

What makes this series so valuable is that each Bible event leads the reader or the group to discover the deepest truths of the Bible for themselves. This is done through insightful multiple choice questions which draw the readers to enter into the story and find for themselves its meanings and implications which they then can apply to their own lives.

The series is best “taught” by persons who encourage the group to do most of the talking and thinking. The teacher best acts as a leader in which the group discovers its way through the Scriptural events. The teacher may help the group when he or she believes that valuable truths have been overlooked, but the first discoverers should be members of the group itself. This stirs tremendous interest on the part of the group. This also relieves the teacher of the responsibility, under older systems of teaching, to carefully master all the truths of the text and present them in a way that would hopefully interest and “teach” the group.

Almost all teachers report that their classes or groups show much more interest than before and that teaching this series is much easier than it was under the older systems of teaching.

Individuals who use these lessons for their own personal study find this investigative method interesting and meaningful. The reader is invited to sense the drama of each story in his or her own Bible and be led to discern the spiritual truths that are packed into each story.



Youth POWER

ONE CHANCE IN A LIFETIME



STEPS TO MAXIMUM POWER

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Comments: As a group, remind one another about the advice given hear about how to read your Bible. What time of day is best for you?

The Bible is your best guide. However, you do well to have one or more spiritually mature teachers or friends—especially trusted people that you can talk with, share your feelings and uncertainties and tell about your trials and your victories. As you find friends of the opposite sex, pay special attention to those who understand and share your faith. When two of you come to love one another, you want the other person to be a spiritual partner who can really be your best friend in all things. Any other decision will lead to a shallow relationship that will only bring misunderstanding and sadness to both lives and probably to others as well. A couple cannot happily build on two different foundations, and your foundation is Christ.

Talking to God. After you listen to God, you are better able to talk to him. The Bible says, ***You do not have because you do not ask God.*** James 4:2 (NIV) Jesus said, ***Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.*** Matthew 7:7 (NIV) God gives us many wonderful things even when we do not ask for them. But, how much more he would give us if we asked! This speaks, however, of what might be called “long range prayers.” This means to keep a prayer list of your greatest dreams for life, your greatest needs, your biggest ambitions. It also means to pray every day for your family and your closest friends. Use the list every day to ask for these people and these things. As you pray for them, seek with the Lord, what he might want you to do as your part in the fulfillment of these dreams or for the blessing of these people. Then, go a step forward and knock.

An example of this would be to pray for God's special person to someday be your spouse. Pray daily for this, and when you know him or her well you will be able to say, “I have been praying for you for ... (however long it might have been.)” Consciously seek God's answer. Where, for example, are you most likely to meet such a fine Christian life partner? Make it a point to go where such a person is most likely to be found. Be sociable, make friends, and God may suddenly show you the one you think it might be. How will you know? By knocking! Invite the person to have a cup of coffee with you or to go to some interesting event or to take a class with you. The person's responses will let you know if you are knocking at the right door! If not, keep seeking and carefully knocking—God will answer your prayers. The same principle applies to your deciding on your training or on a job or profession. It also is how to find God's special ministry for your life. This kind of prayer is serious, long-range praying.

Comments: What have you learned about prayer ?

Your opinions:

- ☐ I see that Jesus accepted human limitations to become our Savior
- ☐ I believe Jesus had no real struggles on earth since he is God.
- ☐ Jesus admitted that he depended on his Father for the great things he was able to do.
- ☐ Jesus spent a lot of time alone with his Father to receive both strength and guidance.
- ☐ If Jesus needed time alone with God, I need it even more.

Daily fellowship with God is something like using a telephone, with its two basic parts: the earpiece and the mouthpiece. With half, we listen to others and with the other half, we talk to them. In fellowship with God, we do both. We need to listen to him first and then talk to him. He welcomes our constant calls.

