

Study Guide

Spiritual Living for Ministers

Studies in Spiritual Formation



Truman Scott, PhD.

SUNSET
International Bible Institute



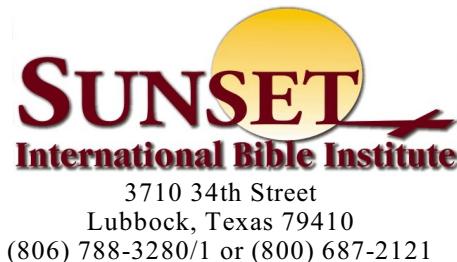
Spiritual Living For Ministers



Truman Scott
Former Instructor
Sunset International Bible Institute

Arranged for study by
Virgil Yocham
©2008

Cover design by
Richard Cravy



Spiritual living For Ministers

©Sunset Institute Press

Copyright © 2007
Sunset Institute Press

Printed and Bound in the
United States of America
All Rights Reserved

All Scripture quotations, unless indicated, are taken from:
The Holy Bible, The New King James Version (NKJV). Nashville:
Thomas Nelson Pub. 1982.
The Holy Bible, The New American Standard (NAS). Nashville:
Broadman and Holman Pub. 1977.
The Holy Bible, The New International Version (NIV). Grand Rapids:
Zondervan Pub. 1996.

Cover Design by Richard Cravy

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced in any form
without the written permission of the publisher except in the case of brief
quotations within critical articles and reviews, including translation.

Instructions and Assignments Level III and Online Students

Welcome to the course on ***Minister's Spiritual Life***. The course will lead you in a four-part study of some foundational principles in spiritual formation, in reviewing some inspiring Scripture selections from the Old and New Testaments, in considering relationships that provide a context for spiritual growth and some vehicles or disciplines that promote spirituality.

The completion of the course requires fulfilling the following assignments:

Assignment One: Read the book, ***Spiritual Living for Ministers*** by Truman Scott. It is on-line and/or you may purchase your own copy from Sunset Institute Press.

Assignment Two: Using the accompanying, on-line Study Guide, outline each chapter as if you were going to prepare a sermon or class presentation, of 1-3 pages each.

Assignment Three: As an *open book* exercise, answer the on-line test questions found at the end of the course, on each of the four parts of the book. **These questions are also located at the back of this Study Guide.**

Assignment Four: Compose one question on each of the twenty-four chapters and provide the answer. A space will be provided on your on-line response. The quality of the question and answer will determine the grade on this assignment.

Each of the four assignments will be valued with up to 25 points to form a composite score. Any score less than 75 will be considered inadequate, requiring the student to redo a part or all of the course.

ASSIGNMENT RESPONSES

Assignment One: On my honor, I have read the book, ***Spiritual Living for Ministers*** by Truman Scott Yes.

Assignment Two: On my honor, I have outlined each of the twenty-four chapters of the book. Yes. **I am submitting three outlines as samples of the quality of work done.**

Assignment Three: Below, I have completed four exams over each part of the text book. Yes. **These exams are being submitted for grading along with assignment #2 & 4.**

Assignment Four: Below, I have composed and answered a test question over each of the twenty-four chapters of the text book. Yes. **To be sent in for evaluation and grading.**

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	The Prerequisites to Spiritual Living.	1
PART ONE		
LESSON ONE	Choose The Way of The Cross – Following Jesus to a Personal Calvary.	9
LESSON TWO	Choose a Lifestyle of Repentance – Loving What God Loves.	14
LESSON THREE	Choose to be a Man of the Book – Committed to its Message.	18
LESSON FOUR	Choose to be a Servant Believer – A Life Centered in Serving.	23
LESSON FIVE	Choose to be Forgiving in Heart – Healing From Hurt.	27
LESSON SIX	Choose Wholeness as a Lifestyle – Thinking, Feeling and Doing Like Jesus Did.	32
LESSON SEVEN	Choose the Pathway to Freedom in Christ – Being Clothed with Spiritual Intimacy.	38
LESSON EIGHT	Choose to be at Home with God – Nurturing the Seed of Eternity.	44
PART TWO		
LESSON NINE	Revisiting Documents in the Old Testament (1)	50
LESSON TEN	Revisiting Documents in the Old Testament (2)	55
LESSON ELEVEN	Revisiting Documents in the New Testament (1)	59
LESSON TWELVE	Revisiting Documents in the New Testament (2)	64
LESSON THIRTEEN	Revisiting Documents in the New Testament (3)	74
PART THREE		
LESSON FOURTEEN	Choose to be a Noble and Loving Husband – Loving a Wife as She Was Designed to Be Loved	81
LESSON FIFTEEN	Choose to Honor God with an Affair Free Marriage.	86
LESSON SIXTEEN	Choose to Make a Father's Imprint – Molding a Vessel of God.	90
LESSON SEVENTEEN	Choose to Embrace Grand-Parenthood.	96
LESSON EIGHTEEN	Choose to Love the Brethren – Loving the Bride of Christ.	102
PART FOUR		
LESSON NINETEEN	Choose to Pursue the Presence of God in Prayer – Discovering the Pathways of Prayer.	109
LESSON TWENTY	Choose Self-Discipline in a life of Purposeful Giving, Fasting and Meditation.	115
LESSON TWENTY ONE	Choose to Claim the Gifts of God in Ministry.	119
LESSON TWENTY-TWO	Choose to Transform Conflict into Unity.	124
LESSON TWENTY-THREE	Choose to Grasp the Vision of God – Seeing a Glorious Church in a Lost World.	130
LESSON TWENTY-FOUR	Choose to be a Church Builder Glorifying the Savior of the Body.	136

INTRODUCTION

The Prerequisites to Spiritual Living

INTRODUCTION

What is Spirituality? Spirituality is a process. It is the outcome of a long series of good choices. It is not synonymous with old age but it does require, not years, but decades to develop. It does not happen mechanically, automatically, routinely. It is purposely pursued. It is the equivalent to the mystical search for the *holy grail*. It is a life-long quest for intimacy with God. After all that a man might do in the quest for spiritual intimacy, at the core of it all is the Spirit of God at work in forming character.

A clear, Biblical illustration of the dimensions of spiritual living was given by Paul, writing to the Ephesians:

1. It is being “*strengthened with power through the Spirit in the inner being*,”
 2. It is “*Christ dwelling in the heart through faith*,”
 3. It is “*being rooted and established in love*,”
 4. It is “*having power . . . to grasp how wide and long, and high and deep is the love of Christ*,”
 5. It is “*to know the love that surpasses knowledge*,”
 6. It is “*to be filled to the measure of all of the fullness of God*.”
 7. And, it is to have God working powerfully in the believer, doing “*immeasurably more than all one could ask or imagine*” (Ephesians 3:14-21).
-

LESSON AIM: To introduce the student to the concept of living a spiritual life, describe and illustrate ways to develop that Spirit filled life.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Recognize what is and what is not the avenue to attaining a Spirit filled life.
 2. Discover that knowing Jesus through an intimate study and knowledge of the Gospels is prerequisite to living a spiritual life.
 3. Examine and illustrate the relationship and effect Jesus had on the lives of various people as recorded in the Gospels, people in His own times.
-

RECOGNIZING THE CHARACTER OF THE SPIRIT FILLED LIFE

A. Mis-concepts of Spirituality

1. Some, like Brennan Manning in his *Abba's Child*, say that spiritual life begins with our acceptance of our wounded self, coming out of hiding and exposing the imposter in each of us.
2. Self-awareness is not the beginning of spirituality.
 - a. One cannot begin to know and accept self without knowing God.
 - b. We cannot know just how incomplete we are without knowing something of the completeness of God.
3. Knowing God in nature, in revelation and, more specifically and clearly, knowing Him in His Son, Jesus, is the beginning of spiritual living.

4. We cannot know how to accept ourselves without knowing to what extent God has gone to redeem us and set us apart for more noble living and purpose.
5. We cannot know our potential without knowing how marvelously we are made in the image of God.

B. The Way into the Presence of God Is Jesus Christ, His Son

1. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life and no man comes to the Father except through Him (John 14:6). He stated, “*To know me is to know the Father*” (vs. 7ff).
2. Walking in His ways, believing His truths and living His life is not only the surest as compared to all other proposals, it is the only hope of being with God.
3. A lifetime spent in knowing the Son is the only way to know the Father.

SPIRITUALITY IS KNOWING JESUS

A. Jesus is the Way, He is the Truth and He is the Life – He, Himself

1. Identifying with Him, living in union with Him, responding to Him in every nerve and sinew of our souls and being, as it were, absorbed into His very being opens the doors to a meaningful spiritual life.
2. Walking the Way begins in observing the life and teachings of Jesus, believing in His divine nature, understanding his atoning sacrifice and acknowledging that, separate from Him, there is no hope in this world or in the world to come.
 - a. Those experiences, be they long or short in time, must result in trusting in Jesus, committing oneself in a purposeful redirection of life of acknowledging and following Him and making a faith response in baptism – being immersed into Him (Romans 6:4).
 - b. With all sins atoned for and washed away – forgiven by God – one then walks in a new life. Such a one is committed to live the truths he is learning and to drink deeply of the joys of the abundant life.

B. Mastering the Gospels, Both in Structure and Content Is Prerequisite to Living a Spiritual Life

1. One must continue listening intently and repeatedly to every sermon preached by Jesus, pondering over every one of the parables, again and again, taking note of every conversation and every confrontation, marveling over every one of the recorded miracles and staying close in following Jesus from Judea, through Samaria to Jerusalem and back again.
2. Feel His weariness of teaching, walking, hungering and grieving with people. Determine to not miss a detail in any of the some thirty days described in His life and ministry, straining to drink deeply of every event, plumbing the depth of each statement and feeling the impact of every response of the lives He touched.
3. Capture His love, feel His concern, understand His anger, laugh with Him, puzzle with Him over the hardness of hearts and be touched by His tenderness with children, widows and the suffering. Climb to the heights of His view of the Kingdom, to the Holiness and purposes of God, to the unfolding of the Scheme of the Ages and to His becoming the Suffering Servant of Old Testament prophesies.
4. Agonize with Him in the Garden, cringe with His beatings, torture and crucifixion.

- a. Be broken up inside with His humiliation, with His seeming defeat and powerlessness in burial.
- b. Be disturbed with all that began to happen from the Temple, the earthquake, the disemboweling of the tombs and his own empty tomb.
- c. Be awakened to wonder over the select meetings after the resurrection, His promises and His return through the skies to the throne room on high to be enthroned in glory.
- d. Be discerning of how the earliest Christians lived out their lives in practicing the teachings of Jesus and paying the highest price for their unflinching faith in His being the promised Messiah, their Savior.

C. Spirituality is Seeing Jesus Touching the Lives of Others

- 1. Spirituality is more than a human quest or learning much from the Bible storehouse of knowledge.
- 2. It is something that God does to one who walks in the Way, believes the Truth and lives the Life.
- 3. Making oneself available to the touch of Jesus is the crucial difference from being humanistic in one's quest for spiritual intimacy and being the object of divine grace. Jesus does something wonderful to those who open their hearts to Him. That "something wonderful" is the fragrance of spirituality.

NOTE: Stepping out of the pages of the Gospels into the lives of living people is one of the most emphatic ways of really knowing the Son. His promise was if we see the Son we see the Father (John 14:7).

D. Watching How Jesus Touched and Changed the Lives of Others in His Own Times

- 1. **Nicodemus, a searcher of truth.** Jesus, the Galilean carpenter, so impacted Nicodemus through his public teaching that the ruler braved the night and the deadly accusations of peers, if exposed, to come to see if the carpenter might be the long awaited Messiah.
 - a. Jesus changed the saintly ruler. Through an evening exchange, Nicodemus became the first believer in the circles of national scholarship and among supreme court judges.
 - b. John 3:1ff, should become a prime passage in learning of the powerfully, impacting spirituality of Jesus and how **a searching spirit is a prerequisite to spirituality.**
- 2. **The Samaritan woman, a believer in evidence provided.**
 - a. Jesus saw something promising within this woman, something to be renewed, reclaimed for God.
 - b. He showed and told her that He was the Messiah for whom many waited.
 - c. He looked beyond the prohibitive, cultural obstacles, religious pretensions and moral debauchery to claiming a believer who would influence a town full of people in discovering the Messiah.
 - d. John 4:4ff, becomes another instructive story in picturing a gateway to spirituality, **believing, on evidence, that Jesus is the anointed Messiah.**
- 3. **Peter, at work – one who recognizes his sinfulness and need of a Savior.**
 - a. Jesus' impact on Peter. Something made Peter realize his utter unworthiness to be blessed by Jesus.
 - b. Peter was more struck by his sinfulness than by the miracle of fish. He pled, "*Go away from me Lord, I am a sinful man.*"

- c. Spirituality waits for men to realize their spiritual needs. No one penetrates the heart so deeply as Jesus.
 - d. Being with Jesus makes one want to be like him, free from sin and living a winsome life.
 - e. Luke 5:1-11, must be one of the fountains in one's quest for spirituality, teaching us the need to **recognize our sinfulness in need of a Savior.**
4. **Possessed Man – one who recognizes who Jesus is and bows at His feet.**
- a. The possessed man knew of his destitute state, even knew the uniqueness of Jesus but feared all of the challenges of a new, responsible life.
 - b. Jesus gave the man in abundance what he feared but, having it, wanted to share it with every one in all of the ten, Grecian cities on the East of the Sea of Galilee.
 - c. Mark 5:1-20 speaks volumes of what Jesus will do when **people recognize who He is and throw themselves at His feet.** He does more and better than is asked.
5. **Hemorrhaging Woman – an outstretched hand of faith.**
- a. Hopelessness can be the beginning of a new search for help. Jesus had healed others. Why could He not heal her?
 - b. She sees hopelessness turn into new strength and wholeness. What a renewed sense of life, what a new list of purposes, what a statement of worth and source of gladness!
 - c. Mark 5:24-34 shows how an **outstretched hand of faith** opens the door to a dramatic life change and newness of person.
6. **A Woman Caught in Adultery – the extent to which Jesus will go to rescue a defenseless sinner.**
- a. Jesus saw something different in this woman, looking beyond obvious sins, knowing well the consequences of such conduct. Both the woman's life and His life were in jeopardy in the evil jaws of the accusers.
 - b. Being righteous called for judgment. Being merciful, mingled with grace, called for forgiveness. Either response could be appropriate to the occasion.
 - c. He saw her in terms of a useful tomorrow and a glorious eternity.
 - d. Jesus was more interested in saving her, not only from the malicious mob, but, perhaps, saving her to a life of a happy marriage, loving parenthood, being a revered grandmother and a faithful citizen in the Eternal Kingdom.
 - e. John 8:1-11, as a step in spiritual living, shows a Savior with the power and will to forgive the grossest of sins, to waive the penalty of sin and extend mercy and provide for a new life and victory over sin and its rightful penalty. **It shows us the extent to which Jesus will go to rescue a defenseless sinner.**
7. **Zacchaeus – seeking, searching to see Jesus.**
- a. A tax collector, an agent for the hated Romans, a ruthless, greedy grasper of the hard-earned money of others, his own brothers, was roundly held in contempt by all.
 - b. Jesus, at His own expense of rejection, offered Zacchaeus friendship, value and opportunity to rethink his life.
 - c. It was a new experience, one he did not deserve and one that flooded him with a compelling sense of doing better.

- d. Luke 19:1-9, shows that spirituality can start from the most unthinkable places **if one will search to see Jesus.**

NOTE: The Gospels are full of such stories that show what happens when people have an intimate moment with Jesus. He changes people. He helps them dig new wells of fresh and living water. He helps them discover courage to make radical and difficult changes.

E. Spirituality Is Claiming the Lifestyle of Jesus

His vision, His purposes, His values, His choices, His attitude and His reactions begin to describe His lifestyle.

- 1. It was a lifestyle in which material attractions did not dominate decisions, – though, in His poverty, He did wear a costly, seamless garment.
- 2. It was a lifestyle in which natural pleasures of marriage and intimacy gave way to eternal purposes – though loyal relationships and friends were important.
- 3. It was a lifestyle in which a longing for longevity of life did not crowd out kingdom priorities – though He dealt wisely in the care of His body.
- 4. It was a lifestyle in which power, control and applause gave way to serving people – though He was destined to be Kings of kings and Lord of lords.
- 5. It was a lifestyle in which He and those that followed Him had little hope to survive – though eternal reward was their pursuit.
- 6. It was a lifestyle in which He did not allow His circumstances to shape his goals, – though He saw in His circumstances the reasons for His life on earth.
- 7. It was a lifestyle in which He embraced the largeness of God's eternal purposes – though He never overlooked the simple lessons He saw among the people.

NOTE: His lifestyle was not intended to be caught up in satisfying Himself, in accumulating toys and things, in living on earth forever, in pushing the envelope to get His way, in sacrificing others to get ahead or quitting when the obstacles piled up. His lifestyle kept true to His vision, focused on His purpose and loyal to His values. His choices were consistent to who He was and His servant attitude did not waver.

F. Spirituality is Yielding to the Spirit

- 1. A continuing work of the Spirit is the formation of character. The saint of God is urged to “*walk by the Spirit*” to “*be led by the Spirit*,” to “*live by the Spirit*” and to expect a harvesting of a spiritual character (Galatians 5:16, 18, 22-23, 25).
- 2. Yielding to the Spirit and to His leadership in our lives is like the power of a new affection.
- 3. The key to opening the door to spirituality is not with well defined methods, highly disciplined schedules and human efforts. It is yielding to the Spirit, who alone forms spiritual character. Staying in places the Spirit works, emulating people who share His values, inviting His sowing and harvesting in our hearts and yielding to character changes He inspires, will lead to where no human ever reaches by his best efforts alone.

Conclusion

On the surface of things, spirituality is something to be sought as a passion of the soul. There are some choices that each person must make to further his quest to enter and to linger in the presence of God. But, the sum total of spirituality is not found in adding up human efforts and with the best of law keeping. It features the overwhelming intervention of God who went so far, even to Calvary, first to save us, then, to plant the seed of eternity in our souls, leading us from one spiritual plane to another, to still higher ground.

SELF-EXAM QUESTIONS:

1. Since self-awareness is not the beginning of spirituality, give two statements that verify this.

1) _____
2) _____

2. What is the beginning of spiritual living?

3. Complete the following statement: "A lifetime spent _____,"

4. How do the Gospels relate to spiritual living?

5. The teacher illustrated how Jesus touched and changed the lives of people in His own times.

List seven people he used as illustrations and the nature of these people which allowed Jesus to change their lives.

1) **Example:** Nicodemus – a searcher of truth.

2)
3)
4)
5)
6)
7) _____

6. Ultimately living a life of spirituality requires that we yield to the _____.

Part One

Lessons 1 – 8

LESSON ONE

Choose The Way Of The Cross

— Following Jesus to a Personal Calvary —

INTRODUCTION

Without the cross at the center of time and at the focal point of God's redemptive plan the Christian way would be so much about little. No cross means no Savior. No Savior means no promises. No promises mean no hope. No hope makes us men most miserable, having no noble purpose in this world. Rather, it would mean being cast as merchants of platitudes, peddlers of deception.

The first century, church folks believed in the centrality of the Cross in establishing the Kingship of Jesus and His redemptive mission on earth. The Cross was something worthy to live for as it was something for which one should be ready to die. And many of them did. They thought nothing of being ready to repeat the history of the Redeemer in taking up their cross and following Him to their own deaths for the sake of the Kingdom. The Cross made no human sense, but when understood as preached by the Apostles, it made all kinds of sense in explaining God and His passionate search for men, everywhere (Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:18-25: The power and wisdom of God).

The certainty of the Cross, with its accompanying empty tomb, is the basis for understanding God's long term desire to save us and the extent to which He has gone to redeem us again from sin (John 3:16).

The Cross measures God's wrath against sin and His determination to blunt and destroy the power of Satan. The Cross is God's statement of how much He loves the unlovable and how far into lostness He will reach to retrieve the sinner. The Cross does speak of how much God values a soul, but, also, how much a faith response is required for us to be saved (2 Peter 3:9).

LESSON AIM: To encourage the student and each one of us to experience our own calvary in crucifying self and enthroning God as the supreme ruler of our hearts.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. See the pattern and nature of discipleship and commitment in the life and actions of Jesus.
2. Learn that living a life of spirituality involves a fervent desire, a decisive self-denial and a cross experience.
3. Discover that a life of sacrifice, a radical end of self-rule and a dedicated walk characterize the cross experience.
4. Realize that there are consequences of discipleship – both negative and positive.

By way of the Cross, by way of His body, suffering and dying on the Cross, we have access to God (Hebrews 10:19-22).

The Cross sets our hearts on fire, a consuming fire setting ablaze spirituality in our souls and a global passion for sharing what great good God has done for us.

SPIRITUALITY BEGINS AT ONE'S PERSONAL CALVARY

If anyone would desire to be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me (daily) (Matthew 16:24; Luke 9:23).

A. The Initial Requirement of Being Jesus' Disciple – Denial of Self

1. Jesus not only gave us the way to begin a spiritual walk, but, how to continue and complete the journey.
2. This statement is the overarching, all inclusive statement instructing obedient believers to enter into the intimate presence of the Father.
3. We are looking at a four point statement leading us to spiritual living:
 - a. Desiring to be a disciple,
 - b. Denying ourselves,
 - c. Taking up one's cross and
 - d. Following Christ continually. All are ongoing, active, personal and constant. Within the grace of God, the completeness of the end is determined by the nature of the walk.
4. Another way of expressing the statement is by the questions it asks:
 - a. How much does one desire to be a learner in the school of Jesus?
 - b. How much is he willing to give up to excel?
 - c. How much is he willing to suffer to be identified with Jesus?
 - d. How much is he willing to go wherever Jesus leads him?

THE PATHWAY TO CALVARY

The path indicated by Jesus that leads one into spiritual living.

A. Fervent Desire. Seeing the compassion of Jesus, seeing how He dealt with people of all kinds, seeing how He was master of the seas, winds and every form of human affliction, including death, seeing how He lived an impeccable life, seeing how He was the fulfillment of numerous Messianic prophecies and worker of miracles, all, should elicit the most fervent desire to follow Him – to be His disciple, to be a learner in the Jesus school of life.

1. To confront the certain trials that will come into the life of a believer, especially in a hostile nation, one will have to have a strong motivation.
"For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia; that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. But, we had the sentence of death in ourselves. . ." (2 Corinthians 1:8-9; cf. 2 Corinthians 11:22-28).
2. Genuine desire purifies our motives, strengthens our resolve, provides us with clearer vision and insight and authenticates every action.
3. A driving desire leads on to making other decisions in spiritual living. Making those decisions further perfects a mature desire to serve faithfully until death.

B. Decisive Self Denial

1. There can only be one master, one person in charge of a life, one set of values, one overwhelming purpose and passion, and one affection that wins over all others.
"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. For I am meek and lowly of heart and you will

find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.
(Matthew 11:28-30).

2. The radical, decisive dethronement of self and the enthronement of Jesus are crucial to spiritual living. Anything less will result in an embattlement in the inner life, doubt over most decisions – a constant tearing of the mind, motives and purposes.
 - a. A denial of self as the dominant principle over one's life means saying "yes" to Jesus, every day and in every way.
 - b. It is to make Jesus the ruling principle, even ruling passion, of one's whole life.
3. Self can be replaced on the throne for awhile, but, anything short of joining Jesus in His suffering and bearing a cross all the way to Calvary and being crucified – dying to self – will not blossom into spiritual living at its most fruitful.
4. A denial of self, resulting in an end to any personal pretension, any imagination, ambition or any presumption, is a prerequisite to spiritual living at its best.

C. Calvary Bound. Picking up the Cross and following Jesus underscores a two-part decision: choosing **a life of sacrifice** over security and comfort and choosing **a radical end of self**.

1. A life of sacrifice.
 - a. The "cross" that a believer is to bear is not the common afflictions and difficulties that all humanity groans under. It is what one purposely chooses to give up for the cause of Christ.
 - b. It is something that one may have earned, have every right to enjoy, but, chooses to sacrifice for the advance of the Gospel.
 - c. Sacrifice is the common experience of all believers. Some will suffer martyrdom, shame or exile.
 - d. Beyond the expected moments of sacrifice, there is the daily readiness and joy in doing whatever it takes to exalt Jesus before a needy world.

NOTE: The new lifestyle to which Jesus calls his followers is to be suffering servants, identified with Christ in his suffering. In suffering, in sacrificing and dying the faithful servant is identified with Jesus and shares the nature of the people of God of all centuries. ". . . *He that suffers in the flesh ceases from sin; that he should no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God*" (1 Peter 4:1-2).

2. A radical end of the self-regime.
 - a. A willful act to put to death the old man of sin, bury him forever and get on with a new life of submission and sacrifice for the purposes of the kingdom (Colossians 3:9-10).
 - b. The break with the old man is so decisive, so radical, it is called a crucifixion of self. "*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 serve sin.*" (Romans 6:6).
 - c. To reject any self-opposition that could be on the rise and reaffirm that self is dead and Jesus Christ is alive.

NOTE: Spiritual living includes looking at the cross daily through the door of the empty tomb of Jesus and reaffirming the supremacy of the risen Lord and a

readiness to pay whatever price is needed to keep Him before the world as the Lord of Life.

3. A dedicated walk.
 - a. Spiritual living is powerful in actions that appear as lights in a world of darkness. The “talk” will not be heard or believed without the “walk” being seen and appreciated.
 - b. Seeing how Jesus and His followers act will either make believers or stir up opposition.
 - c. The Calvary message saves when believed and obeyed. It will not be believed without the world seeing that it can be lived in every culture and in every land.
 - d. The daily experience of walking with Jesus is vital to one becoming intimate with the Father.

CONSEQUENCES OF DISCIPLESHIP

A. Consequences of Discipleship No Secret

Jesus could not have been more open about the consequences one must face in making a choice for discipleship (Matthew 16:24-26; Luke 9:24-25).

1. Turning from discipleship to gain security can have its immediate rewards.
2. Self first and safety first makes good, worldly sense.
3. Rejecting Christ in order to live and avoiding the humiliation of being identified with the company of the Man of Galilee will work for awhile.
4. Holding on to possessions rather than helping others provides life pleasures in the short term. Pursuing one’s own life agenda with its ambitions and rewards can result in a life of worldly gain.

B. Rejection of Christ Means Tragic and Destructive Consequences

1. If any decision causes one to lose his soul, the gaining of the whole world could not compensate the endless loss.
2. It comes down to a choice of the moment or the choice of an endless joy. One way or another, every person will lose his life. Either give it to Christ and enjoy fellowship with God now and forever or keep it for oneself and lose it in a Christ-less death and eternal ruin.
3. The validity of the choice to follow Christ is to be seen in the certainty of the second coming of Christ in glory to gather those who have chosen to follow Him in life and death.

CONCLUSION

Spiritual living begins with the mind – being convinced that Jesus is the very Son of God – continues with the heart – desiring to follow Jesus – and becomes more real with the exercise of the will – making the decision to dethrone self and enthroned Jesus as the Lord of Life. But, ending there, Christianity would be nothing but an ideology resulting in a stained glass religion and long discussions on the theology of the Temple. One’s spirituality would not get out in the streets taking the Gospel to the lost, healing to the sick or comfort to the sorrowing. It would not stand long in the face of opposition and would yield to the more pressing temptations. It would often be reluctant to sacrifice for the good of the kingdom.

The words of Jesus, “*If any man would desire to be my disciple. . .*” loom as among the most important words to guide us into the heart of God. With minds convinced of the deity of Jesus (John 8:24), with hearts burning with the passion to be one of

His followers (John 6:66-69) and with the announcement that He is the unquestioned Lord of Life (Matthew 10:32-33) one takes the first crucial step toward spiritual living. But, joining Him on the way to Calvary to die to self, co-mingling blood with blood, sweat with sweat, suffering with suffering and triumph with triumph, the fledgling believer continues his walk toward spiritual living. Beginning with the forgiveness of sins by identifying with him in baptism and being lifted in triumph by the resurrection we seek and find the Father in a life of spiritual growth and accomplishment.

SELF-EXAM FOR LESSON ONE:

1. The initial requirement of being Jesus' disciple is _____.
2. What is the four point statement leading us to spiritual living as reflected in Matthew 16:24 and Luke 9:23?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
3. Picking up the Cross and following Jesus underscores a two-part decision:
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

LESSON TWO

Choosing a Lifestyle of Repentance

INTRODUCTION

Our God is Holy! Being holy means He is infinitely above, superbly and incomparably different and superior to any other deity. He wants us to share in His holiness in all aspects of our life, worship and service. So states the Apostle Peter: “*But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: Be holy because I am holy*” (I Peter 1:13-16).

Spiritual living begins with a house cleaning. Like Spring cleaning each year, the chastening of the mind continues throughout life as one sweeps his temple clean for the divine residence. God cannot associate intimately with the clutter and trash of impure thinking. Jesus does not hesitate to pull men out of the gutter, but, he does not long walk with people who find delight with life in the gutter or thoughts leading to gutter living.

Throughout his ministry Jesus called on men **to repent**. The repentance envisioned by Jesus was a change of mind, resulting in a change of conduct. Dressing a dirty body in clean clothing was not enough to meet the conditions of repentance. It was a radical change from the inside, from the heart, that reached even to the attitudes, values, relationships and outside behavior and treatment of others.

Being a caretaker of the “*temple of God*,” which each of us has become with faith and obedience, means that we make repentance a life-style attitude and practice. With David we pray, “*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting*” (Psalms 139:23-24).

LESSON AIM: To examine the nature of repentance and its relationship to spiritual living.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Learn that the beginning of repentance is knowledge of God’s word.
 2. Investigate the power and progress of repentance.
 3. See that the fruit of repentance is moral wholeness and evangelism.
-

THE GENRE OF REPENTANCE

A. Repentance Starts With Knowledge

1. There is an in-born consciousness toward sin and righteousness bequeathed to every soul (Romans 2:14-15).
 - a. Most people, despite a bent toward sinning, know that they are doing wrong (Romans 1:18-32).
 - b. A natural disdain to sin can become seared over by frequent practice – to some, wrong can become right (1 Timothy 4:2).
2. Because of the clarity of right and wrong, even in the absence of revealed Law, sinners stand without excuse before divine judgment.
3. God has not left humanity with just an innate remonstrance to sin and a conscience that recoils initially from wrong behavior.

- a. He has revealed standards, expectations, for becoming holy as He is Holy.
- b. The Ten Commandments given to the Jews at Mt. Sinai formed the core of the holiness of God's ancient people.
- c. The teachings of Jesus, amplified in Apostolic writings, portray the mantra of holiness for Christians, following Jesus.
- 4. Lifestyle repentance begins and thrives on increasing knowledge of God's revealed will.
 - a. Jesus said, "*You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free*" (John 8:32).
 - b. It is not within man to guide his own steps (Jeremiah 10:23). He had often poured over the monumental Psalms 119 which speaks eloquently of the place of the Word in shaping men's souls. Read Psalm 119:129-133.

B. Repentance Continues With Self Awareness

- 1. Repentance has no validity or power to change a person who does not acknowledge his sinfulness.
- 2. Comparing oneself with those around him can leave a person thinking that things are not all that bad.
 - a. Seeing oneself in the light of God's standards, whether for morality or spiritual living, affirms the statement of Paul, "*All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23).
 - b. Psalms 36:1: "*There is none righteous, no, not one . . . there is none that does good, no, not one.*"
 - c. The whole world has become guilty before God. Jesus came to save man because all men were sinners and could not save themselves.
- 3. John describes the moral deficiency in refusing to recognize one's sins: "*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us . . . If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.*" (1 John 1:8, 10).
- 4. A person ignores his faulty values, his sins all, to his own loss.
 - a. Only in a carefully scrutinized life placed along side the life of Jesus can one enjoy the virtues of a well disciplined life.
 - b. Satan would distract us or even encourage us in being so busy serving others and praising God to keep us from looking at ourselves or acknowledge our sinfulness.

C. Repentance Takes Shape With Disdain Toward Sin

- 1. The ugliness of sin and its deceptive nature are seldom on display or easily seen.
- 2. A lifestyle of repentance begins to take shape when sin can be seen for what it is and what it intends to do.
 - a. Spiritual insight, sharpened by a knowledge of the Word and increasing success in battle is required to see the end result of any sin.
 - b. Seeing what sin does to people, to relationships and to the lofty purposes in the Kingdom enterprise should begin to raise a noble disdain within us.

NOTE: Self centered pursuits, holding others in contempt, having goals that emarginate God or hoarding one's resources to himself while others languish in need are deplorable – ugly and to be disdained. Claiming to have fellowship with God while any such sins course our veins should be met, steadily, by a rush of disdain and eagerness to be freed by repentance.

THE POWER AND PROGRESS OF REPENTANCE

A. Repentance Grows With Delight in Righteousness

1. Being “more righteous than others” brings no lasting joy.
 - a. It eventually is overcome by arrogance and a condescending spirit, even pity and then contempt for others.
 - b. Wearing the ever-new clothes of righteousness – the righteousness imputed by Christ – brings a sense of delight.
 - c. It is a poor man being given a new, fresh, clean, daily wardrobe of the best of clothing.
 - d. It is undeserved, incredibly beautiful and fits so well. Best of all, the Father smiles on how well one looks like His Son, wearing the gifts of His sacrifice.
2. Wearing the robes of righteousness given by Jesus, the redeemed sinner wants to stay near the throne, in the temple presence of the Father.
3. By God’s grace he abandoned sin through repentance; by God’s abiding grace he will continue his life of repentance.

B. Repentance Flourishes In Praising God

1. The saint knows that but for the grace of God he would be powerless, he would be nothing.
 - a. That is why he increasingly praises God for His loving kindness and His faithfulness in forgiveness.
 - b. That is why the perfect life and perfect sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross absorbs his day, erupting in praise.
 - c. That is why he cherishes each victory over sin and rejoices when any one around him rises above a temptation.
 - d. That is why he revels in every good he sees and is able to see beauty in the most unusual places and people.
 - e. That is why he is continually challenged to overcome every obstacle that blocks his view of God.
2. The saint prays daily for the strength to dispel every shadow that blurs his seeing the beauty of the Almighty.

FRUIT OF REPENTANCE – EVANGELISM AND MORAL WHOLENESS

A. Repentance Matures In Sharing The Good News With Others

1. Repentance is something more fundamental than changing behavior.
 - a. Repentance is turning from self-dependence and self-righteousness and self-justification to seeing in Jesus the sole, sufficient payment for the penalty of sin.
 - b. Repentance is turning to full reliance on the person, work and sacrifice of Jesus.
2. Repentance is a turning from self to a full hearted embracing of Jesus.

