 For each one shall bear his own load. 6 Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the**

household of faith." gives good advice concerning fellowship with other believers.

*It teaches that you need to help your brothers or sisters who have fallen into sin, but while doing so, be careful not to fall into the same sin.

*You should help other believers with their burdens. By doing this Christ's kingdom can move forward.

*You should never feel self sufficient or that you do not need the help of others. If you do you are only fooling yourself.

*You should not measure your spirituality by comparing yourself with others. The only way you should measure your spirituality is by comparing yourself to the task God has given you to do. If you have been obedient and have accomplished the work given to you, then you will feel good about doing your task and will not need to compare yourself to others.

*You must share your blessings with those who teach you spiritual things. It is good for those who disciple you to know that their work has been productive and that "fruit" has been produced as a direct or indirect result of their teaching. This will encourage them to continue their work.

*Anyone who does service for God only to be seen or recognized by others with whom they fellowship are doing so only to draw attention to themselves, and not for spiritual gain. They are not fooling God. Those who fellowship for spiritual gain will be blessed with spiritual gain.

*The benefits of your good deeds will not always come immediately. Sometimes years will pass before you see the fruit of your work for the Lord. **"Fruit" is the positive results of witnessing, discipling, and teaching.** You should never be discouraged or give up because the fruit of your labor will come. You must always continue to do good, knowing that the "crops" from your labor will one day be harvested. And when they do, you will be richly blessed.

You must always do good to others, especially when the opportunity is given to you. This is especially true concerning your "Faith Family". Even though you are to do good to everyone, your priorities must be toward your spiritual family.

(4) Witnessing is important because your testimony is the only thing the world can see to identify you with Christ. Through it they will see the difference between your life and theirs. If your life is not clean, they will see no difference and will not understand their need for Jesus.

In **Matthew 5:16** **"Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled."** Jesus said that our lives must shine before men so tht they would glorify God. When people look at you, they should see the change that Jesus has brought to your life and want to have the same thing happen to them. **Titus 2:7-8** **"In all things showing yourself *to be* a pattern of good works; in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, 8 sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you."** says that we must be a good example in everything we do. You should never give the world a chance to speak badly of you.

Colossians 3:23 **"And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men."** says that we must do everything "whole heartedly," as if we were doing it for God and not for men. In other words, no matter what you do, you must do it to the best of your ability as though what you are doing is being done for the Lord

Conclusion: Remember that there must always be a balance of these four ingredients. The formula must be taken in equal proportions so that your growth is normal. *No ingredient must be left out.* This is the only way that we will ever be able to know God's power in our lives. This is the only way that we will ever be the disciples that Jesus wants us to be.

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SPIRITUAL NOTEBOOK

LESSON FOUR: FORMULA FOR GROWTH

BIBLE EXERCISE

1. I Corinthians 3:1-13 "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able *to receive it,* and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like *mere* men? 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I *am* of Apollos," are you not carnal? 5 Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, *you are* God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is."

a. Should a child of God remain a "baby" forever? b. Why is Paul upset in these verses? c. What are you going to do to grow spiritually?

2. Mark 9:42 "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea."

a. What does Jesus say *about* those who make His little ones fall? B. Could you make a younger brother stumble or fall? How?

3. Matthew 24:24 "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect."

a. How many people are going to rise and say they have the truth of God? b. Will these people be able to do miracles? C. How will we be able to tell if they are from God or not?

4. John 15:4-5 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 "I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

a. Can a Christian who does not "remain in Christ" produce fruit? b. What kind of fruit are we talking about here? c. What does Bible Study, Prayer, Fellowship, and Witnessing have to do with remaining in Christ?

REVIEW: Go over your Scripture studies this week and write down what you learned from them.

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PRAYER:

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DISCIPLESHIP

SERIES TWO: A NEW PERSPECTIVE

LESSON FIVE: THE WORLD IN GOD'S SIGHT

Introduction: It is common place for the world to criticize Christians who try to live godly lives. There is so much evil in the world that any attempt to overcome it with good can seem futile – like trying to empty the sea with a small cup. Satan is constantly telling us that "God is love, so in the end He is going to forgive everyone for every evil thing they have done. Therefore, you missed out on having all the fun."

It is true that God is a loving God. But we must remember that He also dispenses justice and truth, and that He does not lie. He would not have sent His only Son to die on the cross of Calvary if there were any other way by which man could be saved. *We can be sure of this*.

I. WHAT GOD DESIRES IS MOST IMPORTANT

Your personal desires do not matter if they are contrary to God's desires. You were placed on this earth for one reason: *to do the will of God*. His will is that you live in holiness, that you separate yourself from sin, and that you teach others to do the same.

As a disciple of Jesus, the only thing that should interest you is complete submission to Him. **I John 2:15-17 "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."** teaches that we should not love the things of this world. It also tells us that if we love the world, and can do so with a clear conscience, then something is spiritually wrong. If the Father's love is not in you, then you should be feeling very uneasy. It also points out the fact that the things of this world are only temporary, while the person who does the will of God lives forever.

II. WE MARVEL AT MAN'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS – GOD DOES NOT

With our limited human knowledge, we easily marvel at the things man can do. Imagine! Man has walked on the moon, has power to destroy nations with the push of a button, and can eat breakfast on one continent, and have supper on another continent the same day. We are astonished at the things man has accomplished, we tremble at his power, and we praise him for his intelligence.

Man is truly a work of art. However, there is someone who is not impressed with the things man has done. Man's abilities are insignificant when compared to the Supreme Being of this universe – **GOD**.

Isaiah 40:15-17 "Behold, the nations *are* as a drop in a bucket, and are counted as the small dust on the scales; look, He lifts up the isles as a very little thing. 16 and Lebanon *is* not sufficient to burn, nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering. 17 All nations before Him *are* as nothing, and they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless." Says that to God, all the nations combined together are like a drop in a bucket! As far as God is concerned, the nations of this world are *nothing* to Him. In fact, they are *less than nothing*.

Man does not impress God, because God created him. You can marvel at mankind if you want, but God is not impressed.

II. THE WORLD BRINGS DESTRUCTION UPON ITSELF – GOD DOES NOT

We must remember that the world is God's enemy. The world and the things of this world – under Satan's direction – have lifted their fists in the face of God and declared war. Being enemies of God, their sin and their lifestyles only help to destroy them.

The wickedness and depravity of the world are summed up by these three things found in **I John 2:16**: **"For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world."** (1) the "lust of the flesh," (2) the "lust of the eyes," (3) the boastful "pride of life." These categories of sin only cause pain and suffering for mankind.

THE LUST OF THE FLESH. Remember that Satan will always attack you by way of "the flesh." Your flesh nature will always have desires that can lead you from the right direction (God's paths). This is why you must be sure that you satisfy the needs of your flesh within the boundaries God set for you. For example, sexual desires should only be satisfied inside of the marriage commitment – the boundary that God established for that purpose.

THE LUST OF THE EYES: Sin will always come surrounded with bright, pretty lights. The actors in beer and cigarette commercials are always intelligent, healthy people, with pretty white teeth. But the truth is not being shown. The drunkard is not shown in the gutter, lying in his own vomit, or taking the lives of innocent people because he drove his car while intoxicated. They do not show the man talking from a tube protruding from his throat because his vocal cords were destroyed by cancer.

