



# **A Life That's Real**

**By G. Christian Weiss**

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## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Since you will be studying God's Word (the Bible), you will want to give it your complete attention. Find a quiet place in which to study. Then ask God to teach you more about Himself and His Word as you study.
2. Read each lesson carefully. Look up each Scripture reference in your Bible. Study until you believe you understand the material
3. Memorize the Scripture verse listed at the end of each lesson. Once you have the verses in your mind, God will be able to remind you of truths from those verses that will help you in living for Him.
4. The examination found at the end of the lesson without looking at your book, your Bible or any notes you may have made. This will help you see how well you understand the material. After you have finished, turn to the back of the book to check your answers. If you missed any, you may want to study that part of the lesson again.
5. Ask God to show you how to apply what you have learned. We need to know what God's Word says, but we also need to do what it says. James 1:22 says, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only." God's Word has the power to change your life. but you must believe it and obey it.

# Lesson 1

## Salvation: God's Side and Your Side

Your salvation involves God as well as you. This truth is clearly disclosed in the Scriptures.

### **The Fact of Sin**

The basic fact every person must face as he considers his spiritual relationship to God is that of sin. Every human being is conscious of sin to some extent, although some may not want to openly admit it. When a person wants to pray or turn to God in time of need, the inborn consciousness of sin and unworthiness almost immediately arises within him. How can one who is so full of sin gain an audience with God? How can a sinner experience fellowship with the Holy One? These are the first questions that come to the mind of the seeking soul.

The consciousness of sin is not merely the result of childhood training, nor does it come only to those who read and know the Bible. Even in heathen lands, men and women experience that same consciousness of sin when they desire to approach God. Pagan religions are characterized by unceasing attempts to atone for sin and to appease the displeasure of their gods. People everywhere are conscious of sin.

### **The Problem Sin Causes**

You, too, must come face to face with this unalterable fact of sin, if you haven't already. As you consider the matter of your salvation-your being reconciled with God-you will undoubtedly become conscious of the wall of sin between you and God. Your conscience, common honesty, the convicting voice of the Holy Spirit and the Bible itself tell you that you have sinned (Isa. 53:6; Rom. 3:10,23). The Bible's testimony concerning sin is universal, indicting and indisputable.

Within the human heart there arises a corresponding consciousness of the holiness and justice of God. God is pure, holy, righteous and just; therefore He cannot tolerate sin. As the great, just Judge, He cannot ignore the guilt of human sin.

## **God's Love for Humanity**

That God loves all people, even though they are sinful, is also beyond dispute. The love of God is one of the main themes of the Scriptures. God loves the entire human race-every descendant of Adam. God loves you because you are a human being; nothing else is required to qualify you for a place in His love. When all human loves are exhausted or withdrawn, you can still rest on the fact that God loves you (Jer. 31:3; John 3:16; Rom. 5:8).

In addition, God is a God of mercy (Ps. 103:17). Mercy and love always go together. One cannot exist without the other. Mercy always desires to forgive and constantly pleads for leniency, exoneration and pardon for the guilty soul.

God is both a God of justice and a God of mercy. But how can He exercise both in dealing with sinners? God's justice requires that punishment be given for sin; yet God's love pleads for the sinner's pardon. How can God both punish and pardon sin? How can He be both just and merciful to us who are sinful?

## **God's Solution**

Thank God, He has yet another divine attribute-wisdom. God's infinite wisdom, stimulated by His holy love, solved this great problem and provided a way for our salvation. The answer was the cross, where God gave His only Son, Jesus Christ, to die in the place of guilty sinners, paying in full the penalty of their sins. Sin was not ignored, it was punished (Isa. 53:6; 1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18). On the cross Jesus declared, "It is finished" (John 19:30), indicating that the necessary judgment of mankind's sins was finished. Because the price was paid, mercy could now be extended to sinful people!

At the cross both God's justice and His mercy were operative. His holiness (which required the just punishment of sin) was satisfied, and His mercy (which desired man's pardon) was also satisfied. At Calvary the power and wisdom of God were both demonstrated (1 Cor. 1:18-25).

Only Christ's death could provide our salvation. The cross is God's side of salvation-it was all God's doing. The gracious act of a just and loving God furnished a righteous way of salvation for sinful and guilty humanity. Salvation is primarily the work of God-the operation of His own wisdom, love and grace.

## **Your Side of Salvation**

Although Christ died for all mankind and paid for everyone's sins, people are not automatically saved. Every individual must play a simple and minor, yet very important, part in salvation. Each person must accept by simple faith what Christ did for him on the cross. All he must do is believe, accept, trust and receive what Christ has done in his behalf. Our part of salvation is just faith-simple, childlike, trusting faith (Acts 16:31). Nothing more is needed. nothing less will suffice, nothing else will do.

## **What Faith Includes**

Faith involves knowledge, or understanding and comes in response to what we hear or learn. You cannot believe something about which you know nothing. Saving faith requires knowledge and understanding of Christ's work on the cross. An individual may hear that Christ died for his sins, but he does not have saving faith until he realizes that Christ completely paid for all his sins, once and for all, and he can do nothing but personally accept that fact.

Anyone who hears the gospel and really understands that salvation is now a finished work of Christ on his behalf has laid the groundwork for saving faith. Such knowledge is the first element of faith.

I will never forget the night when saving faith became mine. A man had dealt with me long and faithfully, pointing me to the cross and Christ's invitation to come and be saved, but all I could see was my sin and unworthiness. He prayed, and I tried to, but I left the meeting that evening in spiritual darkness and misery. After reaching home, however, the truth that Jesus Christ had actually paid the penalty for all my sins suddenly became clear! They were answered for! They were atoned for! He died for me-for my sin! I understood for the first time the divine plan of salvation. Faith was dawning. I now knew what Christ had done on the cross of Calvary.

Faith also involves decision. Once the fact of Christ's work on the cross is understood, the individual must decide either to repent of sin and accept Christ or to reject the plan of salvation. This decision of faith must be made after the knowledge of salvation is grasped. Many people have lived in Christian homes and have heard the gospel all their lives; yet they have never made that personal decision to accept Christ. They must do this, or they will not be saved.

The decision to accept Christ involves repenting of sin. Everyone who understands a degree of spiritual truth knows that following Christ means forsaking sin. The necessity of repentance keeps many from accepting Christ.

## **A Personal Decision**

When you understand what Christ did for you on the cross and know that to accept and follow Him means repentance and turning away from sin, you must personally decide what you will do. The mind must be enlightened and the will exercised-faith involves both the intellect and the will. What will your choice be as you consider Christ's sacrifice for your sin? This is your personal responsibility.

You must accept what Christ has done in order to be benefited by it. It does no good to get the best physician and to secure an expensive remedy if you do not take it. Likewise, the faith you may have in an airplane will not get you across the ocean unless you actually board it; then the faith you previously expressed goes into action. Similarly, faith in Christ must involve action; you do not really trust Him until you rely entirely on Him for salvation.

Have you accepted Christ, repenting of your sins and sincerely determining in your heart to follow Him? If not, this decision faces you now. What is your reaction to the fact that He died for you and now pleads with you to come to Him for full and free forgiveness? What is the answer of your will to the knowledge you now have of the Savior and His work on the cross? This is the decision of all decisions-to personally accept Christ as your Savior-for it determines your eternal destiny. If you have accepted Christ and repented of your sin, your salvation is forever sealed.