NOTE: That deeply felt relationship creates a new, Spirit filled heart, resulting in a new recognition of God’s mercy and grace, and makes dependence on Jesus become a lifestyle delight. That spirit of repentance, turning always away from self to continue embracing Jesus, is a life long experience. This message is compellingly shared with others in need of a Savior. That is evangelism at its most persuasive.

B. Repentance Is The Prelude to Moral Wholeness

1. Ministry skills, extensive Biblical knowledge and a charismatic personality, all, are given validity and strength by moral wholeness.

- a. How a preacher lives will be remembered long after he moves on to other places, more than the sermons he preached, the programs he designed and led and his wise counseling.
 - b. The best of ministry can be destroyed by a carelessness in moral living.
 - c. Jesus described the immoral lives of religious leaders as “*whitewashed tombs which appear beautiful outwardly but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness*” (Matthew 23:27).
2. The call of God is that we be holy in all of our conduct because He is holy (1 Peter 1:15-16). We are called to be a “*holy priesthood . . . a holy nation . . . having . . . honorable conduct . . .*” (1 Peter 2:5, 9, 12).

NOTE: Because immorality is such a denial of our mission and who we are, Paul encourages us: “*Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God*” (2 Corinthians 7:1).

A lifestyle of daily repentance is the only way to keep our feet pointed toward Jesus, keeping habits from forming by denying entry of any thoughts or careless actions into our lives. Sinful thoughts become entrenched, producing hidden sins that finally explode into devastating, public shame.

Conclusion

A spirit of repentance, in all of its many splendors, keeps one open to opportunities in spiritual growth. It keeps complacency at a distance. It elicits scrutiny of everything to determine if it will honor God or distract from Kingdom purposes. It is an *early defense system* against every threat. It brings one, hungering after righteousness, to his knees in contrition when he sins. It keeps one centered in Jesus. It keeps worship a compelling, moving necessity and joy. It keeps the spirit of evangelism stirred and the passion for souls real. Repentance is not one finger in the five finger plan of salvation. It is a daily experience in the life and service of the redeemed.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWO:

1. Concerning the Genre of repentance: It starts with _____, continues with _____ and takes shape with _____.
2. It is said the power and progress of repentance:
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
3. The Fruit of Repentance involves what two areas of action?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
4. Write a brief paragraph describing how your repentance has changed you life and relationships within your family.

LESSON THREE

Choose to Be a Man of the Book

— Committed To Its Message —

INTRODUCTION

Everything a minister is and everything he does is inseparably dependent on the Word. There is no reason to think that the most talented man can be fruitful for long or even survive to the end without a full dependence on the Word. Nothing short of a full dependence on the Word will be sufficient for his spiritual journey and for his spiritual mission. There have been too many that have tried it on their own genius, having ended up either falling away or leading God's people away from the truth. The lengthy list of fallen proclaimers of the Word, both in Scripture and in history, should be an adequate indicator of the value of being a man of the Book.

LESSON AIM: To imprint indelibly on the mind of the student the importance of being a man of the book.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Learn six important areas which Bible study must include.
 2. Examine and learn five "must be" statements concerning the very foundation of Bible study.
-

BIBLE STUDY MUST BE CORE DRIVEN

A. An Intimate Knowledge of the Gospels A Necessity

Like every believer, the preacher must aim at mastering the contents of the Gospels, both in structure and content.

B. A Practical Means of Mastering the Structure and Content of the Four Gospels

1. Discipline oneself in a nine week, reading and memory plan.
 - a. Purchase an index box with four index tabs. Write on them the names of each of the Gospels.
 - b. Take eighty-nine index cards and write on them the chapter numbers of each Gospel: Twenty-eight for Matthew, Sixteen for Mark, etc.
 - c. Begin by reading the first ten chapters of Matthew, each day for a week.
 - d. On the second day, begin writing the **sub-topics** of each chapter on the chapter cards and memorizing them. By the end of the week one will have read Matthew 1-10 seven times and memorized the outline of each of the ten chapters.
2. For the next eight weeks, read the next ten chapters each day of every week and memorize the sub-topics. In the end, one will have read the Gospels seven times, memorized the topical contents of the chapters of each Gospel and have their contents stamped on his mind. One could, as he was completing his reading and memorizing, add the names of the people, places, a special verse, etc. of each chapter on the back of the chapter cards.

NOTE: This reading and memorizing could be extended through the whole of the New Testament, reading the succeeding ten chapters each day for a week and memorizing the topical contents, etc. In all, after twenty-six weeks, one would have read the 260 chapters of the New Testament seven times and memorized the topical contents of all twenty-seven books. Next up would be to use the same system to embrace the knowledge of the Old Testament – attainable in two and one-half years! Using this approach one could have a good knowledge of the Scriptures in three years – and never leave his home.

BIBLE STUDY MUST BE PURPOSE DRIVEN

A. A Working Knowledge of the Bible Includes

1. **Structural knowledge:** knowing the message of each Biblical book, its sections, its author, its readers and its purpose, is the foundation on which the preacher must build his preaching and teaching efforts.
2. **Content knowledge:** complete familiarity of the contents of the Bible, gained through daily, systematic Bible reading, continued over a lifetime, is fundamental to a preacher being a teacher of the Word.
3. **Textual knowledge:** understanding truth in its historical context, section by section, provides one of the richest soils for expository preaching.
4. **Topical knowledge:** knowing accurately all of the great Bible doctrines (e.g. God, prophecy, salvation, Christ, church, second coming, etc.) is the best defense against error.
5. **Biographical knowledge:** knowing all of the patriarchs, judges, kings, prophets, apostles, leading characters, men and women, etc. provides the models for powerful applications.
6. **Geographical knowledge:** A thorough knowledge of the nations, lands, seas, mountains, rivers, cities, etc., related to the periods of Biblical history, helps immensely in understanding and appreciating the Bible message.

BIBLE STUDY MUST BE PRINCIPLE DRIVEN

A. The Gaining and Use of Biblical Knowledge Should Follow Guidelines

1. The Bible student's obligation is to understand the purpose of the author, the message to the original reader, what he was expected to do with the message in his historical context and the application of the inspired message in one's modern setting.
2. One should gain the background knowledge to better accomplish the student's obligation.
3. One should acquire and use updated, research tools to be most effective.
4. One should develop a system to retain the knowledge in order to keep building on past studies.
5. After personal application, one should organize the material to teach others and use every opportunity to share the knowledge (e.g. classes, sermons, seminars, etc.).
6. One should broaden the search for more knowledge among proven Bible instructors – being forever a life-long Berean or an inquiring, Ethiopian Treasurer.
7. If gifted in writing, one should reproduce oneself many times in composing articles, tracts, courses, books, video studies, correspondence, etc.
8. One should make Bible study a life-long commitment, never content with any level of knowledge.
9. Mastery of the Biblical languages is strongly recommended for all those who are serious in unlocking the full knowledge of the Biblical text.

B. The Day the Preacher Quits Studying the Word Marks the Decline or Even Halting of His Spiritual Growth

BIBLE STUDY MUST BE MINISTRY DRIVEN

A. Personal Growth Demands Personal Study and Meditation

The following passages out of Paul's admonitions to Timothy illustrate how the study of the Scriptures is important to a preacher's ministry:

1. Studying helps the preacher know what is a "*pattern of sound words*," and to hold tightly to it in faith and love (2 Timothy 1:13).
2. Studying enables a preacher to know what to commit to other faithful men (2 Timothy 2:2).
3. Studying lifts the preacher above the foolish and speculative issues in which men get embroiled (2 Timothy 2:14-16).
4. Studying makes a preacher complete, ready for every good work (2 Timothy 3: 14-17).
5. Studying equips a preacher to accomplish his central mission: preach the Word, doing the work of an evangelist (2 Timothy 4:1-5).

B. Personal Growth Requires Adequate Time In The Word

1. A complete reading of Paul's statements to Timothy and Titus provide breathtaking emphasis on the need and value of constant study of Scriptures.
2. A preacher who wants to get the best of Scriptures will read 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus once a week to keep himself motivated in the study of the Word.
3. A telling measure of a preacher's growing spirituality is seen in how much time he spends in recreation, physical exercises or even in "church work" as compared to the time devoted to the study in the Word.

BIBLE STUDY MUST BE VALUE DRIVEN

A. Bible Study for the Preacher must Be Driven by a Compelling Value

1. Every thing done regularly, despite the circumstances that could distract, must be driven by a compelling value. Without such a motivation the activity would decline and die.
2. It is very possible for the preacher to get so busy serving people, doing much for the King and forget to listen to the King.
3. An indelible list should be imprinted on the fore mind of the preacher concerning the values of daily Bible study – study for his own growth beyond studying for a sermon or lesson. A preacher should fear to go into battle when the "sword" has not been polished in recent hours. Prayers are hindered coming from staleness in the Word.

B. Preparedness by the Preacher Involves Constant Study in the Word

1. Weakness before temptations can be quickly diagnosed by the lack of study and replaced with strength by study.
2. Having little to give comes from taking little from the Word. Searching for a sermon topic seldom happens to a preacher who is frequently in the Word. From his regular, daily study, he usually will have an imposing list of sermons ideas that just need to be developed. With God smiling into his life, through the Word, the value-driven preacher finds study a delightful and necessary part of his daily life and ministry.

BIBLE STUDY MUST BE EVANGELISTICALLY DRIVEN

A. Whatever Else the Church Is Designed and Mandated to Accomplish, Soul Saving Is among the Dominant Priorities

1. A preacher's Bible study should reflect the evangelistic mandate. Souls near and far are precious to God.
2. A preacher's study should reflect the global nature of the soul winning church. The Gospels declare the Person of our faith that we are commanded to share with every ethnic group in the world – every creature, everywhere (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).
 - a. Acts shows us the urgency, the plan and the costs of global evangelism.
 - b. The Epistles deepen our knowledge of the message, tell a great deal about the messengers and show us how the early converts lived out their faith.
 - c. Revelation thrills us with the ultimate destiny of the soul after Satan has had his best shot in destroying the Sovereign God's plan to save the righteous.

B. The Preacher Who Studies Evangelistically Will Preach Evangelistically and Will Lead Others in Evangelism

BIBLE STUDY MUST BE MORALITY DRIVEN

A. A Preacher Searches the Scriptures to See What Kind of Man He Should Be Before He Dares Preach Piety to Others (1 Corinthians 9:27)

B. A Preacher That Searches the Scriptures Lofty Principles of Moral Living Is Best Empowered to Gladden an Audience with the Joys of Holy Living and Reassures Those That Fall Short of the Redeeming Grace of God

BIBLE STUDY MUST BE MODEL DRIVEN

A. The biographies embedded throughout Scripture.

1. The models of faith, purity, courage, hope, and conviction are given in striking and memorable stories.
2. A preacher grows through the lives of those of ancient times who faced the same questions and circumstances we could face.
3. The more effectively he can identify with the people of ancient times and learn their stories and lessons the more effective he can get close to those dear ones in the pews and in Bible studies.
4. Such a preacher believes that such stories were written for people of our times who need similar messages to live their lives victoriously (Romans 15:4).

SELF-EXAM FOR LESSON THREE:

1. Complete this sentence: Everything a minister is and everything he does is

2. A working knowledge of the Bible includes what eight things?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

8) _____

3. Bible study must be ministry driven and demands what two practices?

1) _____

2) _____

4. Purpose driven Bible study involves what six kinds of knowledge?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

LESSON FOUR

Choosing to Excel as a Servant

— Following Jesus —

INTRODUCTION:

In the introductory remarks, the wanting with all one's soul, passionately desiring to follow Jesus was seen as the fountain head of spiritual living. Lacking that impulse of the soul, no other effort matters much in the quest for the presence of God. Like sacrifice without love is an empty gong so spiritual living without the consuming longing to be in the presence of God is sterile.

Spiritual living, on a believer's part, is about choosing to follow Jesus, bearing a cross. It is identifying with Jesus, it is becoming a part of His history that led him to Calvary, it is a commitment to give no less than the Savior gave for us. Giving one's life, dying, sacrificing, toiling and agonizing are small prices to pay to be in the entourage of Jesus. A less willing believer will, at best, follow Jesus at a distance, with all of the resulting losses of not being close to hear every word and participate in every event. At that distance such a believer would be more vulnerable to all of the more vicious attacks of the ancient lion that goes about stalking and seeking whom he might devour (1 Peter 5:9).

LESSON AIM: To inspire the student to have a burning desire to be a servant in the midst of a community of servants.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Discover that servanthood involves desire, conviction and passion and is founded upon a growing sense of being a servant.
 2. Learn that a person's servanthood is to be patterned after the ultimate servant, Jesus Christ.
-

DESIRE, CONVICTION AND PASSION

A. Jesus Longs for Good Men to Follow Him into the Presence of the Father

1. Once, when Jesus called some followers to make a faith commitment they left and walked away, never to return. The remaining disciples, when asked if they would go away also, were represented well by Peter when he said, "*Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the Words of Eternal Life. We believe and are sure that you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God*" (John 6:66-69).
2. Another time Jesus sorrowed when a personable and admirable, young ruler found the price too high in choosing to follow Him, though he had a near impeccable life (Luke 18:18-28). Jesus, however, wanted something more than a follower. **He wanted each follower to be servant-minded.**

B. The Basic Condition to Becoming Spiritual in Ministry Is a Growing Sense of Being a Servant

1. A servant (preacher) can work in a big house in a big city or in a little house in a little city. He can serve a rich master, dress accordingly and enjoy

available benefits or serve a less rich master, dress accordingly and be content with what is available.

- a. It is not where he serves but who he serves that is of singular importance to the servant.
- b. As a servant, he does not base his serving on what recognition he receives. He does not demand special attention or pay because he is better educated, more knowledgeable, works harder than others, has more to show for his efforts, is more personable or is a charismatic leader.
- c. He disdains anything that he might do, good or bad, that distracts the eyes, the ears and the hearts of others away from his Master.
- d. He rejoices when his labors bring praise to his Owner. He knows that serving is not about him and what he derives from his serving. It is about every thought being devoted to pleasing the Lord, about focusing on doing what most pleases Him.

B. The Preacher and His Servant Attire

- 1. A preacher can never progress in his spiritual life without taking on the garment, the sandals and the mind of a servant.
- 2. A preacher that performs well but neither dresses, works or thinks like a servant will fail in drawing nearer to the Master.
 - a. Frequently thinking about self hinders from thinking about being a servant at his best.
 - b. Trying to climb a ladder of perceived ministerial success, getting the better paying and more prominent roles in the kingdom business distorts the purpose of serving.

JESUS – THE ULTIMATE MODEL OF SERVING

A. Jesus' Life, A Pattern of Serving

- 1. Jesus walked among men serving them at every turn.
 - a. **His miracles** – were all about serving the needs of those who were suffering, who were hungry, who were bereaved and who were wavering in their faith.
 - b. **His teachings** – were to serve the listeners in knowing God and what would please Him.
 - c. **His availability** – readiness to stop what He was doing to listen to the pleas of many exhibited a serving spirit.
 - d. **His constant work** – pushing Himself to exhaustion and traveling constantly showed the intensity of his serving.
 - e. **His bearing the insults** – the intrigues and the hostility of religious leaders showed His determination in serving.
- 2. Undergoing the week of the cross, bearing the searing pain of the crucifixion, staggering under the overwhelming humiliation and shouldering the crushing burden of human sin, all, revealed the proofs of His being the ultimate servant.

B. Jesus Pronounced Servanthood as the Prerequisite of Spirituality

- 1. Jesus, first and last, asks each new adherent to be a servant.
 - a. Being a servant speaks of obedience, regard for the master, devotion to the assigned tasks, lowered demands for self and recognition of others and wanting only to honor the will of one's Lord.
 - b. Satisfaction at the end of the day is that the Master's will has been done and a new day will soon dawn to continue to please him.
- 2. The twelve apostles, struggled with the concept of becoming servants.

- a. In their rush to the throne they forgot that the pathway of serving is the prelude to glory.
 - b. They aspired to rule, to have authority over others, accompanied with pomp, ceremony and wealth.
 - c. They saw Jesus perform miracles and saw themselves vested with the same authority.
 - d. They saw His dominance over the leaders of Israel and envisioned themselves rising above them.
 - e. They listened to His teachings on the coming Kingdom and begin jostling for superior positions, even becoming angry at anyone who seemed to be gaining an edge.
 - f. They saw Jesus as the destined King and themselves next in command. They saw His resurrection as the confirmation of their eminent role in the imminent Kingdom.
3. They had missed knowing the heart of Jesus.
- a. Though soon to be appointed King of kings, Jesus came, not to be served, but, to serve (Matthew 21:17-28; Luke 22:27).
 - b. The highest rank in the house of God is reserved for those who serve others (Matthew 23:11; Mark 9:35).
 - c. A true servant of Jesus the Lord does not expect a better station or treatment than his Lord received (John 15:18-20).
 - d. Lowering oneself to serve another, any other, is acceptable and expected (John 13:13-17).

NOTE: When we think of Christian doctrine we are disciples and believers; when we think of the battle against Satan we are soldiers; when we think of the awesome sovereignty of God we are worshipers; but when we think of the nature of the church and of our relationship to one another we are a community of servants.

C. How We Can Recognize the Spirit of Serving

1. The gift of serving is identifying with the person of Jesus and serving in harmony with His purposes, spirit and methods (Philippians 2:3-8).
 - a. v. 3: Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit.
 - b. v. 3: Humbly, regard others as more important.
 - c. v. 4: Concern for the needs of others.
 - d. v. 5: Absorbing the mind of Jesus – thinking what He thinks, feeling what He feels and doing what He does.
 - e. v. 7: Renounce personal prerogatives to serve others.
 - f. v. 8: Keep service true and responsive to the highest demands of obedience.
2. The mind of a servant is described by Jesus in His preface to the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-10).
3. The mind of a servant is described in the centerpiece of Paul's writings to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 13:1-13).

D. The Source of Spiritual Serving

1. Motivation for serving others begins with our recognition of the gracious gifts of God to us.
 - a. He gave us His Son who procured salvation by His sacrifice (John 3:16).
 - b. God gave us His Spirit who endows us with many ministry gifts (Titus 3:5-6).
 - c. God gives us the hope of eternal life (Titus 1:2).
2. Jesus' desire and request of His people is to be servants.
 - a. He is not asking us to do great things in His kingdom, nor is He

- conditioning our salvation on being known for our many and marvelous works.
- b. He is asking us to be servants, serving Him without fanfare or designs for personal greatness, but, for the singular purpose of being faithful in obeying Him.
 - 3. Jesus, as an ultimate model of serving, has shown us in spirit and in fact just how to serve and how important it is to serve.

Conclusion

The spirit of serving is not seen in its fullness in just doing good things, even great things. It begins with a people-centered mind set, an attitude of giving and continues with a selfless purpose to glorify God. It can lead to a fullness and completeness but does not seek it. Rather, at its core, it honors God and blesses others. It is content that God has been honored, people have been lifted up and prays for another day, another place and another time that serving God can be repeated.

SELF-EXAM FOR LESSON FOUR:

1. What two examples does the teacher use to illustrate Jesus' longing for good men to follow Him?
1) _____
2) _____
2. List five areas which reflected Jesus' life as a pattern of serving.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
3. From Philippians 2:3-8, list five things that help us recognize the spirit of serving.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
4. Write a paragraph describing what this lesson has done to increase your servanthood in the church.

LESSON FIVE

Choose to Be Forgiving in Heart

— Healing from Hurt —

INTRODUCTION

Becoming a spiritual leader like Jesus means to channel anger with a purposeful self-control, making emotions work for righteousness, and being able to keep a heart free from resentment, bitterness and revenge. A trusted measure of one's growing spirituality is the amount of time that passes from the time of hurt and when one can genuinely care for the offender and plea to the Father for His forgiveness. How long did it take Jesus to process the hurt of Calvary and cry out to the Father for the forgiveness of the accusers?

The emotion of anger is the body's frequent response to a perceived hurt or threat. As such, in its inception, it is neutral, neither right or wrong. Its nature can be transformed by a choice. It can be turned toward avoidance, rejection or hurtful retaliation, disrupting relationships and precluding any good. Or, it can be turned to forgiveness, reconciliation and helpful service. Anger, as a secondary emotion, can be quick to follow a hurt or threat from another. But, each person chooses what to do with his anger. Will he "...be slow to anger" (James 1:19) and pave the way for forgiveness and reconciliation? Or will he unbridle his anger, paving the way for a progressive and hurtful, ill will, a retaliatory defensiveness or, even, repressive retrIBUTions? Which will it be?

LESSON AIM: To move the student from a possible unforgiving or slow forgiving spirit to a quickly forgiving spiritual person.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

Learn and incorporate eight choices concerning forgiveness which will grow a heart like the Son of Man.

The choices that follow are practical, powerful and full of promise in developing a forgiving heart – a heart like the Son of Man:

A HEART LIKE THE SON OF MAN

A. A Choice to Be Honest: to acknowledge hurt and anger.

1. The refusal to acknowledge one's health issues could lead to death. Cancer ignored means death.
2. Anger ignored, hurts denied, can lead to spiritual death. Many consider the admitting to being hurt, with its attending anger, to be a sign of weakness which is to be covered up with dishonest, deceptive farces.
3. Confession is a vital and urgent aspect of correction and growth (James 5:16). Saying "ouch" to hurts requires the development of personal integrity, humility, courage and candor with others, all pre-requisites to spiritual living.
4. The inability, the spiritual deficiency that hinders one in being honest with himself and, thereby, getting in contact with his emotions lessens or virtually precludes ever enjoying the sweetness and power of forgiveness.

- a. Anger management that paves the way for forgiveness is blocked at the beginning without self-awareness.
- b. This is one of the reasons that the ancient Greek's central thought was "*know thyself.*"

NOTE: When one is quick to acknowledge a hurt and face the frequently resulting anger, the sooner he can get on with dealing with his anger productively and forgiving effectively.

B. A Choice to Make a Healthy Response: to repress, to explode or to give direction and control to hurt emotions. Being spiritual means knowing how to deal promptly and efficiently with the perception of hurt and its accompanying anger.

- 1. Guided by the flesh, a person will do one of two things:
 - a. One: He will **repress** the angry feelings, deny the severity of the hurt and begin a process that will lead to a seething resentment with all of its consequences.
 - 1) He will pour in his own heart the "acid" for storage.
 - 2) Stored up resentments begin by damaging the person's emotional and physical health, continue in damaging treasured relationships and end in damaging one's relation to God and compromising the enjoyment of the sweetness of forgiveness with all.
 - 3) Such resentments stored too long over a long period of time eventually explode, inflicting harm on anyone who is standing nearby.
 - 4) Paul urges us to process angry feelings promptly, beginning at once (Ephesians 5:26, 31), even within the day of the hurt.
 - b. Two: He will **explode** on the occasion of most hurts. Some schools in modern psychology have taught the "scream" theory in dealing with hurt and anger.
 - 1) They have correctly measured the damage of repressed, angry emotions, but, have gone to another extreme in urging people to express, even angrily, their feelings in what results in an irresponsible manner of anger management.
 - 2) People get hurt, often severely, by an angry man who thinks he is being candid and courageous, "telling it just like it is."
 - 3) **Spiritual-minded people do only what is best for others.**
- 2. Being spiritual means one, having already become aware of hurt and meeting the resultant anger head-on, begins immediately to take charge of the emotion and give it direction – to begin channeling the anger toward forgiveness and reconciliation.
 - a. He is a man well described in the "*second slap, second mile and second piece of clothing*" story of Jesus (Matthew 5:38-42).
 - b. He keeps his emotions in check, buying not only time to act responsibly, but keeping anger from going inwardly and doing its damaging work.
 - c. He gives impetus to a continuing process to be like Jesus in doing only good for people, never evil.

C. A Choice to Confront the Hurt: to verify if it is real or perceived, if it is important, if it is current or in the past.

- 1. Accumulated hurts pose almost unsurmountable problems.
 - a. When people confront hurt and anger globally, unsorted, they have to deal with a barrage of issues that, more than often, is overwhelming and almost inevitably precludes dealing with the issues effectively.
 - b. It has been estimated that as high as 75% of all hurts never happened,

- c. either at all, or for the reasons assigned, or with the importance perceived.
 - c. Many people are accused of things they never did or for motives they never had.
 - d. The spiritual man feels the weighty responsibility to be a custodian of truth. He knows and delights in truth that liberates (John 8:32). He is committed to make everything he says meet the standards of truth and love (Ephesians 4:15).
2. Every hurt must be run through a grid of truth, asking these candid questions:
 - a. **Did this hurt ever occur** or am I just perceiving, imagining it as having happened?
 - b. **Am I blowing the hurt out of proportion**, giving it an importance that it does not deserve?
 - c. **Am I feeling hurt because the person did not meet my expectation?**
 - 1) Did I clearly communicate to him what were my expectations?
 - 2) Was I fair in my expectations or was he capable of meeting them?
 - 3) Did he ever commit to my expectations?
 - d. **Is the present hurt just another hurt on top of many similar hurts of the past that I never really processed and forgave?**
 3. When hurts are sorted out, given their truthful designations, we can more easily deal with them and move on toward forgiving those that are real, important and current.

D. A Choice to Understand the Offender: to put in context the significant hurts that have been verified, to ask “why” questions.

1. One must try to understand why another person would hurt him.
 - a. While angry, we have little care to understand the offender, only to accuse him and retaliate – make him pay for the offence.
 - b. Wanting to understand is not to justify a wrongful action.
 - c. Wanting to understand indicates we want to care and we feel a value in the other person.
 - d. It is easier to understand a person’s hurtful, pattern behaviors by knowing the family environment in which he was raised.
2. Spiritual living sets out to break the defective and hurtful cycles of our past and set in motion new values, new attitudes and new behaviors.
 - a. One of those new attitudes is to determine to understand why people fail and, then, non-judgmentally try to put ourselves where they are and feel what they feel.
 - b. Our understanding and sympathy would foster acceptance and a willingness to reach out to them, leading further along the path of forgiveness.

E. A Choice to Desire the Best for the Offender: to practice love.

1. To want the best to happen in the life of another is a choice to love.
 - a. Before tender affections can gain roots in a relationship there must be the choice to love, to want the best to happen in the life of another.
 - b. Before one can erase a debt, forgive a real, important offence, he must want the best to happen to the offender.

NOTE: Could Jesus have chosen to leave the side of the Father in heaven, to have come among men even in a beautiful earth, to have been treated with contempt by fearful men, to have faced and endured the Cross without having chosen to want the best for undeserving, unlovable sinners (John 3:16)? So, one who would be spiritual in acting out of a forgiving heart must practice the Calvary choice on behalf of an offender.

2. Agape love does not look on what a person has done or failed to do. It looks on what a person can become in Christ.
- F. A Choice to Forgive the Offense:** to stand at the side of the offender as a defense attorney and plea the case for clemency.
- G. A Choice to Confirm the Forgiveness in Word and in Deed:** to decide to be a servant and assume some responsibility in the rehabilitation of the offender.
1. Forgiveness is the goal of the disciplined effort
 2. The impact of forgiveness, as a result of love, is the most powerful and moving experience known to man.
 - a. It identifies the forgiving one with God and it draws the forgiven one closest to the nature of God.
 - b. Helping the person toward a more sensitive and responsible life is done with a servant spirit.
- H. A Choice to Maintain Vigilance and Discipline in Dealing with Future Hurts Through Effective Anger Management:** to practice the preceding principles each time that new hurts occur.
1. The spiritual person stays alert and prepared to face incoming hurts.
 2. Vigilance and discipline make it possible to process every new hurt that comes.

Conclusion

There are multiple blessings that come from learning how to forgive, starting with a Christian control of anger. The fundamental reason for forgiving is because in doing so we identify with the nature of God. God wants us to be like him – to forgive out of love for the offenders. Jesus made God's forgiveness of us contingent on our forgiving those who trespass against us (Matthew 6:14-15).

A SPIRITUAL MAN IS A FORGIVEN AND A FORGIVING PERSON.

SELF-EXAM FOR LESSON FIVE:

1. List below the eight (8) choices which will lead in developing a forgiving heart – a heart like the Son of Man.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
 - 7) _____
 - 8) _____
2. Every hurt must be run through the grid of truth consisting of what four (4) questions?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
3. Write a brief paragraph explaining how this lesson has made you a more forgiving person.

LESSON SIX

Choosing Wholeness as a Lifestyle

— Thinking, Feeling and Doing like Jesus —

INTRODUCTION

Everyone who would dare to preach God's Word must claim for himself the goal that Paul had for every one he taught (Colossians 1:28-29).

The purposeful march toward maturity in Christ has to include the maturing of the human, quality traits, each developed and controlled by the Spirit in the increasing likeness of Jesus, the Son of Man.

1. The spiritual man is controlled under the **stresses of life**, keeping his responses under the supervision of the Spirit.
2. The spiritual man confronts **anxiety** and transforms it into hope.
3. The spiritual man is comfortably **involved with people**.
4. The spiritual man is **open and transparent** at the feeling level.
5. The spiritual man is **sensitive and caring**.
6. The spiritual man is able to be **objective**, unselfishly making decisions to benefit others, even at his own loss.
7. The spiritual man is **dominant and decisive**, having a sense of worth, a sense of belonging, a sense of competency and a sense of mission.
8. The spiritual man is an able **manager of his anger**.
9. The spiritual man is **disciplined**, living an organized and productive life.

The above nine life traits are at the heart of who a person is and how he relates to others.

LESSON AIM: To implant in the mind of all students the necessity of having these nine qualities in their lives.

LESSON OBJECTIVE: You will . . .

Learn nine testing tools for the spiritual man and be able to reproduce them on a test.

TESTING TOOLS FOR THE SPIRITUAL MAN

A. Able To Cope. Every job or profession has its own list of stresses. It is not so much how much stress one faces in his work as it is how well does he know how to cope with the stress. The following guidelines can help:

1. **Remember who is really in charge** – God. The church does not live or die according to the work of the preacher
2. **Be ready to take the leadership** when guidance is needed, but learn to train people and delegate responsibilities.
3. **Spend more time in prayer and in the Word.** Jesus did not allow a crushing throng of people keep Him from rising early to pray or spending all night in prayer.
4. **Be confident in the Lord.** But also know that God's assignments in ministry follow closely to one's God given strengths and giftedness.

5. **Identify and seek help** to replace any deficiencies in attitude or values that otherwise drain one's ability to stay calm, controlled and productive.

Research Scriptures: Psalm 71:20-21, 131:1-2; Proverbs 14:30; Isaiah 26:3; Jeremiah 17:7-8; Matthew 6:24-34, 11:28-30; Luke 10:41; John 14:27, 16:33; Romans 5:1-2, 8:6, 15:13; 2 Corinthians 1:3-5; Philippians 4:6-13; Colossians 3:1-2; 1 Timothy 6:6-8; Hebrews 2:17-18.

- B. Hopeful.** Jesus presents the perfect model of pulling hope out of the jaws of anxiety in the most anxious weekend of His life – from Gethsemane, to the Cross and the Empty Tomb!
1. Anxiety is defined as a crushing sense of being out of control.
 2. Hope is defined as a sense of continuity and of favorable outcome.
 - a. In the garden Jesus saw anxiety for what it was, a four pronged attack by Satan, that can be destroyed, one by one.
 - b. Anxiety is strengthened by the conspiracy of **doubt, fear, loneliness and guilt**.
 - c. Alone, it is difficult for any human to consistently confront and destroy each of these four conspirators.
 - d. Jesus confronted them and won an exemplary victory – as a man, using the same resources available to each of us.
 3. Note Jesus' use of the available resources.
 - a. Jesus, drawing on His knowledge of God's promises, changed **doubt** – a sense of uncertainty – to **conviction** – a sense of certainty.
 - b. Jesus, submitting His will to the will of God, changed fear – a sense of **threat** – to **courage** – a sense of security.
 - c. Jesus, reaffirming God's caring presence and purpose, changed **loneliness** – a sense of isolation – to **companionship** – a sense of belonging.
 - d. Jesus, trusting God to be faithful to His redemptive plan, changed the burden of **guilt of humanity** – a sense of accusation – to **attachment** – a sense of acceptance.
 4. Defeating the anxiety that could have crushed Him. Jesus confronted and defeated each element of anxiety. The resources of Jesus are still available to the messengers of the Lord:
 - a. **Knowledge of God's promises** – derived from a life of living in The Book.
 - b. **Submitting to the will of God** – derived from knowing and doing God's will.
 - c. **Reaffirming God's caring presence and purpose** – derived from speaking often and clearly about God's intervention and extolling Him in prayer.
 - d. **Trusting God to be faithful to His redemptive plan** – derived from being a keen observer and grateful recipient of God's grace.

Research Scriptures: Psalm 3:5-6, 37:1-7, 40:1-3, 42:11, 131:1-2; Proverbs 14:30; Matthew 6:25-34, 11:28-30; Romans 5:1-2, 15:13; Philippians 4:6-7.

C. Involved with People

1. The model of Jesus pictures one who, tirelessly, wanted to travel to where people gathered, was ready to sit down with individuals, even in the darkness of night, and was constantly addressing the varied needs and concerns of people.
 - a. **He was single-minded in His life purpose:** He came to seek and save the lost, to give them an abundant life, to preach the good news and to glorify His Father.

- b. **He knew the truthfulness and value of His message, the urgency of His ministry and the shortness of time.**
- c. **He knew the lostness of people and of their eternal destiny** contrasted with the heavenly abundance reserved for each obedient person.
- d. **He knew the longing of His Father that all might hear, obey and be saved.**
- 2. This was enough to take Him from the solitude of His carpenter's bench, to quell any natural, human reticence and to embolden Him to speak, to confront and to comfort.

Research Scriptures: Romans 12:9-13, 15:1-2; 1 Corinthians 12:24-26; 2 Timothy 1:7; James 5:16; 1 John 4:18,

- D. Open and Expressive.** A preacher has to be approachable, likeable and open in relationships
- 1. What was it that drew people to Jesus that is attainable and reproducible by every preacher?
 - a. **He was clearly knowledgeable** – responding with wisdom, and engendered respect and confidence.
 - b. **He showed compassion** – to a wide range of people suffering dreadfully and without hope.
 - c. **He treated women with deference and value** – uncommon in its time and children felt drawn to Him and were comfortable surrounding Him.
 - d. **He welcomed questions** – answered questions, asked questions and honored the sincere questioners.
 - e. **He identified with people** – with His simple, direct and understandable illustrations taken from their life situations.
 - f. **He did not hide His needs for friendship, for rest, for food and drink.**
 - 2. He made himself vulnerable for the sake of others, He was willing to give up much and suffer deeply. He placed others before Himself. Paul summarizes what we can take from the life of Christ (Read Philippians 2:1-5).

