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The Family of God at Work

Adult and Young People's Quarterly

INTRODUCTION

It seems to be an accepted belief in many religious circles that Christianity is a secondary interest in life, and the performance of a few ceremonies constitutes the whole fabric of God's plan, and that the work that is to be done can be undertaken by the pastor and his appointed helpers. This attitude and practice spells the doom of Christianity, an agent in the world for the betterment of society. The Church was ordained by the will of God to be a live, powerful, divinely guided force in the world, being not only able to survive, but also of sufficient strength to wage a powerful offensive warfare and to increase the ranks continually at the cost of the kingdom of darkness. If the Church does not do this, she fails in her mission in the earth, to a great extent.

We desire in this group of lessons to set before the student the true work of the Church with the hope that we can inspire each one to strive to be an active, militant servant and friend of the most high God. There can be no question in the least that Christianity is a positive and restless foe of every other form of religion that has ever made its way into the earth. There can never be any compromise made with these forms of religion; there can never be a truce declared. The reason is that Christianity in its true sense is the product and property of God alone; every other religion is the product and property of Satan. In some instances, Satan has very closely copied the plan of God, and thus by deception has led many astray. Nevertheless, regardless of how closely the devil may have copied the plan of God, his system is still hated by God and will not be accepted at the gates of heaven as a passport to heaven. It is then very necessary that we know the true plan of God and that we devote all that we have or are to the great work of advancing the kingdom of God in the earth. Work in the kingdom of God brings much happiness to the Christian and aids greatly in his struggles for survival. Also, his reward for the whole of eternity is determined by the work that he does, for the Word declares that every man shall be rewarded according as his works shall be. Therefore, let us, as Christians, put our shoulders to the wheel and make sure that we do our part of the work that God has ordained.

THE WAY OF TRUTH

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PUBLISHERS OF CHURCH OF GOD LITERATURE

LESSON NUMBER ONE FOR JULY 7

A VISION OF THE WORK

Scriptures: John 6:27-30; Mark 16:15-18; John 17:4; I Corinthians 16:10; II Timothy 4:5; I Corinthians 1:21; 15:58.

John 6:27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

30 They said therefore unto him, What sign showest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

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

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

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

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

John 17:4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

I Corinthians 16:10 Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do.

II Timothy 4:5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

I Corinthians 1:21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

I Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Memory Verse: Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.—Proverbs 29:18.

Aim: To obtain a vision of the great work of the family of God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	I Corinthians 1:1-15	Thursday	II Timothy 4:1-8
Tuesday	I Corinthians 1:16-31	Friday	Luke 10:1-20
Wednesday	Romans 10	Saturday	Mark 6:1-13

INTRODUCTION

In today's Memory Verse, Solomon declares, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." No one needs to be told that there is a great lack of vision today, since the vast majority of people have no spiritual life and are doomed to a devil's hell. The pleasures of godly living and the joy of the friendship of God have been replaced by the fleeting pleasures of modern entertainment and recreation. This spells doom for the souls of men and, in the end, the destruction of the world. If we would prolong the prosperity of our great nation, we must awaken to the dire situation that is before us and wait before God until anew He

inspires in our hearts a true vision of His great work. Then we must set about, with all our power, to carry out the work that is the work of God. God never included in His plan the spreading of the gospel by the angels. This is a job that is assigned solely to the men of the earth; and if they do not preach the gospel, it will never be preached.

MEDITATIONS

MATERIAL THINGS ARE SECONDARY—John 6:27—The meat which perisheth—Men have permitted the abundance of material things, which God gave to us for our good, to become a curse. They are putting forth far more effort to have and to hold than to have eternal blessings of salvation. Such a procedure can result in but one thing, and that is eternal damnation. The wisdom of man is marred in regard to the true values of life. Eternal life is truly a gift of God, but we can retain this gift only by diligent and painstaking labor and walking in the commands of the Lord.

AROUSING FROM SLEEP—John 6:28—What shall we do?—The preaching of the gospel had aroused the listeners of Jesus to the point where there began an inquiry concerning their obligations. A desire was springing up to work for the Lord. They were now coming to the place where they could receive from Jesus a vision of His work.

BELIEF IN CHRIST EMBRACES ALL—John 6:29—Believe on him—Anyone who truly and sincerely believes on the One whom God has sent will perform in his daily life the things He has taught. The first result of believing on Christ is the regeneration of the soul. Then follows the receiving of the Spirit of God. When the Holy Spirit takes possession of the soul, all the future is under control. No one can be successful in the Christian race until he has a true vision of what God expects of him.

THE WRONG EMPHASIS—John 6:30—That we may see—Then, as now, men understood that performing some task or other would open the way into eternal glory. Good works do not produce eternal life, but the factor of eternal life in any man will produce good works. Too often, after men see, they fail to believe. "Blessed is he who believes who has not seen."

THE GREAT COMMISSION—Mark 16:15—Go ye—These words produce a thrill to the wide-awake Christian, if for no other reason than that they were spoken by the Master. The whole world, every nation, every people, need THE gospel, not the opinions or doctrines of men. God respects the person of no man; therefore, the rich and poor, black and white are in line to receive alike.

THE BASIS OF SALVATION—Mark 16:16—Believeth and is baptized—This one religious formula of the Lord Jesus without exception admits us, when we sincerely accept it, into the great and enduring family of God. No other way or formula, regardless of the size or popularity behind it, will bring the priceless gift of life eternal.

THE CHRISTIAN'S WORK OUTLINED—Mark 16:17, 18—The vigorous and all-powerful Word of the living God, without fail, will produce all the things spoken of in this verse, and it most certainly is expected by divine will that these shall be a part of the labors of the family of God. Miraculous performances in the religious realm, for a great part, have been limited in the thinking of religious leaders to the time of the apostles. This is strictly human reasoning, for the Word plainly declares that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. The true Bible saint today has a vision that includes the miraculous healing by divine power of the physical man as well as the spiritual man. He also includes in this vision the supplying of all his needs according to His riches in glory. This in no way even suggests that any man can sit around in laziness and expect God to supply his needs. But it does imply that God will provide a way whereby a man can labor and care for his own and himself.

A NOTABLE TESTIMONY—John 17:4—Finished the work—Many have the opinion that the labor of a minister of the gospel is trivial indeed, but the true minister of God leads a very strenuous life. It was not uncommon for the Lord Jesus to leave His rest very early in the morning, a long time before it was day, to engage in prayer at the throne of grace. He ministered to every need of the individual and the large gathering. (He fed the multitudes; He healed all their sick.) Jesus not only taught truth but also laid down the entire foundation for all truth for all time. Any man who has a vision of the work of God today will contend earnestly for the faith that was once delivered to the saints. He will not preach a compromised gospel to suit the whims of the people. It is the pure Word, unadulterated, that saves the soul, not the weakened-down social gospel of our day.

TIMOTHY IS RECOMMENDED—I Corinthians 16:10—He worketh the work of the Lord—There was no doubt in the mind of Paul in regard to the genuineness of his work, nor the work of his spiritual son, Timothy. In our day of many religious persuasions, it is needful that a child of God have a strong conviction in regard to the truth and not be like the modernist who would tolerate any kind of religion that may come along and because of a degree of sincerity grant unto it credence and tolerance. Anything that is not of God must be renounced and that with boldness and conviction of Paul when he said that if anyone, even an angel from heaven, bring a gospel other than he had preached, let him be accursed (Galatians 1:8, 9). A true vision of the work of the Lord allows for one faith only (Ephesians 4:5).

EVANGELISM VERY ESSENTIAL—II Timothy 4:5—Do the work of an evangelist—The powerful, sin-destroying work of Holy Ghost evangelism has almost disappeared from the earth. We have many people today who are preaching a false gospel that is seemingly converting many, many souls, but in the end they are leaving them bound in some modern sectarian movement, the result of which is that

the poor souls are worse off than they were before they made a profession. True evangelism will destroy the forces of sin in any life that it deals with and will establish it in the grace of the living God in the body of Christ, which is the Church of God (Colossians 1:18). This Timothy did and so will every true God-sent minister of the gospel.

I Corinthians 1:21—Foolishness of preaching—The preaching of the gospel in all its respective modes of expression is for the one purpose of building the body of Christ, and, therefore, it must be of the cleanest, most earnest and sincere character. He whose vision takes in a story-telling, surface-skimming, man-pleasing ministry has no vision at all and is not worthy of the name preacher. Preaching under the anointing of the Holy Spirit will be heart-searching, sin-revealing and soul-inspiring.

LABOR REWARDED—I Corinthians 15:58—Labor is not in vain—We are not taught in the Word of God to look for great material rewards for service in the kingdom of God. We are promised only that all our needs shall be supplied and that we shall not want. However, we are promised a great reward in the world to come. Even a cup of cold water given in the name of an apostle shall not lose its reward. God will hold it for us. The Christian must learn to be content, having food and raiment.

CONCLUSION

No one needs to think that he shall have a true vision of God's work if he attempts to put only half of his heart and life into it. The nature of the work of the Lord is so important and far-reaching that it requires the very best that is in any man. Only then as God supplements what man has can man become an efficient witness of the gospel. No man, be he ever so highly accomplished, can successfully do anything for God unless his life is freshened by the presence of God. So a true vision of the work of God first visualizes God as the Originator and sole Owner of all things, that He was perfectly within His rights when He established natural and moral laws to govern His physical and spiritual creation. The true vision recognizes God as a God of infinite love, who is deeply interested in mankind and desirous that all men come to repentance.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why do Christians need a vision of the work of the Lord?
2. Why do you think the world is in such a state of religious slumber today?
3. Why are people more interested in the "meat which perisheth" than in the "meat which endureth unto eternal life"?
4. In a few words, tell just what it means to lean on the Lord.
5. What is the nature of the greatest work in which man can engage?
6. What are some of the assignments in the work of a man of God?

LESSON NUMBER TWO FOR JULY 14

THE FAMILY OF GOD AT PRAYER

Scriptures: I Thessalonians 5:17; Acts 12:5, 12; 4:24, 31; Daniel 6:10, 11; Judges 6:15, 16.

I Thessalonians 5:17 Pray without ceasing.

Acts 12:5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

12 And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

Acts 4:24 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.

