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Living the Christian Life

Adult and Young People's Quarterly

INTRODUCTION

Living is life, of course, and the manner in which we live is certain to determine the quality and measure of our happiness. Due to misunderstanding of life and the wrong conceptions, people, to a great measure, are pursuing courses that are certain to produce sorrow, woe, and sickness. In the end, in the deepest of despair, it will result in a neverending hell. In this course of lessons, it is our sincerest desire to present to the student the correct analysis of the subject which is at hand from Sunday to Sunday. It is of no value to be informed in regard to the realities of life and the divine plan if we do not intend to apply the knowledge thoroughly to our own individual lives. Most people have had some access to the truths that shall be presented in this quarterly but have not acted upon them. There is more than one reason for this. First, it is the business of the enemy of man and God to pervert the right way of living, seeking to induce every man to transgress every law of nature and every law of God, holding out as a reward, pleasure in the flesh. Transgression, in a measure, will yield some pleasure, but in the end every transgression of nature and the law of God brings reactions that bear the opposite of pleasure. The cigarette smoker (man or woman) finds a small degree of pleasure with each succeeding indulgence, but he is preparing for himself in the future a tobacco heart, a tobacco liver, tuberculosis, or perhaps a combination of afflictions, which means not only pain at frequent intervals, but, also, in many instances, continuous pain that is almost unbearable and, finally, death.

Moral laws obeyed will give us power over the flesh, and we can say as Paul said, "I bring my body under." God entrusted us with a great deal when He put a body under our control. We should seek to govern this body according to the law that God has given us, since He knows fully the manner in which the body should be handled in order to bring the greatest amount of happiness and pleasure; and you may be sure He has prepared His law, not with the intention of curbing our happiness or bringing us into bondage, but of giving us freedom. So we present these lessons to you, expecting that through their application your life shall be made freer and happier.

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PUBLISHERS OF CHURCH OF GOD LITERATURE

LESSON NUMBER ONE FOR OCTOBER 1

STUDY TO SHOW THYSELF APPROVED

Scriptures: II Kings 23:2, 3; John 5:39; Acts 17:11; I Timothy 4:12-16.

II Kings 23:2 And the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord.

3 And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.

John 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Acts 17:11 These were more noble than

those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

I Timothy 4:12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

Memory Verse: Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

—II Timothy 2:15.

Aim: To show that study is essential to the right understanding of the Word.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Psalm 119:89-105

Tuesday II Kings 23

Wednesday II Kings 22:8-20

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Psalm 119:1-16

Acts 17:1-16

II Timothy 2

INTRODUCTION

Man was created by God an intellectual being. His powers intellectually may be increased by the exercise of his mental faculties, and his intellectual powers may be diminished by their neglect or improper use. Mental faculties and the right use of our minds are indeed rich and marvelous blessings, which should be cherished, appreciated, and carefully guarded. God's instruction by His Word is that we develop our minds by study in the great truths that make up His Word. This makes it plain that, as the days go by, God expects that we, as soldiers of the cross, become more effectual in the work of carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth.

MEDITATIONS

READING THE WORD OF GOD—II Kings 23:2—He read in their ears—It is of little value to read the Word of God unless we do so with an intense desire to understand it according to the interpretation that God would give it. It is true that the Word of God is a light unto our path, but it is the true interpretation only that is a light. All Christians should study the Word of God, for then when it is preached, or the Holy Spirit gives visitation, the understanding is received. It is good to have a good acquaintance with the Word of God, even though there may be many passages that are not understood.

RECEIVING THE WORD OF GOD—II Kings 23:3—The people stood to the covenant—God has always promised to prosper and help all who would walk in His statutes and has let us know that if we turn our backs on Him, He will forsake us. The study of the Word in this instance revealed the fact that these people had not been obedient to God's commands, and it brought sufficient conviction to their hearts to cause them to turn from their wrong ways to the commandments of the Lord. It was only through the reading of the Word of God that they were made conscious of their need.

CHRIST REVEALED BY THE WORD—John 5:39—They which testify of me—Jesus in this verse invited and urged these pretentious Jews to apply themselves diligently to the search of the Scriptures; for if they did so sincerely, they were sure to find that He was the Christ they were looking for. Dear Student, have you found the Lord Jesus actually through the Scriptures, or is He merely a historical figure to you?

AN HONEST HEART IS NECESSARY—Acts 17:11—These were more noble—No doubt, these individuals had read the Scriptures many times, but had been unable to glean the truth from them, but, under the guiding hand of Paul, they were able to see the truth that brought them the happiness their hearts so much desired. These people, of course, had a reading knowledge of the Old Testament, but their traditions had voided the divine understanding. It is sad that many people do not have even a reading knowledge of the Scriptures; and when you talk with them in regard to some subject, they know nothing of what you say. This is a deplorable situation and accounts somewhat for the great deluge of sin that is sweeping the world.

GIVING A CHRISTIAN EXAMPLE—I Timothy 4:12—An example of the believers—In order to be able to give an example that is commendable, we must inform ourselves thoroughly in the Word of God. The Bible is our guide, and it is only by making ourselves acquainted with its teachings that we can put in practice its message. The world does have a greater attraction for the young people than the old because of their adventurous nature and their inexperience. Let us remember that youth is much

more attractive and appreciated when it is filled with faith and good works than when filled with sin.

A PLANNED LIFE—I Timothy 4:13—Give attendance to reading—He who would accomplish the most in his span of life must watch his time and give himself to those things that will accomplish the greatest good at the proper time. Some read just for the sake of reading, and the thought of that which is read passes through their minds as through a sieve. This is injurious to the mind, making it difficult to remember things that should be remembered. We should give ourselves to reading with the purpose of gathering information to be retained for future use and not for pleasure only. Reading will, with the proper instruction, reveal the doctrines which are so essential today. Paul said that God would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. To come to the knowledge of the truth is to understand the doctrines of the church that Jesus is building. How far people are from this today, thinking that to preach the cross is all that is necessary, and if we preach the cross, everything else will take care of itself! God wills that all come to the knowledge of the truth as revealed in Jesus Christ.

CHERISHING GOD'S GIFTS—I Timothy 4:14—Neglect not the gift that is in thee—Timothy had received the gift of prophecy, not at the will of Paul, but at the will of God, for it is God who does the calling. Paul merely laid hands on Timothy and prayed at the time God bestowed the gift. Gifts of the Spirit are given to believers for the purpose of carrying on the work of the Church. These gifts are made more useful through their use. To neglect them is not to use them; therefore, we should give very earnest consideration to their use. We are told to covet earnestly the best gifts. A spiritual gift from God is the power of the Spirit resting upon an individual enabling him to perform a special service in a special calling. The gift of apostleship stands at the head of the list. An apostle is one who is so endowed from God that he is able to go into a new community, unassisted by boards or societies, and, if it be so, in the face of great opposition, start and establish a new work for God in Christianity. When from the new effort he has seen a leader raised up to carry on the work, he goes to a new community and starts again. Today even though we are rated as Christians in many parts of the world, there is a great need of apostles to raise up true Christianity in the midst of the false that fills the earth.

COMPLETE CONSECRATION—I Timothy 4:15—Give thyself—The devil drives and compels his servants; the Lord seeks the sanction of our wills. If we do not give freely to God of our time and talents, the Lord will have none of them. If we would make progress in the Christian race, we must willingly give our time to study, prayer, and meditation. The Spirit is always waiting to instruct us as we meditate before Him. It is easy to tell who it is who is giving himself to the Spirit of God. Benefits are going to flow from his life.

HOW TO WIN THE CHRISTIAN RACE—I Timothy 4:16—Save thyself and them that hear thee—As already stated, Deuteronomy 6:5-7 instructs us to teach our children the love of God when we lie down, when we arise, when we sit down, and when we walk. In other words, we are to fill the minds of the young (the old also) with the Word of God so that error and evil will be excluded. Paul told Timothy that the study of the Word in sincerity would make sure the salvation of his soul and would give him power with others for the furtherance of the kingdom of God. This is good instruction for us today. Chaffy literature, comic strips, and sex magazines are being given the place that belongs to the Word of God. This will destroy our nation. Let us awaken to the awful immoral situation that is upon us and meet it with the Word of God!

CONCLUSION

The land is full of Bibles, as it were, and it seems that we have lost sight of the Word's rich value. The majority of people are studying the Bible for the purpose of making it bend to their conception of truth. Men are declaring allegiance to the organizations of men instead of the Word of God. This is disastrous. We had better leave the Word of God entirely alone than to give unto it a meaning that is contrary to what God intended. Another point that will reveal to us some of the present-day situation is the fact that so-called Christians have sought to embrace religion, while at the same time they have tried to get all that the world had to offer. This kills the true spirit of Christianity and leaves the professor cold and powerless. If we would have the power that rightfully belongs to Christianity, we must separate ourselves from the world, not only for the purpose of being informed in regard to what is there, but also to put in practice in our lives what we read as revealed by the Holy Ghost. Study and meditation play a very important part in the spread of the kingdom of God.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why is it so necessary that we study the Word of God?
2. What is the place that the Holy Spirit should be given in our study?
3. What place does preaching fill in the plan of God for our spiritual education?
4. What would you say is the greatest revelation made by the Word of God?
5. Can anyone expect to learn the truth of the Word of God if he has no intention of doing the will of God?
6. As Christians, how should we plan the days that are given to us?
7. What is the purpose of the gifts of God?
8. How can you tell when a person is fully consecrated to the Lord?

LESSON NUMBER TWO FOR OCTOBER 8

GROWING IN GRACE

Scriptures: II Corinthians 7:1; Philippians 3:8-12; I Peter 1:13, 14; II Peter 1:5-8; II Peter 3:18.

II Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Philippians 3:8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for

which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

I Peter 1:13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance.

II Peter 1:5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

II Peter 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Memory Verse: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.—Ephesians 4:13.

Aim: To stimulate in the pupil a desire to attain to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday II Corinthians 7
Tuesday Philippians 3
Wednesday II Peter 3

Thursday I Peter 1:1-14
Friday II Peter 1
Saturday I Thessalonians 1

INTRODUCTION

We need men with great grace resting upon them to fight the great spiritual battles of the world today. We need men with the grace of God to oppose the awful evils of liquor and tobacco, which are consuming our financial powers and undermining the physical and mental health of our people. Let us seek to draw closer to God, that more grace may be ours

for the purpose of advancing the kingdom of God in the earth and being a blessing to our fellowmen.

MEDITATIONS

IMPROVING OUR SPIRITUAL STANDING—II Corinthians 7:1—Perfecting holiness—As God reveals His truths to us while we walk the pilgrim way, it is our duty to make, instantly, this new truth a part of our spiritual life. If we will do this, we shall not fail to walk in the light and to grow in grace. Filthiness of the flesh is anything that the Word of God forbids for the flesh; filthiness of the spirit is anything that the Word of God forbids for the spirit.

