
Vol. 76

January—February—March, 2024

No. 1

THE FAMILY OF GOD

Adult and Young People's Quarterly

INTRODUCTION

We have chosen as our subject for the lessons of this quarter, “The Family of God.” It is our aim to show that God does have a family and to point out the different members and their relation to one another, also to show what the name of the family is. From the time of Jacob, God’s people were known as the Children of Israel. As time went on, they forsook the Lord, and at one time were so rebellious that God repented for ever having made man and was going to destroy man from off the earth. Through the intercession of Moses, God permitted the Children of Israel to continue to live. In Isaiah 65:15 we read, “And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name.” This came to pass in the gospel dispensation, and the name of the Jew has become a curse to the rest of the world.

After the crucifixion of Christ, the followers of Christ were known as the Church of God, for Paul said that he persecuted the Church of God and wasted it. We all know whom he was persecuting, so that tells us the name that Paul knew it by. And in Ephesians 3:14, 15 we read, “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.” This plainly tells us that the family is named after the Father, and that is God. This should not leave any doubt in anyone’s mind about the Church of God’s being the children of God as just one big, happy family, with every child having an interest and concern for every other child. The Word says that when one member of the family suffers, we all suffer, and that we should remember them who are in bonds as being bound with them. The members of the family are likened unto our physical body; our physical members shield an injured member.

We sincerely trust that the study of these lessons will enable you to comprehend the truth in regard to the family of God—its true name, what it embraces, and how it functions. When we are able through the Spirit to behold the Church of God, the glorious bride of Christ, it becomes to us the most beautiful of all creations.

Note to teacher: Please note the **Aim** of each lesson, and as the Lord directs, try to carry this line of thought through in teaching each lesson.

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PUBLISHERS OF CHURCH OF GOD LITERATURE

LESSON NUMBER ONE FOR JANUARY 7

GOD, THE FATHER

Scriptures: Matthew 6:9; 17:5, 6; Luke 10:21, 22; Ephesians 3:14, 15; Acts 7:55, 56; John 16:23.

Matthew 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Matthew 17:5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

Luke 10:21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

22 All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son

is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.

Ephesians 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

Acts 7:55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

John 16:23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

Memory Verse: One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.—Ephesians 4:6.

Aim: To give an understanding of the Fatherhood of God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Matthew 6:5-15
Tuesday Luke 12:22-32
Wednesday Hebrews 1

Thursday Hebrews 8
Friday John 15:15-27
Saturday Luke 10:21-24

INTRODUCTION

In the beginning God created the earth and everything on it. He created man, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul. Thus we see that God became the Father of all mankind. We who have been born again are the sons of God. Romans 8:14, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." How fitting it is that God's children are known as the family of God!

Let us consider for a moment the greatness of God. At His command the earth came into existence, as did the sun, moon, and all the stars. Some stars, we are told, are so far away and so large that the light you now see radiating from them left that star before Christ was born. Light travels at the rate of 186,000 miles per second, so the distance is so great that the human mind cannot comprehend it.

God's mind is so great that He has a record of each of our lives down to the minutest detail, including our very thought. The happenings of a thou-

sand years ago are just as fresh in His mind as those of yesterday. What a mighty God we serve!

MEDITATIONS

THE FATHER IN HEAVEN—Matthew 6:9—Hallowed—God is on His eternal throne which He has prepared in the eternal heavens. His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, is seated beside Him. The Spirit of God (also called the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Ghost and Comforter, which are one and the same Spirit) is in the world doing the will of the Father and Son. It is only by a well-planned program of teaching this truth concerning God that the Father can be given the worship that is properly due Him. A strong and persistent effort is being made by the spirit of the world to dishonor God.

THE FATHER'S COMMAND—Matthew 17:5—Hear ye him—This vision was given, no doubt, to strengthen Peter's, James' and John's faith in Jesus and to prove to them that He really was divine. Up to this time the Jews had been living entirely under the law, but here these disciples heard the voice of God say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Thus we see that from then on Christ was to be the center of all things. Truly, it is He whom we must hear, for there is none other name given under heaven whereby we can be saved. His teachings are the gospel, full and complete. He was the perfect Example. He trod the road before us. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet He did no sin. He doesn't ask or expect us to do anything that He has not already done. Why shouldn't we be willing, even anxious, to follow such a sublime and loving example?

GOD'S VOICE CARRIES POWER—Matthew 17:6—And when the disciples—When God speaks, something happens. Here the sound of His voice caused Peter, James, and John to fall down speechless. **Were sore afraid**—Think what His voice of wrath will be when He says, "Depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity: I never knew you."

THE FATHER RECOGNIZED—Luke 10:21—O Father—There's a feeling of kinship in these words. Jesus called God His Father when in prayer, for He addressed Him as such. He gave respect and honor to His Father, God, and submitted Himself to His authority (Matthew 26:39-42). This same expression can also be found in other scriptures (Mark 14:36; Matthew 11:25; John 12:28). Upon these three different occasions "a voice" made known the relationship between God and Jesus Christ: at the baptism, upon the mount, and again near the close of Jesus' life. **Verse 22—My Father**—The closeness of the Father to His beloved Son is evident as we thoughtfully study these passages of Scripture. We, too, should be aware of the nearness and watchful care of One whom we may call, "Our Father."

NAMED AFTER THE FATHER—Ephesians 3:14—For this cause—Paul in his letter to the Ephesians tells us that the family of God is named after the Father. Now we are told elsewhere in the Scriptures that

the saints compose the body of Christ, or the Church. Or, in other words, the name of the church would have to be the Church of God. This scripture says that the whole family, both in heaven and in earth, is thus named. Now if this be true, every born-again person, regardless of where he may be, is in the family of God, which is the Church of God. Does it stand to reason that God is pleased when man organizes a sect and gives it some man's name and then tries to say it is God's church? **Verse 15—The whole family**—The Church is compared to a family. When a child is born into the Jones family, it takes the father's name. If the child were named Smith, it would naturally follow that Mr. Jones was not its father. This would bring disgrace to the father, Mr. Jones. So it is when Christians take some other name than that of God our spiritual Father. It is displeasing to God and is in direct violation of His commandments. If God be our Father, why not follow the Bible teaching and take His name?

STEPHEN, A MAN FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST—Acts 7:55—Being full of the Holy Ghost—I know of no greater testimony that anyone could leave than to have it said of him, "He was filled with the Holy Ghost." In Acts 1:8 we read, "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." What kind of power did Jesus mean? Did He mean the kind that causes one to fall on the floor, creating an unseemly spectacle, and muttering a lot of unintelligible jargon? No, a thousand times, no! He meant the power to live a pure and holy life, the power to witness for Christ at all times, the power to keep one's heart filled with love to the extent that he can love even his enemies with a pure heart fervently; the power to keep humble, low down at Jesus' feet and to esteem others better than oneself. Stephen had this power, and he was able to witness for Christ, having no fear as to what the cost might be. God may permit us to be persecuted and even martyred for His sake, but the Holy Ghost will furnish us power and courage to go through, praising God, just as Stephen did. He will give us the grace to ask God to forgive those who wrong us. The Holy Spirit should be cherished in our hearts. **Verse 56—Behold, I see ... the Son of man standing**—God was right by Stephen's side, and to encourage him, He gave him a glimpse of heaven where he saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God. After beholding this wonderful sight, do you think Stephen had any regrets for the course he had taken? Heaven is cheap at any price; and if we could buy it with our very life, it would be the cheapest thing we ever bought.

PRAY IN JESUS' NAME—John 16:23—And in that day—Jesus was soon to leave this earth; so it was necessary to instruct the disciples to pray to the Father in Jesus' name. He was still going to be their Mediator. Jesus says in this verse, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." If we are walking close to the Lord, we never have any desire to ask anything of the Lord for any selfish purpose. Our greatest desire is to please the Lord, and this desire is reflected in our praying. We can never make a mistake praying for lost souls or for the advancement of God's work in the earth.

CONCLUSION

What a wonderful privilege it is to have God for our Father! It is His desire that we give our hearts to Him so He can lead us more than we can ever imagine, and everything that He does is for our good. Sometimes we may not be able to understand why things happen as they do, but we must never doubt or question the wisdom of God. He is all-powerful and all-wise and never makes a mistake. He knows the end from the beginning, and we never make a mistake by putting our complete trust in Him. God has a greater concern for us than we do for our own children. So let us have real trust and confidence in God's ability and desire to care for us. This is what it takes to live a victorious Christian life, and I am sure that we all want to be victorious over sin and the devil.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why did God reveal the gospel mysteries to "babes"?
 2. Do you suppose the rich and educated would have received them?
 3. How is the family of God compared to the human family?
 4. What kind of power does the Holy Ghost give us?
 5. What is our most cherished possession?
 6. What is the correct attitude of prayer?
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LESSON NUMBER TWO FOR JANUARY 14

BROTHERHOOD OF CHRIST

Scriptures: Romans 8:17; Matthew 12:46-50; Hebrews 2:11; Matthew 28:10; Romans 8:29.

Romans 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Matthew 12:46 While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.

47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Hebrews 2:11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.

Matthew 28:10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

Romans 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Memory Verse: And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.—Luke 8:21.

Aim: To show the brotherly characteristics of Christ in the family of God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Hebrews 2	Thursday	Matthew 11:1-15
Tuesday	Luke 8	Friday	John 4:10-26
Wednesday	Matthew 16:13-28	Saturday	John 6:60-71

INTRODUCTION

Did you ever stop to think that we who are saints of God are sons of God and brothers of Christ, that we are joint-heirs with Christ to the realms of eternal glory? This truly should make us shout and praise God for His goodness unto us. What have we done to merit such a priceless favor? Nothing. It is just the goodness of God. The Word says, “Fear not, little flock: for it is the Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Dear Ones, this should thrill our very souls and put new determination in our hearts that we may stay on fire for God and be faithful unto the end.

MEDITATIONS

OUR INHERITANCE—Romans 8:17—And if children, then heirs—We cannot imagine what our part of the inheritance will be like; but we know that it will be more wonderful and more glorious than anything our finite minds have comprehended in this time world. Let us note the latter part of the verse: “If ... we suffer with him ...” How little modern Christendom knows about suffering! It has resorted to sectarian organizations to avoid the pressure of persecution and remove the reproach of Christ. If we shrink from God-appointed suffering, there is danger of our losing God out of our soul, thus bringing about the loss of our inheritance and of our being “glorified” with Him.

