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A Continuing Study of Paul's Letters to Timothy

**Adult and Young People's
Quarterly**

INTRODUCTION

Paul's second letter to Timothy is the second of the three letters called "The Pastoral Epistles." The three letters, I and II Timothy, along with Titus, are called *Pastoral Epistles* because they deal with matters affecting congregations and their pastors.

It is believed, though not clearly stated in the Scriptures, that Paul was released from prison in Rome, and was able to make other missionary journeys before being re-arrested at Rome where he was put to death. This being true, this second letter to Timothy was written during Paul's second imprisonment and shortly before his martyrdom. This then could possibly be the last of Paul's epistles.

This faithful servant of the Lord was able to say, "I have fought a good fight," and surely we will all agree he did. Further, he was able to say, "I have kept the faith." If there was ever a man who stood firm and steadfast for the truth of the gospel, it was Paul. He opposed all error and all who tried to impose false doctrine on the church. He was so sure he had taught the truth, he said, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than ye have received, let him be accursed." He also told the Galatian brethren, "If I come back to you and preach something different than I preached to you at first, do not receive what I say! 'Or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.'"

We do well to study the writings of this Holy Spirit filled man of God and be guided accordingly. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

God's church has always been opposed by the powers of darkness. Satan has worked to bring in error, compromise, and division down through the ages. Sad, but true, many have been deceived and led away from the truth. May God give each one a love for the truth and a desire to measure to its teachings.

Our prayer is that the study of these lessons will be a blessing to each one.

THE WAY OF TRUTH

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LESSON NUMBER ONE FOR OCTOBER 4

LIVING IN HARMONY

Scriptures: I Timothy 6:1-11.

1 Timothy 6:1 Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.

2 And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.

3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but dotting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, suppos-

ing that gain is godliness, from such withdraw thyself.

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

7 For we brought nothing into this world, 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,

11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Memory Verse: But godliness with contentment is great gain.

—I Timothy 6:6.

Aim: To help the student to see what is required to find true peace and contentment.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday **Philippians 4:1-12**

Tuesday **Hebrews 13:1-7**

Wednesday **Romans 14:1-19**

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Matthew 6:25-34

Luke 12:15-34

James 3

INTRODUCTION

“From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded” (James 4:1-8).

Selfishness—the desire to put self and what self wants ahead of everything else—has led to more heartache, evil, strife, wars, and

death than most people realize. The Bible, especially the New Covenant, teaches a different kind of life. In this lesson we would like to point out some of these precious teachings.

MEDITATIONS

HONOR THOSE THAT ARE OVER YOU—I Timothy 6:1—Count their own masters worthy—“People could become slaves in several ways. The poor who were unable to pay their debts could offer themselves as slaves (Exodus 21:2-6; Nehemiah 5:1-5). A thief who could not repay what he had stolen could also be sold as a slave. Children born of slave parents became ‘house-born slaves’ (Genesis 15:3; 17:12, 13). Sometimes children would be taken as slaves in payment for debts (II Kings 4:1-7).”—*Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. There was also “state” slavery, as the Israelites in Egypt. Some were taken in wars and made slaves.

Customs and practices through the ages have changed. There are, doubtless, many things hard for us to understand, but Paul is here saying to the newly converted Christians who were *slaves* that they should honor and respect their owners, even though they were heathen masters; otherwise, the name of God and His doctrine would be blasphemed. How much more should Christian workers and others as well, honor, and respect those who have authority over them. A Christian is to be a Christian everywhere!

THE GOSPEL IS FOR ALL—I Timothy 6:2—Believing masters—As the gospel spread, some of the slave owners were converted. Therefore, we might wonder why Paul did not instruct them to release their slaves. However, he instructed the servants, “Let them not despise them,” even though they were brethren in the Lord, and thus equal in their *spiritual privileges*, “yet there still continues in the order of God’s providence a great disparity in their station: the *master* must ever be in this sense *superior* to the *servant*.” (Quote is from Adam Clarke’s comments on this verse.) So today, when a Christian is working for a Christian employer, they are brethren and have equal access to the grace of God, yet in their temporal affairs they are not equal and proper regard is to be given to the employer. How much labor strife would be avoided if this principle was carried out. To be true Christians, and to live in harmony one with another, *Christians* must carry out Paul’s instructions.

THIS TRUTH MUST BE TAUGHT—I Timothy 6:3-5—Wholesome words—The instructions Paul was giving were inspired by God; they were “wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness.” It appears there were some who were teaching otherwise, and Paul says of such, “He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words.” It is a failure to produce “envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds,” etc., and say that that is what the Word of God produces. And on top of

this, “supposing that gain is godliness,” how blind people are when they take material gain—and that many times evilly obtained—as godliness! No wonder the world is in such a state. It is the responsibility of all true ministers to teach the people “wholesome words.”

TRUE HAPPINESS—I Timothy 6:6—Godliness—To live godly, one must forsake a life of selfishness. You cannot put self first and live godly! Yes, there are many, even in the religious world who do not believe we can live godly in this present evil world. They would have us believe that we all sin more or less every day. That is not what Paul taught! “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:11, 12). Contentment is something that is lacking in so many lives today. So many seem to think material gain will produce it, but they are mistaken. If one will come to Christ in true godly sorrow, repent of, and forsake his own sinful way, and let Christ become his Lord and Master, he will find contentment and be able to live holy.

THE EARTH IS THE LORD’S—I Timothy 6:7—We brought nothing—I realize some would laugh at you if they knew you believed in creation, but I still believe, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” I still believe, “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.” So, as Paul has said, “We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.” Think about that statement! Why sell your soul for this material world when you are going to leave it *all* behind? You will not take one house, car, or coin with you into eternity. No wonder Paul said, “Godliness with contentment is *great gain*.” Living in harmony with the Word of God will enable one, as far as lies within him, to live in harmony with his fellowman.

LIVING A SATISFIED LIFE—I Timothy 6:8—Having food and raiment—The Word of God does not forbid having a nice home, it does not forbid having some material things to meet our needs, but the Word does forbid our setting our affections on these things. We are not to serve them, they are to *serve* us. If we do not have as much as some have, so what! Life does not consist in the abundance of things we may possess; life, true living is in knowing Jesus Christ and being thankful for what we do have. Paul is not teaching laziness, he is teaching Christian living.

DETERMINED TO GET EARTHLY RICHES—I Timothy 6:9—They that will be rich—How many times have people committed murder, robbed, cheated, embezzled, gambled, etc., in an effort to get their hands on money or material things, thinking this would bring them happiness and peace, when in reality it leads them further from the source of true peace. Paul’s words are emphatic, “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.” The apostle speaks of people who are determined to get riches, who make this

their aim and object in life. They may start out honest, but if money is their “god,” we see what it can lead to—“destruction and perdition.”

HAVING MONEY IS NOT SINFUL—I Timothy 6:10—The love of money—Money of itself is not sinful or wrong. It is not wrong to have a good paying job, a good home, to have material things that are needed. We understand that Abraham became a wealthy man, yet he maintained his faith in God. Job was a wealthy man, but he showed where his heart was when God allowed Satan to take his wealth away. “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21). What is wrong is to allow your affections to go out for these things and to let them become your *master*. Notice what Paul said happened to some who did: “Which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” Anything that will cause you to “err from the faith” is wrong.

TRUE INSTRUCTIONS—I Timothy 6:11—But thou, O man of God—Paul was writing this letter to a fellow minister, and, of course, this is very good and sound instruction for ministers of the gospel, for Paul says a minister must “not [be] given to filthy lucre.” But it is good instruction for all. Again, Paul was not teaching laziness, he was not teaching it was wrong to have the necessities of life, he was teaching us to put “first things first.” “Follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.” What a beautiful world we would have, what harmony we would have, if every one carried out these instructions! It is a spirit of “get” that causes strifes, envying, railings, evil surmisings, etc. Love is giving. Faith in God assures us, if we will seek first the kingdom of God, He will take care of us. A spirit of meekness will not cause us to “lord it over” others or to take advantage of others. God’s way is the way of peace, love, and harmony.

CONCLUSION

Few, it seems, know what it really means to live with love ruling their heart and actions. Love is giving—giving, not demanding anything in return. It takes a true experience of full salvation (saved and sanctified) to live this kind of life. Those who live this kind of life should be able to live in harmony, not only with God, but with one another. They should be able to show proper respect and honor to everyone, whatever office or position the person may hold. Of course, problems will arise from time to time, but there is a Bible way for such problems to be dealt with.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. From whence come wars and fightings?
2. What should be our attitude toward those that are ruling over us—either in temporal or spiritual affairs?
3. Why is there so much unhappiness in the world today?
4. How can one be truly content?
5. Is it possible to have true peace without godliness?

LESSON NUMBER TWO FOR OCTOBER 11

ETERNAL LIFE

Scriptures: I Timothy 6:12-21.

I Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;

14 That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:

15 Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

21 Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.

Memory Verse: And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

—John 17:3.

Aim: To stress the importance of eternal life.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday John 17
Tuesday Ephesians 2
Wednesday Ezekiel 33:1-16

Thursday Psalm 23
Friday John 3:1-21
Saturday John 5:19-47

INTRODUCTION

Paul declares in Acts, chapter 17, that God made the world and all things therein; also, that God gave to all life, and breath, and all things.

We know from Genesis that God gave our first parents a law which caused them to exercise their will. They had to choose to obey or disobey. If they disobeyed, the penalty was death. Life would have been theirs had they obeyed, but we know they disobeyed. Their disobedience brought death not only to themselves but to the family of man, physically and spiritually. They were driven from the garden and from the “tree of life.”

God in His love provided a way through His Son Jesus Christ for man to regain life. Man in himself could not do this. There was no amount of money, no amount of work, no amount of good deeds, nor anything else he could do to buy, earn, or deserve the restoration of

life. So we do not want anyone to think we are teaching salvation by works, but there are things one must do to receive Christ. After receiving Him, that is receiving life, there are things people must do to retain Christ as Lord of their lives.

MEDITATIONS

CHRISTIANS ARE TO FIGHT—I Timothy 6:12, 13—Fight the good fight of faith—There is a teaching in the religious world to the effect that once you become a Christian you can never lose spiritual life. Such teaching is not according to God's Word. Adam was a son of God, he had spiritual life, yet he "died." If Adam could lose spiritual life, so can we. Therefore, Paul tells Timothy and all of us, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." Jesus Christ faced the temptations of Satan and He witnessed a good confession before Pilate, yet without sin; so can we by His grace and help. Eternal life is worth fighting for.

