

CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Introduction.	2
Lesson 1	Devotional Life.	3
Lesson 2	Love and Compassion.	7
Lesson 3	Contentment and Stewardship.	11
Lesson 4	Humility.	13
Lesson 5	Christian Speech.	19
Lesson 6	Purity.	23
Lesson 7	Honesty.	27
Lesson 8	Faith and Trust.	31
Lesson 9	Obedience.	35
Lesson 10	Personal Evangelism and Christian Service.	39

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the study of Christian Virtues!

If you were asked to define a virtue, what would you say? According to the dictionary, a virtue is a particular moral excellence. It is manly strength or courage. It is a conformity to a standard of right.

So what is a virtue? According to the last definition, virtue is attained by conformity or submission to a particular standard. One of the sad things about society today is the standards of moral excellence are based on nothing more than good feelings and accepted practices. For many people, moral excellence is expressed by what feels good without damaging one's reputation too badly.

But what is Christian Virtue? A Christian is a follower of Jesus. He is a "little Christ". His standard of moral excellence, his virtues are based upon the teachings of Jesus. Jesus' teachings are without question the standard of right. To have Christian Virtue is to display or to conform to Jesus' standard of right.

In this course we will be using the Christian Virtues section found in the "Decrees for to Keep" of the Pilgrim Mennonite Conference. Each virtue will be studied for a lesson.

Why would church standards include Christian virtues? Sad to say, some Christians, some church members, do not have a priority placed on particular moral excellences. They seem to fall for the concept that if they are law abiding to the church's written standard, then they are attaining to the utmost that God has for them.

But Christian Virtues are more than just laws. They are the fruit of a relationship with Jesus Christ. Does this undermine the Decrees? Not at all! The expression of Christian moral excellence is seen in submission and obedience of the individual to his church standards.

As we enter into this study, let us see these virtues as more important than church discipline. But remember, as we live and express these virtues, they will not destroy our conformity to church discipline, but strengthen it.

H. Stephen Ebersole

LESSON 1

DEVOTIONAL LIFE

Man's basic and most important relationship is with God through the new birth experience. This relationship grows through Bible reading, worship, prayer, and praise. From this springs his life of daily obedience and service for God and humanity. The Bible, in both Old and New Testaments, emphasizes the importance of a constant right relationship with God. Our Master Himself spent much time in communion with His Father. Patriarchs, prophets, and apostles show by their example and teaching the blessing and necessity of personal communion with God. Men of God in history who were successful in their service to God made it their priority to spend much time in prayer and personal Bible reading.

The Church recognizes that the complexity of life in modern civilization endangers the personal quiet time with God. Therefore, in view of the importance of the devotional life in a fast-moving age, it is urged that the ministry personally experience a daily walk with God. They shall also conduct meaningful devotional periods in the church services, leaders in related church activities shall give devotional life its proper emphasis, and good devotional congregational singing shall be encouraged. The daily family worship period shall be promoted and maintained in each family. The importance of personal Bible reading should be held forth to the brotherhood (1 Tim. 4:13-16). It is further desired that personal devotional life with God is to be considered of more importance than Christian service.

There are a number of things that make a devotional life more difficult to maintain and therefore need to be guarded against. Among these we name the following: the abundance of non-religious literature as newspapers, magazines, and light-reading, and the breaking up of family devotional life through the influence of present day industrialism.

May our churches and homes seek to strengthen the devotional life in order to meet the negative conditions of the day.

Matthew 22:37-38

37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

1. *What parts of our being does God want love from?*

2. *How does loving God with all our heart become the foundation for all obedience?*

Matthew 6:33

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Deuteronomy 17:14, 18-20

14 When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that *are* about me;

18 And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of *that which is* before the priests the Levites:

19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them:

20 That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, *to* the right hand, or *to* the left: to the end that he may prolong *his days* in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

Joshua 1:8-9

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God *is* with thee whithersoever thou goest."

