**In Training For Rulership**

Jesus Christ will soon return as Supreme Ruler to establish the world-ruling Kingdom of God. But what about YOU? Will you be one of Christ’s assistants in the World Tomorrow? How can one be TRAINED to rule with Him? THE SAVIOR of mankind came to earth over 1,900 years ago with a message—the good news of the coming Kingdom of God. We call that message the "Gospel"—an old English word that meant "good news." The Kingdom of God will rule over all nations, and the Supreme Ruler on earth will be Jesus Christ Himself. 

But Christ will not rule over thousands of millions of people all by Himself while Spirit-born Christians take an eternal vacation. The Bible shows they will rule the earth with Him!

***Trained to Rule***

In 1948, Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain gave birth to her first son, Charles. Everyone knew he was destined to become monarch over the British Commonwealth. From his birth he has received the education and training necessary to prepare him to become the next king of England.

And now Prince Charles’ firstborn son, Prince William, will also be trained to become king.

Just as surely as Prince Charles was born into the reigning family of England to become a king, you, if you are a Spirit-begotten child of God, are destined, when born of God’s Spirit into the ruling Family of God, to reign as a far greater and ETERNAL KING! As Prince William is heir to the throne his father will someday inherit, you are the heir of a spiritual King! [(Rom. 8:16-17.)](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rom8.html#8:16)

And as the royal heirs of the throne of England receive special training for their future position, so do true Christians. The Christian life is the preparation and training necessary for rulership in the eternal Kingdom of God!

***Saints to Rule in God’s Kingdom***

A kingdom is a nation composed of people, as well as the government of that nation. The Kingdom of God is the divine Family of God, presently composed of God the Father and God the Son (Christ) in heaven, and of Spirit-begotten sons and daughters—not yet born—on earth.

God’s Family is a ruling Family. And it is the Spirit-begotten children of God who will, at the first resurrection, be born of God and become part of that divine ruling Kingdom! Notice:

"And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" [(Dan. 7:27).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/dan7.html#7:27)

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection... they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" [(Rev. 20:6).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev20.html#20:6) And after that? "They shall reign for ever and ever" [(Rev. 22:5).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev22.html#22:5)

Those whom Daniel called "saints" will be resurrected or changed to immortality and given positions of rulership in God’s Kingdom. But who will they rule over? And where will they reign? Notice [Revelation 2:26-27:](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev2.html#2:26) "And he that overcometh...to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron."

The Kingdom of God, with Christ as King [(Rev. 11:15;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev11.html#11:15) [19:16),](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev19.html#19:16) will rule over all mortals on earth [(Rev. 5:10).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev5.html#5:10) And the law by which Christ and the immortal saints will rule is the law that expresses the loving nature and character of God—the Ten Commandments!

***Rewarded According to Our Works***

God has an exciting future beyond imagination in store for those who willingly follow His way of life, grow and overcome spiritually. Not only will they inherit eternal life as the free gift of God and become eternal members of the God Family, they will also be rewarded—not with the temporary rewards of men, but with rewards of eternal responsibility. Every Christian’s reward will be exciting and fulfilling for all eternity!

In God’s government will be many important offices of responsibility. God will give these responsibilities to those who have qualified for them during their training period. In complete fairness, all will be rewarded according to the "works" they did during their Christian lives [(Matt. 16:27).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat16.html#16:27) And because every member, when born into God’s Family, will be completely yielded to God’s government, everyone will be completely satisfied with the responsibilities and power God will give them.

Let’s understand how God will reward those who have been freely given the opportunity to become His children. Let’s see how one can prepare for exciting power in God’s ruling Family! But before we begin, get your Bible, some paper, and a pen or pencil. Look up the Bible verses given in answer to the questions and read them. You may also want to write these scriptures down. Many of our students have discovered that writing them out helps to increase their understanding and memory. Now let’s begin.

LESSON 20

***The Kingdom of God Is DUAL***

God has a message for mankind that is so important He commissioned His own Son to be the first to deliver it. As we learned in Lesson 18, that supremely important message is the Gospel—the good news—of the coming Kingdom of God [(Mark 1:14-15).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mar1.html#1:14)

That same message is being proclaimed to the world today by God’s Church!

Actually, the central message of the entire Bible is the coming Kingdom of God on earth. The ancient kingdom of Israel was a physical type or forerunner of the Kingdom of God. Many of the prophecies of the Bible show how God’s Kingdom will be established. Jesus’ life and teachings, and His sacrifice and resurrection reveal how we may become members of God’s Kingdom. Christ, the King of that coming Kingdom, and His apostles preached about many aspects of the Kingdom of God.

Let’s briefly review, first, what the Kingdom of God is. Lesson 18 showed that God’s Kingdom will be a literal government ruling over the nations of earth. Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the great image makes that very clear [(Dan. 2).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/dan2.html) 

But the Kingdom of God is more than just the government of God. It is also the Family of God, into which humans may be born as spirit members. As a governing or ruling family, it will exercise jurisdiction over all nations on earth—and, ultimately, over the entire universe!

Let’s understand more about these two aspects of God’s Kingdom, beginning with the Family of God.

***The Ruling Family of God***

The coming government of God on earth will be administered by the ruling Family of God. When Jesus came preaching about the Kingdom of God, He was talking about the Family of God, and how humans, through Him, may be born into it.

1. Did Jesus, in His conversation with Nicodemus, reveal the family nature of the Kingdom of God? [John 3:3,](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/joh3.html#3:3) [5.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/joh3.html#3:5)

COMMENT: Christ showed that the Kingdom of God is the Family of God into which we may be born as very God Beings (no longer human beings, but divine beings)--literally BORN of God’s Spirit into the very God Family!

As previous lessons have shown, God is not a single Personage. The Hebrew word for God is Elohim [(Gen. 1:1),](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/gen1.html) which denotes more than one person. God is a family of Personages, or "kingdom" composed of more than one being. There is the mineral kingdom, the plant kingdom, and the animal kingdom. Then there is an angel kingdom created by God and composed of spirit. And then, high above all, is the God Kingdom. In other words, the Kingdom of God!

2. What is the pattern of government God has set for the human family? [Eph. 5:23-24;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/eph5.html#5:23) [6:1-2.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/eph6.html)

COMMENT: God created the human family to be a physical type of His own Family. Therefore He instructs human families to have government from the top down, just as His divine Family does. God’s Family has a ruling structure, with various responsibilities to be fulfilled by Spirit-born children of God, all organized into a world-ruling government!

***God’s Perfect Government***

God originally set the archangel Lucifer on earth to administer the government of God over the angels He had placed here. But God’s government ceased to be administered on earth when Lucifer (now Satan) rebelled against His Creator.

In the Garden of Eden, God gave Adam the opportunity to replace Satan as world ruler. Adam failed by making the wrong choice. Four thousand years later, Jesus Christ came as the second Adam and, by obeying God’s Law, qualified to rule the earth. But Christ did not immediately begin ruling. He returned to heaven and established His Church on earth through God’s Spirit, thus making it possible for many to qualify to rule with Him. It would be nearly 2,000 years until Christ returns from heaven to restore God’s government over the entire earth [(Acts 3:19-21).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/act3.html#3:19)

Let’s review some basic scriptures covering the governmental aspect of the coming world-ruling Kingdom of God.

1. When the Kingdom of God is established on earth, will it take over the governments of this world? [Rev. 11:15.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev11.html#11:15) Who will become king over all the earth? Same verse; [Zech. 14:9;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/zec14.html#14:9) [Rev. 19:16.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev19.html#19:16) How long will He reign? [Rev. 11:15.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev11.html#11:15) Did Christ clearly state that He was born to be a king? [John 18:37.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/joh18.html#18:37)

COMMENT: These scriptures reveal that God is Supreme Ruler, and that the government of God will take over the governments of this world at Christ’s return. The Bible tells us in the plainest of language that Jesus Christ was born to be King of the earth. He will rule all nations and His government will last forever!

2. What did Christ say to Pilate to show clearly that His Kingdom had not yet been established on earth? [John 18:36.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/joh18.html#18:36)

COMMENT: Christ s Kingdom is not part of this world’s civilization. It will not begin to rule on earth until His Second Coming.

3. When Jesus Christ is ruling from Jerusalem, what will the world be like under His government? [Micah 4:1-4;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mic4.html) [Isa. 11:6-9.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/isa11.html#11:6)

COMMENT: When the Kingdom of God takes over the governments of this earth and the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ begins (commonly called the Millennium), His rule will bring peace, happiness and joy to all mankind.

Notice that in the Millennium there will be babies and young children on earth. They will be mortal, flesh and blood human beings—not spirit beings. And since Spirit-begotten Christians will have already been made immortal Sons of God at the resurrection, there will be both mortals and immortals living at the same time throughout the Millennium.

4. Where will Satan be during the thousand years? [Rev. 20:1-3.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev20.html) COMMENT: Satan will be put away where he can do no harm. He will be gone and Christ will be here! Instead of the evil spirit or attitude of Satan pervading the atmosphere, influencing everyone and causing evil as it does today [(Eph. 2:2),](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/eph2.html#2:2) the Holy Spirit of God will infuse the atmosphere! The Holy Spirit, represented by "living waters" [(Zech. 14:8;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/zec14.html#14:8) [John 7:38-39),](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/joh7.html#7:38) will flow out from Christ and begin to heal the spiritual problems of mankind. 

The government of the World Tomorrow will be based on God’s Law of love. With the help and inspiration of God’s Holy Spirit given to them, people will begin to truly love one another—to have godly concern for fellowman.

God’s government will not be a democracy. It will not be socialism, communism or fascism. It will not be human monarchy, oligarchy or plutocracy. It will not be man’s government over man. Man has proven his utter incapability of ruling himself!

It will be divine government—the government of God. It will not be government from the bottom up. The people will not vote their leaders into office. No time or money will be wasted on campaigning and elections. It will not be government of or by the people—but it will be government for the people. It will be government from the top (God Almighty) down.

In the World Tomorrow, all officials will be members of God’s Family— divine spirit beings, appointed by Christ Himself even down to the level of mayors over cities.

The Bible tells us that under the leadership of Jesus Christ, God’s government will produce a utopian paradise on earth. As we learned in Lesson 4, God will begin to work first with the descendants of the children of Jacob. Using them as a model and example, God will rebuild and bless all nations!

***Completely New Civilization to Be Built!***

The Kingdom of God includes much more than bringing this world’s governments under God’s rule. A completely new civilization will have to be built! Let’s understand.

1. Is God’s Church compared to a building? [I Cor. 3:9;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/1co3.html#3:9) [I Peter 2:5.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/1pe2.html#2:5) What foundation is it built upon? [Eph. 2:19-22.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/eph2.html#2:19) Just how important is a solid foundation to any building? [Matt. 7:24-27.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat7.html#7:24) 

COMMENT: The Church of God is built on God’s rock-solid spiritual foundation—the teachings of Jesus Christ, His apostles and prophets. Their teachings are based on God’s Law of love—God’s way of cooperation, unselfish giving and serving. But this present world has been built on a different foundation.

The civilization of this world was founded nearly 6,000 years ago in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve, influenced by Satan, rejected God’s government and chose self-government instead. They ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which represented Satan’s way of life. Consequently, this world’s civilization has been built on the foundation of sin! And so it was that at the very "foundation" of this present world [(Rev. 13:8),](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev13.html#13:8) when Adam and Eve sinned, God decreed that Christ, the "Lamb of God" [(John 1:36),](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/joh1.html#1:36) should come and be sacrificed to pay the penalty of their sins and the sins of their descendants.

This present evil world is built on a foundation of "sand" [(Matt. 7:26)](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat7.html#7:26)--on Satan’s way of vanity, covetousness, envy and jealousy, competition and strife, violence, rebellion, contention, unhappiness, suffering and death. This world is therefore doomed to crash. And as Jesus said, great shall be the fall thereof! [(Verse 27.)](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat7.html#7:27)

The foundation of this world’s civilization is faulty because it is of Satan the devil. This is Satan’s civilization, started through Adam when he sinned. Therefore this world’s superstructure—its systems of government, law, politics, education, economics, religion and social customs—is faulty, having produced the discontent, unhappiness and strife that has led to the violence and destruction, the anguish, suffering, poverty and death in the world today.

The superstructure of the building that is this world is fast crumbling and will soon be completely destroyed by God at the return of Jesus Christ!

God says, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" [(Psalm 127:1).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/psa127.html) Satan, not God, built this house.

God is not trying to repair this decaying and rotting civilization. Instead He sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, as the second Adam, to start anew—to begin building a totally different new structure of civilization. The new civilization will be built on God’s foundation—His way of life.

As we learned in the previous lesson, God’s Church is the beginning, in "embryonic" form, of that entirely new and different building. Jesus started the new civilization and the nucleus of God’s coming government on earth when He began His Church in the first century A.D.

The Church started with about 120 on the day of Pentecost A.D. 31, when its first members were begotten by the Holy Spirit. God’s Church has continued to exist through the centuries to this day. Many more have been and are now being trained to help rule in the World Tomorrow. (More about God’s training program will be covered later in this lesson.)

2. Will many nations go up to Jerusalem—the headquarters of Christ’s worldwide government—and ask to be taught His ways? [Micah 4:2.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mic4.html#4:2) Will the earth become full of the knowledge of God? [Isa. 11:9.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/isa11.html#11:9)

COMMENT: Soon mankind will begin to be taught how to live God’s way of life, with God’s religion, God’s education, God’s social customs, God’s economic, industrial and merchandising systems. The millions who have lived in this satanically influenced world and are still alive at Christ’s return will be taught the knowledge of God. His truth will be taught throughout the Millennium. Eventually, the whole earth will be following God’s way.