LIVE BY THE WORD—I Timothy 6:14—Keep this commandment—To be a Christian, to have spiritual life, one must live by the doctrine of Christ. We are not free to change it, we are not free to disregard it. We are not talking about obtaining salvation by good works, we are talking about what God requires of His children. Salvation is the gift of God. Good fruit is what the child of God produces.

CHRIST IS ABLE TO KEEP—I Timothy 6:15, 16—The King of kings—To say that Christ is unable to keep those He saves is to say the devil is stronger than Christ, which, of course, is not true. How then can one lose spiritual life? By failing to walk in the light, by failing to measure to the truth as it comes your way, by failing to pray and do the things one must to retain God's favor. Paul, speaking of Christ, says, "Who only hath immortality." Life is found only in Christ. If you lose Christ out of your heart, you lose life; you return to a state of death. Again, let no man deceive you with the false teaching that you cannot lose spiritual life. The Bible tells us of different ones who did. Though Christ is all powerful, He must have our surrendered will to be able to keep us.

CHRISTIAN LIVING—I Timothy 6:17-19—Trust ... in the living God—Back in verses 9 and 10 Paul gives instructions in obtaining riches. In verse 17 he gives instructions in regard to the use of riches. Very few, it seems, can handle riches properly. Paul says, "Be not highminded." Do not trust in them—they are uncertain—trust in the living God, for He is always faithful. God has given us many good things to enjoy, and we will enjoy them, as well as God's approval IF we will use material things as He intended and not set our hearts on them. **Verse 18**—Strive not to be rich in material goods; strive to be rich in doing the will of God, in helping the poor and needy, in supporting the gospel. By so doing you will lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven (verse 19), and thus "lay hold on eternal life."

KEEP TRUE—I Timothy 6:20—Keep that which is committed to thy trust—Paul realized it was possible for man to fail, and he loved Timothy, so he expresses with great affection, “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust. Don’t allow vain babblers, false prophets, or anyone else to lead you from the truths that you now know and hold.” **Verse 21—Some ... have erred**—The Bible, again and again, warns us against the false prophets, against becoming lukewarm, against departing from the faith. It charges us to resist the devil, to fight the good fight of faith. Why all these warnings and instructions? Because it is possible to lose Christ out of your heart, and thus lose spiritual life. God does not want that to happen, but He forces no one to serve Him. Secondly, the Lord knows the value of eternal life. He died and rose again to make it available to us, and it is His will for us to have it. He knows the terrible loss to anyone who fails to obtain and retain it—thus these warnings and instructions are given. Therefore, let us take heed.

CONCLUSION

In this lesson we have pointed out the possibility of losing spiritual life. We do not want to convey the thought that one *must* fail of the grace of God, for surely that is not necessary. The same One who saves us from a life of sin is able to keep us from sinning, but there are things we must do in order for the Lord to keep us. Everyone who has failed has done so because they did not do what they should. The Lord has never failed, and He never will.

With this lesson we come to the end of I Timothy. I realize we have not covered all the precious truths contained in Paul’s first letter to Timothy, but I trust the lessons have been a blessing to the student.

Adam Clarke said at the close of his comments on this letter:

“I cannot help considering it of the first consequence to the Church of God. In it we see more clearly than elsewhere what the *ministers* of the Gospel should be, what is the character of the *true church*. *Bishops, presbyters* and *deacons* are particularly described; and their qualifications so circumstantially detailed, that it is impossible to be ignorant on this head. What the *church* should be is also particularly stated; it is the house of the living God; the place where he lives, works, and manifests himself. The *doctrines* and *discipline* of the church are not less specifically noted.”

The need is that we live these truths out in our daily lives.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What brings about spiritual death?
2. Can one regain spiritual life? How?
3. Can good works save anyone?
4. Can one be a Christian and remain one without producing spiritual fruit?
5. In your own words, what is the value of eternal life?

LESSON NUMBER THREE FOR OCTOBER 18

SERVANTS OF CHRIST

Scriptures: II Timothy 1:1-11.

II Timothy 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

2 To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;

5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

Memory Verse: But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.—Romans 6:22.

Aim: To help the student to see what it means to be a servant of Christ.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Romans 1
Tuesday Romans 7:9-25
Wednesday Romans 8:1-18

Thursday Matthew 6:1-24
Friday Romans 6:1-18
Saturday Galatians 1:1-10

INTRODUCTION

It is indeed a joy and a privilege to be a servant of Jesus Christ. Have you ever considered the fact that we are all servants? We are either a servant of Christ or a servant of the devil, one or the other. We cannot be a servant of both at the same time.

Jesus said in Matthew 6:24, "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."

How many of us have ever considered what the word *servant* means? Paul, in Romans 1:1, says he is a servant of Jesus Christ, and the word *servant* in that verse means "a slave," one who is the entire prop-

erty of his master. How wonderful to have Christ as our Master and not the devil!

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, commenting on the word *slave*, says, "In a spiritual sense, people apart from Christ are slaves to sin. To commit sin is to demonstrate that sin has control of one's life (John 8:34). Christ can set us free from this kind of slavery (John 8:36)—to be obedient to Christ and to do righteousness (Romans 6:16-18).

"Paul spoke of himself as a 'servant,' a word sometimes rendered as 'bondservant' but frequently also as 'slave' (Romans 1:1; Titus 1:1). Christians, especially ministers, are not hired servants but slaves committed to service to Jesus. A slave does not manage his own life. The person who calls himself a slave of Christ acknowledges that the Savior has power over him."

We do not like the word *slave* because of its association with cruelty and bondage, but again, we are servants of Christ or Satan. I count it a wonderful blessing to have Christ as my Master.

MEDITATIONS

AN IMPORTANT OFFICE—II Timothy 1:1—An apostle of Jesus Christ—There were few that could be called an apostle. It appears that an apostle of the early morning church had to be one who had seen Christ, among other requirements, to qualify as an apostle. Paul said he had seen Christ as one "born out of season," possibly referring to his vision on the way to Damascus. Paul said he had his apostleship by the will of God. The Scriptures tell us God sets the members in the body as it pleases Him (I Corinthians 12:18). The word *apostle* has a secondary meaning covering those who go into a new field where the true gospel has not been preached and there establishes a congregation of the Church of God. Such a person may then move on to a new field, as Paul so often did.

A BOND OF LOVE—II Timothy 1:2—My dearly beloved son—Paul had other helpers from time to time, but there seemed to be a special bond between him and Timothy. Timothy was one who had proven himself trustworthy in very trying circumstances, and Paul, in tender love and affection, bids the very best for his co-worker: "Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."

SERVANTS ARE TO WORK—II Timothy 1:3—Whom I serve—Paul at one time was a servant of sin and a slave to false religion. O yes, as he implies in this verse, he was taught the Scriptures from his youth, and he thought he was doing right, even when he persecuted the Church of God; but it was not until he met Christ that he became a true servant of God. Paul declares he was an apostle, that his calling was from God, yet he recognizes his true position as a servant. A spirit of humility is a must if one is going to be used of God. Servants are to work! Among Paul's work was his praying for his beloved son in the faith. Prayer is a work that every child of God can and must do.

THERE ARE BURDENS TO BEAR—II Timothy 1:4—Being mindful of thy tears—Again, there was a great love, holy love, between Paul and Timothy. Paul was very desirous of seeing Timothy at this time, but our thoughts turn to the statement of Timothy's tears. Paul does not say just why the tears, but there are times in the life of the servant of Christ when tears flow. Paul himself spoke of warning people for three years and six months, day and night, with tears. I feel safe in saying, there is a great need of the church's getting to the place today where it can weep over the erring ones, where it can weep over the sick and suffering. The church is called to minister to the lost, the sick and the suffering. Jesus wept over Jerusalem. He had compassion on the sick and oppressed. We are His servants; we are to carry on His work in the earth.

A FIRM FOUNDATION—II Timothy 1:5—When I call to remembrance—"The unfeigned faith that is in thee." Timothy's faith was real, genuine, sincere. There was a reason for this: "Which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice." How important it is for parents to be servants of God and work to the end of teaching and training their children in the right way. One of the greatest services we can render to the cause of Christ is to bring our children up in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

PAUL EXHORTS TIMOTHY—II Timothy 1:6—Stir up the gift—It is good for a young minister to labor with an older minister, at least for a period of time, to learn lessons in soul winning, dealing with problems, praying for the sick, and carrying on the work of the Lord in its various aspects. Whatever gifts Timothy had were given to him by the Holy Spirit, even though Paul speaks of laying on hands, and, presumably, praying for him.

BE STRONG AND BOLD FOR THE TRUTH—II Timothy 1:7—God hath not given—It seems in these verses that Paul felt Timothy needed to be more active. He needed to "stir up the gift," keep it active, use it, lest it die out. Whether Timothy had run into some problems that discouraged him, or some people had said unkind things about him, we are not able to say, but Paul assures him, "God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." There have always been opposers to the truth. There have been those who stand on the sidelines and criticize, those who can tell you what to do, while doing nothing themselves! The servant of God is not to be deterred by such.

DO NOT BE INTIMIDATED—II Timothy 1:8—Be not ... ashamed—There is a devil in the world and he will use any tool he can to hinder or stop the work of God. Paul declared in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth: to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Here Paul exhorts Timothy not to be ashamed of the *testimony* of our Lord, which we understand to mean the gospel.

Also, do not be ashamed of “me his prisoner.” The gospel is nothing to be ashamed of, neither the saints who are living the gospel. The one who is living in God’s beautiful world, receiving blessings from His bountiful hand, and serving the devil is the one that should be ashamed. Further, Paul says, “Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.” Paul loved Timothy. He desired the very best for him, yet he realized that there was suffering connected with serving Christ.

A HIGH CALLING—II Timothy 1:9-11—Saved ... and called— Salvation is the greatest blessing that could come to any soul, and salvation is offered to all. Yes, you can be saved and become a servant of Jesus Christ if you are not already. Then you will be in a place where God can call you into whatever service He sees fit. Not everyone, of course, is called to be a minister, but God has a work for all, and it is “a holy calling”; not according to any work or righteousness of our own, but according to His own purpose and grace. Salvation is in and through Jesus Christ, for He has “abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” Sin leads to eternal death; Christ gives eternal life. This is the heart of the Gospel, “the good news.”

This was the message Paul was called to preach, it was the message Timothy was called to preach, and it is still the message the Church is to proclaim today.

CONCLUSION

The very word *servant* carries the thought of work, and every member of the body of Christ has a work to do. There is not only the need of each one being busy about the Master’s business, but there is a great need of His followers being workers together.