Psalms 1:1

1 Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the

3. *What is our first and foremost responsibility as Christians? How does this relate to material wealth?*

4. *What two requirements did God ask of each king of Israel?*

5. *What would copying the Scriptures and reading them every day do for the king?*

6. *What can a person do that is guaranteed to give him a successful life if he does it every day?*

7. *What can be done to prevent gradual decline into disobedience?*

8. *What are some choices of a person who delights himself in the Lord?*

way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2 But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Matthew 7:7-11

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him

Matthew 21:22

22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

9. *What are some of the rewards for a godly person?*

10. *How does God feel about His children coming to Him in prayer?*

11. *What may the disciple of Jesus know about his prayers if he prays in faith?*

15. *When might Bible reading and prayer not produce fruit in a person's experience?*

16. *How does Bible reading and prayer prepare one for Christian service?*

17. *Read Acts 17:10-12. What was the ingredient that made the Jewish Bereans more ready to commit themselves to Jesus than Thessalonian Jews?*

18. *What are some benefits of reading through the Bible?*

19. *What is the root cause if we find ourselves trying to figure things out for ourselves rather than asking God for His direction?*

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

12. *In what ways should the Bible be read differently than any other book?*

13. *What are some ways young people can encourage each other in their devotional life?*

14. *What are some warning signs that indicate that my love for God and His Word is cooling off?*

LESSON 2

LOVE AND COMPASSION

Throughout the New Testament and especially in Jesus' teachings, we discover an emphasis of loving our fellow man. We have love when "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts" (Rom. 5:5), and it will be demonstrated in outward expressions. These should include rendering assistance as may be required in times of distress or want, remembering those who labor among us and are over us in the Lord, and doing good unto all men. As believers exercise Christian charity, they will be able to "admonish one another" without critical and judgmental attitudes, and will exercise patient forgiveness toward all men.

John 13 34-35

34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Romans 13:9-10

9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Romans 15:14

14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

1. *What is the test with which we are to compare our love for our fellow man?*

2. *The Old Testament taught love for one's brother. (Lev 19:18-34) How is Jesus teaching a new commandment?*

3. *Who is a neighbor?*

4. *How might I show my neighbor I love him as myself?*

5. *How is love expressed throughout the process of admonishing another?*

Matthew 7:1-5; 15-16; 20

1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Ephesians 4:31- 5:2

31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

1 Peter 4:8-12

8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for

6. *What is the difference between judging (which is forbidden) and analyzing fruit (which is commanded)?*

7. *Why do you think Jesus commands us to deal with all sin and carnality in our own lives before we may correct our brother?*

8. *If we have negative feelings and reactions about our brother, what are we to do with these feelings?*

9. *What is the example to follow and resource to draw from when we have been hurt by our fellow man?*

10. *What is lacking in my life if I resort to bitterness in times of frustration and hurt?*

railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

1 John 4:7-12

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

1 John 5:2

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

11. What is the proactive Christian response when one is unjustly accused?

12. How does prayer relate to inheriting a blessing?

13. What is evident when a person can love and speak kindly about those who mistreat and misuse him?

14. What two facts do we reveal when we choose to love in the midst of trying accusations?

15. What two requirements are the proof of genuine love for our fellow-man?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

16. Contrast a group of individuals when God's love is present with a group which lacks God's love.

17. What should we do when it appears obvious to us that we have love but our brother lacks it?

18. What can we do in a situation where two brothers in the church seem intent in highlighting each other's faults?

19. How is it possible to communicate love and goodwill even in the midst of disagreements and misunderstandings?

LESSON 3

CONTENTMENT AND STEWARDSHIP

We recognize that all earthly possessions belong to God (Gen. 14:19-20)

Therefore we are stewards and not owners of these material goods (Psa. 50:10).

The threat of materialism is a serious challenge to true spirituality in our day. We sense this in a keen way when we compare the warnings against seeking riches in the New Testament, with the materialistic emphasis of seeking wealth and prosperity in our culture. When God blesses with added wealth, members are directed to find ways to share with others for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven, and avoid excessive accumulation of material wealth (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

The following guidelines are presented as a means of helping the believer sense when materialism is influencing him in a course away from God.

1. When devotional life and the family altar are pushed out of his schedule, one is busier than God ever intended him to be (Matt. 6:33).
2. When disagreements over material possessions begin to cause strife, envy or bitterness (Luke 12:13-16).
3. When one begins to strap himself with debt in order to achieve a better life style (Rom. 13:8).
4. When giving is done grudgingly so that more and more of one's finances are kept for self (2 Cor. 9:6-10).
5. When one has an unthankful attitude toward present blessings, and an unwholesome craving for more (1 Tim. 6:6-10).

