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No. 4

Enemies of the Family of God

Adult and Young People's Quarterly

INTRODUCTION

A mere head knowledge of the Scriptures is of no value to anyone. It is only as the true meaning of the Scriptures is translated into Christian action and living that the Word becomes profitable. We hope by this quarter's lessons to make a proper application of the meaning of the Scriptures in everyday life and to encourage the student to accept them for his very own. Jesus set the true example before us by His life on this earth. He walked blamelessly in the presence of the greatest temptations that all powers of hell could bring against Him. He did not accumulate a great amount of wealth; He did not boast of a great intellectual attainment. His role was service to mankind, while at the same time, He was bringing to light the true Word of God in its proper translation. We should seek with all our powers to imitate the life that Jesus lived. This involves one of the hardest things, it seems, that man has to do, that is the denial of self. We recall the words of Jesus when He said that if any man will be His disciple he must deny himself. If we have not arrived at the place in our Christian experience where we can deny self, we have not arrived at the place where we can give the greatest service in the kingdom of God and receive unto ourselves the greatest amount of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

We send these lessons forth with the hope that they will help each one to a deeper life in the things of God, also that they will give inspiration to a greater life of service. Anyone who will let the Word of God shine out through his life, unhindered, is certain to be a blessing wherever he may be.

THE WAY OF TRUTH

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PUBLISHERS OF CHURCH OF GOD LITERATURE

LESSON NUMBER ONE FOR OCTOBER 6

THE CHRISTIAN ON THE BATTLEFIELD

Scriptures: Ephesians 6:10-20.

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the prepara-

tion of the gospel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

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

Aim: To show that the Christian must be prepared to meet his enemies on the battlefield.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	John 17	Thursday	Acts 25
Tuesday	II Thessalonians 2	Friday	Acts 26
Wednesday	Acts 24	Saturday	Ephesians 6

INTRODUCTION

History reveals to us much about the carnal conflict of man in which much blood has been shed. However, the warfare we are to study today is of an entirely different nature yet very deadly in its engagements. Every battle engages a foe whose sinister motive is the destruction of the human soul. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that we teach the Christian to put on the whole armor of God that he may be able to stand. God saves man that he may become a stalwart soldier of the cross and serve victoriously and valiantly in the army of the Lord. Many aspire to be soldiers of the cross but fail to prepare for the battles properly. No man or combination of men can win in this great conflict by themselves or with a partial armor. We all need the help of almighty God, for it is He who gives the power to win in battles. Let every soldier make sure that he has on the whole armor; then let him use it fearlessly.

MEDITATIONS

THE BRETHREN EXHORTED—Ephesians 6:10—Be strong in the Lord—Paul tells us in Romans 1:17 that the just shall live by faith. This is ordained by God, and victory can come by no other means. If we believe the whole Word of God without wavering, we are certain to be strong in the Lord and to be entrusted with a due portion of the power of God's might. Remember, God is almighty. This verse of scripture, operating in the life of a soldier of the cross, is indispensable to his success.

FULL EQUIPMENT IMPERATIVE—Ephesians 6:11—The whole armor—Paul had some association with soldiers; therefore, it is no surprise that he used some military terms to describe spiritual values. The spirit realm is a realm all its own about which we know little, only as it is described to us in comparative natural terms. Thus, there is a warfare in the spiritual realm, but it is quite different from the carnal warfares of this world. The devil is permitted to attack the army of the Lord, but he cannot be repulsed by carnal weapons. In Jesus Christ we have a leader and power that will enable us to overcome every one of his attacks. Seldom has anyone ever seen Satan, but many have felt his wicked presence and have fought him almost hand to hand. Any soul who puts on all the armor of God can withstand any and all attacks of Satan.

CHILDREN OF LIGHT OPPOSING CHILDREN OF DARKNESS—Ephesians 6:12—Wrestle not against flesh—There are but two distinct families in the earth—the children of darkness, or Satan, and the children of light, or God. The children of Satan are divided into many parts, but their purposes and intents are the same. The family of God, being one, faces all the combined forces of the children of darkness; but many times the unlearned children of light mistake a transformed part of Satan's kingdom for the kingdom of God, and thus are deceived. Only through continued prayer and humble submission to God can a soldier of the cross keep himself clear from the entangling snares of the devil. Do not discount the power of Satan, for he far surpasses the natural strength of any man or group of men. "Spiritual wickedness in high places" is the ungodly conduct of the leaders of the great religious organizations, the pope, the bishops, and the preachers, who have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof. Against these forces the child of light must learn to wage a successful warfare.