## **What Saving Faith Is**

Faith is just believing the promises of God's Word. The Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16: 31) and, "Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). This truth is also stated in John 1:12 and 5:24.

Will God keep His word? Will Christ fulfill His promises? Our salvation depends on His trustworthiness. So faith, in the final and simplest analysis, is believing the promises of God's Word and acting on them. If we do not rely on His promises, we can have no sure hope. But if the Bible is true, our salvation is secure.

Faith is a matter of adhering to the one and only hope of salvation, the crucified Christ. You may not understand all the spiritual significance of the cross or all the theological explanations about the atonement. But you know that Christ paid for your sins at Calvary, and you know this alone is your hope

of salvation. To that crucified and resurrected Savior you cling in earnest, simple faith.

Two lines from the hymn "Rock of Ages" well express what true, saving faith is: "In my hand no price I bring, / Simply to Thy cross I cling."

No works of yours, no matter how good they may be, can pay for sin. Only Jesus Christ, who died, rose again and lives forever, is able to save you. Thank God that your salvation does not depend on you but on Christ, and then trust Him.

## **Memorize Romans 5:8.**

### **Examination**

Fill in the blanks:

1. When a person wants to turn to God, he becomes conscious of his \_\_\_\_\_ and unworthiness.
2. The heathen who have not heard the gospel are conscious of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. God loves all \_\_\_\_\_, but He cannot ignore their guilt of sin.
4. God in His mercy desires to forgive sinners, but being just, He requires that \_\_\_\_\_ be given for sin.
5. God, in His wisdom and love, solved the problem of man's salvation through the death of \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Christ died in the place of guilty sinners, paying in full the \_\_\_\_\_ of their sins.
7. The cross is \_\_\_\_\_ side of salvation.

Underline the correct words:

8. Our salvation is primarily the work of ourselves / God, although it involves both.
9. Since Christ died for all mankind, all we need to do is to realize this / accept Christ in order to be saved.



**10. Saving faith requires knowledge and understanding of the Old and New Testaments / what Christ did on the cross.**

**11. The decision to accept Christ as Savior must be made before / after the knowledge of salvation is grasped.**

**12. The decision to accept Christ has nothing to do with / involves repenting of sin.**

**13. You do not really trust Christ until you personally believe what the Bible says about Him / rely entirely on Him for salvation.**

**14. In its simplest analysis, faith is hoping / believing the promises of God's Word are true and acting on them.**

**15. In order to cling to Christ in saving faith, you must / need not understand the theological explanations about the atonement.**

**Write Romans 5:8 from memory on the lines below.**

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## Lesson 2

### Dealing With Doubts

Many believe a person cannot be assured of eternal life until he faces God at the judgment seat after death. Even some true Christians do not have the assurance of salvation and think it is impossible to attain such assurance in this life.

But this is not the Bible's picture! The New Testament does not portray the followers of Christ groping through life in darkness and uncertainty, never sure of their salvation until after death. The message of the gospel is not one of doubt and suspense.

#### **Assurance Is Possible**

Christians can be sure of their salvation. The First Epistle of John was written so that believers might know that they have eternal life (5:13). To deny the possibility of the believer's assurance of salvation would be to deny the message of this book thus insulting the Holy Spirit, who inspired John's writing.

Assurance of salvation is not only possible but also logical. Christ promised eternal life as a present possession to all who will put their trust in Him. To doubt that you have eternal life after believing on Christ is to say that He is untrue to His promises. The message of the gospel is not one of uncertainty. Is it not reasonable that the Savior, who has asked you to follow Him, would give you assurance of your eternal home?

How may an individual know that he has eternal life? There are three sources of assurance—the change that has been made in one's life, the testimony of the Word of God, and the inward witness of the Holy Spirit.

#### **A Changed Life**

The testimony of the Apostle Paul was "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). When a person comes to personally know Jesus Christ as his Savior, God inwardly transforms his life. He gives him a new nature—the nature of Christ, for all believers have become "partakers of the divine nature"

(2 Pet. 1:4). This new nature naturally produces new attitudes and opinions, new likes and dislikes, new loves and hatreds. The things a person once loved, he now hates; and the things he once hated, he now loves. The whole inward motivation of his life has been changed.

Not only is this change apparent to the inner consciousness of the individual himself, his outward life also will appear different to those around him. The whole character of his life will be changed. Often a complete change of disposition will occur and even one's conversation may be altered.

When a person has accepted Christ, there will be changes within him, particularly in his desires. Ambitions, affections and inward nature will be switched from evil things to godliness. If you can honestly say that such a change has taken place in your life, you may rest assured that it was accomplished by the Holy Spirit and is a sign that you have been born of God (John 1:12,13).

When a person becomes a Christian, he is "born again" (3:3). Human birth is the demonstration of physical life. The new birth is the demonstration of spiritual life-the evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit. When a person is born again, he receives a new inner nature (2 Cor. 5:17). The consciousness of a new nature-the Christ life-within is evidence that you are born of God.

Of course, the old nature is also within, and conflicts often arise between the old and the new natures. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17). Your old nature ("the flesh") fights with the new nature ("the Spirit"). Such conflicts are normal in the life of a real Christian-one who has been saved and made a child of God forever.

## **The Testimony of the Bible**

The believer in Christ may have assurance of his salvation on the most reliable of all grounds-the Word of God. John 1:12 is a clear statement that everyone who receives Jesus as his Savior positively becomes a child of God. Acts 13:39 states that every believer is "justified from all things," declared free from the guilt of sin. The Lord Jesus Christ assured believers that they have eternal life now and will never be condemned (John 5:24). You can always trust God's Word.

Many doubt their salvation and relationship to God merely because of personal feeling. We may have feelings, but it is only the Word of God that gives us definite assurance of salvation. We need to ask, "Have I met the

condition of these promises?" That condition is faith in the finished work of Christ.

When Jesus healed the sinful woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee, He told her, "Thy sins are forgiven" (Luke 7:48). Would it not have been presumptuous for her to say she doubted that her sins had all been forgiven? Is it any more presumptuous for a Christian today to say that he knows his sins are forgiven and he is saved? God plainly states these truths in Ephesians 1:7; 4:32 and 1 John 2:12. If you have called on the Lord Jesus Christ to save you (Rom. 10:13), either He has saved you or God's promises are false.

If Satan causes you to doubt that your sins are forgiven, point to the Word of God and say, "God says that my sins are forgiven, because I have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe that what God says is true." If Satan should lead you to think that you have not really believed in Christ, just say, "If I never did believe on Him before, I accept Him as my Savior here and now." Then go on your way rejoicing, knowing that your sins are forgiven and that you are a child of God on the basis of God's own written promises.

Suppose that you had been justly imprisoned and that without your knowledge, friends had suddenly secured your pardon. You are summoned to the warden's office and handed the document. You are somewhat surprised by the suddenness of the transaction.

Then someone asks you if you feel pardoned, and you reply that you don't. "But," says your questioner, "how do you know that you are pardoned if you don't feel like it?" You point to the document and state, "Because this says so!" You do not depend on your feelings but only on what is written.