THE BOASTFUL PRIDE OF LIFE: Are you not surprised when people whom you thought "had it all" commit suicide? Happiness does not come from having obtained riches or fame. These things are only temporary and do not bring a person true happiness.

Conclusion: You will only experience true happiness when you have fulfilled the purpose of your existence which is to do the will of God. The wisest man who ever lived explained in **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14** **Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. 14 For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil."** that man's all is to fear God and obey His commandments. Why? Solomon said that **"God will being every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil."**

The true disciple of Christ will not fear man, nor will he be impressed by what man can do. The true disciple knows that all good things come from God and that all evil comes from the world and Satan. The disciple of Jesus will look at things from God's point of view, and will discover that the world is not very impressive.

Our job is to complete our mission. Our mission is to save mankind from the world. We cannot complete our mission if we have fallen in love with the world, or if we are subject to the world. We must live with our eyes constantly focused on God.

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SPIRITUAL NOTEBOOK

LESSON FIVE: THE WORLD IN GOD'S SIGHT

BIBLE EXERCISE

1. I Corinthians 1:18-23 "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.' 20 Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness."

a. What does the world think about God's things? b. What does the cross mean to us? c. What manner did God choose to get His message to the world?

2. Acts 4:1-22 "Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, 2 being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. 4 However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand. 5 And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, 6 as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?" 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: 9 If we this day are judged for a good deed *done* to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, 10 let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. 11 This is the *'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'*[a] 12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." 13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. 14 And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. 15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 saying, "What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them *is* evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it.* 17 But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name." 18 So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." 21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since

they all glorified God for what had been done. 22 For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed."

a. Why did the priests get upset with Peter and John? b. What did they tell Peter and John? c. How did Peter and John reply?

3. Acts 5:29-42 "But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. 31 Him God has exalted to His right hand *to be* Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are His witnesses to these things, and *so* also *is* the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him." 33 When they heard *this,* they were furious and plotted to kill them. 34 Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. 35 And he said to them: "Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. 36 For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. 37 After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. 38 And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; 39 but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God." 40 And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten *them,* they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. 42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus *as* the Christ.

a. What did the priests want to do when they heard Peter's words? b. What did they do to the apostles before letting them go? c. What reaction did the apostles have?

4. James 4:4 "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

a. What do you become to God, if you are a friend of the world? b. From what point of view should you look at the world? c. What point of view is best for all mankind?

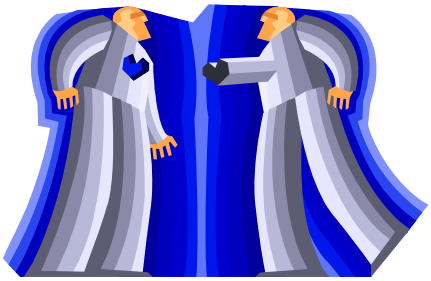
REVIEW: Go over your Scripture studies this week and write down what you learned from them.

PRAYER:

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DISCIPLESHIP

SERIES TWO: A NEW PERSPECTIVE

LESSON SIX: TAKING UP YOUR CROSS

INTRODUCTION: There are many Christians who are very unhappy because they try to live a double life. They want to "belong to," or be a part of the world, and "belong to" Jesus at the same time. *This type of life is impossible*. Therefore, whoever tries to live this way will find confusion instead of happiness.

The only way you can find happiness and satisfaction is by becoming a true disciple, because you have been called for that reason. When you became a Christian, Jesus freed you from the world so that you could be His disciple. Being a disciple of Christ is no easy task. Our Master told us in **Matthew 16:24-25** **"Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."** that being a disciple would involve self denial, the "taking up of one's cross", and following in His footsteps.

At first glance, this might not sound very positive. But Jesus did not finish the thought with a negative theme. He said, **"Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it."** In other words, if you turn your life over to Jesus, you will find an eternal life of happiness and satisfaction. Why? Because you were created for the purpose of bringing honor and glory to God.

I. DENYING YOURSELF

The most difficult thing for the new believer is to "denying himself." Your flesh nature is always going to be attracted to the world, and it will fight you all the way to your grave. But **Galatians 5:16** **"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."** teaches us to give in to the Holy Spirit so that we will not satisfy the desires of our flesh. You will achieve this only when you learn to say "NO" to what your flesh nature wants to do. There will be times when you will need for other Christian brothers and sisters to help you over-come the temptations that will come your way. You must remember that the need to ask your brothers and sisters in Christ to help you is not something to be ashamed of. If you are to be successful in denying yourself, then asking for the help of others is the intelligent thing to do.

The influence that Satan can have on your flesh nature is incredible. Most if us can watch hours of television, but when we start to read the Bible, our eyes mysteriously get tired. We can stand in line for hours at the theater or at an amusement park to ride the roller coaster, but our feet suddenly become tired when it is time to deliver the gospel to others. We can spend hours gossiping about our friends on the telephone, but cannot talk about spiritual things for more than a few minutes.

In **1 CORINTHIANS 9:27**, **"But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."** the apostle Paul said that *he* sometimes had to "beat" his body and make it subject to the Holy Spirit. This does not mean that you have to physically hurt yourself, but it does indicate that you need to make a strong effort to not let yourself be controlled by your fleshly desires.

So the question that might come to mind is this: "Why should I deny myself?" The answer is

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really quite simple. You do not necessarily know what is best for your life. God, being your creator, knows what is best for you. Satan, being God's enemy, would like to destroy you. He will constantly lie to you and try to get you to follow your flesh nature so that he can influence you to do things that will cause you much pain, and eventually destroy you.

By denying yourself, you will be following the example set by our Savior. Jesus denied Himself and was obedient to the Father, even unto death on the cross. Because of His obedience, **Philippians 2:5-11 "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father."** tells us that His name is above all others, and that one day, everyone will bow before Him and confess that he is Lord.

God knows what is best for you, and for that reason, you need to be obedient to Him, even though you might not understand everything that is going on in your life. You need to learn to *deny yourself*.

II. TAKING UP YOUR CROSS

One of the ways you can learn to deny yourself, is by "taking up your cross" each and every day. When you think of a cross, you think of someone dying a painful death. The images that a cross brings are never pleasant. Some Christians might think that when the Bible says to "take up our cross," it is talking about giving up or doing without something, having to endure a physical defect or illness, or having some other situation to tolerate. But when Jesus talked about "taking up one's cross," He was using symbolism to describe how we are to "crucify" or kill the desires of our flesh moment by moment. Taking up your cross means that when you are tempted to sin, you must remember that you accepted Christ as your Savior and that your sins were crucified. You now live for Jesus Christ and not for yourself. This is what the apostle Paul told us in **Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.** This talk about "taking up your cross" is not a very pleasant subject. But you must understand that it is the only way that you are going to defeat Satan's desire to destroy you with sin and fulfill the will of the Father, which will bring you true happiness and make you a true disciple of our Lord.