HUMAN USE OF PRESTIGE—Matthew 12:46—While he yet talked—Fleshly relationship does not give any priority in the sight of God. Belonging to a powerful organization dominated by man does not either. Wealth, fame, or learning is no indication of divine approval. It is the change of heart that makes us all brethren in the sight of God. This is the only thing that God recognizes. First, seek the kingdom of God, and the necessary things of life shall be added as needed. There are no “big I’s and little you’s” in the kingdom of God. We are all brothers, and all are equal in the great family of God. We are all interested in one another; for when one member of the body suffers, we all suffer. Galatians 6:2 tells us, “Bear ye one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.” **Verse 47—Then one said—**The multitude was, seemingly, of the same opinion, that fleshly relationship granted special privileges. The same is true today with the multitudes; they think that relationship gives special privileges. But not so with

God, for He is no respecter of persons. We all receive the same consideration under like conditions.

In James 2:9 we read, "But if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors."

WE ARE ALL BRETHREN IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD—Matthew 12:48—Who is my mother and who are my brethren?—

He asked this question to set them to thinking so that they would be ready for the truth of His answer. The Word tells us that we were created for God's own pleasure. The world affords everything that is needful for material happiness and pleasure, if it were only put to the use God intended it should be. If all the people would obey God, those who have much would give more to help those who have little. He has given us richly all things to enjoy. **Verse 49—And he stretched forth—**There was a short pause, giving the people an opportunity to think upon His question. His answer showed that He placed emphasis upon spiritual relationship rather than fleshly relationship. He pointed toward His disciples and said, "Behold my mother and my brethren!" How impartial He was! His disciples, His brethren in the Spirit, were just as dear to Him as His real mother and brethren. This is still true today. We do love our brothers and sisters in Christ, for there is a warmth of fellowship existing between us that the world knows nothing about. Praise God.

THE WILL OF GOD—Matthew 12:50—For whosoever shall do—No one can consistently perform the entire will of God without being in the family of God, without, at the same time, being a brother or sister to everyone in the family of God. Division in this time world that separates the family of God into unconnected groups is not of God and should be forsaken. The family of God, of all families in the earth, should be able to get along and dwell together in peace. This is God's desire, for He says in His Word, I Corinthians 1:10, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." Now what are we going to do about this command? Do you think God will permit us to do just as we please about it? No, we are going to have to answer to Him for disobeying this command just the same as any other. It is not the Father's will that Christians separate themselves into different groups and have different beliefs and creeds.

ALL ARE ONE IN CHRIST JESUS—Hebrews 2:11—For both he that sanctifieth—Though Christ is greater in power and might than we

are, still He is not ashamed to call us brethren, for He says that the Sanctifier and the sanctified are all one, for we are in Christ, and He is in us. This is according to Jesus' prayer, "That they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." It is indeed an honor and a privilege to be a brother to Christ, and we should strive earnestly to

be worthy of the honor God has so unselfishly and lovingly bestowed upon us.

BROTHERHOOD BEYOND THE RESURRECTION—Matthew 28:10—See me—Christ had earthly brethren (which fact false prophets deny), but the reference here is to the spiritual brotherhood. There is no doubt that Christ left this earth in His physical body, but before He seated Himself by the Father, His body was glorified. This is evidenced by John’s description of Him in Revelation 1. Brotherhood in Christ is further emphasized by the words of John when he said that we shall be like Him in the resurrection (I John 3:2).

GOD DESIRES A LARGE FAMILY—Romans 8:29—Among many brethren—The will of God is that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. The likeness of the brethren unto Jesus is proven by the words that the brethren are to be conformed to the image of Christ Jesus. Many sons will enter into the kingdom of God, but the number is shockingly less than the number that will be eternally lost. “Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, ... and few there be that find it!”—Matthew 7:13.

CONCLUSION

I trust that the study of this lesson has made us more conscious that we as the children of God are just one family and that we should be interested in the welfare of God’s children everywhere. Paul has instructed us to pray for all saints everywhere. Ephesians 6:18, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. How are we brothers in Christ?
2. How are we to be like Christ?
3. How can we show our appreciation of God’s great favor in elevating us to the brotherhood of Christ?
4. Why did Jesus say that He was not ashamed to call us brethren?
5. What is meant by Christ’s being our Intercessor?
6. Is God pleased with the division that is in the religious world?
7. How can this be avoided?
8. Quote one scripture that condemns division.

LESSON NUMBER THREE FOR JANUARY 21

THE SPIRIT OF GOD

Scriptures: Ephesians 4:4; Genesis 6:3; John 14:26; 16:7, 8, 13; Romans 8:14-16, 26; John 14:16-18.

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

Genesis 6:3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

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

Memory Verse: But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things.—John 14:26a.

Aim: To identify the personality and work of the Holy Spirit.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Nehemiah 9

Tuesday I John 5

Wednesday John 14:15-31

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Genesis 6

Isaiah 63

Galatians 5

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

INTRODUCTION

Our Aim states that this lesson is to identify the (1) personality of and (2) the work of the Holy Spirit. There are religious groups who deny the Spirit of God as an actual personality. Nevertheless, the Scriptures often speak of the Spirit as “He,” “Him,” “His,” etc. He had His part to play in creation (Genesis 1:2), in reproving the sinner of his sins (Genesis 6:3), a work He still carries on. We need to understand clearly what the Spirit’s work is and what man’s job is, for we cannot expect the Spirit to do that which God has given man to do. There are extant two extreme beliefs—one, that everything must be done by the Spirit (man having no place at all); the other, that

man rules, doing away with the Spirit's work altogether. The family of God needs to know the truth and fulfill the will of God.

MEDITATIONS

ONE TRUE SPIRIT—Ephesians 4:4—There is ... one Spirit—This is a statement of fact, regardless of what the Jehovah's Witnesses, or anyone else declares. There **IS** one true Holy Spirit, just as there is one body, which of course means one family (of God), one church, the Church of God, to which all truly saved souls belong.

THE SPIRIT DRAWS—Genesis 6:3—My Spirit shall not always strive—The work of the Holy Spirit is to convict, to draw, the sinner to Christ. This verse should be a solemn warning to every unsaved heart to "seek the Lord while He may be found"; tomorrow may be too late. Here again, we must not overlook man's part in saving the lost. The Spirit uses godly, Spirit-filled lives of others, He uses preachers, He uses earnest prayers and burdened hearts to draw sinners to repentance. For a sinner to override this is serious, for the "Spirit will not always strive" with him.

THE TEACHER—John 14:26—Shall teach you all things—Some may think, from the casual reading of this verse, that the Spirit without any help from anyone, is personally going to teach everyone the truth; but other scriptures inform us that the Spirit gives the gift of teaching to some in the family. Thus when a Holy Spirit-filled teacher is instructing, it is the Spirit who is doing the teaching, but He is using a human through whom to do His work. Jesus said the Spirit would bring all things to the remembrance of the disciples, whatsoever He had said unto them, thus showing man's part in Holy Ghost teaching.

THE COMFORTER—John 16:7—I will send him—Here Christ plainly stated that He would send the Spirit, a real Person, One who was to comfort every believer who would receive Him. One cannot remain a Christian and refuse to receive Him. Besides being a Comforter, the Spirit gives power to live above sin and gives to the church the gifts as God directs. **Verse 8—Reprove the world of sin—**The Spirit is in the world now reproving sinners, but He is limited! Why? Because the Spirit works through those who are willing to obey Him. If the Spirit worked independently of men, He could reprove every sinner in the world, all at the same time; but "it pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH—John 16:13—Show you things to come—The Spirit of God always teaches the truth, nothing else. The devil is the father of the lie. The Spirit of Truth has been given the task of showing God's children things that are yet to come to pass. You may rest assured when the Spirit gives a revelation, it will come to pass. This gift is greatly needed in the church NOW.

THE SPIRIT, A LEADER—Romans 8:14—As many as are led by the Spirit of God ... are the sons of God—Some people fail to realize that when a godly pastor leads a flock, that flock is led by the Spirit. The

Spirit must lead in our daily lives, but even here, we are to live the life the Word teaches and the man of God preaches and not expect the Spirit to tell us every step to take. God expects us to live out what the Word and Spirit have already taught us without telling us over, every day, what He wants done. **Verse 15—Not ... the spirit of bondage**—The Spirit of God is the Spirit of freedom and not the spirit of bondage. Many people, especially among the “tongues” movements, have received a spirit of bondage, thinking it is the Spirit of God! **Verse 16—Children of God**—There are times when Satan comes to the child of God, even as he did to Jesus, and tries to plant a doubt in his mind as to whether he is a child of God. The Spirit is faithful, and if that person will listen for His still small voice, he can know that “all is well.”

THE SPIRIT, AN INTERCESSOR—Romans 8:26—The Spirit maketh intercession—Here again I feel it is necessary to point out man’s place along with the Spirit’s place, for the Holy Spirit cannot make intercession for us unless we pray. If we pray, the Spirit then does His part. “The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

ABIDE FOREVER—John 14:16—And I will pray the Father—The Spirit of God is for the family of God. Every child of God can have the abiding presence of the Comforter in his heart, not for just a week or two, but forever, if he will obey the Word. The Spirit will give power over sin, will help in prayer, will teach the truth, and will show things to come, and help the individual to put the program of God over. **Verse 17—The world cannot receive**—This should be clear enough for all to understand. The world, that is, sinners, cannot receive the Spirit! One must first become a child of God through the new birth, then present himself to God a living sacrifice in order to receive the Spirit. **Verse 18—Will come to you**—Christ comes to us through His Spirit. As great as the Holy Ghost is, as powerful as He is, one may wonder why more is not being done. Again, for Him to be able to work He must have vessels through whom to work. Can He use you?

CONCLUSION

The world is lost! While you have been studying this lesson souls have been leaving the world, going into eternity. God would have all to be saved, but His plan does not call for Him to send angels to preach. He has told His family to “go into all the world and preach the gospel.” The great, all-wise, all-powerful Spirit of God is ready to go with us.

Will we do our part?

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Is the Holy Spirit a person or merely, the “power” of God?
2. How does the Holy Spirit reprove of sin?
3. Is there danger in rejecting the Spirit?
4. How does the Spirit help us pray?
5. How can we know we are sons of God?
6. Does the Spirit abide in your heart today?

LESSON NUMBER FOUR FOR JANUARY 28

THE CHURCH, THE MOTHER

Scriptures: Isaiah 66:8; Galatians 4:26; Psalm 87:5, 6; Acts 2:41, 47.

Isaiah 66:8 Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

Galatians 4:26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Psalms 87:5 And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her.

6 The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah.

Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Memory Verse: But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.—Galatians 4:26.