The Bible is God's authoritative document declaring that everyone who believes in Jesus is justified, has everlasting life and is a child of God. If anyone asks if you know that your sins are forgiven, you can reply, "Yes, I know they are because God says so." You may not feel forgiven, but you believe God. However, if you keep meditating on God's statements and believing God's Word, you will eventually feel forgiven, too.

### **The Inward Witness**

The inward presence and voice of the Holy Spirit is a third witness to assurance of salvation. The Holy Spirit "beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16). This is not a human feeling but a divine impression. The Holy Spirit brings to our inner consciousness the vivid assurance that we are saved.

The Holy Spirit assures us primarily through the Word of God itself. Yet often in countries where many people are unable to read and write, the Holy Spirit has remarkably brought assurance of salvation even to illiterate people. The Holy Spirit was sent into our hearts to be our Comforter, and one of His main messages of comfort is the assurance of our salvation.

The Holy Spirit witnesses to the fact that we are Christ's as we read the Word of God and meditate on it with a yielded heart and open mind. The Spirit firmly implants the Bible's truths in the soul.

The inward witness of the Holy Spirit is further strengthened and deepened as we commune with God in prayer. Prayer is not only petition but also communion. We speak to God and He speaks to us through the Holy Spirit.

If you are troubled with doubts about your salvation, do not merely search the Bible but go to God in prayer. As you pray, the Holy Spirit will speak to your heart and bring the wonderful assurance that you are His child. A Christian who does not pray may lose the assurance of his salvation (not the salvation itself, of course), because it is usually as we pray that the Holy Spirit communicates that assurance to us.

When you become discouraged, go to the Lord in prayer and let the Holy Spirit comfort your heart with His voice of assurance and hope. The very fact that you find comfort and assurance as you pray is in itself a proof of your salvation-the Holy Spirit communicates this assurance only to believers.

You need not go through life wondering whether you are saved or lost. The change in your own heart and life, the testimony of God's Word and the inward witness of the Holy Spirit unite to bring the true Christian a definite assurance that he is saved for time and eternity. When doubts persist, look back again to the Christ of the cross and say, "He died for my sins. He paid my penalty. He promised that if I would trust Him as my Substitute, He would save me. I have trusted Him. Now I depend on Him to keep His promise."

New Christians sometimes become discouraged and feel that they are lost if they seem to lose the warmth of their first love for Christ. However, we need to remember that our feelings and affections may change with the condition of our health, the weather or circumstances. But Jesus Christ never changes. He is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). We can avoid some doubts by cultivating the desire for earnest study of the Scriptures, prayerful self-examination and obedient Christian living. Always keep "looking

unto Jesus the author and finisher [perfector] of our faith" (Heb. 12:2).

Being sure of your salvation will give you spiritual stability, and this will greatly help your spiritual growth.

## **Memorize John 5:24.**

### **Examination**

True or False

1. \_\_\_\_ A Christian cannot have assurance of salvation.
2. \_\_\_\_ To deny the possibility of being sure of salvation is to deny the message of 1 John.
3. \_\_\_\_ It is reasonable that the Savior would give His followers assurance of an eternal home.
4. \_\_\_\_ When a person accepts Christ as Savior, God inwardly transforms his life.
5. \_\_\_\_ Often a change in one's speech and actions will occur after he has accepted Christ.
6. \_\_\_\_ There will be no conflicts between the old and new natures after one has accepted Christ.
7. \_\_\_\_ Only one verse in the Bible gives us assurance of our salvation.
8. \_\_\_\_ We can depend on our feelings; if we don't feel saved, we apparently are not saved.

Answer the following questions:

9. Can a person say, on the authority of the Scriptures, that he is saved?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. If Satan causes you to doubt your salvation, what should you depend on in answering him? \_\_\_\_\_

11. What authoritative document declares that believers are justified and have everlasting life? \_\_\_\_\_

**12. Who brings to our consciousness the assurance that we are saved?**

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**13. In what two ways is the witness of the Holy Spirit to our salvation strengthened?** \_\_\_\_\_

**14. To what persons does the Holy Spirit give assurance?**

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**15. What will earnest Bible study, prayerful self-examination and obedient Christian living help us to avoid?**

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**Write John 5:24 from memory on the lines below.**

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## Lesson 3

### Your Fellowship With God

Having become a child of God, the greatest privilege in the world is now yours—fellowship with God! This fellowship is possible only on the basis of Christ's death. Because God dealt with our sin at Calvary, the Holy God and sinful man can meet. God can and will accept any person who will place his trust in the blood that was shed on the cross as an atonement for his sin.

Fellowship with God is possible because of Christ, who died on the cross, and because of our faith in the work He finished there. The crucified Savior is now our ascended Lord and High Priest (Heb. 4:14-16; 10:19-22). He makes it possible for us to come freely to the Father.

#### **Cultivating Fellowship**

Fellowship with God is strengthened and deepened by the habitual practice of prayer and by constantly living in an atmosphere of prayer. As you visit with someone and spend time with him, your fellowship deepens and becomes richer. Our fellowship with God develops in the same way.

Fellowship with God is also cultivated through the reading of His Word. When we pray, we are talking to God; when we read the Bible, God is talking to us. Let us be sure that we spend time praying and searching His Word.

#### **Maintaining Fellowship**

Sometimes sin breaks our fellowship, and we do not enjoy the presence of God. This does not indicate that we have lost our salvation; although we are disobedient, we are still children of God.

Naturally, no one can continue to fellowship with God while he is participating in sin. Fellowship with God is maintained by confessing and forsaking every known sin. When you realize that you have sinned against God, go to Him immediately, confess your sin, and ask His forgiveness and restoration (I John 1:9). God will be true to His Word and restore you to fellowship with Himself.



## **Fellowship Indispensable**

Without fellowship with God, the Christian does not experience the true joy of the Lord. God intends that His people have joy (John 15:11; Rom. 14:17; 1 Pet. 1:8). When one does not live in fellowship with God, he loses the joy of salvation. Happy Christians experience close fellowship with God; they pray, read God's Word and obey Him.

Fellowship with God is necessary to a life of victory over sin and Satan. Backsliding begins when fellowship with God is not cultivated-when Bible study and prayer are neglected. If you fail to do your part in maintaining your fellowship with God, you will soon begin to drift away from the Lord, and you will eventually fall into sin. You cannot resist Satan in your own strength; you must get strength from the Lord daily. No Christian can grow strong spiritually and triumph over sin and the world if he does not live a life of prayer and communion with the Lord.

Fellowship with God is indispensable if the Christian is to bear fruit for the Lord. Jesus illustrated the relationship between Himself and the Christian by the union of the vine and the branch (John 15:4,5). He pointed out that the branch can bear fruit only while it is firmly attached to the vine and draws its life and fruit-bearing qualities from the vine. If we fail to maintain fellowship with the Lord, our lives become barren, and we accomplish little or nothing.

### **A Few Guidelines**

First, begin the day with God in thanksgiving and prayer. As you think of the new blessings which God gives you each day, thank Him for them. As you anticipate the temptations you may meet during the day, ask God to give you strength for victory over them. Never let the rush of the day's business cheat you out of your morning time with the Lord.