PUTTING PROPER VALUES IN THE PROPER PLACES—Philippians 3:8—Count all things but loss—Paul was a highly educated man in the learning of the world and could properly value things of the world. He wisely declared, in comparison to the riches of the salvation of the Lord Jesus, that the things of the earth were but refuse. He who esteems material things ahead of Christ is void of the grace of God and has not learned properly to evaluate anything.

TRUE RICHES—Philippians 3:9—The righteousness which is of God—Redemption by the blood followed by righteous living is certain to put us in direct line for eternal life in the celestial city. This is true wealth, for it is accompanied by abounding peace of mind, abiding hope, and gracious love. What more could a person desire than the peace of God that passes all understanding?

SUFFERING, A PART OF THE INHERITANCE—Philippians 3:10—Fellowship of his sufferings—Christ knew the value of one soul, and He knew what a terrible calamity it was for one soul to be lost in eternity through sin. This great reality caused Him to sweat, as it were, great drops of blood. This was agony, indeed, and exceeded by far the suffering on the cross. We take too lightly the awfulness of sin. When a soul is lost, God's kingdom has suffered a greater loss than if the entire starry heavens had been wiped out. Yet men will sell their souls for just a little of this world's goods. To know the power of the resurrection of Christ is to have a realization of the blessings of eternal life.

DETERMINED TO SEE HEAVEN—Philippians 3:11—If by any means—The thing that Paul was trying to tell us here was that although there were many hindrances in the way of gaining heaven, yet he determined that he was going to overcome every obstacle by the grace of God and enter heaven in the end. There is no one who needs to miss heaven.

ETERNAL SECURITY REFUTED—Philippians 3:12—Already attained—Although Paul had been apprehended of Christ, there was danger that he would fail and not apprehend himself that which is in Christ. Even though he was perfect in Christ, having been obedient to every known command, and having walked in all the light that God allowed to shine on his pathway, there were things still in his life that could be removed to the advantage of the gospel.

THE CHRISTIAN RACE REQUIRES PREPARATION—I Peter 1:13—Gird up the loins of your mind—How we do need to prepare ourselves for the Christian race! We must lay aside every weight and all desires for the things of the world and run with patience the race before us. We have a very powerful enemy that must be defeated, and to defeat him we must have on the whole armor of God and keep in close contact with Him through constant study of His precious Word and fervent prayer. **Verse 14—As obedient children**—Just as obedient children are an honor to their parents, so are we, His children, honoring our heavenly Father when we are obedient to His every known command. Let us ask God to give us a real hungering and thirsting after righteousness and strive with all our heart to measure up to all the truth that comes our way. This will be a big help in growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

ONLY THE DILIGENT CAN GROW IN GRACE—II Peter 1:5—Giving all diligence—Everyone is given a certain amount of faith, or he could not even find God, and without faith it is impossible to please God. Peter tells us to add to our faith virtue (moral goodness), but still that is not enough. We must also add to our virtue as much knowledge as we can of the things of the Word of God.

CHRISTIAN DILIGENCE BLESSED BY CHRISTIAN ATTRIBUTES—II Peter 1:6, 7—And to knowledge temperance—These attributes must be sought, and they require effort. Do not think that these graces are handed out to the believer in a nice little package. **To temperance patience**—We are the ones who do the adding. We gain in patience by maintaining a Christian attitude in the face of fiery trials that may come upon us. **To patience godliness**—Godliness is the quality of being like God in the various Christian graces. We should be longsuffering, forgiving, kind, meek, generous, hospitable, humble, and zealous. If we have these graces, we will live godly, and we will manifest love.

GROWTH IN GRACE CERTAIN—II Peter 1:8—Be in you, and abound—If the above things are put into practice, growth in Christian character is certain to follow. There is no reason why every man cannot do these things and arrive at a place of great service to the kingdom of God. What a grave error it is to neglect these important things!

GROWTH IN GRACE COMMANDED—II Peter 3:18—But grow in grace—In other words, we are commanded here to apply ourselves to the study and practice of the Word of God. Christian growth is certain to follow. We dare not stand still for long, for if we do, we find ourselves going backward, down the hill of failure.

CONCLUSION

The Christian race is one that takes endurance for the running. There is no place along the way where we can relax. The devil never quits the battle. One fine thing about it is that the Lord, who is all powerful, declares that He will keep a close check upon our strength and will not allow us to

be tempted above that we are able. It is in spiritual exercise, as it is in physical exercise, that we gain strength. Through the spiritual exercise that we realize in resisting the attacks of the devil, we grow in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ; thus we become of greater value in the service of God, and enjoy a greater measure of happiness and peace.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is the meaning of the grace of God?
2. Why must men have the grace of God in their hearts?
3. What are true riches?
4. What is the difference between the righteousness of God and that of a man who in his own strength tries to live a good moral life?
5. How can we improve our spiritual standing?
6. How did Paul value material things as compared to spiritual things?
7. By what means are we sure to make spiritual growth?

LESSON NUMBER THREE FOR OCTOBER 15

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

Scriptures: John 3:19-21; 8:12; 9:4, 5; 12:35, 36, 46; I John 2:9-11.

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

John 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

John 9:4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

John 12:35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk

while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

I John 2:9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

Memory Verse: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.—I John 1:7.

Aim: To show that Christian success is dependent upon daily walking in the light.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday I John 1
Tuesday John 12:34-50
Wednesday Isaiah 49

Thursday John 8:12-30
Friday John 9:1-34
Saturday I John 2:1-11

INTRODUCTION

Our Memory Verse declares that if we walk in the light as God is in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin, and we have fellowship one with another. So the true basis of fellowship in Jesus Christ is walking in the light of His glorious gospel. If we do not walk in the light, we do not have fellowship. We may have friendship, and that is all many religious people have, because the only thing they have in common is that they belong to the same organization. Christian fellowship can be built only around the operation of the gospel of Jesus Christ unhindered in our hearts. Therefore, a successful Christian is one who is walking in all the light of the gospel that the Lord allows to shine on his pathway.

MEDITATIONS

THE DEPRAVED NATURE AT WORK—John 3:19—Men loved darkness—The only reason that men love darkness, or sin, is because their nature is depraved, or fallen, from the high standard of divine perfection. The only reason that men commit sin is because they are in darkness spiritually and afflicted with a depraved nature. Sin belongs to the devil's crowd, and righteousness to the people of God. Any man who commits sin is under condemnation. The light of the gospel condemns the works of darkness, or sin. That is why a sinner feels conviction, or condemnation, when he is in a place where the gospel is being preached with the power of the Spirit of the living God. If we will dare to walk in the light of the gospel, it will lead us out of darkness and sin.

THE GREAT WARFARE BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARKNESS—John 3:20—Everyone that doeth evil hateth the light—It is impossible for the forces of sin and the forces of righteousness to get along together. A true Christian hates darkness and sin. A sinner who is a sinner indeed hates the light and the workers of righteousness, for they are a reproof to him. It is impossible for anyone to be a sinner and a Christian at the same time. Mark these truths well, and be sure that if you have your soul polluted with sin, you are not by any means a Christian.

HE WHO WALKS IN THE LIGHT IS NOT CONDEMNED—John 3:21—Cometh to the light—The preaching of the gospel to the Christian is a delight, and he does not care how straight it is preached. If he finds something that he has not measured up to, he will do so at once and keep himself from condemnation.

THE SOURCE OF ALL LIGHT—John 8:12—I am the light of the world—Jesus Christ is the source of all light, both spiritual and physical. It was Christ who created the great sun with the moon and stars. It was Christ

who came into the world to give to the inhabitants of the earth the knowledge of the truth of God. It is He who shall light the realms of eternity. If we would walk in the light, then it is a necessity that we know Jesus Christ, the source of spiritual light. No one ever made a mistake who followed Jesus Christ. All of our mistakes are made when we wander away from Him.

HASTE IS NECESSARY—John 9:4—The night cometh—Surely, we are drawing very close to the end of time. Christ very soon will appear for the second time. All opportunity to do good for the kingdom of God will be past. We must work while we have opportunity. Jesus gave Himself wholly to the cause for which His Father sent Him into the world. If we be truly followers of Christ, can we do less and please God? We must be ready to do the things that God wants done at the time He wants them done. To try to do tomorrow what He desires for us to do today will be too late. If we would make progress in the kingdom of God, we must learn to obey at once when God speaks.

WITHOUT CHRIST THERE IS NO LIGHT—John 9:5—As long as I am in the world—Darkness is settling upon the world. Men are taking into their own hands the responsibility of inflicting punishment upon those who do not do according to their thinking. This is due to the fact that Christ is being retired from the activities of men. Were Christ to be found more in the hearts of men, there would be more light in the world and the way to travel safely could be much more plainly seen. How dark is that darkness where Christ is not present!

John 12:35—Yet a little while—Christ is here speaking of His earthly sojourn. It was soon to come to an end, but He was to return in the person of the Spirit. That is, the Spirit of God, when He came, would teach all who would listen the very same things that Christ had taught; thus would Christ abide forever. The admonition here was that while they had access to the light they should walk in it; for if they did not, darkness was certain to come upon them. Many are the poor souls today who, although they have much knowledge of the letter of the Word of God, do not have the spiritual understanding, and, consequently, they are groping in darkness, and that darkness is great.

BELIEVING IN THE LIGHT—John 12:36—Believe in the light—When light is revealed, an individual has to choose between two responses. He must either believe in the light as truth or reject light as error. By believing in the light, our lives are filled with the light of the gospel, and thus we become the children of light or the children of God.

HATRED DESTROYS LIGHT—I John 2:9—He that hateth his brother—One great desire of the Lord for the family of man is that they love one another. It is the principle of love that promotes peace both among individuals and nations. No one could knowingly do harm to his brother or sister (neither could one nation do harm to another) if true love

existed. He who has hatred in his heart for his fellowmen cannot know, at the same time, that he is walking in the light.

LOVE COMMENDED—I John 2:10—None occasion of stumbling—He who loves his brother is giving a good testimony to the world and is a blessing to the community and nation in which he lives. No one will be led astray or stumble because of him. This is one good reason why we should seek with all our might to walk in all the light that God allows to shine on our pathway. We will be a beacon light to others.

HATRED BLINDS THE EYES—I John 2:11—Knoweth not whither he goeth—Little does anyone know what an outburst of hatred may cause. It may result in murder. He who becomes the victim of hatred has truly become the servant of Satan, and who can predict what Satan will do if he has opportunity? But if we walk in the light, we know that God will care for our every need, for this is His promise.