Aim: To show that the Church is the mother in the family of God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Isaiah 66:5-18

Tuesday Galatians 4:21-31

Wednesday Psalm 87

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Galatians 6:1-14

II Thessalonians 1

Acts 2:37-47

INTRODUCTION

The Church in the Bible is mentioned by different names, such as Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of God, etc. The Memory Verse quoted above states that Jerusalem is the Church and that she is the mother of us all. The Scriptures say that when Zion travails she brings forth children. As the natural mother cannot bring forth children without labor, neither can the Church, our spiritual mother, bring forth children without effort. The natural family is commanded to be fruitful and replenish the earth; so also must the spiritual family make every effort to bring lost souls into the Church of God. The new converts are spoken of as babes in Christ and are to be nurtured and cared for as such. "As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby: If so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (I Peter 2:2, 3). Thus we can plainly see that it is the duty of the Church to watch carefully over the newborn babes so that they will grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The church of today is not giving the proper care and concern to the new converts, for too many of them fail to survive the storms and tests of life. No real mother would leave her new baby to battle the elements alone, so the church should not leave the new spiritual babe to grope alone in his new experience. There are some who have that determination that knows no defeat, but the great majority of people will need our help and prayers to see them firmly established in the truth.

MEDITATIONS

THE CHURCH IN TRAVAIL—Isaiah 66:8—As soon as Zion travailed—We are made to understand from this verse that when Zion (the church) travailed, she brought forth her children. We are told that the world now has a way of measuring pain and that child-bearing is the greatest pain humans have to suffer. This gives us an idea how earnest we must be in praying for souls to see them saved. We have the promise that the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. But we must be fervent, not half-hearted; we must travail with a soul burden to see others saved. This is a wonderful promise, one that we can claim in praying for our unsaved loved ones, or for any soul who needs God.

THE CHURCH, OUR MOTHER—Galatians 4:26—The mother of us all—We are very plainly told by this verse of scripture that the Church of God is our mother. Some might say, “How can that be?” First, we can never have a family without a mother. We are told in Isaiah 66:8 (above) that when Zion travailed, or prayed, she brought forth children, and so it is the Church that prays and labors to see souls saved. God calls the Church our mother because she labors and works to see us born again; also after we are saved, she looks after us and helps us to grow strong. The Church then is our mother, and God is our Father. When souls are “born again,” they are born of the same Father and mother and must be in the same family, the Church. This great truth is also brought out in Revelation 12:2, 5, where we are told that the woman (the Church) gave birth to a man child (the children of God). Notice also this verse says that Jerusalem is free. Although a Christian may have his name on a sect church book, his soul is free from all sect spirits; otherwise, he could not be a child of God. When he sees the light on the one church, he must come out of Babylon.

BORN IN ZION—Psalm 87:5—Born in her—There never has been a soul born again that wasn't born in Zion. The Spirit of God will not commit spiritual adultery. Every soul of whom He is Father must and does have the same mother, the Church of God. “And the Spirit [Father] and the bride [mother] say, Come” (Revelation 22:17). Some tell us that we have to see the Church before we can be born into the Church, but I wonder how many of us saw our mother before we were born. Others would have us believe that we have to be in a Church of God congregation to be born into the Church, but such is not the case. Anywhere you feel convicted and yield to the Spirit, right then and there you are born into Zion, the Church of the living God. **The highest himself shall establish her—**The Spirit is directed by Christ to convict a soul, and Christ does this to answer the prayers of the Church, our mother. The Spirit applies the blood of Christ to the soul, and it is set free from every committed sin.

GOD DOES THE WRITING—Psalm 87:6—When he writeth up—I am glad it is not left to man to add to or remove our names from the church book, but God Himself attends to this job. God writes only the names of those who “were born there.” Only those who have been born of God, our Father and Zion, our mother, are members of the Church of

God. To retain our membership, we must live clean and holy lives every day, for God told Moses, “Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of MY book.” Only those who have their names in the Book of Life shall enter heaven. All church books will be burned up except the one God keeps, and that is the one you should have your name in.

RECEIVING THE WORD—Acts 2:41—They that gladly received—We must receive the Word into our hearts to be saved. David said, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” The Word is Christ, and no one can receive Christ without being born again; neither can anyone receive Christ without forsaking sin. Anyone who has the Word (Christ) in his heart is going to live a holy life. He will not bring shame to his Father and mother, but will bring honor and glory to God. The entrance of the Word gives light. God said in His Word that it pleased Him “through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” After a person has received the gospel, he must then be baptized, thereby giving a testimony to the world that he is through with sin and is going to be a follower of the Lord Jesus.

GOD GIVES FAVOR—Acts 2:47—Having favor—It is wonderful how God can give His people favor even in the eyes of the wicked. When God desires it to be so, a sinner can be a very good, helpful friend. Many times in the Bible we are told how God gave His people favor in the eyes of the wicked. It is God, and God alone, who adds people to His church, and we are led to believe from this verse that—without exception—every one who is saved is added to the Church.

CONCLUSION

We hope that the study of this lesson has enabled you to see the reasonableness of considering the Church as the mother in the family of God. As it is the function of the natural mother to bring children into the world, so it is the function of the Church to bring forth spiritual children. And as the natural mother cares for her children, so must the Church care for the spiritual children. The family of God, or the Church, is a wonderful institution when it is functioning as it should under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. It is ordained that those who are older in the faith and well established should lend a helping and protecting hand to the ones who are young in the faith. As Paul exhorts us, “Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.”

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Who is our spiritual mother? What verse proves it?
2. How is the Church our mother?
3. Can anyone be born without a mother?
4. Can two people be born of the same father and mother without being in the same family?
5. Whom did God say He would blot out of His book?
6. How many families does God have?

LESSON NUMBER FIVE FOR FEBRUARY 4

SONS OF GOD

Scriptures: John 1:12, 13; I Peter 1:23; I John 3:1, 2; John 3:1-5; Romans 8:14.

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

I Peter 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

I John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

John 3:1 There was a man of the Phar-

isees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Memory Verse: For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.—Romans 8:14.

Aim: To give the student an understanding of who the sons of God are.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday I John 3:1-10
Tuesday Philemon
Wednesday John 12

Thursday John 10:31-42
Friday I Peter 1:13-25
Saturday Luke 9:28-36

INTRODUCTION

“No knowledge is of such vast importance to the individual as that he is personally accepted of God, that his sins have been pardoned, that God looks upon him with pleasure, that he is born of the Spirit, that he is a child of God, and that he is on the way to eternal blessedness. It is reasonable to suppose those who are thus saved are conscious of their salvation. The infinite cost of salvation is grounds for the expectation that God will give definite assurance of acceptance to those whom He saves. He so loved men that He spared not His own Son; that He sent His Holy Spirit to convict, convert, sanctify, and guide them; that He inspired holy men to write the sacred Scriptures for the revelation of the way of salvation; that he calls, qualifies, and sends ministers to preach salvation to sinners; and that He

instituted His church as a means for the propagation of the gospel. Surely after doing all this He has not failed to make possible to the individual Christian the knowledge of that most important fact—that he is a child of God.” R. R. Byrum, *Christian Theology*.

May the Lord bless each one as you study this important subject, and if you are not a child of God now, consider becoming one.

MEDITATIONS

HOW TO BECOME SONS—John 1:12, 13—As many as received him—To all those that believed Jesus was the Christ He gave power to become sons of God. There is no other name given under heaven whereby men can be saved.

BORN AGAIN BY THE WORD OF GOD—I Peter 1:23—Being born again—The Jews believed that because they were the seed of Abraham they would make it through to heaven. Peter plainly tells them in this verse that they must be born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, which is the Word of God, which lives and abides forever. In the previous verse, Peter was telling them to love one another with a pure heart fervently. It is the born-again experience that enables us to love with a pure heart fervently. Salvation will most certainly change a heart of stone to a heart of flesh. I got saved while I was working away from home. When I came home, I did not say anything about it to the family, but they began talking among themselves, saying, “I wonder what has come over Pop, for he is not like he used to be.” I do thank and praise the dear Lord for the great change that He wrought in my heart. I have never regretted my born-again experience, and I have determined with the help of God to go through, regardless of the cost.

THE SONS OF GOD—I John 3:1—Behold, what manner of love—When we think of the greatness and majesty of God, how great must His love be that He would take notice of the men of the earth! This same thought must have run through David’s mind, for as he beheld the starry heavens, he exclaimed, “What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him?” Truly the love of God is beyond our comprehension, and we ought to avail ourselves of the opportunity to become His children. As sons of God, we are not of the world, and in a spiritual sense, we have nothing in common with the world. We do not love the things of the world. Our affections are set upon things above. We have no fellowship with the children of the world, as the things that they are interested in do not appeal to the children of God. **Verse 2—Beloved, now are we the sons of God**—We know that we have been born again, having passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. The love of God in our hearts just naturally makes us want to love everybody, and the more of His love we have, the more we want to love others. It is this love that constrains us to work for the salvation of lost souls, and it is the purpose of these lessons to instill in your heart a burning desire to help in

this great work. No man has ever seen God, so we don't know just what we will be like in the world to come; but we know by the Spirit which He has given us, and by our hope of eternal life that we shall see Him face to face.

NICODEMUS SEEKS JESUS—John 3:1—There was a man—Nicodemus was a man high up in the Pharisees' religion; and if Jesus had been looking for prestige or for a following, here would have been a wonderful opportunity for increasing His favor with the Jews. It was not His mission to seek for fame or popularity, but to bring the pure gospel to the men of the earth. We are not to regard the person of man, for God is no respecter of persons. **Verse 2—The same came to Jesus—**The consistent life of the Christian man or woman is bound to witness for Christ. Nicodemus had been watching the works of Jesus, and he recognized that this was not the work of any mere man, but that Jesus was a man of God. Any honest and sincere person will have the witness within himself when he beholds the works of the Lord. Therefore, it is extremely dangerous to be rebellious against the manifestations of the Spirit of God. **Verse 3—Jesus answered and said—**Jesus looked right into the heart of Nicodemus and perceived that he was really desirous of knowing the truth, so he came right to the point and told him, "You must be born again, or you cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus did not know what Jesus was talking about. He did not know that there was a spiritual birth. Although he was a ruler of the Jews, still he did not know the first thing about salvation. The same can be said of the greater part of the church members of our present-day sects. This will help us to realize the weight of the words of Jesus, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and few there be that find it." **Verse 4—Nicodemus saith unto him—**This verse brings to our minds how utterly ignorant Nicodemus was of the plan of salvation. He was making a profession but had no possession. He did, however, have one very important thing in his favor, and that was an honest heart and a sincere desire to know the truth, and we see him later on as he brought spices to help prepare the body of Jesus for burial—John 19:39, 40. **Verse 5—Jesus answered, Verily, verily—**In being born of the Spirit of God we become members of the kingdom of God, which is the Church of God. To be born again is to be sorry for our sins and to come to Jesus, asking Him to forgive us. As soon as we believe, the work is done, and we become new creatures in Christ. "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Praise God for His goodness to the children of men! It makes no difference how vile and wicked a person may have been, the cleansing blood of Jesus can wash away every stain of sin and make his soul pure and whiter than snow. How foolish it is for anyone to keep on carrying the burden of sin, which is daily growing heavier, when Jesus is so willing to relieve him of it! Can't you hear Him saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and

ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light”?