III. FOLLOWING CHRIST

The third action that Jesus said was necessary to be His disciple was to "follow Him." The only way you can follow Him is by knowing and understanding how He lived while He was here on earth. And the only way you can understand this is by studying His life as it was described in the Bible. You must be a student of the Scriptures and be very obedient to what you learn. In **John 15:10, "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."** Jesus said that if we

want to remain "in His love," we must obey his commandments. The *only* place you can find His commandments is in the Bible. There is no other source for obtaining instructions for discipleship. You must study the Word and practice what you learn.

CONCLUSION: These three actions of discipleship are easy to understand, but are not easy to practice. Satan will always be around to oppose you and to place obstacles in your way. For the rich man in **Mark 10:19-22** **"You know the commandments: *'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,'* 'Do not defraud,' *'Honor your father and your mother.'*" 20 And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth." 21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." 22 But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions."** the obstacle was money. He wanted to follow Jesus, but he did not want to give up His wealth. What is keeping *you* from following Jesus?

Eternal life and a home in heaven should be reason enough to follow Jesus. These two things alone should motivate you to serve Him with everything you have for the rest of your life. However, they are not the only things Jesus promised to those who follow Him. He told us that if we follow Him, that we will also be blessed here on earth. He promised us that we cannot out-give Him, and that anyone who gives up things to be His disciple will receive more in this life, in addition to all that awaits him in heaven. **MARK 10:29-30** **"So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, 30 who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life."** says that no one can serve Jesus without being rewarded for his service. It really is worth it!

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SPIRITUAL NOTEBOOK

LESSON SIX: TAKING UP OUR CROSS

BIBLE EXERCISE

1. Luke 9:57-62 "Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, *that* someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go." 58 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head." 59 Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." 60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God." 61 And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go *and* bid them farewell who are at my house." 62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

a. What did Jesus say to the man who said he would follow him wherever he went? b. What did Jesus say to the man who wanted to bury his father first?

2. Matthew 10:37-38 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me."

a. Does Jesus really want us to hate our families? b. What does He mean by these words? c. What does Jesus say about those who don't want to carry their cross?

3. Matthew 16:24-25 "Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.'"

a. What does it mean to "follow Jesus"? b. What do we have to do to be like Jesus? c. What does "losing your life to find it" mean?

4. Galatians 5:24 "And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

a. What do disciples of Jesus crucify? b. How does one go about crucifying his fleshly desires?

REVIEW: Go over your Scripture studies this week and write down what you learned from them.

PRAYER:

FELLOWSHIP: (Any activity done with fellow Christians.)

WITNESS: (Any activity done to share Christ with those who are lost.)

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DISCIPLESHIP

SERIES THREE: IDENTIFYING MYSELF WITH CHRIST

LESSON SEVEN: MY TESTIMONY

INTRODUCTION: The Lord Jesus Christ wants His followers to identify themselves with Him. In medieval times, when kings and their armies lived in castles and wore steel armor, they could be identified by the emblems or symbols on their shields or banners. Today, gangs are identified by colors they wear or by special signals given at certain times.

Followers of Jesus are identified in several ways. But the thing that really identifies us as disciples of Christ is our "testimony" or "witness." When we speak of our testimony, we are talking about the way we act in different situations. The world is constantly looking at us, trying to see if we live according to the things our Divine Teacher taught us during His personal ministry here on earth. If we practice his teachings, then the world can identify us with Him. Otherwise, they will see no resemblance.

Because your friends and relatives who do not know Jesus cannot understand spiritual matters, your testimony is important. 1 Corinthians 2:14 **"But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them,* because they are spiritually discerned."** tells us that spiritual matters are just foolishness to unbelievers. They cannot understand spiritual matters because they have no spiritual nature. They have not been born of the Holy Spirit of God. This is where your testimony becomes important. With your testimony, you can demonstrate to the world spiritual matters in a physical and personal way. You can use your physical body to show what you have become spiritually and the difference between knowing and not knowing Jesus. However, if you choose not to live a spiritual, Godly life before the world, they will not be able to see a difference in you and will not understand their need for Jesus in their life.

I. THE ONLY THING YOU HAVE TO OFFER GOD:

Remember, you have been bought with a price, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 **"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."** and your life no longer belongs to yourself. God does not need money, so what can you give to the one who owns you?

The only thing that you can offer God that has any value is your testimony or witness. You must protect it and nurture it so that you do not lose it. If you lose your good witness, it will be very hard for you to give back to God for all the wonderful things He has done for you. Jesus taught us in Matthew 5:13-16 **"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. 14 "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."** that we are like "salt" and "light" to the world. Jesus has called you to bring some *flavor* into this world and to shine the

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light of the gospel upon everyone who comes into contact with you. If you do not carry out this task, what hope do your friends and relatives have in finding salvation?

The believer who has no testimony is like salt that has lost it's seasoning power. The Bible says that it no longer has any worth and will be thrown onto the ground and stomped on by men. The disciple with no testimony will soon become the laughing stock of all nonbelievers. Unless he "gets his act together," he will only be a hindrance to the growth of our Lord's kingdom. **• Remember, your testimony is what identifies you as a follower of Jesus.**

II. BAPTISM, TRAINING, AND DISOBEDIENCE

There are several things you can do to strengthen your testimony. In **Matthew 28:19-20**, **"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age. Amen."** our Lord gave us three things to do to "build up" our witness and be healthy Christians who can be *identified* with Him. As you study these verses, you will realize that Jesus wants his disciples to be baptized, receive training, and be obedient to Him.

Baptism identifies you with Jesus because it represents His death, burial, and resurrection. **Romans 6:3-6** **"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him,* that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.** explains that when you are baptized, you are showing the world what happened to you when you received Jesus as your Savior. When you accepted Christ, you *died* to sin, were *buried* in His blood, and *arose* to a new life in Him. The world cannot see what happened in your heart, but by way of baptism, you can physically demonstrate to them what happened to you. You must always remember that the world cannot understand anything other than visible, physical, and material things. By being baptized, you can show them that you are serious about your decision to follow Jesus and that it is not a game for you.

After being baptized, you enter a life of continual education, which will last until you go to be with the Lord in heaven. You have many things to learn about the Savior and what He expects from you as His disciple. To get the training you need, there is only one place you can go: *the Bible*. The Word of God is our only source of *authorized* information. You must always be sure that what you are taught lines up with it's teachings.

There are many institutions within your church where you can learn: Sunday school, home Bible studies, and sermons in addition to your own personal study that you have alone with the Lord. In all of these events, you can learn more about what is expected of you as a disciple. But remember, all your study must be backed up by the Word of God.

No amount of teaching will be beneficial to your life if you do not practice it. It will do you no good to know about Jesus if you are not going to be obedient to him. You cannot be a true disciple of Jesus if you are not going to follow his teachings.

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James 1:22-25 **"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it,* and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does."** tells us that if we are only going to be *hearers* of the Word, and not "*doers*" of the Word, then we are only fooling ourselves. We are not blessed only by knowing what the Bible says. We are blessed by practicing the principles it teaches.