Listening to God. God speaks to us most clearly by means of the Bible, his Word. We may hear good Bible preachers and teachers and read good Christian books. But, most of all, we need to hear God himself. You don't have to read a lot each day, but have a special time when you will always listen to God, read his Word, and have time to pray. Get an inexpensive Bible in easily understood English that you can mark up. Underline the verses that most impress you. Write ideas about what you read in the margins. When you find special passages that are worth reading again and again, put a border around them. These are the special gems you find. Collectors of jewelry take their collection out again and again to admire it, and maybe show it to others. The same thing is true of collectors of valuable coins or stamps. You are a collector of something far greater: You collect the most thrilling promises and truths of God. These enrich your life, fill you with hope, give you encouragement and guidance any time of the day. If you mark those "gems," then, when you are a little discouraged or low on faith, flip through the Bible and just see some of your "gem collection." Read some new parts of the Bible every day, but if you don't find real gems, take a little time to go back and re-read gems you had marked. Start the day happy with the Lord. You will feel a lot better and other people, not knowing why, will feel better just being with you.

As you read the Bible, look for God's hidden messages for you written between the lines of Scripture. In other words, whatever you read in the Bible, think about how it relates to your life and your issues in life. Let the Lord encourage you in your hard times and guide you on to mountain paths where you will see God's greatness and his great purposes for you. At the beginning, give emphasis to the books that most inspire you. These will include, certainly, all books of the New Testament., starting with one or two of the Gospels and then the Book of Acts. The Psalms, Proverbs and Isaiah are Old Testament treasure chests. Genesis and Exodus, the books of Samuel, of Daniel and Nehemiah are key books to the Old Testament. In time, read the whole Bible, but go back and re-read the gems you marked off with borders. When the entire Bible is marked up, get another one and start over again!

Step One

One Chance in a Lifetime

The next time you go to a large store, pay attention to the people you see there—especially the adults. Most may be middle-aged although you will see young adults and the aged as well. Do they look and sound like what you want to be at that age? If you settle for the law of averages, you will eventually look and be like what you see there. When you see the oldest person in the store, man or woman, try to imagine what they were like at your age—because every adult was once your age! All of them, without exception, have lost something you have right now—Youth Power. Youth Power is given to people only once in a lifetime, and you have it right now. But what will you do with it? And why does it matter, anyway?

"As the twig is bent, so grows the mighty oak," is an old American saying. If it is bent in youth, it will be a really ugly sight twenty years from now. Many may say, "Why should that bother me now?" Simply because most of your life-time you will be looking back and wondering why you didn't use your Youth Power when you had it. You owe it to your future self. That is the self you will be living in and with perhaps for another 60 years or more. Now is the one time you can cast the mold for what you will be all across those years. With Youth Power, you can start to build a glorious skyscraper of a life or you can settle for a shack. The earlier you decide and act, the greater your prospects.

Comments: It has been said by some that today's youth, as a whole, are only interested in now and not about their future. What do you think? What about you?

Most people of your age wonder who might become the great love of their life—the one who will complete his or her being sexually, socially, financially and in every other respect. You will most likely attract and win a person of similar values as yours. Skyscrapers will attract skyscrapers and shacks will attract shacks. So, in a large measure, what you get will be in the measure of what you are yourself. You want the very best for yourself in the not too distant future and you will want the very best for all of your life.

Therefore, your Youth Power can be used to make of yourself the very best for your own self's sake, but also to attract and win the very best loved one for all of your life ahead. Or you can settle for shack living right now and put down this guide booklet. The fact that you have read this far probably means that you have higher expectations of your life than that.

Comments: Aside from what you have just read, what do you think are reasons many young people should be interested in making themselves into the best possible adults?

Youth Power can be wasted, or it can be used to build real heroes—people of strength and beauty. Strength is what you will find in yourself and beauty is what others will see in you. For men, "beauty" may not sound very masculine, but the inner core of the greatest men on earth is nothing less than beautiful. Many women are knock-outs in appearance, but are ugly hags inside. Without hesitation, we can say that beauty, of the most glorious kind, can and should be

the inner core of whom and what you are. And the better you are inside, the better you will look on the outside.

You may or may not be very religious, or even interested in religion. The pathway set before you here will not recommend any specific religion or church to you. However, the truly greatest people to live on earth are more than mere humans—they have a certain divine quality about them. It cannot be explained educationally, morally or psychologically—it goes beyond the realm of our animal nature. We can be beautiful in many aspects, but be like a decorated lamp that has everything but light. Youth Power is enormously enhanced when that light is turned on.