CONCLUSION

Moral, mental and physical health, to a great extent depends upon our obedience to the Word and will of God. There can be no question but that the great and widespread diseased condition of humanity is the result of people's failing to walk in the light of the Word of God that has been revealed. How often we have seen the change that came into the lives of people by the coming of Christ into the heart! The face clears up, the health improves, the mind becomes clear, all because the weight and hindrance of sin have been removed. Of course, there are some few exceptions to this, but in general this is true.

We desire to encourage the student to put forth a greater effort to walk in the light of God's Word, for in so doing he is going to find greater happiness and is going to be of greater service to the church and his nation.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is the source of all light, both spiritual and literal?
2. What is the true basis of fellowship in Jesus Christ?
3. What causes men to love darkness?
4. What will light do to those who walk in darkness?
5. Why are nations taking things in their own hands, inflicting punishment on others?
6. What evidence do we have that the light of divine healing is rejected by the great majority of people?
7. Name some of the benefits of walking in the light.

LESSON NUMBER FOUR FOR OCTOBER 22

FACING THE TRIAL

Scriptures: Daniel 3:14-18, 20-26.

Daniel 3:14 Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?

15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.

17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

20 And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonied, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.

Memory Verse: Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.—James 1:12.

Aim: To fortify the student against the wiles of the devil.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Daniel 3:1-13	Thursday	Daniel 6:11-28
Tuesday	Daniel 3:14-30	Friday	John 19
Wednesday	Daniel 6:1-10	Saturday	James 1

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson we want to point out some helps in meeting the trials, and we trust that the student will go deeper in the Lord by overcoming in every trial that the Lord sees fit to allow to come his way. A trial can come our way only as the Lord allows it; and He allows it, for He sees that by it He can bring a benefit into our life.

MEDITATIONS

FALSE RELIGION DEFENDED—Daniel 3:14—Is it true?—These three young men were Hebrews, having been carried away captives to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar, the king, had caused a great image, a “god,” to be set up on the plains of Dura, and on a set day everyone was to bow down and worship it. These young men knew God had forbidden such, so they chose to obey God, rather than man.

GROSS IGNORANCE OF TRUTH—Daniel 3:15—Who is that God that shall deliver?—The king offered them a second chance to disobey God. Satan offers us many ways to sin against God, but as these three young men, we must refuse. The king was ignorant of the true and living God, it would seem, or he would not have asked such a question. Pride goes before a fall.

UNDAUNTED COURAGE—Daniel 3:16—We are not careful to answer thee—The only reason these men, who had been captured by the king’s army, could make such a bold stand was because they knew God; and, spiritually speaking, they had their eyes wide open. Our stand in this day of chaos will be made possible by a close walk with God so that we may always know exactly what the situation is. He who puts his trust in God needs not to be confounded.

UNSHAKABLE FAITH—Daniel 3:17, 18—Our God whom we serve is able—These young men knew the God they were serving. They knew He was able to deliver them, yet they did not know He would deliver them from the fiery furnace, but they knew they would be delivered out of the King’s hand, even if they were burned to death. We must love God more than our own life, and when we do, God will give us grace to face and to overcome whatever trial may come our way.

THE KING MAKES GOOD HIS THREAT—Daniel 3:20—And he commanded—Still confident of his irresistible power and authority, the king commanded that his threat be carried out. The steadfastness of these men remained unshaken, which, indeed, is a beautiful picture unto us. **Verse 21—These men were bound**—Great precaution was taken to make sure that there was no failure. But let men plan all they please, let them bring all their strength to bear. He who goes against God is certain to fail.

MAN’S WRATH DRIVES HIM TO EXTREMES—Daniel 3:22—King’s commandment was urgent—The king had been greatly vexed because these slaves had dared to resist him. His wrath was hot, and he made sure that the heat of the furnace was sufficient to finish them off quickly. How vain is the wrath of man! His wrath would have destroyed those he counted as his enemy, but proved to be the destruction of these fine stalwart men of his own people, his best soldiers.

FAITH THAT HOLDS OUT—Daniel 3:23—Fell down bound—

These three young men were thrown into the fiery furnace. Their faith in God, their desire to obey Him, had brought them to this place. Their faith did not fail, and God did not fail. **Verse 24—King was astonished—**The king saw something he never expected to see. He saw a power manifested that was greater than his. “Did we not cast three men into the fire?” “Yes,” came the answer. **Verse 25—Like the Son of God—**The king saw four “men” in the fire. God was taking care of His own, as He always does. Do not shun the trial. Face it and go through it in the name of the Lord. You will be a better, stronger Christian when you come out than when you went in.

DELIVERANCE—Daniel 3:26—Come forth—The trial was ended, the victory was won, God had been glorified, and that was because these three men had dared to have faith in God. Not only was this exhibition of faith a glory to God in that day, but in every generation men have read this marvelous account and have given glory to God. The good that we do will not die with the doing, but shall be used of God.

CONCLUSION

Since it is impossible to deal at length with this great subject in so short a space, we commend unto you the Word of God, which is rich with experiences of men who have traveled the pilgrim journey. We find details of the conflicts and results both to them who were faithful and to them who were untrue. Study this lesson with a sincere desire to make the powerful gospel of Jesus real in your life, so that when the fiery test comes your way you can stand, and our great God will be glorified.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What did God mean when He said He would have a tried people?
2. What two things does the Christian’s trial do?
3. How do you account for the fact that men will become so puffed up over something they have done when all about us can be seen the great hand of God?
4. Is there ever a time that we do wrong in obeying the Word of God?
5. What caused the king’s wrath to melt?
6. What can we expect from Christ in our trials today?

LESSON NUMBER FIVE FOR OCTOBER 29

RESISTING THE DEVIL

Scriptures: Matthew 4:1-11.

Matthew 4:1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning

thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Memory Verse: Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.—James 4:7.

Aim: To fortify the pupil against the wiles of the devil.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Mark 1:1-22

Tuesday Genesis 3

Wednesday I Peter 5

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Luke 4:1-18

I Peter 4

Acts 21:1-14

INTRODUCTION

Our lesson today is centered around the temptations the devil brought to Christ in order to turn Him aside from the purpose for which His Father sent Him into the world. We will note in this lesson that on every occasion of the effort of Satan, Jesus used the Word of God as His defense; He did not use human reasoning. We should never reason with Satan, for to do so is to lose. He can outreason us due to his superiority in might. But one thing is certain, the Word of God is more than a match for all that Satan can think or do, and we can rest in hope as long as we are resting in the Word of God.

MEDITATIONS

LET THE SPIRIT LEAD—Matthew 4:1—Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit—The great wisdom and foreknowledge of God make it possible for Him to prepare the way before us so that we shall have the greatest possible success in life and so that we can bring the greatest glory to

God. If we interfere by resisting His will in any way or to any degree, we are going to mar our success. Therefore, God has rightly and justly and wisely asked that we, who have far inferior judgment and understanding, submit our all to Him for time and eternity.

FASTING IN GOD'S PLAN—Matthew 4:2—Fasted forty days and forty nights—His fast was an absolute fast; He took neither food nor water, day nor night. If it was necessary for Christ to fast, then how much more necessary it is that we fast. It was, doubtless, through the act of fasting that His spiritual strength was raised to the place where He could victoriously resist the devil. I am also persuaded that He received other benefits in this fast which perhaps had a bearing on the opening of His ministry.

THE EFFORT TO INJECT DOUBT—Matthew 4:3—If thou be the Son of God—Satan can be detected in his attacks by his if's and maybe's. In this trial, the devil suggested that Jesus use His miraculous power for His own personal benefit. The greatness of a disciple of Christ is measured by the amount of service that he renders to others. This temptation of Satan had two aspects: the first, to bring doubt and the second (if the first failed, for Christ could have made bread out of stone), to get Christ to use His unusual power wrongly.

THE PROPER WAY TO RESIST THE DEVIL—Matthew 4:4—It is written—Sometimes the trial gets so heavy that it seems impossible to bear, and the devil will tell you that you just as well give up, but meet him with the words of Paul when he said in I Corinthians 10:13, "I will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." God's Word is eternal; it is from everlasting to everlasting (Christ is the Word, John 1:1), and it is given by God for the food of man's soul. But when man twists the Word of God out of the meaning God intended, it is no longer the Word of God and should not be received by any man, for the soul cannot exist by such.

THE UNUSUAL POWER OF SATAN—Matthew 4:6—He shall give his angels charge—Here was a very subtle temptation. The devil knew the Scriptures, and he used one on Christ; but, as usual, he put the wrong interpretation upon it. The angels would bear Christ up as long as He trusted His Father in resisting trials that came from without; but if He would have voluntarily put Himself in a place where He would have to rely upon the miraculous intervention of the Father to save Him, He would have failed.

TO TREAD ON UNCERTAIN OR FORBIDDEN GROUND IS DISASTROUS—Matthew 4:7—Thou shalt not tempt—To tempt God is to throw ourselves carelessly in the way of temptation and expect God to deliver us. For the man who is saved from drunkenness to go back and hang around the booze joint is to tempt God, and he is almost certain to fall again under its temptation. However, if he is compelled to go there, he then can call upon God to protect him.

TEMPTED BY PERSONAL POWER—Matthew 4:8—All the kingdoms of the world—Again, we see the great demonstration of the power of Satan. From this vantage point, the devil passed before the Son of God the exact reproduction of all the earthly kingdoms and emphasized the glory that was to be found in them. This he promised to give to Christ, and it would have been, in the reasoning of Satan, a shortcut to power. This would have been quite a different life for Christ than the rough, rugged and thorny road He traveled to the cross. But who is it who will be so foolish to trade divine glory for worldly power and fame? Millions are doing it today.

JESUS WINS BY THE WORD—Matthew 4:10—Get thee hence, Satan—Satan had done his worst and lost. When Jesus said, “Get thee hence,” the devil had to go. So it is with us. If we will steadfastly resist Satan in the faith, he will have to flee, for he cannot stand the glory and power of the Word of God.

REWARD FOR FAITHFULNESS—Matthew 4:11—Angels came—The angels did not come until first Jesus had demonstrated by the operation of His will that He would not yield to the devil. So it is with us: we cannot expect help from God until first we set our wills in the face of the temptation to stand true to the Word. If we demonstrate a will to be true, then all the power of heaven will come to our rescue.