But who will teach the people in the World Tomorrow? Certainly not the educators and theologians of this world!

***Called to Become Rulers and Teachers***

Jesus is coming again to restore the rule of God on this earth and to teach the way of salvation to mankind. But Christ will not rule and teach all by Himself.

1. Exactly what will Spirit-born Sons of God do for a thousand years? [Rev. 2:26-27;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev2.html#2:26) [3:21;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev3.html#3:21) [5:10;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev5.html#5:10) [20:4, last part;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev20.html#20:4) [Dan. 7:27.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/dan7.html#7:27) Will many be mayors over cities? [Luke 19:16-19.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/luk19.html#19:16)

COMMENT: The Bible plainly shows that those who will be born into God’s Family at the first resurrection (which includes all Spirit-begotten saints of God through the centuries) will rule this earth’s mortals under Jesus Christ!

But some doubt whether they could ever rule, while others have no desire to rule whatsoever. (Be sure to read Mr. Armstrong’s article on page 9. [see end. Editor]) Perhaps you have thought: "I don’t want to rule in the World Tomorrow. I just want to serve God." The problem is that few people have ever really understood what it means to serve.

2. Did Jesus explain the difference between the kings in God’s coming Kingdom, and the kings or rulers of this present world? [Mark 10:42-45.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mar10.html#10:42)

COMMENT: Rulers in God’s Family will not be like most of this civilization’s rulers. They will not be harsh dictators. Those occupying positions of rulership in the World Tomorrow will be servants, having opportunity to do great good in truly SERVING mankind by governing God’s way!

God’s world will be built on a completely new foundation—His way of life, which is the way of His Law of love. The divine kings of the Family of God will be servants of God and humanity. Each divine ruler will serve his subjects by ruling in genuine love and concern [(I John 4:16),](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/1jo4.html#4:16) never acting selfishly. They will rule for the benefit of others, not themselves!

Yes, they will have the power to stabilize the world and enforce peace when necessary, which will be especially needed at the beginning of the Millennium. They will also have the compassion required to help the survivors of the Great Tribulation—to heal them, teach them the causes of the evils of the world they lived in, and teach them God’s way to peace, happiness and salvation.

3. In addition to being rulers, will the Sons of God also be priests? [Rev. 1:6;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev1.html#1:6) [5:10;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev5.html#5:10) [20:6.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev20.html#20:6) What is the function of a priest? [Mal. 2:7.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mal2.html#2:7)

COMMENT: Just as ancient Israel’s priests taught God’s way, Spirit-born members of God’s Family will also be teachers of God’s way of life, helping to eventually bring the knowledge of the way to salvation to everyone in the World Tomorrow.

In addition to being the Supreme King over all nations, Christ will also be the Supreme Educator. To bring mankind to repentance, Christ will reeducate the world to God’s way of life—the way of God’s Law of love—so the people may, of their own free will, decide to follow His way.

Reeducating mankind to God’s way of life will receive top priority. Under the direct supervision of Jesus Christ, the Kingdom of God will restore the laws and rule of God to the entire earth. As the world becomes reeducated, people will begin to experience the blessings that result from obeying God’s Law of love. There will be peace, cooperation, vibrant health, abundance and joy. And the whole world will come to understand God’s purpose and master plan for mankind.

But God will not begin saving the entire world until He first has teachers trained to help Him teach the way of salvation.

As we learned in the previous lesson, God will not save millions until He first has thousands of teachers. This is why God is training the thousands He has called into His Church today.

While on the earth, Christ was a teacher, as well as a messenger and announcer of the good news of the coming Kingdom of God. He personally instructed His apostles in the way of God. He then commissioned them to teach others what they were taught [(Matt. 28:19-20).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat28.html#28:19) Those whom God has called to be members of His Church and who have been taught by His ministers down through the ages will have been trained to become rulers and teachers during the Millennium!

True Christians today should have a burning desire to bring God’s way of life to the entire world—to teach God’s wonderful way to peace, joy and abundance. And they’ll be able to do just that when Christ returns to set up the Kingdom of God and they are born of God!

But to qualify—to be properly trained—to serve and teach in the World Tomorrow, true Christians must learn to serve and teach now.

The only reason any person is called to salvation now is to QUALIFY to help in ruling and teaching in the World Tomorrow—to help call and save those alive then. God hasn’t selected certain ones today for special favors; He has called them for a special purpose—a tremendous JOB to do!

Spirit-begotten Christians are now in training for significant roles in helping to teach the world God’s way and to administer the government of God for the good of all mankind. The rest of this lesson will clearly show that the Christian life is one of preparing for great service in tomorrow’s world!

***God’s Training Program***

True Christians are now in training for responsible positions in God’s soon- coming world- ruling government. This training comes through living the Christian life, which is following the way of God’s government! It is the training God’s Spirit-begotten children must receive to administer His government in the Kingdom of God.

God Himself laid out the plan of salvation and the method by which humans may be trained and prepared to become, through the free gift of God, Spirit-born members of His ruling Kingdom. God’s divine Family will be highly trained and superbly organized, having learned God’s pattern of mutual teamwork and cooperation to function perfectly together. The initial steps to salvation are actually the beginning of preparation for God’s Kingdom. Let’s understand.

1. To eventually be born into God’s ruling Family, we must first be begotten by His Spirit. What conditions must we fulfill before God will beget us as His free gift? [Mark 1:14-15;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mar1.html#1:14) [Acts 3:19.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/act3.html#3:19)

COMMENT: Repentance and belief are the first steps. Belief involves believing what Jesus taught about the coming Kingdom of God, as well as believing on Him as personal Savior.

To repent means to turn around and go the opposite direction—to forsake our own way, which is contrary to God’s Law, and turn to God’s way, which is the way of His Law. It means rejecting our previous sinful way of life and willingly yielding ourselves to God’s government.

Before we can be allowed to govern others in the World Tomorrow, God must know that we will submit to His rule now! Since there will always be a chain of authority from God the Father through Jesus Christ and on down, we will always be under authority. So learning to rule begins with submission to rule.

2. What is the next step toward one day becoming a member of God’s ruling Family? [Acts 2:38.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/act2.html#2:38)

COMMENT: Baptism is the outward symbol of our faith in Christ as our Savior, and of our turning from our past life of sin to a life of obedience to God. It symbolizes our rejection of Satan’s way—the way of this human civilization he has inspired—and turning our allegiance and loyalty to God and His soon-coming Kingdom. 

Baptism and the laying on of hands of a minister of God for the receipt of the Holy Spirit also shows our recognition of, and submission to, the authority God has placed in the called and chosen ministers of His Church. And through the consequent begettal of God’s Spirit, we become part of His government- in- training—His Kingdom in embryo, which is His Church [(I Cor. 12:13).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/1co12.html#12:13)

3. What is the next step in God’s training program for rulership in His Kingdom? [II Peter 3:18;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/2pe3.html#3:18) [1:5-11.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/2pe1.html#1:5)

COMMENT: Upon our receipt of God’s free gift of the Holy Spirit, we have been begotten of God. But we are only spiritual embryos, not yet born again as God Beings—not yet developed for the purpose God has called us, not yet trained to be divine rulers and teachers in His Kingdom. Spiritual growth—character development as a result of obedience to God—must occur within us to become properly trained!

God has supreme spiritual character. He is holy, righteous and perfect. We, to be actually born of Him—born into His ruling Family as His divine children—must be changed not only from human flesh and blood to divine spirit, but from our sinful human nature into God’s divine nature [(II Peter 1:4),](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/2pe1.html#1:4) which reflects His holy, perfect character [(I Peter 1:16;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/1pe1.html#1:16) [Matt. 5:48).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat5.html#5:48)

God’s spiritual character must be in the process of development in us throughout our Christian lives!

What, precisely, is the character God wants His begotten children to be developing? It is a combination of knowledge, attitude and action: the knowledge of what God defines as right as opposed to wrong—knowledge learned by studying God’s Word—and the desire and actual DOING of the right, despite temptation to do wrong.

Godly character is the possession and practice of love, patience, mercy, faith, kindness, gentleness, meekness, temperance, self-restraint and right self-direction. This kind of character involves knowledge, wisdom, purpose and ability, all properly controlled and developed through independent choice.

Holy, righteous character is something that is developed only through experience. Experience requires time and circumstances. Therefore God allows the time and circumstances which enable us to develop this character. But this is not our character. It is actually the character of God- holy, righteous character—motivated by Him, inspired by Him, and built by Him in us through our willing obedience to His Law.

4. In what one word can God’s character be summed up? [I John 4:16.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/1jo4.html#4:16) And exactly what is God’s part in building His character in Spirit-begotten Christians? [Rom. 5:5;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rom5.html#5:5) [13:10.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rom13.html#13:10)

COMMENT: The Holy Spirit, which the Father freely gives to those who repent, believe and are baptized, enables God’s children to understand the Word of God—the foundation for character development. It also supplies the spiritual love and faith needed to obey God’s Law of love, which is the basis of His government.

But God’s Spirit does not force one to obey Him. Character cannot be forced upon people. It can be developed only through willing, voluntary choice—by those God calls to be Christians [(John 6:44)](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/joh6.html#6:44) actively choosing to be led by God’s Spirit throughout their mortal lives [(Rom. 8:14).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rom8.html#8:14) That is the spiritual training that prepares us for rulership in the Kingdom of God!

And when we are born of God at the resurrection, we will be perfect as God is, for God will have developed in us, with our yielding, perfect character. It will then by nature be established in us forever [(I John 3:9).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/1jo3.html#3:9) We will then be ready to assist Christ as holy and righteous co-rulers in the World Tomorrow.

5. Jesus Christ overcame the temptations of Satan the devil [(Matt. 4:1-11).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat4.html) He was severely tempted, yet through the power of God’s Spirit, He resisted and overcame Satan, and remained faithful to God and His way until death. Must Christians, to be able to assist Christ, also overcome? [Rev. 3:21.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev3.html#3:21)

COMMENT: Jesus had to qualify to replace this world’s present ruler. He, functioning as a human being, had to resist and overcome the intense temptations of the devil. And all who are called by the Father to rule with Christ when He restores God’s government on earth must also qualify to rule—must turn from Satan’s way, resist and overcome his temptations. We must strive to root out Satan’s attitude and way, and learn to obey God’s Law of love, which is the way of His government.

Christ resisted all evil influences perfectly because He had the will and full measure of God’s Spirit [(John 3:34).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/joh3.html#3:34) Though we do not have the fullness of God’s Spirit now, we can, with the help of the measure of the Spirit God grants us, begin to resist and overcome Satan, this world and our own carnal nature.

Through the process of overcoming the sinful pulls and impulses of the flesh, the world and the devil, and submitting to God and His way, spiritual character is being developed. We are yielding to God to build within us His very character. Thus we are preparing and qualifying to rule and teach the nations with Jesus Christ!

But no one can overcome for us. No one can produce spiritual works for us. It requires putting forth effort on our part, together with the power of God’s Holy Spirit, to become the spiritually minded and motivated persons God can use in His Kingdom.

***How Responsibilities Will Be Determined***

As our Savior and elder brother—"the firstborn among many brethren"— Jesus Christ has already qualified for the highest office under God the Father in the World Tomorrow. No one else can ever receive the position of authority the Father has promised to Him in the government of God.

Certain other individuals have also been promised particular positions of responsibility in God’s Kingdom. King David will rule over the 12 tribes of the reunited nation of Israel [(Ezek. 37:21-22,](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/eze37.html#37:21) [24).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/eze37.html#37:24) Each of the 12 apostles will rule over one of the tribes of Israel [(Matt. 19:27-28).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat19.html#19:27) And God has alluded to other positions of rulership for other overcomers who have lived before us and are to be in His Kingdom [(Heb. 11:4-40).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/heb11.html#11:4) They have already been trained and will be given responsibilities in God’s ruling Family, though God has not revealed what their specific positions will be.

In the Kingdom or Family of God there will be various positions of responsibility, for an entirely new civilization must be built on earth— built this time to God’s specifications. It will take many different, vital jobs to recreate world society as it ought to be.

You, if you are a Spirit-begotten child of God, are now being judged for your future job in God’s Kingdom [(I Peter 4:17).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/1pe4.html#4:17) You shall be rewarded with an office in God’s government according to your works in this life! Let’s thoroughly understand this important principle.

1. How does God judge true Christians? [I Peter 1:17;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/1pe1.html#1:17) [Rom. 2:5-10.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rom2.html#2:5)

COMMENT: Everyone has works—either good or bad. Those who do good works will receive good rewards. Those who do evil works—who commit SIN [(I John 3:4)](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/1jo3.html#3:4)--will be punished, unless their evil works are repented of and covered by the blood of Christ. Note that our works determine our rewards, not whether we receive eternal life—that is a free gift from God for which we cannot work. But unrepentant sinners will receive the "wages"—payment or reward—for sin which they have earned—DEATH for all eternity! [(Rom. 6:23.)](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rom6.html#6:23)

Let’s be sure we understand the meaning of the word "works" as used in the Bible.

The word works is translated from the Greek ergon and means deeds, actions, business. The Bible uses this word primarily in two ways, and there is a vast difference between the two.

When joined with "law," as "the works of the law" (primarily in Romans and Galatians), it refers to the hard work required in performing the rituals of the law of Moses. These rituals involved repetitive physical labor. These laborious physical rituals, or "works of the law," were a substitute for the work of the Holy Spirit, and were in force only until Christ’s death.