Research Scriptures: Proverbs 25:11; Romans 12:10, 15:2; Philippians 2: 1-4; James 1:19-20; 1 John 4:18.

- E. Sensitive and Caring.** The extent that a preacher can and will repeatedly visit in another's world and understand his hurts and needs determines the closeness that he will come to touching the person's life with the Gospel. How did Jesus draw so many to Him?
- 1. He looked beyond the moment of judgment to understand the forces driving the wrong action and tried to address that situation.
 - 2. His knowledge of wrong behavior or the wrong intent of a person did not blind Him to what the person could become, by the grace of God.
 - 3. His defense of and loyalty to the integrity and holiness of God did not distance Him from becoming a lowly carpenter and unpretentious servant to all.
 - 4. He kept Himself above hate or ill will toward even those who had hurt Him.
 - 5. He could put Himself where each person was seeing life from the other person's viewpoint.

Research Scriptures: Romans 12:15-16, 15:1-7; Ephesians 4:31-32; Philippians 2:1-4; Colossians 3:12-13; James 3:15-17; 1 John 4:7-11.

F. Unselfish

1. What most controls people, at least initially, emotions or reasoned facts? Several facts stand out:
 - a. God gave us a mind with which to search and determine what is true and best.
 - b. God gave us a will with which we are to submit all decisions to His will – a will with which to decide all matters rightly.
 - c. God gave us emotions with which to add impetus, enhancement and fire to every decision.
2. Selfish people subject the mind and the will to the unreasoned demands of reactive emotions.
3. Unselfish people determine to use their well-honed mind with which to think, they determine to discipline their will to be in submission to the will of God and, once they are sure that their decision will honor God, they will let their emotions grace and drive the resulting efforts.
4. Jesus is still our abiding example of having used His mind, will and emotions in a God-honoring way on every occasion.
 - a. He acted with the knowledge of what was needed, what was right and what was important.
 - b. A part of His human perfection was He thought and submitted His will to God before He enlisted His emotions.
 - c. His central thought in every action was not self-seeking, self-serving or retributive.

Research Scriptures: Psalm 119:65-72; Proverbs 2:7, 9, 12:8, 13:2, 15, 18:13, 28:13; Romans 12:3; 2 Corinthians 13:5; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Ephesians 4:14-24; Philippians 1:27, 2:5-8, 4:8-9; Colossians 3:5-10; 2 Timothy 1:12-13, 3:14-17; 1 Peter 1:13-16.

G. Confident

1. To have inspiring confidence, one must grow in the following qualities:
 - a. **A sense of worth** – most greatly achieved through understanding the magnificence of Creation and the price of Calvary.
 - b. **A sense of competency** – most greatly achieved through discovery of the God-given, ministry gifts and the development and employment of those gifts in a healthy, church commitment.
 - c. **A sense of belonging** – most greatly achieved through understanding the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood in Christ and the mutual, fraternal fellowship and service.
 - d. **A sense of purpose** – most greatly achieved through understanding the mandate of Jesus to His church and seeing one's place in its accomplishment.
2. One can increase his personal confidence by adding ministry skills, reaching new depths through personal research, continuing ministry training in reputable schools, gaining meaningful experience through fruitful efforts and being affirmed by brotherhood affirmations. But, one's growing, mature relationship with God is the best and surest way to grow in a sense of worth, competency, belonging and purpose – becoming a confident, servant worker.

Research Scriptures: Genesis 1:27; Matthew 6:25-34, 20:25-28; Romans 8:28-39, 12:3, 16-21; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; Galatians 5:25-26; Ephesians 5:21; Philippians 2:2, 4:13; 2 Timothy 2:24-25; Titus 2:4-5, 3:1-2; 1 Peter 1:18-19, 2:13, 5:1-3; 3 John 1:9,

H. Forgiving

1. One of the saddest, even most despicable sights, is a preacher who at the end of his lifelong preaching career is bitter, begrudging and unforgiving of people along the way. Review the eight simple choices presented earlier in Lesson Five.
2. A mature preacher aims at being a healthy Christian, being a forgiven and forgiving person, preaching the necessity and urgency of forgiving and modeling the quality in his daily life and ministry.

Research Scriptures: Psalm 4:4; Proverbs 14:29, 15:1-2, 16:32, 29:11; Ecclesiastes 7:7-9; Matthew 5:22-24; Romans 12:19-21; Ephesians 4:26-27, 31-32; 2 Timothy 2:24-25; James 1:19-21.

I. Disciplined and Organized

1. A well organized preacher knows how to stay on track. How did Jesus get so much done in three years of ministry?
 - a. He made extensive preparation before starting His public ministry.
 - b. He had an “end-game” plan and set His face toward accomplishing it.
 - c. Interruptions to teach, to comfort and to confront were a part of His planned day. But, after every such interruption He went back to His purpose in preaching.
 - d. He kept attuned to God in prayer and dwelt in the Word for a renewal of strength.
 - e. He mentored others to join Him in His ministry objectives.
2. Being well organized will not only lessen the stress and anxiety, accomplish more useful work and bring more people together in team efforts, but, a busy, productive, well disciplined preacher leaves less time and opportunity to Satan to destroy the preacher and his work.

Research Scriptures: Proverbs 25:28; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 5:22-24; Philippians 4:11-13; 2 Timothy 1:7; Hebrews 10:35-39, 12:35-36; James 1:2-4, 5:7-9; 1 Peter 1:13.

Conclusion

If we saw an army marching off to a battle, being well equipped, being veteran warriors and being highly motivated to win, we would be enthusiastic about the anticipated victory. But, if we saw that two-thirds of the soldiers and almost one-half of the leaders were critically wounded, with many lesser wounds, what would be our level of hope? We would know that wounded soldiers do not fight long or as well as when they are healthy and whole. Such is the description of the church and its leaders. One half of our elders and preachers are severely wounded in at least two of the above nine traits, some being wounded in many more. One of the basis for our hope of winning more battles is for an increasing number of our preachers becoming whole as this lesson pictures: **able to cope, hopeful, involved with people, open and expressive, sensitive and caring, unselfish, confident, forgiving, disciplined and well organized.**

SELF-EXAM FOR LESSON SIX:

1. List the nine character traits which define who a person is and how he relates to others.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____
8) _____
9) _____
2. A confident preacher will have what five (5) traits in his life?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
3. A preacher must be approachable, likeable and open in relationships. What are six (6) things listed that drew people to Jesus that is attainable and reproducible by every preacher?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
4. Four things modeled by Jesus which will help a preacher overcome anxiety in his life.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5. Write a brief paragraph explaining how this lesson will affect your life and ministry in coming years.

LESSON SEVEN

Choose the Pathway to Freedom in Christ

— Being Clothed with Spiritual Intimacy —

INTRODUCTION

Most organisms have a predictable growth pattern. Could it be possible that such could be true of the spiritual man? Could there be stages of spiritual growth like there are stages of childhood development, the building of a structure or the growth patterns of a mighty tree? Is this suggested by Peter's admonition of adding "*. . . to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self control, to self control perseverance, to perseverance to godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness and to brotherly kindness, love*" (2 Peter 1:5-10)?

In the past, spiritual formation writers have proposed different possibilities. As early as the late twelfth century, Marguerite Porete proposed seven stages of spiritual ascent: keeping the commandments, following the counsel of perfection, the death of the will, labors giving way to contemplation, the will abandoned to God, freedom in enlightenment and final release. Paul Bunyan in his *Pilgrim's Progress*, Thomas Merton, in his *Seven Story Mountain* and James W. Fowler in his *Stages of Faith* were all outlining differing levels of spiritual experiences and growth.

LESSON AIM: To inform and convict each of us that spirituality requires a great deal of effort and does not come cheap.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Examine, study and investigate seven stages of spiritual progression and maturity.
 2. Incorporate these seven stages of spiritual growth into your life.
-

STAGE ONE: KNOWLEDGE

A. The Beginning Point of Spiritual Freedom and Growth Is Knowledge of God's Word

1. A preacher cannot safely or effectively go any further than his accurate and growing knowledge of the Word. He must be a man of the Book!
2. It is still true, "*You shall know the truth and the truth will make you free*" (John 8:32).
3. It will always be good for preachers to take personally the words of Peter, "*. . . grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,*" (2 Peter 3:18) and the commendation of Paul to the Ephesians elders, "*And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified*" (Acts 20:32). (Note: review again Chapter Three, Choose To Be A Man of the Book.)

B. The Day the Preacher Quits Studying the Word Marks the Decline or Even Halting of His Spiritual Growth. Continued study of the Word is one's best assurance of continuing his spiritual formation.

STAGE TWO: OBEDIENCE

- A. **The Consistency and Completeness of Loving Obedience Is the Measure of A Person's or Church's Pursuit of Intimacy with God**
1. **A measure of our love:** “*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*” (John 15:10).
 2. **A measure of our faith:** “*But there are some of you who do not believe. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe and who would betray him. . . . Then Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God’*” (John 6:64, 66-69).
 3. **A measure of our understanding.** We show how well we have understood specific commands when we make the right, obedient decisions:
 - a. Not looking at a woman lustfully (Matthew 5:28).
 - b. Forgiving a person as we want God to forgive us (Matthew 6:14-15).
 - c. Making the kingdom priority the guiding principle of life in each decision (Matthew 6:33).
 - d. Being careful in not being overly critical and judgmental of a brother (Matthew 7:1-4).
 4. **A measure of our certainty:** “*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. For we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard’*” (Acts 4:19-20).
 5. **A measure of our churches:** just consider current examples of churches that are determined to be obedient even when those around them are listening to every wind of doctrine. It would be well for everyone to establish some guidelines in promoting the growth in obedience in order to be faithful until death (Revelation 2:10). Note some examples:
 - a. Purposely develop a love for core realities: God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church, the Gospel, the lost, evangelism and ministry.
 - b. Studiously develop a mature understanding of the imputed righteousness of God (Romans 1:1-17).
 - c. Joyfully develop a clear vision of the Kingdom purposes and your place in their fulfillment (Romans 12:6ff; 1 Peter 4:10).
 - d. Carefully develop a clear view of the desired results to every act of obedience.
 - e. Solemnly develop an ability to foresee consequences of disobedience.
 - f. Develop an awareness of the available resources to insure obedience (1 Corinthians 10:13).
 - g. Develop a history of obedience done to the glory of God.
- B. **Paul’s Caution Is Important To Remember:** “*I discipline my body and bring it into submission. Lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified*” (1 Corinthians 9:27).

STAGE THREE: CONSCIENCE

- A. **Response to God Requires Something Deeper than Knowledge and Obedience**
1. Serving God only out of those qualities makes us vulnerable to the sin of the elder brother in the Lost Son story (Luke 15:25-32) and the condemnation by Jesus of the Jewish leaders for their lack of committed conscience in obeying God (Matthew 15:7-9).
 2. Serving God with all of our heart is the benchmark for every believer.

B. Some Indications That We Are Growing at the Level of Conscience

1. When the Kingdom purposes are regularly the highest priorities (Matthew 6:18-34).
2. When the importance and urgency of spiritual development and service become a consuming passion (cf. young ruler, Matthew 19:16-22).
3. When a convincing testimony to others becomes an important concern (Matthew 5:12-16).
4. When there is a consuming hungering and thirsting for things beyond ourselves (e.g. the righteousness of God, Matthew 5:12-16, the Word of God, 1 Peter 2:2-3).
5. When our failed attempts are seen as costly hindrances to kingdom purposes.
6. When our achievements are seen as victories in the cause of the Kingdom.
7. When pleasing God and fulfilling His will are in our continual thoughts.

C. Some Helpful Guidelines to Promote a Deepening of Intent in Our Pursuit of God and Spiritual Formation

1. We need to conduct regular evaluations of our motives: Why do we give? Why do we pray? Why do we fast? (Matthew 6:1ff).
2. We need to conduct regular evaluations of ministry results.
3. We need to conduct regular evaluations of the suggestions and encouragements of mature and loving brethren.
4. We need to conduct regular evaluations of the observations of critics (2 Corinthians 13:5).

STAGE FOUR: DISCIPLINE (A Disciplined Life)

A. The Critical Necessity of Discipline

1. One can measure his growth in a systematic effort to grow through discipline:
 - a. When the art and science of prayer is being mastered.
 - b. When Bible Study is becoming effective and fruitful.
 - c. When evangelism is moving toward the center of one's activity.
 - d. When teaching and preaching is becoming more passionate, persuasive and purposeful.
 - e. When forgiveness is becoming more frequent and complete.
 - f. When conflict is being more frequently turned into reconciliation and unity.
 - g. When relationships are becoming more positive, up-building and endearing.
2. Each one should develop a program for mastering a discipline, using the following process:
 - a. **Capture a vision** of God's view of a well-disciplined person.
 - b. **Choose a model** of a champion of a discipline (in prayer, Bible Study, in service, etc).
 - c. **Be alert to resources** that can promote a discipline (books, seminars, conferences).
 - d. **Form a plan**, complete with a schedule and a place to pursue a discipline.
 - e. **Commit to the plan**, fighting off all distractions.
 - f. **Foretaste the joys** of being a disciplined person.
 - g. **Celebrate** as you are becoming mature in a discipline.
4. It should be understood that no accomplished discipline comes through the grit and sweat of a person, but, is an empowerment of God (Ephesians 1:19-20).

STAGE FIVE: DEVOTION

A. The Devotional Level of Spiritual Growth Feeds on Knowledge, Obedience, Conscience and Discipline

1. Indicators that one is growing in devotional maturity.
 - a. When one is eagerly looking for more time to spend in prayer, in the Word and in worship.
 - b. When laying the Bible down or shortening a prayer is done with reluctance.
 - c. When a day without prayer, without the Word and without worship leaves a person hungry, feeling like something is missing.
 - d. When deep feelings are regularly stirred in every encounter with God lifting one to be filled with gratitude, praise and adoration – or sorrowing over things that grieve the heart of God.
 - e. When insights are clearer and magnified, when views are broader and more distinct and when there are assurances of seeing things more out of the eyes of God.
2. Guidelines to help one grow at the devotional level of spiritual formation:
 - a. Focus on the devotional aspects of the Scriptures to promote growth and continued emphasis on prayer and meditation.
 - b. Focus on the devotional giants in the lives of the champions of the faith that are found in Scripture.
 - c. Focus on the writings of spiritual giants, reading the spiritual classics.
 - d. Focus on chronicling your spiritual journey, reviewing its pages to encourage continual growth.
 - e. Focus on sharing your devotional experiences with others who have similar purposes and experiences.

B. Dangers to Be Avoided. Be cautious against feeling more spiritual than others, putting one's growth on display or, in any way, making others feel diminished.

STAGE SIX: SURRENDER

A. Qualities Which Indicate Total Surrender

1. When we acknowledge, confront and surrender all of our feelings of doubt, fear, isolation and guilt.
2. When we challenge every idea, value or attitude within ourselves that might be alien to Christ and His cause.
3. When we renounce ownership of self, others and things and more fully accept the role of stewardship.
4. When we pointedly and increasingly yield to the will of God with fewer demands, genuinely believing that He is always right.
5. When the fruits of having surrendered all things to God are the source of some of our greatest joys and gives meaning and purpose to our lives.

B. We Can Hasten Our Full Surrender by Following these Guidelines

1. **Focus** on knowing even more purposefully and clearly the priorities of God and our ministry assignments in the kingdom.
2. **Identify** anything we may have held back from God and launch a crusade of surrender.
3. **Expose** any corner of our life in which we may have resisted the Spirit and purposely open the door giving Him free course to change all that He finds.
4. **Practice** giving up different things at different times to test our growing freedom from dependence on things.
5. **Journal** our crusade of surrender and share our struggles and triumphs with whomever we can share similar experiences and purposes.

STAGE SEVEN: INTIMACY

A. Experiences One Might Expect in the Seventh Stage of One's Pursuit of the Ultimate Freedom in Christ

1. Knowledge that God knows all and sees all becomes one's greater delights.
2. Aware that God has long been open in revealing His deepest longings, His highest purposes and His most far-reaching plans for humanity and has frequently invited man to be open and intimate with Him.
3. No longer is there any impulse or reluctance to hold back any feeling, of any kind, from God, inspiring an eager pouring out of self in every encounter and filling one's day with purpose, strength and dignity.
4. Continual awareness of being welcomed into God's presence and being specially favored by His "*loving kindness and faithfulness*."
5. Living with the confidence and purpose that there is nothing now that can threaten or interrupt one's drinking deeply and continually of the fount of eternal life – regardless of where a person is or how he is being treated.

B. Cooperating with the Spirit in Achieving this Level of Spiritual Formation

1. **Rely** on the Holy Spirit to aid in breaking down any remaining barrier and in leading you in your communication with God (Romans 8).
2. **Review** the growth in the past six levels to see if you can strengthen any aspect of past growth.
3. **Guard** against the designs of Satan to reclaim you through arrogance and self-sufficiency.
4. **Determine** to look for God in every event, making every day a fresh, exciting encounter with God.
5. **Share** your adoration of God with everyone possible, helping each move from one level to another.

Conclusion

The freedom to be free is the deepest need and longing of every human being. The way to freedom is not in being released from moral standards, in accumulating riches, in gaining the best of health, in travel or change of residence, in educational achievement or in advancements of position and power.

The human, secular paths to freedom do not compare with the increasing freedom being experienced by the believer as he grows from one stage of spiritual development to the other. Finally, he arrives in his pilgrimage to enjoy intimacy with God and to claim the prize of full freedom: "*It was for freedom that Christ has set you free*" (Galatians 5:1). Then the promise of Jesus will become reality: "*If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed*" (John 8:36).

SELF-EXAM FOR LESSON SEVEN:

1. Obedience is a measure of what five things or of what five areas of spirituality?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
2. List the seven (7) stages of ascent to a spiritual life.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
 - 7) _____
3. Each one should develop a program for mastering a discipline. Complete the following formula:
 - 1) Capture a _____ of God's view of a well-disciplined person.
 - 2) Choose a _____ of a champion of a discipline.
 - 3) Be alert to _____ that can promote a discipline.
 - 4) Form a _____, complete with a schedule and a place to pursue a discipline.
 - 5) _____ to the plan, fighting off all distractions.
 - 6) _____ the joys of being a disciplined person.
 - 7) _____ as you are becoming mature in a discipline.

LESSON EIGHT

Choose to Be at Home with God

— Seeing Hope Become Reality —

INTRODUCTION

The seed of eternity, the hope of a better tomorrow, the belief in a yonder world, all maturing into a longing for an eternal home, are woven into the fabric of humanity, everywhere and in all ages. In some civilizations it could be seen only in simple outlines. In others, like the ancient Egyptians and their extensive burial rites and monuments, it was greatly developed. Nature illustrates an eternal home, but Revelation affirms it.

LESSON AIM: To instill in each Christian the expectation, hope of an eternal home with God in the heavens.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Rediscover the New Testament writers' and Jesus' emphasis and affirmation of a home eternal in the heavens.
 2. Examine several areas in which the hope of an eternal home impacts spiritual growth and advancement.
-

THE BIBLE AFFIRMS A YONDER WORLD, ETERNAL IN THE HEAVENS

A. Jesus' Emphasis On A Heavenly Home

1. Abraham, a nomad on this earth, by faith looked for a permanent place that "*had foundations, whose builder and maker is God*" (Hebrews 11:8-9).
2. Jesus of Nazareth, spoke much of the yonder world, making it a central, motivating theme of His visit among men.
 - a. He began His preaching mission by centering His famed Sermon on the Mount in "*kingdom of heaven*" themes (Matthew 5-7).
 - b. He spoke of His having come from the presence of God (John 3:12-13; John 6:38) and of His return as a forerunner of many who would be a prepared people for a prepared place (John 14:1-3).
 - c. Heaven was real to Him (John 17:24) and His promises set the hearts of His disciples on fire with the hope of joining Him around the throne of God in the heavens.

B. The New Testament Writers' Emphasis on Heaven

1. Peter captures the fire in 1 Peter 1:3-5. ". . . who is gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him" (1 Peter 3:22).
2. Paul spoke passionately about wanting "to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord" (1 Corinthians 5:8). He was convinced and guided by the Spirit to declare that Jesus had returned to the eternal home: "*Wherefore, God has highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*" (Philippians 2:9-11; cf. Ephesians 1:20-23; Hebrews 1:1-3). No wonder there would be a chorus of early disciples singing, "Here we

- have no continuing city, but we seek one to come” (Hebrews 13:14).*
3. John left inspiring and inspired pictures of heaven centered upon the exalted throne of God in heaven, of its unimaginable beauty, of its unmatched security and of its desirable company of just men made perfect by the blood of the Lamb, feasting in God’s presence and basking in the delights of the soul (Revelation 4:1-11, 7:9-17, 21:1-22:17).

C. Focusing on Heaven, Our Hope Is Enlivened and Our Destiny Is Defined

1. *“For we know if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, an house not made with hands but eternal in the heavens” (2 Corinthians 5:1).*
2. Like Stephen, our faith must become so affirming and our hope so real that we can, even if dimly, catch his dying vision of our appointed destiny, *“But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God and said, ‘Behold I see the heavens open and the son of man standing on the right hand of God’”* (Acts 7:55).
3. Bringing the hope that stirred the hearts and efforts of the early Christians down to our times, what impact would it have on our beliefs and lives.

IMPACT OF HOPE OF AN ETERNAL HOME ON SPIRITUAL GROWTH

The doctrine of heaven is one of the most enabling beliefs of the Christian faith.

A. It Defines the Nature and Intent of God

1. What kind of a deity would invite a people to reside permanently in a *city* as described by John? (Read Revelation 21:2-5)
 - a. Before the towering, jeweled gates of that city and shut out by its impenetrable walls, all those ills of a fallen earth are halted.
 - b. This God wants to share a *presence* with His people that is as perfect as it is complete, as pure and intimate as it is inspiring and noble and as stable as it is permanent. . .ever new and fully satisfying.
2. There is no vindictive trace, there is no arbitrary shadow, there is no suspicion or greed but undiminished acceptance, fullness of grace and unlimited mercy because of a more than adequate, redemptive price paid by the Lamb of God.
3. The Christian picture of the yonder world speaks of a divine architect that embodies all of the highest qualities of nobility, with the genius and power that defy human imagination and the deepest yearning for relationship with His earthly creatures. If the science of the earth boggles the minds of men, the greater grandeur and fullness of heaven lifts before us a God of infinite and limitless qualities of creative genius and unbounded love for man.
4. Seeing the intent and nature of the Heavenly God, adoration, praise and loving trust should swell our souls with delight and fill our lives with purpose and pursuit of everything that is good.

B. It Guards Against Failing in the Christian Commitment

1. The Book of Hebrews calls on Judean Christians to pull back from the brink of failing in their commitment of faith.
 - a. They were in danger of denying the covenant of faith based on greater promises (Hebrews 8:6), of rejecting the divine, prophetic and priestly Christ and the hope of salvation based on the higher sacrifice of Jesus.
 - b. A reoccurring theme of the treatise is the call to keep their minds focused on the “*enduring possessions in heaven*” (Hebrews 10:34) as a powerful, motivating means to avoid falling away.
 - c. The ancient people of God failed to enter their promised resting place through disobedience (Hebrews 4). The same danger faces the new

people of God in failing to enter their promised rest. “...we desire that each of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end. That you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Hebrews 6:11-12).

2. Battles one may lose but the war against Satan is already won for those who remain engaged in the ranks of the faithful.

C. It Gives Purpose in All Struggles

1. The believer discovers he does not stand alone. He learns that his hope stands firmly on the immutability of God, confirmed by His oath, serving him as an anchor, sure and steadfast, reaching all the way into the presence of God (Hebrews 6:17-20).
2. By virtue of the offered blood of Christ and through His mediation the called believer receives the “*promise of eternal inheritance*” (Hebrews 9:15).
3. With such a destiny as dwelling so augustly in the presence of God, the Christian draws strength to endure in his struggles, to triumph in his battles and go onward to the next challenge to his faith.

D. It Calls Out the Best in Everyone

1. One who is going home wants to be at his best and puts on his robe of righteous living.
 - a. He discards unnecessary baggage, leaving distasteful habits and associates behind.
 - b. Every believer counts everything as nothing, as worthless garbage, that would hinder him from being in that select number.
2. Paul understood the power of the ultimate victory in calling out the best in him. (Read Philippians 3:7-14)
3. We are preparing to have audience in the throne room of the King of kings and the assembled faithful of all ages. He surely loved us in our earthly rags and paid the incalculable price for our redemption. But, we have been given heavenly robes for just such an occasion. The least we should do is go, dressed appropriately for the gathering of the saints to honor the Monarch.

E. It Motivates Believers in Seeking Others for the Journey of Faith

1. The joy of sharing such a treasure should motivate us in speaking freely of heaven with whomever we meet.
2. One of the messages in Revelation 21 is that there will be plenty of room in the Eternal City for whoever and however many may want to come. Sharing what we are certain to receive in abundance is the surest way to express our gratitude to God and our unselfish love for others.

F. It Enriches the Worship of God

1. Because the believer seeks a “*continuing city to come*” he continually offers the sacrifice of praise to God. . .giving thanks to His name (Hebrews 13:15).
2. Salvation from sin through faith and obedience, having heard the good news of Calvary, along with all of a life-time full of blessings in the fellowship of the saints and worship of God, are beyond anything any of us deserve. But to have such abundance out of God’s grace *and heaven too*, is too much to comprehend.
3. A thankful heart, a grateful life, a submissive will and humble adoration increases as one understands more of the home of the soul.
 - a. The malady of our generation is the poverty of our thinking about heaven, resulting in a superficial and sterile worship of God.

- b. Those who intentionally and continually seek the “*continuing city to come*” find the worship of God an increasing and uplifting reality.

G. It Builds a Bridge over the River of Death

1. A profoundly deep chasm at death has frightened men of every age. They have searched the endless lengths of the chasm, finding no certain bridge that was secure by which to cross to the other side.
2. The test of every religion is its answer to a passage over the deep chasm of death. All men die but few have spanned the ageless chasm.
3. The Christian believer has found the way to the other side, following Christ through the resurrection, leaving nothing behind to serve him in the coming age but laying up *treasures in heaven* against the day that he will be no more a part of the cities of men (Matthew 6:19-21).

Conclusion

The hope of eternal life, a clear vision of heaven as revealed in Scripture and an abiding trust in the proven promises of an immutable God drives the fear of death out of the daily thoughts of the believer. He sees the other shore but a pleasant step away, with the joys awaiting him ready to crowd out all of the sorrows, pains and threats of the brief life among men. He is home at last, the journey is ended and the purpose of his creation and redemption is accomplished in full.

SELF-EXAM FOR LESSON EIGHT:

1. The impact of hope of an eternal home on spiritual growth is seen in what seven areas?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
 - 7) _____
2. Briefly describe what effect your view of an eternal home has had on your spiritual life.

YOU ARE NOW READY TO TAKE EXAM # 1

Part Two

Lessons 9 – 13

LESSON NINE

Revisiting the Documents of the Old Testament (1)

INTRODUCTION

Two of the most inspiring documents in the Old Testament to give spiritual strength to the reader are the Creation Account of Genesis One and the Decalogue of Exodus Twenty.

LESSON AIM: To impress upon the mind of the student and all others the fact that spirituality rests upon who God is as revealed in the Old Testament books of Genesis and Exodus.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Reexamine the fact that spiritual life rests solidly on the sovereignty of God.
 2. Learn eight foundation truths for accepting all the rest of the Bible.
 3. Revisit Exodus twenty remembering that the moral requirements of God are based upon the authority of God and seen in the statement "***I am Jehovah thy God . . .***"
-

SINGING THE HYMN OF CREATION IN GENESIS ONE

A. Spirituality Rests Solidly on the Sovereignty of God

1. Amid all of the discussion on the Genesis account of creation and speculation about the origin of the earth and the universe, one monumental truth stands out: **God is Sovereign, the Creator of all we see.**
2. He has the right, by creation, to determine our purpose, to set our course and define our destiny.
 - a. His designs should be the basis of our spiritual formation.
 - b. We can avail ourselves of the same divine power with which He created the universe!
3. The first chapter of Genesis does not attempt to answer the many questions that trouble man.
 - a. Questions about the age of the earth, process theories, geological stratifications, presence of dinosaurs or time calculations.
 - b. The paramount point is that God is the Creator of the universe.
 - c. **God is the first and adequate Cause to explain the origin of the material world and the presence of all that is in the universe and upon the earth.**
4. From the origin of the earth to the end of sacred revelation the one truth about the Sovereignty of God has subsisted, "*You are worthy our Lord and God to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things and by your will they were created and have their being*" (Revelation 4:11).

B. Spirituality Thrives on the Foundation Truths of Genesis One

The Genesis account of the origin of the earth and man continues to be a

monumental document that promotes the spiritual formation of a man of God. Any doubt concerning the message of this document spells problems on every succeeding page of the Bible. It serves as a foundation in eight ways:

1. **Foundation for faith in God.**
 - a. A Creator God, as described in Genesis One, is seen as transcendent, independent of the earth, an adequate first cause for all that exists.
 - b. He is omnipotent, omni-competent, omniscient and omnipresent. He is the explanation to all of the inquiries of all of the sciences. He is in full control of all the vast forces associated with the earth.
 - c. If He can create the earth, a small part of a vast uncharted universe, He can certainly respond to every human need. If He created all we see and perceive exists, then all of His promises have a basis to be believed and counted on.
2. **Foundation for faith in Scripture.**
 - a. If the first verse of Genesis is true then it is no stretch of credulity to believe in the lesser miracles recorded throughout the Bible, the multitudes of prophecies coming true and the entirety of the Scheme of Redemption.
 - b. Critics know how decisive faith in a creation account is in paving the way for a robust faith in the rest of Scriptures and have done all within their power to resist it being believed.
3. **Foundation for ultimate questions.**

The question of origin (Where did we come from?), the question of purpose (Why are we on earth?), the question of man's nature (Of what do we consist?) and the question of destiny (Where are we going?) begin finding their answers on the first page of the Bible.
4. **Foundation for moral accountability.**
 - a. A standard for human conduct, an accountability for behavior, and consequences for irresponsibility are defined from the beginning of human toil.
 - b. The human beings are not given a democratic vote nor are they left to do what they may choose without consequences.
5. **Foundation for trust in Jesus.**
 - a. Genesis One and its corollary passages place Jesus, the Incarnate Word, as having been present and active in the creation of the world.
 - b. Knowing the Father, coming from and returning to His divine presence makes Jesus One to be trusted in all He preached and in the purposes of His earthly coming.
6. **Foundation for the worship of God.**
 - a. Creation, alone, would make the Creator God a worthy object of worship and service.
 - b. Pantheism, dualism, Gnosticism, deism, materialism and liberalism, all fall in shambles around Genesis One.
7. **Foundation for Evangelism and Service.**

The God of Genesis One must be shared with all ages, nations and cultures. People need to know where they came from, what is their nature, why are they on earth and what is their destiny and how Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life, their only hope of salvation.
8. **Foundation for hope of eternal life.**

One's certainty in creation, leads to one's certainty in prophecy, strengthens one's reliance on God's promises, establishes a firm basis of faith in Jesus, in the Cross and in His resurrection.

C. Spirituality Finds its Vigor in the Creator-Creature Distinction

1. Second to the sovereignty of God that overarches all of the Creation, emerges a second, monumental truth: **man is a creature.**

2. The violation of this truth is the root of much evil.
 - a. Adam longed to be something more and plunged us all into a world of trouble.
 - b. All idolatry stems from worshiping the creature rather than worshiping a transcendent God.
 - c. The deification of man or science or any philosophy is derived from forgetting the Creator and creature relationship.
3. Romans 1 outlines the immoral consequences of forgetting that man is a creature, responsible and accountable to the Creator.
4. Most every human sin committed from the beginning of time in the Garden springs from man ignoring God as Creator or forgetting man's dependent nature on God.
5. Every positive step to moral living, serving others and reaching religious attainments in worship and service have come from a theology that recognizes and honors the Creator-creature relation.

Read: Isaiah 40:28-31; Acts 17:26-28; Romans 1:18-32; Hebrews 11:1-3.

REVISITING THE DECALOGUE IN EXODUS TWENTY

The Decalogue makes an emphatic statement of the **authority of God** in the lives of the redeemed.

A. The Decalogue Must be seen In the Context of Redemption

The Israelites were suffering under the inhumane burden of Egyptian injustice. The national promises of a home land to Abraham seemed beyond hope. The people seemed doomed to endless generations of oppressive slavery. But, after a swift exodus from Egypt led by Moses and the marvelous crossing of the Red Sea, leaving the powerful, Egypt army destroyed in the sea, they stood before Mt. Sinai in Arabia. They were redeemed! Snatched from hopeless slavery! The promises to Abraham were fulfilled (Deuteronomy 6:23), by virtue of God's grace in delivering the Israelites. God defined the context in Exodus 20:1: "*God spake all these words, saying, I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*"

B. The Decalogue Must be seen in the Context of a Covenant

As the Redeemer, God graciously established a covenant to define how He wanted the redeemed to act (Deuteronomy 5:33).

1. The Decalogue demanded the response of love and gratitude (Deuteronomy 6:5).
2. The Decalogue led to fullness of life (Deuteronomy 6:10-11).
3. The Decalogue was the heart of the God-Israel relationship, with the ordinances being the commentary on the commands.
4. The Decalogue gave direction to the people in the continuity of the covenant.
5. The Decalogue called on the people to express their dependence on God, honoring His absolute authority.