CONCLUSION: As a disciple of Christ, you must fight to not abuse the freedom you have in Jesus. Because you are saved, you are no longer condemned as a sinner. You have passed from the death of sin to a life with Jesus. But what you must remember is that thousands of people are living under that condemnation, and it is your responsibility to present the Savior to them. Your salvation does not depend on presenting Jesus to others, but it sure would be a shame to abuse the freedom you have in Christ! **Galatians 5:13** **"For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."** tells us that we have been called to freedom, but that we must not abuse that freedom by using it as an occasion to sin. That freedom was given to us by Jesus, and it cost Him his life!

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SPIRITUAL NOTEBOOK

LESSON SEVEN: MY TESTIMONY

BIBLE EXERCISE

1. Titus 2:7-8 "In all things showing yourself *to be* a pattern of good works; in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,[a] 8 sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

a. In how many things should we be a good example? b. How should our enemies feel when they cannot find anything to accuse us of? c. What do these verses have to do with our testimony?

2. Romans 14:8 "For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's."

a. Who do we (Jesus' disciples) live for? b. Should we be willing to die for the cause of Christ? c. Do we have the right to say how we are going to live? Why?

3. 1 Samuel 15:22 "So Samuel said: 'Has the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, a*nd* to heed than the fat of rams.

a. Which does God prefer, offerings or obedience? b. Do you think there are Christians who think they can buy God's favor? c. Why do you think God prefers obedience?

4. John 13:17 "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."

a. Are we blessed by knowing what God wants us to do, or by doing what God wants us to do? b. If we know Jesus wants us to be baptized, to prepare ourselves and be obedient, what should we do? c. Do you think the person who does not do these things will be blessed? Why?

REVIEW: Go over your Scripture studies this week and write down what you learned from them.

PRAYER:

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DISCIPLESHIP

SERIES THREE: IDENTIFYING MYSELF WITH CHRIST

LESSON EIGHT: THE CHURCH AND MY PLACE IN IT

INTRODUCTION: There are many Christians who say they love Jesus, but who have little to do with His Church. For some, their failure not to unite with the Church is because of laziness or hypocrisy. For others, it is a lack of spiritual maturity or discipleship. If you are going to be a true disciple of Christ, you will identify yourself with Him by loving the Church and taking an active part in it.

This is what He demands of us. Why? Because the Church is His *body*. It is not reasonable to say that you love Jesus and at the same time despise His body. If you love Jesus, you will also love His Church.

I. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The primary reason that a disciple needs to have an active part in the Church is to carry out the mandate that our Divine Teacher gave us. In **Matthew 28:19-20** **"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age."** we find that Jesus ordered His Church to go into the world and make disciples of all nations, baptizing those who believe and teaching them to keep His commandments.

As you take a look at this task you might ask the question: What one individual could accomplish this? The answer is: NO ONE INDIVIDUAL. But, that should not surprise you, because the task has not been given to any one individual. Not even Jesus attempted to tell the gospel to everyone by Himself. That was not His plan. The task of discipling the nations is the mission of the entire Church.

Some have placed a limit on these words in **Matthew** claiming that they were directed to the Apostles and that they were not intended for the Church as a whole. But, if we consider the last words of the chapter, we will find Jesus saying, **"...and surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."** The **"end of the age"** means to *the end of the world*. Therefore, if this mandate was given only to the apostles, and not to the Church as a whole, the apostles must be physically alive and well somewhere on this planet. We know that this is not the case. Jesus gave this mission to **His Church**.

Jesus promised a unique power to His Church. The Church of Jesus Christ is the only organization in the whole world with the capacity to achieve the task of discipling **"all the nations."** Why? Because Jesus promised to be with His Church until the end of all time. So great was the power Jesus gave to the Church, that even the **"gates of hell cannot prevail against it"** **Matthew 16:18**. Jesus did not promise this power to any one individual, but He did to His "Church." So, if you want to be able to carry out the mission the Lord left us, we will have to be actively involved with his Church.

II. AS YOU PRACTICE THE FORMULA, GOD WILL LEAD YOU TO YOUR PLACE OF SERVICE

1 Corinthians 12:12-27 "For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many. 15 If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,' is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,' is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would be* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would be* the smelling? 18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 19 And if they *were* all one member, where *would* the body *be?* 20 But now indeed *there are* many members, yet one body. 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you'; nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' 22 No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. 23 And those *members* of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable *parts* have greater modesty, 24 but our presentable *parts* have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that *part* which lacks it, 25 that there should be no schism in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with *it;* or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with *it.* 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually." teaches us that just like our physical bodies, the body of Christ is made up of many "members." Each member has it's own function or job to do inside the body. Your big toe could never take the place of your eye no matter how hard it tried because it does not have the capacity to see. Your eye could not take the place of your big toe because it was not designed to support the weight of your body. Every body member has it's own service to perform.

There are many Christians who sit around and patiently wait for a revelation from God concerning their place of service in the Church. Unfortunately, they are going to be waiting for a long time. No one has the right to sit around and wait for God to show him or her His will for their life. God is not going to show you big things if you are not going to be faithful in small things. To be involved in the mission of the Church means to set out to accomplish what you already know He wants you to do and then allow Him to lead you into your place of ministry in the body. And the way He will do that is through **Bible Study, Prayer, Fellowship, and Witnessing.**

As you **study the Word of God** the Holy Spirit will indicate to you the changes necessary to prepare you for your place of service. He will instruct you in the things you need to know, will give you the special training you need to have, and will get you ready for your special place of service in the body of Christ.

As you **practice prayer** you will learn to intercede for others. You will come to a place in your prayer life where you will find yourself praying for certain people and their special situations. As you continue to pray the Holy Spirit will show you ways we can meet peoples' needs. In this way He will plant in your heart a special place of service where He wants you to carry out His will.

As you **practice fellowship** with other believers you will soon find yourself relating to a certain group of people, to a particular age group, or to special needs. You will feel something

special for that group of people. You will see their needs and want to do something about them. The Holy Spirit will guide you and help you accomplish that task.

The last ingredient in the formula is **Witnessing.** In reality, if you are being responsible with the other three ingredients of the formula, this one will not be difficult to carry out, because your testimony will be such that the people of this world will see a difference between your life and theirs, and will desire to have what you have. This will lead you to the opportunities of sharing Christ with them.

CONCLUSION: The Apostle Paul in **Ephesians 5:23-27** **"For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."** taught us that the Church has a very special place in Jesus' heart. So special is the relationship between Christ and His Church that it was compared to the relationship between a husband and wife. So special is the Church to Jesus, that He gave His life to rescue it.

As a disciple of Christ, it would be impossible for you to follow Jesus and, at the same time, not desire to have anything to do with His Church. To criticize, misuse, abuse, or neglect the Church would be a huge mistake for your life. It would be as though you were criticizing, misusing, or abusing Jesus. The true disciple will identify with Christ by being faithful to His Church.

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SPIRITUAL NOTEBOOK

LESSON EIGHT: THE CHURCH AND MY PLACE IN IT

BIBLE EXERCISE

1. Matthew 16:18 "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

a. Who edifies the Church? b. How does this verse show that the church is a moving organization, and not one that sits still?

2. Hebrews 10:24-25 "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another,* and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."

a. What two things should we be stimulated to do? b. What does verse 25 say about those who do not want to attend church? c. Why do you think we need to get together?

3. James 1:22-25 "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it,* and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does."

a. What is the person who only hears the word - but does not practice it - doing to themselves? b. Are you a hearer or a doer?