But where the word "works" appears alone, it usually refers to acts of righteousness or of evil—that is, the good works of keeping God’s spiritual Law [(Psalm 119:172)](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/psa119.html#119:172) or the evil works of disobedience [(Col. 1:21).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/col1.html#1:21) In this lesson we are concerned with spiritual "works" (righteous conduct), not rituals of the law of Moses.

2. What will Christ bring with Him when He returns? [Rev. 22:12.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev22.html#22:12) Who will be rewarded then? [Rev. 11:18.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev11.html#11:18) Will the reward be according to each person’s works? [Rev. 22:12;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev22.html#22:12) [Matt. 16:27;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat16.html#16:27) [Rev. 2:26-27;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev2.html#2:26) [3:21.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev3.html#3:21)

COMMENT: When the glorified Christ returns to earth to rule all nations as King of kings, He will assign positions of authority in His government (the "reward") to those who are freely "saved" by His grace—those who have, through grace, received God’s gift of eternal life by a resurrection or change to immortality at His Second Coming.

However, most professing Christians confuse the "reward of the saved" with eternal life. Eternal life is a gift, not a reward. The Bible clearly defines both.

3. Can we "earn" eternal life? [Rom. 6:23;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rom6.html#6:23) [Eph. 2:8-9.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/eph2.html#2:8) Yet what must we do if we expect to receive God’s gift of eternal life? [Matt. 19:16-19.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat19.html#19:16)

COMMENT: A "gift" is something granted as a favor, something given freely. God’s gift of eternal life comes by His grace and favor. It is unmerited. There is absolutely nothing we can do to "earn" it. If it were earned it would not be a gift.

However, God has set certain terms or conditions which must be met before He will give us immortality. Compliance with these conditions does not "earn" eternal life, but noncompliance will result in death! [(I Cor. 6:9-10;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/1co6.html#6:9) [Rom. 6:23;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rom6.html#6:23) [Rev. 21:8.)](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rev21.html#21:8) God will not give eternal life to anyone who insists on living Satan’s way.

What are God’s conditions? As we saw earlier, they include: repentance, belief, baptism, and obedience to God—in other words, cooperation with His plan of salvation.

Those who are given immortality at Christ’s return will receive a reward in addition to the free gift of eternal life. The "reward of the saved" is not eternal life, but rulership with Jesus Christ over the nations of this earth! But not all positions of rulership will be equal. How will God decide which of His Spirit-born children will be given which positions in His ruling Family? Let’s notice several parables of Christ that explain this.

4. Should Christians constantly be using Godly Holy Spirit to produce much spiritual "fruit"? [John 15:1-5,](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/joh15.html) [8,](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/joh15.html#15:8) [16.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/joh15.html#15:16)

COMMENT: Using an example of a grapevine and its branches, Jesus says He is the vine and Christians are the branches. The branches do not join themselves to the vine—receive God’s Holy Spirit—by their own efforts or "works." It is the Father’s doing [(John 6:44;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/joh6.html#6:44) [17:9,](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/joh17.html#17:9) [11;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/joh17.html#17:11) [Acts 2:38-39)](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/act2.html#2:38)--His GIFT. It comes by GRACE.

But once joined on, with the sap flowing from the vine into the branches (a picture of Christ’s Spirit flowing into and empowering us), we must produce spiritual fruit throughout our lives. If we don’t, then the Father will remove us from the vine [(verse 2, first part)](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/joh15.html#15:2)--cut us off from Christ—and ultimately cast us into the lake of fire! [(Verse 6.)](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/joh15.html#15:6)

5. Does Jesus’ parable of the sower show that some bring forth more "fruit" than others? [Matt. 13:23.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat13.html#13:23)

COMMENT: The Spirit of God is given to us so we can produce good fruit. The fruit is simply the result of following God’s way of life—of keeping God’s Law. We must be doers of the Law, not hearers only [(Rom. 2:13).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/rom2.html#2:13) This doing produces fruit—develops the spiritual character of God—trains us for responsible positions in God’s Kingdom. But one’s particular job will be dependent on how well he did during his training period—upon the amount of fruit (good works) produced during his Christian life! 

Now notice the parable of the pounds in [Luke 19.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/luk19.html) It shows that the degree of reward each Christian will receive will be according to how much he grew and overcame spiritually in this life—how much good fruit he produced by his effort and the power of Christ’s Spirit in him.

In this parable Christ pictures Himself as a nobleman going to a far country (heaven) to receive a kingdom and to return to earth [(verses 11-12).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/luk19.html#19:11) But before leaving, He gave an equal amount of money to each of His ten servants [(verse 13).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/luk19.html#19:13)

6. Having obtained the Kingdom and returned, how will Christ judge His servants? [Luke 19:15.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/luk19.html#19:15)

COMMENT: These servants represent Christians [(I Cor. 7:22)](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/1co7.html#7:22) to whom God has given His Holy Spirit. Each "pound" (a unit of money symbolizing spiritual value) corresponds to the beginning unit of God’s Spirit we receive after baptism. God has given each Christian His Spirit to be USED to serve others, overcome, develop spiritual character, and help accomplish the work of God’s Church.

At His return, Christ will call His servants to see how much each "had gained by trading." Christ will want to see how much each Christian grew spiritually!

7. Will each servant’s reward be proportional to his growth—his spiritual overcoming and godly character development? [Verses 16-19.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/luk19.html#19:16)

COMMENT: The Christian life is a "spiritual school"—our training to be a ruler, priest and teacher in God’s Kingdom. But some learn more and accomplish more spiritual works with the Spirit they have been given than others. Some overcome and develop more spiritual character than others, producing more spiritual fruit. Thus, in the Kingdom or Family of God, each will receive greater or lesser positions of responsibility based upon the degree of his or her spiritual overcoming and how much of God’s character was developed in this life. Each will be rewarded "according to his works" [(Matt. 16:27).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat16.html#16:27)

As explained before, our good works cannot gain us entrance into God’s Kingdom of immortals. We are born into the Kingdom of God by His grace. But once we are born into the God Family, our spiritual "works" during our Christian life DO determine what office, position, rank or degree of glory we shall have!

So it is not a matter of grace or works, but grace and works!

Turn to the parable of the talents in [Matthew 25, verses 14 through 30.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat25.html#25:14) This parable illustrates the fact that we will be rewarded according to our works. But it also illustrates another aspect—God’s complete fairness in rewarding us, taking into consideration our own natural limitations.

8. In this parable Christ compared Himself to a man traveling to a far country [(verse 14).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat25.html#25:14) In what way did the man divide up his goods? [Verse 15.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat25.html#25:15)

COMMENT: The Greek word translated "talent" is talanton, which was a measure by which gold or silver was weighed.

9. This time are all the quantities equal, or were amounts given according to each servant’s natural physical aptitude or ability? [Same verse.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat25.html#25:15)

COMMENT: These units of money, like the pounds in [Luke 19,](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/luk19.html) symbolize the Holy Spirit given to each Christian (servant). But they also picture spiritual gifts given to each based on his own natural ability! God knows some have more hereditary ability, greater innate aptitudes, more personality or more physical strength than others. Some also have more education and better opportunities in life. 

10. In this parable, what did the servants do with the money given to them before Christ came back to "reckon" with them—to judge their works? [Verses 16-19.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/luk19.html#19:16) How were the first two judged? [Verses 20-23.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/luk19.html#19:20)

COMMENT: In the parable of the pounds, all ten of Christ’s servants (Christians) appear to have had equal ability, and each was given an equal portion of Spirit from God at the start.

But in the parable of the talents, God gave spiritual gifts to each, at the start of his Christian life, according to his natural ability. To one He gave five talents, to another two, and to another only one—according to the natural ability of each. The person who was given five talents doubled his spiritual stock-in-trade. Likewise, although the man with two produced less in number than the one with five, he also doubled what he started with. He did as well in proportion to his ability!

Consequently we find it revealed that to whom much is given, much is required; and to whom little is given, less is required [(Luke 12:48).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/luk12.html#12:48) In other words, God judges each Christian according to how well he overcomes, yields to God, develops and grows spiritually, according to what he has to do with!

11. Does this parable reveal that each servant who is faithful "over a few things"—that is, over his or her limited abilities and opportunities of this life—will be rewarded with "many things" when Christ returns? [Matt. 25:21,](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat25.html#25:21) [23.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat25.html#25:23) Isn’t it clearly rulership that Christ promised? Same verses.

COMMENT: We learn to responsibly rule for the good of ourselves and others in the World Tomorrow by learning to better manage the affairs, responsibilities and powers in our control today, no matter how small they may presently be. There are many opportunities to grow and develop right on the job, at school or in the home—in whatever circumstance we may find ourselves.

12. What will happen to those who fail to overcome and grow even a little—who fail to increase their spiritual usefulness and effectiveness? [Luke 19:20-24;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/luk19.html#19:20) [Matt. 25:24-30.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat25.html#25:24)

COMMENT: The one who did nothing with his spiritual gift—the pound or talent—corresponds to a Christian who did not overcome and grow spiritually. He developed no character.

These parables show that the Christian who does not grow spiritually will lose out! He could be compared to one who thought he did not need to overcome spiritually and grow in spiritual character. He thought he was "already saved." He didn’t believe any "works" were necessary!

By doing nothing, he lost not only the reward, but he lost out on the free gift of eternal life as well because he produced no spiritual fruit. He failed utterly in God’s REAL PURPOSE for his life.

God freely gives us salvation so we may serve others. If we do not prepare now to serve in God’s coming Kingdom, we may have taken away from us even the salvation we thought we had!

***Are You in Training to Rule?***

Why will Abraham, David and the apostles be assigned positions of responsibility in the Kingdom of God? Simply because they prepared and qualified for those positions during their mortal lives. They learned to rule by submitting to God’s rule. They were willing to do whatever God said. They grew in the holy, righteous character of God.

Christ will not establish world rule until He has first trained His assistants. God will not entrust the incomprehensibly great powers of His ruling Family to those who did not, in this human life, strive to obey Him and learn to properly control the small powers we all have at our disposal. God wants to know that we would use His incredible power in love and self-control and according to His will for the good of all under our authority!

1. By what great principle can a person of ordinary ability and humble opportunity qualify for far greater responsibility in the Kingdom of God? [Luke 16:10.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/luk16.html#16:10) Also notice [verses 11-12.](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/luk16.html#16:11)

COMMENT: We learn to rule by being faithful—conscientious and honest— in whatever we do as we strive to put into practice the principles of God’s Law we learn from His Word. Even the person who considers himself or herself as having only a little ability and natural talent can be trained to rule—SERVE—in God’s Kingdom!

But can that really qualify you to rule a city—to tackle the complex administrative, organizational and personal problems that come up when several thousand families live together? Yes, it can!

God does not need to see you actually ruling ten cities to determine whether you know how to apply and observe His Law. He can see, by the simple decisions you make every day in your life, whether you will obey Him or go the way of this present evil world.

The decisions required to live God’s way are really very simple—they are basically a matter of saying "yes" or "no" to God’s Law.

The way you treat your wife, respect your husband, love your children and your friends shows Christ what kind of a ruler you would be. Are you short-tempered, hard to get along with, rebellious, uncooperative, unfair?

Christ needs to know that now, before He entrusts you with a major responsibility over many people. The Kingdom of God is going to bring peace to the world, not more strife. Those who will rule must show God now that they are learning the way of peace.

God wants us to learn to rule ourselves before He gives us authority over others!

What about finances? Would you handle the finances of a city like so many rulers today, and enrich yourself at the expense of others? God can tell by the way you handle your employer’s money and the time your employer pays you for, by your attitude toward taxes you must "render unto Caesar," and by what you do with God’s tithe.

As Jesus said, "If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own?" [(Luke 16:12.)](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/luk16.html#16:12) If you learn to be faithful and loyal in the small things of life, God knows that you will be that way if given much greater responsibility!

Every Christian who is growing and developing spiritually also has his heart completely in the work God has given His Church to accomplish. Our "works" include our part in doing God’s work—getting the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to the whole world as a witness [(Matt. 24:14;](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat24.html#24:14) [28:19-20),](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat28.html#28:19) thus preparing the way for Christ’s coming. God’s Spirit-begotten children are His instruments in fulfilling His great commission to His Church in the end time!

Years of experience have shown that those who are self-centered, caring nothing for the work of God’s Church, not having enough outgoing concern to want to help get Christ’s message out to this blinded, deceived, dying world, eventually fall away. Those who center their whole "Christian" life on themselves, whose hearts are not in or concerned about this great outgoing worldwide work of God, shrivel up spiritually and fall by the wayside!

Just as the Church has two primary commissions--1) to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom to the world; and 2) to help the Spirit-begotten members grow spiritually as part of their training for that Kingdom—so the members also have two primary missions: 1) to actively support the Church in preaching the Gospel; and 2) to willingly and actively participate in God’s training program for eternal rulership as Spirit-born members of the universe-ruling Kingdom of God!

Ask God daily for the understanding and wisdom to rightly use and direct the powers, abilities and responsibilities that are now yours so you can be a faithful and productive servant of God.

Strive to be faithful over what God has already given you, so that one day Christ can say to you: "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over MUCH..." [(Matt. 25:21, RSV).](http://wwcg.org/BibleCourse/ac_bcc/AC%20Bible%20Correspondence%20Course/Bible/mat25.html#25:21)

This life is our time of training. It is only those who are obedient to the authority of God’s government now—who learn its laws, who overcome every false way, who grow in God’s holy, righteous character, becoming more like Him in preparation to being born into His Family and ruling with Christ—who then will be assigned a position of rulership.