Second, during the day, stop occasionally for thanksgiving and prayer. A few moments alone with God several times a day will keep you calm and triumphant, even when you have cares and problems.

Third, close the day with thanksgiving and prayer. Review the blessings of the day, and thank God for them in detail.

Fourth, daily confess to God any sin that you know about-all the things that have been displeasing to Him. As you are praying, pause for a moment and let the Holy Spirit search your heart to point out any sins of which you may not be conscious.

Remember, prayer is your source of victory and fruitfulness. Fellowship with God is not only a privilege but also an indispensable factor in successful Christian living.

## **The Indwelling Holy Spirit**

You are not left to your own strength and resources for living the Christian life. You have a competent inner Helper, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God, and He is a Person just as God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are Persons. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter whom Jesus promised to send (John 14:16-17; 15:26,27).

Every Christian has the Holy Spirit living within him (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19). At salvation, a person is "born of the Spirit" (John 3:6). The new birth is actually the Holy Spirit's entering the human soul and implanting the life of God in it by His own personal presence.

With the Holy Spirit's strength and power we are not helpless to live the Christian life as God expects. Many things are promised to believers through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

## **Helps in Weaknesses and Temptations**

The Holy Spirit helps us in our weaknesses and daily problems (Rom. 8:26). He is always with us to meet our deficiencies and to supply the strength we lack. Even the weakest Christian may rely on His divine strength.

The inner strength the Holy Spirit is ready to supply will enable you to gain victory over sin (Eph. 3:16) and to defeat Satan (6:17,18). When you feel tempted by sin or error, ask the Holy Spirit to give you strength right then and there, and He will!

## **Gives Understanding of the Bible**

The understanding of the Scriptures comes as the Holy Spirit guides God's people into divine truth (John 16:12,13). When you encounter passages you do not understand, pause and ask the Holy Spirit, the Author of the Scriptures (2 Pet. 1:20,21) to help you reach a satisfactory interpretation. Remember, of course, that God's Word contains some verses and passages that even the most dedicated and highly respected Bible scholars find difficult. But with the Holy Spirit's illumination each person who studies the Word can know what God has written there for his benefit.

## **Gives Us Love**

Love is our most vital need-love for God, love for fellow Christians and love for all mankind (John 13:35). We cannot make ourselves love, but the Holy Spirit will fill our hearts with the love of God (Rom. 5:5), if we will let Him do so.

When you are conscious of a coldness and lack of love in your heart, ask the Holy Spirit to pour out His love in your heart. You can be filled with the Holy Spirit by simply yielding yourself to Him and emptying your life of other things.

## **Aids Our Praying**

The Holy Spirit prompts us to pray. Christ intercedes for us in heaven before the Father, while the Holy Spirit intercedes within our hearts on earth (Rom. 8:26,27). The Spirit frequently motivates us to pray, burdening our hearts for certain things or certain people, and we should carefully cooperate so that we may be led into an active life of prayer.

The Holy Spirit also instructs us as to how we should pray and for what we should pray. Many times we would make unwise requests, so the Holy Spirit advises us of the things we should pray for. He comes to our aid, giving us holy desires and helping us as we pray.

Prayer is not merely asking for natural desires which arise in our minds, nor is it merely beautiful words or expressions. Real prayer is the Holy Spirit's producing holy desires within us and then intensifying them so that we will not cease praying until God has granted the petition.

Satan will attack you in your prayer life more than in any other area, so here you especially need the help of the Holy Spirit. When you find yourself unable to pray, then depend on the Spirit and ask Him to come to your rescue. This is one of His ministries to you as a Christian.

## **Directs Our Lives**

The Holy Spirit directs and leads in the lives of God's people (Rom. 8:14). When we do not know what decision to make and cannot determine the will of God, the Holy Spirit comes to our aid. He is willing to lead and guide in every detail if we will only live close enough to Him so that He can do so.

A Christian should cultivate the daily habit of asking the Holy Spirit to guide. Pray before facing your daily tasks, asking guidance for every thought, decision and step. Then throughout the day, as you go about your work and face problems, needs and dilemmas, lift your heart in prayer for guidance. The Holy Spirit will not fail you.

## **Produces Spiritual Fruit**

The Holy Spirit produces in our lives the heavenly fruit named in Galatians 5:22,23. He gives love, joy, peace, and patience and enables you to live commendably. The Holy Spirit imparts faith and increases your faith. He gives you the ability to be humble and the power to be temperate, restraining natural appetites and desires. All the graces of the Christian life are given by the Holy Spirit. Learn to commune with Him so that He may impart these things to you.

## **Fellowship With the Holy Spirit**

Learn to cultivate fellowship with the Holy Spirit. Think of Him as an indwelling presence and a real Person. Contemplate His desires for your spiritual growth and spiritual prosperity. Consider His goodness, His graciousness, and His willingness to help you with every problem. Learn to rely on Him for all of your spiritual needs. Learn to talk to Him and to commune with Him. Learn to draw from the Holy Spirit all the spiritual graces which you (as well as God) desire to have demonstrated in your life. Think of the Holy Spirit as He really is-your Friend, Companion, Comforter, Guide, Helper and Teacher. As your life is yielded to Him, He will lead you into the abundant life.

## **Memorize 1 John 1:7.**

### **Examination**

Fill in the blanks:

1. Fellowship with God is possible because of Christ who is now our ascended \_\_\_\_\_ and High \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The Christian's fellowship with God is maintained by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ every known \_\_\_\_\_.
3. A life of prayer and fellowship with God is necessary if the Christian is to experience spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ and have \_\_\_\_\_ over sin.

4. It is impossible to be a fruitful Christian unless one maintains \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Although it is a good practice to spend time in prayer morning and evening, one should also take a few moments for prayer \_\_\_\_\_ times a \_\_\_\_\_.
6. In addition to regular prayer and thanksgiving each day, we should be sure to \_\_\_\_\_ each day.
7. The Holy Spirit is able to help us in many ways because He is \_\_\_\_\_ and He is a \_\_\_\_\_.

Underline the correct words:

8. The Holy Spirit indwells all / only victorious Christians.
9. When temptations become too much for us, we should give in, knowing we can't hold out indefinitely / pray that the Holy Spirit will give us the strength needed for victory.
10. When we do not understand the Scripture we are reading, we should skip those verses / ask the Holy Spirit to help us reach a satisfactory interpretation.
11. When we find it difficult or impossible to love someone, we should force ourselves to love the person anyhow / ask the Holy Spirit to pour out His love in our hearts.
12. The Holy Spirit helps us in praying by seeing that we get what we ask for / guiding us concerning what we should pray for.
13. We should make it a habit each morning to ask the Holy Spirit to abundantly bless us / to guide our thoughts and actions.
14. All the love, joy, peace and patience which we have as Christians was given to us when we accepted Christ / is produced in us by the Holy Spirit.
15. As we cultivate fellowship with the Holy Spirit, we become sinless / draw from Him the spiritual graces we need.

Write 1 John 1:7 from memory on the lines below.

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## Lesson 4

### Your Spiritual Diet

The Bible compares spiritual life to physical life. Both must be properly nurtured and nourished if they are to prosper and grow. Becoming a Christian is a matter of birth (the new birth); being a Christian is a matter of growth. Believers are urged to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18).