4. Ephesians 4:11-16 "And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."

a. What is the function of Pastors and Teachers in the Church? b. What are the two reasons for "perfecting the saints"? c. What does verse 16 have to do with you?

REVIEW: Go over your Scripture studies this week and write down what you learned from them.

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PRAYER:

FELLOWSHIP: (Any activity done with fellow Christians.)

WITNESS: (Any activity done to share Christ with those who are lost.)

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DISCIPLESHIP

SERIES THREE: IDENTIFYING MYSELF WITH CHRIST

LESSON NINE: MY GUIDE, THE HOLY SPIRIT

INTRODUCTION: Every successful organization has a director or leader. Without one, there would be confusion and the lack of focused leadership would prevent anything from getting done. There would be many members who had the ability to direct the affairs of the organization, but everyone thinks differently. If everyone tried to lead, then everyone would be going in a different direction. There would always be the need for one leader so that the organization could function properly.

Our Lord Jesus Christ did not leave His army without leadership. When you received Christ as your Savior, The holy Spirit of God entered your human spirit and took up permanent residence. He did this because He has the responsibility of leading you on your journey while you are here on earth. If you are obedient to the Holy Spirit, disagreements or confrontations with other brothers and sister in Christ will not be a problem, because He will direct where you are supposed to go, and teach you what to do. It is only when you go against His leadership that you will have problems.

I. THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Before He returned to heaven, Jesus told us about the Holy Spirit's ministry. In **John 16:7-15**, **"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 depart, I will send Him to you. 8 And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 of sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; 11 of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. 12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. 13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority,* but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. 15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you."** He taught us that the Holy Spirit has two important jobs: (1) To convince non-believers that they are sinners, that by themselves they cannot reach the state of perfection required to enter heaven, and that they therefore need a Savior, and (2) to guide God's children so that they can accomplish the purpose for which they were created.

It is because God saved you that you seek to be a disciple. Therefore, we want to study the second phase of the Spirit's ministry. It concerns the leadership you need in order to grow spiritually. **2 Corinthians 3:18** **"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."** teaches that when you are being obedient to the Spirit, He will reveal our Lord's truths to you in such a manner that your day to day growth will transform you into His image. Little by little you will see yourself change - like looking into a mirror and

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seeing Jesus in you more each day. This way, when your lost friends see you, they will see Jesus in you, and the Holy Spirit can work through you and can complete the first phase of His ministry, which is to convince non-believers of their need for a Savior. Because you are living in obedience to the Spirit, the world will compare itself to you, and will feel ashamed, recognize it's sins and want to repent, ask forgiveness, and accept the only One who can save.

The Holy Spirit uses at least three methods to bring about this transformation in you. According to **Romans 5:3-5** **"And not only *that,* but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us."** one of those methods involves bringing problems into your life. If you went through life with no problems or obstacles, you would come to depend on yourself and would find little reason to depend on God. When you encounter problems, and then learn to have faith in God and to depend on Him, the opportunity is created for Him to reveal His willingness and ability to provide for you and to help you through life's problems, as well as His will for your life.

This is the method the Spirit uses to "transform" us into the image of Christ. Jesus always sought to do the Father's will. So, you too must learn to do the same. However, if you are constantly depending on you own ability and are feeling self sufficient, you will find yourself doing only what you want, and will forget about the purpose of your existence, which is to bring honor and glory to God. Sometimes when you reach this point in your life, the Holy Spirit will send problems your way which will cause you to seek God's will and help, which in turn will cause you to become like Jesus and be "transformed into His image."

The second method the Spirit uses is the giving of "blessings." As you learn from your problems and make whatever adjustments to your life are necessary, you will receive blessings from God. They will come as rewards for your obedience and will help you to realize that God your Father is pleased when you are obedient. As you receive blessings from Him, you are going to want to serve Him more. This is another way the Spirit helps you to transform to the image of our Lord, who **"for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, scorning it's shame, and sat down at the right hand of the thrown of God"** **Hebrews 12:2**. As you receive blessings from the Father, you will be able to continue in what God wants you to do, suffer whatever difficulty needs to be endured, and determine to complete your mission no matter the price, knowing that at the end of your battle lies the *ultimate blessing*.

The third method the Spirit uses involves the Word of God. This is the most effective method because the Word of God is *POWERFUL*. **Hebrews 4:12** **"For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."** teaches us that the Bible cuts deeper than any two-edged sword. In other words, its words can penetrate all the way to the soul and spirit of man, and discern or read thoughts and intentions. *What POWER!* **Ephesians 6:17** **"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."** says that the Bible is the "sword of the Spirit". God will take His sword and, as a surgeon uses a scalpel to operate, will cut away anything that is hindering your spiritual health.

II. THE OBSTACLE TO THE SPIRIT'S MINISTRY

The major obstacle to the process of transforming you to the image of Christ, is not Satan, or his demons, sin or the world. It is you yourself. When you are disobedient to the Spirit's leadership and doing those things that your flesh naturally wants us to do, then you become an

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obstacle, slowing down the transformation process. When you get to the point where you will not let the process continue, you become useless to the purpose of God. Sometimes God removes those who refuse to follow His will. Such a situation occured in **1 Corinthians 5:1** **"It is actually reported *that there is* sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife!"** where one of the brethren at the church in Corinth was committing adultery with his father's wife. Apparently, that bother refused to change his behavior, so the apostle Paul "turned the brother over to Satan so that his sinful nature would be destroyed (his flesh desires), and his spirit saved unto the day of the Lord." In other words, because the brother was not going to let the transformation process continue, the Apostle asked that he be removed so as not to be an obstacle to others.

It is important that you need to understand that the Spirit is not a "thing" or an "it", but a person. He has feelings and can be offended. The Spirit is offended when you do not follow His leadership and turn away from God. This is the opposite of what a child of God should do. It is obeying the desires of the flesh. Why does the Spirit become offended when we disobey Him? It is because He loves us. He knows what is best for us and wants to guide us in that direction. The world wants to destroy us. Why should He not get offended when we choose to follow the world?

CONCLUSION: Remember that you are composed of three parts: Body, soul, and spirit. When you received Jesus as your Savior, the Holy Spirit of Christ entered into your human spirit and took up permanent residence there. He wants to have fellowship with you. He is that very special person living with you who is there to teach you, guide you, protect you, and help you transform to the image of our Lord. If you are going to be a true disciple of Christ, it is necessary to be obedient to the Holy Spirit.

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SPIRITUAL NOTEBOOK

LESSON NINE: MY GUIDE, THE HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE EXERCISE

1. I Thessalonians 5:16-19 "Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19 Do not quench the Spirit."

a. According to verses 16-18, what should we be continually doing? b. Are these three things evident in your life? c. What changes need to be made?

2. Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

a. What things should you be able to detect in the life of a disciple who is being obedient to the Spirit? b. In which of these things are you resisting? c. What can you work on to help speed up the transformation process?

3. John 16:13 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority,* but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."

a. According to this verse, what will the Spirit guide us to? b. What do you think "all truth" means? c. Can you name some truths that the Holy Spirit has guided you to?