Again, may I impress your heart with the fact that everyone is a servant. Why not be a servant of Christ and live forever?

Russell R. Byrum wrote, “It is the duty of every member of the local church to maintain holiness of life both for the glory of God and that the good name of the church which has extended its fellowship to him shall not be injured. He should keep himself from every appearance of evil. In business he should be honest, in his social life and amusements, temperate and sober. In his prayer life he should be earnest and constant. In all things he should seek to conform his life to the Word of God.”—*Problems of the Local Church*.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What does the word *servant* mean?
2. How did Paul become a servant of Christ?
3. Does the church need a greater soul burden today?
4. What does the gospel do for souls that will accept it?
5. Are you a servant of Christ today?
6. Are you telling others about your good Master?

LESSON NUMBER FOUR FOR OCTOBER 25

A LIVING SACRIFICE

Scriptures: II Timothy 1:12-18.

II Timothy 1:12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which is in Christ Jesus.

14 That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

15 This thou knowest, that all they

which are in Asia he turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

16 The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:

17 But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.

18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

Memory Verse: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.—Romans 12:1.

Aim: To inspire the student to be a living sacrifice for the Lord.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday **Romans 12**
Tuesday **Philippians 3**
Wednesday **Matthew 16**

Thursday **Mark 8:29-38**
Friday **Matthew 6:24-34**
Saturday **Hebrews 11:7-26**

INTRODUCTION

Sacrifice is something that does not appeal to the flesh! The spirit that controls most people in the world today, it seems to me, is a spirit of “get,” and some do not seem to care how they get, just so they get what they want.

What is the meaning of the word *sacrifice*?

Webster's New World Dictionary says, in part, 1) “an offering of the life of a person or animal, or of an object, in homage to a deity. 2) A giving up, destroying, etc., of one thing for the sake of another of higher value.”

Paul tells us in Romans 12:1 that we are to present our bodies a “living sacrifice” to God, and he further adds, it is our “reasonable service.” So Paul is not speaking of our physical death, but when we become a Christian we are then to present our all to God for His service.

Paul himself was a fine example of a living sacrifice, for he said he had “suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” (See Philippians 3:7-9.)

Not everyone will be called to leave home as Paul was, not everyone will be called to preach, not everyone will be called to leave his job and

go into full-time gospel work, but everyone is called to be a living sacrifice. Some will have to live a more separated life than others—this is God's business—and if our consecration is what it should be, we will not complain or ask, "Why doesn't So-and-so have to give up his job?" but will say, "Here am I, send me."

MEDITATIONS

PAUL HAD CONVICTIONS—II Timothy 1:12—I ... am persuaded—Paul had been deceived by one of the Jewish sects, but on the road to Damascus he met the Savior and accepted Him. From then on he was a true disciple. In verse eleven, Paul said he had been called to preach the gospel as an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles. As a result he had suffered many things. In the first part of this verse he speaks of suffering, yet he was not ashamed. Why? "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." What a wonderful testimony for one who was facing death and knew it. Someone who is in doubt as to who Christ is would not be willing to give up all things to be His disciple.

PAUL HAD A ZEAL—II Timothy 1:13—Hold fast—Paul, as a Pharisee, had persecuted the Church of God. When he came to know Christ and the truth concerning the Church of God, he did not lose his zeal; he turned it and all he had over to the Lord and let Him use it. He lived to spread the gospel. Timothy was one of his fine helpers, and Paul wanted to make sure Timothy held on to the truth which he had taught Timothy. As long as we are a living sacrifice we will stand for the truth that is revealed to us. When people begin to depart from truth, they begin to take things off the altar of sacrifice.

VESSELS FOR GOD—II Timothy 1:14—The Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us—There is a great need of more power in the Church of God, or possibly we should say, there is a great need of more power being manifest. The power is there, but there must be vessels for the Holy Spirit to use. These vessels must be "living sacrifices," for the Spirit will not use just anyone. They that bear the vessels of the Lord must be clean. As long as your job means more to you, as long as your house means more to you, as long as your own life means more to you than Jesus Christ, you are not a living sacrifice. That may seem like a hard saying, but read and study Matthew 16:24-26 and see if that is not what the Master taught.

SOME FORSAKE PAUL—II Timothy 1:15—Be turned away—Adam Clarke expresses the belief that Paul here speaks of those from Asia that were, or had been at Rome, and not all the saints of Asia Minor. "It seems as if the apostle must refer to the Asiatic Christians which were there at Rome, or had been lately there. Finding the apos-

tle in disgrace, and thinking it dangerous to own him or his cause, they neither visited him nor confessed Christianity.” As to the two that Paul names we have no further information. Nevertheless, this lack on their part did not cause Paul to turn aside.

NEED OF SACRIFICE TODAY—II Timothy 1:16-18—He oft refreshed me—It is thrilling to read of the labors of Paul, and even of men like Daniel S. Warner and others who lived in more recent times, but there is need of sacrifice today. Our vision of the lost world and the church’s responsibility to spread the gospel needs to be enlarged. The printing press, the radio, the internet, etc., should not be left for the world alone to use; these things need to be put to greater use in spreading the pure gospel. But these things are so expensive! True, but where is our love for souls? Where is our spirit of sacrifice? In these verses we see some who turned away, and we see some who were very faithful. We see those who helped Paul in a temporal way in his labors for the Master. If we cannot preach, teach, or work miracles, let us do what we can to help those who are called and sent of God. There is a place and a work for everyone. May the Lord help us each one to make sure we do His will and that we are a living sacrifice for Him.

CONCLUSION

“Many begin the Christian walk in carefulness and diligence, but soon give place to carelessness and neglect. How prone people are to lose interest in anything when the new has worn away! They take great interest in the new preacher, but they will become so familiar with him and so accustomed to him that they will lose interest. ...

“In the Christian life there is a strong tendency to let things run down. Some persons hear a sermon and they are awakened, but they are soon lulled to sleep again. Perhaps the example of someone has shown them that they do not pray enough, and they resolve to pray more, but they soon drift into the same careless way. Maybe they see that they do not read enough and improve themselves, and they are greatly stirred to do better, but alas! how soon they allow that resolution to weaken and become as negligent as ever. Nothing but the greatest diligence and unyielding determination will save us from getting weary in well doing. Keep up a strong faith. Hold your mansion in the skies well in view and let nothing hinder you in your journey home.”—C. E. Orr, *How To Live a Holy Life*.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What did Paul “commit” unto the Lord?
2. What does it mean to present your body a “living sacrifice”?
3. What kind of sacrifices are needed today?
4. What are you personally doing to help spread the gospel?

LESSON NUMBER FIVE FOR NOVEMBER 1

SOLDIERS FOR CHRIST

Scriptures: II Timothy 2:1-10.

II Timothy 2:1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

6 The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits.

7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:

9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Memory Verse: No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.—II Timothy 2:4.

Aim: To help each Christian be a good soldier.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday II Timothy 2:1-10
Tuesday II Corinthians 6:1-10
Wednesday Ephesians 5:1-21

Thursday Ephesians 6:10-24
Friday Revelation 12
Saturday Song of Solomon 6

INTRODUCTION

The Church of God is spoken of in the Scriptures in different terms, i.e., family, body, mountain, city, bride, etc. These terms are to convey to our minds certain truths concerning the Church, its work and/or mission.

In our lesson today we have reference to an army, and Paul instructs Timothy to endure hardness as a good soldier.

Some of you, doubtless, have seen military personnel out on a parade field, marching in perfect step, with nice clean uniforms on, and possibly a band playing marching music. It was a stirring sight. But that is not the real purpose of an army! An army is for the purpose of fighting, to defend its homeland, to ward off the attacks of an enemy. Christ's army is not for the purpose of marching as a dress parade, but to fight!

If you are not willing to fight, you cannot be a part of the Church of God, for it is an army.

H. M. Riggle wrote:

"The kingdom of Christ is represented as engaged in constant conflict and as always being victorious. Christ reigns while his enemies are being conquered; 'for he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet' (I Corinthians 15:25). In the very opening of the plan of redemption Christianity is represented as an aggressive conquering power, under the following symbol: 'And I saw, and behold a white horse, and he that sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given him, and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.' (Revelation 6:2). The symbol is that of a victorious warrior, and is drawn from the civil and military life of the Romans. He well represents the primitive church of God. The white horse denotes purity. Holiness was the mighty steed upon which the Christian church rushed to battle. The rider, no doubt, signifies the ministers, who stood for the church entire. The bow signifies that the rider was a warrior. With the sword of truth the early ministry and church rushed forth to battle against the powerful systems of error with which they had to contend. A crown was given unto him. Why? Because he conquered. 'He went forth conquering and to conquer.' This rider wore the victor's crown. So the early ministry and church triumphed over every foe. They multiplied into a strong kingdom of priests and reigned in life. Thus Christ conquered nations through his pure church and ministry. She was seen as an army with banners (Song of Solomon 6:10)."

MEDITATIONS

SOLDIERS ARE TO BE STRONG—II Timothy 2:1—Be strong—In a literal army new recruits have to go through a period of training before they are put out on the battlefield. In some respects it is the same in the army of the Lord. New converts need to be with older saints to learn how to fight the devil. We are not fighting against flesh and blood, but against the wicked and deceptive spirit, Satan. The only way any of us can overcome him is by being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Paul said, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:10-12). The Scriptures warn us against putting confidence in the flesh—Peter did when he told the Lord he would not deny him, but Peter failed—we must be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

TEACH OTHERS—II Timothy 2:2—Commit thou to faithful men—Paul, facing death, greatly desired that the truth of the gospel would continue to be preached to the people. He knew that he had taught Timothy and that Timothy had been faithful to him and to the gospel. Now he instructs Timothy to teach other faithful men who would be able to teach others. I feel safe in saying Timothy did

just that; but somewhere along the line some proved to be unfaithful! Otherwise the “falling away” would not have occurred. We need to listen and obey the orders that are given to us by Christ and His ministers. A man in a literal army must obey those that are over him. To be a soldier in the army of the Lord we must do the same.

SOME THINGS ARE NOT PLEASANT—II Timothy 2:3—Endure hardness—It is wonderful to be a Christian! You do not know true living if you are not a child of God. But as Paul is writing to Timothy, there are hard places, there are battles, there are trials, there are some things to *endure*. These preachers who are teaching the people that Christianity is just “a feel good religion” that offers year around sports programs and social gatherings do not know what real Christianity is. I am not painting a dark, drab way; I am simply pointing out what the apostle Paul was saying. He spoke from experience. If we are good soldiers, we will endure the hard places and stick to our post of duty. Do not flee in the hottest fight. Stand your ground, push the enemy back, and wear the victor’s crown someday. Christ has promised never to leave you nor forsake you.