C. The Decalogue Sets the Standard of Religious and Social Living, Based on God's Authority ("I am Jehovah thy God . . .", Exodus 20:1)

1. **The First Commandment** ("Thou shalt have no other gods before me"): required Israel, though surrounded by idolatry, to categorically reject all other deities and exclusively bow before Jehovah God.
2. **The Second Commandment** ("Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image. . . ."): Nothing in the created order was to be placed above God for worship. Elevating the creature above the Creator is the central weakness

- of humanity.
3. **The Third Commandment** (“*Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain . . .*”): God’s name is reserved for the exclusive use of fulfilling covenant purposes. Giving authenticity to error or human threats by carelessly authorizing them by citing God’s name is strongly prohibited.
 4. **The Fourth Commandment** (“*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy . . .*”): The weekly day of rest was to call the people back to their origin and back to their Creator. Spiritual growth is directly dependent on a systematic and periodic remembrance of God being the source of life and all things.
 5. **The Fifth Commandment** (“*Honor thy father and thy mother . . .*”): The continuity of the covenant is dependent on parents being honored in the obedience of the children (Deuteronomy 6:1-10; Proverbs 22:6).
 6. **The Sixth Commandment** (“*Thou shalt not kill*”): Life is sacred. Every human person has created worth, established dignity. No human creature, unless authorized by God, is to take the life of another person.
 7. **The Seventh Commandment** (“*Thou shalt not commit adultery*”): The commandment demands covenant faithfulness in the intimacy of marriage but its principle could extend to every sphere of life. Do not be covenant breakers in any relationship.
 8. **The Eighth Commandment** (“*Thou shalt not steal*”): The possessions of another, like his character, is an extension of his worth, the fruit of his labors and the substance of his purpose and values. To steal is to devalue another person, even to hold him in contempt.
 9. **The Ninth Commandment** (“*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor*”): Integrity in personal relationships within the community of God is essential to cohesiveness and unity of purpose.
 10. **The Tenth Commandment** (“*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house . . . wife . . . servants . . .*”): Secure relationships assume that each man honors the achievements of others and does nothing to lessen them. A neighbor’s world is safe when others do not act on selfish motives and greed.

D. The Decalogue must Be Seen as a Continuing Basis for Spiritual Formation

1. The Decalogue was at the heart of the Jehovah-Israel covenant relationship, giving direction to the people in their response of love and obedience to the grace and sovereignty of God.
2. What was ended by the cross was a dependence on “law keeping” as a basis of a right relationship with God.
3. The covenant of the cross defines and secures a new relationship with God through trusting in Christ for our salvation.
4. The Decalogue continues as a vital part of a mature, spiritual formation.

NOTE: While we do not follow Moses nor are we under the mountain covenant, but under the leadership of Christ, the conditions we face remain analogous: God’s redemption, grace and sovereignty, along with responsible behavior in the community of His people.

- a. **Religious realities remain unchanged.** The Ten Commandments are not time dated. We still need to have full devotion to God and serve him with all of our hearts.
- b. **Man’s dependence on God remains unchanged.** The principle of the Sabbath has not changed, even if the practices and day have changed.
- c. **Social, community realities remain unchanged.** Developing a strong family unity is the core strength of the church and society. The acceptance of individual worth and purpose is the best deterrence of harm at any level.

- d. **Relationship principles of the Decalogue are enhanced by Calvary.**
Creation principles continue to speak to us about the sovereignty of God in caring for our every need. The Decalogue continues to speak to us of God as our Deliverer, the singular object of our worship, portraying the core religious and social values of the community of God. The Cross speaks to us of the heart of God in redeeming us from inescapable ruin.

Conclusion

While the New Testament speaks of all of these abiding principles they are best understood and emphasized by the monumental documents of Creation and the Decalogue. Spirituality is so deeply rooted in these historic truths that much time should be spent in Genesis One and Exodus Twenty.

SELF-EXAM FOR LESSON NINE:

1. What right does God have to determine our purpose, set our course and define our destiny?

2. List the eight things which Genesis one gives as a foundation for spirituality.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

8) _____

3. In what two contextual areas are we to view the Decalogue?

1) _____

2) _____

4. Based on God's authority, the Decalogue sets the standard for what?

5. In your judgment, were the people under the Old Law to live the same spiritual life as those under the New Covenant?

LESSON TEN

Revisiting the Documents of the Old Testament (2)

INTRODUCTION

Three more Old Testament documents that provide a rich resource for spiritual formation are Psalms 23, Isaiah 6 and Isaiah 53.

Anxiety is man's number one slave-master. The doubt, fear, loneliness and guilt that it infuses in man's every thought blinds him from seeing that there is a God who cares and can provide strength and deliverance. Psalms 23 is the most eloquent declaration that there is someone who cares and is able and ready to intervene in every threat that faces man.

LESSON AIM: To promote spiritual growth by looking at three Old Testament passages as examples of complete submission to God's will.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Learn seven summary statements of Psalm 23 which are reflected in a seven day plan for one's daily living.
 2. Be able to remember seven words which reflect Isaiah's response to what he saw and experienced in Isaiah chapter six.
 3. Learn five statements out of Isaiah 53 which reveal the nature of spirituality.
-

GETTING TO KNOW THE SHEPHERD OF PSALMS TWENTY-THREE

The Psalm declares in the clearest of terms that **God is a Provident God**. Psalm 23 provides us with a seven day plan for learning to trust in God.

A. Summary Statements of the Psalm in a Seven Day Plan

1. **Day One: The Lord fills my life completely** – “*The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.*”
 - a. This is the theme of the psalm. More than memorizing the verse and believing it to be true, it is important to come to know the Shepherd of the Twenty-Third psalm.
 - b. Outside of this psalm, the hymn of creation in Genesis One, the crashing lightning and thunder of Exodus Twenty and the cross emblazoned against the darkened sky draw attention to the person of the Shepherd – who He is, how He acts on behalf of mankind, how He cares for them in their plight.
 - c. The Lord thinks of my simple needs – “*He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside the still water.*”
 - d. The Shepherd is leading his sheep to still waters and green pastures, having already chosen the pasture and made sure it is safe.
 - e. A wise shepherd who knows his sheep will provide what best responds to their needs.
2. **Day Two: The Lord gives me strength** – “*He restores my soul.*”
 - a. The Shepherd God, like every good shepherd, will watch over the well-

- being of each sheep, noting a sagging of strength. . .every struggle against adversaries.
- b. He will come to the side of and pick up the staggering or fallen sheep and give comfort and strength.
 - c. He will do whatever is necessary to restore the struggling sheep to the healthy fold.
3. **Day Three: The Lord gives me purpose** – “*He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his namesake.*”
- a. God will not allow His sheep to go aimlessly through life, without purpose or leadership.
 - b. His central purpose is that we have a right relationship with Him and aim at doing only that which is for His namesake.
4. **Day Four: The Lord surrounds me** – “*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me.*”
- a. The shepherd’s purposes are focused on protecting the sheep while they grow.
 - b. Knowing the Shepherd brings us the certainty that He cares for us when we are vulnerable and gives us confidence in fearing no evil.
5. **Day Five: The Lord delights in me** – “*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*”
- In the fold of God, each sheep is cherished and given what seems to be favored attention.
6. **Day Six: The Lord gives beauty to my service** – “*Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life.*”
- The Shepherd God follows even the mis-steps of the sheep, confirming His good will and tender mercies on their behalf.
7. **Day Seven: The Lord brings me home** – “*And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*”
- The conclusion of the psalm is that, come what may, dwelling in the home-like presence of God is assured.

VISITING IN THE TEMPLE OF ISAIAH SIX

- A. The Holiness of God Seen in the Throne Room**
- 1. Isaiah saw the Lord in all of His majesty, Jehovah as the holy God.
 - a. He saw God dressed in regal splendor, with the flowing garment carpeting the temple floor.
 - b. There were the matchless seraphim singing as a harmonious chorus, singing praises of the Holiness of God.
 - c. The temple was filled with the smoke of the presence of deity.
 - 2. Isaiah felt the weight of his sins and the shame of even pronouncing the holy name of God with such sinful lips.
- B. Isaiah’s Experience and Response Described**
- 1. **Compelled:** Awe in the presence of God — a holy God that was superlatively above all gods and incomparably beyond all acclaimed deities.
 - 2. **Convicted:** Overwhelmed by the holiness of God — struck by the magnitude of his personal sin and of those in the nation.
 - 3. **Confessed:** Honesty in the recognition of personal sin — unworthy to be in God’s presence.
 - 4. **Cleansed:** Rejoicing in the freedom from sin — his sins were no more, the direct work of God’s grace.
 - 5. **Committed:** Eagerness to serve in an urgent mission — not by any merit

as a young, intelligent and fluent member of the royal family but because he understood the joy of his salvation. He now had something of value to say to others in sin.

6. **Commissioned:** Armed in the presence of mission — he now would speak by the highest authority in the land.
7. **Confirmed:** Sobered in the presence of reality — a difficult people would resist him at every step but his faithfulness was more important than his fruitfulness. Isaiah wanted God to give him a confirmation because he knew the people were angry and in grief. God told Isaiah to preach until He told him to stop.

C. Application

1. The temple experience, centered on Jehovah God in His holiness, must become the experience of everyone who preaches and be renewed as he deepens his spiritual life.
2. The preacher that hasn't visited in the temple presence of God will likely compare himself with other members or even other preachers
3. Isaiah Six must be a major source of the growing spirituality of one who would dare preach the Word.

Further Research: See how other prophets had similar experiences— patterns of spiritual formation:

1. Going beyond the knowledge of God to understanding His awesome presence and power,
2. Being struck with one's own sinfulness and total inadequacy,
3. Being transformed by cleansing and empowerment,
4. Being assigned a new place or means of serving. Cf. Job Chapters 1-41, 42:6-6; Joshua 5:13-15; Isaiah 6:1ff; Jeremiah 1:6-10; Ezekiel 1:28, 2:1-10; Daniel 10:5-12.

MEETING THE SUFFERING SERVANT OF ISAIAH FIFTY-THREE

The chapter declares the **sacrificial love of God** for His people. **The Fountain of our Spirituality.**

A. Spirituality Does not Come From the Flesh (Isaiah 53:1-3)

1. Men look for confirmation of greatness, even spiritual worth, in fleshly considerations.
2. If the people waiting for a Messiah in the first century A.D. had understood Isaiah 53:1-3, they would have seen that none of the characteristics of greatness were to be expected of the Messiah.
3. His surroundings were so unheralded that it was generally doubted that anything of worth could spring from such a backward village.

B. Spirituality Comes through Suffering (Isaiah 53:4-6)

1. Our spirituality begins taking shape with our dying to ourselves, identifying with the man of sorrows in His death.
2. Desiring a spiritual life absent of His suffering and of our own suffering is to hold an empty sack at the end of the day.

C. Spirituality Comes through Submission (Isaiah 53:7-9)

1. Ten thousand angels could have been called to rescue Jesus, leaving us all unsaved and spiritually starved.
2. Choosing to submit His will to the will of the Father and head resolutely to the cross formed the history that is to become our history of submission.
3. Our refusal to submit results in our rejection of the company of spiritual men of the ages, led by the suffering servant.

- D. Spirituality Comes through Serving Others (Isaiah 53:10-12)**
1. Through the suffering and submission of Jesus he served the highest and most pressing needs of a lost race.
 2. In the same spirit and for the same causes, through serving others and leading them to Jesus (Colossians 1:23), we open ourselves to the work of God, making us holy and complete in Him.
- E. Spirituality Comes through Divine Empowerment (Isaiah 53:12)**
1. He fills our lives with the bounty of His grace, prolonging our days and influence as He sees fit.
 2. Spirituality comes through suffering for Christ, through submitting to the will of the Father, through serving others and through the bestowal of the riches of God's grace.

SELF-EXAM FOR LESSON TEN:

1. Reproduce the summary statements of Psalm 23 in a seven day plan.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____
2. List seven words describing Isaiah's response in Isaiah chapter six.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____
3. Write out the five statements derived from Isaiah 53 concerning spirituality.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
4. Write a brief paragraph explaining how this lesson will affect your life in coming days.

LESSON ELEVEN

Revisiting the Documents of the New Testament (1)

INTRODUCTION

The New Testament is such a rich storehouse of sources of spiritual growth. Singling out a few selected chapters does not diminish the power and beauty of the others. Following, though, are three documents of particular importance in growing spiritually: The Kingdom Beatitudes in Matthew Five, the Litany of Love in 1 Corinthians Thirteen and the Harvest of the Spirit in Galatians Five.

LESSON AIM: Using the Beatitudes in Matthew 5 and the litany of love in 1 Corinthians 13 the student will be encouraged to grow in spiritual living.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will...

1. Carefully study the Beatitudes making application to your life the principles vividly taught.
 2. Look intently into the Litany of Love recorded in 1 Corinthians and make personal application using it as a measuring stick for your relationship to God and to your fellow man.
-

THE KINGDOM BEATITUDES (MATTHEW 5:1-10)

1. The beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-10 are so rich that they have been portrayed in many different ways: the self-portrait of Jesus, the ideals of Kingdom people, the pathway to happiness, the Magna Charter of Christianity, etc.
2. Each beatitude contains three components:
 - a. A promise of happiness, in its completeness or fulfillment.
 - b. The quality that leads to blessedness.
 - c. The condition that constitutes blessedness.
3. Jesus is asking if one wants to be happy or complete, tells him what he has to do to be filled with happiness and describes what God supplies to complete him.

A. First Beatitude: “*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*”

1. “...poor in spirit” would include but goes beyond being humble or the recognition of a need or serves only as a contrast to arrogance that would preclude any yielding to God.
 - a. The term describes those who “are enthusiasts for spiritual poverty.”
 - 1) It recognizes that one does not have the spiritual resources of his own to be saved or to survive in this evil world.
 - 2) That he must place his full trust in the God who provides all.
 - b. It is a statement of absolute trust in God.
2. The beatitude portrays a commitment to a simple lifestyle seen in Jesus, with priorities clearly set and carefully followed.
3. One who is possessed by nothing or no one other than by God and for kingdom purposes.

- Jesus is saying, “You will be happy when the kingdom of heaven invades your soul, when the Lordship of heaven controls your life, when you submit to the will of God.”

Commentary: One thinks constantly of the need for God and keeps his life simple, uncluttered, yielding faithfully to the kingdom rule.

B. Second Beatitude: “*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted*”

- “...mourn” describes a heart submitted to God that is made sensitive by felt hurt.
- Hurt and mourning, by themselves, can become the occasion of one being bitter and retaliatory.
 - A submitted believer that cries out to God for comfort will be strengthened.
 - Being comforted by God enables the believer to turn to others who hurt.
- A believer mourns with others who suffer, grieves over the unrighteousness of others and over the lost in all of the world. He mourns over what grieves the great heart of God.

Commentary: One stays in contact with the feelings of pain and grieves over the tragedy of wrong and cries to God that His comfort be felt and His righteousness prevail.

C. Third Beatitude: “*Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth*”

- “...meek,” in the Greek language describes people of resolute spirit who commit to a difficult task and complete their commitment with a tenacious, but sweet and uncomplaining spirit.
- True happiness comes to people who start and finish a commitment and who are uncomplaining of the difficulties they may encounter along the way.
 - The happiest of people are productive people.
 - They see their works are good and extending to oncoming generations and enjoy the grateful friends along the way.

Commentary: One thinks of the nobility of doing right and commits himself to fulfill his promise, with a sweet, uncomplaining spirit.

D. Fourth Beatitude: “*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled*”

- “...hunger and thirst,” pushes a sense of physical well-being far away.
- Spiritually, one cannot feel good when he is far from God, depending on human efforts to achieve a sense of well-being.
- Jesus speaks here of the deep longing to be right with God as the key to the treasures of the Father.
- It comes through the spiritual disciplines that help us to yield to the Spirit of God who transforms our character and forms our spiritual life into something beautiful.

Commentary: One thinks of the emptiness of a life without God and searches passionately to be filled with God.

E. Fifth Beatitude: “*Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy*”

- When we fail or hurt in some situation, we want people to understand us and to extend mercy.
- Mercy is one of the most powerful features of the Gospel: God understands,

- really cares and is merciful to us.
- 3. Mercy is an important part in building good relationships.
- 4. Being arrogant, harsh, expressing diminishing judgments, making unkind remarks or putting down another, even with humor, and spewing sarcasm do not build relationships.

Commentary: One thinks of the deep need to be kindly understood and reaches out to feel the needs of others, treating them with understanding and mercy.

F. Sixth Beatitude: “*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God*”

- 1. Doing God’s will faithfully depends on knowing His heart. He can best be seen through pure thoughts and pristine motives. The promise is clear: God is to be seen through the clean, window panes of our hearts.
- 2. Envy, jealousy, lust, resentment, pride, etc. blur our view of God and impede spiritual growth and service. Guarding against every thought that distorts our vision of God becomes a daily pursuit.

Commentary: One thinks of the beauty of holiness and drives every impure thought from the mind.

G. Seventh Beatitude: “*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God*”

- 1. A peacemaker describes one who brings harmony, balance and unity of actions to others.
- 2. The Lord is urging us in our enjoyment of life to invest in people, helping them reach their greatest potential by getting along well and being happily productive.

Commentary: One thinks of the pain and loss in every conflict and works to bond others in the joys of friendship.

H. Eighth Beatitude: “*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*”

- 1. Each beatitude has built on the preceding one.
 - a. The first beatitude instructed us that the Lordship of God – the rule of heaven – would be the basis of true happiness.
 - b. Living the values of the beatitudes will put a believer at odds with the values of the world. Every beatitude is in conflict with the values of the world.
- 2. The most common way that a distorted world knows how to act is to unleash its frustrations on a source of threat. Instead of confusing the believer, persecution affirms his faith and his submission to the rule of God in his life.

Commentary: One thinks of the lofty values of right beliefs and considers the loss of personal comforts and life itself a small price to pay.

THE LITANY OF LOVE (1 CORINTHIANS 13)

The love extolled here is the *agape* love of responsibility. It is not driven by passion for the object (*eros*) but by passion for the need being met. It is not motivated by the pleasure of friendship (*philia*) but by the pleasure of service. Nor is it limited to a sense of kinship (*storge*) but reaches out to total strangers. It is the core quality of any Christian ministry or initiative (1 Corinthians 13:1-3: language, prophecy, knowledge, faith, giving, sacrifice). Anything done without agape love is empty, useless, arrogant and self-serving.

Insert your name in the fifteen qualities of love listed below.

1. _____ **suffers long.** Suffering long with people or circumstances precludes snapping back, giving up too soon or demanding instant gratification.
2. _____ **is kind.** Kindness is actively engaged in doing good. It comes out of a heart of good will and a merciful spirit. Kindness is what mercy feels.
3. _____ **does not envy.** Envy leads one to be jealous of the progress and to begrudge the accomplishments of others, desiring to have what they enjoy. And usually without paying the price of the achievements.
4. _____ **does not parade itself.** The highest rank given in the kingdom is a servant. While we all need encouragement and affirmation, our greater wonder is that God has decided to give each of us such gifted abilities to serve Him effectively and fruitfully.
5. _____ **is not puffed up.** The man of God thinks little of his own importance or the significant things he has done. He is not driven to defend himself, believing that truth will have its own day.
6. _____ **does not behave rudely.** Rudeness to any other person, for any reason, not only devalues the mistreated person but it reveals a heart of arrogance, insensitivity and some level of contempt.
7. _____ **does not seek its own.** Demanding to be first in line, insisting on others stepping aside, arguing for rights and privileges being promptly observed, showing little concern for others being served or their needs being recognized are daily experiences of one filled with himself.
8. _____ **is not easily provoked.** The mastery of anger is the mark of a mature person (James 4:1ff). One who “*is slow to speak and slow to anger*” is more able to be a channel of righteous (James 1:19).
9. _____ **thinks no evil.** Brooding over past hurts, keeping account of the failures of others and continually looking for someone to mess up provides a storehouse of evil thoughts.
10. _____ **does not rejoice in iniquity.** Preachers, among others, are custodians of truth and avowed enemies of iniquity. They cannot be indifferent to those in sin, but, rather, they grieve over their lostness. They grieve when others sin. His rejoicing is in truth, truth preached or practiced by anyone, anywhere.
11. _____ **rejoices in truth.** A preacher’s strongest bulwark is revealed truth. For it he searches as for a treasure. Loyalty to what truth he knows is his best evidence of integrity.
12. _____ **bears all things.** What a preacher is like when being insulted, abused, hurt and disappointed may be the best measure of his love.
13. _____ **believes all things.** Belief always predicates evidence. Love seriously considers evidence, handles evidence carefully and responds to evidence responsibly. Believing all things involves an attitude of looking for the best in people and giving them the benefit of belief in the absence of contrasting evidence.
14. _____ **hopes all things.** The man of God lives by a vision of worthy purposes and good results. He has a resiliency about him that he sees hope when others cannot.
15. _____ **endures all things.** This speaks of outlasting everything and finishing triumphantly one’s journey. It is the “*being faithful until death*” of Revelation 2:10.

Conclusion

Ministry maturity is not about how many baptisms, how many debates, how many churches, how many books, how many accolades or how great the salaries and benefits there have been over the course of one’s ministry. Our becoming like the portrait of Jesus and of Jesus’ people in Matthew Five and our faithfulness in

serving, motivated always by love in acting like Jesus in 1 Corinthians Thirteen, is at the heart of the spiritual living at its most noble.

SELF-EXAM FOR LESSON ELEVEN:

1. List the eight (8) beatitudes with a brief explanation of each one.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____

2. Give the fifteen qualities of love in 1 Corinthians 13.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____
- 11) _____
- 12) _____
- 13) _____
- 14) _____
- 15) _____

Look intently into your life as it relates to meeting the qualities you have studied in this lesson and write a brief paragraph recording your inner thoughts after finishing this lesson.

LESSON TWELVE

Revisiting the Documents of the New Testament (2)

— The Harvest of the Spirit (Galatians Five) —

INTRODUCTION

Nine virtues are named in Galatians 5:22-23 that are the result of the Holy Spirit at work to form character in the yielded believer. They are a cluster of virtues that form a unit. Careful and continued disciplines (prayer, fasting, giving, study, etc.) favor or provide a healthy environment for the growth of these virtues. Yet, it must be understood that they are derived from and produced by the Holy Spirit in the believer. *THEY ARE THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT!* The ripening of each of these virtues will be seen increasingly in the preacher who is growing.

LESSON AIM: Using Galatians 5:22-23 we will encourage the student to grow spiritually as the Spirit produces His fruit in his life.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Discover that the growth factor in anyone's life is the Holy Spirit of God.
 2. Study carefully various qualities the Spirit grows in our lives and how those qualities results in a spiritual servant of God
-

THE FRUIT OF LOVE

A. The Virtue of Love

1. The Holy Spirit dwells in each believer to form the virtue of love. (See the discussion on love from lesson 11)
2. Natural love flows more easily as long as a personal need is being fulfilled.
3. Agape love is much more difficult, on our own, to initiate and continue over a long period of time or over a series of circumstances.
 - a. When our acts of love are occasional or do not last long they are likely coming out of natural love that expects a return rather than agape love.
 - b. The agape love that "*is patient. . . bears all things. . . endures all things*" (1 Corinthians 13) is a fruit of the Holy Spirit in the believer.

B. The Holy Spirit Forms the Character of Love In Us

1. When our actions toward others are focused on the need of another and not on the merit of another, the Holy Spirit is forming agape character in us.
 - a. When we can continue acting on behalf of another over a long period of time and without getting anything in return we know the Holy Spirit is at work.
 - b. The Holy Spirit enables us to act unselfishly, untiringly and to keep focused on fulfilling the needs of others.
2. Only those with agape love will carry the gospel across town and around the world. Only those with agape love will "*look after the widows and orphans in their distress*" (James 1:27).

THE JOY PRODUCED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

A. The Precious Jewel of Joy in a Believer's Life

1. The history of humanity is the story of a human search after happiness, each man choosing the most promising path to happiness.
2. Jesus began the monumental sermon in Matthew Five promising blessedness and illustrating the pathway to experiencing it.
 - a. One of the reasons He came to the earth was to provide "exuberant life – life more abundantly" (John 10:10).
 - b. He had taught the Apostles so that His joy might remain in them and be complete (John 15:9-11).
3. Joy was a frequently reoccurring theme in the New Testament writings, especially in the letter to the Philippians.
4. The **joy**, numbered among the fruit of the Spirit, goes deeper yet to touch the deepest need and ecstasy of the human spirit.
 - a. It goes beyond pleasure, which is a temporary respite, a soothing feeling. It is happiness overflowing.
 - b. Biblical joy is intrinsic to the nature of God. It proceeds from the intimacy of the Holy Spirit of God.
 - c. God, by the Holy Spirit, ripens, matures and harvests the fruit of joy.

B. Defining What Spirit Endowed Joy Is Not

1. **Not related to circumstance.** It does not increase with:
 - a. Possessions.
 - b. Promotions for hard or exemplary work or accomplishment.
 - c. Improvement of health.
 - d. An increased circle of friends.
 - e. Leaving behind difficult relations or heavy responsibilities.
2. **Not the happiness that the world seeks.** Joy rises above the happiness that the world seeks relentlessly.
 - a. Happiness is what results from "happenings" – circumstances that are favorable.
 - b. Men think that by changing their circumstances they will be happy.
 - c. For most persons the coming and going of happiness does largely depend on changing externals and how one reacts to them.
 - d. Human happiness, achieved through human effort, can never be permanent or complete.
3. **Does not need to be deferred until better times.**
4. **Not the product of a humanistic effort** to change our attitude to bring about different outlooks even though the Bible attests the value of laughter to good health (Proverbs 17:22).
5. **Not a work of the flesh** or even many works of faith, not even the gaining of much Biblical knowledge and ministry skills.

D. Defining Spirit Endowed Joy

1. **Begins when a person hears, is convinced and determines to claim the Lordship of Christ in his life** (Acts 2:38, 4:32). Joy is a gift resulting from yielding oneself to the sovereignty of God and staying in His love.
2. **Is purposefully abiding in the love of Jesus**, being secure and obedient in the Father's will (John 15, 9-11; Romans 14:17-18). In the Father's love, yielded to the Spirit of God, joy is developed and becomes complete (John 15:9-11).
3. **Develops when the yielded believer steadfastly believes that he does not find his joy from external benefits.**
 - a. Joy comes from serving Christ and pleasing God.
 - b. Joy, among other values, is a gift of the Holy Spirit (Romans 4:17-18).

4. **Comes through bowing to the reign of God** in one's total person, opening every conclave of one's being to the rule of God. The yielded believer continues to "...live a life worthy of the Lord," pleasing the Lord "...in every way, bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God."
5. **Is the work of the Spirit generating inner contentment and security in the grace of God.**
6. **Based on reasons that are unaffected by changing circumstances.**

C. **Claiming the Joy of Christ**

Jesus promised He would leave His joy with his followers. As "...a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief," what was the source of His joy?

1. He found joy because **He could do something for humanity that no one else could do.** Without His sacrifice humanity was self-doomed.
2. He found joy in **knowing the blessings that His sacrifice would offer.**
3. He found joy in **doing the will of God.** This was the reason He came to earth.
4. He found joy in **fulfilling the long, prophesied promises of the Father.**
5. He found joy in **sharing the anticipation of its fruits with His disciples.** The thought of giving His joy of anticipation to His disciples was something to pray about, "...that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves" (John 17:13).

PEACE BEYOND REASON

A. **The Character and Nature of Biblical Peace**

1. Many who call Jesus the Prince of Peace neither know the nature of the peace He gives or the pathway to His peace.
 - a. He did not come to put an end to all hostilities on the earth or bring all nations to the table of peace.
 - b. Earthly battles cannot be waged in His name anymore than His banner be lofted high in demanding the end of a war.
 - c. His peace is not devoted to promoting one plan or another to achieve favorable circumstances (Romans 14:17).
 - 1) Not to resolve the historic conflicts between the nations.
 - 2) He spoke of wars and rumors of war being the fabric of history and that He brought a sword (Matthew 10:34).
2. The peace He promised was an inner peace of individuals in the midst of turmoil.
 - a. This inner peace was so much in evidence during His last week on earth.
 - b. He was grieved, torn and humanly devastated, with every nerve screaming out in protest to the evils of human greed and the horrors of the cruelty of crucifixion.
 - c. He found a peace that triumphed over everything. The same peace that He promised to give to His disciples (John 15:27).

B. **How Do We Describe the Spirit Given Peace?**

1. The focus of Spirit-given peace is becoming of the same nature as God.
 - a. There can be no peace with God while living according to the nature of evil – the works of the flesh mentioned earlier in Galatians 5.
 - b. The promise of the angel at the birth of Jesus was that there would be peace on the earth "...to men on whom God's favor rests" (Luke 2:14).
 - c. Those who have been justified through faith "...have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:1).

2. While conflict with evil may rage on the outside, a right relationship with God produces peace in the inner man.
3. Without a radical renouncing of the acts of the fleshly nature and an equally radical yielding to the Spirit the nature of peace will not flourish.
4. The major access, while sharing in the nature of God, is learning to communicate with God, even among the anxieties and troubles that are common to all. By the Spirit, Paul relays a promise that “...the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7). He, then, describes the pathway to peace:
 - a. A saint needs to be alive to his world of needs, to the needs and hurts of people around him, to the opportunities to do good and to the dangers and battles he is facing.
 - b. He is to make his requests known to God, believing that He can make a difference.
 - c. The act of praying begins with *adoration* and *praise*: adoring God for His essential nature and praising Him for his marvelous works.
 - d. In the context of extolling God it is appropriate to *petition*, to beg God to exert His mighty power in impacting the desire of the heart.
 - e. The closure of the prayer comes with *thanksgiving* for all that God has done and will do about the matters presented to Him.
5. The peace of the Spirit is intentional and persistent.
 - a. From Psalms 34 we are admonished “...to seek peace and pursue it.”
 - b. 1 Peter 3:8-9 – Peter repeats the admonition and goes on to instruct us how to be intentional and persistent in seeking and pursuing peace with others (Cf. Matthew 5:9).
6. The prophecy of Isaiah 2 foresees a coming society where peace would prevail. (See Ephesians 4:3; Colossians 3:15; Hebrews 12:14; Romans 12:18; 2 Corinthians 13:11).

SPIRIT PRODUCED PATIENCE

A. Two Views of God's Patience

1. The more dramatic views of God picture Him creating worlds, destroying the two cities of the plains, sending plagues to Egypt, opening up the sea to deliver the Israelites, raising the dead and healing the sick.
2. The more common view of God is that He takes long days, years, centuries and millenniums to bring about His desired results.
3. It is the second view that God invites us to build into our lives.
 - a. Patience, the control of exploding emotions, builds virtue, strength and gains time to develop wise perspectives and drink deeply of God's grace (Titus 2:11-14).
 - b. Patience saves us all from a world of misdirection, lost opportunities, embarrassment and ruin (Proverbs 14:29).

B. The Power and Nature of Biblical Patience

1. Not all problems have immediate solutions or all desires have immediate gratification.
2. Patience (Gk. *makrothymia*) is holding in check the strong desire for immediate results.
 - a. It knows how to wait for God to bring about a solution.
 - b. It is a willingness to suffer or lack something, believing there is something more important than self.
 - c. It is the capacity to look beyond the antics of difficult people to what they might become in Christ.
 - d. It is the purposeful self-control that helps a person to suspend

- judgment and penalty to ask what need is being satisfied or what drives a person to act wrongly.
3. Patience, as produced by the Spirit, impacts every segment of a preacher's person and work.

C. The Nature of a Preacher's Life and Ministry When Patience Is a Growing Virtue

1. After studying long and hard and preaching his heart out and some brethren either did not understand or did not care, he will keep his frustrations and resentment in check and continue teaching with a sweet and tolerant spirit (2 Timothy 2:24-26).
2. After seeing no response to urging his elders to dig down deep and find the courage to confront open sin in the lives of some members he will continue his life of prayer on their behalf and continue being faithful to his calling to do the work of an evangelist (2 Timothy 4:2-5).
3. After struggling and failing in his own attempts to be a man of prayer, of Bible study, of soul seeking and self-discipline in his virtues he will seek a trusted, mature brother to whom he could confess and by whom he could be held accountable (James 5:16).
4. After being wrongly accused, disloyally supported or shown no recognition or gratitude he will remember he should expect no better than what was given to his Lord and ask the Father for their forgiveness (Matthew 10:24-24).
5. After knowing how much God had forgiven him, he will be patient (longsuffering) with those who owed him much less and had not or could not pay (Matthew 18:23-35).
6. After an especially stressful day in ministry, returning home and everything seems to be out of place and disjointed, he will keep his irritation in check. He will savor passages he had learned just for such occasions (Psalms 86:15; Numbers 14:18).
7. After any confrontation he remembers the virtues of God that brought us all to repentance: *kindness, tolerance and patience* (Romans 2:4).

THE EXPRESSION OF SPIRIT-PRODUCED KINDNESS

A. Kindness Comes in Many Forms, Expressing Itself in Many Ways

1. It is universally recognized and appreciated. Kindness is shown by people in all walks of life, all traveling a different journey.
2. Kindness must be an essential characteristic of the people of God, quick to be expressed and continued as long as it serves the pressing need.
3. A leader must learn to model the sweetness of kindness in every relationship, in every situation and before both the church and the world.

B. A Preacher Yields to the Spirit in Developing Kindness

1. Being alert to observe others to understand their need and going beyond relationships and shared values to help another.
2. Putting oneself in the same position of need and defining what he would desire from others (Matthew 7:12).
3. Determining what personal resources are available and/or how others could be enlisted in helping to meet the needs of others.
4. Being freely willing to face risks in committing to helping another in need.
5. Being ready to continue helping as long as possible and as long as the need continued.
6. Not expecting any show of gratitude as a condition for continuing to help meet a person's need.
7. The story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

- a. Being kind means being a “neighbor” to another in meeting needs.
- b. Jesus expanded the meaning of neighbor beyond proximity, beyond race, beyond religion, beyond profession, defining it as *a person in need*.
- c. The Spirit can mold such a yielded preacher to becoming a Christ like practitioner of kindness.
 - 1) Evidenced in his church relations, in his preaching, in his mentoring others, in his counseling and in the ways he deals with the public.
 - 2) Instead of embarrassing others by a show of his knowledge in publicly exposing others in their ignorance or error, or refusing to strike back for inadvertent or intended insults or being selective in being kind only to those who are kind in return, the preacher distributes his kindness whether it is wanted, appreciated or returned.
- d. He models his kindness after the perfect model of the Father in distributing his love indiscriminately upon all those in need (Matthew 5:46-48).

C. The Centrality of Kindness

- 1. Kindness is what compassion feels.
 - a. It flows out of loving compassion of others, feeling their pain and having the humility of a servant to bear another’s burdens.
 - b. It is associated in Scripture with the best of divine virtues: with the riches of God’s grace (Ephesians 2:6-7), God’s love and mercy (Titus 3:4-5) and the sternness of God (Romans 11:22).
- 2. The preacher, like all Spirit filled believers, is to be clothed with kindness, a kindness that makes forgiving natural, taking an insult less painful and demanding recognition for accomplishments a thing of his fleshly past (Colossians 3:12; Ephesians 4:32).