4. 1 Corinthians 2:14 "Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.

a. Why are people who have not received Christ as Savior unable to understand things about God? b. At one time you thought God's things were foolish. c. Now you do not. Why?

REVIEW: Go over your Scripture studies this week and write down what you learned from them.

PRAYER:

FELLOWSHIP: (Any activity done with fellow Christians.)

WITNESSING: (Any activity done to share Christ with those who are lost.)

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DISCIPLESHIP

SERIES FOUR: MY SPIRITUAL WEAPONS

LESSON TEN: MY BIBLE

INTRODUCTION: Many good intentioned soldiers of the Lord are wiped out in the spiritual battle because they do not use the correct weapons. It is impossible to fight a war with spiritual beings using physical weapons. The only thing that will harm spiritual forces of evil are spiritual weapons. **2 Corinthians 10:3-5 "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."** indicate that even though we are physical, our weapons are not.

I. THE BIBLE IS THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ephesians 6:17 "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." teaches us that the Word of God is the "sword of the Spirit". If we are going to give the Holy Spirit a weapon to use in our lives, we are going to have to be students of the Word, and at the same time make sure we have a good relationship with Him.

2 Timothy 2:15 "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." exhorts us to be approved workers that know how to use God's word correctly. If we do not know the word, the Holy Spirit does not have anything to grab hold to, in order to use us. The more Bible we know, the better we will be able to fight for the honor and glory of our Lord.

Remember that Jesus set the example for us as far as being a student of the scriptures is concerned. Each time He met Satan in the "temptation in the desert" incident, He retaliated with the words, "It is written...it is written...it is written." He told the Pharisees that they had many errors because of their lack of Bible knowledge. If our Lord was dedicated to the study of the Bible, we must follow His example.

Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." indicates the power the Bible has, comparing it to a "two-edged sword." Could you imagine how bad a two-edged sword could cut an individual? The Bible penetrates deep into the soul and is potent enough to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart!

John 14:26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." talks about the Counselor, the precious Holy Spirit, who comes from the Father to teach us and remind us of the things Jesus taught and said. It was the Holy Spirit who reminded the apostles of Jesus' words and deeds, as they sat down to write the gospels of the New Testament. Just as He reminded them, He will also remind us of the thing we have gone over in the Bible when the time comes. But what will He bring to our memories if we never study the Bible? He cannot bring to our memories things that we never have seen before.

We must realize that without the help of the Holy Spirit, we will never be able to utilize God's

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word to the maximum power. We must remember that the bible is a sword, but it is the "sword of the Spirit". It does not belong to us. The only one who can yield it 100% correctly is the Spirit. For this reason, we need to be totally obedient to Him. This is the only way we will be able to lift the Bible up and be sure it will accomplish what God wants it to.

II. THE BIBLE IS MORE THAN A BOOK. IT IS A COMPLETE LIBRARY

The Bible is a compilation of 66 books, making it a complete library! These 66 books can be divided into two groups. The first group of books was compiled before Jesus' personal ministry on earth. This group of books are catalogued under a section titled "Old Testament". The second group of books was written after Jesus personal ministry on earth and is found in a section we call the "New testament".

The books of the Old Testament are 39, and we can divide them the following way:

BOOKS OF THE LAW	**05 (Genesis to Deuteronomy)**
BOOKS OF HISTORY	**12 (Joshua to Esther)**
BOOKS OF POETRY	**05 (Job to Songs of Solomon)**
BOOKS OF MAJOR PROPHETS	**05 (Isaiah to Daniel)**
BOOKS OF MINOR PROPHETS	**12 (Hosea to Malachi)**

There are 27 books in the New Testament, which can be divided in the following manner:

BOOKS OF BIOGRAPHY	**04 (Matthew to John)**
BOOKS OF HISTORY	**01 (The Acts of the Apostles)**
EPISTLES (letters)	**21 (Romans to Jude)**
BOOK OF PROPHECY	**01 (Revelation)**

III. HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

If we want to find the treasures in the Bible, we will have to do more than just look at it from time to time. We will have to dig in! This is the only way we will be able to find the trea-sures that are waiting for us. But, in order to dig deep, we are going to need some special instructions.

There are three study instruments that theologians (those who study the Bible), use to help them find treasure. They are **OBSERVATION**, **INTERPRETATION**, and **APPLICATION**. Each one of these instruments will help us dig just a little bit deeper.

Before we start digging, we have to have some knowledge of the terrain. Therefore, it is intelligent to read over the area we are going to study in order to get an idea of where we are going to start digging.

OBSERVATION - What is God saying? With this first instrument, we need to do the following:

1. Write down the main messages given in the verses being studied.
2. Write down any words we do not understand or know.
3. Write down names of people and places that are mentioned in our verses.

INTERPRETATION - What is God saying? With this first instrument, we need to take the following steps:

1. Find the definition of the unknown words you wrote down. These words could be keys to understanding the meaning of the text being studied.

2. Look up any information on the people or places mentioned in the text. The knowledge gained from this could be very helpful in interpreting the meaning of the text being studied.

3. God knows we have needs. He wants to help us. What is the need presented in the text (remember, it could be hidden), for which God is giving the answer?

APPLICATION - What am I going to do with what God is teaching me? This is the most powerful instrument and very important, because if we are not going to apply what we have learned, we have wasted our time. It would be like finding money and burying it. In order to use this instrument correctly we must:

1. Write down attitudes or changes that need to be made.
2. Write down things you can do to practice what you have learned in the text you are studying.
3. Write down how the devil could try to stop you from making these changes, so as to be prepared when the time comes.

EXAMPLE OF BIBLE STUDY:

BIBLE EXERCISE: James 4:4 "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

OBSERVATION:

1. God is saying that a person cannot be friends with the world, and call themselves His friend at the same time. He distinctly says that if I choose to be the world's friend, then I am His enemy.
2. ADULTEROUS.
3. No names are mentioned.

INTERPRETATION:

1. ADULTEROUS: Guilty of adultery.
2. Adultery: Sexual unfaithfulness on the part of a married person.
3. God understands the pressures that the world puts on us. He knows we have a need to be loved and wanted by others. But He also knows the world will destroy us. When we make friends with the world, we participate in their destruction. Since God knows what is best for us, and we are participating in what is wrong for us and for others, we make ourselves His enemy. When I accepted Jesus as my Savior, a new relationship with God was established. When I do what the world wants me to do, and participate with them in sin, I am unfaithful to that relationship.

APPLICATION:

1. I need to change my attitude toward God and the world. Who loves me more than God does? The world is doing everything it can to hurt God and destroy His creation. How could I possibly participate.
2. I need to look at the end results of things. Take smoking, drugs, or alcohol for instance. So, the world says they make you look or act cool. But is that really true? What is so cool about ending up in the hospital? Forget the world and it's fun. I think it would be to my advantage to take a closer look at things that the world calls "fun".
3. The devil will probably get my friends to pour the pressure on. I might even lose a couple of

friends for a time. But I know that I need God on my side if I am ever going to be able to help them. I sure cannot do it if I am caught up in the things they are doing!

SPIRITUAL NOTEBOOK

LESSON TEN: MY BIBLE

BIBLE EXERCISE: We are going to begin practicing the steps of **Observation**, **Interpretation**, and **Application** this week.