What about it? Are you ready to explore your possibilities? In everything that follows, you will be making the choices. No one will pressure you in any way because only you have the driver's wheel of your own life. Most people in life, however, don't even know where they are going or where they will end up. Hopefully, the map of the road ahead will be of help to you.

Assignment: Write a secret list of things that you would like to describe you ten years from now. Keep it until the end of this course and then see if you want to make any changes.

Step 5

Turbo-Charged Youth Power

Youth Power that is divine begins the moment a person, of any age, turns away from a self-centered, sinful life and takes Christ as Lord of all and Savior from all one's sins. Christian lives, however, can be like automobiles. Some barely "put-put" along and others zip up and down the hills and mountains with turbo-charged power. This series of studies would be incomplete if it didn't come with instructions on how to get the most out of your car, that is, out of your new life. Adventure lies ahead!

How nice it would be if you were given a brand new car, and, with it, they gave you a master mechanic to care for it. Every day, he would wash and polish the car, dust and vacuum the interior, fill the gas tank, check the oil level, the tires, and then double-check the engine. If any problem was found, he would take care of it immediately. Sound good? Yes, too good to be true!

When you receive eternal life from the Lord, however, He does give you a Master Mechanic who is ready to work every day on YOU! That Master Mechanic is God's own Holy Spirit, Who is the Third Person of the Trinity. When you received Christ as your Master and Savior, He installed eternal life in your heart and life and He will keep your spiritual motor purring, and give you a daily cleaning that can make the Father proud to call you His own. He only does, however, what you allow Him to do. If you forget about Him, and act like you don't need Him, you will soon resemble a mud-splashed car with one cylinder not working. You may "put-put" down the road, but what a sight you will be!

Comments: Have you seen both "put-put" and powerful Christians? What made them that way?

The main secret to keeping any car in good shape is regular maintenance. Christians of great power are people who come to God constantly for regular "maintenance." But, what does this mean? Mostly, it means having regular fellowship with God, being God's friend every day.

We are struck by the fact that Jesus regularly began his day in private fellowship with God. His faith was strengthened by being alone with God and it is evident that he received daily instructions from his Father in this way. He had given up his qualities of omnipresence (being everywhere at once), omniscience (knowing all things) and omnipotence (having all power.) For these reasons, he made this remarkable statement: ***"Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does."*** John 5:19-20 (NIV)

God's Revolution in each person is to turn from one's uncertain path ahead and, instead, follow Jesus, who said, ***"I am the way, the truth and the life."*** John 14:6 God's way, carefully followed, is His promised way to the fullest life possible. Again, we see that God made a promise to his people that is as good today as the first day it was spoken, ***"I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. . . . You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."*** Jeremiah 29:11;13 (NIV)

Your Spiritual Conclusions: (Every person should answer each question.)

- ☐ I believe the self-centered life is the best—I know what is best for me.
- ☐ I believe my life is given to me by God and is meant for something good.
- ☐ I believe I can trust Christ with my life—His plans give me real hope.
- ☐ I plan to go my own way wherever It may lead.
- ☐ I believe that Jesus is the Way—I trust him with my life.
- ☐ I believe that Jesus died for sinners, making it possible for me to be saved.
- ☐ I know that Jesus died for me. I trust him and will live for him.
- ☐ Right now, I am afraid to trust God. I'll stay on my old path.
- ☐ There are things I can't turn loose of to follow Jesus.
- ☐ I seek Jesus with all my heart and am finding faith to follow him.
- ☐ I can reject Christ or take him as Lord. I take him with all my heart.
- ☐ I know all roads but Christ's are downward roads to failure and death.
- ☐ I will let God work out his plans that give me a hope and a future.
- ☐ I know I have a future with the Lord. Lord, let's go!