Extravagance in any form is not consistent with the teachings of the Scriptures. Therefore, we urge that our members refrain from useless and wasteful expenditures of money in their homes, on their persons, or in their living, and recommend that in all things, they seek to give a good account of their stewardship as faithful servants of Christ (Luke 12:13-30; 16:1-13).

Psalm 50:7-12

7 Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God.

1. Since God is owner of all things, what responsibility does this give us with material goods?

8 I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before me.

9 I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds.

10 For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.

11 I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine.

12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.

Matthew 6:19-24

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Luke 12:13-15

13 And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

14 And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

1 Timothy 6:6-10

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

7 For we brought nothing into this world,

2. Why did God express His disinterest in the sacrifices of the Israelites when they were commanded to sacrifice to Him?

3. Give some ways that treasures can be laid up in heaven.

4. Where are we specifically forbidden to lay up treasures?

5. Why is service to God and service to mammon incompatible?

6. How do the concepts of Christian stewardship and serving mammon differ?

7. Since our life doesn't consist of our natural wealth and possessions, then explain of what it does consist.

8. With what two possessions are we to be content?

and it is certain we can carry nothing out.
8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

Hebrews 13:5-6

5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

James 1:9-11

9 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

10 But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

11 For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

9. *What are some hurtful things people may bring on themselves and their families by wanting to be rich?*

10. *What does conversation mean in this verse?*

11. *How does a person conduct himself if he is content with what he has?*

12. *When are improvements a result of unscriptural discontentment? (Clothes, car, new carpet etc.)*

13. *How are the poor better off than the wealthy?*

16. *How do Biblical giving principles apply to a person who makes \$20,000 compared to a person who makes \$50,000 per year?*

17. *What are some excuses people make for not maintaining their trust in God for their natural needs in life?*

18. *How does God view excuses for trusting in money or insurance companies more than trusting in Him?*

19. *What are some ways discontentment might show up in our lives?*

20. *What are some things people borrow money for just to keep up with society? (Rom 13:8)*

21. *Give some principles we should consider before borrowing money.*

23. *What is the snare that the rich fall into? Why is it so serious?*

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

14. *Why does an all powerful God call men to be a steward of what He has created?*

15. *What are some principles the Bible gives in relation to giving to the poor?*

LESSON 4

HUMILITY

Inasmuch as the Bible condemns pride in such strong language referring to its disastrous results to nations, peoples, and individuals, and holds forth the blessings of humility; the church seeks by the grace of God to be free from denominational pride, and personal or ministerial emulation and rivalry. Rather, we desire to express humility in church life, in the building and equipping of our meeting houses and homes, in our possessions, in our dress, and in our relationships one to another (Rom. 12:16). Material prosperity (Pro.28:11), educational advancement (1 Cor. 8:1), and success in various endeavors may cause one to be lifted up in pride. May we labor and pray that we will not lose the blessing of the Lord because of a sense of self-sufficiency and social importance.

Humility will also express itself in pursuing kingdom usefulness instead of self interests (Matt. 23:10-12; James 4:6,10; Pro. 6:17; Dan. 4:37).

Proverbs 6:16-19

16 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:

17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,

19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

Daniel 4:34-37

34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from

1. *Where does God put pride in the list of sins He hates? Why?*

2. *What circumstances did God bring into Nebuchadnezzar's life to humble him?*

generation to generation:

35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

36 At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.

37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

Matthew 23:10-12

10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.