THE SERVICE OF BIBLICAL GOODNESS

Goodness, for the Christian, is constant in its contrast to anything that is evil, anything that dishonors God and anything that does not serve kingdom purposes.

A. A Description of a Preacher Known Best for his Goodness

- 1. **He is a generous giver.** He sees a need of people in the church and gives generously of his resources.
- 2. **He has a servant heart.** He has great insights into the potential of people, and, as often as necessary, stands at their sides, using his influence in opening incredible doors for service to them.
- 3. **He has an unquestioned character.** His recommendations are heeded by the church.
- 4. **He is a church builder.** He is recognized as such a strong and dependable person in building churches that he is entrusted with difficult, kingdom assignments.
- 5. **He is genuinely evangelistic and a catalyst for church growth.**
- 6. **He works well with other people,** – even handling conflict in a positive, productive manner.
- 7. **He is global in his vision of the church** – and is ready to be sent abroad to preach. Thus, is the description of Barnabas from the pen of Luke in the book of Acts (Acts 11:24).

B. Timely Observations

- 1. Men with ordinary, preaching ability, who are respected for their goodness, yield continuing fruit more than the golden tongue preacher without

- goodness.
2. A passion to be right in life or doctrine that lacks goodness brings little, lasting joy either to the preacher or to the listeners.
 3. The Holy Spirit of God wants goodness to be abundant in His harvest among those who would preach.

THE FULNESS OF FAITHFULNESS

- A. The Holy Spirit Works to Promote the Thirst of Faithfulness in Each of us**
 1. Being “faithful unto death” (until death, to the point of death? – Revelation 2:10) may be the ultimate meaning of faithfulness.
 2. Being consistent with our promises in all aspects of life shows the fullness of faithfulness.
 - a. Being faithful before the eyes of others must be a constant companion to being faithful when no one can see.
 - b. A preacher’s faithfulness goes beyond matters of doctrine, how he uses his unwatched time during the week or how he treats his brethren.
 - c. Faithfulness includes how he behaves at home, in his marriage, before his children, before the computer monitor behind closed doors and in paying his bills.
 3. Is he faithful, that is, is he reliable, dependable, even predictably true to his promises in every aspect in his life and ministry?
- B. The Holy Spirit Promotes Faithfulness in the Life and Ministry of a Preacher**
 1. **Guides him in his study of Scriptures** – to believe implicitly and rely absolutely on the faithfulness of God in keeping His promises. A core understanding of God is His faithfulness. One has not begun to understand God or to take on God’s essential nature until His faithfulness looms large before him (Hebrews 10:23; 1 John 1:9; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 Peter 4:19).
 2. **Keeps his eyes focused on Jesus** – who faithfully fulfilled all of the Father’s redemptive plan for humanity, even to the extent of the cross (John 4:34; Hebrews 2:17, 3:2).
 3. **Keeps him reminded of the hall of faithful men and women** – named in Hebrews 11 and throughout the Bible who relied on the promises of a faithful God as a firm basis of their own faithfulness.
 4. **Continues to renew his joy in seeing the faithfulness of modern heroes of the faith** – who, even in the face of beatings, losses and death, continue to be trustworthy with the treasures of faith they have received to share with the lost and bless the church.
 5. **Reminds him of his own promises made before many witnesses** – at his baptism, at his marriage, in his sermons, in counseling sessions, etc. (1 Corinthians 4:2; 1 Timothy 6:11-12).
 6. **Calls him repeatedly to the careful reading and passionate study of Scriptures** – the sole, reliable source of his faith and faithfulness (Romans 10:17; 1 Timothy 4:11-16).
 7. **Freshens the joy and honor of being called to the ministry of faithfulness** (1 Timothy 1:12).
- C. Jesus’ Plan for Evangelizing the World**
 1. The faithfulness of His disciples was near the center of the plan of Jesus.
 2. Evangelization of the world depends on our faithfulness (Mark 16:15-16; Romans 10:13-15).
 3. The preacher’s job is to be an inspiration to others by his own faithfulness and do his part that Christ’s plan will be accomplished through the faithfulness of the church!

THE FRUIT OF GENTLENESS

A. How Does A Preacher Practice Gentleness With Those In Search for the Truth?

“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander” (1 Peter 3:15-16).

B. How Does a Preacher Treat Those Who Are Broken by the Harshness in Life?

“Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I have put my delight; I will put my Spirit in him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will stuff out, till he leads justice to victory. In his name the nations will put their hope” (Matthew 12:18-21; cf. Isaiah 42:1-4).

NOTE: In gentleness, a preacher, like his Lord, would proclaim justice but never in a quarreling or loud manner. He would never be harsh with those already beaten down by difficulties. He would make every effort to keep alive what little hope a discouraged person might have.

C. How Does a Preacher Treat His Brethren?

“And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God, perhaps, will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth. . .” (2 Timothy 2:24-25).

NOTE: Angry quarreling hardly can solve conflicts in the church, but gentleness, with patience and humility, have been the means by which an able teacher is able to accomplish God’s purposes.

D. How Does a Preacher Ever Become Known for His Gentleness?

Two men in Bible history were most known for their gentleness: Moses (Numbers 12:3) and Jesus (Matthew 11:28). The pathway to gentleness for Jesus is well described in Philippians 2:5-11.

1. He chose to set aside rightful status and authority to rule in order to serve.
2. He did not insist on a superior reputation to lessen another.
3. He saw himself as nothing, thus, unable to demand special treatment or recognition.
4. He did not claim any privileges or exception from obeying God.

NOTE: There is no reason to wonder how the Lord of Glory could so gently wash the feet of mere mortals (John 13:12-17). There should be no wonder how a preacher will develop greater humility, gently encouraging young and old, weak and strong, lost and saved.

SELF CONTROL — A SURRENDERED LIFE TO JESUS

A. Christian Self-control Begins with a Surrender to Jesus as Lord, the Claiming of a New Will and the Driving Desire to Take on a New Nature with New and Different Purposes

1. Looks outward in service to others and upward in a vigilance to honor God.
2. It is more pervasive, even invasive, than all other forms of self-control.

- a. It comes from within to confront a threat.
- b. A Christian self-control is **selfless, Christ-centered** and **Spirit-driven**. It is better described as Spirit-control.
- 3. For all Christians, especially preachers, it controls the content and tone of conversation and of thought.
 - a. It guards against Satan breaching the moral walls and leaving the soul vulnerable to evil (Proverbs 25:28).
 - b. Any list of immoral, freshly behavior is effectively and tenaciously combated by a Spirit-controlled person (Galatians 5:19-21; Colossians 3:5).
 - c. It keeps one from abusing others in any way or neglecting family or neighbors.
 - d. It gives determination to obey God without delay.
- 4. Self-control gives a leader the ability to lead a church through perilous times. It guides a preacher to be “*instant in season and out of season*” in the selection of preaching topics, in keeping his finances in order, in ordering his relationships with all and in the fruitful use of his time.

Conclusion

Paul concludes the discussion on the harvest of the Spirit in our lives by reminding us of the three goals that are necessary for a prayerful, renewal of the work of the Spirit in us (Galatians 5:24-26):

- 1. Keeping our death to self as a centerpiece in our lives,
- 2. Being pointedly committed to walking in cadence with the Spirit and
- 3. Being devoted to a humble, servant life.

SELF-EXAM FOR LESSON TWELVE:

1. List four things the Spirit endowed joy is not.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

2. Give two views of God's patience.

1) _____
2) _____

3. Give the seven-fold description of the preacher known best for his goodness.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____

4. Write out the seven ways the Holy Spirit promotes faithfulness in the life and ministry of a Preacher.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____

5. A Christian self-control is _____, _____ and _____

2. Write a paragraph explaining how you have opened up your life and encouraged the Spirit to grow the different fruit into your spiritual being.

LESSON THIRTEEN

Revisiting Documents in the New Testament (3)

— Becoming an Elder-like Man of 1 Timothy Three —

INTRODUCTION

I Timothy 3, along with Titus 1, provides a portrait of a mature man. In these documents the church has its plan for developing mature men, out of which they will choose their Elders. From these pages, all men should be inspired to commit themselves to achieving masculine maturity, even as they pattern themselves after Christ. While there is a clear distinction between the work of an elder and an evangelist in the Scriptures, every preacher would do well to set his heart on becoming an “elder-like” man, whether he were ever appointed to the work of an elder. The elder qualities would serve well in everything he did as a preacher.

The portrait emphasizes the exemplary life of a leader: Home relations, moral maturity, church relations and community relations.

LESSON AIM: To emphasize the nature of the spiritually mature man in his relation to the family, the church, and the community.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Find out how a spiritually mature man relates to his wife.
 2. See the spiritually mature man in the environment of his home especially as it relates to his children.
 3. Learn how a spiritually mature man relates to the church and the community.
-

HOME RELATIONS: WIFE

A. Emphasizing the Quality of the Marital Relationship

1. Discussions have focused too narrowly on what an elder should not be: not a celibate, not a polygamist, not a divorcee or widower.
2. The literal meaning of the phrase “husband of one wife” – “a one-woman kind of man.”
3. A look at the meaning of “one-woman kind of man” from other biblical passages throughout the Bible.
4. **Genesis 1-2:** In the opening chapters of the Bible the fundamental values of marriage are clearly established.
 - a. Marriage belongs to God, giving Him the sovereign right of legislation (1:27).
 - b. Marriage is composed of diverse parties with different needs, outlooks, reactions and roles (1:27).
 - c. Marriage is designed to be a relationship of mutual service wherein both mates reach their potential in serving one another (2:18).
 - d. Marriage seeks to achieve unity in the context of interdependence (2:24).
 - e. Marriage is a commitment to a lifelong, unbroken relationship (2:24).

NOTE: In this section the “one-woman kind of man” sees God’s emphasis on the person and place of the woman. Her diverse needs are to be identified and fulfilled. Her equal partnership, uniqueness and value in the marriage are to be honored. She takes precedence over all other human relationships or concerns (cf. also Deut. 24:4).

5. **Ephesians 5:21-23:** To enjoy an obedient, submissive relationship with the Lord the husband is to commit himself to love his wife.
 - a. **Love without reservation:** loving her more than life itself, seeing and following the example of Christ who gave himself for the church.
 - b. **Love with an eternal purpose:** loving her in view of her eternal sanctification.
 - c. **Love unselfishly:** loving her with the same awareness of need and with the same care as he responds to his own needs.

NOTE: Experiencing such masculine affection, the wife is secure in the love of her husband and free to respond with dependency on him, trust or belief in him, recognition of his value and praise of his accomplishments.

6. **I Peter 3:7:** The “one-woman kind of man” heeds Peter’s three point response to his wife:
 - a. **Lives with her intelligently:** he studies how to be an exemplary husband, understanding that the passing seasons of femininity call for added and different responses.
 - b. **He is considerate of her femininity:** he learns to speak the feminine language, understanding her different needs and responses and honoring her God-assigned role.
 - c. **He honors her as a spiritual equal:** he treasures her partnership in the Gospel, profiting from her spiritual insights and feminine ministry.

NOTE: He remembers that God listens to his prayers only as he builds the right relation with his wife.

HOME RELATIONS: CHILDREN

- A. **The Nature and Character of the Man Who “manages his household well”**
 1. It is more than functioning efficiently in finances or making good use of time and other resources.
 - a. The word “manages” comes from the same word as “ruler” or, literally, *one who stands before protectively*.
 - b. In all matters his children should observe in his life a model behavior that gives them a context of security, purpose and affirmation. The emphasis of the text is on the impact his conduct has on his children.
 - c. Orderly children who hold their father in high esteem reflect how a man has “*managed his household*.” By his life decisions and his active teaching he protects his children from the threats of this modern age. He guards them from associations that would lead them away from God.
 - d. Both prospective elders and active preachers have felt the bite of the “*believing children*” statement.
 2. The term “*believing*” could be translated “persuadable, convincible, teachable.”
 - a. Paul would be emphasizing a certain mind-set or attitude of children toward listening, being corrected and learning.
 - b. An open minded, a fair-minded, reasonable, easily informed, easily entreated person.

- c. Attitudes learned from a maturing father who would be expressing the same qualities in his leadership role.
- d. Titus 1:6 would be a one sentence commentary on the Book of Proverbs that urges the son to be eager to listen to instruction, to prize knowledge and wisdom above all treasures.
- e. The writer repeatedly emphasizes that the disposition to heed instruction saves one from untold moral failure, which is the emphasis of the statements of Paul to Titus.

B. Moral Maturity

- 1. As men develop toward leadership, they must become exemplary in their ethical and relational qualities that will determine the strength of their influence on others.
 - a. Temperate describes a person who is calm, wise, cautious, vigilant. Such a person is not extreme in anything — work, play, pleasures, relations, etc.
 - b. Sober describes one who is serious, under control.
 - c. Of good behavior speaks of one who is organized, orderly. He is predictable. He can be counted on to be punctual, orderly in behavior and decision making.
 - d. Hospitable pictures one who enjoys helping the needy, who understands the plight of traveling strangers, who is unselfish in helping resolve the difficulties of others.
 - e. Not given to much wine, (literally: “not sitting long at his cup”) extols the virtue of self-control and resisting enslavement. Possibly, the New Testament prohibition of addiction to wine in a wine drinking society could authorize us to speak against addiction in any area of life: money, power, work, play, etc.
 - f. No striker precludes a man being in the leadership who is contentious, quarrelsome and hurtful in his treatment of others.
 - g. Gentle applauds one who is fair, reasonable, not unduly rigorous or demanding, being sensitive to the feelings and needs of others.
 - h. Not a brawler marks one who, perhaps, is not as hurtful of others as the *striker*, but is always finding a provocation to quarrel. He is easily offended, quick to be defensive.
 - I. Not covetous, (literally, not fond of, not having a liking of silver) commends one who is free from greed and free to work for the good of others, not motivated by desire of the goods of others. To Titus, Paul says the leader, rather, “*loves what is good*” and is sensible, just, devout and self-controlled (Titus 1:8).
- 2. These relational qualities enhance one’s leadership opportunities to gain the respect and co-labor of fellow Christians

CHURCH RELATIONS

A. Maturity Level For Church Leaders

- 1. Beyond a man’s family relations and personal morality, Paul mentions two qualities that every leader must achieve:
 - a. Apt to teach requires one to have discovered and developed his potential as a teacher. While we have ignored this quality in our search and selection of elders it is heavily expected for our preachers. If a preacher cannot preach, he won’t get a chance to preach or won’t preach long or well. The point here is that a preacher just must keep growing in the art and science of preaching. His studies, his research tools, his abilities, his scheduling plans, etc. must be kept at a high priority for him to continue as an able instructor of the Word.

- b. *Not a novice*, (literally, “not a recently planted tree) emphasizes the pressing need for maturity. A recently planted tree or one that does not mature is not fruitful. It cannot give haven to birds in its tender branches or comforting shade by its leaves. It needs, itself, to be supported to grow straight and tall and stand erect in a storm. Likewise, time is required for men to become giants in the forest of trees. Paul cautions us not to thrust men into prime leadership roles too early. That is, before they have demonstrated the deep rootage and fruitfulness of mature growth. For young preachers we need more Paul-Timothy relationships, greater Eldership care and purposeful ministry training. For our maturing preachers we need more accessible and determined growth plans, ministry renewal programs, extensive reading and mutual sharing, etc.

B. The Fruit of Mature and Capable Instructors in the Word

1. A church thrives when its principle leaders are regularly being and becoming more and more mature and capable instructors of the Word.
2. Conversely, a church cannot grow to the pleasure of God, being led by immature and inept instructors of the Word.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

A. The Church’s Relation to its Surroundings

1. The church is not a secret or clannish fellowship. It is the “*salt of the earth . . . the light of the world.*”
2. It and its message is intended to be seen, heard and examined in the world and by the world.
3. Those leaders we put up front are required to be attractive and convincing in their relations in the community.
 - a. They display before the world what Christ does in the lives of His followers. By looking at them the worldly can find hope for becoming moral, hope for building strong marriages and families and hope for becoming respected by one’s peers.
 - b. How a preacher is regarded in the community will determine how effectively he can penetrate that community with the gospel.
 - c. Beyond his dealings with people in the community in matters of finances, the way he responds to stressful situations or lives morally, his getting involved in the lives and wholesome activities in the community opens multiple doors.

B. A Preacher Is to Aspire to Being an “Elder-like Man”

He must become and mature as a model of family relations, moral relations, leadership maturity and useful service in the community.

SELF-EXAM FOR LESSON THIRTEEN:

1. In Genesis 1-2 the fundamental values of marriage are given. List these five values below.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

2. In Ephesians 5:21-13 the husband is to commit himself to love his wife in what three ways?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

3. In 1 Peter 3:7 the husband is to show his love in what three ways?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

Part Three

Lessons 14 – 18

LESSON FOURTEEN

Choose to Be a Noble and Loving Husband

— Loving a Wife as She Was Designed to Be Loved —

INTRODUCTION

Not every minister should marry. Marriage is not a prerequisite to effective ministry. Being married could be a distraction, especially if the marriage is full of friction. Paul so states, at least, for the first part of the statement (1 Corinthians 7:32-33). Yet, being married fulfills some of the deepest longings in the human heart, provides opportunities to grow to greater fullness and creates a potential partnership in ministry that can be fruitful and a blessing to many. To enjoy such a relationship, a preacher must learn to love his wife as she was designed to be loved. God has created within her a spirit of responsiveness. Her first inclination will be to respond in kind. She is at her best and in harmony with her feminine nature when she can respond to a loving, thoughtful and trustworthy leader. She is constrained to be at her best self when she must respond well to an unloving, thoughtless and careless husband. When she is loved as God designed her to be loved she blossoms as the most lovely and delicate flower, perfuming the marriage and all around in the lives of the children and of others.

LESSON AIM: To build in the mind of the student the picture of a God-honoring marriage relationship.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Learn the character and nature of the feminine design and five things it requires.
 2. Examine five things God revealed in Genesis 1-2 concerning His plan for marriage
 3. Be reminded of what a good marriage looks like from Hosea 2:19-20.
 4. Look at the Christ model for building a God-honoring marriage in Ephesians 5:21-33.
-

WHAT DOES THE FEMININE DESIGN REQUIRE?

A. To Have a Good Listener – Being Attentive

1. Women are first attracted to a man who listens often and well. She needs him to understand her feelings, to correctly interpret her feminine language and to see what she sees in differing colors, shapes, situations and people.
2. This is not natural to a man. It is a skill he must learn.
 - a. He learns the value of maintaining direct and warm eye contact as his wife speaks.
 - b. He learns to ask questions that encourage continued sharing.
 - c. He learns to withhold anything but instructive criticisms and make them sparingly and when clearly necessary.
3. His comments are enriched responses, full of compliments, encouraging observations and emphasis on what she regards as her strengths.

4. She becomes an equal listening partner in response to how well the husband listens to her.

B. To Have Affectionate Regard – Being Affectionate

1. Male affection fulfills some of the deepest longings of a woman.
 - a. A worthy husband learns what makes his wife feel most loved.
 - b. Endearing words, physical touches, not necessarily associated with sex, flowers, meaningful cards or notes, thoughtful gifts and gestures, unsolicited compliments.
2. A husband must crown anything he does or thinks with a singular desire to show how often and how much she is loved.
3. A husband's deeply felt and sincerely offered affection is poetry of the highest quality to a wife.

C. To Have Affirmations of Value – Being Affirmative

1. Femininity flourishes when a woman's sense of personal value is affirmed by a loving husband
2. If a woman has been affirmed by her father in a healthy father-daughter relationship a fortunate husband can and must build on that strength with his own, well chosen affirmations.
3. If a woman has been diminished and/or abused by her father or a significant male in her early years she will need much wise and affirmative expressions from the husband, first, to heal and then to grow.

D. To Have Assurance of Security – Being Assuring

1. A wife thrives in a secure environment. Taking risks, especially without purpose, is not a part of her basic nature.
2. A husband's business affairs are organized, the future is secured and problems are kept at a distance through good foresight and planning.
3. A woman is not at her best in living from paycheck to paycheck, fearing about not being able to meet the needs of her children and seeing nothing but a dismal, retirement future.

E. To Have an Achieving Partner – Being Active

1. A wife can do incredible things. She usually can do them better if she does not have to carry both her responsibilities and those of her husband.
2. She can be a patient person, especially if she is confident in her husband's love
3. His dependability in keeping promises and even going beyond reasonable expectations enriches a marriage and builds the wife's trust and dependency in her husband.

NOTE: The five A's of a harmonious marriage, **being attentive, affectionate, affirmative, assuring and active**, feed the deepest and most persistent needs of a wife. When done well by a knowledgeable and able husband, she feels loved even as God designed her to be.

GOD HAS SPOKEN AND WE LISTEN!

A. At the Beginning God Revealed His Plan for Marriage (Genesis 1-2)

1. **Marriage Begins with God (Genesis 1:27-28).**
 - a. The home was instituted in the design of creation.
 - b. It was to be constituted by diverse genders.
 - c. It was to be assured with male leadership.
 - d. It was seen as a reproductive unit and primary in the order of creation.

- e. God was, by reason of design and creation, the uncontested legislator and promised provider.
 - f. He, then, would have the right to determine the purpose, the longevity and the result of marriage.
2. **Marriage is Founded on Diversity (Genesis 1:27).**
- a. The composition of marriage was intentionally diverse in gender. Each gender is an incredible collection of very different traits, potentials and needs. Part of the diversity is what initially attracts each to the other.
 - b. A happy marriage is bi-lingual, multi-faceted and culturally enhanced. Though the couple started as former strangers, who from birth came from different worlds, in marriage they can use their adversity in discovering comfort and purpose together.
3. **Marriage Thrives on Mutuality of Service (Genesis 2:18).**
- a. In the process of creation, an unmet need was noted. Man was alone, in need of someone to complete him, comparable to him in his creative nature.
 - b. The corollary to his incompleteness without a wife is equally true of her incompleteness without him. They each supply the unmet needs of the other.
 - c. Knowing of God's design, their lives take on a mutual, servant spirit in searching out and fulfilling the needs of the other.
4. **Marriage is Driven by a Shared Purpose (Genesis 2:27).**
- a. The one, overarching purpose of marriage, other than honoring God, is that the two very diverse genders, through mutual understanding and service, grow to be one.
 - b. They grow to be one in endeavors, values, visionary pursuits, in triumph or defeat, in losses or gains, joy or suffering and one in procreation and parenting.
 - c. At all times their endeavors are mutually shared and pursued.
5. **Marriage is Cemented by a Lasting Commitment (Genesis 2:27).**
- a. The marriage was designed to be life-long, indissoluble, strong against everything but death itself.
 - b. Keeping such a commitment would require guarding against distracting thoughts, keeping desires dedicated to one's mate, making sure that one's needs were intentionally and singularly met in the faithful embrace of the one, chosen mate.
 - c. The keeping of such a commitment provides security and needed affirmations.

B. God's Clear Reminder of What a Good Marriage Looks Like (Hosea 2:19-20)

Seven qualities that characterized his marital commitments.

1. **An Everlasting Covenant.**
 - a. In the beginning, God designed marriage to be a life-long commitment.
 - b. There is the context where the best of personal qualities have time to develop and the most fruitful, shared endeavors can flourish. In such a safe environment, children can grow to be healthy adults.
2. **A Covenant of Righteousness.**
 - a. When a man is committed to doing the right thing in every circumstance, the wife can be free to trust.
 - b. She feels honored by his leadership and confidently trains her children to follow his example.
3. **A Covenant of Justice.**
 - a. In the hard decisions of a leader and in the daily dealings in the family, the husband that follows God promises always to be fair, impartial and balanced.

- b. The wife never has to wonder if her husband is being selfish, devious or thoughtless.
 - c. She is assured that his discipline of the children will be fair, always keeping a balance between the expectations that have been communicated and the capacities of each child. She supports him in fair responsibility and clear accountability.
4. **A Covenant of Compassion.**
- a. When the charm of courtship ends, the God-like husband continues and grows in his feelings of kindness toward his wife.
 - b. It is best described as *loving kindness*, wanting the sweetest and most needed goodness to happen to his wife.
 - c. It is devoting himself to giving her his tender love.
5. **A Covenant of Mercy.**
- a. Mercy does what kindness feels. When a husband deeply loves his wife, all of the qualities of mercy follow: patience, understanding, tolerance, care, insight, etc.
 - b. Mercy overlooks or gives little weight to faults.
 - 1) Mercy leads to quick and effective forgiveness.
 - 2) Mercy never looks back, is never harsh and is never accusatory.
 - c. A woman who knows that she lives with a husband that is forgiving, supportive and understanding is free to be a woman at her best.
6. **A Covenant of Faithfulness.**
- a. A man who has chosen God as his model in marriage both promises and is true to his promise to be faithful throughout the years of his covenant.
 - 1) We first think of *faithfulness* in terms of sexual integrity.
 - 2) The man keeps his thoughts, his eyes and arms devoted to the one woman in his life.
 - 3) He never gives his wife any reason to doubt his marital integrity.
 - b. Yet, *faithfulness*, goes beyond the avoidance of illicit, sexual relations. It speaks of making serious promises and keeping them in all areas of the relationship.
7. **A Covenant of Intimacy.**
- a. The statement speaks of having a close relationship, even sexual intimacy.
 - b. The marriage bond brings two into deep understanding of each other and a joyful acknowledgment of the intimacy between them.

C. Christ Provided the Model for Building a God Honoring Marriage (Ephesians 5:21-33)

1. **Christ loved the Church submitting Himself to her needs.**
Christ, worthy of worship, came to meet the needs of His bride, the church. He not only taught servanthood in bowing to wash feet but in willfully becoming the sacrificial lamb to redeem His people.
2. **Christ loved the Church unselfishly.**
That the church be saved, that it become holy and that it become an instrument for global evangelism overshadowed anything that related to Him and his well-being.
3. **Christ loved the Church more than He loved Himself.**
He would die for God's people. They were more important to Him than life itself. Calvary will always assure believers of the love of Jesus. The sacrificial, loving actions of a husband over the continuing years of marriage assures his wife of the extent he would go in loving her.

D. Peter Draws a Portrait of a Fulfilling Marriage (1 Peter 3:7). He Pictures:

1. **A Knowledgeable Man.** He instructs husbands to "live with their wives

according to knowledge." Men are to dedicate themselves to learning how to be husbands.

2. **An Insightful Man.** He instructs husbands to "*consider her femininity.*" Her needs are different than his, her insights are other than his and her responses vary from his. She is more delicate (i.e. "*weaker vessel*"), more sensitive and more relational.
3. **An Understanding Man.** He instructs husbands to realize the spiritual equality of a wife. Leadership does not make the man superior. Just more responsible. The woman has equal access to the Father. She has spiritual insights, often different but just as profound. She has ministry gifts just as rich and varied. She has as valid a claim on eternal life as he does.
4. **A Man of Effective Prayer.** He shows how precariously ineffective prayers become when lifted by men who are careless in their relations with their wives.

SELF-EXAM FOR LESSON FOURTEEN:

1. What are the five "A" words which describe / explain the feminine design needs?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
2. Concerning God's revealed plan for marriage, complete the sentences below.
 - 1) Marriage begins with _____.
 - 2) Marriage is founded on _____.
 - 3) Marriage thrives on _____.
 - 4) Marriage is driven by _____.
 - 5) Marriage is cemented by _____.
3. In reminding us what a good marriage looks like in Hosea, what are seven qualities listed?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
 - 7) _____

LESSON FIFTEEN

Choose To Honor God With An Affair Free Marriage

INTRODUCTION

No age has ever been a safe zone for marriage. Despite the marital ideal that God declared at the beginning, the Mosaic protections that were anchored in the mountain top law or the voices of prophets and apostles and the model of Jesus himself, men have struggled in offering to God a marriage full of integrity and faithfulness to promises. The age through which we are journeying is full of pitfalls, distractions and deceptions. Even getting too busy in kingdom serving has resulted in neglecting the precious relationships in marriage.

How can a fruitful preacher end his days in the arms of the wife of his youth? How can he show those that follow his same path how to continue being a “*one woman kind of man?*” Or, even should he fall, how can he rise again and succeed wherein he once failed?

LESSON AIM: To convince the student that spiritual living is a safe-guard against infidelity and the danger of being involved in an adulterous affair.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. First of all, answer the question: Why do ministers cheat and break marital promises.
 2. Examine some ways and means by which lines of defense may be set up to prevent being overcome and sinning against one’s wife and against God.
 2. Learn that holiness of life is the ultimate safe-guard against unfaithfulness.
-

CHOOSING AN AFFAIR FREE MARRIAGE

Spiritual living and extramarital affairs are mutually exclusive. They must be regarded as completely incompatible.

A. Why Ministers Choose To Cheat

1. Why do ministers break marital promises to ones who are so dear and disappoint those in the faith family who have trusted them?
2. At the base of all such faulty decisions is a **heart of greed, selfishness, thoughtlessness for others and an un-submitted will.**
3. There is no defense or justification. But, there is some understanding.
 - a. To some extent, all men have to face personal struggles in human sexuality. Ministers are more open to attack by the very nature of the ministry choice.
 - b. Men overly burdened in serving or stressed in conflict can become emotionally deficit and in need of affirmation.
 - c. Ministers who have failed to mature a marital relation in which their full, masculine needs are met or have made some immature marital

- choices could become vulnerable to an extramarital relationship that promises to fill the void.
4. Most ministers are servants at heart and reaching out to a woman in pain, without exercising boundaries, can easily end in a hurtful involvement.

B. The First Lines of Defense

1. **Older ministers must serve as mentors.**
 - a. An older minister must help younger men to deal with their youthful passions to find purpose and strength in rising above our common humanity.
 - b. Paul gave that exact consideration to Timothy and Titus (cf. the three letters).
2. **Elders must shepherd the moral lives of ministers.**
 - a. The ample provision of financial means, the clear definition of ministry responsibilities and accountabilities and frequent and purposeful prayer time with and about a minister's morals are basic considerations of congregational shepherds.
 - b. Attentive elders can stop developments before they have time to destroy a preacher and his family, and with it, a congregation.
 - c. This ministry care is intrinsic in their leadership charge (Acts 20:28-32).
3. **Ministers must place holiness as a high priority in a committed life.**
 - a. Thinking, feeling and doing exactly like Jesus must be a daily commitment
 - b. He must eagerly learn how to delight in righteousness in holy living.
4. **Ministers must place a fulfilling and a fulfilled marriage as a high priority in being a minister.**
5. **Congregations must place a healthy marriage high on the list of expectations in considering and sustaining future preachers.**
6. **Our brotherhood must place ministry renewal high on our list of urgent needs.**
Having safe places where skilled counseling can be appropriately found and ministers and missionaries can be renewed from the rigors of battle is one of the most urgent and necessary initiatives facing the modern church.
7. **A minister must envision the day he can look back over a long career in an affair free marriage.**

C. Ways A Minister Can Keep Himself Pure and Free From Sexual Entanglement

1. **Construct a collage and keep it available in his wallet.**
On that collage there would be a picture or symbol of the following ones who would be hurt by a marital affair: parents, wife, her family, children and grandchildren, colleagues, churches and brethren served, converts, those yet to be taught if one remains faithful, the woman and her family who would be crushed, an unbelieving world, a reveling Devil and the Lord of Glory.
2. **Keep a tight, inner circle of confidants (fellow ministers, loyal friends, trusted elders) to whom to be accountable.**
Having select persons to whom one can be accountable, if one is honest and courageous to share openly, is a strong shield against infidelity.
3. **Use discretion and self-discipline in using Internet programs.**
 - a. In every age Satan finds a way to allure God's men to sin. In this age the most insidious is pornography on the Internet.
 - b. Paul called his effort to avoid sin as "*buffeting*" or "*disciplining*" his body (1 Corinthians 9:27). Similar effort can keep a preacher out of the lethal rapids of pornography.

4. **A complete “outing” of self before God.** The wise, affair free preacher will have spent choice time with the Father with the following appeals:
 - a. “Help me guard my thoughts and motives” (Psalms 139:23-24).
 - b. “Help me choose my friends” (1 Corinthians 15:33).
 - c. “Help me keep a close rein on my actions” (1 Corinthians 9:27).
 - d. “Help me to love only the wife of my youth, all of my years” (Proverbs 5:18).
 - e. “Help me to regard, with all purity, my dear women in the faith only as sisters and mothers” (1 Timothy 5:2).
5. **Invest deeply and continually in one’s marriage.**
A preacher must lovingly encourage a wife to stay healthy, vibrant and attractive, providing the budget and the sensitive incentives to keep her motivated.

WHAT DOES THE DISCUSSION COME TO AT LAST?

- A. Being Holy Because God is Holy is the Bottom Line of an Affair Free Marriage**
 1. Along with the “*except you believe. . .repent. . .confess and be baptized,*” there is the “*be holy because I am holy*” (1 Peter 1:16).
 2. Holiness has always been at the heart of the covenant with God (Leviticus 11:44,45, 19:2, 20:7)
- B. Pulling Out All Stops to Keep a Marriage Free of Affairs and Healthy is Reflective of the Spiritual Relation With Christ**
 1. A preacher’s best sermon on the church being the beautiful and radiant bride of Christ must be his own marriage (Ephesians 5:21f).
 2. His best counsel to young lovers is the way he loves his own wife and is faithfully protective of his marriage.
 3. His strongest affirmation about recognizing and rejoicing in the value of his saved relation with Christ is how fully he values his covenant with his wife.
- C. Covenant Keeping Has Been Given Its God Honoring Place in Marital Faithfulness**
 1. God is a promise making and a promise keeping God. We are sons of the Father and share His central concerns.
 2. Preachers are specially engaged as custodians of covenants. Our assignment is to call all men to the covenant house of God and to keep the covenants fresh and assessable, calling the forgetful to remember the promises they have made with God (2 Peter 1:12-15).
 - a. The priest of Malachi’s day were severely condemned for despising the name of God as seen in the sickly sacrifices they laid on the altar (Malachi 1:7-8).
 - b. Everything a preacher does should be his laying it as a gift on the altar. How would God regard a marital affair laid on His altar of praise? Malachi all over again!

Conclusion

By a preacher’s faithfulness in his marriage he reaffirms his love for the church and his valued relationship with his Savior. He recommits himself daily to the covenant with his wife and renews it frequently before the covenant keeping God. He sings again and again the song of holiness and confirms his deep longing to be like his God in His holiness. He guards every association, every relationship in the faith and every thought that they will only keep him true to his promises. He will keep his affection singularly focused on the wife of his youth, help her to be all that God designed her

to be and chooses to find his needs fulfilled only in the one-flesh relationship of his covenanted marriage.