Yes, you were born with the potential to be an eternal king—to RULE in the Kingdom of God! Your awesome destiny, once born of God, is that of helping to rule the earth, and the universe beyond, as a member of the Family of God!

It’s a breathtaking, exciting, incredible calling! A glorious, wonderful future! Have you begun to walk spiritually toward that goal? Are you in training to rule?

**Article**

**"BUT I DON'T WANT ANY RESPONSIBILITY"**

He wanted an eternity-lasting vacation in heaven.

"Let me see if, I understand your view correctly, a college professor challenged. You say a Protestant teaching is like being on a lifelong railroad journey. At the end of the line is a switch automatically set to send you down to hell where you will burn and burn forever but never burn up. But if, at any point during the journey you accept Christ, He will overlook your sins, and the switch at the end of the journey will be changed to shoot you straight up to heaven when you die. And in heaven you will have no responsibilities but only an eternal vacation with nothing to do.

"But you don't believe that. You believe one must first repent of his sins, change to living according to God's Law, strive to overcome, grow in grace and Bible understanding, develop Godly righteous character, and then in the resurrection you will be given immortal life as God's free gift, but you will live forever here on earth and be given responsibilities as a reward according to your character development during this life—ruling over and teaching others. Do I understand you correctly?" "Well," I smiled, "something like that." "Then I don't want your kind of religion," he said emphatically. "I don't want to be saddled with responsibilities for all eternity. I'd rather just accept Christ, decide for myself how I'll live the rest of this life and then go to heaven with nothing to do for eternity." The above conversation took place some 36 years ago. This man later reached retirement age and was retired on a pension. He got his wish of having nothing to do but just live out his years on a small pension. During his retirement years I met him again. He was a very unhappy, frustrated man.

"I wish," he said, "I had something to keep me busy like you have. All I do is sit here in my little living room all day long, day after day, with nothing to keep me occupied. It's the most boring existence I could imagine."

Later I had a report from one of our ministers in his city. "He is now 87 years old," said the minister, "and the only thing he thinks of is wanting to die and end his loneliness."

And he soon did die, a frustrated, unhappy old man. He got his wish at last, for several years, of no responsibilities and one long vacation, mercifully ended in death. In the Great White Throne resurrection he will come alive for judgment. Perhaps he may find the way of repentance, a changed life living God's way, and discover the way to happy, vigorous, enthusiastic life living by God's Law of out-flowing love, discovering the thrills and ecstasies of accomplishment, achieving success in enjoyable responsibilities.

I look back on some experiences in my own life. As a young advertising man at age 20, 1 was given the responsibility to try to sell a magazine advertisement to a certain manufacturer. I succeeded. As I left the factory office with signed contract in hand, it seemed I was walking on air. A feeling of ecstasy thrilled me as I walked from that office.

Years later, I had completed my first evangelistic campaign of nine nights, with three new converts baptized, the very first of my entire ministerial experience. The fact that God had blessed my efforts with this accomplishment electrified me through and through in a far more intense thrill of joyous ecstasy than I had ever experienced before. I have learned by experience that nothing else is as satisfying and rewarding as achievement of a responsibility accomplished.

Eternal life is offered us as God's free GIFT upon real repentance, accepting Christ's sacrifice—but repentance means turning from the ways of sin and henceforth living according to God's way of out-flowing LOVE. It cannot be earned. But those who are given this matchless GIFT will be rewarded according to their spiritual works during this present human life. Some will qualify to rule over one small city. Some over many cities and some over entire nations.

What many do not realize is that, in the resurrection to eternal life, we shall be composed entirely of spirit. We shall never become tired or weary. We shall never suffer ill health. We shall be strong and vigorous, and find our greatest pleasure in creative work well accomplished. We shall be constantly looking back on happy accomplishments, and anticipating even more pleasurable accomplishments ahead. It will be one continuous pleasure after another for all eternity.

Responsibility means opportunity for that which leads to greater happiness and joys than any other possible existence. The greater one's reward earned during this life is simply the greater gift of pleasurable and even thrilling life which shall continue forever.

A fifteen-year-old teenager eagerly looks forward to being given the responsibility to sit behind the steering wheel of an automobile, with his foot on the throttle of power. He has the youthful energy and vitality and eagerly desires to release these powers within him. That is merely an example of the attitude we should have over the prospect of being given the POWER and vitality for the responsibilities in the Kingdom of God.

**TEST**

This multiple choice test is designed to help you review the preceding lesson. It’s an enjoyable way of putting to use some of the vital knowledge and understanding you have gained through this lesson.

Select one of the four choices given under each question or incomplete statement. The other three are incorrect—unless stated or indicated otherwise.

Take sufficient time to understand each question or statement, as well as the choices. Try to do as many as you can without referring to the lesson. If you have difficulty deciding on the correct answer, then review the part of the lesson in question.

1. God’s Spirit-begotten children A. will retire for eternity in the Kingdom of God . B. will rule in heaven with Jesus Christ. C. are royal heirs to the throne of England. D. are receiving the training necessary to rule the earth with and under Christ.

2. The Kingdom of God is A. not a divine Family one can be born into. B. not the government of God administered by the ruling Family of God. C. the divine Family of God, into which Spirit-begotten Christians will be born at Christ’s return. D. eternally limited to only the Father and the Son.

3. God will give offces of responsibility in His government A. to those who qualified for those positions during their training period. B. not as a reward, but as a gift. C. to those angels who refused to follow Lucifer in his rebellion. D. to all who have professed Christ.

4. The government of God’s ruling Family is A. Christian democracy. B. from the top down—like His instructions for human family government. C. a tyrannical dictatorship. D. not based on any law.

5. Which one of the following statements does NOT accurately describe an aspect of the Millennium? A. The Kingdom of God will rule all nations on earth. B. Christ will be King of the world. C. Satan will be put away where he can do no harm. D. Satan will still broadcast his attitudes of sin to all mortals.

6. The world as we know it A. is built on the solid foundation of God’s Law. B. is Satan’s world because it is built on a foundation of sin. C. does not need to be rebuilt from the bottom up. D. is God’s world.

7. This world’s civilization A. was founded by Adam and Eve when they sinned. B. is influenced by Satan. C. will be replaced by God with a totally new civilization after Christ’s return. D. All of the above.

8. Godsent His ownSon to earth to A. strengthen civilization’s foundations. B. repairearth’s decaying civilization. C. begin building a new and totally different structure of civilization by founding His Church. D. All of the above.

9. Which one of. the following statements does NOT describe the future rulers of the World Tomorrow? A. Spirit-born members in God’s Family. B.Serving and helping humanity, always ruling in love. C. Qualified to rule by having learned to serve during their mortal lives. D. Self-serving, ruling for their own gain and benefit.

10. In the Millennium, Christ will teach everyone the way of salvation A. by forcing His truth upon them. B. by pleading with them to give their hearts to Him. C. with the help of thousands of trained teachers. D. with the help of this world’s educators and theologians.

11. Everyone God has called to salvation now A. has been called to qualify to help rule and teach in the World Tomorrow. B. does not need to learn to serve and teach while still mortal. C. is exceptionally gifted in governmental administration. D. is automatically given eternal life.

12. The Christian’s preparation to become a part of God’s ruling Family A. has nothing to do with living the Christian life. B. includes belief, repentance, baptism, and living the Christian way of life. C. includes relying on God’s grace without any need to obey Him. D. includes the obtaining of a college degree in political science.

13. Which one of the following statements is FALSE? A. Learning to rule in the World Tomorrow begins with submission to God’s rule now. B. God will not allow us to rule in His Kingdom unless we prove our willingness to be ruled by Him now. C. We will no longer be under authority once born into the ruling Family of God. D. There will always be a chain of authority from God the Father, through Jesus Christ, and on down.

14. Spiritual growth, which is essential to the training of the spiritual leaders of the World Tomorrow , A. involves the knowledge of what God defines as right as opposed to wrong. B. involves righteous character development through obedience to God’s Law. C. must continue throughout one’s Christian life. D. All of the above.

15. God will develop His holy, righteous character in Spirit-begotten Christians A. because of their natural goodness. B. who resist the keeping of His Law. C. only as they willingly and actively choose to be led by God’s Spirit. D. by forcing it upon them.

16. All who are called by the Father to rule with Christ when He restores God’s government on earth A. must turn from Satan’s attitude and way of life, and learn to live by God’s Law of love. B. must overcome with human effort alone. C. Both A and B. D. are not being judged for their future responsibilities.

17. How is a Christian judged for his future job in God’s Kingdom? A. Simply by accepting Christ as his Savior. B. According to his works in this life. C. Certainly not by his "works." D. By the Church.

18. God will give His gift of eternal life to A. everyone who desires it. b. those who earn it. C. those who meet certain conditions laid down in His Word. D. those who just profess Christ. 19. The "reward of the saved" is A. rulership with Jesus Christ. B. the gift of eternal life. C. heaven. D. not earned.

20. Which one of the following statements does NOT accurately represent the meaning of the parables of the pounds and talents? A. Christians will be given offices of responsibility in God’s Kingdom based upon how much spiritual "fruit" (good works) they produced while mortal. B. God’s Spirit-begotten children will be given jobs according to their spiritual growth and overcoming in this life. C. God’s servants will be rewarded according to how much of His character is developed in them before Christ returns. D. These parables have nothing to do with Christians being rewarded.

21. God expects all Christians to grow and overcome spiritually A. in equal amounts regardless of their natural ability. B. only after they are resurrected. C. in whatever circumstances they may find themselves. D. only if they are naturally very talented.

22. A Christian who does nothing with God’s Spirit—the "pound" or "talent"—he’s been given A. has failed utterly in God’s real purpose for his life. B. will still be rewarded. C. cannot be blamed for not accomplishing anything because he wasn’t given much to work with. D. would make an effective ruler in God’s Kingdom.

23. God can know how well you would rule in His Kingdom A. by giving you opportunities to work in the governments of this world. B. only after He has given you such responsibility in His Kingdom. C. by seeing if you are obedient to Him in the decisions of everyday life, and in how you relate to others. D. just from seeing whether you pay your tithes faithfully.

24. Every Christian who is growing spiritually A. is concentrating on developing himself to the exclusion of all else. B. is wholeheartedly supporting the work God has given His Church to do. C. is not really interested in helping to spread the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to the world as a witness. D. does not really have his heart in the work of God’s Church.

25. Those whom God has called into His Church have been called to A. support the publishing and preaching of the Gospel to the world with their prayers, tithes and offerings. B. grow in His righteous character. C. be trained now to become rulers and teachers in the Kingdom of God. D. All of the above.

**ANSWERS TO LESSON 20 TEST**

1-D, 2-C, 3-A, 4-B, 5-D  
6-B, 7-D, 8-C, 9-D, 10-C  
11-A, 12-B, 13-C, 14-D, 15-C  
16-A, 17-B, 18-C, 19-A, 20-D  
21-C, 22-A, 23-C, 24-B, 25-D

The Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course  
Lesson 11  
1977

**WHY YOU NEED THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*Mankind is engaged in a frustrating search for answers to the problems of humanity. Yet the real answers have eluded this world's greatest thinkers. Only the Creator God has the ultimate answer--if we are willing to seek and accept it!*

WHAT is the Holy Spirit? What does it do? Why do we need it anyway? The answers to these questions are vitally important to everyone, for the Holy Spirit is the only real, permanent and lasting answer to the problems of every human being!

Jesus said: "... I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). One reason Christ came into this world was to teach humanity the true values in life--the way which would bring true happiness and joy into our lives. But more importantly, Christ came to reveal the way to receive God's gift of eternal life. Jesus taught that unless we receive and retain the Holy Spirit, we can never hope to enter the Kingdom of God.

Why?

Because it is only through God's Spirit that we develop the lasting character of God in this life, and are resurrected to glorious eternal life at Christ's return.

**Holy Spirit Now Available**

Jesus Christ came to herald the coming of the Holy Spirit--to make this precious gift freely available to every person whom God would call and who would truly repent and believe. "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said," proclaimed Jesus, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive...)" (John 7:38-39).

After teaching His deciples for three and one half years, Jesus Christ prepared to offer Himself as the ultimate sacrifice. Soon He would be crucified and murdered by His contempraries. After three days and three nights in the tomb, He would be resurrected to sit at the right hand of His Father in heaven. His twelve apostles would then spearhead the Work He had personally begun.

These men would have to face the sobering prospect of carrying an unpopular gospel to a hostile world. They would have to contemplate years of persecution, ridicule and possibly even martyrdom. A discomforting prospect to say the least!

The apostles would need strength, encouragement and wisdom. They would need love, patience and endurance to follow in Christ's steps and carry out His commission.

**Jesus Promised Special Help**

The apostles would also need to recall the lessons taught to them by Christ during His earthly ministry. As generally "unlearned" men, they needed wisdom to face the philosophers, scholars and intellectuals of that day. They needed faith and courage to confront the seething hostility of religious leaders who would attempt to stamp out the fledgling Work of God time after time.

And Jesus knew it!

He said to them shortly before His trial and crucifixion: "I am not going to leave you alone in the world--I am coming to you" (John 14:18, Phillips trans.). Christ intended to continue to teach and support the twelve, but not in the flesh. His Father in heaven possessed a means by which the apostles would be aided miraculously in their efforts to spread the true gospel.