CONCLUSION

We must not get the idea that resisting the devil is for the one purpose of retaining spiritual existence. Through resistance we gain spiritual strength, and we also make inroads into the kingdom of Satan; or rather, in going on to the devil’s territory to rescue perishing souls, we are certain to come into contact with the resistance of the devil. Here is where the Christian life becomes intensely interesting and exciting. It is not enough to have strength just for survival. That kind of life becomes very dry and unsatisfactory. We must have power enough in our lives to wage a successful offensive on the devil and make him fear our presence. From this day forth earnestly strive to defeat the devil in every encounter, and enter boldly in the name of Jesus in the conflict to win souls out of sin and deception. Life will become more interesting, and your reward in heaven will grow.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why does the devil desire to hide his identity?
2. Consider the fact that Jesus is just the opposite, and that He reveals His true nature by the Word of God.
3. Why should the Spirit of God be permitted to lead us?
4. What is the nature of true fasting?
5. By what means can we always successfully resist the devil?
6. How did Christ meet the temptations of Satan?
7. Give an experience of successfully resisting temptation.

LESSON NUMBER SIX FOR NOVEMBER 5

PRAYING THROUGH

Scriptures: I Kings 18:41-46; James 5:17, 18; Acts 4:23, 24, 29-31.

I Kings 18:41 And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.

42 So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees,

43 And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times.

44 And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.

45 And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.

46 And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

James 5:17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed

earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

Acts 4:23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:

29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

Memory Verse: And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.—Luke 18:7, 8a.

Aim: To teach the pupil perseverance in prayer.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Luke 18:1-17

Tuesday Luke 18:18-43

Wednesday Mark 8:22-38

Thursday John 17

Friday Matthew 6:1-18

Saturday I Kings 8

INTRODUCTION

Praying through is not an act of speaking so loudly that we make God hear, nor is it a long array of words merely repeated. Praying through is talking with the Lord until every opposition of the devil is overcome and real live faith takes hold of God's promises. When faith really takes hold of God, we have the calm and joyful assurance that the answer has come, for we know that the very moment we believe in our hearts, God moves. Satan will seek to interject doubt, thus hindering believing, but he must be overcome. It is possible for everyone to pray through and cause God to move on His throne.

MEDITATIONS

THE POSSIBILITIES OF FAITH—I Kings 18:41—Sound of abundance of rain—Elijah had not as yet prayed, but the Spirit of God was inspiring him that he might believe, and his faith had risen to the point that he could tell the king that he had better get ready, for there was rain coming. It is, indeed, a small thing for God to send a rain.

THE STRIKING DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE KING AND THE PROPHET—I Kings 18:42—Face between his knees—The king departed that he might eat and drink, but the prophet went up into the mountain that he might pray. In order to have his face between his knees, the prophet must have been sitting directly upon the ground. But it makes little difference what posture our bodies may have; it is the posture of the heart that counts.

THE FAITH THAT EXPECTS AN ANSWER—I Kings 18:43—Look toward the sea—Elijah desired that his servant go toward the sea to see if there might not be some clouds forming from which he would conclude that the Lord had answered prayer. The first time brought no results, so Elijah prayed again. The second time there were no results; he prayed on for seven times. Here we get a glimpse of the trust and faith that Elijah had in God. He did not pray one time and then give up. He knew that God had answered his prayers before, and he had confidence that He would do it again; so there was only one thing to do, and that was to keep on calling until God gave evidence that he had been heard.

THE EVIDENCE APPEARS—I Kings 18:44—Ariseth a little cloud—A cloud the size of the hand of a man would in itself be of little consequence in producing an abundance of rain. It did, however, serve as a great boost to the faith of Elijah and brought him to the place where he knew he had prayed through; and, without doubt, now he could declare that rain was coming. Ofttimes God does give evidence of His will to answer our prayers by some natural manifestation. The kingdom of God ruleth over all, and we need not fear to trust Him, for He can bring every natural resource to bear upon the answering of our prayers.

PRAYERS ANSWERED—I Kings 18:45—The heaven was black—What a blessing rain is! How little we appreciate it at times! Upon it depends our very existence. Surely we should be more eager to praise God for His excellence and for His loving and tender care of us. To be without rain, as Israel was, was indeed a serious thing; but such would never have happened if the people had obeyed God. We, as a nation, should take warning and turn from sin, lest God sees fit to stretch forth His hand and withhold from us some of the everyday blessings.

AN UNUSUAL HAPPENING—I Kings 18:46—Ran before Ahab—Ahab was in a chariot drawn by horses, but it was an easy matter for God to enable a man to outrun a chariot. This ability of the prophet was not the

result of a long period of hard training; it was not the result of enthusiasm because God had answered prayer; it was the miraculous manifestation of the power of God in the human life. It was similar to the act of Samson's taking the doors of the gate and the posts and carrying them up into the mountains (Judges 16:3).

IF GOD ANSWERED FOR ELIJAH, HE WILL FOR US—James 5:17—A man subject to like passions—What James is trying to do here is to encourage every believer to trust God. He relates the wonderful thing that Elijah had done by prayer and then says that he was a man that was subject to the very same things in life that we are. If we seek God with the same determination Elijah did, we may be sure that we will have the very same results. Many do not seek God at all, and, consequently, they live daily below their privileges; others pray once and then give up. I trust that every student of this lesson will be encouraged by the success of Elijah and seek God for the accomplishment of great things by the act of faith.

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP, A RICH BLESSING—Acts 4:23—And being let go—The disciples had been jailed because they had obeyed God in bringing the blessing of healing to a suffering man. Being let loose, they went to assemble with the saints that a report might be given of the happening. How good it is to go with those of like faith in a time of stress! When one member of the Christian body suffers, the whole body suffers.

RESORTING TO PRAYER—Acts 4:24—Lifted up their voices—In this prayer they did not ask to be delivered from the situation that life was finding them in, but rather that they might have power to give a good and bold testimony in the circumstances. Many draw back from the suffering that faithfulness to Christ brings, but we are told that we should rejoice in tribulation and that we should fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life.

PRAYING FOR POWER—Acts 4:29—May speak thy word—The Word of God always has been and always will be directly across the path of the man who seeks to make his selfish purposes first and the man who follows the pursuit of the wicked and gainsaying world. It is not always pleasant to take a stand against the great host of humanity that has strayed from the strait and narrow way into the broad way that leads to destruction. Therefore, we need to strengthen our souls for this great ordeal by much prayer before the throne of grace. Today, the world has gone mad over the great abundance of good things the Lord has given to us, and their whole desire seems to be to get as much pleasure as possible. It is our place, as Christians, to turn them from the pleasure of the world to the joys of Jesus Christ. The Christian is always required to conduct himself as he would desire the other fellow to treat him. This policy requires spiritual strength and fortitude and can be found only at the throne of grace. The disciples at this trying time wisely sought the place of prayer.

DESIRE TO DO GOOD, NOT EVIL—Acts 4:30—Stretching forth thine hand to heal—What a wonderful thing healing is to suffering humanity! What a blessing a man is to a community if he has the power of God in his life to the extent that he can pray the prayer of faith for the sick! God does not trust His gifts with the flagrant and egotistical man. He trusts His gifts with the man who is meek and humble, for all power is with God, and no man is sufficient in himself. The name of Jesus Christ has made possible this blessing to man, and it is this name we must recognize and reverence.

Acts 4:31—The place was shaken—The disciples did not desire that just a small demonstration be made by God in answer to prayer. They wanted signs and wonders to follow the preaching of the Word. Even the building in which they were gathered together began to shake, so mighty was the presence of God. The disciples went forth to do great things in the name of the Lord. If we pray through today, we can see things happening also.

CONCLUSION

For the sake of convenience, men have written long prayers and made them available to the masses. Preachers themselves are constructing prayers to be read with the thought in mind of tickling the ears of the people rather than touching the throne of God. Do not write prayers to be read. Let prayer be the spontaneous expression of the heart. We know not how we should pray as we ought, as Paul says, but it is the Spirit within man that prompts the prayer, if He is having His way, for He knows the mind of God and the need of man. What a wonderful combination this is! Prayer must be the attitude of the Christian, for it keeps him in touch with the source of all power and wisdom. Paul said that we should pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. Jesus said, "When you pray, believe." The human family needs to move up on the practice of prayer, and we hope this lesson shall serve to that end.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Give two reasons why prayer is necessary to the human family.
2. Describe what you understand the meaning of praying through to be.
3. What are the possibilities of faith?
4. What was the object in Elijah's sending his servant to look toward the sea?
5. Why do you think that God did not answer the first time Elijah prayed?
6. Do you always get your prayer answered the first time you pray?

LESSON NUMBER SEVEN FOR NOVEMBER 12

THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF

Scriptures: Luke 10:29-37.

Luke 10:29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

30 And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he

saw him, he had compassion on him,

34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

37 And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Memory Verse: Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

—Matthew 7:12.

Aim: To teach our responsibility to our fellowmen.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday

Matthew 7:1-14

Thursday

Matthew 5:27-48

Tuesday

Matthew 7:15-29

Friday

Luke 10

Wednesday

Matthew 5:1-26

Saturday

I Thessalonians 2

INTRODUCTION

The success of human relationship, both in the neighborhood and internationally, is determined by our reaction to the teaching found in the title of our lesson today. Since God has made the world and is the Author of human life, He alone is able to prescribe the rules that will produce success. He declares, as an irrevocable truth, that every man should have as much regard for his fellowmen as he does for himself. Let us keep in line with the divine will, and then we will be under the protection of divine power, which is absolute.

MEDITATIONS

NEIGHBORS—Luke 10:29—Who is my neighbour?—Our neighbor is anyone with whom we come in contact by any means. Modern invention has increased our responsibility and opportunity. We should use everything of this modern age for the one purpose of carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth. There is no pleasure in being a neighbor just because you feel that it is your duty. If the part of the neighbor is really

played, it must come from the heart; and when it does, we are always rewarded with happiness and satisfaction.

A MAN NEEDING A NEIGHBOR—Luke 10:30—Leaving him half dead—Men love life and like to be permitted to live in the way that seems for them to produce the most happiness. But, alas, how often wicked men impose upon others to the point where sorrow and misery become their constant portion! The gospel, if taken according to prescription by all men, would relieve the world of all its suffering, and it was for this purpose that Christ came into the world. Accounts are not always evened up in this world, but you may be sure the time is coming when all accounts will be settled from the standpoint of justice. It pays to settle now while mercy is extended. The man in this verse was treated with grave injustice and would have died, forfeiting all hope of this time world, had not one come who had compassion on him.

RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY—Luke 10:31—Came down a certain priest—He was priest in name only. He was definitely a publican at heart, and it is the heart that determines what a man is and not his name. The Scriptures teach, as the priest is, so will the people be. As we examine the people today who are church members, we find them sinners, and the people readily acknowledge that they are. This being true, then we know that the priests are sinners, too; and their lives are in vain hypocrisy. This priest definitely shirked his duty when he went out of his way to avoid the suffering man. The work of a minister of the Word of God is to care for the needy in any way that need demands.