All life is dependent on food for growth and development. God has richly provided for the feeding and care of our spiritual life. His Word, the Holy Bible, contains a balanced diet for the soul, providing every spiritual vitamin needed for health and growth. If we feed our souls daily with the Word of God, we will be growing, healthy Christians, but without this regular diet no Christian can be strong (1 Pet. 2:2).

#### Reading Diligently

Read your Bible diligently, earnestly seeking to understand for yourself its truths and to make its blessings your very own. Careless reading of the Bible will not help much. If you read the Bible with as much concentration as you use in reading an ordinary textbook, you will find most of it understandable. When carefully read, the Bible is amazingly clear. As you read and absorb its truths, your spiritual life will be fed and nourished.

#### Reading Regularly and Systematically

Set aside a regular time each day for Bible reading—at least 15 minutes. Bible reading in connection with your prayer time is best-possibly preceding prayer. Two 15-minute periods of reading each day ought to be a minimum goal. (Many believers spend an hour a day studying the Word.) No matter how busy you are, do not become too busy to feed your soul. Allowing a day to pass without faithfully studying the Word opens the door to sin, error and indifference.

#### Reading Obediently

Nothing will bring you nearer to an understanding of the Bible than your determining to obey it. You cannot really understand God's Book without being willing to do what it says (see John 7:17). You will soon lose your

appreciation for Bible reading and fail to comprehend its teachings when you openly disobey its commands. Cultivate prompt, complete, happy, unquestioning obedience to every instruction which applies to you, and you will find that each command opens the way to understanding further truths and providing greater satisfaction.

A friend of mine stated, "Years ago I made up my mind that as I read the Bible, I would, by God's grace, attempt to do everything it commanded me." That explained to me his Christlikeness and spiritual power. He had let the Word of God accomplish its purpose in his life.

### **Reading Prayerfully**

As you read, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal its truths to you and to apply them to your life. The Bible is God's inspired Word (2 Tim. 3:16), and its spiritual truths cannot be understood by the natural mind. Only those who are enlightened by the Spirit can grasp spiritual truth (1 Cor. 2:12-14).

Every time you open your Bible, pray that the Holy Spirit will enable you to understand the meaning of what you read. Whenever you encounter a difficulty in the Scriptures, lay it before the Lord and ask Him to give you the explanation. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit will guide into all the truth (John 16:13). Since He is the Author of the Bible, He is its best Teacher and Interpreter, and He is ready to serve you when you ask Him and rely on Him. Every believer may have this assistance and, consequently, an adequate understanding of the Scriptures.

### **Reading Incessantly**

Carry a small New Testament with you all the time, and read it during those brief periods which are usually wasted. Read the Word of God while waiting for a friend or for transportation, while relaxing from work or waiting for meals-anytime you have a few spare minutes. Such little snatches of spiritual food will be to your Christian life what a snack is to your physical system. This will help you become a strong Christian and not remain a spiritual babe.

### **Memorizing Scripture**

Memorizing the Scriptures has great value-in this way we can best retain and make use of them. The Word committed to memory will restrain us from sinning (Ps. 119:11). A memorized verse will flash into the mind at the moment of temptation and prevent us from sinning.

Verses and passages of the Scriptures committed to memory also equip one to be a witness and a soul winner. God always honors and uses His Word. When human persuasion and reasoning fail, statements from the Word will convince, convict and convert people (see Heb. 4:12). Therefore, we should quote it.

Various methods and aids for Scripture memorization have been developed. A simple suggestion is to memorize each day a verse selected from your regular Bible reading—the verse that means the most to you. Underline it in your Bible or Testament, and review it at various times during the day. Keep reviewing verses previously learned, for constant repetition is the secret of memorization. If one verse a day seems too much for you, start with one verse a week.

## **Studying by Chapters**

Serious Bible study is essential to your spiritual development (2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16,17). Bible study by chapters is one practical method. Select a book of the Bible and read it through, chapter by chapter, spending as much time as necessary to master the contents of each chapter. After reading, you should ask yourself these questions:

1. What is the main subject?
2. Who are the principal characters?
3. What truth is clearly taught or stressed?
4. What is the key verse?
5. Is anything taught concerning Christ?
6. What new truth (if any) have I discovered?
7. How does this chapter relate to my life?
8. What is God saying to me in this chapter?

It is also helpful to make a brief outline of the chapter. By going through book after book in this manner, you will greatly increase your knowledge and understanding of the Bible.

## **Studying by Topics**

The topical (or subject) method is both simple and valuable. You should have a good concordance (such as Cruden's, Young's or Strong's) or a topical textbook; however, the chain references, marginal references or subject index found in many Bibles will be of great assistance in this method of study.



Study all the Bible verses you can find on such subjects as the Holy Spirit, sin, grace, the blood of Christ, faith, the new birth, the resurrection, the love of God, Christian love, the coming of Christ, heaven, hell, angels and other important truths. With the aids you are using, see what the entire Bible says about each topic.

## **Studying by Books**

The study of individual books (also called "synthesis") is another good means of Bible study. Select a book of the Bible, preferably one of the shorter New Testament epistles to begin with. Master its contents by reading the entire book through several times. Read it through each time at one sitting or even several times at a sitting. After the second reading begin to look for the main teaching of that book. Then at the next reading begin to note how the theme is developed. In subsequent readings make an outline of your own, keeping in mind the main theme.

Stay in one book until you feel that you have mastered it, then go on to another. Within the course of your Christian life you may to some extent master the entire Bible. It is not as difficult as you may think.

## **Studying Biblical Characters**

The character method is also a helpful way of studying the Bible. A Bible dictionary (such as Unger's or Zondervan's) will give some assistance. Simply choose a Bible character and study exhaustively everything the Scriptures say about this person. Compile a list of facts about the person, such as:

1. His meeting with God (conversion or call)
2. His strong points (such as prayer, faith, preaching abilities, etc.)
3. His weak points (sins, failures)
4. His accomplishments and influence
5. His name (note meaning and any changes)
6. Characteristics in his life you should imitate
7. Characteristics in his life you should avoid
8. What God said about him

## **The Comparison Method**

The best commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself. By comparing one Scripture passage with another, difficult verses or passages will be seen in their true light and significance. When studying a difficult passage, try to find another passage similar to it or at least dealing with the same subject, and let

that help to explain the meaning. A concordance, a topical textbook or a Bible dictionary will be helpful.

## **Additional Aids to Bible Study**

A number of helpful Bible study courses are available at your local Christian bookstore. Few people are really familiar with the Bible; yet, a thorough knowledge of it is essential to Christian growth. Why not accept the challenge to study the Word of God and be a well-informed and useful Christian?

## **Memorize 2 Timothy 2:15.**

### **Examination**

Circle the correct letter:

1. To be growing, healthy Christians, we must first
  - a. feed our souls daily with God's Word.
  - b. be baptized.
  - c. join the church.
  
2. The Bible will be more understandable if we
  - a. read it fast.
  - b. read it carefully.
  - c. read what many people say about it.
  
3. A great help in avoiding sin, error and indifference is to
  - a. be sure to read a chapter from the Bible every Sunday.
  - b. read the Bible on weekdays, if you have time.
  - c. regularly read the Bible each day.
  