A sample prayer of faith: **Lord Jesus, thank you for dying for all my sins and offering me forgiveness and new life. I take you as my Master and my Savior, and give you myself in exchange for eternal life. So be it. Amen.**

Step Two

Birds Are Meant For Flying

Fish were created for swimming, earthworms for tunneling and birds are meant for flying. But what were you meant for? The answers you get will depend on who does the talking. If you ask your friendly drug dealer, it is to get high. If you ask a swindler, he will tell you it is to trust in him and get rich. Better people, like teachers, may tell you that it is to get a good education and army recruiters tell you that it is to join up. And many other ideas are out there—some will kill you and others may help you. But what do you think you were meant for?

Sadly, most people are never quite sure how to answer that question, because they don't have a clue. They wander through life and at the end, they may shake their heads and ask, "Now, what was that all about?" Life seemed to have little purpose and brought much sadness and disappointment and little real happiness. If you don't know your purpose as a young person, it is unlikely you will ever find out later in life. Youth power exists only when you come to understand what it means for your life, and then hit the road, marching.

There are two basic viewpoints in life: the secular "scientific" viewpoint is that there really is no purpose in the universe—everything is a matter of chance. It speaks of the "survival of the fittest" and an application of that rule is to kill or be killed — figuratively speaking, usually. Humans are compared to animals and our task is to survive and reproduce, and then become compost. There is no right and wrong except as society may decide. German society, perhaps the most scientific people in the early 20th Century, decided that their high purpose was to wipe out the inferior races and take over the world. By the "laws of science," the Nazis might seem to be right. Some believe that killing inferior people would improve the world!

The other basic concept is the very opposite of the so-called "scientific" view. It is that there is purpose in the universe and there is right and wrong—and not simply what different people may say is right or wrong. To accept that view, however, is to accept the idea that God is, and the universe is his creation. If not, we are back to the animal philosophy, and your life is not all that different from that of a dog living on the street.

Comments: What do you see in American youth society today that seems to bring the desires and goals of life to the level of dogs in the street: In regard to sex? Drug use? Personal responsibility? Nobility of purpose? Hope? Loyalty to family, spouse, friends and others?

All this is philosophical—logical human conclusions. And there are only two possible conclusions: 1) there is no purpose in the universe and we are accidents of nature, doing the best we can in a “dog eat dog” world. Or, 2) God is, there is purpose in the universe and we are here on purpose. We are much more than animals—we were “created in the image of God,” and are capable of great and noble things that go far beyond the mere matter of survival. Most of us don’t claim to be brilliant. How can we know what the truth is? How can we be sure we are on the right path? We can begin by considering both sides of the argument and see which side is most likely and most promising.

If you attend a public school, watch television, use the internet and pay attention to most of the people around you, you will see that the God factor is not widely followed. You are taught, entertained, persuaded, ordered and perhaps abused and used by people all around you—but with no reference at all as to why you are here in the first place. We live in a secular society and secularism thinks, speaks and acts as if there is no God. He is not to be taken into account, except, perhaps as a threat to our freedom. In the “modern world,” this is the attitude you have seen around you and there is no need to use any more space here to explain or defend it. You have heard that side of the argument for a long time.

The other conclusion is that God is, and that His existence has everything to do with your happiness and success in life. You have probably heard little about that and if so, it is about time that you do. Youth power depends on your understanding it. To go ahead with this study is to understand that birds were created to fly and, figuratively speaking, you were also. The real beginning of happiness is to understand who you are and what you are here for.

Though you may not be sure, assume for a moment that God is and wants to take your life, bless it and make it a blessing. Assume for a moment that he has a purpose for your life. All right, if those things are true, God would be responsible to let you know about it, right? You may be told by some to look into your inner being, whatever that is. But you won’t find God there—you will only find more of the same thing you see on the outside. No, God has to somehow appear to you, reveal himself, and let you know what is the truth. If God reveals his truth, you can be sure it will be almost the direct opposite of what everyone else is saying. If it is not, be careful! Men invent gods, and those gods always look a lot like the men who invented them. No, if God is real, he is a Revolutionary God and his values are completely different from the insipid, self-serving, harmful and useless values of little people. We do not create God, he created us and we need to see him and hear him. “How will we do that?” you may ask. Are we talking about dreams and visions? No. We are talking about something much more solid than that.