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.

Daniel 6:10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

11 Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.

Judges 6:15 And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.

16 And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

Memory Verse: Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.—Philippians 4:6.

Aim: To show the accomplishments of prayer in the family of God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday II Chronicles 7

Tuesday Luke 18:1-14

Wednesday Luke 11:1-13

Thursday Daniel 6

Friday Judges 6

Saturday Matthew 21:17-22

INTRODUCTION

Prayer is the communion of the souls of men with their Creator, the one and only true God. Since the world is owned by God and we are the stewards of His great creation and possession, it is only natural that we should have communion and contact with Him. It follows, then, that the more systematic and complete this communion or contact is, the better He shall be able to direct us to success, and that especially since there is in existence a great enemy in the person of Satan. Do not be fooled into believing that Satan is a myth. He is a real, spiritual being with great power, who is as bad as God is good. He is always found on the opposite side of God in everything and seeks to bring everyone to his side. Many are on his side today because they have believed his lies and have concluded that white is black and black is white.

Great success in spiritual endeavor has always followed prevailing prayer before the throne of grace. We have excellent examples of this in the Scriptures. Jesus was able to succeed only by the means of prayer. The prophets and apostles were men of prayer. We can succeed today only by prevailing in prayer before the throne of God. We have the wonderful promise that when we pray in faith, we shall receive.

MEDITATIONS

THE SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL POWER—I Thessalonians 5:17—Pray—There is little use for a sinner to pray unless he is honestly desiring to quit the sin business and become a servant of God. Therefore, the injunction to pray without ceasing is directed toward the child of God who, of course, is in touch with heaven. To pray without ceasing is to keep in continual contact with God. This is the plan of God. This does not mean that a person has to stay on his knees all the time uttering words of supplication. It means that just as a man must eat at regular and stated intervals lest he die physically, he must also feed his soul at the throne of grace lest he die spiritually. Let the Church of the living God keep up the prayer life where it belongs, and progress will result. The sinful world will face a force that cannot be overcome.

THE EARLY CHURCH PRAYS—Acts 12:5—Prayer was made without ceasing—Not once did these people consider making up a mob of furious people to assault the jail and remove Peter by force. They knew God and believed that He was able to answer prayer. In this case they did pray continuously and without ceasing until Peter was released, the thing they so earnestly desired. We are made conscious of the fact that the weapons of the Christian warfare are not carnal, but spiritual. We fight the fight of faith, which sometimes is a great struggle, and it is always God who works in our behalf if we faint not.

PRAYER REWARDED—Acts 12:12—Many were ... praying—We have no evidence that Peter prayed on this occasion, though naturally we would think that praying was his habit in times of peril and otherwise. However, he was not praying when the angel came to deliver him, for he was asleep. It would seem, then, for the most part, it was the praying Church that affected the delivery of the apostle Peter. We would conclude from this miraculous happening, when an angel came down from heaven and delivered a prisoner from jail, that nothing would be impossible to the man or church who prays in faith. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."

SOLVING A SERIOUS PROBLEM—Acts 4:24—When they heard that—Serious threats had been made against the church. Their weapons were not carnal; their only hope was in the intervention of Almighty God. One very noticeable state of affairs among this people was that they were all of one accord, not divided in any sense.

This is one of the greatest needs of the religious world today. We cannot convince a divided world with a divided church. It should be easy to believe for anything we might ask if we are truly conscious that we are asking of One who has, with the word of His mouth, made the heavens and the earth and all that in them is.

PRAYING THROUGH—Acts 4:31—And when they had prayed—They had often been answered before when they had called upon God, so their faith was strong. They ceased not to pray until God gave evidence from heaven that He had heard, by shaking the place in which they were assembled. One reason for their success was that they were filled with the Holy Ghost. He, being present in their hearts, would make intercession with groanings that could not be uttered. If we pray in the Spirit, we are certain to be praying according to the will of God. One serious lack today is the fact that people have deserted the successful practice of Holy Ghost praying and have resorted to the reading of prayers from a book. This will not move God on His throne. A successful church is a church that prays in the Spirit.

FAITHFULNESS IN PRAYER—Daniel 6:10—Three times a day—This practice of Daniel's can be truly called praying without ceasing. Even though the greatest penalty that can be imposed on man was certain to come his way apparently, yet he was not deterred from his purpose. It takes men of this caliber really to win out for God. A little prayer book reading and an on-the-surface religious observance will not advance the kingdom of God in the earth. We are faced with a great foe, and it takes great power to overcome him. When once a Christian starts on his pilgrimage, he must not be turned from his course even though his Christian activities at the hands of a wicked world may carry the penalty of death. Since God is all-powerful, we need never have any fear of trusting Him. In this instance God delivered Daniel.

OPPOSITION IN PRAYER—Daniel 6:11—Found Daniel praying—Paul declared that it is the will of God that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting (I Timothy 2:8). Daniel had established a custom through much experience that could not be easily broken. In his seasons of prayer, he had learned to meet his very best Friend, One who had done great things for him; He was God. Through these frequent contacts God had become very real, and Daniel's understanding of God had become more complete. Every Christian should have this experience, for it is God's plan that from day to day we make progress in our understanding of God Himself and His divine plan. Daniel was truly a member of the family of God and was working at the much-needed Christian engagement, prayer.

GIDEON PRAYS—Judges 6:15, 16—In himself Gideon did not feel equal to the job God was giving him. Feeling as he did, there was

only one thing he could do and that was to resort to prayer. Humility is the basis of Christian success. He felt very small and thus was compelled to lean heavily on God. Any man who does this can never fail. This must be the attitude of the whole family of God, for truly without Christ, we can do nothing.

THE MEMORY VERSE—Philippians 4:6—Be careful for nothing—In this verse the expression, “be careful for nothing” is to be understood as meaning, “Be not anxiously solicitous.” Do not be worrying or fretting about the matter. Worry never solves a problem or brings an answer to prayer. Paul says, “In every thing by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God.” Let your request be made known, and then trust the Lord to answer.

CONCLUSION

It seems that in all generations it has been a fact that the abundance of material blessings has caused men to forget God, forsake the practice of prayer, and launch out on a program of self-sufficiency. No wonder we are warned against covetousness and the love of filthy lucre. Life does not consist in the abundance of the things we possess. Jesus said in St. John 17:3, to know God is eternal life. Jesus came that we might have life and have it more abundantly. The abundant life is not the enjoyment of God’s created things, but the enjoyment of the fellowship of God Himself. These blessings come through prayer. Thus, the individual life is enriched by the faithful practice of prayer. But the family needs to get together and in unity call upon the name of the Lord. The family of God is the only agent that God has to carry the good news to the world, and the only way that the family can carry the gospel is by the power of God. The power to live a long and successful life, both as an individual and as a congregation, cannot be obtained in one or two seasons of prayer before the throne of God. Every day and several times a day it will be necessary to come to the Lord in prayer. Therefore, a praying congregation is certain to be a successful congregation. We cannot overemphasize prayer, so we insist that the student carefully examine his prayer life and make sure it is all God would have it to be.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is prayer?
2. Why do men need to pray?
3. Why did Jesus need to pray?
4. What is meant by praying without ceasing?
5. How did the early church solve their problems?
6. What must be the state of the heart if we are to have help from God?

LESSON NUMBER THREE FOR JULY 21
THE FAMILY OF GOD FASTING

Scriptures: Esther 4:15, 16; Isaiah 58:6; Matthew 4:2; Acts 27:33-36.

Esther 4:15 Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer,

16 Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

Isaiah 58:6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

Matthew 4:2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was after-

ward an hungered.

Acts 27:33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

34 Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.

36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat.

Memory Verse: And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.—Acts 14:23.

Aim: To show the accomplishments of fasting in the family of God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Esther 4
Tuesday Esther 5
Wednesday Isaiah 58

Thursday Matthew 4
Friday Acts 27
Saturday Acts 14:23-28

INTRODUCTION

God in His love and great wisdom has made many wonderful and delightful foods to please the taste of men whom He has created. The recurrence of the appetite for food is so frequent and regular that to refrain from eating does take some willpower and determination. Having become so accustomed to the intake of food, the body, when it is denied food, of course, at once sets up an urgent demand for food.

There is not much fasting done today, partly because of this, yet it is the plain teaching of the Word of God that the family of God must fast. I suppose there are two different practices of fasting. The most common is the setting of a time for fasting by the ministry in which everyone who may be a part of the organization is expected to fast partly or wholly. This is done to some extent, especially around Easter time, by modern church systems. An uncommon and, doubtless, the most effective practice is fasting of an individual because the burden has become so heavy that the desire for food has disappeared. The person is unhampered by the pains of hunger and can devote his time and

energy without distraction to devotion to God in unbroken prayer and supplication. This kind of fasting becomes very powerful and accomplishes great things.

MEDITATIONS

FASTING—Esther 4:15, 16—Neither eat nor drink three days—A very serious situation had arisen here among the Jews. They were threatened with extinction. The thought of such a serious thing as this, it seems, would naturally take away the desire for food. Perhaps not so for the carefree and undisciplined, but more than likely all would be affected by it. In this instance it was not a considerable length of time that they fasted, but just about long enough for the worst pangs of hunger to have subsided. It was a complete fast, for nothing—neither food nor water—was to be taken, either by day or night. Abstinence from water adds great difficulty to the practice of fasting, for the human body can go longer without food than without water, but no fast is complete unless water is denied. There is one thing of which we can be perfectly sure, and that is that after we have done all we can, God will do the rest. We will find that the most earnest prayer by itself will not bring the desired results in some cases. The reason is that God has instituted the practice of fasting, and there are certain things that can be accomplished only by this means. Doubtless, in this circumstance among the Jews, ordinary prayer would not have accomplished the desired end. Fasting was the only way out, and the Lord moved upon Esther to call for a fast. The Bible account reveals the fact that they did win and with great victory.

HYPOCRITICAL FASTING—Isaiah 58:6—Is not this the fast—This reflects the practice of the Pharisees, who boasted of their faithfulness in fasting. They fasted to be seen of men and to gain personal glory. Such fasting means nothing to the Lord and gains no ground with God; it is hypocrisy. Thus, we see that fasting can become a mere form and there is danger of this when a fast is announced for the entirety of a religious group. Doubtless, some fast because others are fasting, and, generally speaking, it avails little. Far better than the mere act of fasting is the actual commands of our Lord. Likewise, the offering of a sacrifice under the law was of no avail, unless the one who offered it had a heart that was right before God.

THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST—Matthew 4:2—Fasting forty days and forty nights—This was a very unusual example of fasting and could have been accomplished only by divine assistance. We know surely that everything Jesus did was by divine assistance and by divine order. On this occasion there was a great need, for Jesus was at the point of entering upon His ministry. The great task of choosing His twelve disciples was immediately before Him. He had the great task

of laying down the full order of divine truth and putting into actual practice its divine precepts. If it were necessary for the Master to fast, we must remark that it is more necessary for His followers to fast. His ministry is trusted with the task of carrying on the work that He started, and it must be carried on with identically the same emphasis. Notice from this account in Verse Two that Jesus was not hungry until after the fast was finished. Thus, we conclude that the burden of His heart and the task before Him had so weighted Him down that hunger had departed from Him.

PAUL FASTS—Acts 27:33—This day is the fourteenth day—The elements had presented on this occasion a very serious situation, so serious that it appeared as if all life on the ship on which Paul was prisoner would be lost. Fasting for the space of one meal would have had little effect upon the situation, but fasting for the space of fourteen days did. Paul was able to say that not one life would be lost. We may be sure that today, with the moral conditions as bad as they are, we will meet problems just as hard to solve as Paul did and that an equal amount (or more) of fasting will be necessary. This fast was complete, for they took nothing. The storm, being of such a fierce nature, would naturally have been a great drain on their strength, then to abstain from food and water would make it quite evident that God had to sustain their bodies miraculously.

PAUL ENDS THE FAST—Acts 27:34—Take some meat—It is perfectly right to fast within the will of God, but when the purpose of God has been accomplished, it is time to take food, for it is by the taking of food that God has planned to sustain life.

GENUINE GRATITUDE—Acts 27:35—Gave thanks—Paul had much to be grateful for. Even though the shipmaster had refused to obey the warning Paul had issued by the Spirit of God, and had exposed the ship and its passengers to the awful dangers of the storm that lay ahead, Paul still was able to prevail before the throne of God and bring safety to all on board. It was time for true rejoicing. The forces of evil are abroad in the world and must be met with the same weapons today as in the days of Paul. The family of God must stand together and employ the same procedures as the morning church. We can look forward to suffering, for it is given to us “in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.”

VICTORY WON—Acts 27:36—All of good cheer—The uncertainty of the outcome of the storm was now wiped away, and the victory was won. Good cheer now replaced the depression that had been theirs. Life again took on its normal flow. God has ordained that we live normal lives, but there will come times when the Holy Ghost will operate in our lives, and some natural inclinations will temporarily be set aside.

THE MEMORY VERSE—Acts 14:23—Prayed with fasting—

Before Barnabas and Paul were sent forth on this first missionary journey, the church at Antioch of Syria was fasting and praying (Acts 13:1-3). The congregation was a spiritual church and they had a true concern for souls, therefore the Holy Spirit was able to reveal to them the will of God.

As Barnabas and Paul journeyed from place to place preaching the gospel, the Lord worked with them, and through them, and we find them fasting and praying as they ordained elders in the various congregations that they were able to establish. If we want to see the Lord's work prosper in our day, there must be that willingness to fast and pray, not just pray, but fast and pray.

CONCLUSION

We would conclude from the study of this lesson that fasting is an absolute necessity on the part of the Church today if she is to meet successfully the problems and powers that shall assail here. Again, let me say that it is not the mere act of suffering as the result of refraining from the eating of food that wins the victory; it is the approach that we make to the throne of God while the fast is on. The Pharisees fasted much, but it did no good whatsoever. Perhaps the lack of fasting is one reason why the world is plunging rapidly down in the maelstrom of sin. Let us awake to the responsibility that is at hand.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is the purpose of a fast?
2. Why was it necessary for Jesus to fast?
3. Where does the spiritual power lie in fasting?
4. What was wrong with the fasting of the Pharisees in Jesus' day?
5. How do you account for the fact that sin is increasing so rapidly?
6. What place should fasting have in the lives of the family of God today?

LESSON NUMBER FOUR FOR JULY 28

THE FAMILY OF GOD STUDIES THE WORD

Scriptures: II Timothy 3:15; II Peter 3:16; Acts 8:30, 31, 35-37; Nehemiah 8:8, 12; Hebrews 5:12; Psalm 119:99.

II Timothy 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

II Peter 3:16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

Acts 8:30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readeſt?

31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth

hinder me to be baptized?

37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Nehemiah 8:8 So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.

12 And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

Hebrews 5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

Psalm 119:99 I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.

Memory Verse: All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.—II Timothy 3:16.

Aim: To show how a study of the Word qualifies the family of God for its work.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Nehemiah 8	Thursday	Luke 10:38-42
Tuesday	Psalm 119:89-104	Friday	Acts 8
Wednesday	II Timothy 3	Saturday	Hebrews 5

INTRODUCTION

Growth in the gospel of the Lord Jesus has no limits. Some have erroneously taught that when a soul is converted and filled with the Spirit, his knowledge is complete, and that since he has the mind of Christ, all things are known unto him. This is not true. When we have received the Holy Ghost, we then have the supreme Teacher, and He at once sets about the task of teaching as rapidly as possible the things of the Word. Should anyone live a million years, he would be

unable to learn all that is to be known. We have the solemn charge in the Scriptures to study. I do think that when a soul has been faithful in applying himself as diligently as possible, the Holy Spirit will supply whatever knowledge is needed in difficult circumstances. Schools, as a whole, have lifted the masses of people out of ignorance and made life much broader. None of us would want to live in a land where all were illiterate. Many have spoken against a school instituted for the purpose of giving instruction in the Word of God, using I John 2:27, which states that we need not that any man should teach us. This could not have reference to instruction in the things of God, for we are commanded to “train up” our children, which means to teach them the truth. A school under the leadership of the Holy Ghost would most certainly be a blessing to mankind, for it would enable them to learn, in a short time, what might take a lifetime to learn under self-instruction.

MEDITATIONS

KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCRIPTURES IMPORTANT—II Timothy 3:15—And that from a child—The Bible says to train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it. The training in the things of God should begin as soon as the child is able to understand what is said to him. This is God’s way; and if it is followed out, it is bound to bring results. In this verse we have a demonstration of what early training will do for a child in the person of Timothy, who, Paul said, knew the holy Scriptures from a child, which were able to make him wise unto salvation. He became a power in the Church for the spread of the gospel and, as far as we know, never departed from the truth.

THE DANGER OF BEING UNLEARNED—II Peter 3:16—As also in all his epistles—This verse shows the necessity of studying the Scriptures, for Peter says the unlearned and unstable wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction. To study the Word without the enlightenment of the Holy Ghost will not always prove profitable, for the holy Scriptures were written by inspiration of God, and we need the help of the Holy Spirit to interpret them rightly.

PHILIP INSTRUCTS THE ETHIOPIAN—Acts 8:30, 31—Philip, a man of God, was moved by the Spirit to journey toward Gaza, and on the way he met an Ethiopian, who was reading from the writings of the prophet Isaiah. When Philip asked him if he understood what he was reading, he replied, “How can I, except some man should guide me?” Thus, we see how utterly helpless the natural man is in trying to get the meaning out of the prophecies of the Bible. To force our own teachings or ideas on others may prove a very serious error. The Ethiopian realized his need of instruction and invited Philip to come up and sit with him. **Verses 35, 36—Then Philip opened his**

mouth—Philip was quick to take advantage of the opportunity to preach the soul-saving gospel of Jesus to him under the anointing of the Holy Ghost, and he accepted Christ as his Savior. Philip had applied himself to the study of the Scriptures and was close enough to God to hear the still, small voice; and when the opportunity presented itself, Philip was able to present the gospel in such a convincing manner that the eunuch got saved. He realized his need of being baptized and asked Philip if he could not be baptized, as there was plenty of water at hand. **Verse 37—If thou believest with all thine heart**—Here we have the true requirement for baptism. We must believe on the Lord Jesus with all our heart, or, in other words, we must be born again. There is absolutely no benefit in baptism unless one is saved before it is performed, for it is only an answer of a good conscience and a witness to the world that we have accepted Christ.

THE STUDY OF THE WORD BRINGS HAPPINESS—Nehemiah 8:8, 12—We see by these two verses that the expounding of the true meaning of the Scriptures brought great joy to the Jews in Nehemiah's time, and it will do the same thing for us today. I have found group study of the Scriptures very profitable and enjoyable when it is done under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. David said, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" The study of the Word brings joy to our souls, especially when we consider what God did to insure our comfort and happiness.

LACK OF STUDY BRINGS REPROOF—Hebrews 5:12—For when for the time—In this verse we see Paul reproving the Hebrews because they had failed to advance in the Christian life, and instead of now being able to teach others, they were still in need of being taught themselves. Even Christ had to undergo preparation for His work, for we read in Hebrews 5:8, 9, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." How much more, then, is it needful that we study to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

DAVID ENLIGHTENED BY THE WORD—Psalm 119:99—I have more understanding—Studying and meditating on the Word of God made David wiser than all his teachers. The teachers here referred to, no doubt, were teachers of secular matters. Let us all try to be like David and get real enjoyment out of our perusal of the Word. From Psalm 1:2 we learn that David's delight was in the law of the Lord, and in it did he meditate day and night.

CONCLUSION

In order to be successful in any line of endeavor, it is absolutely necessary to prepare for the work by diligent study. Every Christian has a work to do in the family of God. The more diligently he applies him-

self in the study of God's Word, the more successful he shall be and the more he shall be able to please God (and this is the most important thing of all). Our Memory Verse tells us that the Word is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness, and the next verse says, "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. How should we study the Word of God?
 2. What is your opinion of schools for religious education?
 3. Give two Bible characters whose lives were greatly influenced by their childhood training.
 4. Why is it so important to know God's Word?
 5. Tell how Philip's knowledge of the Scriptures brought results.
 6. Does the study of the Word bring joy to our hearts?
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LESSON NUMBER FIVE FOR AUGUST 4

THE FAMILY SEEKS THE LEADERSHIP OF THE SPIRIT

Scriptures: Acts 16:6, 7, 10; I Corinthians 2:12-15; I John 2:27; Acts 18:9, 10; 23:11.