11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

Romans 12:16

16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

James 4:6,10

6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

1Peter 5:5-7

5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves

3. *What were some expressions of Nebuchadnezzar's new found humility?*

4. *What will be the consequences of walking in pride?*

5. *How does thinking about the Lordship of Christ and the sovereignty of God inspire humility?*

6. *What did Jesus mean when He instructs us as disciples, "he that is greatest among you shall be your servant"?*

7. *Explain the phrase "condescend to men of low estate".*

8. *How does the attitude of humility enable God to give us strength to get through the difficult times of life?*

unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

9. Explain the relationship of humility and giving in to the ideas and direction of other brothers.

10. How might one be “clothed with humility”?

16. What are some tests that help us to evaluate our humility?

17. Identify several “proud looks” that Christians face today.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

11. Why does an accumulation of money militate against humility?

18. List several reasons why submission can be a struggle.

12. Why does knowledge tend to destroy humility?

13. Is humbling oneself a once and done action? Explain.

14. Give some ways God may resist the proud.

15. What is the difference between humility and humiliation?

LESSON 5

CHRISTIAN SPEECH

Members shall refrain from foolish, profane, or vulgar talk, and from vain and idle gossiping. All shall use their conversational powers in a way that is edifying, uplifting, and strengthening.

Proverbs 15:2

2 The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.

Isaiah 50:4

4 The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.

Matthew 12:35-37

35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

1. *Why does a fool's mouth pour out foolishness?*

2. *Where does one learn the ability to have gracious and uplifting speech?*

3. *What is the sure expression of the tongue of the learned?*

4. *Why will God use our words as a basis for judgement?*

Ephesians 4:29-32

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

Ephesians 5:3-5

3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

2 Timothy 2:16

16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

James 4:11

11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

5. *What quality should characterize the speech of the Christian at all times?*

6. *How can the Disciple of Christ put away all forms of selfish speech?*

7. *Define the following terms:*
bitterness-

wrath-

clamor-

evil speaking-

8. *What is the context of foolish talking and jesting that is forbidden?*

9. *Describe the kind of speech that produces ungodliness.*

10. *Of what offense does a person become guilty when he speaks evil of his brother?*

LESSON 6

PURITY

The Christian life, purity and getting to heaven cannot be divided. Purity in heart suggests a purity of mind that will help one to be pure in actions. Purity in action will be an asset to the purity of others and will enhance our Christian testimony.

Psalm 51:7-10

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

Matthew 5:8, 27-30

8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should

1. *What sin had David committed that generated the desperation expressed in these verses? (See 2 Samuel 11)*

2. *How does a person feel who has chosen immoral actions?*

3. *How do the pure in heart see God in the present?*

4. *How will the pure in heart be rewarded in the future?*

5. *In what way did Jesus strengthen the Old Testament teaching against immorality?*

6. *Where is the battle of immorality generally fought?*

perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

1 Corinthians 6:18-20

18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

1 Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.

2 For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.

3 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

8 He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.

7. *How do we know the struggle for moral purity is one that God views as extremely important?*

8. *On what basis does God own our bodies?*

9. *What does the word "flee" tell us about our personal responsibility in this matter?*

10. *How does one go about walking and pleasing God?*

11. *What is God's will regarding the Christian's moral life?*

12. *Who will deal the ultimate consequences to a person who takes what is forbidden?*

1 Corinthians 10:13

13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

13. *What is the significance of the term "God is faithful"?*

18. *Impurity is very prevalent in our day. How can we "flee fornication"?*

19. *God makes His standard for purity clear. What is the root cause when a person decides to become involved in immoral thoughts or actions even when he knows God's standard?*

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

11. *How are Satan's lies about immorality being promoted today?*

12. *What is the difference between an immoral thought and an immoral mind?*

13. *How are immoral thoughts fed?*

14. *How are immoral thoughts overcome?*

15. *Moral purity is God's will for our lives. How can this be an encouragement for us?*

16. *Are adverse circumstances an excuse for failure?*

17. *List several helps for victory in purity.*

LESSON 7

HONESTY

Personal holiness involves honesty in speech and business life. Bearing false witness (Deut. 19:16-21, Prov. 6:19), spreading false reports, pretending we are something we are not and denying things we are guilty of (2 Kings 5:22-25), justifying the wicked and condemning the righteous (Pro. 17:15), and all deliberate misrepresentations are an abomination unto the Lord.

Exodus 20:16

16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

Deuteronomy 19:16-20

16 If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong;

17 Then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days;

18 And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother;

19 Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you.

20 And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you.

2Kings 5:25-27

25 But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence

1. *What is God's standard regarding telling the truth?*

2. *How did God show His desire for justice for the accused in the Old Testament?*

3. *What was the punishment when someone gave a false report in order to get someone else into trouble?*

4. *What do you think Gehazai might have*

comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither. And he said unto him,

26 Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?