DO NOT BE CAUGHT IN A NET—II Timothy 2:4—No man that warreth—Paul was aware that the legionnaire soldiers among the Romans were not permitted to engage in husbandry, merchandise, mechanical employments or anything that would be inconsistent with his job as a soldier. Even today a man who enlists in a literal army must leave his civilian job, and many times leave his family behind. This is especially true in time of war. I realize Paul was writing to a fellow minister, and they do have a special calling that separates them from other work, as Peter said, “It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:2-4). I do not think it out of line to say that *every* soldier of the cross must be careful that they not be *entangled* with the cares of this life in a way that would keep them from being what God would have them be. This may mean changing jobs or foregoing some legitimate things so that the “weightier matters” can be attended to.

CONDITIONS TO BE MET—II Timothy 2:5—If a man—Whether you speak of the public games of that day, or of something a person may do to “win the prize,” there were rules to go by. If we are to fight the good fight of faith, there are rules we must follow—the Word of God. The Church of God is not a politically run “business.” Christ is the Head of His church, He is the Captain of His army, and for one to be in that army and to make advancement, or progress, he must “strive lawfully.”

A PROPER WAY TO STRIVE—II Timothy 2:6, 7—The above statement is born out by these verses. A husbandman must first prop-

erly prepare his ground if he expects to reap a harvest, and a soldier, a minister of the gospel, for instance, must labor in the spiritual vineyard, fight on the spiritual battlefield according to the directions of the Master, before he can expect the crown of righteousness. “Consider what I say,” Paul said, and the Lord give you understanding as to the true meaning of the metaphor given.

WE HAVE A HOPE—II Timothy 2:8—Jesus Christ ... was raised from the dead—Why did Paul interject this thought here? Paul was facing death. Timothy was to be left behind; he would have to continue the battle, facing what Paul did not know. He wanted Timothy to remember there was a reason he was willing to suffer as he had and why he was willing to suffer martyrdom. This life was not all there was to it. There was a hereafter, there would be a resurrection, and Christ’s resurrection was proof of that fact. Hymeneus and Philetus were teaching that the resurrection was past already, but Paul who preached the true gospel knew that was not true.

TRUTH BRINGS TROUBLE—II Timothy 2:9—I suffer trouble—To the child of God who has been saved from a life of sin and evil, the gospel is good news, but to the devil it is *bad* news! It uncovers his dirty, evil works. As a result, many times the devil stirs up his *soldiers* to fight against the soldiers of Christ. Paul preached a risen living Christ, a Savior that could deliver from all sin, heal from all sickness, give power over all evil, and he met great opposition everywhere he went. He suffered many things, but was able to say, “None of these things move me.” He was bound, literally at times, but the Word of God was not bound! **Verse 10**—Paul suffered, not only that he be true, but that his life and labor be a blessing to others. The soldier of Christ is not only fighting for himself but for the entire family of God, and also to win the lost to the Lord. Let each soldier be determined to be true and loyal. The victory may depend on you.

CONCLUSION

The thoughts expressed in this lesson and the truths brought out in these verses are not just words. To be a follower of Jesus Christ you must fight! There is a deadly enemy in the world called the devil and Satan, and he is determined to defeat everyone and to damn every soul in an eternal hell. We must be more determined than he is. If we will obey the orders of our “Captain,” the Lord Jesus Christ, we can be more than conquerors.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why is the Church of God compared to an army?
2. What kind of battle is the Christian soldier called to fight?
3. Who is our enemy?
4. What are our weapons?
5. What does the word *endure* mean?

LESSON NUMBER SIX FOR NOVEMBER 8

DOERS OF THE WORD

Scriptures: II Timothy 2:11-19.

II Timothy 2:11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be

ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

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

17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

Memory Verse: But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.—James 1:22.

Aim: To stress the need of LIVING the Word of God out in our daily lives.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday **Matthew 4**
Tuesday **James 1**
Wednesday **Matthew 7**

Thursday **Matthew 23**
Friday **John 14**
Saturday **Revelation 2**

INTRODUCTION

There is so much “theory” in the religious world today! So many “talk” about the Scriptures, or at least religion. Christ is a historical figure that many seem to admire, and millions have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof. They say they believe *on* Him, but how many really *believe* Him?

In many ways the religious world today reminds us of the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus said in regard to them: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves” (Matthew 23:14, 15). What is needed is that we obey the words of James, “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:21, 22).

The prophet Micah wrote: “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (6:8).

“It is not said that God walked with Enoch, but that Enoch walked with God. Some heart might sighingly say, ‘Oh, that God would walk with me!’ Let the sighings of thy heart be changed to saying, ‘Oh, let me walk with God!’ There are many who would be pleased to have God walk with them, but who will not walk with Him. God’s course was marked out before man was created. From this course He never turns. If you desire His companionship, you must walk in His way. ...

“God will condescend to walk with those who walk with Him; but if you would walk with Him, you must go in the ways in which He leads.”—C. E. Orr, *The Hidden Life*.

MEDITATIONS

GOD’S WORD IS FAITHFUL—II Timothy 2:11—A faithful saying—The Word of God is clear in its teaching about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul informs us, “If Christ be not raised, your faith in vain; ye are yet in your sins” (I Corinthians 15:17). Of course, Paul was not in doubt in this matter. I would like to call your attention to another death that we must die before we can be resurrected to eternal life. “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Romans 6:1, 2). We must die to sin to have part in “the first resurrection,” which is not literal but spiritual. “And you hath he quickened [made alive, resurrected], who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). It is this first resurrection that gives us assurance of life beyond the grave.

NOT ALWAYS EASY—II Timothy 2:12—If we suffer—Why should anyone have to suffer because he is a Christian? He really shouldn’t *have to*! But Jesus said, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you” (John 15:18). “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Matthew 10:22). “I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John 17:14). So if we are going to be a *doer of the Word* we will have to take the suffering that goes with it. However, that is not all Paul said in this verse! “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.” That is what life is all about: living in such a way that we will be able to reign with Christ eternally. But note, “If we deny him, he also will deny us.”

SUPPOSE SOME DO NOT BELIEVE—II Timothy 2:13—If we believe not—Suppose some do not believe. Does that make void the Word of God? In no way. “If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.” The Lord and His Word do not depend on our believing. He is “the way, the truth, and the life” whether we believe it or not. We are the ones who are benefitted by obeying the Word.

PREACHING AND TEACHING THE TRUTH—II Timothy 2:14—Put them in remembrance—So many today, even as some in

ancient Israel, want the ministers to speak “smooth things,” to tickle their ears with funny stories, etc., but what is needed is the preaching of the rugged old gospel just as it is. Striving over words “to no profit” can end up “subverting the hearers.”

NEED TO STUDY—II Timothy 2:15, 16—Study to shew thyself approved—It is good to read the Bible, but we need to do more; we need to *study* the Scriptures. We are to study them, not so we can impress others with our wisdom, or “debate” the Scriptures with others, but we are to study them so we can live the kind of life that will be acceptable in the sight of God. Many are teaching the doctrines of sect religion. Paul says we should rightly divide the Word, and in doing so, “shun profane and vain babblings”; such will produce more ungodliness.

FALSE DOCTRINE EXPOSED—II Timothy 2:17, 18—Their word—Many study the Scriptures without the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Human reasoning and sectarian spirits will lead to spiritual shipwreck. Paul refers to two who had done just that, and as a result, they started teaching that the “resurrection is past already.” If a person studies the Scriptures under the influence of a false spirit, he will come up with false doctrine. If a person studies the Scriptures with a wrong motive, he is in danger of doing the same thing. Again, we need to study the Word with a sincere desire to let it have full course in our lives. **Verse 19**—God’s Word stands sure! In the face of all denial, in spite of all the false doctrines, the Word of God endureth to all generations. The Lord knows those who are His. He knows who loves Him, who is serving Him. He knows those who are “doers of the Word,” those who have departed from all iniquity.

CONCLUSION

Jesus said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).

Jesus further stated: “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock” (Matthew 7:24, 25).

Make sure your “house” stands by being a doer of the Word.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What does it mean to have just a form of godliness?
2. Why should one study the Word of God?
3. The Pharisees were very religious. Why did Jesus call them hypocrites?
4. What part does the Holy Spirit have to play in our study of the Word?
5. Who shall enter into that eternal home Christ is preparing?

LESSON NUMBER SEVEN FOR NOVEMBER 15

VESSELS UNTO HONOR

Scriptures: II Timothy 2:20-26; I Corinthians 3:16, 17; 6:19, 20.

II Timothy 2:20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing they do gender strifes.

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure

will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

I Corinthians 3:16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

I Corinthians 6:19 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.

Memory Verse: But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

—II Corinthians 4:7.

Aim: To encourage each student to be a vessel unto honor—God's honor.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday II Corinthians 4

Tuesday II Corinthians 7

Wednesday Jeremiah 18:1-12

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

I Timothy 3:1-13

I Thessalonians 4

Matthew 25:1-13

INTRODUCTION

I have seen my brother take a lump of clay, put it on his turntable, take his hands while turning his turntable with his foot, and fashion that lump of clay into a vessel. The clay had nothing to "say" about what kind of vessel it would become! That was up to the potter.

God formed man from the *dust* of the earth. Paul speaks of the redeemed as being earthen vessels. We do have the responsibility of choosing who we will serve, but if our choice is God, then we must be clay in the Potter's hands and let Him mold us into the vessel He would have us be. If we will, we will be a vessel unto honor.

MEDITATIONS

VESSELS IN A HOUSE—II Timothy 2:20—A great house—In the previous verse Paul speaks of the foundation of God standing sure, and in this verse he speaks of a great house. The Church of God is

referred to as the “house of God,” and in the church there are vessels. Gold and silver vessels, doubtless, would refer to holy and sincere saints; wood and earth could refer to those who were less than what they should be. From time to time there are those who assemble with the saints who are only professing, as Hymenaeus and Philetus (verse 17), who had erred and departed from the truth. Such professors are not actually in the Church. Some vessels honor God and some dishonor Him.

SOMETHING TO DO—II Timothy 2:21—If a man—Salvation from sin is a divine work wrought in the soul by God. No man can cleanse his soul from sin. But we are to quit the sinful habits, we are to “cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh ... perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” Do not expect God to send an angel to take the tobacco out of your pocket! Do not expect Him to send an angel to remove the worldly adornment you may have on your fingers, or ears, or around your neck; you are to do that. *Convert* or *conversion* carries the thought of turning away from sin and turning to God. When one does this with all his heart, he is a vessel meet for the Master’s use.