Acts 16:6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,

7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

I Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are

foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

I John 2:27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

Acts 18:9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:

10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

Acts 23:11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

Memory Verse: I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.—Psalm 32:8.

Aim: To teach that the success of the work of the family of God depends upon our getting directions from the Spirit.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Acts 22:1-16	Thursday	I Corinthians 2
Tuesday	Acts 22:17-30	Friday	Acts 18:18-28
Wednesday	I John 2:20-29	Saturday	Acts 23:1-15

INTRODUCTION

It is very important that we seek the Holy Spirit as soon as possible after we get saved. It is the Holy Spirit's dwelling in us that gives us power to be overcomers.

It is highly important that we constantly seek the leadership of the Spirit in our everyday lives. God has a plan for every one of us and it should be our greatest desire that the Spirit have right-of-way to work as He sees fit. He has promised that if we trust in Him with all our heart and lean not to our own understanding, He will direct our path. This necessitates a close walk with God, but that is the only way in which it is possible for God to accomplish His purpose in our lives. God knows what is best for us; and if we will sincerely and honestly seek His will in all our undertakings and be guided thereby, we will save ourselves many disappointments and heartaches.

MEDITATIONS

PAUL GUIDED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT—Acts 16:6—Were forbidden of the Holy Ghost—Paul had a desire to preach the Word in Asia, but he was close enough to God for the Holy Ghost to make known to him that it was not the time to go there. God, knowing all things, knew that the people of Asia were not ready at that time to receive the gospel. Thus, we see how much better it is to have the mind of the Lord so that all our efforts can accomplish the most for God. Had Paul gone over into Asia, following his own desires, no doubt a lot of valuable time and energy would have been wasted; and not only that, but the people to whom God desired Paul to preach would have been denied the gospel and may have never accepted it. **Verse 7—But the Spirit suffered them not—**Here again the Spirit was able to make Paul know that Bithynia also was not ready to receive the gospel. Being able to know the mind of the Lord at all times was one of the reasons for the success of Paul's ministry wherever he went. **Verse 10—And after he had seen the vision—**Now we see why Paul was not permitted to go into Asia at that time, for the people of Macedonia were ripe for the gospel, and it was there that the Lord desired him to go. He went with all haste, and his labors resulted in the establishment of a Church of God at Thessalonica. Let us all strive earnestly for Holy Ghost leadership.

THE HOLY GHOST, OUR TEACHER—I Corinthians 2:12—
Now we have received—It is only through the Spirit that we are able to know the things that God would have us to do. It is only through the Spirit that we are able to interpret the Word correctly. We are agreed that the Scriptures have but one true interpretation, but we also know that all men do not interpret them the same; therefore, some of them cannot have the proper meaning of them. To have the wrong understanding of the Scriptures may be the cause of our losing our souls in a never-ending hell. Thus, it certainly behooves us to have the Spirit of God to be doubly sure that we are enjoying His leadership. **Verse 13—Which things also we speak**—The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God; therefore, we must be taught of the Holy Ghost the deep things of the Spirit. Let us always remember that the Word tells us, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments.” Education is to be desired and is really helpful when rightly used, but it can never take the place of Holy Ghost teaching.

SPIRITUAL THINGS FOOLISHNESS TO THE WORLD—I Corinthians 2:14—But the natural man receiveth not—The natural man, that is, the man who has not been born again into the family of God, is not able to understand spiritual things; they are foolishness to him. When Jesus told Nicodemus that he would have to be born again to enter the kingdom of heaven, he did not know what Jesus was talking about, because he did not have the Spirit of God. Just so it is with us today. We must have the Spirit and strive for His leadership in our everyday lives.

THE SPIRITUAL MAN JUDGETH ALL THINGS—I Corinthians 2:15—But he that is spiritual—He who is filled with the Spirit is able to judge spiritual things. He is able to detect false spirits and false teachers. He is able to recognize false doctrines and false interpretations of the Scriptures. The mere natural man is not able to judge or understand us in the things of the Spirit.

WE NEED THE ANOINTING OF THE SPIRIT—I John 2:27—
But the anointing—With the anointing of the Holy Ghost abiding in our hearts, we do not need to be ignorant to the things of God, for it is the work of the Holy Ghost to teach us. This verse does not mean that we are not to listen to the teachings of our pastor if he be a Spirit-filled man, for when he speaks, it really is not he, but the Spirit of God speaking through him. The thought God brings out here is that we need not go to some highly educated man of the world to study the Scriptures. Our teaching must come from the Holy Spirit, either by direct revelation to us, or through some of God’s Spirit-filled and Spirit-led people.

THE SPIRIT SPEAKS TO PAUL IN A VISION—Acts 18:9, 10—The Holy Spirit is indeed faithful and will never fail us as long as we diligently apply ourselves in the Lord's work. In this verse we see how Paul was encouraged to remain in Corinth in spite of all the opposition the enemy could bring to bear upon him, and many precious souls were added to the kingdom of God. His labors here resulted in the establishing of a true Church of God. Thus, we see that great things can be accomplished for God when we avail ourselves of the leadership He puts at our disposal.

THE SPIRIT ADVISES PAUL OF HIS WORK IN ROME—Acts 23:11—And the night following—The study of the labors of Paul in the service of the Lord reveals that he was ever led by the Spirit. Through the work of the Spirit in his life he was able to put first things first and to say cheerfully, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ." In these days of false prophets and deception, it is absolutely imperative that we have the leadership of the Holy Spirit to keep us on the strait and narrow way. Without Him we are likely to fall victims to some of the deceptive doctrines of Satan.

CONCLUSION

A careful study of this lesson should indelibly impress on our minds the necessity of having the leadership of the Holy Spirit in our lives. There never was a time when there was so much deception abroad in the land as there is today. The religion of Jesus Christ in all its purity has just about vanished from the earth, and in its place we have the kind of religion that permits one to do almost as he pleases as long as he keeps up his dues and attends church occasionally. This will help us to understand why Jesus said, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." On another occasion, He asked the question, "Will I find faith on the earth when I return?" This present state of affairs certainly points to the soon coming of the Lord Jesus to judge the world. Are you living every day so that you can say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"?

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why should we seek the Holy Spirit as soon as possible after we are converted?
2. Name some of the things that the Spirit will do for us.
3. What do we need to do to have God direct our every activity?
4. How are we able to detect false spirits or false doctrines?
5. Why cannot the natural man discern spiritual things?
6. Are you personally doing all you can to avail yourself of Holy Ghost leadership?

LESSON NUMBER SIX FOR AUGUST 11

THE FAMILY PERFORMS MIRACLES

Scriptures: II Kings 6:5, 6; 4:1-6; Acts 6:8; 8:6, 7.

II Kings 6:5 But as one was felling a beam, the ax head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed.

6 And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim.

II Kings 4:1 Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.

2 And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil.

3 Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few.

4 And when thou art come in, thou shalt

shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full.

5 So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out.

6 And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed.

Acts 6:8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

Acts 8:6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

Memory Verse: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.—John 14:12.

Aim: To show that the performing of miracles is a part of the work of the family of God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	II Kings 6:1-12	Thursday	Acts 28:1-11
Tuesday	II Kings 7:1-17	Friday	Mark 3
Wednesday	Mark 2	Saturday	Acts 19:1-12

INTRODUCTION

Why should it be thought that the day of miracles is past? We read in Malachi 3:6, "I am the Lord; I change not," and in Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." These scriptures plainly tell us that God is just as willing and able now to perform miracles for His trusting children as He ever was. God is no respecter of persons, and He is bound by His unchanging Word to do the same for us today as He did in the past under the same conditions. We are all familiar with the numerous miracles that He performed,

and, according to His Word, we are commanded to do the same. But there are certain conditions to be met. We must love God with all our hearts and keep every known commandment.

MEDITATIONS

THE AXE HEAD SWIMS—II Kings 6:5, 6—God is always ready and willing to minister to the needs of His trusting children. In this case, the loss of the axe head was a real hindrance to the work the sons of the prophets were engaged in, and, besides, the axe was a borrowed one, and the man had not the funds to repay the owner. The man came to Elisha, the man of God, and told him of his misfortune, confident that he would do something about it. His confidence was not in vain, for Elisha had compassion on him and prevailed upon God to make the axe head swim, so it was recovered. God is still doing the miraculous for the saints when the need arises. The writer could relate several instances in his own life where God miraculously came to his rescue in answer to prayer. He will do the same for all of us.

CONFIDENCE IN GOD—II Kings 4:1, 2—Here we see a real need that could not be met by natural means. The widow was about to lose her two sons to pay the debt of her late husband, for she had no money to pay. The husband had been a righteous man, and she came to Elisha with faith in God and told him of her unfortunate predicament. The only thing of value she had in her house was a pot of oil.

THE WIDOW'S OBEDIENCE—II Kings 4:3, 4—Note particularly that the widow set out immediately to do just as Elisha commanded her, without asking any questions. Elisha had the Spirit of God, and when he spoke, he spoke with power and authority, just the same as if God had spoken. The widow surely manifested faith by sending her sons to borrow all the empty vessels they could, to fill with oil out of the small pot she had in her house. It is the simple, child-like faith such as this widow manifested that pleases God and moves Him to supply our needs. God is more interested in us than we think and is desirous of seeing that our needs are supplied, and He will supply them if we exercise the faith.

THE WIDOW'S NEED SUPPLIED—II Kings 4:5, 6—The widow and her sons took the empty vessels into the house and shut the door, and she started to fill them from the pot of oil. Her faith paid off, and she filled all the empty vessels, and still there was oil in her pot. The widow, then, had more than enough oil to sell to get the money that was needed to pay the debt. What a mighty God we serve! God in His Word tells us to command Him concerning the works of His hands (Isaiah 45:11), and He also said, "Is there anything too hard for me?" We need to let God's Word become a part of us so that our confidence in Him cannot be shaken, and then we will be able to exercise faith that will enable God to work.