4. You cannot really understand the Bible unless you
  - a. are willing to obey it.
  - b. study a correspondence course.
  - c. read what great preachers say about it.
  
5. Whenever we open the Bible, we should
  - a. begin reading right away, so we can read more chapters.
  - b. pray that the Holy Spirit will help us understand it.
  - c. begin reading wherever we open it.
  
6. You should carry a New Testament with you so that
  - a. you will be protected from harm.
  - b. others will know that you have one.
  - c. you may read it whenever you have a few spare minutes.

Answer the following questions:

7. What is the first thing we should do to help us become better witnesses and to resist temptation?

8. Since God's Word will convince, convict, and convert people, what should we do when trying to win someone to Christ?

9. Why should you seriously study the Bible?

10. When studying a chapter, what questions should you ask yourself?  
(List three.)

11. What is to be gained by topical study?

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12. What is the basic procedure in studying the Bible a book at a time?

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13. What kind of Bible study seeks to discover and trace the main theme of a book?

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14. What facts should be noted when studying a Bible character? (List three.)

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15. In what way can you use the Bible to help you when you are puzzled by a biblical statement on a particular subject?

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**Write 2 Timothy 2:15 from memory on the lines below.**

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# Lesson 5

## Your Worship

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). To the Christian, the worship of God is primarily a spiritual exercise. The believer worships God in his heart, and he should constantly be in the spirit of worship. But this does not eliminate the need for having special times set apart for worship. At certain times, in addition to our personal prayer life, everything else must be put aside for the sole purpose of worship, Bible reading and prayer.

### **The Family Altar**

By "family altar" we mean a time set apart every day in the home when the whole family engages in the worship of the Lord through reading the Bible and praying together. Nothing can be a greater blessing in any home. Nothing will instill more respect for, and love of, God in the hearts of children, and nothing will so minimize family differences and difficulties. When the family gets together for prayer and worship, ill feelings and unkind thoughts are forgotten. The family altar is indispensable to the Christian home.

If you are a Christian, begin family worship in your home at once. Designate a definite time for it each day. Right after breakfast or after supper is often the best time. You may begin by going through a book of the Bible, reading a chapter or a portion each day. Many families use a devotional book to guide them. Then let the entire family assume an attitude of prayer, with as many participating as possible. On some days there may be time only for father or mother to pray, but there should also be times when ample opportunity is given for the children to pray. Every Christian in the family should participate at least part of the time.

Plan to discuss any problems in the Bible text as they are faced. Children should be given sufficient opportunity to ask questions. When the family includes small children, it may be good to also read from a Bible storybook and to give some simple explanations of the story, if needed. Make this devotional time meaningful to every family member.

Normally, the family altar should be conducted by the father, as head of the

house, but circumstances may make it necessary for others to lead at times. If the husband is not a Christian, but is willing for the wife to conduct family worship, she should by all means do so. Older children who have been saved might even lead if the parents are willing.

You cannot have a real Christian home without family worship. To begin and maintain family worship faithfully takes determination, but the dividends are infinitely worthwhile. Carry it on at any cost. Family life in a Christian home should center around family worship.

## **The Church**

The word "church" is used in two senses in the New Testament. All believers are members of the invisible universal Church, the spiritual body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-14). The word is also used to designate groups of believers, usually in organized assemblies or congregations. These local churches are God's provision for the mutual strengthening of believers and the spreading of the gospel.

The Bible teaches that we, as members of the spiritual body of Christ, are to identify ourselves with other believers in fellowship (Heb. 10:25). God knows that we need the fellowship of other Christians if we are to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Savior and to be useful servants for Him.

## **Church Membership**

Membership in a church is a definite part of the Christian life, and every Christian should normally unite with some local church. Of course, church membership is not essential to salvation, nor is it a part of salvation. But for spiritual growth and help, every Christian should, where possible, unite with a Bible-believing local church. Your spiritual life and growth will be greatly aided if you do this.

Which church should you join? Make sure it is a church where the Bible is believed and taught. Avoid churches where the authority, authenticity or reliability of the Bible as God's revealed Word is questioned. Seek a church which has a real concern for the salvation of the lost and for the spiritual growth of believers, where young Christians are helped and where a genuine interest in missions is evident. Look for a prayerful church that has an interest in reaching its community for Christ.

Be sure you know the doctrinal position of the church and are acquainted with its form of government and its affiliations before joining.

Denominational differences are not as important as agreement on the great fundamental truths of the faith.

### **Some Vital Questions**

Here are some simple questions which you should ask concerning any church you may contemplate joining:

1. Is the church true to the Bible? Does it teach that the Bible is the actual Word of God and uphold it as such?
2. Does the minister preach plainly concerning the atoning death of Christ on the cross and emphasize His shed blood?
3. Does the church stress "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7)?
4. Does the church have weekly prayer meetings? Do the members actually pray at these services?
5. Is there constant emphasis on the winning of souls, and are real efforts made to bring unbelievers to Christ?
6. Is the Holy Spirit's ministry recognized and emphasized in the preaching and program of the church?
7. Does the ministry of the church emphasize the need for separation from the things of the world and from questionable practices and amusements?
8. Does the church have a foreign missionary program? Are the members actively interested in missions? Are they giving to the support of missionaries and encouraging their young people to consider giving their lives as missionaries?
9. Does the church teach the personal return of Jesus Christ?

If all these questions can be answered with "yes," such a church would be an excellent one to join. In case they cannot all be thus answered, make sure the first six questions can be. Do not join a church unless it holds to the Bible as God's inspired Word, the necessity of Christ's shed blood, the new birth and true prayer.

## **Your Church Attendance**

Joining a church is not enough; you must attend regularly. Make a real effort to attend at least the Sunday morning and evening services and the midweek prayer meeting. Participate in other services as time and circumstances permit. By all means, attend the Sunday school regularly.

If you begin to neglect church attendance, you will probably drift in your own Christian life. If you habitually avoid the house of God, you may become a real backslider. You need the inspiration of united worship with other Christians. You need the strength available from the Word of God as it is preached. You need the fellowship of other Christians in the church. Therefore be regular in your attendance in God's house.

Unfaithful or irregular church attendance by Christians presents a poor testimony to unsaved friends and neighbors. How can you expect them to go to church to hear the gospel preached if you are careless about your own attendance?

## **Your Participation**

You should participate in the church's activities and assume your share of the church's responsibilities. If you are qualified to fill an office in the church and are asked to do so, accept the position with a willing heart as service to the Lord. If you are asked to teach a Sunday school class, teach it conscientiously and diligently. If you are chosen to serve on a committee or are asked to help in some way, do your best. Decline only when you conscientiously feel unable to fill the position you are asked to take. Even then, pray about refusing to accept some task or responsibility.

Financial responsibilities must accompany church membership, and you should expect to assume your part in those. The expenses of operating a church can be met only as members give. Give liberally and cheerfully, as to the Lord (2 Cor. 9:6-8). Giving should be regular and systematic (1 Cor. 16:1,2). If you have the right attitude toward your own redemption, you will have the right attitude toward Christian stewardship.

## **Your Christian Fellowship**

The church is the Christian's spiritual home while he is on earth. The believer there cultivates fellowship with other Christians and shares his prayer burdens with them. He can find spiritual help (and perhaps material help at times). He will also be instructed in the Word of God and built up in the faith. There he worships God each Lord's Day.