Thinking about Paul’s example:

- ☐ Saul, later called Paul, demonstrated that people can be sincerely wrong about Christ.
- ☐ People who are enemies of Christ can potentially become some of his greatest followers.
- ☐ Christ assumes complete liberty to tell his followers what to do.
- ☐ Paul began his way to victory when he immediately obeyed the Lord.
- ☐ To be a Christian is just to believe in Jesus, but not to obey him.

Paul’s change from being Christ’s enemy is called “repentance,” meaning a turning away from what one was before knowing Christ. The fact that he obeyed Christ was because of “faith”—he believed in Christ completely. Repentance, turning our back on our sinful past, and Faith, turning to Jesus for forgiveness, salvation and new life are two sides of the same coin. Repentance is what we leave behind, faith in Christ is our road ahead.

To repent and trust God is the secret to having a personal spiritual revolution. Hardly a week after the resurrected Jesus was lifted up to heaven in the sight of many believers, Peter preached to Jesus’ killers with these words: ***Repent then, and turn to God, so that he will forgive your sins. If you do, times of spiritual strength will come from the Lord and he will send Jesus, who is the Messiah he has already chosen for you. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for all things to be made new.*** Acts 3:19-21 Peter then quotes Moses’ prophecy about Jesus: ***Anyone who does not obey that prophet shall be separated from God’s people and destroyed.*** Acts 3:23

Opinions: How do you understand these words?

- ☐ Our sins are forgiven when we repent of our sins and turn to God.
- ☐ The words, “If you do,” means that people are given the choice to turn from sin to God or to continue in hopeless darkness.
- ☐ Those who do repent and trust Christ will be given spiritual strength from the Lord to enable us to live different kinds of lives than honor God.
- ☐ Jesus is waiting in heaven until the time comes for ALL THINGS to be made new.
- ☐ Those who fail to believe enough to obey Christ, taking him as the very Lord of their lives, face eternal destruction when he comes.

The Revolution of Jesus means a change of government in one’s life. Before, we were our own king or queen and did what pleased us. That independent life only brings trouble and sorrow, defeat and death. We find out about Christ and take him as Lord and Savior, turning away from our old self-rule to Jesus Christ, our powerful loving Lord. When that happens, we are ready to be his powerful revolutionaries in a spiritually empty world.

People wonder how it was that Jesus could take such common people as this and turn them into some of the greatest men in all history. Part of the answer was that when he called, they didn't count the cost but just got up and followed him. The other part of the answer is that Jesus himself changes his true followers, giving them character, purpose, power and beauty that men and women without him will never ever know.

Comments: What basic difference do you see between the young Apostles and young people today who settle for a failed life of self-satisfaction?

The Revolution Is Personal

The word "revolution" speaks of a turning. The Revolution by the power of Christ takes place when one's life has been completely turned around by God. It is a turn from aimlessness to divine purpose, from emptiness to fullness, from death to life. One must agree to the turn, and then let God do the spinning. Paul described it as a death to the old failed life that enables Christ to come in and fill the empty shell. Paul explains his complete turnaround in life when he trusted in Christ and submitted to him: ***It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. This life that I live now, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave his life for me.*** Galatians 2:20

Thinking it through:

- ☐ Paul explains his power by saying that his "big I" (his egocentric self) is dead. What we see is Christ living in him, filling his life.
- ☐ The "life I live now" speaks of his continued physical life, now with Christ.
- ☐ Paul's connection to Christ is his faith in him, a faith that gives him life.
- ☐ Paul admitted that what he did came from the power of Christ in him.
- ☐ Paul said his power was his own personal ability.
- ☐ Christ did two things for Paul: He loved him, and he gave his life for him.
- ☐ We can say that Christ gave his life for Paul and Paul gave his for Christ.

Paul's life was revolutionized on a road on the outskirts of Damascus where he headed with murder in his heart. He hated Christians and was authorized to arrest them, leading them to prison or death. The resurrected Jesus met him there in a blinding light and asked, ***"Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."*** Acts 9:4-6 (NIV) Paul had doubted Jesus' resurrection but now he discovered that Christ is real. When Christ called him, he started telling Paul what to do. From that moment on, Paul became a disciple of Jesus Christ and was transformed into a man who was, after Christ himself, perhaps the greatest spiritual leader in human history.