STEPHEN WORKS GREAT WONDERS—Acts 6:8—And Stephen, full of faith—We note this verse says that Stephen was full of faith and power, and these are the qualifications we need if we are to see miracles performed. Not everyone is going to be able to perform these miracles, for God gives gifts to men as He wills. It is His will to bestow the various gifts upon different members of each congregation of the church. (If the congregation we are a part of does not have these gifts, let us pray earnestly for this to become a reality.) It is our duty to pray for those who have the gifts that they might remain humble, low down at the Master's feet, so that God can use them for His honor and glory.

PHILIP PREACHES THE TRUTH—Acts 8:6, 7—The Word says that signs and wonders shall follow the preaching of the truth, and when these signs and wonders do not follow, at least in some degree, one may question whether the truth is truly being preached. Divine healing and miracles are definitely parts of the gospel, and ministers who preach under the anointing of the Spirit are going to preach these parts of it, too, and then we have a right to expect these signs and wonders to follow. We receive requests for prayer for healing and other needs from readers of *The Way of Truth* paper. We have in our files testimonies of healing, some of them instantaneous, from many states and other countries of the world.

CONCLUSION

Revelation 22:19 says, "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." So we plainly see how dangerous it is to tamper with the Word of God. We cannot disregard any of it but are commanded to live by every word of it. Since the Word makes provision for the working of miracles, it certainly behooves us to get close enough to God that miracles may take their rightful place in the ministry of God's Word.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Is the day of miracles past?
2. Why are so few miracles being performed now?
3. Name some of the promises of the Bible that assure us of God's willingness to work miracles in our day.
4. What are some of the conditions that have to be met?
5. In the case of the axe head, what conditions were met?
6. What inspired faith in the increasing of the oil?
7. What was the source of Stephen's power with God?
8. What can we do to bring about a great manifestation of the power of God in the working of miracles?

LESSON NUMBER SEVEN FOR AUGUST 18

THE FAMILY DOES PERSONAL WORK

Scriptures: John 1:40-49; Romans 9:1-3.

John 1:40 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

43 The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can

there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

Romans 9:1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

Memory Verse: The fruit of the righteous is as a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.—Proverbs 11:30.

Aim: To show the need of personal work by the family of God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Luke 10:25-37

Tuesday Acts 10:1-33

Wednesday Acts 9:32-43

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Philippians 1:1-14

Philippians 1:15-30

Luke 3:1-22

INTRODUCTION

We are unable to live unto ourselves. Our lives have an influence on those with whom we come in contact, for good or evil. Jesus said that we should let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven. We must live a consistent Christian life day by day so that the world will take note of us that we have been with Jesus. We should strive to so live that the religion of Jesus Christ will become attractive to the unsaved. The pure religion of Jesus Christ transforms the hearts of men and causes them to walk uprightly in the sight of God, thereby making them an asset to the community in which they live. The Christian is God's representative on the earth, and it is up to us to carry the gospel message to this lost and dying world. That is our commission, and we must not be neglectful in this part.

MEDITATIONS

ANDREW AND PETER RECOGNIZE THE MESSIAH—John 1:40, 41—Andrew had been listening to the preaching of John the Baptist and was very much touched by what he said about Christ; and when he said, “Behold the Lamb of God,” he followed Him and dwelt with Him the rest of the day. Andrew started doing personal work for the Lord right away, for he sought out his brother, Simon Peter, and told him of Jesus and that He was the promised Messiah. **Verse 42—And he brought him to Jesus**—When Peter came into the presence of Jesus, Jesus knew that Peter was to be one of the pillars of the Church; so he called him Cephas, that being the Greek word for stone. The personal work of Andrew bore fruit almost immediately.

PHILIP FOLLOWS JESUS—John 1:43, 44—The day following—Philip heeded the call of Jesus and followed Him. Jesus is calling men and women to follow Him today. Have you heeded the call? He says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” Oh, how important it is that we let Him in, so we may use our God-given talents to win other souls to Christ!

PHILIP BRINGS NATHANAEL—John 1:45, 46—Philip, too, began witnessing for Jesus right away, and his efforts were rewarded with another follower of Jesus. If we have the love of God down in our hearts, we are going to want to lead others to Christ. We know that it is not His will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. It is a real joy to the saints to see souls snatched from the kingdom of Satan and born into the kingdom of God. The Word tells us that there is more joy in heaven over one soul that repenteth than over ninety-nine righteous souls who need no repentance.

NATHANAEL REALIZES THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST—John 1:47-49—Nathanael evidently was a little doubtful at first as to whether Jesus was really the Christ, for he said, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” But he was honest at heart and really desired to know the truth, and after Jesus had talked with him a little while, he knew in his heart that he had found the Christ, and he exclaimed, “Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel.” It is highly essential that we ever keep our hearts open for truth, for we have God’s promise to make the truth known to us. Jesus said, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” Praise God for His faithfulness unto the children of men!

PAUL’S BURDEN—Romans 9:1-3—That I have great heaviness—Paul really carried a burden for lost souls. In one place we

read that for the space of three years he ceased not to warn everyone, night and day, with tears, to repent of their sins and believe the gospel. In these verses he felt so sorry for his Jewish brethren who were rejecting the love of Christ that he was willing for his own soul to be accursed from Christ if it would be the means of causing them to accept Jesus as their Savior. Can you imagine any greater devotion to the cause of Christ? We can see by this why Paul attained such a great measure of success in his work for the Lord. He was so sold out to God that nothing could stop him. This same enthusiasm today will work wonders for the cause of Christ. And remember, Dear Ones, there is nothing that will pay more dividends in the world to come than the work of winning souls. Our Memory Verse says, "He that winneth souls is wise." And in Daniel 12:3 we read, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

CONCLUSION

When the Lord saves us, He does not save us to settle down to a life of ease, for He has given us an armor, and He expects us to go forth and fight the good fight of faith. We are warned in His holy Word not to be at ease in Zion. If we, His children, do not carry this gospel message, how is the world to know of the saving grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? We have been likened to a city that is set on a hill that cannot be hidden; so we must let our light shine that the world may know that God still has a people on the earth who are not ashamed of Him and are willing to cry out against the sins of this wicked world. What we do we must do quickly, for the day is far spent, and the night is at hand when no man can work. Let us take this lesson to heart and pray earnestly to God for a greater soul burden and for a renewed determination to put forth a greater effort to point lost souls to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Are we able to live unto ourselves alone?
2. What do we mean by personal work?
3. Why is it necessary to sow beside all waters?
4. How were the first disciples won to the Lord?
5. Why should we desire a real hungering and thirsting after righteousness?
6. Name some of the things that enabled Paul to be so successful in his work for the Master.
7. What is the promised reward for winning souls?
8. What are you personally doing to lead others to the Lord?

LESSON NUMBER EIGHT FOR AUGUST 26

HELPERS IN THE FAMILY OF GOD

Scriptures: I Corinthians 12:28; Numbers 11:11, 14, 16; Philippians 2:25; Philemon 7, 10, 12, 13; I Corinthians 16:17, 18; Romans 16:3.

I Corinthians 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Numbers 11:11 And Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?

14 I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me.

16 And the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee.

Philippians 2:25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fel-

lowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

Philemon 7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

10 I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

12 Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:

13 Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel.

I Corinthians 16:17 I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied.

18 For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.

Romans 16:3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus.

Memory Verse: They helped every one his neighbour: and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage.—Isaiah 41:6.

Aim: To show that helpers are needed to accomplish the work of the family of God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Numbers 11	Thursday	Romans 16:16-27
Tuesday	I Corinthians 16:6-18	Friday	Acts 11:19-30
Wednesday	Philippians 2:18-30	Saturday	Exodus 17:8-16

INTRODUCTION

I Corinthians 3:9, "We are laborers together with God." God's saints should be one big family where all are interested in one another and working together for the upbuilding of the Church of God. Paul said that if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it, and if one be honored, all the members rejoice with it. In unity there is strength, and so much more can be accomplished when all the members of the Church are united with a single purpose in mind, that of carrying the soul-saving gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. Paul compares the members of the Church to our human body. We all know that the different members of our physical body are

in perfect harmony one with the other and are in complete subjection to our will. If one member is injured, the other members willingly share the added burden imposed upon them. This is the way God desires the members of His church, the body of Christ, to function. We need to be in complete subjection to His will so that the plan He has mapped out for our individual lives can be carried out in its entirety.

MEDITATIONS

GOD PLACES THE MEMBERS IN THE BODY—I Corinthians 12:28—God hath set some in the church—God is familiar with the talents and abilities of each one of us, and He reserves the right to place us in the body as it pleases Him. Helpers are necessary for the proper functioning of the family of God, and each one should be willing to assist gladly in the work of the Lord as opportunity presents itself. We cannot all be leaders; so let us gladly assume the role of helper as the Lord directs.

THE LORD GIVES MOSES HELPERS—Numbers 11:11, 14, 16—The task of looking after all the Israelites proved too much of a job for Moses, and he called on the Lord to help him out of the difficulty. God heard the petition of Moses and had him pick out seventy elders who were of good report, to which he assigned the various tasks to relieve him. In the human family, one member is not burdened with all the work, but each one does his part, and there is no hardship for anyone. God wants His family to function the same way, and it will when the Holy Spirit is allowed to have His way in every heart.

EPAPHRODITUS, A HELPER—Philippians 2:25—Epaphroditus, my ... companion in labour—Paul was a very busy man in the work of the Lord, and God supplied him with helpers to assist in his various duties. The epistle to the Philippians was written by Epaphroditus for him, and he also ministered to many of his other needs, thus relieving Paul so he could give more time to the preaching of the gospel. Almost any of us can perform the physical task, but only a few are able to carry the deep spiritual burdens.

PAUL'S LOVE FOR PHILEMON—Philemon 7—For we have great joy—Philemon was one of Paul's converts of Colosse and one which had in former times been of assistance to him in the work. It does give us great joy when we hear of one of the saints prospering in the Lord's work.