A LACK OF COMPASSION—Luke 10:32—And likewise a Levite—This man showed a little more concern than the priest did, for he stopped and looked at him. He, doubtless, had a little sympathy, but not enough to cause him to forego his present duties and submit himself to the inconvenience that the circumstance demanded. We do owe much to our fellowmen. Paul said that we should work with our hands so that we would have to give to them who have need. The liberal soul shall be made fat.

ONE PROVES TO BE A NEIGHBOR—Luke 10:33—A certain Samaritan—The Samaritans were regarded by the Jews as dogs, and the Jews refused to have anything to do with them, as a rule. It was one of these who was not regarded as a follower of the true God that had mercy on the suffering man. Since Jesus made such a comparison when talking to the Jews, we can imagine that it cut deeply. It seems that when a man who once knew the truth departs from it, his hardness of heart becomes even greater than that of an avowed sinner. We need to exercise care that we daily walk in all the light the Lord sees fit to shine on our pathway. The light of the Word is precious, and we should regard it highly.

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF—Luke 10:34—On his own beast—This is just what Jesus meant when He said, “Thou shalt love

thy neighbour as thyself.” This man put the unfortunate one in his own place, doing just as he would have wanted someone to do for him. He gave him the best personal attention; he used his own personal supplies, and he gave all that was needed of his substance. He did not leave him until he was satisfied that everything had been done that he could do. None of us are justified until we have done all we can do. **Verse 35—What thou spendest more**—This man was not bound in any legal way to perform such devotion to one whom he did not know, but the law of love compelled him to do it, and the law of love rewarded him bountifully. How could any man sleep who had willfully neglected a suffering fellowman?

A POINTED QUESTION—Luke 10:36—Which ... was neighbour?—This was a very ordinary story couched in simple words, but it was told by the Master, and it had weight, fully answering the question that had been asked of Him. He who would be greatest, let him be servant of all. Human nature without the refining power of the Holy Spirit seeks to be served and not to serve.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SERVICE—Luke 10:37—Go, and do thou likewise—There is always a place for service, and it would be a wonderful world if men were taught to serve their fellowmen rather than to seek ease and attention for themselves. Jesus said we would have the poor with us always, so there is always opportunity to help someone.

CONCLUSION

True neighborliness is built upon the foundation of the service that the Samaritan rendered to the unfortunate man. He served without any expectation of ever receiving anything in return. He who gives out of a heart of love, and gives because he wants to make someone else happy, may be sure that God, the Almighty Power, is on his side, and he will be taken care of. Truly, the Lord did give us a gracious command that proves to be a blessing to anyone who observes it when He said, “Love thy neighbour as thyself.”

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What does it do for the soul of man to render service freely to others?
2. Could any nation fail in any way if it puts its full trust in God?
3. What had caused our responsibility to others to increase in the last few decades?
4. Does anyone receive benefits if he gives grudgingly?
5. What was the trouble with the priest that he did not give help to the man who had been robbed?
6. Does our present society offer any opportunity for service today?
7. What is our responsibility to a godless nation?

LESSON NUMBER EIGHT FOR NOVEMBER 19

SOWING BESIDE ALL WATERS

Scriptures: John 4:6, 7, 9-15, 39-41.

John 4:6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank

thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

41 And many more believed because of his own word.

Memory Verse: Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.—Ecclesiastes 11:1.

Aim: To encourage personal testimony.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Luke 14	Thursday	Ecclesiastes 11
Tuesday	II Corinthians 5	Friday	Acts 26:1-18
Wednesday	II Corinthians 6	Saturday	Acts 26:19-32

INTRODUCTION

One reason why Christianity is on the defensive and is losing in influence is because Christians have desisted to a great extent in the great calling of personal testimony. Many formal Christians will tell you that they hire a preacher to do the work that is to be done in religion. The truth of the situation is that the preacher is the leader, and the lay members are his working force. All must give personal testimony whenever there is an opportunity, for it is certainly true that all come in contact with people where there is opportunity to testify for Christianity. The bold stand of the Christians and their personal testimonies in the early church in Jerusalem stirred up a great persecution, and the children of God were scattered abroad, but that did not stop their testimony. Everywhere they were driven, they told the

story of Christ, and the work grew mightily. We hope to be able by this lesson to stir Christians to greater activity in sowing the precious seed of the gospel.

MEDITATIONS

HE TOOK UPON HIMSELF THE FORM OF MAN—John 4:6, 7—Being wearied with his journey—Jesus was truly divine, yet He occupied a body of flesh that was subject to weariness and thirst as we are. As He sat on the well, a woman of Samaria comes to draw water. To her great surprise, Jesus said to her, “Give me to drink.”

CLASS HATRED—John 4:9—How is it?—Any man who esteems himself better than any other human being regardless of his situation or station in life, does not know how far he has drifted from the truth. Had Jesus been true to the tradition of the elders, He would not even have spoken to this woman, but Jesus was not moved by traditions. He was moved only by truth; thus He was able to give us an example that is worthy to be followed. Jesus did not stop at the brink of religious training. He went on and beheld the value of the soul that was held in bondage by false religion and sought to impart the remedy, regardless of to whom He was talking. We can learn a good lesson here. We must sow willingly beside all waters.

THE NEED OF FALLEN HUMANITY—John 4:10—Given thee living water—Much religious water (teaching) is offered to the men of the earth today, but only the living water that comes from Jesus Christ will effect the cure of sin. Men can take the water of false religion and continue to live on in sin, but not so with the living water. It is a perfect cure and gives to its owner life eternal. Outwardly it seems that there was little that would suggest that Jesus was anything other than an ordinary man, but from His lips issued wisdom that demonstrated the fact that within Him was a power and a contact that wrought great changes in the lives of men. How is the world ever going to know the truth of Christian religion if we who are Christians indeed do not tell them the true story?

ASLEEP TO SPIRITUAL THINGS—John 4:11—Whence then hast thou?—The woman, so used to thinking only in terms of material things, had not yet awakened to the spiritual application that Jesus was trying to make. How often people search for something in a material sense that will do the work of the spiritual! Some wear beads or amulets around their necks, or carry them in their pockets; some are baptized, learn the catechism, and the like, to bring consolation to the God-hungry soul. Jesus did not aim to teach that the drink He had to offer would take a man beyond the place where he would never need to drink again. It would, in that first drink, bring such a satisfaction that the thirst for deliverance from sin and bondage would be quenched forever; but the desire for sweet fellowship with God and the continued sense of well-being can only be had by constantly returning to the fountain to drink deep of the Water of Life.

Verse 12—Art thou greater?—They held Jacob in great reverence,

since it was he who gave them the well. It was hard to think of anyone who could render them even a like service, much less one so much greater, as Jesus had suggested here.

SALVATION HEALS PERMANENTLY—John 4:13—Shall thirst again—We must have physical water frequently or discomfort will result. The water of spiritual life heals and satisfies permanently; we need never thirst again. We do not aim to teach here that one drink will assure you against falling from the grace of God. If one departs from the true and living God, he loses the spiritual life he has acquired and will need to drink at the fountain again for repentance. **Verse 14—In him a well of water—**Jesus is not teaching that we should not hunger and thirst after righteousness, or seek to grow in our Christian experience, but He is teaching that salvation satisfies the soul. And having been saved from sin, we will no longer desire the sinful and evil things of the world. To continue in the Christian way will indeed mean “everlasting life.”

SPIRITUAL AWAKENING—John 4:15—Sir, give me this water—We need wisdom in sowing beside all waters. Jesus had so worked with His subject that He had created an interest and a thirst. One in such a state is easily led into an experience with God. The thing that fully awakened the woman was the ability of Jesus to look into her heart and see the life she was actually living. She knew then that she had not been talking to an ordinary man, even though He appeared to be.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY BRINGS RESULTS—John 4:39—Many believed—This unusual event greatly influenced the woman, and she did not hesitate to tell all her friends. It moved them, too, for they knew the life that this woman had been living. Such power is delegated to the Church today, for we are told in John 16:13 that when the Spirit of truth is come into our lives, He will even show us things that are yet in the future. There is nothing more interesting and exciting than the work of a true Christian.

THE LORD DIRECTED—John 4:40—Samaritans ... besought him—These Samaritans did better than the Jews of His own country who rejected Him. The man or nation is certainly blessed who accepts the Lord Jesus in his heart, but so many religions permit Him to dwell only in their thoughts and formalities of worship. Christ in the heart transforms a man, but Christ in formality only is certain to lead to religious bigotry and failure. **Verse 41—Many more believed—**We do not know when we plant the seed of the Word of God in one heart what the result may be. Therefore, it is necessary that we sow beside all waters, trusting the Lord to produce a harvest.

CONCLUSION

I do not think that there ever was a people who had a better opportunity to carry the gospel message than we, and yet it seems that there is an indifference, an ease in Zion, which to me is very alarming. There is not enough

of the spirit of sacrifice. There is too much contentment with the lot in which we find ourselves. If we were as willing to go into debt to send the gospel to the ends of the earth as we are to get the good things of life, without doubt, things would change very quickly. May God stir each earnest and honest heart to a great effort in carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth!

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why is Christianity losing ground in the world today?
 2. What is the duty of every Christian in the matter of personal evangelism?
 3. Consider the awful indignity of class hatred among any people.
 4. In what respect does the Water of Life satisfy permanently?
 5. Do we still need the Word of God after we have been saved by the initial drink?
 6. Give one example of your success in personally sowing God's Word.
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LESSON NUMBER NINE FOR NOVEMBER 26

ASSEMBLING OURSELVES TOGETHER

Scriptures: Psalm 122; Psalm 133; Acts 20:7-11.

Psalm 122:1 I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.

2 Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

3 Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together:

4 Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.

5 For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.

7 Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.

8 For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.

9 Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good.

Psalm 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

2 It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the

skirts of his garments;

3 As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

Acts 20:7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

9 And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

Memory Verse: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.—Hebrews 10:25.

Aim: To show the benefits of Christian fellowship.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Hebrews 10	Thursday	Ezra 3
Tuesday	Psalms 122; 133	Friday	Nehemiah 8
Wednesday	II Kings 4:8-37	Saturday	Nehemiah 9

INTRODUCTION

It is not uncommon to hear people say they can get along all right worshipping in the home, and there is no need to attend church. But this is a direct contradiction of the Word of God and should not be accepted as truth. God never intended that we should live unto ourselves, but that we should be a society of people meeting together frequently for the purpose of being of mutual benefit one to another in any way that there is need. Especially would God have us to meet together for the purpose of worshipping Him. He takes care to tell us that not everyone who says, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of the Father who is in heaven. So it is a necessity that we make sure that we meet with the people who truly are children of God, and it is especially necessary that we make sure that the leader is led by the Holy Spirit. Many leaders today have been deceived by vain teachings and commandments of men, and their worship is only a form of godliness. We should separate ourselves from all such, lest we become contaminated by their false teachings. God has chosen through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. So by attending church and listening to the preaching of the Word, we will be enlightened in the Word of God. If we forsake the assembling of ourselves together, we are bringing ourselves into a dangerous place, and if we persist in this practice, it is certain that we will grieve the Spirit of God and lose our experience.