There is a theological word that describes it: incarnation. This is the word that explains how God himself came to earth to be born of a woman (to be born of the flesh), to be seen and heard by many, to demonstrate his power, love and compassion, to deal with our greatest problem at great cost to himself, to die like a man and be raised from death to eternal life like God. The virgin who was to bear him was told by the archangel Gabriel to name the child "Jesus"—"God Saves." When you study Jesus' life, you must decide if he is what was promised or not. If not, you can put this study aside. But, if he is what he claimed to be, you must decide what you will do about it and the right decision will mean eternal life for you as well.

Jesus' youngest disciple, John, wrote decades later about his experience with Jesus and that of his friends: ***We write to you about the Word of life, which has existed from the very beginning. We have heard it, and we have seen it with our eyes; yes, we have seen it, and our hands have touched it. When this life became visible, we saw it; so we speak of it and tell you about this eternal life which was with the Father and was made known to us.*** 1 John 1:1-2

1. What did John say about the disciples' experience with Jesus?

- ☐ He describes Jesus as being "the Word of life"—meaning God's life-giving communication with mankind.
- ☐ He said that they heard Jesus, saw him, and even touched him.
- ☐ He said that it was all a dream.
- ☐ He said that Jesus himself is eternal life from the Father, given to us.

What we have seen and heard we announce to you also, so that you will join with us in the fellowship that we have with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We write this in order that your/our joy may be complete. 1 John 1:3-4

2. Why did John write in the Bible?

- ☐ He wanted to tell us exactly what he saw and heard personally.
- ☐ He wanted us to join him and the earliest disciples and know God.
- ☐ He said that it is a scary thing to know God through Jesus.
- ☐ He said that he wrote so that we would have real joy.

The Bible is the one Book that offers real promise for your life. God, himself, speaks in the Old Testament saying, ***I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for. Then you will call to me. You will come and pray to me and I will answer you. You will seek me, and you will find me because you seek me with all your heart.*** Jeremiah 29:11-13

This was his word to ancient Israel, but it is also his word of promise to all who seek him and find him because they seek him with all their heart.

How do you interpret these words from God?

- ☐ God knows the plans he has for those who seek him and they are terrific.
- ☐ God has no plans at all; we are left to the laws of chance.
- ☐ God's plans for his people are to bring about the future we hope for.
- ☐ We are alone in this world and only the strong will survive.
- ☐ We can trust that God's plans for us will not bring disaster but prosperity.
- ☐ God is going to push His plans on me.
- ☐ God's wonderful plans for me will only be revealed when I seek him with all my heart.
- ☐ When we come to God with all we are, He will hear us and answer us.

There are two ways to live in this world God has created: We can choose to live in God's world without God, take our chances and suffer the possible consequences. Or we can choose to live with God and have his constant love, care and protection. To do that, however, we must be made right with God. We must become his children by adoption, so the Bible says. And that requires revolutionary decisions on our part. It requires a miracle of God in our lives, and one he is ready to make. It will happen only when you decide to seek him with all your heart.

If that is your desire, pray the following prayer: **God, I have lived all of my life on my own and it is not easy for me to seek you with all my heart. Have pity on me and give me an open heart that I might understand and truly come to you. Amen.**

Step 4

It's a Revolution of the Courageous

Throughout history, the people who bring revolution are always young people. Most people who are older are settled in their ways and tend to conform to the status quo. Young people are, by nature, idealistic. They are asking questions: Why are things the way they are? Why not make the necessary changes? What must we do now?

Youth Power is the power of Christ's Revolution. The courageous and visionary ones answer his call while weak-willed people slip deeper and deeper into a sense of uselessness, consumerism and sheer boredom. Those who have never heard the call to Christ's Revolution, or who have rejected it, can be found soaking their brain cells with alcohol or inducing hallucinations with weeds and chemicals—trying to escape from the realities of life that, for them, is going nowhere. They live in basic hopelessness and many try to cover that sadness with the sexual habits of animals. They have lost almost entirely any sense of nobility. Their faces show it as do their voices and their vocabulary. They try anything new in their appearance or life-style that might give significance to their being, and they make themselves their own little idol—a very disappointing one.