"But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit," said Jesus, "whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said unto you" (John 14:26, RSV). The word translated "counselor" in the Greek is parakletos, which in the Gospel of John has the meaning of "helper, advisor, intercessor." God's Spirit was intended to help and support the apostles in their work. And it would remind them of the lessons they had learned from their Master--Jesus Christ.

**A Help and Comfort to Every Christian**

But Christ did not limit the help of the Holy Spirit to the apostles alone. Notice the apostle Peter's bold promise in Acts 2:38: "... Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (RSV).

And as we learned in a previous lesson, only those who possess the Holy Spirit are recognized by God as being true Christians (Rom. 8:9-11). You can have the resources that will enable you to live the kind of life God intended from the beginning, and to ultimately attain eternal life. But these gifts can come only from above--from the Holy Spirit of God--not from the within or the around.

The apostle James was inspired to remind us that "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights ..." (James 1:17). Our Creator stands ready to impart these wonderful resources through the vehicle of His Holy Spirit--if we will only abide by the conditions outlined in His Word.

The Holy Spirit is indeed the key to the spiritual blessings of God. It is the only ingredient which will enable man to fulfill his inner craving for the love, joy and peace he so desperately needs for true happiness and accomplishment in this life, and for all eternity. Let's begin to understand much more about why we need the Holy Spirit in our lives today.

**LESSON 11**

**What the Holy Spirit Really Is**

Spiritual qualities and entities seem so unreal to most people. And no wonder. Spiritual things are invisible, not discerned by the senses except as revealed in writing in the Bible. When we speak of the Holy Spirit, it is difficult to grasp its nature. Yet the Bible reveals a great deal about God's Spirit.

In a section of Lesson 8, we proved conclusively from our study of the scriptures that the Holy Spirit is not a "third person" of a limited "trinity." We discovered that the Spirit of God is the power and energy of the God Family, as well as the very nature, life and mind of God.

Let's review some of those essential scriptures, and study a few new ones as we lay the foundation for understanding one of the most crucial subjects of the Bible.

1. What is the composition of God? John 4:24. But do the Father and Christ have definite form and shape? Gen. 1:26; John 14:9; Rev. 1:13-16.

COMMENT: The God Family is composed of divine, immortal spirit essence. Spirit is the very life of God. Yet the Father and the Son have definite shape. From one end of the Bible to the other we are told about the shape and the parts of each member of the God Family. The Father and the Son each have a head, hair, eyes, nose, mouth, arms, fingers, a torso, legs, feet, plus inward parts. Man, as we know, was created in the image of God. But we are composed of temporal, corruptible matter. We do not have eternal life inherent within ourselves as does the God Family.

2. What is another great difference between God and man--what is God's characteristic attitude and general mental makeup? Ps. 99:9. Is there anyone as "holy" as God? I Sam. 2:2. Would you consider man, of himself, as being "holy"? Rom. 3:10-18, 23; 8:7; Jer. 17:9.

COMMENT: The word holy means pure of heart or free from sin. The two beings presently composing the God Family possess a sinless, "holy," spiritual attitude and mind. The Holy Spirit therefore expresses the very mind and character of God.

3. What are some other characteristic attributes of God's Spirit? Isa. 11:2-3. What additional characteristics or "fruit" does the Holy Spirit manifest? Gal. 5:22-23; II Tim. 1:7.

4. Does God's Spirit fill the entire universe? Ps. 139:7-8; Jer. 23:24.

COMMENT: The Holy Spirit, like matter, exists in various states. It not only composes the members of the God Family, it also flows out from them to accomplish their will.

5. Is the Holy Spirit also the power by which God--the ultimate source of all power--created all things? Jer. 32:17; Ps. 104:30. How did the Eternal God utilize His Spirit of power to bring His various creations into being? Ps. 148:1-5. Notice the word "commanded" in verse 5. Also read Psalm 33:6-9 and Genesis 1:1-3.

COMMENT: Even though the Father and the Son are described specially as being in definite locations with respect to each other, spirit proceeds from them and, as David said, fills the entire universe--much like air is everywhere present on earth. The Spirit actually is the instrument or vehicle by which the God family creates!

Christ--the Logos, or "Word" (John 1:1 )--"spake and it was done." It was by the Spirit of God that the creative energy of the Father and Son was transformed into the physical creation we see around us (Heb. 11:3). And it was by His Spirit that He reformed the surface of the earth (Gen. 1). Man has no such inherent spiritual attribute of creative power. God has purposely limited man's creative abilities to dealing strictly with the physical world around him. And so man has learned to work with and use the physical laws which God set in motion--now to a degree seemingly bordering on the miraculous, but physical nonetheless.

God's original purpose for putting man here on earth was to train him for rulership in the Kingdom of God. The earth is the training ground, so to speak, to prepare mankind for greater responsibilities once born into the universe-ruling Family of God--which will include use of the creative power of God!

6. Is the very creation all around us mute testimony of the miraculous creative power of God? Rom. 1:20. (Also read the entire, but short, 26th chapter of Job for more vivid illustrations of God's infinite power. You might also like to read chapters 36:22 through to 42:6 to see how great the power of God really is!)

7. Does God sustain, preserve and rule His vast creation? Neh. 9:6; Heb. 1:2-3; Ps. 66:7.

COMMENT: God sits at the controls of the entire universe, so to speak, and He rules and sustains everything by the awesome power of His Holy Spirit!

**The KEY to Glorious Immortality**

Man is mortal, subject to death. We do not possess eternal life and great powers inherently within ourselves. Eternal life and spiritual power are gifts of God--attributes of the Holy Spirit. Let's notice how having the Holy Spirit within us now is the key to receiving glorious immortality at the resurrection.

1. According to the biblical account, what happened to Jesus Christ after having been dead and buried for three days? I Cor. 15:3-4. How did the Father raise Christ from death? Eph. 1:19-21. (Note that verse 17 tells us it is God the Father and Christ who are being discussed here.)

COMMENT: Clearly, it was by the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit that God the Father raised Christ from death to glorious immortality, authority and power.

2. Is there any proof of Christ's resurrection from the dead? I Cor. 15:5-8.

3. Was Christ the first of many who are to be resurrected to eternal life? Acts 26:23; Col. 1:18; I Cor. 15:22-23; Rom. 8:29.

4. Does the Father promise true Christians that He will also raise them to immortality--to be partakers of His divine nature and power--as He did Jesus? I Cor. 6:14; 15:49-53; II Pet. 1:4. (We suggest that you also read the entire 15th chapter of I Corinthians together with Galatians 3:29; 4:7; and Titus 3:7.) How essential is it to have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us now in order to receive eternal life at the resurrection? Rom. 8:9-11, 14-17.

COMMENT: The Scriptures make it abundantly clear that God desires to elevate mortal man to the God-plane of existence--to become literal spirit-born members of His spirit-composed Family! It is also evident that only those who presently have (or did have before they died) God's Spirit will be granted the gift of eternal life at Christ's return. These individuals--true Christians--have been begotten by the Spirit of God and are manifesting the "fruit" (Gal. 5:22-23) of the Holy Spirit in their lives. (The "fruit of the Spirit" will be discussed later in this lesson.)

We, if we are begotten of the Father and have the Spirit of Christ, are declared to be "heirs" (future inheritors) of the divine nature--of the very mind of God, and of immortal, incorruptible, perfect, all-powerful God-life!

5. When and how quickly will a spirit-begotten person's change to immortality take place? I Cor. 15:51-52.

6. What type of body did Jesus receive at the time of His resurrection? I Cor. 15:44-45. Will those who are changed at the coming resurrection be given the same kind of glorious body Jesus Christ has today? Phil. 3:20-21; I John 3:2?

COMMENT: They will then be given a spiritcomposed body like Christ has now. Their natural, mortal bodies will suddenly be changed to bodies of spirit, if they are yet alive at the time of the resurrection. If dead, they will be resurrected from the grave with new, spirit bodies (I Thes. 4:14-17).

7. Was Jesus, with His spirit-composed body, able to suddenly appear and disappear? Luke 24:36-37, 31. Was He able to pass through barriers or walls? John 20:19. Can one composed of spirit transform (or manifest) himself into mortal flesh and bone if necessary? Luke 24:37-39.

COMMENT: When one becomes a spirit being, he will also be able to perform all types of miraculous feats as Christ did. Of course, as spirit-born members of God's Family with the character of God, all will be done according to the will of the Father who will always be in charge over all.

8. Are spiritual bodies capable of traveling through space at tremendous speed? Compare John 20:17, 19 with Matthew 28:9.

COMMENT: Notice that Christ traveled to the Father in heaven and returned to earth on the same day!

9. Once a person has been changed into spirit, can he ever die again? Luke 20:35-36.

10. Was Jesus to be "glorified" after His resurrection? John 17:4-5; Heb. 2:9. How do Christ's and the Father's glorified bodies appear when manifested to human beings? Rev. 1:13-16. (The "Son of Man" mentioned here is the glorified Christ.)

COMMENT: Jesus Christ had a glorious, resplendent, spiritual body that was equal to His Father's before He took the human form. After His resurrection, He was restored to the same power and glory. Even when manifested in a mere shadow of its spiritual glory--so that mortal men might receive some idea of its magnificence--Christ's glorified, powerful spirit body radiates light as bright as the sun!

11. Will God also "glorify" all of His spirit-begotten children at the resurrection by giving them this same great power and glory? Rom. 8:17; Col. 3:4.

12. How did Jesus give His disciples a fleeting glimpse of this future glorified condition? Matt. 17:1-2. What other scripture gives us an idea of the future glorified state of those who shall be born again at the resurrection? Dan. 12:2-3.

COMMENT: The ultimate glory that spirit-begotten children of God are to receive at the resurrection will be so great, it will make them shine as the brilliant stars of the heavens. All this can come about only by having God's Spirit working within us now! (At this juncture it is recommended that you review the material on pages 12-15 of Lesson 8 regarding spiritual begettal, which we will now summarize in the following section.)

**Our Spiritual Creation Now Possible!**

In Lesson 8 we learned the biblical definition of what it means to be "born again." We discovered that true Christians are already--in this life--the spiritual children of God the Father (I John 3:1-2). But even though considered God's children, they are now only heirs (Rom. 8:14-17)--ones who shall, in the future, become inheritors.

Why?

Because they are now only begotten children. It is only when they are born of God that they become inheritors of God's Kingdom, having become divine, eternal members of the Family of God. Before the second phase of man's creation--our spiritual creation--can begin, God the Father must first beget each of us spiritually. Whenever we become a begotten member of God's Family, at that moment we receive a portion--a seed or germ--of the Father's Holy Spirit. "...on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 10:45). This gift is "poured out" from the Father in heaven and, like physical life-giving sperm, unites with the "human" spirit in each of our minds upon conversion. (Recall that in Lesson 5 we studied the scriptures dealing with the "spirit in man.") Each human mind is like the nucleus of an egg with which the seed of the Holy Spirit unites.

Thus we are impregnated, so to speak, by the "seed" or germ of eternal life (I Pet. 1:3-4, 23; Jas. 1:18. As we learned in Lesson 8, "born again" in I Peter 1:23 should have been correctly rendered "begotten again.") This impregnation is the begettal of the spiritual life of God within our minds, making us literal children of God (though yet unborn), for we are going to be like our heavenly Father when finally born into His Family.

We also learned in Lesson 8 that the portion of the Holy Spirit which a person may receive as a begettal, does more than impart to us the possibility of eternal life. It imparts to us characteristics and attributes of the Almighty, the all-powerful God the Father in heaven, just as the physical sperm of a human father transmits the father's attributes to his newly conceived offspring. And just as a newly begotten physical embryo must begin to grow in its mother's womb, we also must begin to grow spiritually after being begotten by God's Spirit.

If you are truly the kind of Christian described in the Bible, then you are now a begotten child of God. You were impregnated with the spiritual germ or sperm of eternal life so you could begin the process of spiritual growth. But you are not yet born of God--not yet composed of spirit--not yet immortal. And if you are not yet begotten of God--a genuine Christian by Bible definition (Rom. 8:9)--then you have not yet even begun this process!

Now let's look a little further into the matter of spiritual growth, once an individual is begotten by God's Holy Spirit.

**Spiritual Growth**

Before a spirit-begotten child of God can be born into the divine Family of God, the Bible shows he must grow spiritually. While still mortal, he is to become more God-like--developing more and more of the very character of Jesus Christ. Let's study the scriptures showing how this miraculous change and growth can be accomplished.

1. Must spirit-begotten Christians change their former ways of living which were contrary to God's law? Rom. 12:1-2. What is this changing process producing in true Christians? Eph. 4:22-24. Be sure to also read verses 25-32 of chapter 4, and verses 1-12 of chapter 5.

COMMENT: One's basic attitude of mind must be changed--converted. This transformation is a tremendous undertaking. It requires a miracle! The receiving and indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the power needed to help renew one's mind.

2. Therefore, are begotten Christians admonished to grow spiritually? II Peter 3:18. Are they to be like humble little children growing up--this time spiritually? I Peter 2:1-2; Matt. 18:2-3.

COMMENT: As explained before, once we have repented and received God's Spirit, divine life has been begotten in our minds. Our spiritual life has begun as a very small "seed" which must then grow. To grow spiritually, we must take in spiritual nourishment. Just as the embryo in a mother's womb must be nourished with life-giving food through the placenta, so we must be nourished by the Word of God. "... The words that I speak unto you," said Jesus, "they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). Those words are recorded in the Bible--and Jesus said we are to live by every word of God (Matt. 4:4). We drink in these life-giving words from the Bible through reading, studying and meditating (thinking) on what we read. We also absorb spiritual nourishment through personal, intimate, daily contact with God in prayer and through regular Christian fellowship with God's other begotten children in His Church. (More about this later.)