ONESIMUS, A HELPER—Philemon 10, 12, 13—Onesimus was a slave who belonged to Philemon and who had run away from his master. Onesimus visited Paul, and through his preaching became saved. When we get saved, it is necessary that we make our former wrongs right; so it became necessary for Onesimus to return to his rightful owner. Paul found him a valuable helper and would like to

have had him remain with him. We can never be happy leaving any of God's commands undone; so he sent Onesimus back to Philemon with this very touching epistle. The epistle illustrates the proper working of the family. In it we note the fervent love existing between the brethren. Paul had need of Onesimus, but the good of all concerned forbade his considering his own personal desires.

OTHER WAYS OF HELPING—I Corinthians 16:17, 18—Here Paul expresses his joy at the coming of an offering (II Corinthians 11:9). That which the Christians lacked for Paul was supplied by Stephanas and Fortunatus. Help is not always material things, for we note that Paul said they had refreshed his spirit. Sometimes only the words, "Be of good courage," or, "I have been praying for you," bring just the refreshment to our spirits that we need. All can be helpers by speaking a friendly greeting or word to cheer and comfort.

PHYSICAL HELPERS—Romans 16:3—Paul calls Priscilla and Aquila his helpers in Christ Jesus. Paul had become acquainted with this couple (Acts 18:2) when he was in Corinth. He had lived with them there and worked with them (Acts 20:34; II Thessalonians 3:8; I Corinthians 4:12). The child of God will not forget to aid that member of the family who is without the necessities of life.

CONCLUSION

Any place God gives us in which to labor is important, however small it may seem. One of the places which God gives is that of being a helper. This, in the family of God, may be spiritual or physical help. Moses was not able to hold up his hands continuously by his own strength; but when supported by his faithful helpers, Aaron and Hur, the victory was won (Exodus 17:12). We help to win victories when we pray for those who are attempting a particular work for God. The Lord does not intend for His children to carry heavy burdens alone, for there is always someone who can give spiritual and physical help. An expression of kindness and good cheer is a part of the helpers' work. It is much easier to go about some task when some child of God has said, "Be of good cheer," or, "Isn't there something I can do for you?" Helpers are always needed to accomplish the work of the family of God.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why should the children of God be just one big family?
2. Why are helpers needed in this family?
3. What is one of the greatest hindrances to the family's functioning according to God's plan?
4. Who places the different members in the body?
5. How did Moses have his need of assistants supplied?
6. Why was it necessary for Onesimus to return to Philemon?
7. Are you doing your best in the work God has chosen for you?

LESSON NUMBER NINE FOR SEPTEMBER 1

CASTING OUT DEVILS

Scriptures: Acts 8:5-8; 16:16-18; Matthew 17:14-21.

Acts 8:5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

8 And there was great joy in that city.

Acts 16:16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation.

18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

Matthew 17:14 And when they were

come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying,

15 Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is a lunatic, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

17 Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.

18 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?

20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

Memory Verse: Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

—Luke 9:1.

Aim: To teach that God gives power today to cast out devils.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Luke 9:1-9

Tuesday Luke 9:37-45

Wednesday Luke 4:30-41

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Matthew 8:28-34

Mark 5:1-15

Matthew 17:14-23

INTRODUCTION

We know that God's Word is forever settled in heaven and that it does not change with the years. Jesus cast out many devils; and before He left this earth, He commissioned His followers to cast out devils likewise. We are commanded to exercise this power today. There are many more people possessed with the devil than is generally supposed. Usually, these cases cannot be detected by the natural man. It takes the power of the Spirit to enable one to detect the spirit of the

devil in a person. To be devil-possessed is a terrible state for anyone to be in, for it is absolutely impossible for the victim to free himself of this evil spirit; and unless some child of God rebukes this evil spirit and casts him out, the victim is forever doomed to a never-ending hell. In modern Pentecostal religion, seekers are taught to beg for the infilling of the Spirit and the gift of tongues. When they get under the “power,” they often twitch, jerk, dance, become rigid, and shake. The power they are under is nothing but the power of the devil, and these deluded souls have been taken captive by him and will forever be his prisoners, unless, as previously stated, the power of God casts him out. Everything in the house of God is done in decency and in order.

MEDITATIONS

PHILIP PREACHES THE TRUTH—Acts 8:5, 6—And the people ... gave heed—According to these verses, Philip preached all the truth, which resulted in many souls being saved and miracles being wrought among the people. The Word plainly states that signs and wonders shall follow the preaching of the truth; and when they fail to follow, it is certain that the truth is not going forth under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. There is no power in a compromised gospel; it is only a form of godliness, devoid of power.

PHILIP CASTS OUT DEVILS—Acts 8:7—For unclean spirits—What a blessing to the men of the earth is the preaching of God’s holy Word! In this city we are told that many persons who were possessed with unclean spirits had them cast out so they could go on their way rejoicing. The spiritual state of man is ever so much more important than the physical state, and to be free from evil spirits is certainly a great blessing. Philip’s preaching brought physical healing to many who were sick, which was another great blessing.

PHILIP’S PREACHING BRINGS JOY—Acts 8:8—There was great joy—To them who receive it there is no greater joy than that brought by the preaching of the gospel. As Peter says, it is “joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Surely, it will make our cup run over and will enable us to “dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

PAUL CASTS OUT AN EVIL SPIRIT—Acts 16:16-18—When Paul and Silas were in the city of Philippi, a young woman with the ability to tell fortunes followed them and grieved Paul with her crying out, time and again, “These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation.” The devil is always doing everything he can to hinder the work of the Lord, and in this case Paul recognized that it was the devil in this young woman who was causing her to do this. We must ever be on our guard to detect the working of Satan; for if we do not, sometimes we may think his leadings are from God. In this instance, Paul recognized the devil at work, and in the name of the Lord, he cast the devil out, and the young woman became a normal person.

A FATHER'S REQUEST—Matthew 17:14-18—When Jesus and His disciples came down from the mount of transfiguration and met the multitude, a certain man besought Jesus on behalf of his son who was sore vexed with an evil spirit. The son was, indeed, in a very pitiful condition and was beyond help by human power; but, thank God, he was not beyond help by the mighty power of Jesus. Previously, the father had taken his son to the disciples, but they were not able to restore him to his normal mind. When the father took him to Jesus, He had compassion on the boy and cast out the devil, and he was healed from that very hour. Today we should have compassion on the poor, unfortunate souls who are under the power of Satan, and with prayer and fasting, if necessary, labor for their delivery. Jesus rebuked the disciples for their failure to cure the boy, so it behooves us to apply ourselves diligently in the Lord's service, or we, too, may be rebuked for our lack of power.

FAITH CAN REMOVE MOUNTAINS—Matthew 17:19-21—After Jesus cast the devil out of the boy, the disciples inquired of Him why it was they were not able to do it. He told them it was because of their unbelief, and that if they had faith as a grain of mustard seed, they would be able to remove mountains. We know that everything is possible to him that believeth, but to have that faith takes more than just wishing for it. It takes a close walk with God and a complete surrender of our will and ambitions unto His will. It takes implicit obedience to the will of God to have the faith that God intends for us.

CONCLUSION

There are many persons in the world today who are devil-possessed. Their only hope of delivery from this awful bondage of Satan is the fervent, effectual prayers of the saints of God. Jesus said we should go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, and He also said that in His name we should cast out devils. Thus, we see that preaching the gospel, healing the sick, and casting out devils go hand in hand. If we are not in a position to do this, it is up to us to study to show ourselves approved unto God so that we can do the things He has commanded us to do. If it were not possible for us to do these things, He would have never given us the command. It is part of His unchanging Word and must not be ignored.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Are there many devil-possessed people today?
2. How can we detect cases of devil possession?
3. How do we know the supernatural power of the modern Pentecostals is not of God?
4. Why was there joy in Samaria after Philip's preaching?
5. What is bound to follow the sincere preaching of the truth?
6. What is the power enabling one to tell fortunes?

LESSON NUMBER TEN FOR SEPTEMBER 8

THE FAMILY RECEIVES VISIONS FROM GOD

Scriptures: Joel 2:28; Revelation 1:1, 2; Acts 16:9, 10; II Samuel 7:4-8, 11-17.

Joel 2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.

Revelation 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

Acts 16:9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

II Samuel 7:4 And it came to pass that night, that the word of the Lord came unto Nathan, saying,

5 Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the Lord, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?

6 Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle.

7 In all the places wherein I have walked

with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar?

8 Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel:

11 And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house.

12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.

13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:

15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

17 According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

Memory Verse: 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.—John 16:13.

Aim: To show that God sometimes uses visions to direct His people and to show the necessity of making sure the visions are of God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Acts 11:1-8
Tuesday Joel 2:21-32
Wednesday Luke 24:13-27

Thursday Luke 1:11-23
Friday II Samuel 7:1-11
Saturday II Samuel 7:12-29

INTRODUCTION

God is ever mindful of His children, and He loves them even more than we love our children. He speaks to us through His Word and His Spirit, and sometimes through spiritual visions, He makes known to us things that are going to come to pass and things He desires for us to do. Before God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, He said, "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?" So God made known to Abraham that He was going to destroy these two cities because of their wickedness. This is in accord with our Memory Verse, as it says that the Spirit will show us things to come. I believe this verse just as much as any other part of the Bible, and I do believe that the Lord will keep His humble, trusting children advised beforehand of the coming of the outstanding spiritual events of the future. But in order to have this privilege extended to us, we must, with a perfect heart, walk humbly before the Lord at all times.

MEDITATIONS

THE VISION OF JOEL—Joel 2:28—And it shall come to pass—Some eight hundred years before Christ came, Joel made this prediction. The very fact that God said, "I will pour out my Spirit upon ALL flesh," indicates that the Spirit had been poured out on some already (in the Old Testament dispensation). Joel's prophecy had reference to the mighty outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, which paved the way for all people of all nations to have access to the Spirit. It is God's desire that every born-again soul be filled with the Holy Ghost, for Luke 11:13 says, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Therefore, it is imperative that we seek the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

THE VISION OF JOHN—Revelation 1:1, 2—For his faithfulness in declaring the gospel John was banished to the Isle of Patmos; thus, his enemies hoped to put an end to his work for the Master. While he was on this island, God gave him a wonderful revelation of the history of the Church of God, which is recorded for us in the book of Revelation. John is spoken of as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," which could only be because of his wholehearted devotion and service to his Master, for God is no respecter of persons.