If we have no true church to attend, we must then (and then only) worship alone at home, praying all the while for God to make a way for the establishment of His church in our community.

MEDITATIONS

JOY IN ASSEMBLING—Psalm 122:1—I was glad—David had learned from experience that it was pleasant to hear from God out of His Word; therefore, it was a pleasure to him when the time came for him to go into the house of the Lord. When the experience of a Christian begins to fade, one of the first things to happen is the neglect of attending services in the house of the Lord. The reason is that the appetite for spiritual things is becoming dull, just as one who has poor digestion for food will not be so eager to come to the table. **Verse 2—Our feet shall stand—**One who has been brought to his knees by an enemy is in a place of disadvantage. Jerusalem here

is used as a type of the Church of God, or the family of God. In literal Israel, the great place of worship and the great occurrences in the religious life of Israel were in Jerusalem. So as a type of the true church it is fitting. If we attend to our spiritual duty, we are certain to be able to stand.

ISRAEL PRACTICED ASSEMBLING TOGETHER—Psalm 122:4—Whither the tribes go up—In the religion of the Jews under the law, there were a great many feast days and days of assembling. Then, as now, it was so easy to drift and get away from the Lord. God always came down in their midst and blessed them when they walked in His statutes, but the time came when their worship became a mere form, and this God hated. The very same is true today. In those days the central place of worship was the city of Jerusalem; and when a Jew was away from home, he always turned his face toward Jerusalem when he worshipped. The Jews were to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. **Verse 6—They shall prosper**—The Church that Jesus is building is the greatest possession that God has in the world. Anyone who contributes to her welfare is certain to be blessed of God. It is a very serious matter if anyone hinders her progress. In the New Testament, we are taught that we should pray for our rulers that we may dwell in peace.

THE BEAUTY OF FELLOWSHIP—Psalm 133:1—Behold, how good—It certainly is a very much desired relationship in which brethren can dwell together in peace and have the same understanding of the Word of God. It is not the plan of God that there be so many different religious organizations. He has not ordained them. His plan would bring all strife to an end. Our assembling together would be far more powerful if all had the same doctrine.

FELLOWSHIP PRECIOUS—Psalm 133:2—It is like the precious ointment—The ointment used for anointing had a very pleasant odor. So is the fellowship among brethren who are brethren indeed—perfect trust, perfect harmony. Oh, that we might have a nation like that! Instead, we find that suspicion and graft are evident in a great measure, and it certainly means our downfall. Needless to say, the same thing exists in religious circles. The true gospel of Jesus Christ brings to an end all these destructive forces in the human family, and surely this is what is needed today. Neither Catholicism nor any other ism touches the unregenerated heart of man; all will acknowledge this. Only the pure gospel can do it. **Verse 3—Like the dew**—Dew is very common; so is the rain. Yet most people take little time to thank God for the fact that He sends it. What would the state of the earth be in a very short time if all moisture were withheld? Vegetation would disappear, and hope of life would perish.

BREAKING BREAD—Acts 20:7—The disciples came together—To keep fresh in the mind of the Christian the great love that God has for us and the price our redemption cost, we should partake of the bread and wine, which are representative of the body of Christ which was broken for us and the blood that was spilt. The great society of Christianity is built around the sacrificial death of Christ; and if we lose sight of this, we lose sight of everything. We

have no salvation. If there is one time more urgent than another for us to assemble ourselves together, it is the time of communion. On this particular occasion, the taking of communion was accompanied by a sermon by the apostle Paul. Of course, it is not the form or manner that counts; it is the state of the heart. **Verse 11—Talked a long while—**Paul's life was one that was packed with unusual experiences. He was an ardent advocate of the truth and very energetic in his work, so much so, that he had much to talk about. Furthermore, there is no question but that he was in very close touch with God; therefore, his personal experience would be one that was full of interest. His experiences would be of great help to others, and this is one reason why we should assemble together, that others may gain strength from our testimonies and thereby be better prepared to fight the good fight of faith. His talk was so interesting that it held his audience until the break of day. Previous to this he had preached until midnight. This made a rather long session for one church gathering, but certainly, since God was in it, there was not one dull moment; and doubtless, the people were ready to stay longer if Paul would continue to speak to them. We must expect meetings of a similar nature if the Holy Spirit is allowed to take over our services. Forms, rituals, and other things crowd out the gracious Spirit of God until only a dry, lifeless worship is left.

CONCLUSION

False religion has become so widespread and general that it has been accepted as the true religion. But even so, there is still only one church, and only they who have become members of it by the new birth can expect to make it safely through to heaven. One reason for our assembling together is that we may exhort one another, especially as we draw so near to the end of time. It is very necessary that we hold faith in God and seek even against these odds to make the work of the kingdom of God first. Thus we see the great need of those who really love God and His great truth to obey the command to assemble together.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why is it necessary for the children of God to assemble together?
2. What is the danger of one's living to himself in a religious sense?
3. What made David glad at the idea of going to the house of God?
4. On what basis is it possible to have true Christian fellowship?
5. What is meant by dwelling together in unity?
6. What do you think was the subject of the discussion that Paul carried on until daybreak?
7. What must be a Christian's attitude in the present world crisis?

LESSON NUMBER TEN FOR DECEMBER 3

HEARING THE VOICE OF GOD

Scriptures: I Kings 19:11-14; I Samuel 3:4, 5, 9-11.

I Kings 19:11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake:

12 And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

13 And it was so, when Elijah heard it that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?

14 And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I

only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

I Samuel 3:4 That the Lord called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I.

5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

9 Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

11 And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

Memory Verse: And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.—Isaiah 30:21.

Aim: To teach the student to discern the voice of God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Joshua 1
Tuesday I Samuel 3
Wednesday Isaiah 30

Thursday Genesis 17
Friday Genesis 12
Saturday Genesis 26

INTRODUCTION

There is great need that a Christian be able to discern the voice of God when He speaks, and to do this, it takes a close walk with God. We often hear people say, "The Lord told me so and so," and then to our surprise, we find out in time the thing they said did not turn out as indicated, and we are awakened to the fact that the Lord did not say so and so. This is disheartening and a hindrance to the work of God. It is very necessary that we know the Lord has spoken to us if we make such a statement. The Word says that even if the thing which a prophet says comes to pass, he may not be God's prophet; but if it does not, then of a truth he is not God's prophet. Ofttimes, just because an impression comes, it is accepted as from God. In this age in which we live, the devil is appearing as an angel of light. He is

seeking to conceal his true nature and purpose by imitating God as closely as possible. The devil quoted scriptures to Jesus and then put the wrong interpretation upon them. This is being widely done by Satan today, and it is necessary that we walk close to God so that we may not be deceived.

MEDITATIONS

GOD SPEAKS TO ELIJAH—I Kings 19:11—Go forth, and stand—Elijah, at this time, was somewhat discouraged. He felt that he had done his very best, yet the great cause of God had not prospered as he desired. This was a good time for the devil to try to discourage him further and if possible get him to turn his back on God. The wind blew, and the rocks were broken, and after the wind there was an earthquake, but our scripture says that the Lord was not in those demonstrations. The devil blusters and roars; he imposes, and by so doing, does intimidate some souls. Demonstration of power is no indication, necessarily, of divine power. This lesson is much in need of being learned today. **Verse 12—A still small voice**—God is all-powerful; therefore, He does not have to make a great display to make Himself appear greater than He is. He is big enough to handle any situation that possibly can arise. He speaks with authority and finality. If we listen, we can hear, but if we are self-willed and unbelieving, we cannot hear the voice of God if He does speak to us. Fire also appeared, but the Scriptures say that God wasn't in that either. **Verse 13—What doest thou here**—Elijah had just done a great work in the name of the Lord, but the devil had roared, and he ran, ready to give up, despairing of life. The voice of God brought him to his senses. **Verse 14—I have been very jealous**—Elijah was very devoted to the Lord's cause, but since things went so backward (in his thinking), he was inclined to be discouraged. It proved, however, as it always does, that God is still on the throne and able to deliver under any circumstances those who trust in Him.

GOD CALLS LITTLE SAMUEL—I Samuel 3:4—Here am I—The voice in this instance must have closely resembled the voice of Eli, for Samuel at once ran to Eli to see what was wanted. The voice had no particular sound that would have aroused the curiosity of Samuel. The same may be true with many people. God speaks, and people do not know it. God does not always speak with an audible voice. Sometimes it is in the inner man that He makes His will known. One safeguard in the life of faith is the constant acknowledgment of God, for He says if we will acknowledge Him, He will direct our paths (Proverbs 3:5, 6). Any child who has learned obedience has a better chance in the Christian race than one who does not know obedience.

EAGER RESPONSE—I Samuel 3:5—And he ran—We can see the eager devotion to Eli in the actions of Samuel, because he ran, really wanting to be of service and desirous of being obedient. We should have the very same attitude toward the voice of God. We should be waiting always to hear

it and be ready to perform any task that He might ask us to do. One beautiful thing is that God never asks us to do anything that we cannot do, and He always provides the way for doing what He wants done. No one needs to fear to trust the voice of God.

ELI DISCERNS THE VOICE OF GOD—I Samuel 3:9—And it shall be—Sometimes the Lord uses others to help us recognize the voice of God. Eli did not recognize the voice of God at the first call nor the second, but the third call brought understanding. Samuel had not yet learned to know God's voice.

WAITING FOR THE LORD—I Samuel 3:10—The Lord came ... and called—It is hard to imagine what might have passed through the mind of little Samuel while he was waiting to hear the voice of the Lord. I am not inclined to believe that he went back to sleep. We at all times should be listening for the voice of the Lord. We should be eager to answer when the Lord calls, for One so great as He can never be wrong, nor can He ask us to do anything that would be injurious to us. **Verse 11—I will do a thing**—When God undertakes to work, there is no force to stop Him. This kingdom does rule over all, and He is able to subdue all things under Himself. However, the absence of faith on the part of man does tie His hands so that He cannot work. What a wonderful thing it is that He has promised us that if we will believe, nothing by any means shall be impossible unto us. The sin of Israel had become great. The sons of the high priest were wicked and lewd men. God cannot tolerate sin and wickedness; therefore, judgment must be poured out. Let this generation take warning, for God is no more favorable to sin now than He was then.