WALKING IN THE LIGHT—II Timothy 2:22—Flee also youthful lusts—The gospel is for all! Here Paul speaks directly to youths. The word *lust* means “strong desires,” so a person is to forsake not only sensual desires, but pride, worldly ambitions and a desire for power, which many *lust* after. Replace them with “righteousness, faith, charity, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” Replace evil companions with those who have pure hearts and desires.

SOME THINGS ARE TO BE AVOIDED—II Timothy 2:23—Foolish and unlearned questions—In I Timothy 1:4, Paul said, “Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying.” There are many *foolish* things we need to avoid, including foolish talking, fables, and false doctrines, “knowing that they do gender strifes.”

VESSELS THAT ARE SERVANTS—II Timothy 2:24-26—The servant of the Lord—The servant of the Lord (and here Paul possibly means ministers, as he is writing to Timothy) must strive for some things as the righteous and holy way, but he is not to be carnal, he is not to be harsh, he is not to strive for vainglory or self promotion; he is to be gentle unto all men, for all have a right to hear the gospel. The minister is to teach, for this is much of his work as a minister, so he needs the gift of teaching. He is to be patient, and many times this may be difficult, but he is to be. **Verse 25—**Paul continues his instructions to the “servant of the Lord,” who is to be a vessel unto honor, in a spirit of meekness, “instructing those that oppose themselves.” He is not to have a haughty, holier-than-thou attitude, even when trying to help those who oppose their own best interest. Through such a godly, humble spirit, the wayward may repent and acknowledge the truth. **Verse 26—**Let none of us take the attitude that we cannot be wrong,

that we cannot err. If we realize it is possible, then we can show more patience with others who have been taught error. Our purpose is to be a vessel unto honor and to do all we can to get others to be the same.

VESSELS—TEMPLES—I Corinthians 3:16, 17—The temple of God—Whether we speak of vessels or temples, in these verses Paul is speaking of one and the same—our bodies. In these verses from First Corinthians, Paul points out that we are to be a vessel for the Holy Spirit to dwell in; but not just to dwell in, to use. What an honor to have the Holy Spirit to live in us. The Spirit is *with* the justified, and *in* the sanctified. The temple is to be holy. Some seem to think their soul can be right with God while they use their bodies in sinful ways, but such is not true. God is to have control over the body as well as the spirit. Our bodies are to be clothed in modest apparel, and we are to cleanse ourselves of all filthiness of the flesh. “The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”

BOUGHT WITH A PRICE—I Corinthians 6:19, 20—Ye are not your own—Many put such stress on what they call speaking in tongues. The gift of the Holy Spirit is not *tongues*! The *gift* of the Holy Spirit is the Spirit Himself. This *gift* is not something you have to beg and beg God for. What one must do to receive the Spirit is to meet the conditions: turn from all sin, be converted, and then present his body a living sacrifice. Salvation from sin and sanctification (the infilling of the Holy Spirit) are experiences purchased for us by the blood of the Son of God. Being a vessel for God means He has control, and we seek to glorify Him in body and in spirit. You do not dress, you do not talk, you do not act to draw attention to yourself, to put self on display; you seek to do all to the glory of God. This is a high calling, but it is the standard taught in the Word of God, and thus the standard of the Church of God.

CONCLUSION

As we think of vessels, what greater honor could anyone have than to be a vessel for the precious Holy Spirit to not only dwell in, but to use for the honor and glory of God. After all, a vessel is that which can hold something, that can be used for something. If we are not a vessel for God then we are a vessel for the devil! Let everyone seek to be a vessel of honor by doing the will of God.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is the house of God?
2. Does God's house have vessels? If so, what are they?
3. How can we be a vessel unto honor?
4. How is one a vessel unto dishonor?
5. Does the Holy Spirit possess your vessel?

LESSON NUMBER EIGHT FOR NOVEMBER 22

IN THE LAST DAYS—PERILOUS TIMES

Scriptures: II Timothy 3:1-9; I Peter 5:8-10; II Peter 3:3, 4; II Corinthians 11:13-15.

II Timothy 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good.

4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts.

7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

9 But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.

I Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion,

walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

9 Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

II Peter 3:3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

II Corinthians 11:13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Memory Verse: Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.—Matthew 26:41.

Aim: To help Christians to be on their guard against the evils of our day.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Acts 2

Tuesday Matthew 26:31-41

Wednesday Exodus 7:1-12

Thursday John 14:15-21

Friday Galatians 1

Saturday Galatians 5:14-26

INTRODUCTION

For years men have been setting dates for the second coming of the Lord. All have proven false. You would think they would learn not to expose their lack of knowledge by doing such things, but it seems some people never learn.

Paul speaks of the “last days,” and I suppose some people would apply this statement to our present day alone, but we need to realize

that the expression is used in different ways. Some Old Testament prophets used it to mean the “last age.” Some used it referring to the last days of the Jewish people as a nation to the time of the fall of Jerusalem. Peter referred to his time as the last days. Joel had prophesied certain things would happen in the last days, and Peter quotes his words and then tells his hearers, “This is that.” (See Acts 2:14-16.)

We are living in the last days, but that does not mean Christ is coming this year or next. Even so, we can learn much from the scriptures in this lesson. The end of this, the last age, *will come*! We need to be more concerned about being ready than we are about when it will be.

MEDITATIONS

PAUL FORETELLS THE FUTURE—II Timothy 3:1—Perilous times—The powers of hell have always opposed the true child of God, and always will. Yet there are periods of time when the danger seems to be greater than at other times. Paul saw such a time coming. We need to be aware of the danger in our day and guard against it, for doubtless the things Paul saw, or at least some of them, reach on down to our day. Even so, we need to have that confidence in God to *know*, as He kept the saints of the past, He will keep us if we will but trust and obey Him.

SOME OF THE DANGERS—II Timothy 3:2—For men—One of the main causes—if not the main cause—of evil and trouble in the world is the “get” spirit that rules in many people’s lives. “Men shall be lovers of their own selves,” and because they are, they will put self first. Because they put self first, they become covetous, desiring that which belongs to others, boasters, proud [pride goes before destruction], blasphemers, disobedient to parents. (This is one of the great evils in America and many other lands today, and our civil laws and public officials in some cases encourage and protect such disobedience. You must feed and clothe them, but don’t try to tell them what to do and not do.) A spirit of “get” is not a thankful spirit but a spirit of greed. God has blessed us so much. There is great need of our being thankful, but it seems the more some get, the more they want, and the less thankful they become. Such is indeed unholy; in fact, holiness is laughed at, not only by the sinner, but by many religious people. These things were true before the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and they are true in our day!

THE LIST CONTINUES—II Timothy 3:3—Without natural affection—Paul continues to speak of the perilous conditions that would come and what would make them perilous. How else can you explain the murder of millions of babies by abortion, except “without natural affection”? Also explains “men with men” and “women with women,” burning in their lusts toward those of their own sex. The idea that God made some people that way is as far from the truth as anything could be. Such people were to be put to death under the Old Covenant. Sin is what has produced such perversion.

Many can't be depended on to keep their word, while others falsely accuse those who are striving to do right.

The word *incontinent* means, "without self-restraint, especially in regard to sexual activity," etc. If Paul were living today, he would not have to change his statement one bit—it fits our generation. Paul adds, "fierce, despisers of those that are good." Parents are finding out more and more the opposition they are facing as they try to train their children up in a good, clean, moral way. **Verse 4—Traitors**—Not only to the cause of Christ, but in their dealings with one another. "Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." Surely we see that in the world today. Stadiums filled, people yelling until they are hoarse because someone hits a ball over a fence or crosses a goal line; and, of course, the drinking that goes with such events. Paul here, of course, speaks of fleshly, sinful pleasures. God is not against pleasure, as long as it is in the bounds of His holy Word. But this, doubtless, is one of the reasons millions are not Christians; they want worldly pleasure, and it means more to them than God does.

AN AMAZING FACT—II Timothy 3:5—Having a form of godliness—After Paul speaks of the perilous times, and what makes them perilous times, he adds a statement that many will not want to accept, yet it is true. These proud, disobedient, unthankful, unholy, truce breakers, these people without natural affections will have a *form of godliness!* They will profess to be Christians. Homosexuals will form their own "churches." Some of these worldly pleasure-lovers will tell you they are "born again," but they will deny the power of the gospel. They will scoff at living a holy life. "From such," Paul said, "turn away."

KNOWLEDGE IS NOT SALVATION—II Timothy 3:6-9—Ever learning—Many seem to know the Scriptures, many can go into the Hebrew and the Greek, but do not come up with the real truth of the gospel. False prophets today are resisting the true Church of God just like Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses in Egypt, but God exposed their "form of religion" through His servants, and may He be pleased to do it again in our day.

THE NEED TO WATCH—I Peter 5:8-10—Be sober—In all ages Satan has done his utmost to defeat the children of God. We see the literal nation of Israel turning away from God a number of times and the sad condition it brought to them. Peter advises one and all to face life seriously, to be consistent in our Christian living, because our adversary, the devil, is seeking ways to devour. The devil has more, it seems, to work with than ever before, and he does not miss one opportunity to lead a soul astray. We are to resist the devil "steadfast in the faith" all the time! Do not allow him to use anything of this literal world to allure you away. Saints of old suffered but have overcome, and the "God of all grace" is just as able to keep today as in days past. God can use suffering, persecution, and such to "perfect,

stablish, strengthen, settle” us, if we will be faithful in resisting the adversary.

SCOFFERS AND MOCKERS—II Peter 3:3, 4—There shall come—Peter did not speak idle words. The scoffers came just as he said they would, but all of them are not dead! There are many scoffers in our day. Even among professed Christians, you will find those who deny the truth of the gospel and will mock at those who take the Word of God seriously. Preachers deny the virgin birth of the Son of God, deny His resurrection. Some do not believe He was “God manifest in the flesh,” do not believe He returned to the Father, and do not believe He will come again. Just because the Lord has not returned yet does not mean that He will not. However, millions will be surprised as to what will happen when He does. He will not set up a literal kingdom here on this earth. The kingdom of God has already been set up. When Christ comes, He will judge the world and then *DELIVER UP* the kingdom to the Father.