These are unhappy solutions taken by young people today and the final result is an ugly one, as can be seen in such lives just ten years later. The wonderful thing, however, is that Christ comes and calls even those who have been slipping into these things. Then, they find strength from heaven itself to stand up, turn around, trust the power of Christ and follow Jesus into a true greatness of character, purpose, love and joy. They discover from God Himself what they are made for.

Jesus comes and calls the "good" and "bad"—he is drawn to all and loves them all. To Matthew, hoping to become rich by collecting taxes for the conquerors from Rome, Jesus simply said, **"Follow me."** *Matthew got up and followed him.* Matthew 9:9 As quick and simple as that! To two young fishermen, he said, **"Come with me and I will teach you to catch people."** *At once they left their nets and went with him.* Matthew 4:19-20 As quick and simple as that! He gave a similar invitation to their two young cousins further down the beach, **and at once they left the boat and their father, and went with him.** Matthew 4:22 As quick and simple as that.

are based on love. They give themselves to God for the benefit of others. It is a revolution energized by the radical love of God for the children, the poor, the sick, the needy, the suffering but, most of all, for all who are sinners—those who least deserve it. That love was best seen in God's sending his only beloved Son to earth to teach and serve lost humanity and then for him to submit to a terrible death at their hands that he might save them from their sins. No other revolution in history equals this one.

The revolution did not end with Jesus. It **BEGAN** with him. It **CONTINUES** with US. Jesus plainly said, ***As the Father sent me, so I send you.*** John 20:21 What is more, Jesus said to his disciples, ***"If any of you want to come with me, you must forget yourself, carry your cross, and follow me."*** Matthew 16:24

Your Conclusions:

- ☐ Jesus says we are just to try to be good people.
- ☐ Jesus says that we are sent by God to the world just as he was sent.
- ☐ Jesus speaks of our going to the world as "to come with me."
- ☐ This means that the revolution is his and we follow him in it.
- ☐ He said that there would be no cost to us.
- ☐ He said we must actually forget ourselves and our self-interests.
- ☐ The cross was an instrument of death—to "carry the cross" is to consider ourselves as dead for the sake of Christ and his revolution.

Jesus' revolution brings genuine change on earth, in the very hearts of the people we serve and the new way of life they receive. Its results are for eternity as well—forever and ever. No other revolution compares with it, but it is only made possible by radicals who give up their lives for Christ, trusting him completely. That requires real faith.

Step Three

The Revolution Is Here

In spite of so much natural beauty around us, the world has become a pretty "smelly" place. Throughout the whole world, the poor are downtrodden by the powerful. Thousands of children die of hunger every day while over-eating by people and pets is a problem we face in America. Men and women declare their undying love to one another, but more than one-half of marriages are torn apart by divorce. And many marriages become bitter battlefields of two unhappy souls or are destroyed by separation. Most babies born in our nation today are born outside of marriage. One's chance of having a happy marriage in the United States today is only about one out of eight. Most children today are brought up in unhappy homes. Children and young people are more uncertain about the security of their homes and futures than any other time in American history. "Morality" has become a word that is not to be used publicly, because it infers there is such a thing as moral right and wrong, and that would interfere with our freedom. That freedom from limits, however, has steadily lowered the standards of society as seen in crude language, pornography, indecent behavior, dishonesty, broken relationships, unconcern for others and living only by the supreme law of "me first."

Opinions: Does this assessment of life today in our world seem correct? What do you see that causes you to agree or disagree?

You were born in such a garbage-covered world and you have surely noticed the smell. What you might find most disturbing, however, is to realize how much of the smell clings to you. It is not possible to wade through garbage and not to begin smelling badly yourself. You begin to realize that you have disappointed and hurt people you love and hurt yourself in the process. It brings shame and self-reproach which some try to escape by the "liberation" of alcohol or drugs—a chemical liberation of the brain from the world. Others decide to live sexually like dogs in the street, giving up the idea of personal purity or an exclusive relationship in marriage with someone of character and true beauty. Still others, losing all hope, decide to take their own lives, mistakenly thinking that death will end it all. Tragically, the highest percentage of suicides in our society today is among young people—those who should have the highest hopes for their lives. They are disappointed with others and themselves, and all seems hopeless.