3. Are we to work toward developing the very character of God? Matt. 5:48. COMMENT: Since it is impossible for any human being (with the exception of Jesus Christ who became mortal flesh and blood) to achieve absolute spiritual perfection in this life, the obvious intent of Jesus' statement is that we should strive to become "perfect"--like our Father in heaven. Only when born again at the resurrection will this process be complete, for then we will actually be perfect as the Father and Christ are now (I John 3:2,9). But in the meantime, Jesus tells us to strive toward that end, growing toward spiritual perfection while still mortal beings!

But what, exactly, is spiritual growth? It is the development of the spiritual character of God! The impregnation of your mind by the Holy Spirit will plant within you the seed of the divine nature of God. It will make possible the development of His character in you. Thus, once spirit-begotten, we are to gradually grow to become more and more like God in the way we think, act and do things.

We develop the very character of God by obeying Him, and by giving of ourselves to others in serving and helping our fellowman. This kind of character is developed in Christians through independent free choice combined with learning, experience, trial and test.

It is interesting to note that years of experience with people of every social level and walk of life have shown that every Christian who is truly growing and developing in spiritual character has his heart completely in the Work of God, which the living Christ has called His servants to do as His instruments. One's "works," therefore, also include his part in helping to spread the good news of Christ's true Gospel to all mankind (Matt. 24:14; 28:19-20).

4. According to the apostle Paul, whom must all spirit-begotten Christians strive to emulate? Eph. 4:15. What is to be the end result of this growing process? Gal. 4:19; Eph. 4:13.

5. Will Christ "live" in a spirit-begotten Christian to help him grow spiritually? Col. 1:27-29; Gal. 2:20; I John 4:2-4; Heb. 13:20-21. Exactly how will Christ dwell in us? Phil. 1:19; 2:5; Rom. 8:8-10; Titus 3:5-6.

COMMENT: Not only must the words of God flow into our minds through Bible study, but spirit must also flow into our minds. Recall that each spirit-begotten Christian has received the Holy Spirit of God, which united with the "human" spirit that is in everyone's mind. That is what begets us. But that new spiritual life must grow spiritually, much like the fetus in a mother's womb--until it is finally born.

Added to the germ of spiritual life which proceeds from the Father there must be a continual supply of Spirit sent from Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:19) so that our minds can grow spiritually. Only in this way can our minds become more and more spiritual, growing toward the maturity of the spiritual character of Christ.

Jesus Christ is the Word personified--Christ is the Bible in action. If we have the "mind of Christ"--if Jesus Christ, so to speak, lives His life in us by means of the Holy Spirit--we have at hand the power to grow spiritually as we yield to His Spirit. We have the capacity to grow toward perfect, God-like character. Let's draw another analogy to further understand. The Spirit we may receive can be compared to a current of electricity flowing through a light bulb. We are that bulb. But there could be no light without a filament inside of the bulb. The filament is comparable to the spiritual seed from the Father. The Spirit from Christ can be compared to the electricity flowing through the filament. And so as we receive more Spirit from Christ, we emit more "spiritual light"!

The expression "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18) does not mean to be filled with emotional manifestations which come from the flesh and not from God's Spirit. It means that we are imbued with the Spirit of God which is administered through Jesus Christ in His office as High Priest. Notice again how Paul explained this when he addressed spirit-begotten Christians in the Church at Rome: "But ye are not in the flesh"--not motivated by fleshly passions--"but in the Spirit"--motivated and guided by the Holy Spirit--"if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you"--that is, the Holy Spirit from God the Father transmitting His characteristics. But notice what Paul adds: "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). He does not belong to Christ--he is not a true Christian!

Paul was talking about the Holy Spirit from God the Father which begets us as children of God,and the Spirit of Jesus Christ, which fills our minds so we can grow spiritually, and be able to resist sin by giving us the strength to overcome the attitude of the devil which leads us to sin. This begettal and growth through the Holy Spirit has unfortunately never been understood by most people.

**Great Spiritual Benefits Now**

We've already seen that many marvelous blessings are made possible through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. But there are yet other great benefits available through the Spirit of God.

1. Just how many things does God make available to spirit-begotten Christians through His divine power? II Peter 1:3.

2. Can the human mind--having only the "human" spirit which imparts only human understanding--understand the spiritual things of God? I Cor. 2:9,

14. What must be added before a person can comprehend spiritually revealed knowledge? Verses 10-13.

COMMENT: The Holy Spirit gives you the capacity to understand and grasp spiritual concepts and principles--the very truth of God! In John 6:63 Christ revealed that His words are spiritual in nature: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit...." God also revealed in Romans 7:14 that His law is spiritual. Therefore we see that the Bible and the laws and principles it contains are spiritual in makeup. And spiritual things cannot be comprehended by one who does not possess the Spirit of God.

This is not to say the Bible cannot be understood in an academic sense. Many are thoroughly familiar with what it says--some can even recite large portions of God's Word from memory. But God inspired Paul to say that spiritual things are beyond the comprehension of human intellect alone! Spiritual things simply cannot be seen with the eye, heard with the ear, felt with the hands. The human mind, which can receive knowledge only through these physical channels, can never really comprehend spiritual concepts and principles without the aid of God's Holy Spirit. The greatest scientific and philosophical minds simply cannot really come to know and understand spiritual truths with their natural minds. Just as surely as no animal brain--such as that of a cow, for example--can comprehend or understand human affairs, so no human mind can have comprehension of spiritual things on the divine plane unless and until it has received the Holy Spirit of God!

Without the Holy Spirit a person cannot really understand the Bible. And so the average individual is hostile and unreceptive to the truth of God and looks upon those who understand and practice it as peculiar! As Paul said, spiritual things are "foolishness" to the unconverted (I Cor. 2:14).

Before their conversion, God's begotten children did not understand the Bible and God's way of life. But then God began to draw them (John 6:44) to Christ by His Spirit--He began to grant certain spiritual understanding. They were led to understand the depths of true repentance. After baptism and the receipt of the Spirit of begettal from the Father and the Spirit of Christ, they began to truly keep the laws of God and to comprehend and understand their greatness. And the more they yielded to God and His law, the greater became their spiritual understanding. Notice what God inspired David to write in this regard: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that DO his commandments..." (Ps. 111:10).

3. Is the "carnal" (fleshly) mind with which we were all born therefore unable to comprehend the true spiritual intent of God's law, and therefore unable to obey it--unable to really love God and man? Rom. 8:7-8; Jer. 17:9; Gal. 5:19-21.

4. But what are the capabilities of a spiritually motivated mind? Rom. 8:6; Gal. 5:22-23. Will the Holy Spirit in us grant us the strength to do good works--to literally obey God? Phil. 2:13; Heb. 13:20-21.

COMMENT: It is important to understand that the Holy Spirit will not possess you as does a demonic spirit being of the devil's kingdom possess a person. And God's Spirit in you will not force you to live righteously. But it will strengthen you spiritually, and even physically when necessary, to do God's will as you exert your will and determination to follow God's Spirit as it leads you to see and understand God's way.

5. Do begotten children of God also have direct access to the Father and Christ in heaven? Eph. 2:13-14, 18; Heb. 10:19-20; 4:14-16. What are the special advantages of this close relationship? Matt. 21:22; Heb. 4:16. Why may we receive what we ask? I John 3:22-24; 5:14.

COMMENT: A Christian may come boldly to the Father and Christ the Son in prayer to request help in whatever form necessary, and can expect to receive it according to God's will, if he is striving to please God in the way he conducts his life. Divine guidance, intervention, wisdom, understanding, inspiration, as well as protection, legitimate needs, and power to do God's will--all these and more are available through contact with God as made possible by His Spirit.

6. In what other way does the Holy Spirit help a Christian? Rom. 8:26-27.

7. Does God also grant His human instruments the spiritual power needed to conduct His Work on earth? Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:18-20.

COMMENT: The gift of the Holy Spirit provides the power by which to carry out Christ's great commission of preaching the Gospel to the world. That power is active and working dynamically in the collective body of Christians God has called to do His end-time Work today

**The "Fruit of the Spirit"**

Recall that the presence of God's Spirit in one's mind, or the lack thereof, is the sole factor in determining whether or not an individual is really a Christian (Rom. 8:9). Therefore, it is imperative that we understand just how the Holy Spirit is to be manifested in a Christian's life.

1. Did Jesus Christ clearly indicate that a person is known by his "fruits," or works? Matt. 7:20. In what way did He characterize Himself, His Father, and their followers? John 15:1-8. Does God expect Christians to bear only a little fruit? Verses 5, 8.

COMMENT: This is the reason Christ calls and chooses His disciples--to bear fruit! "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain..." (John 15:16). Jesus was not talking about a momentary sensual thrill or experience--coupled with a "testimony"--that proves you are one of His. You must be led by the Holy Spirit to be Christ's (Rom. 8:14), and bear spiritual fruit! But what will God's Spirit lead and guide you to do? What spiritual "fruit," or results, does the Holy Spirit produce in one who is striving to do the will of God?

Fruit is classified as the edible, usable portion of a plant or vine. Christ is the "vine," and we--if we are His begotten children--are the "branches." Our fruit is what we produce as Christians that is usable to Jesus Christ. Now the good we produce comes from the vine--from Christ! Let's understand. A vine produces grapes, not thorns. An apple tree produces apples, not thistles. The vine determines what fruit should be borne. By this simple analogy we see that it is Christ who determines what kind of fruit we should bear as Christians. That fruit is a result of having the mind of Christ at work in us as made possible by the Spirit of God.

2. How did the apostle Paul, who was inspired of Christ, outline the fruit which the Holy Spirit produces in a Christian? Gal. 5:22-23.

COMMENT: The Holy Spirit imparts to you the traits of God's character. If we lack these characteristics in our lives, then we are likely to be producing many of the opposite fruits called the "works of the flesh." These undesirable works are described in Galatians 5:19-21. They include strife, division, and various objectionable states of mind. All the works of the flesh contribute to the general misery and unhappiness of the individual, being thoroughly un-satisfying and un-fulfilling.

3. What is the very first fruit Paul lists? Gal. 5:22; Rom. 5:5. Is love the basic characteristic of God's nature? I John 4:16. Is it the greatest attribute God transmits to us by the Holy Spirit? I Cor. 13:13. (Be sure to read all of chapter 13.)

COMMENT: The first and most important fruit of God's Spirit dwelling in the minds and hearts of converted human beings is LOVE. It is not just another form of human love, but the divine love that comes directly from God!

4. Is this the same love that will enable us to "fulfill"--to obey--God's laws? Rom. 13:10.

COMMENT: The love of God--imparted to human beings by the Holy Spirit--runs down the riverbed of God's law--the Ten Commandments. It is manifested first of all in adoration and worship of God and literal obedience to Him; and then in outgoing concern, compassion, kindness and service toward other human beings (see Matt. 22:37-40). The original Greek word for the word "love" (in Gal. 5:22) is agape. In context it means devotedness or kindly concern--an intense desire to serve God and man. John said: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments..." (I John 5:2-3). Notice the two necessary elements: 1) love God, and 2) love the children of God--human beings.

5. What is one of the principle ways in which love manifests itself toward our neighbors? Rom. 13:10.

COMMENT: Did you notice that? The kind of love imparted by God's Spirit works no ill to anybody! Rather, God's love is just the opposite--a deep concern and an intense desire to serve, help and encourage others. When you receive the Holy Spirit, this is the very first fruit you should begin to show. You should think or work no ill toward anyone, but rather learn, develop, think on and act on a profound concern and a fervent desire to serve God and man.

Now that's a tall order! But over a period of time--not all at once--you can begin to exhibit this wonderful fruit in your life as you exercise and use God's Holy Spirit. The other fruits of the Spirit, mentioned by Paul in Galatians 5:22-23 and which we will now cover, amplify the attitude of love. They are simply added expressions of this divine love given to an individual whom God begets with His Holy Spirit.

6. What is the second fruit that Paul lists in Galatians 5:22? Is it God's will that we be literally filled with joy? Rom. 15:13.

COMMENT: Some people think of "joy" as the end result of some kind of self-gratification--a new toy, new car, new girlfriend, new home, new baby, etc. Physically speaking, when things go "your way," the emotion you feel is "joy."

7. Does the Bible give rich, deep meaning to this vital fruit of God's Spirit? Luke 15:7, 10.

COMMENT: What causes the angels to have joy? Is it something personal they receive? Is it adding to or gratifying the self in some way? It is none of these. Their joy is in seeing others receive something good for them--in this case as a result of peoples' repentance, which eventually leads to eternal Sonship in God's Kingdom. The angels delight in seeing human beings begin to learn the way of life that will result in the good, lasting, permanent blessings of God's Kingdom.

8. What kind of joy does Jesus Christ experience? Heb. 12:2.

COMMENT: Christ was willing to suffer in anticipation of the real joy he would afterward experience in seeing fellow heirs born into God's Kingdom. This was made possible only through the sacrifice of His life! "Joy" received from personal gratification is only temporary. The car wears out, the ball game is over, the baby grows up, the stomach empties. None of these physical things--though perfectly all right to enjoy for the time--can bring permanent, lasting joy. Christ and the righteous angels receive joy from the outgoing giving of themselves to God and others! This "kind" of joy lasts for all eternity and does not require constant bolstering and rejuvenating with more and more objects and things.