SELF-EXAM FOR LESSON FIFTEEN:

1. Give at least four (4) reasons a minister might be led off into infidelity.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

2. The first line of defense is extremely important. List the seven items given in the Study Guide as being the first line of defense.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____

3. List five (5) practical ways Truman suggests as ways a minister can keep himself pure and free from sexual entanglement.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____

4. Write a brief paragraph stating some things you can do personally to remain true and faithful to the wife of your youth.

LESSON SIXTEEN

Choose to Make a Father's Imprint

— Molding a Vessel of God —

INTRODUCTION

In most cases a man was a father before he progressed very far in ministry. Fatherhood was an early priority that did not lessen in a decision to preach. Becoming a successful minister is no justification for being a poor father. Yet, preachers have many demands made on them, plus their own self-expectations, that could become distractions from molding a vessel of God. The failed parenthood of preachers is probably not any greater than other occupied fathers but the notice given to it is much greater and the consequences can be graver. While the message that his effective parenthood sends is important the greater concern is that his children are matured into the image of Christ. Preaching and parenting can be compatible and mutually supportive.

LESSON AIM: To instill within the student the great value spiritual living has in relation to rearing children.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Learn five (5) foundational principles of parenting.
 2. Learn four (4) powerful pillars of parenting crucial to a preacher being effective as a father.
 3. Consider five (5) parenting skills necessary to insure that a child becomes a responsible adult.
-

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF PARENTING

There are some Biblical basics that will guide the discerning and dedicated preacher-father to begin right and continue well in developing children.

A. The Original Plan of Parenting (Genesis 1:27-28)

1. Effective parenting begins with the recognition that God is the author of the original plan of the family.
 - a. He authored marriage as a union of diversity, mutuality, unity and permanency.
 - b. He designed the sexual relationship as an expression of marital love and procreation.
 - c. He planned that conception would begin life and child birth would usher an infant into this world. He foresaw the development of children, each of them being a special gift and mission to parents.
2. The preacher must preach the original plan of God and effect it in his own family development.

B. The Law of Parenting (Deuteronomy 6:1-9). The Magna Carta of Parenting is seated in God's historic address in Deuteronomy. God established that the fundamental responsibility of parents is to teach a prescribed curriculum.

1. The first curriculum responsibility of a parent is to teach his children that **God is One**: the unity of God.

2. The second curriculum responsibility of a parent is to teach his children of **the sovereign authority of God**. Because of His singular authority he has the sovereign right to tell a child what to do, including obedience to parents.
3. The third curriculum responsibility of a parent is to teach his children that God is a **covenant making and a covenant keeping God**.

C. The Seasons of Parenting (Proverbs 22:6)

1. The often quoted and sometimes poorly interpreted passage could be better translated, "*Give everything a child needs at every level of his development and the passing of years will not deface the imprints that are made.*"
2. This passage basically says that there are optimum seasons of parenthood when some subjects can best be taught.
3. The danger facing all parents is failing to teach what is needed at a particular time and trying to teach it when the best time has passed.
 - a. Child development experts have fairly well defined that attitudes about self, others, things and God are best taught in ages 0-5.
 - b. Values such as ethics, work habits and dependability are best taught in ages 6-10.
 - c. Modeling, positive or negative, is most effective in ages 11-15.
 - d. A child will do his own testing in the 16-20 years range and will best be served by being given a safe environment.

D. The Goal of Parenting (Luke 2:50-52)

1. Obedience to parents is the foundation of the parent-child relationship and for the building of all subsequent relations. A parent does a child a serious disservice if the child is not taught respect for authority in the home.
2. The development of wise insight sets an emerging adult apart. Wisdom begins with comprehensive and accurate knowledge that one learns to apply well in life situations.
3. Good health is the key to the most productive and enjoyable work. Through conscientious modeling, careful nutrition, exercise and protective care a parent must give a child every opportunity to develop a strong and vibrant body. Jesus grew in stature.
4. Social relations will determine much of what a child becomes throughout his life. Being likeable, considerate, dependable, responsible and virtuous defines a person and gives greater assurance that he will do well in life. Jesus grew in favor with people.
5. Spiritual relations with God is the bulwark of what will count in life and in eternity.

E. The Strategy of Parenting (Ephesians 6:1-4)

1. **Teach the child to be a good listener.** The word "obey" means to *listen under*. A child is to be taught to humbly listen and learn, respecting his subordinate role as a child.
2. **Teach the child to perceive value.** The word "honor" suggests that one *determines values*. A child is to be taught, early on, to weigh what is of value or what is of lesser importance.
3. **Remove all obstacles that block growth.** A specific obstacle to healthy growth is in frustrating or confusing a child. A parent's uncontrolled anger ranks high on the list of the things that embitter a child, causing him to lose his trust for a parent.
4. **Actively teach the total child.** Nurturing involves hands-on instruction, modeling, application and show-and-tell approaches to teaching. Admonition involves verbal instruction, systematic teaching.

THE PILLARS OF PARENTING

The following six pillars of parenting that are to be erected on the foundation principles are crucial to a preacher being effective in one of his primary roles: a father who preaches.

A. The Commitment of Parenting

Every parent should make a commitment, prior to becoming a parent and periodically renew it along the way. The following would be included in the parental promise.

1. **I promise to accept the “gift package.”** Nothing, not the gender, not the health, not any special needs, not the timing, diminishes the fact that every child is a gift of God and is to be cared for with dignity, joy and purpose.
2. **I promise to understand diversity.** Every child will be different in his rate of growth, in his motor skills, in his intellectual pursuits, in his interests, etc.
3. **I promise to acknowledge the role of channeling.** A child is not to be forced to be someone contrary to his own giftedness just to please the ego needs of a selfish parent. The parent has the obligation to guide a child to be what God designed him to be.
4. **I promise to foresee adult potential.** Early on every child is broadcasting what he can best do in adult life. The wise parent is alert to all of the signals a child daily sends. A parent must discover the child’s giftedness and build on the strengths of the child.
5. **I promise to learn the skills of parenting.** Parenting is more than a biological outcome. Parenting skills are essential to developing responsible adults.
6. **I promise to offer my parenting as a gift to God.** As all gifts of worship, parenting is to achieve God’s purposes and to rebound to His glory.
7. **I promise to commit my parenting to God to do what He wills.** Whatever the outcome or whatever the child decides to do, the godly parent continues to pray for God to intervene in the life of the child to accomplish His will.

B. The Full Spectrum Parenting

1. God created man and woman, both for mutual companionship and meeting needs and for giving birth and fully developing children.
2. Full spectrum parenting is each parent putting his and her imprint on the child.
 - a. The father best gives a child a capacity for autonomy, detachment, independence, self-confidence, daring, adventure and risk taking.
 - b. The mother best gives a child a capacity for attachment, dependence, affection, sensitivity, tenderness, family connection and community awareness.
3. Each child must be affirmed, confident and be able to take purposeful initiatives throughout his life.

C. The Discipline in Parenting

Following are some general guidelines:

1. Evaluate a motive rather than a result.
2. Determine the need being satisfied before correcting or improving the method.
3. Distinguish between willful disobedience and youthful awkwardness.
4. Establish priorities and communicate them clearly.
5. Differentiate between training and punishment.
6. Use praise more than blame.
7. Focus on behavior rather than the person (“bad boy” or “bad action”).

8. Anticipate developing problems before conflict explodes.
9. Be fair: give punishment or praise as measured by the action.
10. Encourage rather than nag.
11. Listen to explanations before drawing a conclusion.
12. Be consistent and flexible, depending on the situation.
13. Establish a mutual approach to discipline between parents.
14. Avoid ridicule, sarcasm, irony and diminishing humor.
15. Give explanations for disciplinary decisions whenever possible, not to get agreement but to show an effort at fairness, reason, etc.
16. Set definite, clear limits of behavior, avoiding a detailed, "rule book" home.
17. Guard against oral or corporal discipline when angry, weary or tense.
18. Be slow to make hasty, absolute decisions, showing the importance of studying a matter.
19. Keep a promise (decisions, appointments, etc.).
20. Consider individual differences in children (ages, personalities, abilities, etc.).

D. The Environment of Parenting

A strong, cohesive, functional, family environment includes the following qualities:

1. Family members appreciate each other and express it often.
2. Family members arrange and guard their schedules to have time together.
3. Positive communications patterns are regularly practiced.
4. There is a high level of commitment to family values and family pursuits.
5. There is a pronounced, spiritual orientation, weaving God into all activities.
6. There is an ability to deal positively with crisis and effectively resolve conflict.
7. There is a balance of pleasure and growth, service and family needs.
8. There is open, honest communication of needs, joys and dreams.

Achieving such an environment requires purposeful intention by the preacher who is trying to help many other families build a healthy, home environment for their children.

THE SKILLS OF PARENTING

There are skills that parents are to model and teach their children to insure that a child becomes a responsible adult.

A. Listening

1. People learn by listening well.
2. People avoid hurtful consequences by listening carefully.
3. People show value and appreciation to others by listening sincerely.
4. People connect with others and bring others together by listening attentively.
5. People can help others in finding a solution to their problems by listening alertly.

B. Conflict Management

1. Most failures in relationships and human endeavors occur because the participants did not know how to resolve conflict.
2. Having developed the skills of communication, being free of excess baggage, learning how to define conflict and being able to process the hurts in a conflict situation keep the damaging results of conflict at a minimum and leads to conflict resolution and reconciliation.

C. Time Management

1. Everyone has the same time allotment but not everyone makes the best use of his time. It is a skill to be gained to the benefit of every person.
2. Being objective minded, setting priorities, organizing efforts, keeping oneself motivated and disciplined, foreseeing results, sharing and celebrating accomplishments are vital parts of managing time well.

D. Financial Management

1. Having sufficient income through skilled and dedicated industry and efficient use of whatever amount one has is crucial.
2. The method of management is not as important as the skilled discipline in developing a budget with built-in accountability and well defined responsibility.

E. Relationship Building

1. Building productive and wholesome relations starts with being responsible, healthy and whole persons.
2. The valuing of others, keeping commitments, exhibiting the servant spirit and the spirit of always wanting the best to happen to another, being ready to acknowledge wrong and having the humility to ask for help and express gratitude are the stuff from which good relationships are born and prosper.

Conclusion

Because of the importance of the life-task of parenting children the world is filling up with books on the topic. This summary is intended only to encourage preachers in an admittedly difficult assignment in balancing effective parenting and fruitful ministry. The joys of preaching are immense and long lasting. But, the joys of parenting children into a mature, responsible adulthood are indescribable. When done well, with God's grace, parenting opens doors to a sense of fulfillment in one of the preacher's most important ministries. Good parenting is along the same pathway as growing spiritually.

SELF-EXAM FOR LESSON SIXTEEN:

1. There are five (5) foundational principles of parenting suggested by the teacher. List these principles:
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____

2. In the strategy of parenting from Ephesians 6:1-4, what are four (4) things parents are to do?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

3. What are the four (4) pillars of parenting discussed in this lesson?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

4. There are certain skills that are critically important in parenting. List five (5) that are given in this lesson.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____

5. Discuss with your spouse how the lessons learned in this study can be implemented in leading and guiding your children into adulthood. If your offspring are already adults, find ways to share these truths with them in aiding the rearing of your grandchildren.

LESSON SEVENTEEN

Choose to Embrace Grand Parenthood

INTRODUCTION

Ready or not, the age of grand parenthood looms just over the horizon. No matter how busy a preacher may be, one day he may wake up and be a grandparent. Beyond all of the grandparent probability, gifts, pictures, bragging, overnighters and trips that will result, just how spiritual the preacher will be is the issue now in discussion. Becoming and being a grandparent is a part of a preacher's spiritual growth. Purposeful grand parenting is one generation reaching forward, meaningfully, to a third generation. It is a period of service in passing on the torch as it is a continuing period of spiritual growth.

LESSON AIM: To inform the student of a variety of changes in relationships and the beginning of new and different relationships as one transitions from parenthood to grand parenthood.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Look at several things that are necessarily involved in the transition from parent to grandparent.
 2. Examine a large number of suggestions of down-to-earth ways to make grand parenting enjoyable and profitable.
 3. Be instructed by looking at some biblical examples of grand parenting.
 4. Examine grand parenting in the areas of "knowing what to pass on," "how to deal with defeat" and "how to enjoy grandchildren."
-

NECESSARY STEPS TOWARD GRAND PARENTHOOD

Before each child enters the fifth growth stage of personal realization, there will be some preparatory changes required of parents to ease the transition in their parenting adult children.

A. The Preacher Rounding Out His Parenting Job

1. There must be a transition from an authority figure to an accepted counselor.
2. There must be a more determined respect for the autonomy of the adult child, with the liberty to make autonomous decisions.
3. There must be a "non-aggression" pact to be observed whereby the parent does not invade the life of the adult child.
4. There must be a recognition and acceptance of the freedom of the adult child without absorbing the guilt for errors of the child.
5. There must be a determination not to reassume the life responsibilities of a capable child.
6. There must be a benevolent readiness to help if the assistance does not diminish responsibility or does not enable a child in returning to a dependent state.

NOTE: All of these changes will promote a good parent-adult child relationship if the parent has prepared the child and encourages the child to “*leave father and mother*” (Genesis 2:24) in an eventual development of an intimate, interpersonal relation in marriage.

B. Making Grand Parenthood A Rich Reality

Parenthood, when children leave home and start a new home and family, goes to another depth. Parents are intent on seeing each child achieve a fullness of life. The first twenty years are preparatory and involve the parents in an intense teaching ministry. If the job is done well the child is ready to assume effective direction of his/her life. The second twenty years of parenthood features three areas of activity:

1. **Supportive initiatives:** the ministry of prayer, the strategy of praise and encouragement, comradeship and counsel when desired. The adult children greatly need selective assistance in life needs when appropriate and an example that people can achieve security and happiness in marital and parental life.
2. **Teaching ministry:** now is the time for a parent to help children apply what was taught in their youth about marriage, family and life (Titus 2:2).
3. **Devotion to becoming exemplary grandparents:** Happy, secure grandparents are the best source of the sense of permanency, purpose and fulfillment to young adults.

NOTE: In the third twenty years of parenthood (i.e. sixty to eighty years of age) a parent should excel in the ministry of prayer, praise, encouragement and counsel. Parenthood is now more distinguished by presence and fulfillment than by direct activity

C. Day-To-Day Guidelines in Being a Grandparent

Common sense works well for grandparents. The following suggestions are down-to-earth ways to make grand parenting both enjoyable and profitable:

1. Whether the choice of a child's spouse, or the timing or the reasons were agreeable or not one must determine these circumstances will not diminish grand parenting attitudes or efforts toward grandchildren.
2. One must determine that his time schedule in having children will not be made the standard for his children's parenting decisions.
3. One must determine not to make his methods of parenting an issue.
4. One must determine not to be selfish, distractible or jealous relating to the other set(s) of grandparents.
5. One must plan to be as near and concerned as possible without threatening another's home.
6. One must learn to be sensitive that gifts and assistance fill a need or desired purpose.
7. One must determine that selfishness will be excluded as the reason for any action.
8. One must learn to be humble even though he has the most beautiful and intelligent grandchildren in the world!
9. One must determine to be mature so as to avoid diminishing a parent before a grandchild.
10. One must rid himself of any attitude to buy the grandchild's affection.
11. One must determine to find beauty and value in each grandchild.
12. One must determine to guard against thoughtless or offensive expressions of partiality and personal preference among the grandchildren.
13. One must be mature enough to understand that he is not the constant or immediate concern of his children's families.

14. One must be the more mature in times of conflict in assuring that there is a continuing flow of understanding and affection.
15. One must be sure to reinforce the good in each grandchild by sincere praise and affirmation.
16. One must be careful to promise only what he intends to do and keep every promise.
17. One must act his age but work at communicating with each grandchild.
18. One must realize that the usual shortness of time with a grandchild requires the best use of the opportunity to reinforce right values, express affection and affirm the value in each grandchild.
19. One must be careful not to make grandchildren a “battlefield” with the parent.
20. One must avoid any repeated action that communicates disinterest, dislike or disgust to the grandchild.
21. One must build a firm, happy trust in God and let it flow from the center of his life as his richest legacy for each grandchild.
22. One must maintain a clean, orderly and purposeful life style before the grandchildren, even learning new skills and acquiring new interests.
23. One must work, even in older years, in excluding accumulated habits and mannerisms that could embarrass the family.
24. One must have learned to be accomplished in the mature art of forgiving and communicating acceptance.
25. One must keep present in mind how he would want to be remembered as a grandparent years after his decease.
26. One must continue to beg God’s direction and help in becoming his best as a grandparent.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF GRANDPARENTS

We can learn much by observing the successes and failures of others. One of the great values of the Bible is the study in character. We can see people through the “eyes of God.” We gain some valuable insights to be more spiritual in our grand parenting.

- A. **Laban** (Genesis 31:43): Laban cited his concern for the welfare of his daughters and grandchildren as the reason he would not punish Jacob for his deceitful break from the family nor repossess the herds taken by Jacob.
- B. **Jacob** (Genesis 46:7, 48:11): The nomadic tribes or clans like that of Jacob were constantly moving together with their herds. The tribal head, the patriarch, determined the overall life of the tribe. Thus, when Jacob was invited by Pharaoh and instructed by the Lord, he went to Egypt and led his eleven sons and their families as well. His concern extended to “grandsons and granddaughters.” When he arrived in Egypt he rejoiced to see his son Joseph, thought to be dead. His joy was even heightened to see Joseph’s two children as well. Only grandparents can feel the emotion of the moment. To recover a lost son and learn that there were also grandchildren overwhelmed the old patriarch.
- C. **Joseph** (Genesis 50:23): The author of Genesis gives a striking emphasis to grand parenthood. He records that Joseph, in living 110 years, had the joyful experience of living among his grandchildren born to both of his sons. In fact, he saw the third generation of Ephraim’s sons (great, great grandchildren) and the second generation of Manasseh’s sons (great-grandchildren). They were “*brought up on his knee*.” He maintained an active interest and nearness in all of their lives, even being present at the birth of some.

- D. **David** (Psalms 103:17, 109:9, 128:6): By reading his psalms, one can understand the feelings of the kingly grandfather. He extolled God in reaching out to and remembering grandchildren. He considered a man to suffer a severe curse if his children were fatherless, depriving him of the joys of grandfatherhood. He considered a man's higher joy to live to see his "*children's children*."
- E. **Solomon** (Proverbs 13:22, 17:6): Two of Solomon's proverbs paint a beautiful picture of grandfatherhood. The Bible's richest statement on grand parenthood is, "*Grandchildren are the crown of old men*" (Proverbs 17:6).
- F. **Ezekiel** (Ezekiel 37:25): The prophet's inspired view of the Messianic age of peace includes a scene dear to the heart of every family: fathers, sons and grandsons dwelling together in peace.
- G. **Lois** (2 Timothy 1:5, 3:15): The potential and expected influence of a godly grandmother is seen in Lois transmitting her sincere faith to her daughter Eunice and on to her grandson.

GOOD GRAND PARENTING IS KNOWING WHAT TO PASS ON

"A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children . . . (Proverbs 13:22).

- A. **Honest Industry** (v. 23). The man who honestly works, even in an unjust world, has abundance. The "ethics of honest toil" is a rich principle to pass on.
- B. **Diligent Discipline** (v. 24): The greatest human values are molded by discipline. The greatest loss that can be sustained by a person is not having received the inheritance of discipline.
- C. **Simple Living** (v. 25): A life with few or no desires beyond the essential life needs has time to enjoy the real beauties and blessings of life. It is free from anxieties, unmet demands, fear of loss and the emptiness of unfulfilled dreams. "*The Lord is my Shepherd, I have need of nothing*" (Psalms 23:1). It is the substance of the first beatitude in the Sermon on the Mount, "*Happy are those who are poor in spirit*" – lovers of a simple lifestyle.

NOTE: When these three treasures are passed on to the oncoming generations there will be happy, useful and peaceful people. All are conditions that cannot be bought or retained by financial wealth or earthly power. "*The conclusion, when all has been heard is, 'Fear God and keep His commandments; For this is the whole duty of man'*" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

KNOWING HOW TO DEAL WITH DEFEAT

- A. **In Life One must Learn Both How to Win and How to Lose.** Children and grandchildren can fail in their life choices. They are not always all what grandparents, in their wiser years, know they should be
- B. **Continuing Belief in God Being above and Beyond the Shadows of Defeat Sustains**
 1. In difficult times, the preacher starts looking for values to be gained and lessons to be learned (Romans 8:28).
 - a. He knows that God can use a seemingly, bitter defeat to hand out a greater gift.
 - b. He has learned not to concede defeat easily, not until every resource has been used.

- c. He is determined to make Satan pay for every inch he hopes to gain in any battle.
- d. He knows the difference between *losing a battle but winning the war* and taking a step backward to leap forward.
- 2. It is a hard, but a necessary lesson to learn to be humble in accepting a defeat and asking for help from friends. Through it all the preacher/grandfather determines to be a better, more useful servant of the Lord.
- 3. One must accept a defeat that cannot be re-fought, then, go on to the next battle wiser and more dependent on God (Ephesians 6:11-18).
- 4. Ten years from now, amid many victories, a single defeat will be seen very differently, maybe even changed into a victory.
- 5. Even in the case that the defeat has come from personal fault, the preacher, like all those he has taught, needs to repent and go on living free from guilt.

KNOWING HOW TO ENJOY GRANDCHILDREN

A. The Grandparent's Relationship to Grandchildren

- 1. Enjoying grandchildren is most and first of all about putting joy in the lives of the grandchildren.
 - a. Grandparents should not be selfish and especially toward grandchildren.
 - b. Grandparent enjoyment is earned by having invested in the younger lives in the third and fourth generations and receiving a loving response from the grandchildren.
 - c. It means spending time, money and energy. Enjoyment results from planning to be available to show grandchildren how important they are, giving them hugs and praise and making the little and growing person feel warm inside.

B. Not the Passing On of Physical, Material Blessings

- 1. Grandparent enjoyment results from affirming and passing on the beauty and value of life to another generation.
- 2. Leaving material things at death is hardly to be compared to the joy of imprinting life principles during one's lifetime and leaving a legacy of memorable love.

Conclusion

Grand parenting is intended to bring out the best in a preacher as he pours out his unselfish love for his grandchildren. It is intended to occur in the height of his spirituality and in the harvest ripeness of his ministry. Grandchildren are twice blessed because they are intended to see the best examples of humanity, overcome and shaped by grace. The preacher/grandparent can see the culminating purpose of all of the parental efforts of his wife and himself and can now drink deeply of the pleasures of passing the torch to another generation. The imprints they leave on their grandchildren will likely be among the most treasured memories that the grandchildren will pass on through their lives to others. The fruitful, spiritual minister will impact the lives of many. But, few should be impacted more deeply and lastingly as a preacher's grandchildren.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SEVENTEEN:

1. The second twenty years of parenthood features what three areas of activity?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

2. What seven (7) people does the teacher use as examples of grand parenthood?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____

3. List three (3) treasures should grand parents pass on to their grandchildren?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

4. What are four (4) lessons the preacher can gain from difficult times?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

LESSON EIGHTEEN

Choose to love the brethren

— Loving the Bride of Christ —

INTRODUCTION

The church, in its local expression, can either be the seed-bed for a preacher's spiritual growth or a graveyard. Churches tend to have a history of raising up and growing spiritual giants or of stunting the growth of preachers. However, not a little depends on a preacher, wherever he serves, determining to love the brethren, the assembly of God. The choice a preacher makes can be a key to how he grows in spirituality.

LESSON AIM: To motivate the student to love the brethren and show him definite reasons to do so.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Become acquainted with five statements that reveal that the groundwork of one's choice has been determined by God.
 2. Examine the preacher's motivation in loving the brethren.
 3. Learn how the preacher can best love the brethren and a list of ways that love can be put into daily practice.
 4. See that loving the brethren is not about the preacher but about honoring God.
-

THE GROUND WORK OF THE CHOICE

In essence, the preacher's best choice has already been indicated by the choice of God. To have any other spirit toward the brethren than love would be setting oneself against God

- A. **The Church Is the Core of God's Eternal Plan.** All the planning and the unfolding of the Scheme of Redemption throughout the ages pointed to the Church. It was an integral part of how God wanted to deal with lost man (Ephesians 1:3-14).
- B. **The Church Was Given Life and Purpose by the Sacrifice of Jesus.** The preciousness of the church is clearly stated in the price God paid for it – His own, darling Son (Acts 20:28). Its purpose became the extension of the purpose of Jesus on earth: ". . .to seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10).
- C. **The Church Is the Assembly of the Saved.** Wherever the Gospel has been preached, churches blossomed. The believers drew together on a regular basis to celebrate their salvation, to worship their Savior, to encourage one another and to know the mind of God in their historical setting (Hebrews 10:19-25; Acts 20:7).
- D. **The Church Is God's Only Plan, to Prepare People for Heaven.** The more God-like enthusiasm a preacher can discover in his love for the church, the more effective he will be in accomplishing his heart's desire in helping the church

grow. The spiritual man of God makes loving all the brethren his aim (Philippians 1:3-11; Colossians 1:3-8).

- E. **The Church Is the Face of God in a Dark, Cold and Fearful World.** Only the church, touched by the hand of God, can give the heart, hand and a message of lasting hope. The preacher is a spokesman of that hope and often the more prominent voice and face of God in His Church (Romans 10:13-15).

THE PREACHER'S MOTIVATION IN LOVING THE BRETHREN

In addition to God's view of the church to motivate the preacher to love the church, the preacher has some **personal motives**:

- A. **He Owes His Own Salvation to the Outreach of the Church.** Someone, sometime from the church reached out to him with a call to salvation.
- B. **He Owes His Growth in Knowledge, Training and Polished Skill-sets to the Programs of the Church.** Many resources were sacrificially given by **many** that **one man** might become a spokesmen of the Lord. How many brethren did it take who believed in the "*teaching faithful men*" principle of 2 Timothy 2:2 for any preacher to join the preaching ranks of the ages?
- C. **He Owes the Calling to the Most Rewarding Mission Known to Man.** How can any mortal man, outside of preaching, wish for any greater work in which he can make such an eternal difference in the lives of so many?
- D. **He Owes the Sustaining of His Life and the Support of His Family to the Faith and Generosity of Devoted Members of the Church.** People commit sizeable amounts of money over the years and dedicated much time to supporting the needs of the preacher and his family.
- E. **He Owes the Preservation of His Soul to the Protective Arms of the Church.** Every preacher knows that he has ventured further a field in thought or fact than he should have safely done. Most have quickly found refuge in fraternity, in faith and in church love and discipline.

HOW THE PREACHER CAN BEST LOVE THE BRETHREN

By helping the church become:

- A. **A Community of Worshipers**
 - 1. Worshiping God in "*spirit and truth*" begins with knowing God as He reveals Himself in the Word.
 - 2. The preacher will open up the meaning of the words that God uses to identify Himself and will traverse the whole of Scripture to see God at work in planning and bringing to fruition His promises.
 - 3. He will help each believer to drink deeply of God's saving grace and to delight in his own salvation (2 Timothy 4:1-5; Acts 20:17-21, 26-27).
- B. **A Community of Healed Forgivers.** Having been forgiven by God opens the door for the believer to learn to heal and forgive every offense. It is inconsistent with the grace of God and incompatible with the faith in Christ to receive so much from God and then refuse to forgive the trivial hurts of others (Matthew 6:14-15).
- C. **A Community of Peacemakers.** Being peacemakers, promoting harmony instead of conflict, is what sons of God do best (Matthew 5:9).

- D. **A Community of Gifted Servants.** God has given a ministry treasure to every member (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:10).
- E. **A Community of Dreamers.** Every growing church must have a vision that clearly enunciates its purpose (Philippians 3:12-16).
- F. **A Community of Healthy Saints.** In his preaching and counseling roles, the preacher can help members, one by one, be whole in every trait (Colossians 1:28).
- G. **A Community of Convicted Believers.** The core beliefs about God, His Son, His Spirit, His Plan for saving man, the distinctive nature, purpose, work and worship of the Church, holiness and end-times must be constant themes in preaching and instruction.
- H. **A Community of Spirit-filled Followers.** Preachers who love the people work hard at making sure that each member knows the fullness of truth and yields to the Spirit to mold each life.
- I. **A Community of Soul-winners.** Worshiping God, growing in holiness, remaining faithful in truth and helping the needy are incomplete without the urgent effort to call the nations to the Son. The local church must be spurred on by an evangelistic-minded and involved preacher (Matthew 28:19-20).
- J. **A Community of End-time Hopes.** No greater love can be expressed by a preacher for the church than for him to help it prepare and eagerly wait the coming of the Lord (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10, 2:19, 3:11-13, 4:13-18).
- K. **Achieve the Three, Towering, Testimonial Benchmarks of the Christian Faith:**
 1. **Love each other as Christ loved us all** (John 13:34). Jesus made this the badge of Christian living and of our testimony in the world: “. . . by this shall all men know that you are my disciples.”
 2. **Be fruit-bearers** (John 15:1-8). Jesus defined fruitfulness as our way of glorifying God and the means of being identified as his disciples: “. . . so you will be my disciples.”
 3. **Be united** (John 17:20-21). Jesus made oneness among believers the reflection of Divine Oneness and declared our unity to be the confirmation of his divine mission among men: “. . . that the world may believe You sent me.”

DAY BY DAY LOVE FOR THE BRETHREN

- A. **A List of Efforts That Any Preacher Can Take to Open His Heart to Every Member**
 1. **Pray for every member**, week by week until all are brought before God. Like Jesus, tell each one you are praying for them and the topic of the prayer (Luke 21:31-32).
 2. **Develop a systematic plan to be in personal contact with every member** in the shortest time possible.
 3. **Compliment each person**, at the assembly, by phone or by a note, who are participants in the work, worship and fellowship of the church, expressing gratitude for the effort and noting its value in the life of the church.
 4. **Encourage young people** and giving mature attention to children, with special praise to teachers, helpers and parents.

5. **Consult with the elders** and older members about things that they liked that other preachers did to show genuine love for the people.
6. **Be in contact with fellow preachers** on how they are reaching out to the brethren in a loving way.
7. **Be genuinely open to people**, being available as a good listener and making people feel comfortable and valued when in conversation.

WHAT LOVING THE BRETHREN MEANS TO THE PREACHER

- A. **Loving the Brethren Is Not About the Preacher.** It is about honoring God in seeing a leader love His children. Some blessings include the following:
 1. Loving the brethren identifies the preacher with God as he shares in the sacrificial love of the Savior.
 2. Loving the brethren opens the preacher to the manifold blessings from God reserved just for those that obey Him.
 3. Loving the brethren builds meaningful relations that continue throughout a preacher's career.
 4. Loving the brethren enhances every aspect of the preacher's efforts.
 5. Loving the brethren surrounds him with the loving help that he will inevitably need in his trials and defeats.
 6. Loving the brethren will work toward his family being treated with thoughtful care and esteem.
 7. Loving the brethren will prolong his labor in any one place and make it effective and fruitful wherever he goes.
 8. Loving the brethren will prepare for the days when the preacher looks back on his life of service with fond memories and fulfilled purposes.
- B. **Loving the Church Demands That the Preacher Is Growing in Each Spiritual Area of His Life.**

SELF-EXAM FOR LESSON EIGHTEEN:

1. List five (5) statements which reveal that the preacher's choice has already been indicated by the choice of God.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

2. The motivation of the preacher in loving the brethren is seen in what five (5) statements?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

3. List the ten (10) ways the preacher can best love the brethren.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

8) _____

9) _____

10) _____

4. **Write a memo to yourself as to how you will begin to be aware of these necessary things and what you think the results will be.**

Part Four

Lessons 19 – 24

LESSON NINETEEN

Choose to Pursue the Presence of God in Prayer

— Discovering the Pathways of Prayer —

INTRODUCTION

One thing in common among all spiritual giants is prayer. One thing in common among all those preachers who aspire to spiritual maturity is a longing to be strong in prayer. Most have found it to be a journey full of conflicting emotions and experiences. For some it has been a journey of regret that so many years have passed away and so many opportunities have been squandered. For others prayer has been a journey of shame that so many other things of lesser value have been placed over prayer. For still others it has been a journey of frustration that many prayer methods have been tried and many books have been read but there is still an emptiness in prayer. Some have felt prayer has been a journey of futility in thinking that mortal, sinful man could find intimacy with a God who is blessed, immortal, invisible and worthy of all honor and power (1 Timothy 5:15-16). Yet, it is encouraging to learn that many have experienced prayer as a journey of fulfilling a hunger to feel God's presence and to bask in an intimacy with the Divine. When that happens, prayer brings unspeakable joy, life, renewal, meaning, empowerment and purpose.

LESSON AIM: To move the student to make a willful choice to seek God in quiet places through the avenue of prayer.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Consider the nature and character of prayer and the fact that prayer can be taught.
 2. Learn three basic foundational principles of prayer.
 3. Remember and practice the eight pathways of prayer as you study the accompanying scriptures.
-

THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF PRAYER

A. Prayer Described

1. Prayer is man's ultimate quest for intimacy with an immortal, universally existent, all-knowing and all powerful God.
2. Prayer is thinking God's thoughts, desiring God's desires, loving what God loves, willing the things that God wills, seeing what God sees, and doing what God does.
3. It is progressively becoming like Him in all things, at all times and with all people.
4. Prayer is accepting an invitation from the Father to come home and share one's deepest thoughts, one's most felt needs and one's every concern.
 - a. It often erupts in lavish praise and adoration, gratitude and commitment and petitions for self, for others and for the kingdom enterprise.
 - b. Bible Study transforms the mind, meditation transforms the emotions, fasting transforms the will and giving transforms the purpose.

- c. But, prayer transforms the relationship with God, bringing one into the August, throne room of God.

B. Prayer Can Be Taught and Learned

Jesus often taught followers to pray.

1. **Listen to the Teacher (Matthew 6:5-15).** Jesus stresses giving attention to:
 - a. **Motive** (to give glory to God).
 - b. **Conduct** (not put self on display with a loud voice and much speaking).
 - c. **Form** (simple, brief and comprehensive).
 - d. **Content** of prayer (reverence, dependence, thankfulness, purpose).
2. **Learn from a parable of a widow (Luke 18:1-8).** Prayers are to be:
 - a. **Specific** (the widow begged for protection under the law).
 - b. **Courageous** (the judge was fearsome).
 - c. **Persistent** (she returned again and again).
 - d. **Passionate** (her appeals were fervent).
3. **Learn from a parable of a publican (Luke 18:9-14).** In prayer one should acknowledge:
 - a. **God in reverence.**
 - b. **One's sinfulness with honesty.**
 - c. **One's need of divine mercy with humility and expectancy.**
4. **Watch the Master in His prayer life.** Jesus prayed sentence prayers and all-night prayers. He prayed often (fifteen times are recorded in just thirty recorded days). Subjects of his prayers varied (kingdom, people, will of God, self, etc.)