THE VISION OF PAUL—Acts 16:9, 10—In this case God gave Paul a vision to show him what He wanted him to do. Paul had enough spiritual discernment to know that the vision was from the Lord, and he made immediate plans to do that which God had called him to do. We must ever keep in close contact with God so that we will know whether or not our visions or impressions are from the Lord, for the devil can give us visions and impressions; and if we are not careful, there is danger of being led astray.

THE VISION OF NATHAN—II Samuel 7:4-8—As David thought of the fine house he lived in while the ark of the Lord was dwelling in a tent, he thought that it would be a good idea to build a temple for the ark. He talked this matter over with the prophet, Nathan, and was encouraged by the prophet to do it. However, it was not God’s will that David build the temple; so one night in a vision the Lord made known to Nathan that David was not the one to build the house of the Lord and gave him the message that he should talk to King David. David was a man after God’s own heart, and God took great care to tell David that it was not best for him to build the temple. Thus, we can see just how important it is that we keep close to God so He can keep us from undertakings that will not prove profitable.

NATHAN FORETELLS THE FUTURE—II Samuel 7:11-17—In this same vision God revealed to Nathan events that were to come to pass in the rest of David’s reign and his son Solomon’s. He told David that He would establish his kingdom forever and that His mercies should extend down through the reign of Solomon. He also promised him that if Solomon committed iniquity he would be punished for it. David was probably disappointed because he was denied the privilege of building the temple, but humbly submitted to the will of God, knowing that God is all-wise and that He doeth all things well. God allowed him to accumulate much of the materials that were to be used in the building of the house of God, and this he did wholeheartedly as unto the Lord.

CONCLUSION

God has a divine plan for every one of His children, and uses the many ways to help us to know His will and prepare us for the performing of it. The topic for discussion in this lesson is visions, and we have shown how that in the past, visions have been an inspiration to the men of God and helped them to do the work they were called to perform. In response to a vision, Paul went to Macedonia and preached the gospel, winning many precious souls to Christ. Let us keep our experience up-to-date and desire above everything else in this world to do God’s will and to bring glory and honor to His name. Let us forget about ourselves and any worldly ambitions we may have, and should the Lord see fit to honor us with a vision, let us still keep humble, low down at the Master’s feet and be guided by the vision as God directs.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Does God give visions to everyone?
2. To whom does He give visions?
3. What is the purpose of them?
4. What is the significance of Joel’s prophecy?
5. Tell about the vision of John.
6. Do you think God will show us things to come?

LESSON NUMBER ELEVEN FOR SEPTEMBER 15

THE FAMILY SETTLES DIFFERENCES

Scriptures: Acts 15:1, 2, 5, 6, 11, 19, 20, 25, 28-31.

Acts 15:1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.

25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul.

28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

30 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:

31 Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

Memory Verse: Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.—Ephesians 4:3.

Aim: To show how God would have His family settle differences.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Matthew 5:21-30
Tuesday Matthew 18:15-22
Wednesday Ephesians 4:1-13

Thursday Acts 15:1-14
Friday Acts 15:15-29
Saturday Acts 15:30-41

INTRODUCTION

Differences of opinion are certain to arise from time to time among the children of God, just the same as in the human family; but we must never let these differences cause division in the family of God any more than in the home. Many times in the human family these differences end up in the divorce courts, but that is not God's will, for He says, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Neither is it His will that differences in the family of God result in separation. In the Word of God we can find a solution for every problem, and it certainly behooves us to put forth every effort to settle our differences according to the plan laid down in the Word.

In our lesson for today the early church was not in agreement on the question of circumcision, and they met together for a discussion of this difference, which resulted in the establishment of the truth of God on this question. So it is possible for all differences to be settled by waiting before God in earnestness and sincerity until the truth is revealed. The Word says that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth, and we must lay hold of this promise, for we know that He will not lead us into error. Paul says for us all to speak the same thing and not to allow any divisions among us, but to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and judgment. If this were not possible, this command would not be in the Bible; and since it is in there, we must strive with all our might to make it a reality.

MEDITATIONS

THE DISSENSION OVER CIRCUMCISION—Acts 15:1, 2—Some of the men from Judaea came down to Antioch and preached to the Gentiles that it was necessary for them to be circumcised in order to be saved. This was not the truth, and Paul did everything that he could to persuade the brethren from Judaea that they were wrong in this matter but to no avail. However, he did not do what so many would have done, withdraw from them; he went to Jerusalem and conferred with the apostles there. He knew by the Spirit that he was correct in his stand, and he was determined by the help of God to get the truth to the church at Antioch.

CONVERTED PHARISEES UPHOLD CIRCUMCISION—Acts 15:5—There rose up—These recently-converted Pharisees clung to the law of circumcision, not yet having understood that the death of Christ on the cross did away with the ceremonial part of the Mosaic law.

THE CONFERENCE—Acts 15:6, 11—The apostles and elders—Peter had been given a vision in Joppa of a sheet with “all manner of fourfooted beasts” in it. This included “unclean” animals, and through this vision God prepared Peter to go to Caesarea to the home of Cornelius, a Gentile, and there Cornelius and others of his household received the Spirit of God.

When Peter returned to Jerusalem, “they that were of the circumcision contended with him,” but Peter pointed out how God had given the Spirit to the Gentiles, even as He had to them, and he asks, “What was I, that I could withstand God?” (Acts 11).

Peter again relates this experience to the people gathered to discuss the problem at hand. “Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul” (Verse 12).

THE DECISION—Acts 15:19, 20—Paul followed Peter and told of the marvelous way the Lord had blessed his preaching to the Gentiles

and of the many miracles and wonders that had been performed among them. James, one of the pillars of the church, then arose and said, "My sentence is that we trouble them not, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: but that we write unto them to abstain from idols and from fornication and from things strangled and from blood."

THE RESULT—Acts 15:25, 28, 29—Note this verse says they were "assembled with one accord." That is, there was but one desire and that was to arrive at the truth. God blessed them in their efforts, and the truth was established. God is more desirous that we have truth than we are to receive it; and if we will humbly seek it with all our hearts, we are bound to receive it. In this case they were happy when they reached their decision, and they sent chosen men, who had hazarded their lives for the name of Christ, with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch to deliver in person the letter to the saints. All differences were settled in a manner that was pleasing to God, and the church remained united. The Word tells us that we must strive to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and to strive means to put forth real effort.

THE LETTER RECEIVED—Acts 15:30, 31—On arriving at this place, they assembled the multitude together and read to it the letter from the church at Jerusalem. The letter was received with rejoicing, and the dissension over circumcision was removed so that the work once more could move ahead unhindered.

CONCLUSION

The study of this lesson gives us a little insight into the plan God would have us to follow in settling the differences that arise from time to time in the family of God. Differences should be settled at the start, for the devil has a way of making them grow; and if they are not gotten out of the way, they are likely to grow into insurmountable obstacles. This will eventually result in division, which is sin and a great hindrance to the work of the Lord. Let us pray for a real hungering and thirsting after righteousness and a desire for the truth of God's Word above everything else in the world. Only the pure, unadulterated truth will see us through, for the Word says, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why do differences arise among God's people?
2. What was the cause of the difference mentioned in this lesson?
3. Name some hindrances to settlement.
4. Why is division among God's people sin?
5. Why should differences be settled promptly?

LESSON NUMBER TWELVE FOR SEPTEMBER 22

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Scriptures: Acts 13:2, 4-12, 44-48; 14:8-10, 27.

Acts 13:2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.

6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus:

7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

10 And said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

12 Then the deputy, when he saw what

was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Acts 14:8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

9 The same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

Memory Verse: Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

—Matthew 28:19, 20.

Aim: To show what can be accomplished through a Spirit-filled ministry.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Matthew 28:9-20	Thursday	Acts 13:14-26
Tuesday	Mark 16:9-20	Friday	Acts 13:27-39
Wednesday	Acts 13:1-13	Saturday	Acts 13:40-52

INTRODUCTION

Paul was a powerful leader, and through his untiring efforts, churches were established over most of the then-known world. He was so filled with the love of Christ and had such a burden for lost souls that nothing could turn him aside from the task of carrying the gospel. He was so filled with the Spirit of God that he could say, "But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." In other words, he was completely sold out to God and had unbounded faith in his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and the fact that there is but one thing needful was indeed a reality to him. You simply cannot stop a man with all these good qualities. In recounting his persecutions and hindrances he was able to say, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received from the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God." A review of the activities of this dear warrior of the cross should encourage us to be more diligent in carrying the gospel message to the poor, lost souls all around us. The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are so few, and the time is so short that we dare not be idle, but must make every moment count for God.

MEDITATIONS

THE HOLY GHOST CALLS PAUL AND BARNABAS—Acts 13:2, 4—Here we have a group of saints who were led by the Holy Ghost and were able to hear the voice of God. We note that they did not hastily send Paul and Barnabas away on this missionary journey, but they fasted and prayed that they might be sure they were being led of the Lord. We, too, should exercise the same precaution and be sure that we are being led by the Spirit. Paul found it necessary to fast often in his work; and if it was necessary for him to fast, we cannot do less and expect to be successful in the Christian race.

FALSE PROPHET HINDERS—Acts 13:5-8—Which was with the deputy—We note that Paul was confronted with a false prophet by the name of Barjesus, whom the devil was using to hinder the work of the Lord by trying to persuade Paulus that the things Paul preached were not so. It is the devil's business to try to hinder wher-

ever possible, but we must steadfastly resist him in the name of the Lord and never permit him to discourage us or turn us aside from the work at hand. **Verses 9, 10**—Paul was full of the Holy Ghost, and through the Spirit he was able to look right into this false prophet's heart and read his very character, for there is nothing hidden from God. Paul rebuked him for his wickedness and commanded him to cease perverting the ways of the Lord.

JUDGMENT PASSED UPON HIM—Acts 13:11—And now, behold—It does not pay to interfere with the work of the Lord. Many times men have been struck dead for interfering with God's work. Paul, being filled with the Holy Ghost, was able to pronounce judgment on this wicked man. The Holy Spirit will enable us of today to keep our work clean by pointing out to us those who have evil spirits and who are not walking in the true light of the gospel.