Moral failure is the root cause of all that is wrong in the world but it is no longer mentioned in most of our schools. The religions of mankind deal with the problem and most simply tell people to try to try to be better, without offering power to do so. Most modern psychologists try to persuade people who know they have done wrong that there are natural reasons for everything they have done. Guilt, they say, is caused by superstitious beliefs of right and wrong. In other words, the world and most religions as well have no real solution for our problem.

So, it is thought, we might as well give up--and most people do so. They give up in many different ways and their lives show it in many ways. This is sadly true, as well, of probably most young people today. Most people today live without any real hope, and they only hope to get by for the time being. This is not life—it is only existence. And, with age, it only gets worse. Youth power is the power to change the course of your life, and to change now. It is the power to become mighty instruments of change for the sad world that surrounds us. Every person on earth is either a part of the problem or a part of the solution to the problem. What are you?

Comments: What examples can you give of young people or adults who seem to have given up any high expectations for themselves?

We will see that world-changing youth power doesn't come from within but, instead, from above. It is the power of a Revolution started by God Himself to create a different kind of people and, through them, create a different kind of world.

Nearly two thousand years have passed since Jesus Christ marched into the land of Israel announcing God's Revolution on earth. His contemporaries said that his coming was the fulfillment of a 600 year-old prophecy: ***The people who live in darkness will see a great light. On those who live in the dark land of death the light will shine.*** (Isaiah 9:2, also Matthew 4:16)

Opinions: What do you understand from this Bible verse?

- ☐ People without Jesus are described as people who live in darkness.
- ☐ Jesus is described as a "great light."
- ☐ "Light" doesn't have any meaning for us.
- ☐ Only with light are we able to see reality.
- ☐ The world without Christ is described as a "dark land of death."
- ☐ A "dark land of death" describes the hopelessness of people today.
- ☐ People prefer to do the most shameful things "in the dark."
- ☐ Jesus came to be the light—the *light will shine*—talks about him.

The people at first thought Jesus was only a prophet, but he was later to be revealed to be the very Son of God, come from heaven to live among men. His name was "Jesus," because he would save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21) His message was a shocker: ***From that time Jesus began to preach his message: "Turn away from your sins, because the Kingdom of God is near."*** Matthew 4:17

Opinions: How do you interpret these words of Jesus?

- ☐ His Revolution was moral, about God's standards of right and wrong.
- ☐ His revolution was only sentimental. We were just asked to feel good and "let him come into our hearts."
- ☐ His Revolution called for personal revolutions in which people would give up evil in their lives.
- ☐ His Revolution was popular, since everyone is ready to turn away from their sins.
- ☐ His Revolution would divide the people between those who would turn from their sins and those who would not.
- ☐ His Revolution was about God's Kingdom and personal rule coming among people on the earth.
- ☐ His Revolution was unrealistic. No one would do what he asked.
- ☐ To make Jesus one's King and Savior is to turn away from sin.
- ☐ Jesus only asked people to believe in him. How they lived was their business.
- ☐ The Kingdom of God is the opposite of the Kingdom of Darkness and Death.

After three years of ministry, Christ died on the cross for our sins, paying the moral price that we owed for our failures. ***God has shown us how much he loves us—it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us! We were God's enemies, but he made us his friends through the death of his Son.*** Romans 5:8, 10

Opinions: What do you say about this?

- ☐ Christ's death for our sake, at the hands of hateful men, is proof of God's amazing love for all us sinners.
- ☐ Christ's death makes possible a real friendship with God for even the worst sinners.
- ☐ If we are friends with God, we will continue to live just as we please.

Revolutions require the actions of revolutionaries, and successful revolutionaries are always "radicals." They have different values and different goals than almost everyone else. That has been true of political revolutionaries as well as spiritual ones. Most political revolutionaries base their hopes on taking, by force, from some to give to others. Christ's revolutionaries are radically different from them. Their efforts to save the people