27 The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white *as snow*.

Proverbs 17:15

15 He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.

Acts 5:1-11

1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

2 And kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy *to it*, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?

4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried *him* out, and buried *him*.

7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me

been telling himself when he answered Elisha's question falsely?

5. *What reason do we have to think covetousness was the reason for Gehazi's falsehoods?*

6. *What is meant by justifying the wicked or condemning the righteous? How is this a dishonest situation?*

7. *What motives would have moved Annanias and Sapphira in this deceitfulness?*

8. *Sapphira was under the authority of her husband in this deception. What does this teach us about personal responsibility regarding wrongdoing?*

whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband *are* at the door, and shall carry thee out.

10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying *her* forth, buried *her* by her husband.

11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

Ephesians 4:25

25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

Revelation 21:8

8 ...all liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.

Revelation 22:15

For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

9. *Why might lying have been dealt with so harshly in Annanias' case, but seemingly goes without consequence today?*

10. *What reason is given to the New Testament disciple for staying strictly with the truth?*

11. *Why do you think God places such harsh consequences on lying?*

14. *Does telling the truth always produce the most pleasant circumstances? In other words, could I be punished for standing by the truth?*

15. *Compare Leviticus 5:1 and Jeremiah 38:24-27. Is it necessary to tell every thing you may know? Explain.*

16. *What should a Christian do in a situation where telling the truth may be embarrassing to an individual who is present? How about if the truth may be condemning or offensive?*

17. *How many times must I tell the truth to establish my credibility?*

18. *How often can I stretch the truth or lie till my credibility is tainted or destroyed?*

19. *What steps need to be taken to restore lost confidence or credibility?*

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

12. *What are some reasons why some people are dishonest?*

13. *What is hypocrisy? Why do people find this to be an attractive or at least an acceptable choice?*

LESSON 8

FAITH AND TRUST

The mentality and outlook of the Christian is entirely different from that of the natural man. Since his life is in God's hands, the Christian refuses to worry and chooses to trust issues of life in the hands of the Almighty One. This finds an outlet of expression in many ways.

Insurance: We believe the child of God will not need to depend on the world's methods of securities. Members are encouraged to look to the Lord for protection and care, rather than to insurance companies.

Health Care: While we do not object to consistent therapeutic care and the proper use of herbs (Gen 1:29), we believe the primary source of healing is in God. We encourage our membership to keep the practice of anointing with oil, and laying on of hands as a meaningful part of Christian experience.

Forms of health care that rely on occult powers shall be strictly avoided. We sense the danger of any health practice where there is no scientific explanation.

Psalm 118:8-9

8 It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.

9 It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.

Isaiah 57:13

13 When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them: but he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain;

Luke 12:22-32

22 And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

1. Why might it be a temptation to put more trust in mortal man than in our Eternal God?

2. What is the purpose and intent of companies whether they be of armies of nations or insurance firms?

3. How big must a possession be until God wants us to get insurance for it?

23 The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.

24 Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

25 And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?

26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

27 Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Philippians 4:6

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

1 Peter 5:6-7

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7 Casting all your care upon him; for he

4. How much does Jesus want us to worry about our future care?

5. How should we understand the teaching "Take no thought for your life"?

6. What should preoccupy our minds rather than our personal care?

7. Discuss the contrasts between controlling undesirable circumstances and trusting God to carry us through them.

8. What great outlet is provided for the child of God when he has burdens to heavy for him to carry?

9. For what simple reason do God's children not need to withdraw into worry or fear?

careth for you.

James 5:13-16

13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

10. What are some ways God has planned for release of emotions?

11. What would be some guidelines when we a person should call for anointing with oil?

12. What parallels can you think of between anointing in the Old Testament and anointing a suffering Christian?

16. What advantages might be given to the child of God as he experiences material loss?

17. How can each of us help to keep brotherhood sharing from becoming another insurance company?

18. Should a Christian appeal to God before, during or after he receives medical treatment?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

13. What is the relationship between faith and trust? Can the strength of my faith be measured by the display of my trust?