DIVINELY LED—Romans 8:14—By the Spirit—From this verse of Scripture we are confronted with the awakening fact that God will not claim as His own any that will not be led by Him. It is absolutely certain that the Spirit of God never led any man who was trusting Him, into sin. So all that claim they sin more or less every day (if they do so) are not the sons of God. We should consider it the very greatest privilege given to man to have the personal leadership of the Spirit of God. As we study the Scriptures in search of God’s truth, let us make sure that the revelation of truth in this verse is fully applied to our lives.

CONCLUSION

What greater honor could be bestowed upon any man than that of being admitted into the kingdom of God and becoming a son of God and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ? Consider the unbounded love of God for the men of the earth that would constrain Him to sacrifice the very Jewel of heaven on the cruel cross of Calvary that you and I might become His sons. Remember that today is the day of salvation; now is the accepted time. Make peace with God now while you have time and opportunity. Tomorrow may be too late.

We trust the study of the lesson has impressed your minds with the desirability of being a son of God and getting the priceless reward at the end of life’s journey to be had by those who retain their sonship unto the end. Let us ever keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and keep in mind the great joy that will fill our souls when we hear Him say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord.” Just one glimpse of the dear Savior will be worth everything. Also let us never lose sight of the awful sentence that will be passed upon us if we fail to make it through to heaven, and we have to hear Him say, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Dear Reader, one of these two rewards awaits you; so be wise and make your calling and election sure.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. In what way are we sons of God?
2. How do we know that we are sons of God?
3. Why didn’t the Jews receive Jesus?
4. How do we become the sons of God?
5. What is meant by being born again?
6. What is the all-pervading force of the gospel?

LESSON NUMBER SIX FOR FEBRUARY 11

SONS OF GOD HAVE A NEW HEART

Scriptures: II Peter 1:4; I John 3:9-18; Hebrews 12:9, 10; I John 2:3, 6.

II Peter 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

I John 3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a

murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

Hebrews 12:9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

I John 2:3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

Memory Verse: He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.—I John 2:6.

Aim: To show that God's children have a new heart.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday II Corinthians 8

Tuesday II John

Wednesday I Corinthians 10

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

I John 3:12-24

John 8:34-47

II Corinthians 13

INTRODUCTION

We wish to make it plain that we believe and teach two cleansings: one in justification, one in sanctification. D. S. Warner taught that a justified person had a "dual" nature, the divine and the carnal, and that in sanctification the carnal nature was removed leaving only the divine nature. We feel that the Scriptures, and the experiences related in the Scriptures, such as in Acts 8 and Ephesians 5, support this teaching.

There is a definite change that takes place in the heart of an individual. When he is converted, he is forgiven of past sins, true, but his desires are

also changed. The Lord said, through the prophet Ezekiel, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.”

MEDITATIONS

II Peter 1:4—Whereby are given unto us—We who know Christ have become partakers of a new nature, for we are new creatures. Our old, sinful desires have passed away, and in their place are the desires of the Spirit. We have a longing to read the Bible and to assemble ourselves with the saints. We hate the worldly amusements and the pleasures of the world. Our affection is set upon things above and not on things of the world. Being set free from our old sinful ways, we escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. Our hearts have been changed, and we have no desire to do the ungodly things we did while we were in the bondage of sin.

THE SONS COMMIT NO SIN—I John 3:9—Whosoever is born of God—We know that the born-again person does not commit sin, for he that committeth sin is of the devil. As long as we have the grace of God in our hearts, we are not going to sin, because that would be contrary to the divine will. We may yield to temptation, but in yielding we lose the grace of God out of our hearts. **Verse 10—In this the children of God—**“By their fruits ye shall know them”; so we shall know the sons of God by the fruits they produce. You will find them loving, kind and gentle, and not easily provoked. They would rather suffer wrong than to do wrong. Also, we know that they who follow the lusts of the flesh and are not willing to return good for evil are not of God; neither are those who are selfish and have no love for the brethren.

LOVE, THE BASIS OF THE GOSPEL—I John 3:11—For this is the message—The second commandment says that we should love our neighbor as ourselves. The whole plan of salvation is built around love, for God is love. When we are born of God, our hearts are full of love, and we have a compassion for the lost souls and a desire to see others saved. If the world would but give heed to this one command that we should love one another, there could be no wars and no hungry mouths, but the world would be full of happy people, following the pursuits of peace. **Verse 12—Not as Cain—**Without the love of God in our hearts, we cannot love as we ought. I do not believe for a moment that anyone really wants to commit murder; but when we are servants of Satan, we do things on the spur of the moment that we are sorry for later. This is what happened to Cain. He was jealous of his brother because God’s approval was upon him; and Satan entered into his heart, and he killed Abel, and later he was very sorry for what he had done.

HATE, A CURSE TO THE PEOPLE OF THE EARTH—I John 3:13—Marvel not, my brethren—We are not of the world, even as Jesus was not of the world; so it is not surprising if the world hates us, espe-

cially when we uncover its ungodly ways. While Jesus was still here on earth, He told His disciples that if the world hated Him it would also hate us. We must not let the fear of the world deter us from witnessing for Christ. If we would reign with Him, we must also suffer with Him. **Verse 14—We know that we have passed**—The love that we have in our hearts for our fellowmen and our brethren bears witness that we have passed from death unto life. There is no hate in our hearts at all, and we can truthfully say that we love everybody, and we are truly aware of the change that has taken place in our hearts. If we love not our brother, the love of God is not in our hearts, and we are abiding in death. Only God can remove the heart of stone and give us a living heart of flesh. **Verse 15—Whosoever hateth his brother**—If we have hate in our hearts, we have the same indwelling principle that caused Cain to kill his brother, and we never can tell how soon Satan may cause us to commit murder, too. We may say that this could never happen to us, but, Dear Reader, it is happening many times every day. We can scarcely pick up a newspaper that does not tell of a murder somewhere. We know that we cannot be murderers and have eternal life abiding in us.

THE POWER OF TRUE LOVE—I John 3:16—Hereby perceive we the love of God—When we think of the sacrifice that God made for our salvation and how Jesus willingly went to the cross for our sins, we are able to comprehend, in a small way, the unfathomable love of God toward us. We who are sons of God love our heavenly Father and our brethren with this same kind of love. History tells us that millions of Christians were murdered for their stand for Christ by the church of Rome, many of whom were offered their freedom if they would renounce their faith. But their love for the Master was so intense that they were able to go to their death with the praises of God on their lips. Thus, they demonstrated that they had that same undying love that Jesus had for us. Jesus, when He was here on earth, told us not to fear what man can do unto us, for the most they can do is to kill the body, but to fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. **Verse 17—But whoso hath this world's good**—We may say that we love the brethren; but if our hearts are not moved to help them when the occasion arises, we are only fooling ourselves, for real Christian love is a powerful and impelling force that will constrain us to render assistance to our unfortunate brethren. We are all just one big family, and we are interested in one another's welfare; and when one member of the family suffers, we all suffer and will desire to do something about it, not grudgingly or just because it is our duty, but because our love impels us to.

LOVE MANIFESTS ITSELF IN DEEDS—I John 3:18—My little children—The love of God in our hearts is bound to manifest itself in many ways, in deeds of kindness to our fellowmen, in lending a helping hand here and there, by going out of our way to do someone a favor. We should never boast about the good things that we have done, but we should

let our good deeds speak for themselves, for actions speak louder than words. We are all familiar with the story of Dorcas, how her life was spent in acts of kindness and charity. Her soul was full of love to God and man, and her whole time was filled with works of piety and mercy; and those who had received of her gracious deeds wept at her death until at the petition of Peter, God miraculously restored her life!! Her good works are still testifying of her to this day and will continue to do so as long as time lasts. This is what the apostle had in mind when he said we should not love in word and in tongue but in deed and in truth. Words of themselves do not mean anything unless they are followed by action. It is not what we say that counts, but what we do. Our life is our only testimony to the world, so let us take care that it testifies to the world that we have been with Jesus.

CHASTENING IS ESSENTIAL TO A GODLY LIFE—Hebrews 12:9—Furthermore we have had fathers—When we were children, it was necessary for our parents to correct us to teach us obedience. Even so our heavenly Father chastens us to teach us obedience, for without obedience it would be impossible to keep our salvation. The Scriptures say that whom God loves He chastens and scourges every son whom He receives; so we must rejoice at the chastening of God, because it is being done for our profit. **Verse 10—For they verily for a few days**—Our parents corrected us only for a few years while we were growing up, but as long as we remain in the flesh, we will be subject to correction from God, and we can rest assured that any chastening we receive from Him will be beneficial if we will accept it humbly. It takes the guiding hand of God to bring us to the place where He can use us in His kingdom.

TO KNOW GOD IS TO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS—I John 2:3—And hereby we do know—To know or to love God is to keep His commandments. When we really love someone it is a pleasure to do the things that are pleasing to him or her; so, therefore, we can know that we are of God when we are glad to keep His every command. The Word says, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.” It is vain to profess to know God and then to live in opposition to His will. To love Him with our whole heart and our neighbor as ourselves is the natural gift of our born-again soul and puts the witness in our heart that we are the children of God.

A STRAIT WAY—I John 2:6—As he walked—The word, “ought,” means “duty bound” here. Therefore, as fast as we obtain light from God’s Word, we must walk in it. To fail to do so means that we lose favor with God. By the transforming power of the blood of Christ, he that is born again of the Spirit of God has become a member of the family of God or has been made a partaker of the nature of God. As God loves truth and hates error, so does the Christian. This is indeed a strait way. Do not allow anyone to tell you that Christianity and the world can mix, for the way is so strait that not any of the world is allowed upon it. The world does not

add any betterment to the souls of men, but rather leads to destruction. Therefore, we must forsake the world and seek to walk as Christ walked.

CONCLUSION

“Regeneration [being born again] is in some sense an overcoming of moral depravity, but it is not a complete removal of depravity from one’s nature. The Scriptures teach that depravity remains in the regenerated and is entirely cleansed away only in entire sanctification, which is subsequent to regeneration ... In regeneration one is saved from the reigning power of the depraved nature. Justification is salvation from the guilt of sin, regeneration is salvation from the reigning power of sin, and entire sanctification is salvation from the indwelling of sin. ...

“Assisted by the power of God, the regenerated man is able to triumph over the sinful tendency of the depraved nature and to do what is right. But regeneration is also a change of heart or of the affections. The new birth causes one to love what he once did not love and to cease to love sinful things he once loved.”—R. R. Byrum, *Christian Theology*.