ONE MUST LEARN THE BASICS OF PRAYER

A. One must Acknowledge a Personal Need for Growth in Prayer. The following passages could help guide one in conducting a reality check on his need for further growth in prayer:

1. “*...far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you*” (1 Samuel 12:23).
2. “*Let everyone who is godly pray to thee in a time when thou may be found*” (Psalms 32:6).
3. “*Therefore, because he has inclined his ear to me, I will call upon him as long as I live*” (Psalms 116:2).
4. “*Be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God*” (Philippians 4:6).
5. “*Lord teach us to pray...*” (Luke 11:1).
6. “*We do not know how to pray as we should...*” (Romans 8:25).
7. “*You do not have because you do not ask...you ask and do not receive because you ask with wrong motives*” (James 4:2-3).
8. “*Pray without ceasing...*” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
9. “*Men ought always to pray and not faint*” (Luke 18:1).
10. “*Let us come boldly before the throne of grace...*” (Hebrews 4:16).

B. One must Acknowledge the Awesome Greatness of God (Elohim, Jehovah, Adoniah) Frequently, a preacher must go back to the temple scene in Isaiah 6 to tremble anew with the prophet standing before the Almighty, high and lifted up.

C. One must Learn the Dynamics of Prayer. The power of prayer is in its faithfulness:

1. In believing steadfastly in its efficacy, in guarding its practice from any intrusion, in reserving a place and even establishing set times for core praying.
2. It is keeping covenant with God in never missing a prayer appointment with God. The naturalness of prayer is in its **frequency**: the golden rule of learning is repetition.
 - a. Even in prayer, frequent and disciplined practice makes perfect.
 - b. Frequency means never slacking, never letting other concerns crowd out the commitment to pray and never abbreviating a prayer to rush off to something of lesser importance.
3. The increasing efficacy of prayer is in its **forethought**: Spontaneity does not preclude preparation. Effective prayer requires our best readiness in mind, in heart and in words.
4. The heights of prayer are best reached in its **fervency**: Emotions are stirred, aspirations are heightened, purposes are renewed and thoughts are overwhelmed in the presence of the Monarch of the Ages.

NOTE: Thus, as the dynamics of prayer become the engines in driving preachers to their knees, the churches will prosper even the more and spiritual giants will walk our lands.

LEARN TO WALK THE PATHWAYS OF PRAYER

Regularly walking all eight pathways of prayer provides access to all of the kingdom privileges.

A. ADORATION – Standing in Awe of Jehovah’s Essential Qualities and Divine Person

1. Genuine adoration is to joyously acknowledge the Person of God.
2. To adore God in prayer requires a study of all of the essential qualities revealed in Scripture and a falling in love with the person of God.
 - a. He is Holy, meaning that He is superlatively above, incomparable to and fully distinguished from all proclaimed deities. There is none like Him.
 - b. He is omni in all of His traits: omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient and omni-competent.

Scripture References: 2 Samuel 22:2-3; 1 Chronicles 29:11-13; Psalms 8:1; 36:5-9; 57:5; Jeremiah 10:6-7; Revelation 15:3-4.

B. PRAISE – Marveling at His Works That Tower over Man

1. Seeing God at work in the lives of people and in the affairs of nations, the human response should be one of marvel, erupting in praise.
2. God is to be praised in His redemption of man and in His preparation for an eternal destiny for the redeemed. Praise is man’s way of applauding God for jobs well done!

Scripture References: Psalms 103:1-5; 71:19, 104:1-32; 145:10-20; Isaiah 24:1-5; Revelation 15:3-4.

C. THANKSGIVING – Gratefulness for What He Has Done on Our Behalf

The gifts of God are copious and fit for our every need. “Thank you God. . .” should be the constantly, repeating refrain of the preacher’s life.

Scripture References: 1 Chronicles 29:13; Jonah 2:2-9; Matthew 26:26; Luke 24:30; Acts 27:35.

D. CONFESSION – Acknowledging Our Need for Him

1. Confession means *to agree with*. One who prays fully must be in constant and contrite agreement with God of his failures and needs.
2. A preacher who rejoices in his confessor relationship with the Most High finds it easier and more rewarding to “*confess. . . faults. . .*” to his brethren (James 5:16).

Scripture References: Genesis 32:11; 2 Chronicles 20:12; 2 Samuel 24:10; Ezra 9:6; Psalms 54:1-4; 40:17,

E. PETITION – a Call for His Overruling in the Affairs of Men

1. Most often a petition is a statement of a need or a cause bigger than the petitioner and an urgent request for a specific outcome.
2. A petitioner’s prayer addresses what God can do over and above anything the petitioner might do.

Scripture References: Genesis 15:2; 1 Kings 3:9; 1 Chronicles 4:10; Nehemiah 1:11; Psalms 31:1-4; Lamentations 5:21-22; Jeremiah 64:1-2, 9; Daniel 9:15-19.

F. INTERCESSION – a Plea on Behalf of Another

1. Jesus interceded for Peter (Luke 22:31).
2. Paul interceded for brethren in Ephesus (Ephesians 1:15-16), Philippi (Philippians 1:3-4) and Colosse (Colossians 1:3).
3. He urged brethren to pray for him (1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1). Intercessory prayer is a vital part of a brother-to-brother covenant.

Scripture References: Genesis 18:23-32; 25:21; Deuteronomy 26:27; 1 Kings 13:6; 2 Kings 6:17-20; 1 Chronicles 29:18-19; John 17:1-26; Acts 7:60; Ephesians 1:15-23.

G. COMMITMENT – a Promise of Our Responsible Participation

1. Seeking divine favor is completed by gratefulness and responsible commitment on the part of the human recipient. For the more that is given the more will be required (Luke 12:48).
2. Prayers of commitment should burst with promises of our responsible participation.
3. Note how commitment is expressed in the model prayer of Jesus (Matthew 6:9-13):
 - a. v. 9: “*Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name*”— a commitment to honor and exalt God the Father.
 - b. v. 10: “*Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*”— a promise to work to make the Lordship of Heaven more real to others.
 - c. v. 11: “*Give us this day our daily bread*”— a promise to be both an industrious worker and a frugal, grateful steward.
 - d. v. 12: “*And forgive our debtors as we have forgiven our debtors*”— a promise to forgive all others for offences.
 - e. v. 13: “*And do not lead us into temptations but deliver us from evil*”— a promise to rebuff all temptations and fight against the most cherished personal sins.
 - f. v. 13: “*For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.*”— a promise to recognize, extol and honor the exalted position of the Father.

NOTE: Commitment in prayer is a partnership with God. Thus, the preacher prays fervently, promises faithfully like everything depended solely on God and then gets up and works diligently like everything depended on him.

Scripture References: 1 Samuel 1:11; Psalms 39:1; 51:13; 104:33; 145:1-2; Jeremiah 20:12.

H. COMMUNION – a Pouring of Hearts, a Sharing of the Spirit

1. Prayer includes quiet reflection, earnest meditation, humble listening and waiting on the Lord.
2. Prayer is waiting on the Spirit of God to translate into heavenly terms what we feel deeply but cannot express appropriately to the Father (Romans 8:26-27).

Scripture References: Psalms 42:1-11; 55:1-8; 57:1-2; 102:1-11; 139:23-24; Isaiah 26:9; Lamentation 3:48-55.

A PREACHER AT PRAYER

A. Some Initiatives a Preacher Can Take to Enhance His Prayer Life

1. **Keep a prayer journal, with prayer goals.** Write down petitions to God and record eventual answers. Set goals and hold to the promises.
2. **Form a prayer circle.** Choose area preachers, select, accountable friends or the elders and meet regularly for intercessory prayer.
3. **Pray regularly with one's wife.** Set aside a regular period, free from all intrusions, and petition God for matters that are most dear to both.
4. **Focus on the nature of God.** Study the names and attributes of God and make each one the topic of adoration in daily prayers.
5. **Keep a fresh in-flow of thoughts on prayer.** Read at least a new book on prayer every quarter and some of the great devotional classics as often as possible.
6. **Preach and write on prayer.** Once some aspect of prayer has been mastered, share the prayer challenges with the brethren.
7. **Consult other preachers.** Call other preaching brethren about their discoveries in prayer and what they have done to help the brethren in their prayer needs.
8. **Impact the lives of others with prayer.** Tell a group of people each week that they will be the objects of prayer and ask them about their needs to be brought to the Father.
9. **Focus on prayer and praying people in the Bible.** The daily reading program could well include special note of those great prayer warriors in the Bible and how God intervened in their lives in answer to prayer.
10. **Incite others to be serious in their prayer lives.** Ask members what prayer means to them, what they have recently learned or how God has responded to their prayer life.

B. A Preacher Greatly Needs to Be Remembered as a Man of Prayer

1. Whenever he is remembered, his **faithfulness, forethought, frequency, fervency and fullness** in prayer should come readily and happily to mind.
2. Among the overshadowing initiatives in which he should have led a church, becoming a praying church should be among the most evident and appreciated.

SELF-EXAM FOR LESSON NINETEEN:

1. In Matthew 6:5-15 Jesus stressed giving attention to:
1) _____ 3) _____
2) _____ 4) _____

2. From the parable of a widow we learn that prayers are to be:
1) _____ 3) _____
2) _____ 4) _____

3. Three truths we can learn about the basics of prayer are:
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

4. When we learn to walk the pathway of prayer our praying will involve what eight areas?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____
8) _____

5. Some initiatives a preacher can take to enhance his prayer life are:
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____
8) _____
9) _____
10) _____

6. Write a brief paragraph explaining how you could put these prayer principles into effect in your life and what it would do for your ministry.

LESSON TWENTY

Choose A Self-Discipline Life

— Purposeful Giving, Fasting and Meditation —

INTRODUCTION

Purposeful giving, fasting and meditation are not high on the list of spiritual formation in modern literature and church practice. All three disciplines, along with prayer, have been considered as the leading pathways to spirituality in past centuries and still, today, in Eastern thought. In all three cases, the pursuit for spirituality is the poorer for the losses.

Whenever, across the centuries, spiritual formation has been spoken of or written about, giving, fasting and meditation are always among the leading disciplines. Different centuries have placed varied emphasis on each discipline but each has always been considered important in the pursuit of spirituality. Not as acts of obedience or mystic gadgetry, but as pathways that lead deeper into the presence of God and throwing the worshiper yielded at the foot of the Throne. When done as “commandment keeping,” and being duty driven, they are as nothing. They yield little. Spiritual hunger and thirstiness, yearning to be closer to God, are the better motivating dynamics.

Jesus included **giving** among the spiritual disciplines in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:1-4). He spoke of the God-centered vs. self-centered motive in one’s giving. Drawing attention to one’s generosity nullifies the value of the gift in the main purpose it should be offered. Concerning **fasting**, Jesus did not say “**if** you fast” but rather, “**when** you fast” (Matthew 6:17). The little word difference speaks eloquently of His expectations of fasting by His disciples in being spiritual people. Then, He proceeded to tell His disciples how one should fast (Matthew 16-18). His **fasting and meditation** in the desert clearly prepared Him for the fierce test of His mission and for the victory over Satan (Luke 4:1-13). Both were preludes to the greatest of tests in the Garden and at Calvary.

The important centrality that Jesus gave to the disciplines in the mountain-top sermon and His practice of the disciplines in His personal ministry set the context for all of His followers in their pursuit to be like Him.

LESSON AIM: To encourage the student / preacher in the three disciplines of giving, fasting, and meditation.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Understand that when one places himself on the altar he pledges all he is and all he has in service of the Lord.
 2. Discover the spiritual values and forms of fasting, expecting God’s providential intervention and provision.
 3. Learn how a preacher can purposefully meditate.
-

THE DISCIPLINE OF GIVING

A. Purposeful Giving

1. Abundance of references in the Bible about giving.

2. In the Old Testament, the manner, the kind and the amount to be given was specified. In the New Testament, rather, the spirit and the purpose is more emphasized (1 Corinthians 16:1).

B. The Sacrifice of Self

1. Romans 12:1 – “*I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service (worship).*”
2. The gift of one’s body would mean that all that a preacher has, will have or can ever do, already and fully belongs to God.
3. Time, energy or financial resources from the overflow, spending the bulk of income on self and material pleasures or haggling over percentages hardly seems to be consistent with the spirit of having given oneself wholly to the Lord.
4. Generous and purposeful giving should be the impulse of the soul.
5. It should need no contrived reasoning of how we should “*exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees*” (Matthew 5:20) to set the standard for giving. However, the 2% giving of one’s gross income, the national average, surely does not fit in the Romans 12 context.

DISCIPLINE OF FASTING

Fasting has never been commanded because it is a natural response of a soul in anguish, in need of concentration and self-discipline.

A. The Spiritual Values of Fasting. The primary concern for fasting should be **achieving spiritual benefits**. Isaiah 58:5-8:

“Is it such a fast that I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover them, and that thou hide thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward.”

1. Purposeful fasting provides the conditions for **sharpening one’s discernment** in deciding priorities, in gaining sober insights into Scripture and in becoming more acutely aware of the needs of others.
2. Fasting provides the opportunity to **focus on God and embrace His solutions** to problems and fears.
3. Fasting is the **appropriate response of humility** when we are convicted of sin (Ahab – 1 Kings 21:27-28; Nineveh – Jonah 3:5-10).
4. Fasting is the **human response to difficult situations** as did David in fasting before the death of his son (2 Samuel 12:22-23) or Esther before appearing before the King to make her appeal (Esther).
5. Fasting is **wisdom at its best** when needing God’s guidance for difficult decisions as Nehemiah and Ezra did in deciding about problems in Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1-2; Ezra 8:21-23) or the Antioch church did in launching mission work into Asia (Acts 13:2-3).
6. Fasting is a **plea to God** to bring healing to those seriously ill or to a nation in sin (Isaiah 58:8; Jeremiah 36:8; Daniel 9:3-5).
7. Fasting accompanies an **urgent and fervent search for the truth** and spiritual freedom as seen in the case of Cornelius (Acts 10:30).

- B. Fasting Can Take Many Forms.** Abstinence from food and sometimes drink is the usual form of fasting. But, consider a day or more of abstinence from “besetting sins” as a form of fasting.
1. Some preachers would do well in determining to abstain for **a day from criticalness**, being judgmental of others.
 2. Some preachers would do well in determining to abstain for **a day from pride**, having an arrogant, self-sufficient spirit.
 3. Some preachers would do well in determining to abstain for **a day from harboring resentment**, refusing to forgive someone for an offense.

NOTE: Fasting from a flaw in character might not be resolved in a day of fasting but it is a step in the right direction. Such a day of fasting should be accompanied with fervent praying that God will accept one’s repentance and forgive such a despicable sin (i.e. criticalness, pride, resentment, etc.), help in claiming the promise of forgiveness and will help in a new beginning.

- C. Expect God’s Intervention.** Whether one wants to call God’s intervention His *providence* or *angelic guardianship*, or the *working of the Spirit*, God has a long history of intervening when His saints call on Him.
1. Angels came to Daniel, to Elijah, to Jesus and to Cornelius in their fasting.
 2. In Psalms 91, God’s intervening love is promised to His children. The chapter includes God’s promise in verse 11: “*He shall give his angels charge over you, to keep you in all of your ways*” (cf. Hebrews 1:13-14).
 3. In the spiritual warfare in which all saints are engaged God’s children must seek security under God’s protective wing.

THE DISCIPLINE OF MEDITATION

- A. What Is Meditation?**
1. Christian meditation is not Yoga or Eastern or Transcendental meditation.
 - a. It does not seek ecstasies, raptures and “feelings better felt than told.”
 - b. It does not empty the mind.
 2. It is an active, progressive discipline that fills the mind with God’s thoughts.
 3. The word itself is defined as “musing, muttering, murmuring, to ponder, to reflect, to consider.”
 - a. For the Christian it is to concentrate, to be attentive in the Word.
 - b. It is encountering Christ in the Word and capturing His view of us.
 - c. One meditates to let the Word penetrate his mind, his emotions and his will.
 - d. Meditation goes deeply into the emotions where hurts and feelings reside and into the will where decisions are made.
 - e. Meditation involves weighing every situation in the light of Scriptures as Jesus did in the desert temptations (Luke 4).
 4. All of our faculties can become involved in purposeful meditation.
 - a. Our mind helps us understand the words of Scripture as we study them in context.
 - b. Our memory helps us recall the words and their meaning in our lives.
 - c. Our imagination provides the pictures created by the inspired writers.
 - d. And our emotions helps get us in contact with the characters described in Scripture.
 5. David speaks of his meditations in Psalms 63:6; 119:15, 23, 48: “*On my bed I think of you, I meditate on you all night long . . . I mean to meditate on your precepts and to concentrate on your paths . . . Though princes put me on trial, your servant will meditate on your statutes. . . I stretch out my hands to your beloved commandments, I meditate on your statutes.*”

B. How Does A Preacher Purposefully Meditate?

1. **Know well the subject of meditation.** Some time needs to be dedicated to the study of a Scripture selection to exegetically understand its contextual meaning or a monumental truth to put it in its life setting.
2. **Be ready to make every meditative period a rich, rewarding experience.** What is worth doing is worth doing well is, likewise, true of meditation.
3. **Be determined during the meditation period to be yielded to God.** Meditation is a time to be fully humble, contrite and entirely honest.
4. **Accompany meditation with prayer.** Meditation gets stuck at times and begging for God's strength and direction can open another depth of thought and discovery.
5. **Keep a record of the fruits of meditation.** The Parable of the Sower teaches us what Satan does to unattended seeds (Matthew 13:18-23).
6. **Mentor others to drink of the fountains of meditation.** While meditation is a God-on-one discipline, others can be encouraged to encounter Christ in the Word.

Conclusion

The recovery of the disciplines in the modern church, encouraged by spiritually mature preachers, is one of the greatest needs of post-modern times. Without sacrificial and joyful giving the global enterprise and doing good to all men is precluded. Without a willingness of the saints to set aside time in fasting to focus on the great needs in the Kingdom, the renewal of the soul and the battle against sin the church will lack the depth of commitment and the vision of eternity. Without a growing deepening of the spirit that only comes through meditation on God and His Word, the church will be shallow in its roots and superficial in its spirituality.

SELF-EXAM FOR LESSON TWENTY:

1. **ASSIGNMENT:** Work up a plan outlining how you will increase your participation in each of the three disciplines studied in this lesson. Be specific and thorough.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
2. List six (6) ways a preacher may purposefully meditate.

LESSON TWENTY-ONE

Choose to Claim the Gifts of God in Ministry

INTRODUCTION

The minister is often looked to as a model in the areas of piety, Bible knowledge, servant skills, moral living and family development. His skilled leadership in serving is crucial to the growth and expansion of a local church. Key to his fruitfulness is the discovery, development and employment of his own God-given, ministry gifts.

The Biblical imperative for the use of ministry gifts has long been overlooked. Its reality explains why the early church exploded in expansion and inner growth. Evangelism, teaching, ministry, stewardship and shepherding were fundamental activities of the early churches. Underlying each activity was a God-given empowerment: ministry giftedness. The modern church will be transformed when its ministers lead in identifying, developing and employing the same God-given ministry gifts. The transformation will be as dramatic as fire was in transforming civilizations. It is breathtaking to consider what a small number of believers could do if each discovered the marvelous, ministry giftedness from the Lord. Literally, the church would be set on fire!

Greater number of members would be starting new ministries.

- Greater distinction would be seen between right and wrong.
- There would be a quintupling of people taught and converted.
- More people would be nurturing others.
- More helpers would be ready for every good work.
- More skilled, practical teachers would instruct the members.
- There would be greater depth in Bible studies.
- There would be an increased number of benefactors.
- Ministries would be more efficiently organized and administered.
- Greater number of trained people would be reaching out to the needy.
- There would be more people available to lead in the global conquest.

LESSON AIM: To encourage the student to claim the powerful gifts of God in accomplishing the ministry assignments given by God.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will...

1. Examine Romans 12:6-8 and learn the biblical basis for ministry giftedness.
2. Learn that giftedness begins with attitude which is derived from one's values.
3. Discover what a motivating passion and the discovery of ministry potential have to do with giftedness.

THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR MINISTRY GIFTEDNESS

A. The Apostles Taught Early Christians to Recognize Their Rich Giftedness

Romans 12:6-8: *"And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the*

proportion of faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.” (ASV) Three foundational truths concerning gifts:

1. **Gifts come from God according to His sovereign choice.** This fact precludes arrogance over one's giftedness or jealousy of another's array of gifts.
2. **Each gift is an assignment from God** that calls on its recipient to responsibly develop it and exercise it.
3. **Each gift is to be exercised according to its purpose and according to the need to be served.** In the listing to the Romans, Paul notes seven ministry gifts:
 - a. Prophecy is “forth telling” more often than it is “foretelling.” It is speaking or writing the Word of God with authority.
 - 1) It is confrontational in its nature. It is proclamation, usually in a public setting.
 - 2) It is urgent. It is distinct in nature and tone from counseling, comforting and mentoring.
 - 3) It is to be done *“according to the proportion of faith.”*
 - 4) The minister with this ministry gift, with training, is particularly strong in public proclamation, in sharply defining the truth against a background of darkness and in calling the erring to repentance.
 - b. Service is the search and discovery of needs to be met, people to be helped and things to be done. Manual skills, physical energies and community interests become avenues of spiritual benefit to others.
 - c. Teaching is opening doors of knowledge to willing students. A teacher-rich minister has a passion for study and learning and cannot wait for the opportunity to share the fruit of his study with others.
 - d. Exhortation includes teaching, but takes a step further to encouraging a person to act on his new knowledge. A preacher with this gift is likely to be an inspirational speaker, an effective seminar leader or a welcomed mentor.
 - e. Giving, with liberality, is acting beyond a sense of duty or as an act of obedience.
 - 1) There is a responsibility in giving financially that every Christian bears.
 - 2) The gifted giver finds a mission in giving, a life purpose, a particular delight and a sense of being driven to find new, extraordinary ways to bless the lives of others.
 - 3) A preacher with the gift of giving is prompt in seeing needs and sharing what he has with others.
 - f. Leading is providing direction, assembling resources, removing obstacles and providing safe environments for growth and service. A preacher with this gift as one of his primary ministry gifts will be particularly strong in visionary planning, organization and administration.
 - g. Mercy giving is being drawn to the suffering, to circumstances or to the needs of others, putting oneself in their place and feeling their pain.
 - 1) A mature mercy giver is non-judgmental. He can distinguish between acceptance of a person or a situation and approval of what he sees.
 - 2) A preacher rich in mercy giving finds it easier and more authentic to reach out to those whose sins and bad choices have broken or shamed them.
4. Paul adds three different gifts to the seven gifts on the Roman list in his letter to the Ephesians 4:11:

- a. An Apostle, as the word indicates, is first, one who is sent on a mission with authority to act on behalf of another.
 - b. A Shepherd is one who cares for, sustains and protects the flock given to his charge. The gift of shepherding includes fostering a nurturing spirit, gaining a knowledge of the needs of the flock, gaining a grasp on the sustaining resources and developing the protective courage to keep the flock safe.
 - c. An Evangelist is one whose life and ministry is centered in telling every person possible the good news about the salvation that is freely given in Jesus Christ.
- (Consult other “gift” passages: 1 Peter 4:11; 1 Corinthians 12:1ff)

GIFTEDNESS BEGINS WITH ATTITUDE

Attitude is derived from one’s values. One may treat another with kindness and care, even a difficult person, because he values all for whom Christ died.

- A. Claiming an Attitude from the Sermon on the Mount.** The following questions come out of the beatitudes:
 - 1. Would I describe my life as simple and uncluttered?
 - 2. Am I easily touched by the defeats and pains of others?
 - 3. Do I complete commitments in an uncomplaining way?
 - 4. Is being right with God more important to me than life itself?
 - 5. Are building and strengthening relationships at the center of my service?
 - 6. Do I drive away any thought or concept that would hinder me in seeing God?
 - 7. Am I passionate in helping people become whole, well balanced?
 - 8. Are my convictions strong enough to carry me through conflict?
- B. Claiming an Attitude From Kingdom Principles.** A servant attitude thrives when the following principles are chosen as guideposts:
 - 1. Jesus, though soon to be appointed King of kings, came to serve (Matthew 21:17-28).
 - 2. The highest ranks in the house of God are for those who serve (Matthew 23:11; Mark 9:35).
 - 3. Servanthood combines faithfulness and goodness (Matthew 25:21-23).
 - 4. Forgiveness and servanthood are inseparable (Matthew 18:23-32).
 - 5. A true servant of Jesus the Lord does not expect better treatment than his Lord received (John 15:18-20).
 - 6. Lowering oneself in service to one generally thought to be a less worthy person is characteristic of a Christian servant (John 13:13-17).
- C. Claiming an Attitude from Apostolic Testimony in Philippians 2:3-7.** A servant attitude, modeled after Jesus, is cited as the choice of the gifted servant:
 - 1. “*Let this mind (attitude) be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*” (v. 5).
 - 2. “*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition and vain conceit*” (v. 3).
 - 3. “*...in lowliness of mind let each consider another better than yourself*” (v. 3).
 - 4. “*Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others*” (v 4).
 - 5. Jesus, though equal with God, “*... made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, coming in the likeness of man*” (v 7).
- D. Claiming an Attitude of Apostolic Testimony in 1 Corinthians 13.** Putting the statements of the great chapter of love in the first person provides a rich source for fostering a servant attitude.

NOTE: A preacher's credibility opens doors. He can best influence people to trust him by his loving attitude. He will not only be able to serve more effectively with love at the core of his heart and ministry, but he will have increasing opportunities to serve fruitfully.

GIFTEDNESS TAKES FORM IN THE DISCOVERY OF A MOTIVATING PASSION

A. Identifying a Person's Ministry Passion

1. Every gifted person is drawn, motivated, by a kind of person or a ministry circumstance.
2. A preacher cannot adequately take advantage of every opportunity to serve.
3. God helps in stirring a concern for select areas of ministry or kinds of people. Some questions to help one focus on a ministry passion:
 - a. With all restrictions removed (age, health, distance, etc.) what would you most want to do in serving others?
 - b. If you could determine how one-half of your regular contribution was used, where or in what activity would it be spent?
 - c. If you were at the end of your life:
 - 1) What would be the servant results in which you would find most fulfillment?
 - 2) What are the servant activities in which you wish you had been more involved?
4. How would your friends describe your deepest concerns?
5. What do you most enjoy doing for others?
6. What kind of people would you most like to help?
7. What situations most concern you?

B. Some Similarities, Patterns or Themes Emerge Such as Ages, Kinds of People, Situations, Needs or Strong Feelings. Motivating passions become clearer as one responds to a flow of ministry opportunities.

GIFTEDNESS BLOSSOMS UPON DISCOVERY OF THE MINISTRY POTENTIAL

A. Identifying the Major Areas of One's Gift Potential

1. God has gifted each one for exceptional fruitfulness in specific areas of ministry.
2. Each preacher will be gifted in three-to-four primary areas, and three or so in his secondary and tertiary areas of ministry giftedness.
3. It is his major responsibility to identify, develop and employ his primary ministry gifts.

B. A General Approach to Discovering One's Giftedness Potential Is to Engage in a Wide Ranging, Variety of Ministries

1. The affirmations of others will help in determining which ministries are done with greater authenticity and fruitfulness.
2. One should read extensively about gifted people and their rich ministries and sense which one is most inviting.
3. In the end, a number of ministry profiles have been developed to focus one's attention to specific areas of ministry giftedness. One should be discerning.

Conclusion

A ministry gift is God's kingdom assignment. A faithful steward of God's gifts will determine his primary areas of ministry giftedness and give priority time and

resources to mastering those areas. God wants every preacher to be both faithful and fruitful and a happy, fulfilled servant. Serving with a Christ-like attitude, focused on his motivating passions and keenly informed about his primary areas of giftedness the man of God will be all that God designed him to be in his informed choices of ministry.

SELF-EXAM FOR TWENTY-ONE:

1. Give three (3) foundational truths concerning spiritual gifts.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

2. List the seven ministry gifts Paul gives us in Romans 12:6-8.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____

3. Paul adds three (3) different gifts to these seven in Ephesians 4:11. What are these?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

4. What general approach can be used to discover one's giftedness potential?

5. Write a brief paragraph explaining how you came to be involved in your present ministry.

LESSON TWENTY-TWO

Choose to Transform Conflict into Unity

INTRODUCTION

By constitution and purpose, the church of Christ was founded to be a community of peacemakers. Though human conflict within and conflict with the world without are inevitable, peace is the ultimate goal. From the beginning moment of conflict, a faith-based reconciliation is the goal. Spiritually driven preachers must be the catalysts, the models and the skilled leaders in conflict resolution.

LESSON AIM: To inform and prepare the student to recognize and transform conflict into unity, thus fulfilling his obligation to be a peacemaker.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will...

1. Learn the inevitability of conflict and the Christian vision of peacemaking.
 2. Learn seven pathways to peacemaking and five stages of developing effective styles of conflict management environment.
 3. Remember nine areas of needed Christian growth necessary for early resolution of conflict.
-

A CHRISTIAN VISION OF PEACEMAKING

A. The Prophetic Picture of the Christian Era

1. The transformation of antagonism and conflict into peace and participation (Isaiah 2:4): "*. . . they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war anymore.*"
2. In 11:8, the prophet amplifies the picture of reconciliation as a victory over conflict.

B. The New Testament Church as a Community of Peacemakers

"Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9).

" . . . I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:1-3). *"But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first pure, then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness"* (James 3:17-18).

CONFFLICT IS INEVITABLE

A. Conflict Is to Be Expected at Times, Even among Sons of God

1. **A lack of communication.** Until purposeful communication can take place there may be diversities in the facts of a case.
2. **A difference of giftedness.** Between any two people there may well be diversities of giftedness that lend themselves to different emphasis on what is most important in ministry.
3. **Diversities in background.** In most cases there will be diversities in background, in training, in values and in orientation.
4. **Difference in communications kills.** Frequently, the communication skills will often be different or lacking.
5. **Diversities in fundamental beliefs.** In religious discussions the possible diversities in fundamental beliefs will be the source of contrast and conflict.
6. **Different goals and outcomes.** The diversity of goals and desired outcomes are often at the root of conflict.
7. **The lack of a developed conflict management strategy or environment** provides the context of much conflict.
8. **Contrasting and ineffective conflict resolution styles**—hinder peacemaking.

B. Conflict Inevitably Happens When People Are Competing

1. For the same space or resources or their wellbeing is being threatened with the loss of place, resources or relations.
2. The reality of conflict should not be surprising to anyone. The failure to resolve and reconcile conflict should be surprising to all Christians.

PATHWAYS TO PEACEMAKING

There are some clear steps to becoming an effective peacemaker.

A. Step One: Develop a Conflict Management Environment. A church must be brought to understand five basic environmental principles.

1. **Understand the mind of God.** The Father does not want His children to fight.
2. **Understand the nature of humanity.** Humans are born self-centered, self-consumed, and will stay that way unless influenced by the Gospel to become unselfish, caring, sacrificial servants to all.
3. **Understand the reality of conflict.** With so many competing interests, differences in the understanding of the facts and diversities in skills, styles and values, there should be no surprise that conflicts will arise.
4. **Understand the basic mindset of Christ.** Jesus, on the mountain, described the virtues of mature citizens of the kingdom: humility, compassion, commitment, merciful, hunger for righteousness, purity of heart, peacemaking and being courageous for God.
5. **Understand the power of affirmation.** Speaking well of one another, encouraging each other, affirming what is right in each other, believing the best of one another, seeing the potential in each other, all, develop an environment where eventual conflict can be managed well.

B. Step Two: Develop Communication Skills. Unskilled communicators will at best miss opportunities to manage a conflict effectively.

1. In every conflict each disputant has an objective. It is well at the beginning of a discussion to identify the goal he wants to achieve.
2. In every conflict a healthy cycle should be pursued.
 - a. A message must be accurately communicated containing all of the necessary facts, feelings and needs.
 - b. It must be accurately received, processed and understood.
 - c. The sent and received messages must be effectively acknowledged and an affirmative response must be accurately returned to the sender.

3. This cycle can be made more effective by listening attentively, asking informational questions to aid understanding, verifying understanding, looking for options of resolution, prioritizing what is most important to both sides, affirming the desire for resolution and unity, confronting with grace if necessary and supporting the conclusion.
4. In every conflict the full range of the verbal, tonal and corporal vehicles of communication should be used as needed. Remember:
 - a. **Verbal communication** conveys about 7% of the message.
 - b. **Tone** of the words convey 38%.
 - c. **Body language** conveys a full 55%.
5. An important communication skill is the ability to recognize how far the comfort zone of another extends and to honor the boundaries.
6. Going into a conflict situation, one needs to understand where he is on the mind-ladder of the other person.
 - a. People's reception of what is communicated to them has much to do with the credence, the acceptance and the approval of the other.
 - b. One has to be aware of the position he may hold and the impact on the other in dispute.
7. Perhaps, the neurolinguistic skills are too exotic to some, but, they are worth considering.
8. The best list of communication skills is found in Ephesians 4:15, 25-32). Fifteen solid principles of communication are listed with the stamp of inspiration on them.

C. Step Three: Develop Effective Styles of Conflict Management. Somewhere along life every person acquires a style of confronting conflict. Most styles are inefficient.

1. **Dominant Style.** Some are strongly goal oriented.
 - a. Goal achievement is more important to them than relationships.
 - b. Their dominance may be for a perfectly good cause but their style is to overwhelm any resistance.
 - c. They may use skilled arguments, an array of well ordered facts and marshal sizable support from authorities.
 - d. The bottom line is they are determined to get everyone to comply to their views.
2. **Avoidance Style.** Some refuse to insist on their views being adopted or will hardly state them if it is going to result in a conflict.
 - a. They run from conflict. They are willing to settle for less to avoid any dispute.
 - b. This avoidance is not from humility or a spirit of servanthood, but from a low goal orientation and an unhealthy and an excessive regard for maintaining a relationship.
3. **Accommodation Style.** Some will state their views and desires but will relinquish them easily to maintain a relationship.
4. **Compromise Style.** Some feel determined to achieve a goal but are willing to negotiate and will settle for getting some of what they want.
5. **Collaborative Style.** Some feel that through open and skilled communication that productive and shared solutions can be found and goals and relationships can be honored and kept intact. Of the five styles, a shared, collaboration of parties is the most effective and most desired among Christian communicators.