9. What is the third fruit which God's Spirit will manifest in a Christian's life? Gal. 5:22.

COMMENT: Peace of mind is what everyone would like to have, but what so few really possess. Many vainly attempt to achieve peace of mind through escape into alcohol, other drugs, bizarre activities, etc. A person who truly has peace of mind has greater control over his emotions--even in trying circumstances. He enjoys greater tranquility and calm, quiet serenity, together with orderliness of mind.

10. Does peace of mind come from keeping the Ten Commandments? Ps. 119:165.

COMMENT: No one who consistently breaks God's law can have real peace of mind. He will have fears and frustrations, as well as a guilty conscience. Notice how David's words apply: Does a thief have peace of mind when he sees a police car driving by? Is he calm and serene? If he's a good actor, he may appear to be outwardly, but inside he is a seething caldron,hotly activated by his adrenal glands. Always he has to be prepared to run and escape. This man can never find real peace unless and until he repents of--QUITS--breaking God's Ten Commandments, especially the eighth!

A liar is no better off. He must continue to lie in order to cover up the lies he has already told. Solomon wrote: "Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel" (Prov. 20:17). The liar must always be on the alert to avoid having to "eat his words." And when he finally does, they will taste like gravel. One can never have peace of mind with this type of pressure weighing on him all the time.

The person who keeps God's laws knows he is doing the right thing. His goals and purposes are stabilized. His life isn't fraught with frustrations. He has no guilty conscience. He is at peace with God, with himself, and with his neighbor. He has "the peace of God which passes all understanding" (Phil. 4:7).

11. What is the fourth fruit of the Holy Spirit? Gal. 5:22.

COMMENT: "Longsuffering is an old English word for patience. It is also forbearance and clemency--which is the ability to have mercy. One who is short-tempered and easily upset with the faults and inabilities of others is inviting real trouble for himself--physically as well as spiritually. Emotionally induced illnesses can result from the lack of longsuffering. Patience is that steadiness of mind by which you wait for the result to be achieved. One who is patient does not become frustrated because problems don't always lend themselves to immediate solutions. Godly longsuffering (or patience) can only come from exercising the Holy Spirit.

12. Is gentleness also an important fruit or result of having the Holy Spirit? Gal. 5:22.

COMMENT: Gentleness means first of all usefulness, then willingness, graciousness, affability--one who obliges. A gentleman knows how to attend to other people's needs; he has taken the time to learn the social graces; he is courteous. But gentleness is much more. Notice Paul's statement to the Thessalonians: "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children" (I Thes. 2:7). The apostle used this analogy to describe how he and others of God's ministers dealt with the members of God's Church. A nurse must be firm and loving, kind and sure, able and compassionate--all at once! She must clothe, feed, train, and clean up the messes of her charges. It takes a qualified as well as a willing person to be a good nurse. The gentle person is willing to take extra steps to look out for the needs of others. He or she is willing to dirty the hands to do whatever is necessary.

13. Is goodness also a remarkable attribute of the Holy Spirit? Gal. 5:22.

COMMENT: Goodness describes a person possessing God-like qualities of virtue, uprightness and true character. This fruit of the Holy Spirit could probably be described as a summary fruit--summing up the character of a person who is exhibiting the other nine fruits listed by Paul, and as a result is daily becoming more God-like.

14. Is faith one of the vital fruits of the Spirit of God? Gal. 5:22. What is God's definition of "faith"? Heb. 11:1. Did righteous men and women of old possess this kind of faith? Read this entire chapter.

COMMENT: Faith is the "substance"--more accurately the assurance or confidence--"of things hoped for...." Before you receive what you hope for, you already have it in substance, and that substance--that assurance or confidence that you shall possess it--is faith! Faith is your evidence that you shall have what you do not yet see.

15. Is it possible to please God without faith? Heb. 11:6. Must obedience to God and other good works clearly accompany one's faith in order to make it alive and acceptable to God? Read James 2, verses 14-26.

COMMENT: As Hebrews 11:6 explains, faith toward God is expressed in absolute recognition that God exists and that He blesses the obedient. This faith is acquired. You cannot cause yourself to have that kind of faith through autosuggestion!

16. Is the faith which all Christians must possess, and which comes as a free gift from God (Eph. 2:8) through the Holy Spirit, in reality the faith of Jesus Christ? Phil. 3:9; Rom. 3:22.

17. Did Paul plainly state that Christ lived in him? Gal. 2:20. How did Christ live in him? Phil. 2:5; Rom. 8:9-10. Then did Paul live by the very faith of Christ? Notice Galatians 2:20 once again.

COMMENT: Paul did not live by his own faith. Jesus Christ dwelt in Paul through the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit of God from Christ implanted in Paul's mind the same kind of faith that can be in your mind! That faith--the very faith of Jesus Christ--will enable you to live a life of obedience to God as did the apostle Paul and all of the righteous men and women of God. If we were able, of ourselves, to supply the faith to obey God, we would earn our own salvation. It would be the result of self-righteousness that are as "filthy rags" to God (Isa. 64:6).

But the above scriptures speak only of the faith of Christ. Yes, Christ's faith--not your faith. And Christ in us imparts His own strong faith to us that trusts God to make our spiritual obedience possible, thus enabling us to please God. (Much more about this Godly faith will be covered in the next lesson.)

18. Will meekness also be one of the traits of a Spirit-led individual? Gal. 5:23. Who set an outstanding example in this regard? Num. 12:3.

COMMENT: Many falsely assume that meekness is always synonymous with weakness. Before his conversion, Moses was an arrogant and forceful individual. But after his conversion he became so dedicated to God and filled with the Holy Spirit, he was considered to be the meekest man on earth. No longer did he seek to exalt himself, but became lowly and humble in attitude.

When God was about to disinherit and destroy the children of Israel because of their many rebellions, Moses--in spite of many false personal accusations against him--entreated God to save them (Num. 14), and in meekness he instructed those who "opposed themselves" (a required trait of a servant of God--see II Tim. 2:24-25). A meek person is not a revengeful person!

19. What is the last, and one of the least understood fruits of the Holy Spirit mentioned by Paul? Gal. 5:23.

COMMENT: The world has often misunderstood the meaning of the word "temperance." Temperance does not mean abstinence! Temperance means self-control, continence, self-government, moderation--particularly in reference to sensual appetites. The proverbs of Solomon are replete with exhortations about temperance--a vital attribute of God's Spirit which must also be exercised.

20. When one receives God's Holy Spirit, will these precious fruits suddenly appear overnight--almost all at once? II Peter 3:18; Matt. 5:48.

COMMENT: Fruit does not appear overnight on a tree. It takes time, water, the nutrients of the soil and sunlight to grow. Likewise, it takes time for one to grow spiritually and manifest the "fruit of the Spirit"!

21. How can a person start down the road toward possessing the wonderful fruits imparted by the Holy Spirit of God? Acts 2:38.

**Spirit Must Be Used and Renewed**

One is spiritually minded to the degree that he produces the fruits of God's Spirit in his daily life. But merely having the Spirit as a begettal will not make you spiritually minded unless you draw on and USE the Holy Spirit every day! Let's notice how the example of the Corinthian Church in Paul's day bears this out.

1. Were the members of the Church of God in Corinth begotten by the Holy Spirit? I Cor. 3:16. Yet were many of them not really showing the fruit of God's Spirit? Verses 1-3.

COMMENT: Notice that Paul was addressing the Church of God. They were converted. They were the body of Christ, "brethren" with Paul. But they were acting like the average man on the street would act, conducting themselves in an unspiritual manner. They had strifes and arguing, debating and contentions. There was division and party spirit among them. These are some of the very same things listed as the "works of the flesh" in Galatians 5:19-21!

What was their problem? Since they were converted and had God's Spirit, which makes one a member of the Church (I Cor. 12:13), why were they producing these unspiritual, fleshly works?

2. Must the Holy Spirit be put to use? II Tim. 1:6-7.

COMMENT: Even though the members at Corinth had the Spirit as a begettal, they seemed to have lost sight of the fact that it must be used and drawn upon to produce its fruit. They were producing works of the flesh--"doing what comes naturally"--simply because they were not "stirring up" the Spirit of Christ and drawing on it to produce the results of the mind of Christ! (Phil. 1:11.) Another probable and perhaps obvious reason some were acting "carnal" was because they also lacked a supply of the Spirit of Christ. Notice how the following scriptures would bear this out.

3. Would Christ's analogy in John 7:37-39 indicate that His Spirit flows into and out from one? Notice also Isaiah 44:3; Jeremiah 17:13 and John 4:10, 13-14 in this regard. (Recall from previous studies we learned that the "LORD" referred to in Isaiah 44 and Jeremiah 17 is none other than the Christ of the New Testament before He became a human being.)

4. Therefore, does one receive all at once enough of the Spirit of Christ to last as long as he lives, or must the "supply" be replenished every day? Phil. 1:19; II Cor. 4:16.

COMMENT: The Spirit of God, which is administered by Christ, is active--DYNAMIC! It is a moving force that can't be bottled up within you. Jesus compared it to living waters which come into you, and then flow out from you in "good works"--love, joy, peace, obedience, etc. It circulates like electricity in a complete circuit--from God, into you, and then out from you as the "fruits of the Spirit," and then back to God.

Since the Spirit must flow into and out from us, then obviously it must be continually supplied. Therefore, the supply of the Holy Spirit must be renewed in us daily through contact with God in believing prayer (Luke 11:13). To put it in the vernacular, our "spiritual battery" must be continually "charged up." We must daily "plug in" to the POWER SOURCE. That source of the Holy Spirit is GOD!

**Not Generally Available Before Christ**

1. Did God initially offer the first human beings opportunity to receive

His Holy Spirit? Gen. 2:8-9, 16-17.

COMMENT: Adam and Eve were freely offered access to God's Holy Spirit

and resultant eternal life, which were symbolically represented by the

fruit of the "tree of life."

2. But from which tree did they choose to eat? Gen. 3:3-7.

COMMENT: Though their Creator warned them of the dire consequences of eating fruit from the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil," Adam and Eve were persuaded by the devil's clever arguments to partake instead of the fruit that leads to death!

3. What was their punishment for disobeying God? Gen. 3:16-19. Were they denied further access to the Holy Spirit? Verses 22-24.

COMMENT: God's express intention from the beginning was to give man the Holy Spirit. It was only after our first parents directly disobeyed a specific command from their very Creator that the Holy Spirit was denied. And so, it is truly axiomatic that God gives His Spirit only to those who strive to obey Him (Acts 5:32).

4. Did our first parents' transgression set a pattern for the entire human race? Rom. 5:12.

COMMENT: Had Adam and Eve partaken of the tree in the Garden of Eden that represented God's Holy Spirit--the "tree of [eternal] life"--they would have been begotten of God, and ultimately received eternal life, if they had continued to obey God. But Adam and Eve had to desire the Spirit of God and surrender themselves to God's will in order to receive His Spirit--exactly as all must do today. Instead, they chose not to receive the Spirit. They listened to Satan and pursued the way that leads only to death (Gen. 2:17). And because of this sin, God withheld His Holy Spirit of love and eternal life from mankind.

From the very moment mortal man disobeyed God, he was cut off from access to the Spirit of God and the gift of eternal life. Ever since then, God has permitted man to go his own way, setting apart 6,000 years during which He has allowed mankind to learn the painful results of following the dictates of the carnal mind. And mankind has continued choosing the way of disobedience to God (Rom. 3:23), which has resulted in untold suffering and death!

An atonement, therefore, had to be made for mankind--which was to be the sacrifice of Jesus Christ approximately 4000 years later. In the meantime, the Holy Spirit could not be offered to mankind in general in the face of such unexpiated disobedience. But there were some notable exceptions.

5. Did the Patriarchs and Prophets of antiquity have access to the Holy Spirit? I Peter 1:10-11.

COMMENT: Notice that "the Spirit of Christ...was in them." From Adam to Christ, apparently none were called to spiritual salvation except those called to perform a special mission. From Adam to Noah we have the record of Abel, Enoch and Noah--some 1900 years! From Noah to the calling of Israel out of Egypt there was Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. And then, of course, there was Moses and a few others. These few had the Holy Spirit and will be born into God's Kingdom, as we're clearly told in Hebrews chapter 11.

6. Did Caleb have the Holy Spirit too? Num. 14:24, 30. What about Joshua? Num. 27:18; Deut. 34:9.

7. Did the Patriarch and Prophet David also possess the Spirit of Christ? I Sam. 16:13. (Remember that the "LORD" was Christ.) What did David say that further proves he did indeed have the Spirit dwelling in him? Ps. 51:11.

COMMENT: Jesus Christ, before His human birth, was the member of the Godhead who administered the Holy Spirit to all the faithful men of old. He sent the Spirit to be in them--to give them faith and power. Notice: "And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised [God's Kingdom], since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect [at the first resurrection]" (Heb. 11:39-40, RSV).

Perhaps the New Testament "technicalities" of how one is begotten and born into God's Kingdom were not fully revealed to the Patriarchs and Prophets as they are to us today. However, they knew that through the One who would come in the human flesh to give His life as a ransom for many, they too would inherit eternal life.

8. Did God promise long ago that He would again make His Spirit available to man? Ezek. 36:26-27. Will it make obedience to His laws possible? Same verses and Hebrews 8:8-11.

9. Did Jesus specifically promise that the Holy Spirit would dwell in His disciples after His death? John 14:16-19.

10. Is the way of salvation and receipt of the Holy Spirit now open to all who are called by God? John 6:44; Acts 10:43; 13:26; 2:38.

COMMENT: Today, all who are called of God can have His life and characteristics as a very part of their being, enabling them to overcome and grow spiritually toward the Kingdom of God.