Many precious souls in the religious world today have been taught the outward form of church membership. They have had no change of heart, therefore, have not become partakers of the divine nature. Some try to do what is right according to the standards that are presented to them. They still hunger for the pleasures of the world because they have not tasted the pleasures that are found in Christ. Their affections are upon things of the earth, not things above, because they have not died out to the world and been born from above. Their natures are still unholy because they have not been led into the light of God’s holiness through the new birth.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why doesn’t a person who is born of God commit sin?
2. Why is chastening necessary?
3. How can one usually distinguish between a child of God and a child of Satan?
4. What is the compelling force of the gospel?
5. Why will the world hate the Son of God?
6. How is he that hateth his brother a murderer?
7. How do we know that we have passed from death unto life?

LESSON NUMBER SEVEN FOR FEBRUARY 18

A PLACE FOR EACH CHILD OF GOD

Scriptures: Matthew 28:19; I Corinthians 12:18; Mark 16:17; Romans 12:1-3, 5; Galatians 6:6, 10.

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

I Corinthians 12:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Mark 16:17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues.

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

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of

your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Galatians 6:6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Memory Verse: But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.—I Corinthians 12:18.

Aim: To show that there is work for every member of the family of God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday

Colossians 3

Thursday

I Timothy 2

Tuesday

I Thessalonians 1

Friday

I Corinthians 7:17-24

Wednesday

II Timothy 1

Saturday

Colossians 4

INTRODUCTION

God has a definite plan for every human being who comes into the world. Very few allow God to accomplish His plan! However, in the family of God, we must strive to fulfill God's will and plan for our life. There is a work for everyone to do. Some are called to preach the gospel, some to teach, some to fill the office of a deacon, some must have the gifts of healing, or miracles and other gifts; all must work together. We need to realize that God has always had leaders, and He still has today! May God help us not only to learn our place and fill it, but also to recognize others in the office to which God has called them.

MEDITATIONS

THE MINISTRY OF PREACHING—Matthew 28:19—Go ye therefore, and teach all nations—There is a great need today of Holy Ghost-filled, God-called preachers. The fields are white, and the laborers are few. Who is seeking the gift of preaching? The job of teaching all

nations was given to the Church of God. You cannot remain a member of this family without doing your part! When God calls and sends a man, he will preach THE gospel. How many reading this lesson are willing to say, "Here am I; Lord, send me"?

GOD PLACES US IN THE BODY—I Corinthians 12:18—But now hath God—This verse is very clear. God places the members in the family of God, the Church, as it pleases Him. However, we need to realize that God has told us to seek the best gifts. This we must do! If God gives to another more gifts than He gives to us, let us rejoice! After all, we are not fighting one another, but each member of the family must strive to fill his place. In the body there is God-given leadership. Let us recognize this and follow those whom God has called to lead us.

THE WORK OF THE FAMILY—Mark 16:17—And these signs shall follow—Jesus said these signs would follow the family of God. There is no use to make excuses. The thing to do is to get down to business and be the family of God. With God our Father, Christ our Savior and King, what enemy can defeat us? This is no "maybe so" thing; these signs shall follow those that believe. Without faith it is impossible to please God. May God help us to be the winning Church over which the gates of hell cannot prevail!

THE WAY TO VICTORY—Romans 12:1—A living sacrifice—Here is the answer to why more is not being done. When people will sell out to God, hold back nothing—life, talents, money, family, job—putting everything on the altar, then God will answer from heaven. We will see the "fire" fall—no, not wild fire, but the holy power of heaven to heal the sick, save the lost, to cast out devils, and thus show to the world that Christ is alive forevermore! This kind of gospel, a gospel of power and victory, will be inviting to sinners. **Verse 2—And be not conformed to this world**—The one who is seeking after the world need not expect to see the glory of God manifested through his life. No man can serve two masters. He cannot conform to the world and to the Word of God at the same time. A church that conforms to the world in dress, etc., need not expect to see God's mighty power revealed through it. The family of God has been saved from the love of the world.

THE HUMBLE LIFE—Romans 12:3—For I say through the grace given unto me—The gifts of the Spirit are given for the benefit of the whole family, also for the help of the lost. Let no one glory in self or think more highly of himself than he ought. What do we have that we have not received? People who find themselves in a cold, worldly, proud, dead church need to come out, for such is not the family of God. God's people are a humble people.

ONE BODY—Romans 12:5—Many members—Just as the human body has many members—hands, eyes, ears, feet, arms, legs—so the body of Christ has many members. The great need is that every member fill his place as each member of the human body does. There is no place

in the body of Christ for jealousy. Every pastor needs to realize that it is not his congregation but God's, and that he is responsible to God. Therefore, he should be glad to receive any help from another brother who has more ability than he.

SUPPORT OF THE GOSPEL—Galatians 6:6—Let him that is taught—All cannot go, all will not be called to preach, but all can help. The word, “communicate,” as used in this verse means more than to get in contact with, or write a letter. The word means for those who are taught the truth, to support, to give to the one who is teaching. Modern printing presses should be running twenty-four hours per day turning out the pure gospel in every language. Every radio station in the world should be sounding forth the pure gospel, but only they who have it can give it! Are you doing your best? Are you supporting the spread of the truth? **Verse 10—As we have opportunity**—There is a great need today of the family of God fulfilling its responsibility to the sick and needy. We dare not neglect our fellow man, for in so doing we are neglecting the Lord. When we face Him at the last day will Christ say to us, “Depart!” because we did not feed “Him” when “He” was hungry, and we did not visit “Him” when “He” was sick or in prison? This is for every member of the family of God.

CONCLUSION

It is sad that today many of those who say they are members of the family of God and standing for its truths are opposing God and those whom He has chosen to lead His people. If God makes a man a leader, those who are to be led must follow, or else they cannot follow God. How can you follow God and reject His leadership? It remains to be seen what could be done in our day if all who name the name of Christ in sincerity will band together, fill their place, and allow God to have His way in every heart.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Do you think that God has a particular plan for each of us?
2. What is meant by giving our bodies a living sacrifice?
3. Why are we not to be conformed to the world?
4. Why is humility such a great asset in the work of the Lord?
5. How can we all help in the spreading of the gospel?
6. How can we escape deception?
7. What is the most important qualification of a minister?
8. Why is it more blessed to give than to receive?

LESSON NUMBER EIGHT FOR FEBRUARY 25

WORKING TOGETHER

Scriptures: II Corinthians 6:1; I Corinthians 3:9; Colossians 3:15-17; Nehemiah 4:6; Romans 15:1-3.

II Corinthians 6:1 We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

I Corinthians 3:9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

Colossians 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

17 And whatsoever ye do in word or

deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Nehemiah 4:6 So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.

Romans 15:1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

2 Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.

3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

Memory Verse: For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.—I Corinthians 3:9.

Aim: To show that working together is imperative that the family of God may grow.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Romans 14	Thursday	Nehemiah 4:1-12
Tuesday	Romans 16:1-16	Friday	Romans 15:1-13
Wednesday	II Corinthians 1	Saturday	III John

INTRODUCTION

Working together is one of the great needs today in the family of God. However, if all of us will fill our place, as brought out in last week's lesson, we will work together! How could it be otherwise? If God is permitted to have His way in each heart and to use each one as He sees fit, will He not have us all working together? We have a job on our hands; it is a big one. Billions of people, every one with a soul, live on this earth. Our task demands that we all work together. If we will, God will bless us and work with us. Christ has promised, "I will go with you," but we must go! And we must go united! "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."—John 17:21.

MEDITATIONS

WORKING TOGETHER WITH GOD—II Corinthians 6:1—We then as workers—Although we as individuals must fill our place, yet in comparison to the entire world, there is little that one can do. One can

chase a thousand, but two, ten thousand! This shows how much more can be done when we all work together. How can we work with God and not with one another?

FELLOW LABORERS—I Corinthians 3:9—For we are laborers—We are laborers, but for what are we laboring? If we are working to win souls, to see the sick healed, to see the devil defeated, doing it all for the glory of God, there is no place for jealousy or a feeling of independence. We must keep in mind the fact that we are laborers with God, and without Him we can do nothing; therefore, He should get the praise for what is done.

GOD BRINGS PEACE—Colossians 3:15—And let the peace of God—One of the great blessings in being in the family of God is the peace that Christ gives. In this troubled world where there is so much sin and heartache, let us labor to see others enjoy this great peace. In false religion we often hear of trouble—even fights—but with the peace of God ruling in the heart of every Christian, how could such a thing happen in the family of God? Where strife and evil rule, you may rest assured the peace of God is not ruling.

THE WORD OF CHRIST—Colossians 3:16—Teaching and admonishing—Jesus said man should live by every word of God. It takes the grace of God to be able to admonish another, and it takes the grace of God to take the admonishment; but, again, if our aim is to please Christ and to be an effective worker for Him, we should be thankful for all of the words of Christ and strive to practice them in our daily lives. Doubtless, we all have some faults, and by teaching and admonishing one another in the spirit of love and meekness, the family of God can be greatly edified.

ALL THINGS TO THE GLORY OF GOD—Colossians 3:17—And whatsoever ye do—Whether you preach, teach, work miracles, or sweep the floor of the house of worship, there is no place in the family of God for seeking of self praise or putting self on display. This verse, as all verses, means what it says. All that we do or say is to be done in the name of the Lord and for His glory. Yes, give honor where honor is due, but give praise to God for what is done in the name of Christ.

BUILDING THE WALL—Nehemiah 4:6—So built we the wall—Nehemiah was made very sad when he heard of the condition of the remnant left in Jerusalem, of the broken-down walls and the burned gates, and he determined to do something about it. Thank God for Nehemiah! But what of our day? If we could see the spiritual state of the so-called Church of God today, would we not say we need a Nehemiah? How many would be willing to follow him? These people got the job done because they had a mind to work *and they worked together!* Why can't those who say they are members of the family of God do the same today?

BEARING ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS—Romans 15:1—Those that are strong—In the family of God it should be a normal thing for new “babes” to be born. Some will grow faster than others; all will need care.

Those who are strong should help the weak to become strong. To do this, the strong will not be able to please themselves. In bearing one another's burdens the family will be bound together with the cords of love.

HAVE AN INTEREST IN OTHERS—Romans 15:2—Let every one of us please his neighbor—He that wins souls must show himself friendly. We should be careful and watchful to see what we can do for our neighbor (and Jesus tells us who he is) that in the end it might work out to his edification, i.e., to his spiritual good. **Verse 3—For even Christ pleased not himself**—Christ is our Example, and He has told us in His Word that He came not to do His will, but the will of the Father. We are called to the same task! The family of God has been given the task of saving the world. This cannot be done by seeking to please self, to follow the flesh, to take the “easy” way; this can be done only as we all say to God—and mean it with our whole heart—“Not my will, but Thine be done.” How could saved people who say that with all their hearts fail to work together?