RELIGIOUS DECEPTION—II Corinthians 11:13-15—Satan himself—Peter wrote, “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (II Peter 2:1). There were false prophets in Old Testament times even among the Hebrews. The early morning church had to face them, and they are still in the world today. Paul informs us that these false prophets transform themselves into the apostles of Christ. In other words, they do not come saying, “I am a false prophet”; they say they are men of God called of Him to preach. Paul says not to marvel or be surprised about this, “for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.” How many of us can tell the difference? When we speak of the evils of our day, the perilous times, we must not overlook the evil of false prophets, false teachings, false religion. Doubtless, false religion is causing the loss of more souls than any other one thing.

CONCLUSION

Paul, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, has set forth some very plain and straightforward truths in these verses. We have not been able to deal with them in detail, but I trust the student will give additional time to study these truths and guard against such evil in his own life.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is meant by *last times*?
2. What is the meaning of the word *peril*?
3. Why are the things Paul speaks of a peril to mankind?
4. How could such people as Paul describes think they were right with God?
5. How can one come to a knowledge of the truth?

LESSON NUMBER NINE FOR NOVEMBER 29

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

Scriptures: II Timothy 3:10-17; Isaiah 26:3; II Thessalonians 3:3; Jude 24.

II Timothy 3:10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,

11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions, I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able

to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Isaiah 26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

II Thessalonians 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.

Jude 24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

Memory Verse: But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.—II Thessalonians 3:3.

Aim: To stress the faithfulness of God in the midst of trials and tests.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday II Thessalonians 3
Tuesday I Thessalonians 5
Wednesday Isaiah 26

Thursday III John
Friday Psalm 119:65-80
Saturday Psalm 23

INTRODUCTION

Living for Christ is the most important thing in the world! Solomon, the wise man said, "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). And Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

Why then should a Christian be persecuted, talked about, opposed, made fun of, and treated as though he was some evil person?

As we read the Scriptures and early church history, we find that servants of God were stoned, fed to wild beasts, sawn asunder, burned at the stake, beheaded, thrown in prison, exiled, etc. And we find that many times this treatment was meted out by those who had some form of religion. Yet, in it all, God was faithful. It may have appeared to some that God had failed, but such is impossible.

E. E. Byrum made these comments about Paul:

“Paul had had very much experience in committing himself and his ways unto the Lord in time of trouble. When shipwrecked and billows were rolling high, Paul trusted in the mighty God; when thieves and robbers attacked him and his life was endangered, in perils of robbers and of his own countrymen, and by the heathen, he realized the protecting hand of the Lord was over him; and when in perils in the city, with angry mobs casting stones, and beating him with rods and lashes, casting him into prison, and such like, he realized that there was deliverance through the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that his sufferings would only be the means of drawing the people to the Lord and causing many other souls to be delivered from sin and the powers of Satan.”—*The Secret of Salvation*.

MEDITATIONS

PAUL LIVED THE LIFE—II Timothy 3:10, 11—But thou hast fully known—After Paul was converted, and three days later filled with the Spirit and baptized, “straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God” (Acts 9:20). And straightway, or shortly thereafter, “... the Jews took counsel to kill him” (Acts 9:23). Thus Paul started in the Christian race meeting opposition, but he was a faithful and true soldier. In his travels, Timothy was added to the missionary band, and he did indeed know the life of the man Paul, what he taught, what he suffered, his faith and love for souls. At Antioch of Pisida, “The Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts” (Acts 13:50). At Iconium, “the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren. ... And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them, They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe” (Acts 14:2, 5, 6). But Paul declares, in reference to the persecutions, afflictions, etc., “... out of them all the Lord delivered me.”

NOT JUST FOR PAUL—II Timothy 3:12—All that will live godly—Paul declares all that live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. There is a devil in the world and he is called Satan, which means adversary, and he is opposed to everything that is pure, holy, godly, good, loving, and kind. Further, he is opposed to everyone who lives a godly life. Do not think you can be a true Christian and not meet the opposition of the devil. Also, be aware of the fact that the devil uses human beings to carry out his work, just as God uses human beings to carry on His work. Sometimes the opposition comes from those who are the closest to you. Yet, God’s grace has never failed a trusting soul.

EVIL PRODUCES MORE EVIL—II Timothy 3:13—But evil men—The Word of God teaches that we reap what we sow. You cannot sow evil seed and reap a righteous reward. Note, Paul speaks of seducers and deceivers. You will find this not only in the “world,” but you will find it in false religion as well; and they do not improve, they “wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.”

PRESS ON IN THE FIGHT—II Timothy 3:14, 15—But continue—Paul knew he had taught the truth. He knew Timothy had a background of truth, even from his childhood, so he exhorts Timothy to continue in those things that he had been taught. One of the sad things that has happened down through the ages is that men have failed to continue in the truth. Why do some seem to think God’s message has to be changed every two or three generations? Israel departed from the true worship of God and was carried away into captivity. Judah departed from the true worship of God and was carried to Babylon. The early morning church did not continue with power and victory as they started out, and their falling away made it possible for the rise of Papalism. After Paul and others were gone, many departed from the faith. How necessary it is that we not only know the truth and live it for awhile, but that we continue unto the end.

THE WORD IS DEPENDABLE—II Timothy 3:16, 17—All scripture—God never inspired a lie! His Word is forever settled in heaven. The starry heavens will pass away, but not the Word of God. The Word was given to teach us the right way, to reprove us, to correct us, and to instruct us in righteous living. All who will take the Word of God as it is, live it out in their daily lives, will find that it works. You will also find that the world will oppose you, that men will speak evil of you, that the devil will try to stop you, but continue in the Word and you will find that verse 17 is true in your life: “That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

PEACE OF MIND—Isaiah 26:3—Thou wilt keep—Peace with God is one of the wonderful blessings of salvation. Peace with God enables one to be at peace with themselves, and as far as lies within you, to live in peace with others. That is not to say we will not have concerns, it is not to say we will not have any burdens to carry, but it does mean we can trust the faithful God and know all is well, because our mind is stayed on Him.

OUR TRUST IN NOT IN VAIN—II Thessalonians 3:3—The Lord is faithful—How many times have we put trust in individuals and been disappointed? How many put their trust in a company and it has failed? How many times have governments failed? Kingdoms have fallen, and vanished from the earth! How many have ever found God to fail? NOT ONE!! Things may not have always gone as we desired, we may not have always understood the will of God, but God

has never failed. He CANNOT fail, He is GOD. "The Lord is faithful." If we will be faithful to Him, He will "keep [us] from evil."

NOT NECESSARY TO FALL—Jude 24—Keep you from falling—In the Scriptures we find many who failed, but you notice **THEY** are the ones that failed, not God. Just as Jude has stated in this verse, God is able to keep *you* from falling. God does allow tests to come our way. He does it because it will be to our good if we face and overcome as He intends for us to. Jesus, the Son of God, was tempted in all points, yet without sin. By His grace every child of God can be an overcomer. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)" (Hebrews 10:23).

CONCLUSION

God is *Immutable*: That is, "God never changes as to His nature and attributes. He is necessarily unchangeable because He is perfect."

God is *Eternal*: That is, He had no beginning and He will have no ending. "But more than mere infinite duration is involved in the eternity of God. It is His nature to exist, and necessary existence is involved in the very idea of His being God. The supposition that at some time in infinite duration God did not exist is self-contradictory."

God is *Omnipotent*: That is, He is almighty. There is no limit to His power. His power, of course, is never used in an unholy way. His almighty power does not do away with the fact that we are "free moral agents," with the responsibility of choosing whom we will serve. It does not mean that sin will have no effect; it will.

God is *Omnipresent*: That means "that in some sense God is everywhere and fills infinite space with His presence. ... Such infinity of God in relation to space is doubtless as difficult for comprehension by finite minds as is any other infinite idea."

The *Omniscience* of God: That means God has a perfect knowledge of all things. "With the proof that God is eternal and omnipresent, that He inhabits eternity and fills immensity, it logically follows that He is in possession of all knowledge. The fact of omniscience is inseparable from the omnipresence and eternity of God."

"By affirming fidelity of God we mean that He is faithful. What He has promised He will perform." (Quotes are from *Christian Theology*, by R. R. Byrum.)

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is the most important thing in the world? Why?
2. Why do Christians suffer for living for Christ?
3. Why are Christians permitted to suffer?
4. Does suffering reflect on the faithfulness of God?
5. What is our safeguard against failure?

LESSON NUMBER TEN FOR DECEMBER 6

PREACH THE WORD

Scriptures: II Timothy 4:1-5; Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 26:15-19.

II Timothy 4:1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

Mark 16:15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not

shall be damned.

Acts 26:15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.

Memory Verse: Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

—Acts 20:28.

Aim: To impress the student with the need of being loyal to God and to His message, as it is preached by God-called ministers.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday I Timothy 4
Tuesday Ephesians 4:1-16
Wednesday I John 4

Thursday Acts 26:1-29
Friday Mark 16
Saturday Titus 1

INTRODUCTION

A preacher is one who heralds or proclaims, usually by delivering a sermon on some text of scripture.

Noah is spoken of in II Peter 2:5 as a “preacher of righteousness.” Sad to say, but not all “preachers” are preachers of righteousness. All of God’s ministers are, however. And that is not to say they cannot make a mistake, but every true minister is seeking to convey God’s truth.

What a grave responsibility it is to be a spokesman for God. We are dealing with eternity-bound souls, and what is preached could determine whether a soul is saved or lost.

Jesus has warned us that many false prophets would arise, showing signs and wonders, and would deceive many.

Everyone needs to seek God for the truth, being willing to listen to the man of God, but rejecting the false prophet.

“The preacher who fails to make a straight path through life, to walk clean before the world, is not fit to stand behind the sacred desk and bear this pure gospel to the people. The work needs and demands a clean ministry. The preacher with a clean record behind him is the only one needed today—a preacher who can say like Paul ... ‘Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we have behaved ourselves among you.’

“The gospel message is an intelligent one. It should be delivered in an intelligent manner. ... The great need of the times is an efficient ministry, preachers with deep knowledge of the Word of Truth. We should know the Bible thoroughly. We should make it our daily study; yes, make it our life-study. ... Preaching means more than reading portions of the scripture to the people. Most anyone can arrange a large number of scriptural texts, and then read them to a public assembly. To preach means to expound the Word of God. God calls and qualifies His ministers to explain and teach the truth to the people.”—H. M. Riggle, addressing ministers in the 1913 camp meeting at Anderson, Indiana, *Camp Meeting Sermons*.