CONCLUSION

It is a drab world where the voice of God is not heard and society is certain to decay and be in despair. But where the voice of God is heard, prosperity and peace are sure to reign. In the modern age in which we live, formal religionists are making fun of the idea that we can talk to God and that He is interested in us. But times have not changed God, and He loves to walk and talk with His people, just as much as He did in the Garden of Eden. Let us cultivate a closer friendship with God.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Can you discern the voice of God when He speaks?
2. Why does the devil quote Scripture?
3. What is it that keeps God from working?
4. Is God as much governed by the Word as we are?
5. How does God speak to people other than by an audible voice?
6. Why is it unnecessary for God to bluff and be noisy like the devil?

LESSON NUMBER ELEVEN FOR DECEMBER 10

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Scriptures: Genesis 14:20; Hebrews 7:1, 2; Genesis 28:20-22; Malachi 3:7-12; II Corinthians 9:6, 7.

Genesis 14:20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

Hebrews 7:1 For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;

2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace.

Genesis 28:20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,

21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God:

22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Malachi 3:7 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts.

II Corinthians 9:6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

Memory Verse: Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.—Matthew 23:23.

Aim: To teach that one-tenth of our income belongs to God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Genesis 2	Thursday	Malachi 3
Tuesday	Genesis 14	Friday	Hebrews 7
Wednesday	Leviticus 27:26-34	Saturday	Matthew 23:1-34

INTRODUCTION

Little is directly said about the tithe as a requirement in the New Testament, but even so, that does not detract from the fact that it is required by God. In the days of Jesus and the disciples, the people prac-

ticed rigidly the law of tithing. The Pharisees were very faithful in this, but they neglected the weightier matters of the law, such as mercy and judgment. Jesus commended them for tithing, but rebuked them for not taking care of the weightier matters. If the people, as a whole, observed the practice of tithing, there was little to be said about it except in the way of commendation. Let it suffice here to say that if God required the tithe under the less glorious covenant, the ministration of the law, how can anyone expect to please God if he contends for a lesser standard in this most glorious covenant?

Tithing is not the only responsibility in Christian stewardship. Christians find pleasure in giving offerings to the cause of Christ. Paul declares that we should labor with our hands that we might have to give to those who have need. Let us seek to develop fully the art of rendering offerings.

MEDITATIONS

ABRAHAM'S EXAMPLE—Genesis 14:20—He gave him tithes of all—God called Abraham His friend. Abraham found friendship with God because of his humble obedience to God. He gave one-tenth to God's work, and we may wonder where he learned this practice, for before this, tithing was not mentioned in the Bible, and no part of the written law was given either. So the doctrine of tithing precedes the written law and, beyond controversy, continues after it. Abraham was careful to make sure that he gave one-tenth of all.

LIVING BY THE GOSPEL—Hebrews 7:1—Priest of the most high God—God's minister has to live and eat just as anyone else, but he has no time to labor with his hands to make his living; therefore, God has ordained that they who are taught in the Word give to him that teaches in all good things (Galatians 6:6). Since Melchisedec was carrying on God's work, it follows that Abraham should give of his good things to him for God's cause.

JACOB'S VOW—Genesis 28:20—Jacob vowed a vow—Jacob was running away from home and friends, driven by the threats of his brother whom he had injured. The presence of God seems to have convicted him, and now in an effort to regain some relief from his guilty conscience, he makes some promises to God. **Verse 21—Shall the Lord be my God**—It is evident that Jacob knew well the doctrine of tithing but failed to practice it; thus, he was condemned for it. He knew that he could not have peace with God unless he did. He declared he would give the tithe to God.

WHOSOEVER WILL MAY COME—Malachi 3:7—Return unto me—God has always sought to get mankind to turn away from the breaking of His commandments to walking in His truth.

ROBBING GOD—Malachi 3:8—Will a man rob God?—To rob God means to take something that belongs to God. If the tithe belongs to

God, then the returning of the tithe to Him is not an act of giving, but the meeting of an obligation or a debt. It is more dangerous to steal from God than your grocer. Also, according to this verse, God can call for an offering whenever He wishes and the amount He desires.

FAILURE TO TITHE ACCOMPANIED WITH A CURSE—Malachi 3:9—Ye are cursed with a curse—Failure on our part to meet our obligation to God will bring a curse upon us the same as it did upon the people to whom Malachi was talking. The only way God can carry on His work in the earth is by tithes and offerings. If we fail to give as God requires by His Word, it is certain that the Word cannot go forth as it ought, and the failure of the Word to go forth will most surely bring a curse upon the people.

DISPOSITION OF THE TITHE—Malachi 3:10—Into the storehouse—It is evident from this verse that God intends that the tithes be brought to the place where we worship (get our spiritual food). It is not our privilege to scatter it out in various places where we know of a need. We may give offerings in such places.

GOD IS ABLE TO REWARD—Malachi 3:11—Rebuke the devourer—God in very short order prepared a worm to destroy the gourd of Jonah (Jonah 4:6, 7). He likewise is able to bless or curse the efforts of our hands. This I am sure He does. Let us be sure to obey His Word.

GOD'S WORD FINAL—Malachi 3:12—Saith the Lord of hosts—God never needs to reverse His judgments, for He never makes a mistake. We must, therefore, always scrupulously obey Him because He is always right.

REAPING WHAT WE SOW—II Corinthians 9:6—Shall reap also sparingly—God stores in heaven's bank all we bestow upon His cause. Therefore, it must follow that if we give little toward the work of the Lord, we will reap little.

OFFERING INVOLVES FREE WILL—II Corinthians 9:7—According as he purposeth—Everyone should survey the need and then give according to his ability. When he purposes a certain amount, he should give it. This, in order to yield the greatest blessing, must be done freely and gladly.

CONCLUSION

When a man is employed by another for a certain amount of money per hour or day, he sells to his employer a part of his life. Since our lives belong to God (every moment), why should we think it strange that we should be required to return unto God one-tenth of the money for which we sell our time? If He gives us increase from our fields, why should we object to returning unto Him one-tenth? They who withhold that which is justly God's do not realize that God has a thousand ways in which He can subtract from their income.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. How long has God required men to give in one way or another unto Him?
 2. Where do you think Abraham learned tithing?
 3. Does God design that ministers work to support themselves?
 4. What do you think prompted Jacob to make his vow to God?
 5. In what way is it possible to rob God?
 6. What will be the result if we fail to tithe?
 7. What can God do to reduce our income?
 8. Do we have a right to say where our tithe shall go?
 9. What does it mean if we sow sparingly we shall reap sparingly?
 10. What did Christ say about the cheerful giver?
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LESSON NUMBER TWELVE FOR DECEMBER 17 COVETING THE BEST GIFTS

Scriptures: Romans 12:6; I Corinthians 12:1-13.

Romans 12:6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith.

I Corinthians 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.

3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Memory Verse: But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.—I Corinthians 12:31.

Aim: To show that the gifts of the Spirit are essential to the prosperity of the Church.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday

I Corinthians 14:1-19

Thursday

I Corinthians 13

Tuesday

I Corinthians 14:20-40

Friday

I Corinthians 12

Wednesday

Ephesians 4

Saturday

Romans 12

INTRODUCTION

The devil has used the subject of the gifts of the Spirit to cause much confusion in the family of man, due to the fact that he has the power to give counterfeit gifts. His imitations in some instances are close, and the imitation along with the power to deceive and to blind makes it hard indeed for some to recognize the error.

Gifts of the Spirit are imparted by God to His church for the purpose of enabling the work of the Church to be done more effectively, efficiently, and speedily.

MEDITATIONS

DISTRIBUTION OF GIFTS—Romans 12:6—Having then gifts—

God knows and understands the make-up of man; therefore, He knows who is best qualified for the various gifts. If we insist on having one certain gift given to us, it may be necessary for God to put us through a sort of preparatory school, which sometimes is grievous to the flesh. All men do not have the same power in preaching as others because there is not as much of the grace of God in their souls. Noise is not power, yet a Spirit-filled minister may become forceful in his speech.

GOD WOULD TEACH US ABOUT GIFTS—I Corinthians 12:1—

Would not have you ignorant—The ignorance concerning God's true gifts is very pitiful. We see far more counterfeit gifts than we do the true. Thus, we can account for the spiritual confusion that there is in the world. We can read what the Word of God has to say about the gifts; but unless we have the guidance of the Spirit in understanding the Word, we will not obtain light. We should be informed in regard to the devil's success in deceiving the people through the use of his false gifts. Many preachers today have a call from Satan rather than from God and are stoutly contending for the false teachings that come from the bottomless pits of hell. Because a man preaches from the Bible is no indication that he is God's man. If he puts the wrong interpretation upon the Word, it is no longer the Word of God.

FALSE GODS—I Corinthians 12:2—Carried away—

It is sad that so many through the years have been carried away from the true God by false teachings. Such was the state of the Gentiles in Paul's day. They worshiped idols made of wood, stone, and metal. The false gods of the people today are ease and material things. Many worship Satan in ignorance.

SPEAKING BY THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT—I Corinthians

12:3—But by the Holy Ghost—Many have a head knowledge of the

Scriptures, but to speak out of an experience that comes from the heart, it is absolutely necessary that we have the abiding presence of the Spirit of God in our hearts. He who has a false gift of tongues, speaking in what many call the unknown tongue, is very certain to blaspheme God, for he does not know what he says, and the utterance is prompted by Satan. Doubtless, many had ignorantly called Jesus accursed as they spoke in Corinth with a false gift, but Paul let them know that they who did that were not speaking by the Spirit.

MANY GIFTS—I Corinthians 12:4—Diversities of gifts—A gift of the Spirit is merely the power of the Holy Ghost resting upon an individual, enabling him to perform some special spiritual work in the Church. All true gifts originate in the one true Spirit.

MANY MEANS OF EXPRESSION—I Corinthians 12:5—Differences of administrations—Differences in people make differences in the way things are done, but even so, there is but one Lord who gives power to administer and though there are different ways of doing a task, the end will be the same. This has no reference to false doctrines in the land and does not teach that the different and conflicting doctrines are of God and will all produce the same result. We find the same thought in the sixth verse.

PURPOSE OF OPERATION OF GIFT—I Corinthians 12:7—To profit withal—God does not give a gift to a man so that he may profit personally. He gives the gift so that it may be profitable to him in the work of carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth. He who has a gift coupled with the proper amount of the love of God will be able to do a greater work than he who has no gift.

GOD GIVES THE GIFTS AS HE WILLS—I Corinthians 12:8—Word of wisdom—Since God is the Fountainhead of all wisdom, it is no wonder that by the Spirit He is able to impart to anyone whom He will the portion of wisdom that is necessary. The scripture here suggests that he imparts to “one,” not all. It may be that some will receive more than one gift, such as a minister who has the gift of prophecy may also have the gift of miracles and perhaps the gift of discernment. However, the scripture seems to indicate that the gifts are spread out so that, as a rule, there is one gift to a man.