CONCLUSION

“The work of the Church of God is twofold: 1. To care for and perpetuate itself; 2. To evangelize the world. It can prosper only as it keeps this twofold mission in view. A congregation that becomes self-centered, that cares for nothing but local prosperity, is almost sure to decline spiritually, and misses its mission of assisting in carrying the gospel to a lost world. Missionary work was prominent in the apostolic church, and was steadfastly pursued in obedience to Christ's command: ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature’ (Mark 16:15). But the accomplishing of this great work required the sacrifice of men and of means. A noble army of consecrated men and women who ‘loved not their lives unto the death’ went forth to struggle against the powers infernal and win the triumphs of the cross. The same thing is needed today. The work of God needs men and women who are consecrated to evangelize the world, even at the cost of personal comforts and advantages; and the Church of God must awaken to the fact that giving of means for the support of God's work is both their privilege and their duty, and that it must be done.”—Author Unknown.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What are some advantages of working TOGETHER?
2. Can true Christians refuse to work together and still have God's favor?
3. Does man have any place to fill in leading God's people today?
4. What place did Nehemiah fill in the rebuilding of the wall?
5. Why should we strive to honor God in every act?
6. Are you willing to let God have His way in your life?

LESSON NUMBER NINE FOR MARCH 3

THE BLOOD-BOUGHT FAMILY (Part I)

Scriptures: I Corinthians 6:20; Matthew 27:26, 35, 45-50.

I Corinthians 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Matthew 27:26 Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias.

48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.

49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

Memory Verse: For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.—I Corinthians 6:20.

Aim: To impress the student with the price of membership in the family of God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Romans 5
Tuesday Romans 6
Wednesday I Corinthians 6

Thursday Revelation 1
Friday Matthew 27:1-13
Saturday Matthew 27:14-25

INTRODUCTION

The blood-bought family is the family that has been redeemed from the forces of evil and the power of sin by the blood or sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross. The history of this family goes all the way back to the first family, for every saved member of Adam and Eve's family and every succeeding family received redemption through the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). Error in the modern church system has obscured the truth concerning the blood-bought family, therefore it is of the greatest importance that we spread abroad the truth concerning it. The great price that was paid to make possible a blood-bought family seems to mean but little today. Men would rather have the material things that God has given rather than the deep spiritual life that is possible in Him. Even Christians are not so enthusiastic about it as they should be. We could do much, of course, if it were possible to include in the public schools a course in true Christian teaching, but this is impossible; therefore as individual Christian groups, we must devote more time and effort in teaching men the truth.

MEDITATIONS

REDEMPTION ASSURED—I Corinthians 6:20—For ye are—Christ was completely successful in His mission to the earth. He suffered many indignities and finally was put to death. But it took this very procedure to satisfy the offended mind of God. By the sin of Adam, the whole of the human family came under the scourge of sin, were sold out to the power of sin. Only the death of God's Son (He died for all.) could redeem the lost souls of men. Each one who accepts the redemption of his soul has a very difficult course to pursue. Whereas his life, pleasures, and expectations were built around sin, he must now devote his energies to the glorification of the name of Christ. He who pays the purchase price for a thing definitely becomes the owner of it.

THE JUST SUFFERS FOR THE UNJUST—Matthew 27:26—Scourged Jesus—Not only was redemption from sin purchased for us by Christ, but, also by His stripes we were healed. Healing is a temporary benefit granted the human family which will take care of the body until judgment day when the body will also be redeemed. At that time all Christians shall receive a new body that shall never know sickness, pain, or any discomfort of any kind. Praise without end is due our Redeemer for His great love for us. It seems impossible that even the vain world would release a murderer and destroy a just man, but this clearly shows the driving force of sin.

THE SCRIPTURES FULFILLED—Matthew 27:35—Crucified him—Vain men, blindly driven, saw no distance into the future, and being so ignorant of the purpose and justice of God, did not once imagine they would again be confronted with the man they were using so wickedly. However, even such wickedness as this would have been totally forgiven had they acknowledged their error and turned from it. We see from this situation how blind men can get and how dangerous it is to follow blind religious bigots. Had the soldiers known the truth and realized the dignity and the purity of Christ, they would have never cast lots for His clothes. Their terrible transgression, along with every other unforgiven sin, shall be made known in the judgment.

NATURE FROWNS—Matthew 27:45—Over all the land—This was an awful scene. It could not have been otherwise than that the people were greatly moved by it, but it was now too late to retrace their steps. The greatest crime in all history had been committed. The Jews had brought down upon their own heads and their children untold guilt and suffering. They are still suffering for this crime and can only escape its penalty by accepting Christ. **Verse 46—Forsaken me—**Here we see the humanity of Jesus manifested. Christ forsook the glory of heaven to take upon Himself the form of man. Being subject to the flesh, He felt every mental and physical pain. Being treated so evilly by His own creation, there was no power sought to intervene; it seemed certain that even His Father had forsaken Him. The depth of His anguish was made evident by the loudness of His cry. **Verse 47—Called for Elias—**The Jews expected Elijah to return in person even though Christ had

made it plain that John the Baptist was the Elias that was to come. Feelings were running high and many minds were tense. Fear filled some hearts. This was an awful happening. **Verse 48—With vinegar**—Things had now become very serious; some were being moved with pity because of the painful cry of Jesus. I am inclined to believe the vinegar (may be interpreted strong wine—Proverbs 31:6) was offered to Christ as an act of mercy. It doubtless, was to serve the purpose of making Him unconscious of the physical pain He was suffering, but He refused it. **Verse 49—Let be**—Some were still hard-hearted and skeptical. They wanted to let things go as they were and see what would happen. **Verse 50—Yielded up the ghost**—Christ had suffered on the cross for three hours, and if nature had taken its course He could have lived on for some time, but He was to lay His life down, so He gave up the ghost by His own power, thus completing the sacrifice necessary to make possible a blood-bought family.

CONCLUSION

“The death of Christ is often represented in the Scriptures as a redemption, and men are said to be redeemed through His death. Other words of similar import are used to express the same idea, such as ransomed, purchased, and bought. ‘Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood’ (Acts 20:28). ‘Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus’ (Romans 3:24). ...

“Christ’s death is in our stead or substitutional, so we need not die as a penalty for sin. His death is propitiatory or a reconciliation, to propitiate God ... His death is redemptive, or is a ransom or price paid to buy back to a former condition. This does not mean it is a price paid to Satan, but is a satisfaction to the justice of God ... His humiliation and death are an infinite price because of the infinite dignity of the offering.”—R. R. Byrum, *Christian Theology*.

Every member of God’s church has been saved through the shed blood of the Son of God, for there is no other way to be saved, so the Church of God is indeed “The Blood-Bought Family.”

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why was a redemption price necessary?
2. Why was it necessary for the redemption price to be so great?
3. How far back in the history of the earth does the blood-bought family go?
4. In what way does the human family profit by the scourging of Jesus?
5. Why were some of the Jews so determined to destroy Jesus?
6. Is there any danger of men’s becoming as blind today as were the Jews?
7. What effect did the obscuring of the sun have upon the people?
8. Why did Christ say, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me”?

LESSON NUMBER TEN FOR MARCH 10

THE BLOOD-BOUGHT FAMILY (Part II)

Scriptures: I Peter 1:16-25; Revelation 5:9.

I Peter 1:16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Revelation 5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Memory Verse: And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.—Revelation 5:9.

Aim: To impress the student further with the price of membership in the family of God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday I Corinthians 13

Tuesday II Corinthians 10

Wednesday II Corinthians 4

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

II Corinthians 2

II Corinthians 12

Revelation 5

INTRODUCTION

As members of the blood-bought family, it is necessary that we conduct ourselves in such a way that the Father of this family may be respected and adored throughout the earth. He that is a child of God has been born again by the Spirit of God and removed from the family of Satan and added to the family of God. This means an end to the business of sin, and holiness and righteousness become the order of the day. Modern Christianity, so called, is mixing the world with its religion, but this will greatly disappoint the professor when he comes to the judgment bar. Therefore, it is most important that we set down the truth here in regard to the conduct of the family.

MEDITATIONS

HOLINESS REQUIRED—I Peter 1:16—Be ye holy—This is a command, and is indispensable as a characteristic of the blood-bought family. If we are children of God it is only reasonable that we be like Him. We know that our God is a holy God. This command did not originate with Peter's writings, for he referred to the command given to Moses. People were required to live holy under the law.

GOD IS IMPARTIAL—I Peter 1:17—Without respect—He that originates the peculiar family is truly the one true God, giving justice to every man. Every man's reward shall be according to his works. Therefore, it is necessary that we be very careful of our daily life.

GOLD CANNOT BUY FAVOR WITH GOD—I Peter 1:18—With silver and gold—The world relies upon its wealth to do the things it wants done. Money oftentimes (not always) will save the worldling from the prison or gallows. Even in sickness, money buys medical care that may prolong the span of life, but divine healing or the redemption of the soul cannot be purchased with gold or silver. Only the blood of Christ can save us from the power of sin and disease. Millions are living today by the vain, handed-down traditions of modern religion. Only the blood of Christ can save from this error.

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD—I Peter 1:19—The precious blood—The blood is precious because it is the only thing that can redeem a poor, lost soul from the power of sin. God required that he who would make a sacrifice to Him must choose an animal that was perfect in every detail. Likewise, in the one great sacrifice that the Father made, He gave a sacrifice that was perfect in every detail.

REDEMPTION OLDER THAN THE EARTH—I Peter 1:20—Before the foundation—God carefully plans everything He does. How safe we are in trusting Him! He knew that man would sin even before He created the world, and so He laid His plan accordingly. In the mind of God, Christ was slain before the earth was created, and anyone who believed that God would offer His Son received the same benefit as he who today believes that He did offer Him.

THE BLOOD-BOUGHT SOUL HOPES IN THE INVISIBLE GOD—I Peter 1:21—Hope might be—When a Christian kneels, he bows before an invisible God. The world serves gods they can see as well as the invisible powers of darkness. We hope in the invisible God of light.

THE BLOOD-BOUGHT FAMILY IS FERVENT IN LOVE—I Peter 1:22—Love one another—The world is full of hate which often ends in murder. This is not so in God's family. Hate genders turmoil and strife. Love genders peace. Through God's redemptive plan the soul of the sinner is made clean and free from the scourge of sin. **Verse 23—Being born again**—Peter does not speak of a physical birth, but a spiritual birth, born

of the incorruptible Word of God, which lives and abides for ever. The new birth marks the beginning of a new life and also marks the end of the old life of sin.

MAN VERY FRAIL—I Peter 1:24—Is as grass—Grass grows up quickly and soon is gone. So it is with man. Miserable indeed will be the man who falls into the hands of the devil for all eternity.

THE PRESERVING POWER OF THE WORD—I Peter 1:25—Endureth forever—David said, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” It is only the Word of God in the heart that can preserve man in his frailty. The saving Word has been delivered to us by God through the process of preaching. It is by this process that God elects to save them that believe.

ONE PLAN FOR ALL MEN—Revelation 5:9—Every tongue—Around the throne of God in eternity will be gathered men of every age, clime, and race. This shows the universal nature of the gospel of Christ.