MEDITATIONS

A SACRED CHARGE—II Timothy 4:1—I charge thee—Paul, the faithful man of God, who had weathered many a storm, who faced the false prophets of his day, who had fought with “beasts” at Ephesus, was now writing his beloved “son” in the gospel, Timothy, and charging him before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick [alive spiritually] and the dead [dead spiritually] at His appearing. (Please note, Paul did not say Christ would wait 1,007 years after His appearing to judge the people, but at His appearing.) **Verse 2—Preach the word**—When God calls a man to preach, He calls him to preach the Word. God never calls people to preach the message of a sectarian church, He does not call people to preach their own ideas and opinions, He does not call them to be comedians, trying to win the people with their jokes and funny stories. He calls them to preach the Word. According to Paul’s words, a minister may not always “feel” like preaching, but he is to be “instant in season and out of season.” His preaching will “reprove” some and “rebuke” some, but let it be done in a spirit of love and concern for souls, with “all longsuffering and doctrine.”

NOT ALL MEN ARE FAITHFUL—II Timothy 4:3—The time will come—Some do not seem to think “doctrine” is important, but

doctrine is any thing that is taught, and what is taught is very important! All through the history of man we see those who were faithful for awhile, and then, for one reason or another, they turn away from the truth and forsake sound doctrine. Paul said men will forsake the truth, and then they will “heap to themselves” teachers who will preach and teach what the people want to hear. King Saul claimed the people wanted to spare Agag and the finest of the cattle to make an offering to the Lord, but Saul was responsible for his failure to obey the Lord. Everyone must give an account to God for his own deeds.

Verse 4—Turned unto fables—By turning away from the truth, these people turned to fables. They continued with their religious profession, but they were not serving God. If we are not going to stand for truth and live it out in our daily lives, we would be better off not to profess at all.

PAUL EXHORTS TIMOTHY TO BE FAITHFUL—II Timothy 4:5—But watch—The word *watch* here is to be understood as meaning to be on guard. Do not allow Satan, or his false prophets, to lead you astray. Keep your heart set on the things of God, suffer whatever you must, but be true. Continue to preach the gospel, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

THE GOSPEL IS FOR ALL—Mark 16:15, 16—Go ye into all the world—It seems at first the apostles were a little slow in understanding that the gospel *was* for all people. That is not to say they were not busy, for they were, but their vision was enlarged when Peter was given the vision at Jaffa. Note: Jesus instructed them to preach *the gospel!* It was not just any message they were to preach. Matthew quotes Jesus as saying, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, ... Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” That is what the church is to teach today. Jesus goes on to say, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Believing and obeying the gospel is the way to be saved and the way to keep saved. That is why it is so important that the ministry “preach the word.”

THE CONVERSION OF PAUL—Acts 26:15—I am Jesus—We have had much to say about Paul in these lessons on I and II Timothy, as he is the writer, but here we see Paul relating how he was awakened to his need. He had thought Jesus was an imposter, that the followers of Christ were heretics that should be stopped, but now he hears a voice saying, “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.” There are many things about Paul that are to be admired, and one is how honest he was and how willing to change when he was brought face to face with the truth. Oh, that people would be that honest today!

PAUL’S CALLING—Acts 26:16-19—I have appeared unto thee for this purpose—Jesus informs Paul He had a great work for him to do, “to make thee a minister and a witness to the things you have seen and to those things which I will show you later. I will deliver you

from the people.” This is something *every* minister needs! I do not speak of a minister being rude or unconcerned, I speak of him being delivered from the fear of people. One who is *afraid* of what people will say or think will, doubtless, preach a compromised message. He will tickle their ears.

Paul was to be sent to the Gentiles. That is not to say he could not preach to his own people, but he had a special calling to preach to the Gentiles. The gospel he was to preach to them was to “open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” Any “gospel” that will not do that is not the gospel of Christ. It is not the gospel Christ commissioned the Church to take to the entire world.

Jesus told the people in the synagogue at Nazareth, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18, 19). That is the same gospel He gave to the Church to preach to the world. The gospel, if obeyed, will save the soul from all committed sins, sanctify the believer, heal the sick, and give power to live holy.

CONCLUSION

The pressure of the world and false religion is always coming against the Church of God. Even in Old Testament times there was the pressure to be like the other nations. That is why Israel asked for a king, but in doing so, the Lord said they had rejected Him from ruling over them. God’s people are a separate people, and as long as they retain God’s favor they will remain a separate people.

The minister of the gospel has a very important place to fill in the plan of God. Many times whether a people remain faithful or not depends on whether the minister remains faithful or not. The watchman must cry aloud and warn the people, otherwise their “blood” will be on his hands. Those who hear the Word preached as it is then must live accordingly. God does not call ministers to preach just to preach; He calls them to preach so that the people will know how to live in obedience to His will.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is preaching?
2. Are all preachers men of God?
3. What does God call ministers to preach?
4. What will Christ judge the people with?
5. Why do some not endure “sound doctrine”?
6. Do you have a real love in your heart for the truth?

LESSON NUMBER ELEVEN FOR DECEMBER 13

KEEPING THE FAITH

Scriptures: II Timothy 4:6-8; Ephesians 4:4-6; Jude 3, 4.

II Timothy 4:6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Ephesians 4:4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Jude 3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Memory Verse: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.—II Timothy 4:7.

Aim: To encourage the student to keep the faith once delivered to the saints.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Ephesians 4
Tuesday Jude
Wednesday II Timothy 4

Thursday Matthew 24:1-24
Friday John 17
Saturday Acts 20:17-38

INTRODUCTION

In every age the powers of darkness have come against the saints of God. As mentioned in the last lesson, even in Old Testament times we see the forces of evil, including false religion, coming against the nation of Israel, and later the little nation of Judah. How many times were God's people led away from the true worship of God?

God, in His goodness, would raise up a prophet to cry out against the sins of the people. At times his message was heeded; at other times the man of God was persecuted, his message disregarded by his own people.

H. M. Riggle, writing about the "falling away" of the early church said:

"At a very early time heresies were introduced, teaching a plurality of gods in heaven above and that Christ and Jesus were two separate persons. This theory was taught by many, and thousands were led away into this mythology and were never reclaimed. An account of these heresies will be found in the writings of Irenaeus. He wrote his notable work between A.D. 182 and 189. Through the faith of the gospel people received full salvation from sin and found grace to live

free from sin. They entered the holiest and were made perfect through sanctification. Through faith in the name of Jesus the sick were healed of all their diseases, the lame were made to walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak; devils were cast out; and great power and grace rested upon the entire church.

“The reader can readily judge what the result was when men fell away from that faith; they lost all the foregoing blessings from God. So it can easily be seen how such departure and falling away brought darkness and superstition and all conceivable doctrines of devils into the world.”—*The Christian Church: It's Rise and Progress*.

We not only need to know what “the faith” is, but we need to be determined to contend for it, and let no man deceive us.

MEDITATIONS

PAUL WAS FAITHFUL—II Timothy 4:6—I am now ready—It is not our purpose to exalt any man. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, He is the Savior of the body, and the Church is His. But in these verses we have the words of a man that was opposed by all Satan could bring against him, yet he was faithful, thus an example for all.

Paul had been followed by Jews who insisted the Old Covenant law must be kept. He had been opposed by those who worshiped idols, he had faced those who claimed to be “Christians” and were not;—“in peril of false brethren”—yet he stood firm and steadfast. “None of these things move me.” Nearing the end of his earthly sojourn, he tells Timothy, “I am now ready to be offered.” He had told the elders of Ephesus, “I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:26, 27).

LOYAL TO THE FAITH—II Timothy 4:7, 8—I have kept the faith—To stand for the truth means you must *fight!* Paul said he had fought a good fight, and indeed he had. To me one of the most meaningful statements in these verses is, “I have kept the faith.” How many of us realize how greatly Satan *hates* the truth? How many of us realize how *hard* Satan works to get people to depart from it? How many of us realize how *important* it is that we remain true to “the faith”? If we depart from the faith, what will be the results? In verse eight Paul was able to say, because he had not departed from the faith, “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day.” This crown was not for Paul alone, “but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

FAITH—Ephesians 4:4-6—One faith—The apostle Paul informs us there is one true body of Christ, the Church—Colossians 1:18—and there is one Holy Spirit to go with, work in and through that one true body. He also informs us there is one Lord and one faith. Why then do people ask the question, “What faith are you of?” Paul was speaking

of one TRUE faith. Faith, as used in this verse, means the teachings of God's Word, including the truth that Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior, the only mediator between God and man.

SOMETHING VERY NEEDFUL—Jude 3—Contend for the faith—In the first part of this verse we find Jude saying, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you.” I will quote Adam Clarke on this part of the verse: “The meaning of the apostle seems to be this: ‘Beloved brethren, when I saw it necessary to write to you concerning the common salvation, my mind being deeply affected with the dangers to which the church is exposed from the false teachers that are gone out into the world, I found it extremely necessary to write and exhort you to hold fast the truth which you had received, and strenuously to contend for that only faith which, by our Lord and his apostles, has been delivered to the Christians.’”

If Jude felt that way in his day, what about now? Let us also notice Jude said, “The faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” You do not need to look for this faith in Joseph Smith's [founder of the Mormon sect] “tablets,” or in any other sect built by man; look to the precious Word of God and the one true Holy Spirit for the faith we are to contend for. **Verse 4—Crept in unawares**—The reason Jude felt so strongly about this was because “there are certain men crept in unawares.” There were those coming in among them, “wolves in sheep clothing,” who were “ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” Such people cause havoc among the church; therefore, the great need, not only of the ministry, but all the saints to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

CONCLUSION

It seems that few realize how determined the devil is to destroy the souls of men in an eternal hell. He doesn't care how wicked you are, and he doesn't care how religious you are, as long as you have only a form. But if you be one of the few in the world today who really know Christ, know the power of His salvation, know His truth, you may rest assured the devil is after you! But also know, God is looking down, He cares for you, and He has promised grace and power over all the powers of the enemy. By God's grace you can keep the faith.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. How do you account for the many times people have departed from the teachings of God's Word?
2. Why are there so many interpretations of the Scriptures?
3. Why do you think people are so willing to listen to the false “Christ”?
4. How was Paul able to stand so firm for truth and right?
5. How important do you feel it is that we contend for the one faith today?

LESSON NUMBER TWELVE FOR DECEMBER 20

TURNING BACK

Scriptures: II Timothy 4:10-13; Acts 1:25; I Timothy 4:1; Revelation 2:5; II Peter 2:20-22.

II Timothy 4:10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

12 And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.

13 The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.

Acts 1:25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

I Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.

Revelation 2:5 Remember therefore

from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

II Peter 2:20 For if after they have escaped the pollution of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Memory Verse: For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.—Acts 20:29, 30.