11. Will the knowledge of God and opportunity to receive the Holy Spirit ultimately be made available to everyone? Isa. 11:9; Joel 2:28-29.

**Spirit Arrives On Pentecost**

1. What did Jesus promise His disciples regarding the receipt of power from heaven? Luke 24:49. Where did He tell them to wait for this power? Same verse and Acts 1:4-5,8.

2. What miraculous display of power did the Holy Spirit cause upon its initial arrival in Jerusalem? Acts 2:1-12.

COMMENT: The Spirit of God came with a sound as a mighty rushing wind; with the appearance of divided--equally distributed--tongues of fire; it filled the disciples, speaking through them in such a manner that every man there from every nation heard them in his own language! (The miracle was in the hearing as well as in the speaking--verses 6,8).

3. What was the name of the day on which this great display of the Holy Spirit's power occurred? Acts 2:1.

COMMENT: The word "Pentecost" is a Greek word meaning "fiftieth." The Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost (a Sunday), fifty days after Jesus' resurrection. The sudden, spectacular and awe-inspiring exhibit of divine power working within Christ's disciples on that day of Pentecost heralded to the whole world the beginning of the time when all who would thirst for the Holy Spirit could receive it. It marked the beginning of the crowning act of God's supreme creative work in man--the development of Godly character. It was a forerunner of the era foretold by God long ago when He said to His ancient nation Israel (and through it to the whole world): "...the days come...that I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah...I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts..." (Jer. 31:31,33).

This mighty manifestation of the Spirit marked the coming of the power which God would use to engrave His law within the hearts of those who surrender themselves to Him. That is why God made this such a spectacular and momentous event. It was of tremendous import to all mankind, never to be forgotten and apparently never to be repeated in the same way.

**How to Receive the Holy Spirit**

1. Is the Holy Spirit a gift from God? Acts 10:45; II Tim. 1:6.

2. How readily will God give us His Holy Spirit today if we ask for it? Luke 11:10-13. But how do we know God will hear us when we ask Him in prayer? I John 3:22-24.

3. Are repentance and baptism clearly initial steps in our obedience to God by which He is bound to keep His promise to give us (beget us by) His Holy Spirit? Mark 1:14-15; Acts 2:38; 5:32.

COMMENT: Notice the stress placed upon obedience, upon submission to the will of God--to the law of God. God will give His Holy Spirit only to those who have demonstrated--both by attitude and actions--that they want to obey Him. Jesus said, "Not my will, but thine be done" (Luke 22:42). God wants to see a submissive, obedient attitude in us before He gives us His Spirit. How plain it is that the Holy Spirit is the spirit of total submission and obedience to the Father. If we surrender our wills unconditionally to God, He will give us His Spirit!

The subjects of repentance and baptism were covered thoroughly in Lessons 9 and 10. Suffice it to say, by way of review, that repentance means to turn around and go the other way--to forsake all of your ways which have been contrary to God's law, and turn to God's way which is the way of His law. To "believe the gospel" means to believe the very message Jesus brought--the good news of the coming Kingdom of God, which most assuredly includes belief on Him as personal Savior.

God makes it very plain that no one who continuously practices sin (as a way of life) will ever be born into His universe-ruling family (Gal. 5:19-21). All who desire to become born-again members of God's Family and co-rulers with Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of God, must stop sinning now--stop breaking His laws! All must REPENT of rebellion against God; must desire and actually begin to literally OBEY His Word, submitting to His authority over their lives--keeping His commandments!

After belief and sincere, heartfelt, deep repentance of sin, the next step toward becoming a Christian is water baptism. Baptism is an outward symbol of our repentance of our old sinful, disobedient life--of our complete departure from our old sinful way of living--and of our willingness now to obey God in every way.

Once you have taken these two steps, then you are unconditionally promised the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands of one of God's called and chosen ministers. God has bound Himself to perform His part if you first perform yours. God says: "... You shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." It is an absolute promise of God! There is no "perhaps," "probably," or "maybe." You WILL RECEIVE the Holy Spirit because God promised it! You can ask God thereafter to direct you, through His Holy Spirit, to lead a new life in conformity with His revealed Word--the Bible.

**The Spirit and God's Church**

1. Once we have truly repented, been baptized and received the miraculous begettal of God's Holy Spirit, do we automatically become part of a "body"? I Cor. 12:13. What body is Paul talking about? Verse 27; Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18.

COMMENT: In I Corinthians 12, the apostle Paul has drawn an analogy between the human body and God's Church. And as we discovered in Lesson 10, in verse 13 he is speaking about being baptized--put into--the spiritual "body" or Church of God. Therefore, "joining" a group that calls itself a church--having one's name on the membership roll of some group--does not make one in true fact a member of the Church Jesus founded. We cannot become a part of the body of Christ by simply making a decision to "attend" a church service. The stamp of a member of the true church of God is the begettal of the Holy Spirit. Those who have not received this Spirit are simply not a part of the true body of Christ--they are not real Christians! (Rom. 8:9.) God promises His Spirit only to those who repent of sin and are baptized (Acts 2:38; 5:32).

But after we are baptized and begotten by God's Spirit--what then?

2. What did Christ commission His ministers to do for those He has put in His Church? Matt. 28:19-20; John 21:15-17; I Peter 5:1-3. (Notice the last three words of each of the three verses in John 21.) For what purpose are God's ministers to "feed" Christ's "sheep"? Eph. 4:11-15.

COMMENT: God has set His called and chosen ministers in His Church to "feed the flock" so they may grow spiritually--"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ [the Church of God]: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect [fully mature, full grown] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:12-13).

As mentioned previously in Lesson 8, in the human realm it is the father who begets children. He does not "bring forth"; the mother does that, later. After the father's part, which initiates the process, there is always a lapse of time leading to final birth. So just as a human mother feeds her begotten child within her womb through the placenta and umbilical cord, God's children are nourished with spiritual food within His Church.

The parallel is very similar. Spiritually, God's Church is the "mother" (Gal. 4:26) of all who have been begotten by His Holy Spirit. Christ has given His ministers the responsibility to instruct, teach and counsel the members of the Church (Heb. 13:17). And as the human mother carries her unborn baby in that part of her body where she can best protect it from physical harm, the function of God's Church is to also protect the begotten children of God from the false doctrines of false ministers.

Through this "feeding" process, each Christian receives the spiritual nourishment necessary to grow spiritually until he or she is ready to be actually born at the resurrection as a very member in the joyous, ruling Family of God!

**Finding the True Church**

We have just seen that the true Church of God is that body of believers who individually have the Holy Spirit. Therefore, this church is a spiritual organism. And Jesus Christ is its head. The true church understands God's plan of salvation, and is fulfilling Christ's commission to preach the true gospel as a witness to all nations.

And as we also learned, the church is nurturing the spiritually begotten children of God whom He has put into it. Knowing this, it then becomes all important for you to definitely locate the true body of Christ. But exactly how does one go about finding God's Church and His ministers? Just where is the Church God is working through today? Don't all of the churches of denominational Christianity claim to be part of the true body of Christ? Will any church say it is not the church Jesus founded? Of course not! What, then, are some of the signs that would lead us to the true body of Christ?

1. Would the true Church of God follow Christ by upholding God's law? Matt. 5:17; 19:17-19; 28:19-20; John 15:10. Would that Church be striving to literally keep the Ten Commandments of God and other instructions of Christ? John 14:15; Rev. 3:7-8; 12:17. (Chapter 12 of Revelation personifies God's true Church as a woman.)

COMMENT: The true Church upholds God's law. It recognizes that God set in motion a law that, if obeyed, would bring humanity every good thing--abundant well-being--a full life. God's Church boldly proclaims that His law is not done away, but has been spiritually expanded by Christ (Isa. 42:21) to cover every aspect of human activity.

The true Church says with David: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105). It recognizes that God's law is one of His greatest gifts to mankind. Very few churches today can claim to teach obedience to every one of God's Ten Commandments. Those few who do acknowledge these commands refuse to obey other instructions of God found in the Bible. So don't assume that a church professing the name of God or Christ is necessarily a church that literally obeys Christ!

2. Would God's Church be attempting to discredit or devalue the Bible--relying on human traditions and ideas for its principal doctrines? Or would it deeply understand that the whole Bible--Old Testament and New--is the true Word of God? Luke 4:4; II Tim. 3:15-17; 4:2; Isa. 8:20.

COMMENT: The only "scriptures" accessible to Timothy were books of the Old Testament. God's Church believes all of the Bible to be inspired by God. The true Church uses the Old Testament as did Christ and the apostles, and believes it is also a part of God's Word for us today. (Obviously it must be understood in the light of the New Testament.) We have briefly touched on only a few of the unique characteristics of the true Church Jesus built. Others may be readily discovered by requesting our literature shown in the photo at right. (Use the convenient card and envelope enclosed with this lesson to request this free literature.)

**The Holy Spirit and You**

Now let's be very specific as far as you are concerned. How do you know when you are repentant? How do you become baptized and receive God's Holy Spirit? How can you come in contact with one of the true ministers of God? These basic questions have already been answered in this and previous lessons. As most of you students already know, God's ministers are within reach of all areas of the United States, British Commonwealth, Western Europe and much of the rest of the world.

So if you really desire water baptism and the receipt of God's Spirit--and/or you have further questions which need to be answered--write and let us know if you would like to talk with the minister of the Worldwide Church of God in your area. Or if you would prefer faster service, simply pick up the phone and dial this toll-free number in the continental United States: 800-423-4444. (Students in California, Alaska and Hawaii may call 213-577-5555, collect.) And please be sure to mention this lesson of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course.

Remember: when you do receive God's Holy Spirit, you will begin to personally sense a remarkably thrilling change in your mind--your attitude and approach toward life. And as you grow spiritually, you will experience a steady perfection of your character, a new insight in your understanding, a rejuvenated zest for life and a fantastically happy outlook toward the future!

**TEST YOUR MEMORY**

This quiz is designed to help you remember the important facts you learned in the lesson. You simply circle or underline each correct answer. After you've finished the test, check your choices with the correct answers at the end of this lesson, and then rate yourself.

1. The Holy Spirit A. is the "spirit in man." B. is simply our "inner consciousness." C. is the spiritual life and nature of God that we may receive from Him. D. is the spiritual power of God that we were born with.

2. Who is a true Christian in God's sight? A. One who professes Christianity. B. Most church goers today. C. Those who have been "born again." D. Only those who have been begotten by the Holy Spirit.

3. Why is it necessary to be begotten by God's Spirit? A. Because spiritual life and growth in us is impossible without spiritual begettal. B. It isn't necessary since we were already begotten spiritually at birth. C. So we can live perfectly in this life. D. So we can be born of God at the same time.

4. What does the Father promise spirit-begotten Christians? A. Just a slightly better life here and now. B. Riches, power and glory in this life. C. That He will one day change or raise them to immortality, power and glory. D. Nirvana.

5. Which one of the following is true? A. Spiritual concepts and principles are not beyond the comprehension of human intellect alone. B. The Bible cannot be understood in any respect. C. Only the greatest minds can understand spiritual truths with their natural minds. D. The Holy Spirit gives one the capacity to grasp the spiritually revealed truth of God.

6. How can one come to truly obey God? A. It isn't really possible. B. Through sheer human willpower. C. Through the Holy Spirit which forces you to obey. D. Through God's Spirit which will grant you the spiritual faith and strength to resist the devil and do God's will.

7. What is the love of God? A. Certainly not an attribute of His Holy Spirit. B. The chief character trait of God. C. It definitely has nothing to do with keeping His commandments. D. A sentimental feeling--another form of human love.

8. The true Church of God A. rejects the laws of God. B. is not fulfilling Christ's commission to preach the true gospel as a witness to all nations. C. upholds His Ten Commandments and strives to live by every word of God. D. is not interested in the spiritual welfare of His spirit-begotten children.

9. What makes one a member of the true Church? A. Having one's name on its membership roll. B. One's belief in Christ. C. One's baptism in water.

D. One's spiritual begettal by the Holy Spirit.

10. What is the purpose for God's Church and His ministry? A. To make the members feel righteous. B. To take the members' tithes. C. To help the members become more Christ-like, and to protect them from the devil's false ministers and doctrines. D. To make the members' decisions for them.

**TRUE OR FALSE**

11. Since we can't become spiritually perfect in this life, there is no use striving toward perfection. T F

12. We should expect today the special manifestations of the Holy Spirit's arrival on the day of Pentecost. T F

13. The "fruits of the Spirit" are manifested by those who possess and use the Holy Spirit. T F

14. The Spirit of Jesus Christ in a true Christian must be renewed daily to produce spiritual "fruit." T F

15. There is no way to discern which is the true Church of God today. T F

**MATCHING**

Draw a line from each phrase in the left-hand column to the correct/, related phrase In the right-hand column.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 16. Pentecost | A. Born again |
| 17. "Vine" | B. Agape |
| 18. "Germ" | C. Spirit-begotten |
| 19. Heirs | D. Spiritual fruit |
| 20. Joy | E. Parakletos |
|  | F. Spirit arrives |
|  | G. Spiritual growth |
|  | H. Spirit of Christ |
|  | I. Jesus Christ |
|  | J. Spirit of begettal |

**ANSWERS TO QUIZ**

**Rate Yourself**

1-C 5-D 9-D 13-T 17-I 19-20 correct excellent

2-D 6-D 10-C 14-T 18-J 16-18 correct good

3-A 7-B 11-F 15-F 19-C 13-15 correct fair

4-C 8-C 12-F 16-F 20-D