1. 2 Timothy 2:15 "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

2. Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

3. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 "For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

4. John 14:26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."

REVIEW: Go over your Scripture studies this week and write down what you learned from them.

PRAYER:

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DISCIPLESHIP

SERIES FOUR: MY SPIRITUAL WEAPONS

LESSON ELEVEN: PRAYER

INTRODUCTION: The best way to learn how to ride a bicycle is to simply get on one, take off, and try not to fall! This same principle can be applied to prayer. The best way to learn to pray is by just doing it. Pray, pray, and pray some more. The more time we spend in prayer, the easier it will be for us.

We are studying about our spiritual weapons. in our last lesson we studied about the Bible. In this weapon, we are going to observe another powerful weapon: **Prayer**. Prayer is how we communicate with God. He communicates with us through His word, and we communicate with Him by way of prayer. Prayer is just talking to God.

We must understand that prayer is not for God. It is for us. He knows our deepest thoughts. We do not have to say anything for Him to know what we are thinking or feeling. Prayer was designed for us. It is a weapon that God has placed at our disposition and we can either use it or put it away in a closet, which is what the majority of Christians have done for years. If we have faith we will use it.

Once more, let it be understood that there is no correct formula for prayer. God will listen to anyone who comes to Him with a sincere heart. But there are four ingredients that can be included in our prayers that will help us be more effective during our prayer time. The four ingredients are: **PRAISE**, **CONFESSION**, **INTERCESSION**, and **THANKSGIVING**. Lets take a look at what the Bible has to say about these four ingredients, and make an attempt to include them in our prayer time.

I. THE INGREDIENT OF PRAISE:

We must understand to WHOM we are presenting ourselves when we pray. We are not coming before just anybody. We are presenting ourselves before the God of the Universe!

Hebrews 4:16 **"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."** tells us we can come boldly before the throne of God, because we are His children. We can come to His throne because we realize He is GOD! We will come before His throne because we know He is the only ONE who can help us in our time of need.

As we approach the throne of God, we do so with confidence, because He is our Father. However, we do not come before Him with a lack of respect. He is our Creator who has given His life for us. We are His children, but only because of His grace, and we must never forget this truth. None of us can come before God because we deserve to. We can only come before Him because He has so desired. For us to be able to do this is a privilege.

Hebrews 11:6 **"But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him,* for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."** indicates that God wants us to believe that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. he wants us to seek Him and believe Him. If we truly believe that He is the Creator of all things, then we need to tell Him so. He already knows this, but He wants us to confess it. We do not

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have to do so out loud as He knows our thoughts. However, it is necessary for us to direct our thoughts to Him, no matter whether it be out loud or in thought. If we really thought that God was listening to us we would spend more time with Him in prayer. God wants us to come to Him in faith, believing! We must come to Him and tell Him how wonderful He is and praise Him for His magnificence!

Hebrews 13:15 **"*Let your* conduct *be* without covetousness; *be* content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, '*I will never leave you nor forsake you.*'"** encourages us to offer praise to God always. We must always give Him the "fruit of our lips"!

II. THE INGREDIENT OF CONFESSION

When we approach the throne of God, we must be careful that we do so in humility. We must constantly remember WHO God is and who we are. We are nothing more than sinners saved by His grace. There is one thing that God will not tolerate in our lives: sin that has not been confessed. When we come to His throne trying to hide our sin (something that is absolutely impossible) we are being disrespectful to God. We are not being sincere with Him. We are being hypocritical and God will not tolerate such an attitude in His children.

Isaiah 59:1-2 **"Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden *His* face from you, so that He will not hear."** teaches us that God has the power to do whatever He pleases to do. If He does not answer our prayers it is because our sins have built a dividing wall between Him and us and He will not listen.

I Chronicles 7:14 **"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."** explains that there are conditions to meet. If we will humble ourselves, pray, and seek Him and turn from our wicked ways, then He will listen to us and answer. But we must make a sincere effort to seek God. And we must remember that God is the boss, He is in charge, not us!

Psalm 66:18 **"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear."** tells us that God will not listen to us if we regard wickedness in our hearts. We must be sincere when we come before Him. We cannot deceive Him.

God hates sin and we know it. When we have fallen in sin He will not abandon us, but He will insist that we be honest with Him. We must confess our sins, sincerely ask His forgiveness, and when we have done this He promises to hear our prayers and answer them according to His will.

III. THE INGREDIENT OF INTERCESSION

The purpose of our existence is to honor and glorify God. This purpose is fulfilled when we serve others in His name. Our Lord Jesus said that He did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life to rescue others. As His disciples, we should do the same.

Our Lord gave up all His titles in heaven and came to the earth to give His life, being obedient to God the Father. There was not an egotistical bone in His body. All His life was lived to help others. The same should be said of His disciples. Our ministry is to serve God by serving others in His name.

James 4:3 **"You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend**

***it* on your pleasures."** explains that we do not receive what we ask for because we ask selfishly. We are always asking for things that we want, things that concern our flesh nature, things for us and not for the cause of Christ and the enlarging of His kingdom.

1 Timothy 2:1 "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men." indicates that we must come before God in prayer for all men.

1 Samuel 12:23 "Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way." reminds of the prophet's words, who considered it a sin not to pray for Israel. Jesus has taught us that we are the salt of the earth and lights of this world. It is our task to intercede for mankind. When we come before God on behalf of others, we need to come with a sincere desire for their welfare. Such was Moses' desire for the welfare of Israel that he said, **"Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. But now, please forgive their sin - but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written" Exodus 32:31-32**. Moses showed true concern for his people. So concerned was he, that his own welfare was not of importance to him.

The apostle Paul has this same feeling. In **Romans 9:3** the apostle writes: **"For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race."** So great was Paul's love for the Jewish race, that he would have been willing to go to hell, if that would save them.

Our Lord's entire life was one of intercession. In everyone of His prayers, we find Him asking for others. If we are His disciples, we will do the same. Our world needs us. It needs us because we are the ones interceding day and night for the welfare of mankind.

IV. THE INGREDIENT OF THANKSGIVING:

Even in our egotism, we do not forget to go to God when we are in trouble. We will always come to Him if it is convenient to do so. But this same egotism does not permit us to show our gratitude. We are experts at asking for things, but very poor at giving thanks.

Luke 17:11-19 "Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. 12 Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. 13 And they lifted up *their* voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" 14 So when He saw *them,* He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. 15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 and fell down on *his* face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. 17 So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where *are* the nine? 18 Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" 19 And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well." tells us of ten lepers who came to Jesus for healing. He sent them to the Jewish priests to be declared clean. On their way to the priests, all ten were healed. How many returned to thank Jesus? Only one! We follow our merry way (like the other nine), and never give thanks? Do we truly believe we deserve God's favor?

1 Thessalonians 5:18 "in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." teaches us to give thanks in everything, because this pleases God. Once again, it is our ego that will not let us recognize the fact that everything we have belongs to Him,

and that if it were not for Him, we would have absolutely nothing. We should be thankful.