Each individual Christian needs the fellowship of other believers. The outward expression of this fellowship is in the membership of an organized body of believers. A certain benefit always comes to the heart of a true Christian when he is in fellowship with other believers. Informal, social friendships with some members can also prove mutually helpful. (Remember that the responsibility of cultivating Christian friendships is yours as much as it is the other person's.)

## **No Perfect Church**

You will not find a perfect church. But if a church is true to the Word of God, even though some flaws in conduct and practice exist, unite with those believers and contribute to the spiritual advancement of that church, and your own spiritual life will also be advanced. Don't miss the benefits and blessings that come from being united with a Bible-believing church!

## **Memorize John 4:24.**

### **Examination**

True or False:

1. \_\_\_\_ As a Christian I need to have a special time when I put everything else aside so that I can worship God and pray.
2. \_\_\_\_ It would be nice for every family to have a family altar, but many truly Christian homes do not really need it.
3. \_\_\_\_ It is better to wait until children are able to read before sharing family devotions with them.
4. \_\_\_\_ Since the mother is in charge of the home, she should usually lead in devotions.
5. \_\_\_\_ The only church is the local organized assembly of believers.
6. \_\_\_\_ Being members of the spiritual Body of Christ, we should also belong to a local church.
7. \_\_\_\_ Although church membership is not a part of our salvation, we need the church to help us grow spiritually.
8. \_\_\_\_ Since no church is perfect, it does not matter if a church thinks that the Bible contains errors.

**Underline the correct words:**

**9. You should become acquainted with the doctrinal position of a church soon after / before joining it.**

**10. You should be sure that a church stresses the blood atonement / unique character of Christ.**

**11. You should look for a church which says little about money / has a real interest in missions.**

**12. If you constantly stay away from church services, you mainly harm the church / your spiritual life.**

**13. If you are asked to help in the church, you should decline out of humility / willingly do your best.**

**14. Participation in the church's activities and responsibilities includes / does not include giving liberally and cheerfully.**

**15. True Christians find fellowship, spiritual help and prayerful concern in quiet meditation alone / a gospel-preaching church.**

**Write John 4:24 from memory on the lines below.**

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# Lesson 6

## Winning Others

When God saved you He gave you the privilege of leading others to Him. He has chosen you to be one of His ambassadors. "God . . . hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; . . . Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor.5:18,20).

### Your Responsibility

To be an ambassador for Christ is both a privilege and a responsibility. The ministry of reconciliation-urging everyone to come into right relationship with God-has been given to all Christians. Only as people are given the gospel of God's grace will they ever be saved. As ambassadors, we speak on behalf of Christ and urge people to be reconciled to God through His Son.

Every Christian has a responsibility to win others to Christ. If you want to really live the Christian life, join in the work of soul winning. "He that winneth souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30).

A beautiful tribute is paid to Andrew in John 1:40-42. As soon as this man became a follower of Christ, he began to bring others to Him, and he first introduced his brother to the Lord. Peter later became a more influential and important disciple than Andrew. This can be an encouragement to you. You may feel you are insignificant and have little influence, yet you may win someone to Christ who will reach thousands for Him.

Begin by following Andrew's example. Try to win others to Christ, and start with your own family. Notice how simple Andrew's testimony was: "We have found the Messiah" (v. 41). You could tell your friends and loved ones, "I have found the Savior." Is that difficult to do? Is it beyond your ability? Your doing so may result in someone's salvation.

### Equipped

The Lord Jesus Christ has given every Christian some gift or ability (Eph. 4:11-13). These various gifts are bestowed so that His people may be fully equipped for serving.

Every believer is equipped to serve the Lord in one part of His work-the winning of souls. The purpose of this is the building up of the spiritual Body of Christ (v. 12). As Christians all over the world win others to Christ, the Body of Christ will ultimately be completed. At the appointed time Jesus will come back again. What an incentive to try to win others to Him!

## **Prepared**

A witness knows certain facts through personal experience and contact which he must relate to others. So to be a witness for Christ, you must know by personal experience that Jesus saves. Your knowledge of salvation must be personal, positive and real. If your testimony is uncertain and indefinite, it will not convince people.

You must know by personal experience that God answers prayer if you would testify of that fact. Can you look back on such experiences? To say that your teacher thinks so or that the church teaches it or that Christians have always believed it will never convince your friends that God answers prayer. But if you can tell of personal experiences, these will constitute a positive testimony-one that will carry weight and convince concerned individuals. Remember, of course, that no one can convince an arguing skeptic.

You must also know by experience that Christ satisfies the inner longings of the heart and that He can give you victory over sin. Has Christ satisfied your longings and has He given you definite victories over besetting sins? If you have learned to trust Christ and to take all your problems to Him as they arise, you know that He can and does satisfy your soul with peace and joy and rest. If you are enjoying victory over sin, you can assure the person who is afraid he "couldn't hold out" that you have experienced Christ's victorious power in your life. Such a testimony will be far more convincing than a brilliant or eloquent sermon.

You must willingly share what you know. (This may involve answering questions that are asked of you.) God will give you the courage and wisdom to speak for Him (2 Tim. 1:7). As a witness of God's grace, you dare not remain silent while people around you are perishing (see Ezek. 33:8). The main purpose of sharing your faith should be to win others to the Lord.

## **Purposeful Living**

We are not to live for ourselves-for our own personal pleasures and pursuits-

but for Christ (2 Cor. 5:15). The life most pleasing to Him is one lived in obedience to Him and dedicated to winning souls to Him.

You came to Christ as a lost sinner so that your own soul might be saved; but now that you are saved, a primary object of your life ought to be the salvation of others. No other goal becomes you more as a Christian or pleases the Lord as much. Christ wants us to tell others about Him so that through our testimony they may come to know Him as their Savior.

God has a purpose in leaving us here on earth after we have accepted Christ. He wants us to be like lights in a world of darkness so those who are still in darkness may come to know Him as their Savior and Lord (Matt. 5:14-16).

If you are a young Christian, God has a great aim for your life, and if He allows you to live a long time, it will be for the purpose of leading many to Christ through you. If you have known the Lord for a long time, God has spared your life thus far so that others might come to know Him. Has that purpose been realized in your life? Have you disappointed your Savior?

### **The Vine and the Branches**

In John 15 :1-17 our Lord beautifully compared our relationship to Him with the relationship between a vine and its branches. In verse 5 Jesus pointed out the fact that He is indispensable to us. Just as the branch can do nothing without the vine, so we can do nothing without Christ. He is essential to our salvation, our spiritual fruitfulness, and our spiritual life and health. (By "fruitfulness" we mean bringing others to Christ.)

Another truth is taught in this illustration: The branch is also indispensable to the vine. Fruit is always produced on the branches, never on the vine itself. This is God's order both in nature and in the spiritual realm. Only through us, as branches of the Vine, can others come to know the Savior.

We are indispensable to Christ and to His work. Souls can be won to Him only through the witness and instrumentality of Christians. If we, as Christians, do not win others to Christ, they will not be won. If we do not testify to the saving grace of Christ, no testimony will be given. If we do not proclaim the gospel, the people of the world will not hear it. The only feet that can go into the world with the gospel are ours. The only tongues Christ has today to tell the story of His atoning death and saving grace are ours. The only minds and hands He has for translating the Scriptures are ours. How dare we fail Him?