CONCLUSION

God is relying entirely upon the testimony of the blood-bought family to extend the borders of His kingdom in the earth. The family is met by great opposition as we try to do this, but even so there are many great advantages before us today of which we should make the very greatest use. Means of communication is the very best ever known. Every channel should be filled with the pure gospel of Christ. In eternity our reward will be determined by the way we have used the opportunities before us. How will our generation compare with all others in devotion and service? We must not come short in anything.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. How is entrance gained into the blood-bought family?
2. Give some of the characteristics of the blood-bought family.
3. What is the calling of this family?
4. What is meant by the words that God is no respecter of persons?
5. In what way might God be considered helpless in the redemption of one's soul?
6. When did the redemptive plan originate?
7. What great emotion animates the blood-bought family?
8. Why is man so much in need of the redemptive plan?

LESSON NUMBER ELEVEN FOR MARCH 17

THE PECULIAR FAMILY

Scriptures: Hebrews 11:27; I Peter 2:9; Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 14:2; 26:18; I Corinthians 4:9-13; James 4:4.

Hebrews 11:27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

I Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Exodus 19:5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine.

Deuteronomy 14:2 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.

Deuteronomy 26:18 And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments.

I Corinthians 4:9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised.

11 Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace;

12 And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

13 Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

James 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Memory Verse: Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.—Titus 2:14.

Aim: To show why the family of God is peculiar or odd in the eyes of the world.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Hebrews 11	Thursday	Deuteronomy 14
Tuesday	I Corinthians 5	Friday	II Corinthians 5
Wednesday	Exodus 19	Saturday	Hebrews 13

INTRODUCTION

You will note in I Peter 2:9 we are told that we are a peculiar people unto the Lord. Also, that He has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. How thankful we need to be if today we are walking in the light and have fellowship with Almighty God and with His people.

The word, *peculiar*, has different meanings. In a number of verses in our lesson today the word carries the thought of our being a separate, a distinct, people unto the Lord. Thus, we are peculiar unto Him in that He has separated us from the evil of the world through redemption.

Another meaning is to be strange or odd. As you will note in the aim, the thought of this lesson is our peculiarity in the eyes of the world.

The main thing that makes the difference between the world and Christendom is that the sinner sins and the Christian does not. Peter said the world thinks it strange that the Christians do not run after the same excess of riot as they (the world) do. Down deep in his heart the sinner knows that riotous living is wrong, and a righteous life lived before him pricks his conscience. Therefore, he styles the Christian peculiar and often resorts to persecution in an effort to reduce or obliterate the pricks.

MEDITATIONS

FAITH IN THE INVISIBLE GOD—Hebrews 11:27—Seeing him
—Moses was a man of God whose keen spiritual eye beheld Him who is invisible, and consequently, he was able to stand. He who lacks vision could not see what Moses did and so he would be unable to understand Moses' decision. Since he could not understand, he would consider Moses odd. In reality, the sinner, not Moses, would be the strange one.

PETER'S TESTIMONY—I Peter 2:9—A peculiar people—Peter introduces holiness as a part of the Christians' experience. This is surely obnoxious to the world and is scoffed at by most of the religious organizations. There is nothing peculiar about the modern church member, for he walks hand in hand with the world. The world considers it natural to walk in darkness. The world and church members (for the most part) live for themselves and the pleasures of the flesh. The true Christian lives for God. The Christian knows more real pleasure than the world can ever know.

THE OLD TESTAMENT STANDARD—Exodus 19:5—Peculiar treasure—From this scripture we learn that peculiarity is the result of obedience to the voice and Word of the living, invisible God. The Jews lost their peculiar nature when they disobeyed God and became like the world. They were not content to be peculiar but desired to be like the nations around them. Obedience to God produces the same results today as it did in the Old Testament times. **Deuteronomy 14:2; 26:18—Above all**—The closer anyone walks to God, or the more he is like God, the more peculiar he will be in the eyes of the world and mere religious professors. It is God's will that we all have this kind of peculiarity. No one can advance any sound reason why anyone should not want to be like God. How wonderful it would be if the natures of all men were so marvelously transformed that they would not steal, lie, cheat, deceive, or indulge in any other moral irregularity! In this age of the gospel, the invitation to be a part of the peculiar family is extended to all, or "whosoever will."

THINGS A DISCIPLE MAY SUFFER IN THE PECULIAR FAMILY TODAY—I Corinthians 4:9—Set forth—Intense suffering and hardship was the lot of the first disciples. But bear in mind that no man suffers in vain because of the name of Christ. Persecution is a process engineered

by Satan with the purpose in mind of defeating the Christian. But the true Christian loves the name of Christ more than life itself; therefore, the thoughts of death will not cause him to surrender. We are unconscious of the fact, but angels are always watching closely the battle of the Christian on earth. **Verse 10—Fools for Christ**—In the eyes of the world the apostles appeared to be fools. The service of Christ does not offer great earthly rewards, but sometimes poverty and suffering. The world forsakes Christ for the purpose of making earthly gain. The Christian forsakes the world with its earthly gain to win Christ. **Verse 11—Present hour**—Not many men suffered as much as Paul did for the gospel of Christ. Hardship was his lot day by day even to the end when, it is reported, he was beheaded with the sword. It seems that he had almost no earthly possessions, not even a place he could call home. The world would count such a man shiftless. **Verse 12—Labor**—The preacher does not feel himself too good to work for his own support if it becomes necessary. However, the Bible plan, as the general rule, is that he who preaches the gospel shall live of the gospel, and he that is taught in the Word is instructed to give good things to him that teaches. The family of God is peculiar in that it will allow nothing to turn it away from Christ who gave Himself for it. The world today, which is so far from Christian principles, sorely needs men and women who are living out the principles set forth in the Word. **Verse 13—Made as the filth**—We are compelled to accept the Word of God as absolutely true; therefore, we are compelled to state that the modern professor of religion who is a mere church member is not living the life, because he is readily accepted among the world. When the gospel is really allowed to work in the heart of a man, it attacks the evil which rules the heart. This, of course, makes the devil angry, and he does all he can to break down the Christian.

ENEMIES OF GOD—James 4:4—Enmity with God—This is plain enough for all to understand. The man who is living in sin and fellowshiping the world is the enemy of God. He is working against God and tearing down the things that God is doing. This brings to light plainly the vast difference between the world and the people of God.

OUR MEMORY VERSE—Titus 2:14—Gave himself—Jesus Christ gave His life on the cruel cross of Calvary to purchase the Church of God (Acts 20:28), to redeem us, buy us back, after we had sold ourself into sin. In redeeming us, He separated us from the sinful world so that we could be, and would be, “a peculiar people” zealous of good works. Some people are so zealous in seeking after the world; when they get saved, they should be even more zealous in seeking to do the will of God.

CONCLUSION

Today the world is full of sin, and much of it is the very worst kind. This gives its author, the devil, great advantage over the peculiar family.

Nevertheless, God is far more powerful than Satan and is able and will see His family through if they trust Him. Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound. We dare not assume an attitude of compromise or indifference, but we must put on the whole Christian armor and go on the offensive. We know we shall win! The efforts of the normal Christian institutions to combine the world with Christianity have produced a very bad situation. God is no longer in their program, for the world is the enemy of God. Nevertheless, we must face the situation in the power and might of God and give to the world once more the truth of the gospel.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why is the Christian family considered odd in the eyes of the world?
2. What made it possible for Moses to endure?
3. Name some things that “peculiar” people will be found doing.
4. Who is it that can be a member of the peculiar family, and how is membership obtained?
5. What happens to the man who lives godly in Christ Jesus?
6. Why did Paul say he and the apostles were fools for Christ’s sake?
7. What is the reaction of the peculiar family when it’s persecuted?
8. What is our responsibility as members of the peculiar family today?

LESSON NUMBER TWELVE FOR MARCH 24

LOSING MEMBERSHIP IN THE FAMILY OF GOD

Scriptures: I Samuel 16:1; Exodus 32:31-33; I Corinthians 9:27; Acts 1:25; Ezekiel 18:4; John 8:21.

I Samuel 16:1 And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

Exodus 32:31 And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold.

32 Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.

33 And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.

I Corinthians 9:27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

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

Ezekiel 18:4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

John 8:21 Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.

Memory Verse: And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.—Exodus 32:33.

Aim: To give Bible proof that one may lose membership in the family of God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Exodus 32:25-35	Thursday	Acts 1:15-25
Tuesday	I Samuel 16:1-13	Friday	Ezekiel 18:2-13
Wednesday	I Corinthians 9:16-27	Saturday	Romans 11

INTRODUCTION

In Matthew 22:14, we read, “For many are called, but few are chosen.” Many people hear the gospel message and get saved, but sooner or later lose the grace of God out of their hearts. Some seem to receive a wonderful experience and are happy for awhile; but when trials and tribulations beset them, they do not have the courage and determination to go through for God and so go back into sin. Some let the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke God’s Word out of their hearts and so lose the desire to stay in the Christian race. The more we think along these lines the more we are made to realize the truth of Jesus’ words, “Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” So many people will let the merest trifles separate them from God. Our salvation is our most precious possession, and we should consider it so and guard it with every bit of energy and power that we have. The Bible warns us in many places against becoming lukewarm and indifferent, for that will bring about a backslidden condition. Here are a few of the warning passages: “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.” “Be sober, be vigilant, for your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” “Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.” We must remember that the Christian race is a battle from the start to the finish, and we must resist him steadfastly in the faith. We must set our faces like a flint and be ever on the forward march. There can be no retreat in this warfare. God has provided us with everything we need to fight our way through successfully. Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world. Peter has written us some good words: “He that believeth on him shall not be confounded.” With the proper determination on our part and with God’s help, we cannot fail.

MEDITATIONS

GOD REJECTS SAUL—I Samuel 16:1—And the Lord said unto Samuel—Saul had been disobedient to the Lord, and God finally had to cut him off without hope. The Lord is very patient and long-suffering, but the Word tells that He will not always strive with man; thus we see the danger of grieving the Spirit of God to the point where He will take His flight, never to return. This was the terrible plight that Saul found himself in. It is our duty and command to pray for the backsliders in our midst, but not after they have been finally rejected of God, as was the case of Saul. No

doubt Samuel had been praying earnestly for Saul until God spoke to him, telling him that it was enough. How careful we all should be, lest we, too, grieve the Spirit of God and become castaways. We should never become too sure of ourselves and think that this could not happen to us, for the Word very plainly warns us, “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” Peter understood the danger of falling away and gave us this warning: “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness” (II Peter 3:17).