D. Step Four: Develop a Principled Approach to Conflict (candor, courage, care, covenant). When the four C's are present in any conflict situation there is hope for a positive resolution.

1. **Candor.** Truth stands at the center of any successful conflict resolution.

- a. Truth in fact, truth in motive, truth in desired outcome and truth in the treatment of others are essentials to freeing up the discussion to become productive (John 8:32).
 - b. Every participant in a conflict must earnestly want truth to prevail over personal losses, personal views, personal agendas, personally desired outcomes or personal needs.
2. **Courage.** Telling the truth sometimes hurts. It could mean yielding to others. It could mean admitting wrong.
 3. **Care.** Courageously telling the truth is lacking a needed quality without care for those affected. “*Speaking the truth in love*” (Ephesians 4:15), is what makes any communication effort most effective.
 4. **Covenant.** When there is a bonded relationship, based on honored promises, confrontation is different. The best preparation for conflict management is to build covenant relationships in times of peace.

E. Step Five: Promote the Growth of Christian Virtue. The greater the maturity of people in conflict, the greater the early resolution of the conflict. Nine areas of needed Christian growth:

1. **Serenity in stressful times.** How one copes with stress greatly impacts remaining stable and responsible in a time of stress or crisis.
2. **Hope in anxious situations.** Anxiety is feeling out of control. It is caused by *doubt, fear, loneliness and guilt*.
3. **Generosity in the face of demands.** Loving people, seeing their giftedness and potential, finding enjoyment in affirming and praising people and envisioning what they can become in Christ call out generosity in encouraging them, forgiving their faults and lifting them up.
4. **Openness in relationships.** Transparency in relationships is essential to both loving and being loved, helping others and receiving needed help.
5. **Sensitivity in relating to others.** Feeling what the other feels and putting oneself where the other is help one understand, identify and be willing to respond to others.
6. **Unselfishness in decision making.** Objective people are able to dispassionately look at an issue outside of their own feelings, relationships and needs and make an unselfish decision.
7. **Courage in performance.** Courage is based on a strong sense of Bible based, self-worth, a sense of bonded belonging, a sense of personal competency and a guiding sense of purpose.
8. **Humility in forgiving others.** Forgiveness, as required and modeled by the Savior, begins with anger management and the ability to heal from hurt.
9. **Self-discipline in commitment.** Impulsiveness and reaction planning give way to self-control and thoughtful, long term planning.

F. Step Six: Develop A Strategy of Conflict Management. An effective strategy provides a map for a controlled discussion. Four basic steps:

1. **Examine controlling assumptions.** When the heat of a discussion permits, it would be helpful to ask the other disputants and share with them the assumptions that control the discussion.
2. **Identify desired results.** What some people ultimately want may not have anything to do with the topic in conflict.
3. **State the essential issues.** What are the essential reasons for the conflict?
4. **Identify creative alternatives.** This is teaming together in finding solutions that meet the needs of the situation.

G. Step Seven: Develop a Liturgy for Conflict Management

1. Using the *pathways of prayer*, noted earlier in this study, one needs to be regularly approaching God in *adoration, praise, thanksgiving, confession, petition, intercession, commitment and communion* (meditation).
2. He needs to be really looking for what is beautiful in everyone. He needs to regularly be commending each person for valid accomplishments and generously be expressing gratitude for every action.
3. He needs to humbly be acknowledging any hurt or disappointment he may have caused and be praying on behalf of every member.

Conclusion

Well managed conflict accelerates the growth of the church. It brings people together for united, fruit-bearing. It brings out the best in people. It is one of the best weapons against the destructive designs of the Evil One. It promotes the unity of the church and contributes mightily to the global mission of the church, to the growth in holiness and to the glory of God. It is priceless! It is well worth every effort to master the art and science of managing conflict. Patterns of ingrained and habitual behavior can and must be changed if they continually promote ineffective conflict management.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWENTY-TWO

1. What are eight (8) possible reasons for the inevitability of conflict?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____

2. A Conflict management environment would involve what five (5) things?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____

3. List seven (7) steps or pathways to peacemaking.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____

4. What are four (4) basic steps in developing a strategy of conflict management?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

LESSON TWENTY-THREE

Choose to Grasp the Vision of God

— Seeing a Glorious Church in a Lost World —

INTRODUCTION

The vision of God is that His holy people, the church, be a beacon of light in a dark world leading truth loving people to salvation in His son. Wherever and however a preacher serves he must serve with the global vision of God. To be faithful to that vision he must be an avid student and practitioner of the Great Commission. It is the marching order of the Commander of a global quest for souls.

The Evangelist of Galilee spoke volumes in every sentence of His earthly ministry. Whatever he said was meant to be understood as a message of importance. One of the most far-reaching messages was in His farewell address to the Apostles containing His vision of the Kingdom enterprise. For three years these men had been trained in the missionary school of Jesus. In this last address they had to wrap their minds around some age-lasting, monumental truths. If not immediately, empowered by the Holy Spirit, they shortly began to translate this towering command into history as recorded in the *Book of Acts*. The *Book of Acts* tells us that they went everywhere preaching the Word, eventually preaching to every person alive (Colossians 1:23). They understood and preached the full content of the Gospel. They went to the full extent of the commission and they were faithful to the prescribed intent of the mission.

LESSON AIM: To impress on the mind of the student that the vision of God is embodied in the Great Commission.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Discover the essence, character and reason of the Great Commission.
 2. Learn the agenda of the Great Commission as to its extent, intent and content.
-

THE GREAT COMMISSION SUMMARIZED

A. The Essence and Character of the Great Commission

1. **The Commission is validated and Christ centered.** Jesus is the reason and the overpowering subject of the commission.
2. **The Commission is a mirror of the nature of the church and declares its purpose.** When obeyed the church stays on task and fulfills its reason for existence.
3. **The Commission is global and exhaustive.** There should be no place and no person left behind unvisited with the Gospel message.
4. **The Commission is message laden and redemptive.** It generates rich works of generosity and human assistance but it is fundamentally about a message to redeem a lost humanity.
5. **The Commission is integrative and relational.** It embraces all people, gathering them into a relationship with Deity and, hence, with one another.

6. **The Commission is believer focused and content rich.** Its purpose and completion is about responsible people brought into a saved relationship and matured with the richness of the continuing message of Jesus.
7. **The Commission is empowering and age long.** As it derives its authority from Jesus it is energized by His purpose, power and presence until He concludes the Commission by His second coming.
8. **The Commission is a forecast and motivation in the history of the Church.** Global evangelism, making disciples, ministry training and church planting have always sprung from an understanding and commitment to fulfilling the Commission.

B. The Inspiration and Setting for Gospel Preaching Are in These Charter Statements of the Kingdom Enterprise

1. In Matthew 28:18-20, and in companion statements in Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:46-49 and Acts 1:8, the superlative evangelist of Galilee, the ultimate gospel preacher and now King of kings, sets the stage for the place and value of soul winning.
2. He placed before the apostolic leaders a commission that inscribed His signature on the Christian movement in all succeeding centuries being led by dedicated spokesmen (Romans 10:13-15).
3. By a faithful practice of the Commission the church grows in numbers.

THE REASON OF THE GREAT COMMISSION

A. The Person and Authority of Jesus

1. The deity of Jesus was confirmed by the fulfillment of ancient prophesies in His life, by His works and teachings and by the life He lived, by the death He suffered and by the powerful and unique resurrection from the dead.
2. By that validation it was right that Jesus would be worthy both of being the undisputed head of His church, appointed King of God's kingdom and given all authority in all realms of heaven and earth.
3. The Great Commission is Christocentric in His person and in His authority (Matthew 28:18).
 - a. In His eternal deity He has always shared in the sovereign authority of God (John 1:1).
 - b. By His divinely arranged birth into the human lineage of David He was made the royal heir to the Messianic Throne (Matthew 1; Luke 3).
 - c. By the resurrection His royal appointment was announced (Psalms 2; Acts 13:29-30, 33; Romans 1:1-4; Ephesians 1:20-21).

B. All Creation Knew That Jesus Had Been Given the Absolute Authority over All Creation

1. At the high summit in human history Jesus, in the Commission, had already set His global agenda before His trained spokesmen.
2. This would require a global strategy to train evangelists, to evangelize, to plant and grow churches which would be taught how to be obedient in following Jesus, their Lord.

THE AGENDA OF THE GREAT COMMISSION

The agenda of the Commission: It was to be global in its execution (extent), it was to be purposeful in its mission (intent) and it was to be message laden (content).

A. The Extent of the Great Commission

The extent of the Commission is defined graphically in the varied accounts of the Commission.

1. Matthew's account: "***all nations.***"
 a. "Nations" is translated from the Greek word "***ethne***" which designates ethnic groups. This multiplies the extent and complexity of our global task.
 b. An ethnic group is set apart by its language, its dress, its history, its purposes, its culture and its place in society.
 c. In one nation there may be multiplied ethnic groups distinguishing themselves from other distinct groups in the nation.
 d. Spokesmen must be trained for each ethnic group or we will scarcely take the King to be enthroned among them.
2. Mark's account: "***into all the world.***"
 a. The Greek word ***kosmos*** talks about preaching in every place of organized life.
 b. Wherever these ethnic groups live must be placed on the mission map of Christian strategists.
 c. While receptivity is a factor in mission planning un-evangelized places take precedence in decision making.
3. Mark's account: "***every creature.***"
 a. Every one that breathes is a specific object of the Commission.
 b. Many, most, will reject the Gospel but none is to be denied the Gospel.
 c. Their living and dying without the Gospel must be by their choice after we have fulfilled the Commission in giving them a fair hearing of the beauty of Jesus, the ugliness of sin and the joys of salvation.
 d. The "***every creature***" of the Commission is both emphatic and inclusive of all and each living person – in every ethnic group and in every place.
4. Luke's accounts in the Gospel and in Acts emphasize the progression of the Commission ***until the job is finished.***
 a. From its beginning in Jerusalem until the Gospel has been preached to every creature to the ends of the earth.
 b. It is a mission that remains unfulfilled until the last place where people live has been visited by the people of the King and the last of the living hears the Good News.

B. The Intent of the Great Commission

1. The intent of the Commission is to: "***make disciples.***"
2. Making disciples takes precedence over all other purposes of the local church. It becomes the combined, major thrust of the universal church.
3. A recognition and honoring of the authority of Jesus constrains every congregational and para-church organization to set its priorities on speeding the Gospel message to every individual around the globe.
4. There are four functions in the Commission scriptures to carry out that imperative mission intent.
 - a. **Going:** Jesus said literally, using a Greek, aorist participle, "***having gone, or as you are going.***"
 1) Considering the global extent of the Commission it is self-evident that Christianity was to be a going religion of a coming Savior.
 2) The model of Christ's coming to earth and the teachings of Jesus of "***other folds***" is the background of the earliest understanding and practice of the Commission.
 - b. **Proclamation:** Preaching, is a vital function of making disciples (Mark 16:15).
 1) Being informed, being convinced, being convicted and being persuaded to repent and obey are the dynamics of the preaching.
 2) The Great Commission church in the first century and in every century hence must be a powerfully preaching church.

- c. **Baptizing:** To bring believers into a relationship with Deity.
 - 1) The participle puts the function of baptism in focus as a vital part of the intent to make disciples.
 - 2) Discipling is incomplete without gaining a relationship with the Godhead, begun with learning of Jesus and believing in His Lordship but completed in baptism (Mark 16:16).
- d. **Teaching all things:** So that the full body of the teachings of Jesus to the Apostles can be understood and practiced by every disciple.
 - 1) The resultant churches were to be educated assemblies of ever learning disciples, capable of acting in obedience out of their own, studied convictions.
 - 2) The intent of making disciples must not be confused with or replaced by other good works which have their own place in being lights in the world.
 - 3) Jesus went about doing good (Acts 10:38) and Paul urges believers to do good unto all men (Galatians 6:10).

C. The Content of the Great Commission

The Commission is focused in an objective message. A message about a person. It is called a message of “*good news*,” bringing an offer of great benefit, making it both desirable and compelling.

- 1. The content of the Commission message was anticipated in the preaching of Jesus.
 - a. He spoke of being the Messiah, the Son of Man, the Son of God, the prophesied Savior and becoming the anointed King and appointed Judge.
 - b. He gave evidence from the prophets that He was the awaited one from ancient times. He confirmed those claims by His miracles, His life and His teachings.
 - c. God authenticated His claims by the resurrection. He called upon people to believe in Him as such and become His followers.
 - d. He made “*repentance and remission of sins*” to be focal points in the good news message that was to be proclaimed throughout the Christian age.
- 2. The content of the Commission message followed four predictable lines.
 - a. First, speakers would confirm the story of Jesus.
 - b. Second, they often called on the hearers to a conclusion concerning the deity of Jesus, His divine authority and His being God’s eternal plan to save sinners.
 - c. Third, the Gospel proclaimers often spoke of the difference that a relationship with Jesus would make.
 - d. Fourth, repeatedly, preaching ended with some reference to the sinfulness of the people and the offer of forgiveness of sins or the urging a response to result in being made right before God. Sometimes the peril of rejection was added to persuade the listeners to respond.
- 3. The Book of Acts is the source book on knowing the content of the Commission message.

D. The Completion of the Great Commission

- 1. The Commission will have been complete only when Gospel spokesmen have gone to every person in every place, have preached the Gospel in its entirety, people have believed and have obeyed in baptism and the church has nurtured each believer in teaching all that Jesus conveyed to the Apostles.
- 2. Jesus, the Commander, did not see the Commission as a one generation revolution to make radical but temporal changes.

3. Every disciple was to be involved to the lengths of his/her giftedness and circumstances.
4. It was an “until the end of the ages” Commission. However long it might have taken to reach the end of the ages was how long the church was to be urgently busy in fulfilling the Commission.
5. As long as there is a ruling King in the heavens, as long as there is a faithful church on earth, as long as there are sinners in need of good news and as long as there is a danger of missing heaven altogether the Commission has purpose and potential.

E. The Continuing Legacy of the Great Commission

1. The Great Commission still authorizes global, all-inclusive evangelism and disciple making.
2. The Great Commission still authorizes effective ministry training and powerful, persuasive, convincing and convicting Gospel proclamation.
 - a. Men must be trained in every place to reach out to people of their own culture.
 - b. To be most effective the men must be trained in their own language, in their own culture to remain and preach in their own national circumstances.
 - c. The most convicting messages calling for repentance and obedience to the Gospel are those best expressed in immediately understandable words and coming from a disciplined heart of understanding.
3. The Great Commission still authorizes church planting and church growth in every culture.
4. The Great Commission still assures faithful believers of the empowering presence of Jesus as they go about the search for lost souls on every continent.

Conclusion

Constrained by the evidence for the deity of Jesus, consumed by the redemptive nature of the cross and overwhelmed by the power of the resurrection every preacher should thrill at the hearing of the global commission. We take great courage at the diligent and passionate fulfillment in the evangelistic history of the church made possible by the dedication of able men, faithful to the challenges of the Commission.

SELF-EXAM FOR LESSON TWENTY-THREE:

1. List four (4) phrases which reflect the extent of the Great Commission.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

8) _____

2. The intent of the Great Commission is to “make disciples.” What are the four functions in the commission scripture to carry out that mission intent?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

LESSON TWENTY-FOUR

Choose to be a Church Builder Glorifying the Savior of the Body

INTRODUCTION

Important qualities of spiritual formation and ministry fruitfulness is the capturing of the passion and the expanding skills for building churches. A passionate church builder identifies with the following:

1. The church was dear to our Lord, so dear that He died to give it birth.
2. The church was dear to the Spirit, so dear that He was sent to empower it and direct it by apostolic teachings, spoken and written.
3. The church was so dear to generations of faithful believers across the centuries, so dear that they died that it might carry the saving message of Jesus to the nations.
4. The church was so dear to early, nineteenth century reformers that they began a continuing struggle to restore the church's nature, its purpose, the apostolic practices in godly living, the worship, the message, the evangelistic fervor and doing good.

That quest must continue so there will be an increased focus on building strong, healthy churches that again will be called the pillar and ground of truth. That endeavor will require increased numbers of spiritual men to take the lead.

LESSON AIM: To urge the student to choose to be a builder of healthy churches which in turn will glorify and honor Him who is the Savior of the Body.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will. . .

1. Take note of several books which can contribute to your formation as a Church Builder.
 2. Learn and remember ten principles of church growth critical to being a successful Church Builder.
-

APPLAUD TO GIFTED WRITERS

The following books can contribute to one's spiritual formation as a Church Builder:

- A. **Build Healthy Churches with Purpose Driven Commitments.** Rick Warren, in his book, "The Purpose Driven Church," urges leaders to define and communicate the purpose of the church, to reach out to the community, to bring in the community and to build up the church.
- B. **Build Healthy Churches with a God-designed Agenda.** Bob Russell, in his book, "When God Builds a Church," states ten principles that should guide church builders.
- C. **Build Healthy Churches with Natural Church Growth.** Christian Schwarz, in his book, "Natural Church Development," develops eight, growth principles that should measure how churches grow.

D. Build Healthy Churches Through Effective Church Growth Strategies. Gene Getz and Joe Wall, in their book, “Effective Church Strategies,” review seven strategies that are designed to build effective churches.

E. Build Healthy Churches Through Reclaiming the Biblical Pattern for the Church in the 21st. Century. Philip Graham Ryken, in his book, “City on a Hill,” presents nine principles to guide a church builder.

Each of these books will help the reader understand the great heart of God in planting and building churches.

COMMITMENTS TO CHURCH GROWTH

God, as in all of creation, designed His church for growth and fruitfulness. In both the natural world, so in the redemptive world, there are conditions that exist to promote growth. This chapter is largely devoted to suggesting ten principles of church growth.

A. Affirm Biblical Beliefs. A growing, healthy church must preserve its distinct identity in a confused religious world.

1. The pulpit must be faithful, alive and on fire in expositional preaching, with informative, convicting and persuasive proclamation.
2. The study habits of the members must be disciplined, systematic, in-depth and comprehensive, with Bible reading at the core.
3. An emphasis on the centrality of the Bible in the didactical life of the church must be constantly made and demonstrated in every discussion, decision and design.

B. Infuse a Hunger for God. Rising to the stature of Jesus, becoming like Him in His reflection of God (John 14:7-11, Hebrews 1:1-3) is the very essence of the Christian faith. The Psalmist describes the longing for God in Psalms 42:1-2: “*As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?*”

1. A preacher’s encouragements to fast and pray in times of deeply felt need will bring worshipers acutely into the presence of God.
2. A preacher’s encouragements to members to make regular visits to the Book of Psalms and some of the great writings on the Psalms (e.g. Treasures of David by Spurgeon) can stimulate hunger for God.
3. A preacher presenting deeper studies into the names of God can help the church explode with understanding of the extraordinary nature of Jehovah God.

C. Develop Healthy Members. Those new converts coming out of the world and into the church are often marked by sin and dysfunction. Christ, who increasingly comes to the center of our lives, brings harmony, direction and a harvest of values and virtues.

1. A preacher can lead a church in a continual study of the Bible to confront Christ in the Word. These daily confrontations demand self-examination, devotion to prayer and mutual confession. These reoccurring disciplines ultimately bring us to good health.
2. A preacher can help members to identify areas of needed growth through effective Christian counseling and character development.

D. Make Brotherly Love a Signature Statement. With Christ’s love serving as the standard, we affirm our identity as his disciples with our quality of love for one another (John 13:34-35)

1. A preacher can instruct members how to find Biblical models for developing healthy mind-sets by which they can build good relations in the body (Philippians 4:8).
 2. A preacher can lead in a study of the harvest of qualities we are to lovingly share with our spiritual siblings and so model Christ (Galatians 5:20-21).
- E. Develop Inspiring Worship.** God-centered worship is the prerequisite for growing healthy churches. Members come to worship to fill their hearts with God and go out to share Him with every person they meet.
1. In most settings the preacher, in heart, knowledge and skills, needs to be a major catalyst in achieving an inspiring worship service.
 2. The preacher needs to lead the church in each of the eight pathways of worship (adoration, praise, thanksgiving, confession, petition, intercession, commitment and meditation). He can, thereby, fully develop an inspiring worship that is rich in content, in purpose and in desired outcomes.
- F. Create a Passion for Lost Souls.** Moving closer to the heart of God inflames one with a passion for lost souls. The preacher who builds healthy churches helps the members to understand how God prepared the Scheme of Redemption through the ages.
1. A preacher must teach the priorities of soul winning from the Word. Church buildings crumble and must be maintained and replaced in time. Souls live forever.
 2. A preacher must teach all members, help train a select number to seek the lost, model in sowing the Seed and share in gathering the harvest.
- G. Grow an Empowering Leadership.** Good leaders see visions of a growing church. They make growth plans and study how to finance and implement the plans.
1. The argument continues whether good leaders are born or made. The fact is, good leaders are not born already made. They have to be trained.
 2. The cycle of leadership training must be pursued from convert, to involved member, to core and active member, to a deacon and on to an elder.
 3. The Scriptural agenda for mature development must be held before the congregation at all times (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).
- H. Involve Members According to their Giftedness.** God in His sovereign will, has bestowed His gifts in ministry. Each gift is a kingdom assignment. He empowers the gifts through training, develops them through ministry opportunities and further shapes them through Body Life and through His presence. He, thereby, equips the church to accomplish His will in the world.
1. The preacher is in a good position to help people to believe that each is a gifted person (Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Peter 4:10-11 and 1 Corinthians 12).
 2. The preacher can help the members understand that in their humanity God has gifted them but, by redemption, their gifts become Kingdom assignments. They, then, become kingdom bound to identify, develop and employ their giftedness.
 3. The preacher can help the members identify their ministry giftedness. The identification of their gifts can be accomplished by observation, fulfilling experiences and fruitful labors. The identification can be accelerated by Ministry Gifts profiling (Free at www.Teamministry.com).
- I. Excel in Conflict Management.** What Satan cannot block, make difficult or retard with external resources he stirs up conflict internal to the church to

destroy every good effort. Conflict management is one of the great imperatives for healthy, growing churches.

1. The preacher needs to be a teacher of conflict management for the good health and progress of the church and to maximize growth resources.
2. The preacher needs to make conflict resolution a theme in preaching, a course in the teaching curriculum, a part of marriage and parent counseling and a choice, library section at home or church.

J. Unite with a Commitment for the Future. Beyond taking care of business, a church must unite on an all-consuming vision, identify a singular purpose for the church to exist and develop specific and challenging goals that are consistent with the purpose statement.

1. A preacher needs to convict the leaders that people do good and lasting things when given a purpose. Aimless ministry and living seldom result in any thing getting done that is consistent with the potential of the church.
2. A preacher needs to keep the vision, purpose and goals vividly before the church in his sermons, visual materials around the building, the church bulletin masthead, calling cards, telephone advertising, etc.
3. A preacher, every three-to-five years, needs to lead in renewing or revising and recharging a group agreement on the congregational vision, the purpose to pursue and the goals to be reached.

A CALL TO SOUL WINNING, CHURCH PLANTING AND CHURCH BUILDING

A. Some Basic Characteristics of Healthy Churches, Around the World:

1. A church must hear evangelistic messages regularly taught from the local pulpit. The preacher, right or wrong, has the eyes and ears of the congregation by virtue of the preaching assignment. **The church will be as evangelistic as it is challenged to be by the preaching.**
2. The church must spend more time in the Word. Not simply more hours spent in reading the Word, but studying the Scriptures more from the vantage point of evangelism. The Book of Acts is the classic book on evangelism and church planting. Jesus was the Evangelist of Galilee and Paul was ever traveling in search of souls.
3. A church must become more driven and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. As long as the early church yielded to the Spirit and took His sword into battle, the faster it grew. The church today must not be as ignorant of the Holy Spirit as were those disciples at Ephesus in Acts 19.
4. The church must have more teaching on the stewardship of time and money to combat the materialism that has us in its grip and also to infuse the joy of giving and the excitement of seeing what increased giving can do a body. People get excited and more convicted in giving when more of it is directed to soul winning than to bricks and mortar.
5. The church must focus its attention on the big picture, the most pressing priorities and the most essential matters in life and faith. Every time we let ourselves become engrossed in things that will amount to nothing five minutes after we are dead, we become that much less a soul-searching church. If negative views become our mantra, the fervor for soul winning dries up to nothing.
6. The church must stretch its sights, enlarge its vision and lift its horizons to know that it is to be global in its evangelistic outreach. It was “*the whole world*” and “*every creature*” to whom Jesus assigned us to take the Gospel. To be sure, being brightest at home enables us to throw the light further, but it is not “either-or.” We must be committed to both a local, evangelistic fervor and a global outreach.

7. A church must have leaders who are united in firmly believing in each of the above statements and urge the fellowship of believers to pursue each of these realities.

B. Jesus Left this Earth Wanting His Disciples to Share with Him in a World-wide Enterprise

1. Dedicated to saving every soul possible, in every nation and in every tribe.
2. He sits in glory with the pointed desire that every convert be brought to fullness in Christ and every local church be a healthy, thriving and growing people.
3. He yearns to see His world brought to the enjoyment of grace through global preaching and church building.

Conclusion

Men who know that the church belongs to God and know that they are responsible stewards of its purpose and treasured resources will learn what to do to promote growth and fruitfulness. They understand that they are custodians of its nature and destiny. And they will work with all of their might, with urgency and care.

SELF-EXAM FOR LESSON TWENTY-FOUR:

List the ten suggested principles of church growth given by the instructor.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____

PART ONE TEST

True False

- 1. The cross is the center of time and the focus point of God's redemptive plan.
- 2. Matthew 16:24 is the overarching, all inclusive statement of Scripture instructing obedient believers to enter into the intimate presence of God.
- 3. Lifestyle repentance begins and thrives on the ability of a person to resist temptation.
- 4. Repentance is a daily experience in the life and service of the redeemed.
- 5. Mastering the contents of the Gospels must be the aim of every preacher.
- 6. A preacher's study should reflect the global nature of the soul-winning church.
- 7. Absorbing and living the Word in one's life are essential and synonymous to a formation of spiritual character.
- 8. The basic condition to becoming spiritual in ministry is a growing sense of being a servant.
- 9. Servanthood is the prerequisite of spirituality.
- 10. There are seven stages of spiritual growth presented in the text book.

Check the correct or best response:

- 1. The motivation for serving others begins with:
 - a. recognition of the value of gifts given by others.
 - b. recognition of the gracious gifts of God.
 - c. recognition of the needs of others.
- 2. The fundamental reason for forgiving someone is because:
 - a. human relations cannot succeed when there are unresolved hurts.
 - b. in forgiving, we identify with the nature of God.
 - c. many physical illnesses come from stored up anger.
- 3. At its core, forgiveness is:
 - a. wanting the best to happen in the life of the offender.
 - b. possible only after the offender has apologized.
 - c. a long process in which the memory of the offense will still hurt a long time.
- 4. One of the basis for our hope of winning battles is for an increasing number of preachers to:
 - a. study the Word of God more.
 - b. become whole persons.
 - c. get a better education.
- 5. The hope of an eternal home defines:
 - a. the ancient longings of the human heart.
 - b. the nature and intent of God.
 - c. the lengths to which the mind of men can go.

PART TWO TEST

Check the correct or best response

1. The two overarching truths of Genesis One that promote spiritual formation are:
 - a. the sovereignty of God and the Creator-creature distinction.
 - b. the process of creation and the age of the earth.
 - c. the affirmation of creationism and the existence of God.
2. The Decalogue makes an emphatic statement of:
 - a. life among the Israelite tribes.
 - b. the authority of God.
 - c. the contrast between the decadent standards in the ancient world and the moral standards of God.
3. The Twenty-third psalm declares in the clearest terms that:
 - a. God is a Provident God.
 - b. the Israelite people were predominantly pastoral.
 - c. it is the best example of Hebrew poetry in ancient literature.
4. The Temple scene of Isaiah 6 most affirms the:
 - a. sinfulness of man.
 - b. holiness of God.
 - c. dedication of a true prophet.
5. The Isaiah 53 document was:
 - a. fulfilled in the days of Isaiah.
 - b. one of the most revered promises in ancient times of a coming Messiah.
 - c. one of the best examples of ancient personification of suffering.

True False

- _____ 1. The Beatitudes of Matthew 5 have been called the Magna Carta of Christianity.
- _____ 2. Each beatitude asks three questions: "Do you want to be happy?," "What is required?," and "What brings happiness?"
- _____ 3. There are fifteen qualities of love presented in I Corinthians 13.
- _____ 4. The emotion of love comes first by getting busy in ministry; love will follow.
- _____ 5. Character develops primarily through dedicated efforts of the saints.
- _____ 6. The nine character virtues of Galatians 5 forms one harvest by the Spirit, indicating that all are to be a part of spiritual formation.
- _____ 7. A preacher has time to focus only on a few of the character virtues.
- _____ 8. Death to self is at the core of a preacher opening his life to the renewal work of the Spirit.
- _____ 9. Becoming an "elder-like" man should be the aspiration of every man of God.
- _____ 10. Being a "one-woman-kind-of-man" speaks most directly to the quality of the marital relationship.

PART THREE TEST

True False

- 1. Marriage is a prerequisite for ministry.
- 2. Genesis 1-2 gives the foundational principles for building a good marriage.
- 3. Hosea 2:19-20 gives the clearest picture of the commitments in a good marriage.
- 4. Spiritual living and extramarital affairs are mutually exclusive.
- 5. Elders must shepherd the moral lives of ministers.
- 6. Congregations must place a healthy marriage high on the list of expectations in considering and sustaining future preachers.
- 7. Being holy because God is Holy is the bottom line of an affair-free marriage.
- 8. Being a successful minister is no justification for being a poor father.
- 9. Full spectrum parenting makes the roles of both parents equally necessary.
- 10. It is not possible to balance effective parenting and fruitful ministry. A preacher must choose between the two careers.

Choose the most correct or best response:

- 1. Purposeful grand-parenting is:
 - a. not getting too involved into the lives of grandchildren.
 - b. one generation reaching forward meaningfully to a third generation.
 - c. accepting that all parenting is finished when the kids start their own families.
- 2. In the latter years of parenthood a parent should:
 - a. enjoy the fruits of his years of work, traveling, creating new interests, etc.
 - b. excel in the ministry of prayer, praise, encouragement and counsel.
 - c. stay ready to go to the side of an adult child in need.
- 3. A grandparent / preacher should “pass on” to his heirs:
 - a. his library, books he has written and his memoirs.
 - b. honest industry, diligent discipline and simple living.
 - c. all of the savings possible to make their lives easier.
- 4. In order to love the brethren, a preacher must decide how much:
 - a. the church keeps its promises in support and the right treatment of his family.
 - b. he owes the church for his salvation, growth, ministry calling, family support, etc.
 - c. the church will let him love it.
- 5. By loving the brethren, the preacher:
 - a. assures his length of stay with the church.
 - b. identifies with God and shares the sacrificial love of the Savior.
 - c. leaves a wide circle of friends wherever he preaches.

PART FOUR TEST

Choose the most correct or best response:

1. One thing is common among all spiritual giants is:
 - a. their strength to persevere in trials.
 - b. their surrounding themselves with strong allies.
 - c. prayer.
2. Prayer is man's:
 - a. last resort in trying times.
 - b. ultimate quest for intimacy with God.
 - c. biggest spiritual challenge to learn and to excel.
3. The beginning place in walking the pathways of prayer is:
 - a. find a quiet place.
 - b. develop a habit of prayer at the same time each day.
 - c. adoring the essential qualities of Jehovah God.
4. The greatest legacy a preacher should leave a congregation is:
 - a. the memory of his interesting sermons.
 - b. the appreciation for his superb organization of programs.
 - c. being long remembered as a man of prayer.
5. Some of the disciplines most often associated with spiritual formation are:
 - a. the long hours of spiritual work each week.
 - b. the number of gospel meetings a preacher holds each year.
 - c. giving, fasting and meditation.
6. Fasting is:
 - a. an option for today's saints.
 - b. modeled and taught by Jesus.
 - c. a discipline that has outlived its usefulness.
7. Giving of one's financial resources is:
 - a. more often referenced in Scriptures than baptism, the Lord's Supper or the Second Coming of Christ.
 - b. entirely a private matter.
 - c. lesser important than attending worship, working in a ministry, etc.
8. Meditation is:
 - a. the Christian counter-part to Yoga or Eastern meditations.
 - b. a discipline that fills the mind with God's thoughts.
 - c. a discipline of emptying one's mind.
9. Key to the fruitfulness of a minister is to:
 - a. master and apply the principles of church growth.
 - b. discover, develop and employ his own, God-given ministry gifts.
 - c. organize the church to be more effective in its work.
10. Understanding giftedness starts with:
 - a. recognizing that gifts were unique to the first century.

- b. claiming a servant attitude, identifying a ministry passion and discovering one's ministry potential.
- c. doing whatever needs to be done in the church.

True False

- 1. Spiritually driven preachers must be the catalyst, the models and the skilled leaders in conflict resolution.
- 2. Conflict in the church is inevitable.
- 3. Unskilled communicators will at best miss opportunities to manage Conflict effectively.
- 4. An effective strategy provides a map for controlled discussion.
- 5. Managed conflict brings people together for united fruit bearing.
- 6. Having a global vision of a lost world is limited to missionaries.
- 7. The reason and empowerment of the Great Commission is the authority of Christ.
- 8. The extent, the intent and the content of the Great Commission becomes the marching orders of the church.
- 9. The Great Commission still authorizes global, all inclusive Evangelism and disciple making.
- 10. A passion and expanding skills for building churches are vital to experiencing a robust spiritual formation.

Study Guide

Truman Scott, PhD.



Dr. Truman Scott has served over fifty-five years as an evangelist, a missionary, a congregational minister, ministry trainer and Christian counselor. He received his undergraduate degrees from Freed Hardeman and Harding Universities. His graduate work and doctoral studies are from Harding University and Bethany Theological Seminary. His counseling experience is extensive and ongoing. He has authored study courses on counseling and conducted multiple seminars on leadership and marriage.

Currently he is retired from ministry training administration in which he served as Dean at Sunset International Bible Institute. He is engaged in consulting work, planning and writing. He is on the Graduate Faculty of Sunset International Bible Institute.

He is married to Ferne White. Together, in their fifty-six years of marriage, they have three children and nine grandchildren.



3710 34th Street • Lubbock, TX 79410
800-687-2121 • www.extensionschool.com