## **Getting Started**

It may seem a bit difficult at first to begin His work of soul winning, but once you have led someone to Christ, you will never want to stop. Evangelist D. L. Moody made it a rule of his life never to let one day pass without speaking to someone about salvation, trying to win that one to Christ. A person does not have to be either eloquent or clever to win souls.

Often the greatest problem is opening the conversation. Carry some good gospel tracts with you and give them out carefully whenever the opportunity arises. They will open the way for a conversation concerning salvation. Then you can share your salvation experience and assure the person that Christ will save him, too, if he will only accept Him as you did.

Another good way to start a conversation is to wear a small pin on your lapel or collar. This will attract attention and cause people to ask questions. For example, I once wore a gold question mark on the lapel of my coat. When people questioned me about it, I asked, "What do you think is the most important question in the world?" Then I explained that the question, "Are your sins forgiven?" is the biggest question in life. Once you begin a ministry of soul winning, it will be the joy and desire of your life to win others to the Savior.

## **Genuine Love Required**

The most convincing aspect of your testimony as you try to win others to Christ will be a genuine love in your heart for them. People almost always respond to love, and when they see that you really have a love and concern for them, they will not be antagonistic when you try to lead them to Christ.

Believers must be on good terms with unsaved people, develop friendships and have a genuine interest in individuals. People may not be swayed by salesmanship, but they will be impressed by sincere friendship. By speaking to them in love you may win some to Christ (1 Cor. 13:4-8).

If you do not have such love in your heart, pray that the Holy Spirit will fill your heart with God's love (Rom. 5:5). The Holy Spirit is able, willing and happy to do this when we ask Him and as we allow Him. Any soul-winning effort which arises from genuine love for that soul will not fail to make its impression and will very likely result in salvation.

## A Life of Prayer

A life of prayer is the secret behind soul winning. If we attempt to win souls without praying, our efforts will end in failure. But as we pray for real power, grace and love in our lives to win others to Christ and then testify to friends and acquaintances about the Savior, our efforts will be abundantly rewarded.

If you want to really enjoy the Christian life, be a soul winner. Begin at once with prayer, and then speak to the first person you meet who needs your Savior.

### Memorize Acts 22:15.

#### Examination

Fill in the blanks:

1. As \_\_\_\_\_, we speak on behalf of Christ, urging people to be \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ has a responsibility to win others to Christ.
3. Like Andrew, we can tell friends and loved ones, "I have \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_," starting with our own \_\_\_\_\_.
4. To be a witness for Christ, I must \_\_\_\_\_ by personal \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus saves. This knowledge must also be \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. I can best convince others that God answers prayer by telling of \_\_\_\_\_ experiences of \_\_\_\_\_.
6. When we willingly \_\_\_\_\_ what we know, God will give us the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ we need.
7. The life most pleasing to the Lord is one lived in \_\_\_\_\_ to Him and dedicated to \_\_\_\_\_ to Him.

Circle the correct letter:

8. Christ wants us to tell others about Him so that they
  - a. will know that we are good enough to go to heaven.
  - b. may come to know Him as Savior.
  - c. will see how bad they are.

9. If God allows you to live a long time, it will be so that
  - a. through you many will come to Christ.
  - b. you will be able to give much money for His work.
  - c. you will enjoy the blessings of retirement.
  
10. When Jesus spoke of the vine and the branches, He stressed fruitfulness, which means
  - a. bringing others to Christ.
  - b. the beauty of Christian living.
  - c. earning rewards for living close to Him.
  
11. If Christians do not proclaim the gospel,
  - a. God will spread it in other ways.
  - b. God will condemn them to hell.
  - c. the people of the world will not hear it.
  
12. A good way to open a conversation concerning salvation is to
  - a. criticize false teaching.
  - b. carefully give a gospel tract.
  - c. make a shocking statement.
  
13. Once you have won a soul to Christ, you will
  - a. be satisfied that you will surely get a reward.
  - b. desire to win others to the Savior.
  - c. not want to go to so much effort for a while.
  
14. The most convincing element in your effort to win others to Christ should be
  - a. thorough preparation.
  - b. plenty of prayer.
  - c. genuine love for them.
  
15. To be an effective soul winner, it is essential that we begin by
  - a. praying.
  - b. studying all we can.
  - c. being neat in appearance.

Write Acts 22:15 from memory on the lines below.

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# Examination Answers

## Lesson 1

1. Sin.
2. Sin.
3. People (sinners).
4. Punishment.
5. Jesus Christ (His Son), cross.
6. Penalty.
7. God's.
8. God.
9. Accept Christ.
10. What Christ did on the cross.
11. After.
12. Involves.
13. Rely entirely on Him for salvation.
14. Believing.
15. Need not.

## Lesson 2

1. False
2. True
3. True
4. True
5. True
6. False
7. False
8. False
9. Yes.
10. The Word of God.
11. The Bible (or, the Word of God).
12. The Holy Spirit.
13. Through reading the Word and through prayer.
14. Only to believers (or, the child of God).
15. Doubts concerning our salvation.

## Lesson 3

1. Lord, Priest
2. Confessing, forsaking, sin.
3. Strength, triumph (victory).
4. Fellowship, God (the Lord).
5. Several, day.
6. Confess, sin.
7. God, Person.
8. All.
9. Pray that the Holy Spirit will give us the strength needed for victory.
10. Ask the Holy Spirit to help us reach a satisfactory interpretation.
11. Ask the Holy Spirit to pour out His love in our hearts.
12. Guiding us concerning what we should pray for.
13. To guide our thoughts and actions.
14. Is produced in us by the Holy Spirit.
15. Draw from Him the spiritual graces we need.

## Lesson 4

1. a.
2. b.
3. c.
4. a.
5. b.
6. c.
7. Memorize Scripture.
8. Quote (or use) God's Word.
9. It is essential to my spiritual development.
10. What is the main subject? Who are the principal characters? What truth is clearly taught or stressed? What is the key verse? Is anything taught concerning Christ? What new truth (if any) have I discovered? How does this chapter relate to my life? What is God saying to me in this chapter? (Any three questions.)
11. Seeing what the entire Bible says about a topic (or subject).
12. Reading the entire book through several times.
13. Studying by books (synthesis).
14. His meeting with God. His strong points. His weak points. His accomplishments and influence. His name. Characteristics in his life you should imitate. Characteristics in his life you avoid. What God said about him (Name any three.)
15. By comparing one scripture passage with another

## Lesson 5

1. True.
2. False.
3. False.
4. False.
5. False.
6. True.
7. True.
8. False.
9. Before.
10. Blood atonement.
11. Has a real interest in missions.
12. Your spiritual life.
13. Willingly do your best.
14. Includes.
15. A gospel-preaching church.

## Lesson 6

1. Ambassadors, reconciled, God.
2. Every Christian.
3. Found, Savior (or Messiah), family.
4. Know, experience, positive, real.
5. Personal, answered prayer.
6. Share, courage, wisdom.
7. Obedience, winning souls (or others).
8. b.
9. a.
10. a.
11. c.
12. b.
13. b.
14. c.
15. a.