Aim: To show that it is possible to backslide.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday

I Timothy 4

Thursday

Ezekiel 33:1-19

Tuesday

Acts 1

Friday

Revelation 2

Wednesday

James 1

Saturday

John 15

INTRODUCTION

To teach that it is possible for a person to backslide, to lose spiritual life, is, of course, to deny the Calvinistic theory of *predestination*, and also the *eternal security* doctrine of once saved always saved.

To teach that a person can backslide also carries with it the truth that we must make a choice, and this too goes contrary to the Calvinistic teaching of *irrestibility* of saving grace. The Scriptures do not teach that man is totally depraved and thus does not have the ability to choose.

“Salvation from sin in its broad aspect as here used includes, not only pardon, but also regeneration, entire sanctification, ... and power to live a holy life. All of these are obtainable only by one’s voluntarily

meeting proper conditions. But proof of the conditionality of the initial work of salvation is especially important, for when this is established the conditionality of the other aspects of salvation mentioned are generally admitted, and particularly is this proof important because it is on this point that Calvinism has denied conditionality. ...

"The Scriptures very definitely represent forgiveness of sin as conditional. The principal Scripture texts in support of this are those which connect the meeting of certain conditions with salvation from the penalty of sin. ... 'He that *believeth and is baptized* shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned' (Mark 16:16). Nothing is clearer in this Great Commission than that the personal appropriation of the salvation proclaimed by the apostles was altogether optional with the hearers."—R. R. Byrum, *Christian Theology*.

Contrary to Calvin, salvation is offered to all—Jesus tasted death for every man [person] (Hebrews 2:9)—but each one must make his or her own choice.

In this lesson we want to look at some scriptures that clearly state that it is possible for people to backslide. Thank God no one has to!

MEDITATIONS

FORSAKING THE RIGHT—II Timothy 4:10-13—Demas—In these verses Paul speaks of a number of his co-workers where they were laboring at that time, but the first one he names was Demas (In Philemon 24, Paul calls Demas his fellowlabourer.), and he said Demas had forsaken him. This in itself does not prove that Demas had backslid, but when you note the rest of his statement you will see that he had, for he forsook Paul, "having loved this present world." No Christian can retain his relationship with God if he allows his affections to be turned from God back to the world. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15b).

Jesus said, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). If it were not possible to do so, Jesus would not have spoken of it.

FALLING FROM GRACE—Acts 1:25—Judas—Judas was one of the twelve. He had been given power to preach the gospel, to heal the sick, and to cast out devils. Jesus did not give this power to sinners! He had also been appointed treasurer for the group. The twelve, along with the seventy, had their names "written in heaven," yet Judas fell. This scripture not only tells us he fell, but how he fell: "by transgression." You cannot "fall" if you do not have anything to fall from. If transgression would cause Judas to fall—and it did—then it will cause any other disciple of Christ to fall.

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH—I Timothy 4:1—Depart—Here we have the Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth, informing us that some would depart from the faith. Surely the Spirit of God knew whereof He spoke, and He said they would "DEPART FROM THE FAITH." You have to be IN the faith before you can depart from it.

CHRIST TO THE CONGREGATION AT EPHESUS—Revelation 2:5—Fallen—Christ had John write to seven congregations in Asia Minor; five of the seven were told to repent. In this first letter, which was to be sent to Ephesus, Christ speaks of those who had already “fallen,” and they were told to repent. If they didn’t He would have to come and remove their “candlestick.” The candlestick represented the congregation as a whole, and the light they were. But as different ones “left their first love,” the light was going out and there was danger that all would fail, and then there would no longer be a Church of God congregation there, just backslidden professors.

RETURNING TO THE MUD HOLE—II Peter 2:20-22—It is happened—The words could not be plainer! Peter clearly speaks of those who had escaped the pollutions of the world, becoming entangled therein, and overcome again, and he says the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. “For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they had known it, to turn from the holy commandments.” But he said it has happened, “according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”

CONCLUSION

In John 15 Jesus said, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” Paul said, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Corinthians 5:17). So to be “in Christ” is to be a Christian. To be a branch connected to the vine—Christ—is to be connected to the source of life, and YOU have life. To remain “in Christ,” you must bear fruit, and if you do not, Christ said He would take you away! “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned” (John 15:6). If you are separated from Christ, you are separated from the source of life; the results—you die. So Christ Himself taught that it was possible to lose spiritual life.

When a person is born again, regenerated, he is forgiven and saved from his committed sins; but to be eternally saved, you must endure to the end. By the grace of God everyone can.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Does God force people to serve Him?
2. How many can you mention, as recorded in the Bible, who went back on God?
3. What caused Judas to fall?
4. What does Peter compare backsliding to?
5. If a person cannot backslide, why then the temptations of the devil?

LESSON NUMBER THIRTEEN FOR DECEMBER 27

OPPOSERS OF THE TRUTH

Scriptures: II Timothy 4:14-22.

II Timothy 4:14 Alexander the copper-smith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works:

15 Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.

16 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.

17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

18 And the Lord shall deliver me from

every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

19 Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.

20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

21 Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

22 The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

Memory Verse: I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.—Galatians 1:6, 7.

Aim: To warn the student against those who oppose the truth.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday II Timothy 3
Tuesday Galatians 1
Wednesday I Timothy 4

Thursday II Corinthians 6
Friday Matthew 23:1-22
Saturday Matthew 23:23-29

INTRODUCTION

As strange as it may seem, not every one has a love for truth! O yes, when it comes to buying a car, or a home, or some literal item, most, if not all, want to know the truth, but when it comes to “thus saith the Lord,” it is a different matter.

What can be more important than the truth that will determine your eternal welfare? Jesus has taught us that knowing and obeying the truth would make us free. Truth, if obeyed fully, will make you free from hate, envy, malice, worldly pride, self—from all sin, as a matter of fact. Yet we find so many, including preachers, contending for a “sin-you-must” type of religion. Why?

Has sin ever done anyone any good? Has sin ever brought a true blessing to anyone? Has sin ever brought peace to the soul?

It is not just the out-and-out sinner that opposes truth; many times those who oppose it most are religious people.

It is only those who love the truth that will live it.

MEDITATIONS

MEN OPPOSING TRUTH—II Timothy 4:14—Alexander the coppersmith—Adam Clarke supposes this Alexander to be the same man spoken of in Acts 19:33, and he also assumes him to be a rabbi. William P. Barker, in his book, *Everyone In the Bible*, says this Alexander may have been the one Paul speaks of in I Timothy 1:20, who, along with Hymenaeus, had made “shipwreck of their faith.” Whether either of these men be correct, he was an opposer of the truth that the apostle Paul was setting forth. Often when one does turn away from the truth, he becomes an opposer of the truth and those who stand for it. When one opposes the truth, he often will enlist others in his unholy effort. However, the Word of God says, “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 5:6).

We are not to understand that Paul desired evil to come upon Alexander, but that he was simply saying the Lord will reward him according to his works.

A WARNING—II Timothy 4:15—Be thou ware—Paul here expresses a truth that needs to be emphasized. It is not only important that we know, love, and live the truth, but it is necessary, as the Lord directs, to warn others against those who are not teaching the truth. One needs to be careful and do this in the right spirit, and with the right motive, but it must be done. As you read the “four gospels,” you will note that Jesus showed love and kindness to those in sin, those who were sick and suffering; but when it comes to those who were contending for false religion, He was stern and strong in His determination to expose them. We might add, they were His greatest opposers and the ones who demanded He be put to death.

STANDING ALONE—II Timothy 4:16—No man—Paul was a man set for the defense of the gospel. He opposed his own people in their empty forms; he opposed the Gentiles in their worship of their many gods. It was not always easy, for he did not have crowds on his side, but he knew he had the truth and was determined to share it with as many as he could. This verse implies there were others who could have taken their stand with him at the time he refers to, but they did not. Even so, he shows a spirit of charity toward them, “Let it not be placed to their account.”

YET NOT ALONE—II Timothy 4:17—Notwithstanding—No man stood with Paul at the time he referred to, but he hastens to add, “Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me.” The Lord has promised never to leave or forsake those who will put their trust in Him. Paul had been told right after his conversion that he would have to suffer many things, but he was able to say years later, “None of these things move me.” Praise God for this soldier of the cross! The one who stands for truth is in a better position than the one who opposes it. This fact will be clearly seen in eternity.

Paul was strengthened that he might preach the pure Word of God to his own people and to the Gentiles. The “lion” referred to in this verse is not to be understood as a literal lion, but those who, through the power of the devil, opposed him.

THE LORD IS FAITHFUL—II Timothy 4:18—The Lord shall deliver—Paul himself tells us of his trials and troubles, shipwreck, prison, hunger, nakedness, but one of the things that gave him the most trouble was, “perils among false brethren.” The Jews had men following Paul, sometimes coming along later in an effort to influence people to disbelieve what he preached. There were some who were turned aside. We need to understand, and understand clearly, that all opposers of truth are not found in heathen lands, all are not idol worshippers! Some of the strongest opposers to truth are those who say they are Christians! The name *Christian* means little if the life is not there to back it up.

EXPRESSIONS OF LOVE AND AFFECTION—II Timothy 4:19-22—Salute—Paul was strong and firm for truth, yet he was loving and tender to the household of faith. He is the one who said, “Speaking the truth in love.” Speaking the truth in a spirit of harshness will defeat the purpose we desire, which is the salvation of souls. Let us all stand firm and steadfast for truth, but let us do it in the right spirit, with the right attitude. “Grace be with you.”

OUR MEMORY VERSE—Galatians 1:6, 7—Another gospel—There is only one true gospel! It is found in the Word of God, not just the first four books of the New Testament. Paul knew that he had preached the truth to the Galatians, and he knew that those who were “troubling them” with other teachings were not presenting the true gospel. They were *perverting* the gospel, and he knew this would destroy the work of God in that place, so he warns them against these false teachers. Let each one be determined to hold to the true gospel, the one faith.

CONCLUSION

Thus we come to the close of Paul’s second letter to his co-laborer, Timothy.

In these two letters, Paul faithfully instructed Timothy, and as a result, he instructed the Church of God in the truth of the gospel. In presenting truth, he had to warn against false doctrine, false spirits and false prophets as well. Let us study and apply these truths to our individual lives. We cannot really be Church of God and do otherwise.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why did Alexander oppose Paul?
2. Why does any man oppose truth?
3. Can you stand for the truth without opposing wrong?
4. How important is truth?
5. Why are so few living the truth of the gospel?

Name _____

Class _____

A Continuing Study of Paul's Letters to Timothy

ADULT & YOUNG PEOPLE'S

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