CONCLUSION: We must understand that prayer is simply talking to God. He wants us to communicate with Him. He wants us to take time to talk with Him each and every day. If we use these four ingredients our time will be well spent, and in time we will become prayer Warriors like our Lord Jesus Christ.

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SPIRITUAL NOTEBOOK

LESSON ELEVEN: PRAYER

BIBLE EXERCISE: We are going to practice the process of Observation, Interpretation, and Application using the following verses.

1. Colossians 4:2 "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving."

2. Matthew 6:5 "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward."

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

4. Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him,* for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

PRAYER:

FELLOWSHIP:

WITNESSING:

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DISCIPLESHIP

SERIES FOUR: MY SPIRITUAL WEAPONS

LESSON TWELVE: FELLOWSHIP AND WITNESSING

INTRODUCTION: If we are honest with ourselves, we will probably agree that the thing that most makes people take a look at the gospel is a changed life. A changed life is something that will really catch people's attention.

1 Corinthians 2:14 **"But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him,* for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."** tells us that the natural man, the man who has not received Jesus as his Savior yet, cannot understand spiritual things. In fact, spiritual things are foolish to him. This person cannot understand spiritual things, because he has not been born spiritually.

The important thing about understanding this spiritual truth is that we will soon realize that we must present spiritual things in a manner that the world can understand. The only things the world can understand are physical or material things. In other words, we must learn to show them in a physical or material way, the effects that spirituality can have upon a person for the better. This is not going to be easy, but it is the only thing that we can do that they can understand.

There are two kinds of people in our world: Believers and non-believers. We have to live with and help both groups. The way we relate to both of these groups will have an affect on the way they picture us. The image we want to project is an image of encouragement and dedication to the Lord. This way, people can look at us and physically see what the spiritual has done for us. This image will help us conquer more territory for God's kingdom. The world will see Jesus in us, and that is every disciple's desire.

I. FELLOWSHIP:

Fellowship involves the way we relate to other believers (brothers and sisters in Christ). We must understand that even though we do not agree on everything, that if we have received Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we are brothers. There is nothing that can change that fact! We are family. All believers belong to God's family.

1 Timothy 5:1-2 **"Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort *him* as a father, younger men as brothers, 2 older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity."** tells us we must act in a special way, when family is concerned. We must treat our elders in the family as we would our parents, and those who are our own age and younger must be treated as brothers and sisters. We are family and our behavior must be one of love, because our Heavenly father is LOVE.

James 5:16 **"Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."** teaches us to confess our weaknesses to each other and pray for each other, so that we can be healthy. As we share our weaknesses with each other, we can know how to help and protect each other a little better.

Colossians 3:12-13 **"Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and**

forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do."* says that we must be patient and put up with each other. It also says that if a brother offends us we must forgive him. We have to understand that even though we are all brothers and sisters in Christ some of us have not reached the same spiritual maturity of others, therefore we have to be patient and teach each other.

Hebrews 13:17 **"Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you."** indicates that our spiritual family has structure. If the family were not organized, we would never get anywhere, because everyone would be doing their own thing. God has placed a Pastor over His congregation, to be the spiritual leader or guide. The pastor has an awesome responsibility and needs the family's cooperation in order to accomplish the task of leading the flock.

Galatians 6:6 **"Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches."** tells us of the need to share our victories with those who have taught in spiritual warfare. We must consider those who teach us the Word, as our older brothers and sisters, who watch over us and protect us, as they teach us the responsibilities we must share as a family.

There is no one who can understand us better than our brothers and sisters in Christ, other than Jesus Himself. The world does not understand us because it does not understand spiritual matters. Since this is true, it does not make any sense for us to bicker with each other. If we do not protect those of our own family, who will?

II. WITNESSING

Witnessing involves our behavior with non-believers. Having obtained good fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ, we will have the backup we need to help those who are caught up in the world.

Matthew 5:16 **"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."** tells us that our light must shine before men, that they would see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven. When non-believers look at us, they need to see Jesus. If they see evil in us, they will not be able to see a difference between them and us, and therefore will not understand why we say they need to receive Jesus. However, if we show them physically, what we are spiritually, then they will recognize their need, and this will give us the opportunity to present Jesus to them.

1 Corinthians 12;27 **"Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually."** indicates that we are the body of Christ. We are His hands and feet. If we do not help bring freedom to the world, no one will. It is our job.

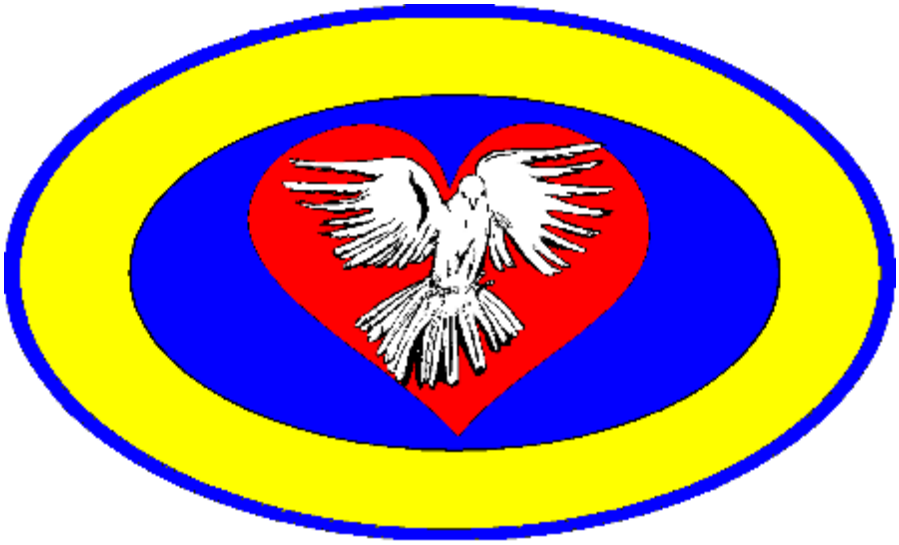
Titus 2:7-8 **"In all things showing yourself *to be* a pattern of good works; in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, 8 sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you."** tells us that it is our responsibility to set a good example in everything we do. Such an example must be set, so that our enemy should be ashamed, not having anything bad to accuse us of.

Truly, all this has to do with the fact that the world is fed up with hearing about Christianity. They need to SEE Christianity! And they SHOULD see Christianity! Most of the time people take a look at Christians they want to run away instead of getting closer. This has to change!

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As we practice fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ, what **Proverbs 27:17 "*As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.*"** talks about will happen to us. As steel sharpens steel, so we will sharpen one another. And when this process has taken place, we can enter the world with great force, and win souls for our Lord Jesus Christ!

We must remember that it is not enough to talk about spiritual things to the world, because those who have not been saved cannot understand. We will have to live the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh.



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SPIRITUAL NOTEBOOK

LESSON TWELVE: FELLOWSHIP AND WITNESSING

BIBLE EXERCISE: Use the process of Observation, Interpretation, and Application with the following verses.

1. 1 Timothy 5:8 "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

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

3. Ephesians 4:32 "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."

4. Matthew 5:26 "Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny."

5. Titus 2:7-8 "In all things showing yourself *to be* a pattern of good works; in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, 8 sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you."

PRAYER:

FELLOWSHIP:

WITNESSING:

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