FAITH MUCH NEEDED—I Corinthians 12:9—To another faith—Faith is needed on every hand. The sick need help. Finances are needed to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth. If we have the proper faith, nothing will be impossible to us. Faith is a gift of the Spirit.

TONGUES NOT IMPARTED TO ALL—I Corinthians 12:10—To another ... tongues—We see from this that not everyone shall receive the gift of tongues. It is “another,” which usually would imply one. Paul compares the body of Christ to the human body. If the body were all eyes, where would the hearing be? It would be just as reasonable to think that

the human body were all eyes as to think that the entire body of Christ had the gift of tongues.

MANY GIFTS, BUT ONE SPIRIT—I Corinthians 12:11—The selfsame Spirit—God has but one Spirit, and the administration of heavenly affairs is in His hand. He can take the things of Jesus Christ and show them to us. The Spirit will always honor Christ through the gifts; therefore, all things will be done decently and in order. God says that He divides severally to every man as He wills. Even so, He gives us the right to covet the gifts if we so desire. But we may covet only the best gifts (I Corinthians 12:31), which leaves tongues out, for it is one of the least.

CHRIST HAS ONLY ONE BODY—I Corinthians 12:12—There is one body—Everyone who has been born again is a member of the body of Christ, regardless of who he is or where he may be. We become a member of this one family by the operation of the one Spirit. So we must be in this one body if we are to have any of the gifts of the Spirit. **Verse 13—Baptized into one body**—We can readily see that all who are in the body of Christ have the same Spirit and thus will be able to get along together. It is the coming of one who has a false spirit into the presence of the body of Christ that causes trouble. But we are to try the spirits to see if they be of God. If they are not of God, it is our duty to reject them.

CONCLUSION

After studying this lesson, we see the great importance of the gifts of the Spirit and also the terrible danger of being influenced by someone who has been a partaker of a false spirit and a false gift. In the eighth chapter of Acts, we read of Simon the sorcerer who did many mighty works and was declared by the people to be the great power of God, but the true servant of God uncovered him. His work was being done by the use of false gifts. There are many in the land today doing great works who are highly acclaimed as of God, but they have deceived the people and are working by the means of false gifts.

The body is not all it should be until the gifts have been given to it. We should pray that in these last days the Lord will give unto His body the gifts that are needed so that a better work for Him may be done. It takes humility to walk in the ways of the Lord, and no proud man needs to think that he shall be entrusted with God's gifts.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. For what purpose are the gifts of the Spirit given?
2. To whom are the gifts given?
3. How can you tell a false gift from a true gift?
4. Under what power was Simon the sorcerer working?
5. Why is faith so much needed in the Church today?
6. What gifts are we told to covet?
7. Where does the gift of tongues stand in importance among the gifts?

LESSON NUMBER THIRTEEN FOR DECEMBER 24

GOD'S GIFT TO US

Scriptures: Isaiah 9:6, 7; Luke 2:4-12, 16.

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Luke 2:4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

Memory Verse: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.—John 3:16.

Aim: To impress the student with God's great love for man.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Matthew 1:18-25
Tuesday Isaiah 53
Wednesday Romans 5

Thursday Isaiah 9
Friday Luke 2:1-21
Saturday Luke 2:22-52

INTRODUCTION

With the unrest and distrust that are in the world today between individuals and nations, there is a special need that we emphasize anew the marvelous love of God manifested in His gift to the world. The world is busy about the task of trying to work out its own problems, but in its groping, so much human reasoning and deduction are put into it that nothing but chaos results. No human life is complete unless that life has been filled with the Spirit of God. So few have the Spirit, and the craving of the rest of mankind for something to satisfy that void has driven them to the pleasures of the world. These do not satisfy, even though repeated indulgences are

entered into. Let us renew our efforts to catch a clearer vision of the priceless gift of God to the world and then redouble our efforts to impress the world with its significance.

Embodied in the gift of God to the world is the fulness of wisdom, knowledge, beauty, power, and love. With the coming of Christ into our hearts comes also the access to all these most desirable blessings. God says He will withhold no good thing from them who walk uprightly. David said, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." Christ not only has all things to give, but also knows what is best to give us. We should trust His judgment without any hesitation.

MEDITATIONS

THE GIFT OF GOD—Isaiah 9:6—Unto us a son is given—Christ was the most illustrious Character that ever came into the world; yet His outward appearance was not impressive. Isaiah said in Isaiah 53, "When we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." All His worth was to be found in His inward purity, beauty of stainless character, unlimited power, and boundless wisdom. Little wonder Isaiah said His name should be Wonderful, the mighty God, the Prince of Peace, the everlasting Father, because it was He who created all things that ever were created (Colossians 1:16). Since God is the sole owner of all things and mankind is the creator of nothing, it naturally follows that man is dependent upon God for everything. Of course, among the gifts of God to man, the gift of His Son is the greatest.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD—Isaiah 9:7—Upon his kingdom—The kingdom of God in its universal sense embraces all things in existence. When He speaks of His people who have been saved by His blood, He is referring to His church, the body of Christ. Christ, as King of this great kingdom, is exactly the same in His executive position as the Head of the Church. The government of the Church is exclusively upon His shoulders. He does delegate men to carry out His will, and some can be trusted with more responsibility than others, but this does not remove from Christ His kingship or His headship. By Him all things consist (Colossians 1:17). As David sat upon the literal throne of Israel, Christ sits upon the spiritual throne and rules spiritual Israel.

JOSEPH GOES TO BETHLEHEM TO BE TAXED—Luke 2:4—Joseph ... went up from Galilee—The Jews were in bondage to the Romans and had to pay taxes to them. It was for this purpose that Joseph journeyed with his expectant wife to Bethlehem. His ancestry issued from Bethlehem. **Verse 5—Being great with child**—This is the one and only instance where such a thing ever happened, that a woman conceived at the hands of God through the Spirit. That which was to be born of her was the actual Son of God; thus, the truth of the scripture that calls Jesus the only begotten Son of the Father.

JESUS BORN AS ANY OTHER CHILD—Luke 2:6—Days were accomplished—Though Christ was divine and existed eternally with the Father, yet He took the natural route to be clothed upon with the flesh. It so happened by divine appointment that the time of taxing came at the time for the deliverance of Mary.

UNFRIENDLY RECEPTION—Luke 2:7—No room for them—Human ambition and greed for gain will drive men to ruthless ends. In all ages there has been a lack of divine love which caused men to minister more to their own personal desires and ambitions than to others! To us it seems wicked that men compelled Christ to use a manger as His first bed, but it is consistent with the simplicity of the life that Christ chose to live in this time world.

THE HUMBLE GIVEN HONOR—Luke 2:8—Keeping watch—The time of the birth of Christ could hardly have been at the time that we celebrate, because the winter months would have prohibited open watch over the flocks.

Verse 9—Angel of the Lord—Heavenly messengers announced the arrival of the divine Visitor whom the men of the inns had turned away from their doors. “Be not unmindful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”

FEAR OF THE MIRACULOUS—Luke 2:9—They were sore afraid—Man in his great strength is frail, and the appearance of divine demonstration strikes fear into his heart. Samson’s father was a good man, yet he thought he would die because he saw an angel of the Lord. Moses fled from his rod that turned into a serpent. The shepherds were taken by surprise and feared what might happen. Human insight does not pierce the future; so humanity suffers much, not knowing what might happen. If we trust God fully, we need not fear the future, for He will care for us.

GOOD NEWS—Luke 2:10—Fear not—The voice was reassuring and comforting. The visit of the angels was for good and not evil. It is the desire of God to do good to mankind always, but when men turn their backs on God, they make it impossible for Him to do good unto them. The blessings of God were not to stop with the kingdom of Israel, but were to be extended to all people.

CHRIST ANNOUNCED—Luke 2:11—Which is Christ the Lord—Christ had long been promised and, doubtless, many mothers who had cradled their infant son hoped that he was the one who had been promised.

IDENTIFICATION—Luke 2:12—Lying in a manger—He would not be hard to identify, for no other children would be found in a manger; they all would be taken care of in a conventional manner. The swaddling clothes were long strips of linen or flannel cloth.

CONCLUSION

God's ways are not our ways. Human nature has a desire to put much value on material things. False pride will cause men to be ashamed of poor relatives or illiterate men, but the gift of Christ to mankind through His lowly birth and His poverty throughout life definitely proves that God does not value the material nearly so highly as the spiritual. We will be much better off if we properly evaluate both the material and the spiritual. The conquest of communism is strictly in the material world and in the end will perish upon the judgment fire of hell. We are far better off if we keep our spiritual standing before God even though our material standing has to suffer because of it. As a gift from God, Jesus came as our Savior, but He is coming soon again, this time as our Judge and the Judge of all men. Let us accept wholeheartedly this Gift and conform to His teachings that we may be found blameless.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. In a few words, give your understanding of what the great Gift of God is.
2. Why is it that the heart of man hungers after something?
3. Name the things that are embodied in Christ.
4. What value did God place upon material things?
5. Why was there no room for Christ in the inn?
6. How can Christ be called the everlasting Father?
7. Why did God choose to announce the arrival of Christ to the poor shepherds?

LESSON NUMBER FOURTEEN FOR DECEMBER 31

REVIEW

Inasmuch as this year has 53 Sundays, we have allowed for the final Sunday of the year to be open for review. You may review the entire quarter or any particular lesson you feel is important.

Memory Verse: That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God.—Numbers 15:40.

Aim: To review the lessons of the quarter.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Galatians 1	Thursday	Galatians 4
Tuesday	Galatians 2	Friday	Galatians 5
Wednesday	Galatians 3	Saturday	Galatians 6

Name _____

Class _____

Living the Christian Life

ADULT & YOUNG PEOPLE

FOR THIS QUARTER:

L#1 . . .	October 1	Study to Show Thyself Approved	Page 3
L#2 . . .	October 8	Growing in Grace	Page 7
L#3 . . .	October 15	Walking in the Light	Page 10
L#4 . . .	October 22	Facing the Trial	Page 14
L#5 . . .	October 29	Resisting the Devil	Page 17
L#6 . . .	November 5	Praying Through	Page 20
L#7 . . .	November 12	Thou Shalt Love Thy Neighbor	Page 24
L#8 . . .	November 19	Sowing Beside All Waters	Page 27
L#9 . . .	November 26	Assembling Ourselves Together	Page 30
L#10 . . .	December 3	Hearing the Voice of God	Page 34
L#11 . . .	December 10	Christian Stewardship	Page 37
L#12 . . .	December 17	Coveting the Best Gifts	Page 40
L#13 . . .	December 24	God's Gift to Us	Page 44
L#14 . . .	December 31	Review	Page 47