14. Insurance contracts have conditions or guarantees. What does God guarantee to those who trust Him?

15. How can one be insured and still trust in God?

19. What should be the Christian's view of free or state medical aid? (vaccinations, Medicare, Medicaid etc.)

LESSON 9

OBEDIENCE

The Christian is one who makes continual choices to do whatever God desires of him. God's will for the believer is revealed in His Word. No Christian may feel comfortable living in disobedience to God's revealed Truth.

God also has a divine will for each of His children (Isa.30:21; John 21:22). As His children, all details of our lives are in the hands of our Father, and we are committed to live our lives to His choosing.

John 16:13

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Matthew 7:21-23

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Mark 8:38

38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in

1. *How do we know the Christian Church has been given all the Divine revelation that God intends to give in this dispensation?*

2. *How do we know obedience is not expressed by saying but by doing?*

3. *How do we know people can do supposedly great spiritual deeds and still be out of God's will?*

4. *Why do people call Jesus Lord, but don't do His commandments?*

5. *What are some teachings of Christ that we may be tempted to be ashamed of in our day?*

the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Luke 8:20

20 And it was told him by certain which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

Ephesians 2:8-9

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Revelation 22:14

14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

Isaiah 30:20-21

20 And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers:

21 And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

John 21:20-22

20 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

6. *What will be the reward for those who unashamedly identify with Christ and His commandments?*

7. *What special affinity does Christ have with those who obey His teachings?*

8a. *We are told on the basis of these verses that salvation is by faith alone. What are some works that cannot save us?*

8b. *What are some Scriptural requirements that people must do in order to be saved?*

9. *What is the reward promised to those who do Jesus' commandments?*

10. *How might God's will for my life be made known to me?*

11. *How do we know God's will for one person may be different than what He has planned for another?*

21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?
22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

17. What is the difference between the attitude of seeing how little we need to do and still be obedient and how we may fully express our Father's will?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

12. On what basis can God require obedience of man?

13. In what areas is God's will generally the same for all of us?

14. In what areas is God's will specifically unique to each of us?

15. How long can a person be outside of God's will and still have God's blessing on his life?

16. Discuss the implications of a person making decisions outside of God's will that have binding consequences? (For instance, if one marries outside of the will of God, will that marriage forever be missing the blessing of God?)

LESSON 10

PERSONAL EVANGELISM AND CHRISTIAN SERVICE

The New Testament teaches that the believer is to share the Gospel with the lost and seek every opportunity to advance the cause of the kingdom of heaven. Members who give no evidence of a burden for the lost should be challenged as to the genuineness of their Christian commitment.

Members shall not be ashamed of the Lord Jesus or practical expressions of discipleship.

Every member shall seek to be involved in the various service opportunities of the church.

Daniel 12:3

3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

Mark 1:16-17

16 Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

18 And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.

John 4:35

35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the

1. What is the eternal reward for those who dedicate their lives to helping others live in righteousness?

2. What is meant by fishing for men?

3. What is the first requirement for one who would be a fisher for men?

4. What is the natural tendency when it comes to harvesting souls?

fields; for they are white already to harvest. 36. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

Matthew 28:19-20

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Acts 1:8

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

2 Corinthians 5:20-21

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

1 Peter 3:15

15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

5. How do we know Jesus intended that soul winning be a team effort?

6. What answer do we have for those who believe evangelism was a command given only to the disciples?

7. How do we know Jesus intends we teach new converts to obey Him, not just claim faith in Jesus?

8. What is your understanding of how the Great Commission should be carried out in your present Christian experience?

9. What is an ambassador?

10. What principles for Christian living does ambassadorship teach?

11. What does it take to be ready to give an answer for the hope that is in us?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

12. *In a congregation of 100 Christians, how many fishermen should there be to fulfill Jesus' command?*

13. *How long must one follow Jesus till he becomes a fisher of men?*

14. *With regard to one's occupation:*

Should a Christian use his boss's time to witness to souls?

What should a Christian do if His boss instructs him not to share his faith at his work place?

15. *How long can a person go without fishing for men before he no longer is a fisher of men?*

16. *What scriptures would you use to help a person find salvation who sincerely wanted to know how to be saved?*

17. *What are some pointers for reaching souls from Jesus' approach to the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4?*

18. *List several areas of Christian service in which youth can participate.*