THE SIN OF IDOL WORSHIP—Exodus 32:31—And Moses returned unto the Lord—While Moses was up in the mount receiving the tables of the law, the people became impatient because Moses had been away so long and persuaded Aaron to make them a golden calf to worship. It seems almost unbelievable that any people could so quickly forget the mighty things that the Lord had done for them and turn to idol worship, but this is just what they did. This was a great sin indeed and incurred the wrath of Almighty God upon them. The command is, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” Human nature doesn’t seem to have changed much down through the ages, for we find men today worshiping almost everything but God. Some worship their automobiles, and some, the finery of their homes, never giving a thought to God who has made all these things possible. Oh, that men would praise the Lord for all His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men!

SIN PUTS US OUT OF THE FAMILY OF GOD—Exodus 32:32—Yet now, if thou wilt forgive—Moses was greatly moved by the anger of the Lord against the Children of Israel, and he pleaded earnestly with the Lord not to destroy them as He was going to do. His love for them was so great that he was willing to have his name blotted out of the book of life that they might be spared. This is real Christian love and the kind of love that we must have to please God. Jesus said for us to love one another as He had loved us, and His love was so great for us that He willingly died in our stead. We find Paul expressing this same love for his people after the flesh, the Jews. Romans 9:2, 3, “I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” Thus we see that it really means something to be a Bible Christian. Dear Ones, don’t be satisfied with only a profession, but be sure you have the kind of religion that changes the heart and gives you that same kind of love that the saints of bygone days had.

GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS—Exodus 32:33—And the Lord said unto Moses—We see by this verse that if we sin, our names will be blotted out of the book of life. There are some who teach that if we once are saved we can never backslide, but here is a verse that proves the falsity of that doctrine. Moses was willing to have his name blotted out to save the Children of Israel from destruction, but God, being just and no

respector of persons, could not accept Moses' offer of mercy. We all must answer individually to God for our deeds here on earth, whether they be good or bad. Some are trying to excuse their own indifferent conduct by saying that they are just as good as the other person. Don't let the devil fill your mind with this kind of foolishness, for you are not responsible for the other person's deeds but only for your own. Don't be foolish enough to be willing to go to hell just because someone else does.

IT PAYS TO BE STEADFAST—I Corinthians 9:27—But I keep under my body—Paul realized the danger of falling from grace. To guard against this he kept his body continually in subjection to the Spirit of God. Indeed there is danger of losing out in our Christian experience, and it is even possible to do so without our knowing it. There are many who have gradually let down on the truth until the Spirit has left them. There are many who are laboring under the impression that they are doing God's service, who will find that they have been deceived and are eternally lost. If Paul found it necessary to be continually on the alert to keep true to the faith, how much more should we be diligent to retain favor with God!

JUDAS FELL BY TRANSGRESSION—Acts 1:25—That he may take part of this ministry—This verse also sets at naught the eternal security doctrine of "once saved, always saved," because this verse plainly states that Judas fell by transgression, and it follows that he had been saved, or he could not have fallen. Judas, no doubt, had a weakness toward covetousness, and he saw in the betrayal a chance for a little financial gain. Having been with Jesus for some time, he was familiar with His supernatural power and had no idea that Jesus would permit Himself to be taken by the Jews. This is evidenced by the fact that when it was apparent that Jesus was not going to free Himself, Judas repented of his act and went to the priests and told them that Christ was innocent and begged for His release and returned the thirty pieces of silver that he had received to betray Jesus. But his efforts were of no avail, and his remorse and sorrow were so great that he went out and hanged himself. What a sad end for one who had been so closely associated with Jesus! The Word warns us to beware of covetousness; so let us all take heed lest our affections become wrapped around some material thing instead of being centered on things above.

SIN BRINGS SPIRITUAL DEATH—Ezekiel 18:4—Behold, all souls are mine—Sin is man's most dreadful enemy, for the Word says that the wages of sin is death. Sin separates us from God, and if not repented of, will send us to the bottomless pit of hell from which there can be no escape. This is the worst calamity that can possibly happen to anyone. Just think of being forever enveloped in the eternal flames of hell! The mere thoughts of such a fate should cause us to tremble in our shoes, so to speak. Dear Reader, if you are not ready to meet a just and righteous God, don't put off your soul's salvation another moment, but make peace with Him now. Now is the accepted time; today is the day of salvation; tomorrow may never come. Why will you die in your sins when the dear Lord has

made every possible provision for your redemption? All you have to do is to repent of your sins, ask for forgiveness and believe that He does forgive, and the work is done, and you can go on your way rejoicing. Praise God.

John 8:21—Then said Jesus ... unto them—If we have sin in our souls, we cannot go where Jesus is, for sin does separate us from God and all that is good. The Word tells us that he that committeth sin is of the devil, and I am sure that none of us want to belong to the devil and be his slaves; yet that is just what we are unless we have been born again, born of the Spirit of God. There are but two families in the world: the family of God and the family of Satan. If we are to continue in God's family, we must keep His commandments, for we read in John 15:10, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love." Again, I want to remind you of the need of keeping close to God so that you may be better able to elude the snares of Satan. We must give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. Since every transgression and every disobedience shall receive a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? We shall not escape, for the Word of God is true and abideth forever.

CONCLUSION

We have endeavored in the comments on this lesson to bring to your mind the danger of losing membership in the family of God. We have to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and the more we are reminded of these great truths, the more likely we will be to hold out to the end. Let our delight be in the Word of God, and let us meditate therein day and night. If we will keep meek and lowly we will endure to the end. Paul says that if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

If there be anyone reading this who once walked with the Lord, but you have lost your way, gone back into sin, I would say to you, you do not have to remain in a backslidden condition. You can return to the Lord, and He invites you to do so. Do not allow your failures of the past to keep you in a defeated state. God loves you. He is willing to forgive you and accept you back into His family.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why is it necessary to worship God with our whole soul, mind, and strength?
2. What puts one out of the family of God?
3. How can we refute the doctrine of once saved, always saved?
4. What is the danger of grieving the Spirit of God?
5. How do you account for Saul's losing out with God?
6. What is the best way to retain favor with God?
7. What is spiritual death?
8. What is your plan to retain your membership in the family of God?

LESSON NUMBER THIRTEEN FOR MARCH 31
THE FAMILY'S MISSION IN THE WORLD

Scriptures: Acts 4:19-33.

Acts 4:19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.

22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was showed.

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:

25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against

the Lord, and against his Christ.

27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

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.

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

Memory Verse: For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.—Acts 4:20.

Aim: To show what God expects of His family.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Psalm 2

Tuesday Acts 6

Wednesday Acts 7:1-30

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Acts 7:31-60

II Corinthians 8

II Corinthians 9

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson we want to discuss some of the things that God expects His family to do. If we are saved, we are in the army of the Lord and are subject to His every command just the same as the soldiers in any army are subject to every order of their officers. The effectiveness of the army depends to a great extent upon prompt and willing obedience to every command of the officer in charge. Just so it is in the army of the Lord. Jesus is our Leader and Commander. He has a plan for every one of us,

and unless we render unto Him prompt and willing obedience, we will not be able to accomplish all the things that He has planned for us. If we fail in our work for the Lord and fall out of the army, the work of the church in that community will be hindered. All of these little things hinder the work of the Lord, and more than likely some precious soul will be lost who might have been saved had we been faithful at our post of duty. Let God use the remainder of your life in winning souls so that you may shine as the stars forever and ever in the world to come.

MEDITATIONS

IT IS BETTER TO OBEY GOD THAN MAN—Acts 4:19-22—

Peter and John had just been brought from prison before the Jewish authorities for questioning in regard to the miraculous healing of the crippled beggar. Here we see just how the devil works on the hearts of men. Instead of the Jews rejoicing because one of the fellowmen had been restored to normal health, they listened to the devil and put Peter and John in prison. After listening to Peter telling them how that by the power and mercy of Jesus, whom they had crucified, this poor unfortunate man had been healed, they threatened them and commanded them not to preach any more in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John were filled with the Spirit, and they wanted to please God above everything else, so they boldly said, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." Our duty to God comes first, and we cannot let the commands of men interfere with our work for the Lord. Jesus said that we should go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, so we dare not keep still while the people all around us are lost in sin. We must be a good witness for the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

THE FAMILY RESORTS TO PRAYER—Acts 4:23-30—As soon as Peter and John were let go, they went to their own company and told them all that had happened. The church went to the Lord in prayer. Prayer is talking with God, and we need to talk with Him every day. When we are facing some hard task or problem, we can go to Him boldly in prayer and He will help us out. That is just what Peter and John did. Note that they did not ask God to let them stop preaching, but they asked God for more power so that they might preach with more boldness than before. Here is part of their prayer: "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus." Isn't it wonderful that God gave them so much courage and confidence that they wanted to go out and preach with more boldness in spite of the threatenings of the Jewish authorities and their command that they should not preach any more in the name of Jesus? We must strive with all our heart to have that same kind of boldness and live and act just as Jesus wants us to at work or wherever we may be.

THE POWER OF PRAYER—Acts 4:31-33—The disciples earnestly prayed, and the Scriptures say that the place was shaken where they were assembled together. If we expect to get an answer to our prayer, we must come to God in earnestness and sincerity. It will not do any good just to say a few words, or just to “say a prayer,” as so many call praying. A prayer must come from the heart and be inspired by the Spirit of God. The Bible tells us that we know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself will make intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. So we see that there is a lot more to prayer than just saying words or reading a prayer that has been written by someone else. We want all of you to talk to God right from your heart. We want you to have that vital contact with God that will keep the joy bells ringing in your heart. We want folks around you to know that your religion is real and that it is making you a good, respectable person. We do not want you to be satisfied with just a profession that fails to put the peace of God in your heart and fails to take away the desires for worldly amusements. We want your affections to be set on heavenly things, things that will please God.

CONCLUSION

The primary mission of the Church of God is to tell the gospel story to others. There are many ways in which you can do this. You can invite your friends and fellow workmen to services; and if you are living the right kind of life before them, they will have an urge to come. They may not acknowledge it and they may not accept your invitation, but the Spirit of God will plead with them and show them that they ought to give their hearts to God and live for Him. You can pray for your friends who are not saved. The Bible tells us that if we ask anything according to His will, He will answer our prayer. Now we know that it is God’s will for everybody to be saved, so if you will earnestly and sincerely pray for your unsaved folks and friends, you can see them saved. But you must be earnest about it and never become discouraged if God delays the answer. Just remember that all of God’s promises are true and cannot fail.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. In what way are we soldiers?
2. In what way is God’s army like a physical army?
3. Against what does God’s army fight?
4. Tell some of the ways the devil fights against us.
5. Why had Peter and John been put into prison?
6. What gave them the courage to say it was better to obey God than man?
7. What did they do when the Jews threatened them and ordered them to stop preaching in the name of Jesus?
8. What happened when the disciples prayed earnestly?
9. What is real prayer?
10. Are you using the avenue of prayer to get closer to God?

Name _____

Class _____

The Family of God

ADULT & YOUNG PEOPLE

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