THE DEPUTY CONVINCED—Acts 13:12—When the deputy—The Lord works in divers ways His wonders to perform. As a result of the sorcerer's being struck blind, the deputy was converted. When the Spirit of God is given free course in our lives, there is bound to be much accomplished for God.

PAUL TURNS TO THE GENTILES—Acts 13:44, 45—On the previous sabbath, Paul preached to a mixed group of Jews and Gentiles. The Gentiles were so impressed by what they heard that they requested Paul to preach the same words to them the following sabbath, and practically the whole city came out to hear him. His preaching brought joy to the Gentiles who accepted it and anger to the Jews who rejected it. The preaching of the Word is always good to accomplish God's purpose. **Verse 46**—The Jews were very bitter against the preaching of Paul and spoke perverse things and blasphemies against him. But Paul waxed bold and declared unto them that since they did not seem to desire to have eternal life, he would henceforth take the gospel to the Gentiles. **Verse 48—And when the Gentiles heard**—Many of the Gentiles accepted the teachings of Paul and were saved. This verse says that they were glad for the preaching and glorified the Word of the Lord. The gospel always brings great joy to all who receive it into their hearts, and that is why it is spoken of in the Bible as "glad tidings."

THE IMPOTENT MAN HEALED—Acts 14:8-10—When the entire gospel is preached, it will include divine healing and miracles; so it was only natural for miracles to follow the preaching of Paul. This man had been crippled from birth, but he was giving heed to the words of Paul, and they inspired him that he had faith to be healed. As Paul beheld his earnestness, he was moved by the Spirit to say in a loud voice, "Stand upright on thy feet." He was healed immediately, and he leaped and walked. There is nothing that will create more

interest in the gospel than for the sick to be healed and the lame made to walk and blind to see.

THE HOMECOMING—Acts 14:27—And when they were come—In due time Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, from where they had started on their missionary journey. Their trip had been highly successful, and many souls had been saved and churches started. Also, devils had been cast out and miracles performed. What a wonderful meeting it must have been as the saints listened to Paul recount the many exciting experiences they had! Paul suffered a lot of persecutions on this trip and had even been stoned, drawn out of the city and left for dead, but the miraculous power of God restored him to health and permitted him to go on his way rejoicing.

THE GOSPEL IS FOR ALL—Matthew 28:19, 20—Teach all nations—Jesus was not speaking to just the twelve when He said to go into all the world and teach all nations. This commission was given to the Church as a whole. Of course, not everyone is called to preach, but everyone has a job to do.

The apostle Paul, along with his co-workers, Timothy, Titus, Barnabas, Silas, Luke, and others, did a wonderful work in their day.

CONCLUSION

The accomplishments of Paul and Barnabas on this first missionary trip give us some idea of what can be accomplished when men are filled with the Holy Ghost and trusting implicitly in His leadership. When God calls us to some particular work, He will supply the grace and the courage and everything else that will be needed so the work can be performed in a manner that will be pleasing in the sight of the Lord. Many times we may think that our work has been a failure as we are not able to see the hidden influences that may be working; only eternity will reveal the measure of success or failure.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What made Paul a really great missionary?
2. Why was there either a riot or a revival wherever he went?
3. Give some of the qualifications that made him great.
4. How did he happen to make this journey?
5. How was Paul able to pronounce judgment upon the false prophet?
6. What was the beneficial result of this miracle?
7. Why did Paul decide to cease preaching to the Jews and turn to the Gentiles?
8. Name three miracles that occurred on this journey.

LESSON NUMBER THIRTEEN FOR SEPTEMBER 29

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Scriptures: Acts 15:35, 36; 16:1-5, 10; 17:1, 4, 15, 16; 18:1, 4; Romans 15:20; I Corinthians 3:10; 4:15.

Acts 15:35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

36 And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.

Acts 16:1 Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:

2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

Acts 17:1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they

came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews.

4 And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

15 And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

Acts 18:1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth.

4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

Romans 15:20 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation.

I Corinthians 3:10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

I Corinthians 4:15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

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

Aim: To show that the consistent preaching of the Word will bring results and that God's Word will not return unto Him void.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	I Corinthians 3:1-12	Thursday	Acts 17:1-15
Tuesday	I Corinthians 3:13-23	Friday	Acts 17:16-34
Wednesday	I Corinthians 4:1-21	Saturday	Acts 18:1-17

INTRODUCTION

We know that it is not God's will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and to the knowledge of truth. In order for people to become aware of their need of God, it is necessary for someone to preach the gospel to them, for the Word says it pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. Last week's Memory Verse says that we should go and teach all nations all things whatsoever Christ taught His disciples. Before we can do this, it is necessary that we know what the Word says; so we must study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Surely, salvation is the greatest gift that was ever bestowed upon mankind, and we who have received this priceless blessing should have a burning desire to tell others so that they might want it, too. The world has become drunken with the pleasures of life, with never a thought of our heavenly Father, who has created all these things they are enjoying. What a sad awakening is in store for those who have permitted their affections to become entwined around the things of the world, while their souls are starving for the love of God! There never has been a time when the missionary spirit among saints was more needful than it is now; and unless we awaken to the need of the hour and pray down a revival from heaven, the long-looked-for day of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to judge the world will soon be a reality.

MEDITATIONS

PAUL'S WORK IN ANTIOCH—Acts 15:35—Paul also and Barnabas—After Paul returned from his first missionary journey, he remained in Antioch, strengthening and encouraging the new converts. This is a very necessary part of our work if we expect to see the newly born converts stay saved. They need our guiding hand until they become established in the faith. **Verse 36—And some days later**—It seems that God gave Paul a burden for the new churches that were established under his preaching, and he decided to visit them and encourage them to keep up the good fight of faith. It is so easy to let our spiritual ardor wane that we need to have our spiritual minds stirred up quite often.

TIMOTHY JOINS PAUL AND SILAS—Acts 16:1-4—This is the same Timothy to whom Paul wrote two epistles in the Bible bearing his name. On account of his early training by his godly mother, even though Timothy was quite young, Paul desired him for a helper in his work. Paul says, "I am made all things to all men that I might by all means save some." With this thought in mind, he required Timothy to be circumcised, not that it had any bearing on his salvation, but that it might not be a stumbling block to some. The needs of the gospel come first, and we must be willing to meet any condition that will fur-

ther the cause of Christ. **Verse 5—And so were the churches—**Through the faithful and conscientious efforts of Paul, many churches were established in this area and were daily added to. The Lord has promised to reward His faithful workers, and to see precious souls saved is the most joyous reward anyone can possibly have.

PAUL'S VISION—Acts 16:10—And after he had seen—In a vision Paul saw a man of Macedonia calling for him to come over and help him. Paul was sure this vision was of the Lord, and he immediately proceeded to go. Here we have the story of the beginning of the first church in Europe. A woman by the name of Lydia, whom Paul met at a prayer meeting beside a river, took Paul and Silas into her home and lodged them. From this simple beginning came the church at Philippi, thus showing that no opportunity, however small, should be neglected to tell the gospel story.

PAUL AT THESSALONICA—Acts 17:1, 4—Paul went up into the synagogue and preached Christ for three sabbath days. Not many of the Jews believed, but a great many of the Greeks were saved, thus paving the way for a thriving Church of God at this place. As mentioned previously, the establishing of churches was Paul's calling, and in this he was highly successful. It pays to stay close to the work God calls us to do.

PAUL AT ATHENS—Acts 17:15, 16—This city was given over almost entirely to idolatry; and as Paul realized this pitiful condition, his spirit stirred within him. It is said that the Athenians spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or hear some new thing; so they gladly listened to Paul to know what this new doctrine was. It was at this place that Paul delivered the memorable sermon on Mars' hill. Only a very few accepted Christ, and we have no record of a church being established.

PAUL AT CORINTH—Acts 18:1, 4—Here again Paul began by preaching in the synagogue but received much opposition. However, there were many honest souls in this place, and in a vision God spoke to Paul, telling him not to hold his peace and not to be afraid, for He had much people in this city and that no man should harm him. Paul preached the gospel in this city for a year and a half with great success and established the Church of God at Corinth.

PAUL'S SPECIAL WORK—Romans 15:20—Yea, so have I strived—It was Paul's calling to go into new fields and plant the gospel rather than to preach where it had already been preached. **I Corinthians 3:10—According to the grace—**Paul was sure of his calling and by the grace of God he knew that the foundation which he laid was right and according to the Word of God. How sure we all ought to be that any doctrine we teach or advocate is absolutely the truth and

nothing but the truth! In this verse Paul warns them who follow him to be careful they build on his foundation, that the structure may be a Church of God, pure and without blemish. **I Corinthians 4:15—For though ye have**—We may have many instructors, Paul says, but not many who will preach the gospel as a father out of love for our souls with no thought of present reward. Today, many are preaching merely for the money they get out of it and do not have the soul burden that is necessary for the called-of-God minister to have.

THE MEMORY VERSE—II Timothy 4:7—I have finished—Paul continued his faithful ministry, making at least one more missionary journey, and was, according to tradition, beheaded in Rome. Nearing the end of his earthly journey he was able to say, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” What a wonderful testimony! May each of us strive to have a like testimony when it comes time for us to leave the field of battle.

CONCLUSION

The study of this lesson shows us that the consistent preaching of the Word by and under the power and anointing of the Spirit does produce results. It also shows us the necessity of being led by the Spirit into the particular place God would have us to labor. He knows the hearts of the people and the time that is best suited for their hearing and accepting the truth.

Paul was obedient to the last commission, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” Paul was led by the Spirit in all that he did and into each place he labored. He was obedient to the heavenly vision given him, and through his efforts churches were established in all the surrounding countries.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Through what avenue does it please God to save men?
2. What is one great cause of the people’s being uninterested in the truth?
3. Is the missionary spirit needed today?
4. Why is it advisable to visit and encourage new congregations?
5. What was Paul’s calling?
6. What is a preacher’s most joyous reward?
7. What stirred Paul’s spirit at Athens?
8. To what would you attribute much of Paul’s success?

Name _____

Class _____

The Family of God at Work

ADULT & YOUNG PEOPLE

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