TO STAND IS THE GOAL—Ephesians 6:13—Having done all—We are assured that by taking the whole armor of God we will be able to stand. After Satan has done his worst to us, God's armor will give us the protection that will enable us to be still standing when the smoke of battle clears away.

THE ARMOR DESCRIBED—Ephesians 6:14—Loins girt about with truth—The great necessity of knowing the truth of the Word of God is little appreciated, and often we are told it is not what we believe, but how sincere we are. Sincerity is not enough! Without truth we cannot stand. God will give truth to everyone who honestly seeks it with all his heart. **The breastplate of righteousness**—Knowing the truth in sincerity is certain to be followed by a flow of righteous acts, which are a defense to the child of light. **Verse 15—The gospel of peace**—The feet are not a beautiful part of the body, but how necessary they are, and how incapacitated anyone is if his feet are bruised with rocks or penetrated with thorns and briars! What a marvelous protection the peace of God is to the standing ability of any man. In Romans 12:18 we read, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” **Verse 16—Shield of faith**—Unwavering faith cannot be penetrated by any thrust or dart of the devil. This is a great encouragement to the soldier of the cross. Faith is absolutely essential in the Christian armor. **Verse 17—Helmet of salvation**—Salvation is here intended to mean the entire divine provision of God for man—deliverance from transgression and inbred sin, deliverance from the diseases of the body, and the providential supply of daily needs. Truly, salvation protects the vitality of life as a helmet protects the most important member, the head. **Sword of the Spirit**—II Timothy 2:15 requires that we study the Word of God so that we may be informed in regard to the will of God for man. He who has the Word in his heart has a mighty offensive weapon in the warfare against spiritual wickedness in high places.

PRAYER REQUIRED—Ephesians 6:18—Praying always—Prayer is the communicative system in the army of the Lord. The soldier must keep in constant contact with the Leader if he is to win the battle. Repeating a few words and calling it a prayer does not constitute a part of the armor of a Christian. Supplication in prayer in the Spirit suggests an earnestness and an entreaty that will not be denied. No soldier stands alone. Someone, somewhere is praying for him. It is the duty of every soldier of the cross, when he sees a fellow soldier hard pressed in battle, to communicate with the Captain of the army about it and ask for help for him.

PAUL'S APPEAL—Ephesians 6:19—And for me—Paul was a valiant soldier of the cross and fought many successful battles. He knew the power of the enemy and made request of his fellow soldiers that they call on the Master for reinforcements for him. Any man who opens his mouth boldly to declare the mystery of the gospel is certain to engage the enemy in hot combat. **Verse 20—Ambassador in bonds**—This is the greatest calling on earth, a representative of God's kingdom. Though Paul found himself in a literal prison, neither his spirit was bound nor the Word of God. In such circumstances he still spoke boldly.

CONCLUSION

It is of the utmost importance that the Christian catch the significance of this very important lesson. No man can make it through to heaven on another man's experience. He himself, along the pathway of life, must meet the ambushes of the devil and in actual spiritual conflict overcome Satan. Jesus said, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne." The Christian must learn to rejoice in the battle, and until he does, he cannot be classed as a victorious, successful soldier. And we must not get the idea that a battle with Satan is self-defense. No! We must come to the place where we wage an aggressive warfare, putting Satan to flight and rescuing precious souls held by him.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is the nature of the armor of God?
 2. Name the various parts of the armor.
 3. What is the "sword of the Spirit"?
 4. What part of the armor is it that never fails to stop any dart or thrust of the devil?
 5. What is the great danger of having on only a part of the armor?
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LESSON NUMBER TWO FOR OCTOBER 13

THE CHRISTIAN FACES DISCOURAGEMENT

Scriptures: James 1:2-7, 12; I Peter 4:12; Hebrews 12:11-15.

James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

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

I Peter 4:12 Beloved, think it not

strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.

Hebrews 12:11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby may be defiled.

Memory Verse: I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.—Philippians 4:13.

Aim: To acquaint the pupil with the nature of discouragement and to show how he can overcome it.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Psalm 42	Thursday	Joshua 7
Tuesday	I Kings 19	Friday	Mark 15
Wednesday	Philippians 4	Saturday	James 1

INTRODUCTION

It seems that it is natural for most human beings to follow the lines of life in which they encounter the least resistance. They do not desire to enter the experiences of life that require struggling and battling to survive. Even so, hard places in life are certain to come to us all, and unless we are prepared to meet them, discouragement is sure to come. Discouragement is not the solution to the problem, but only adds to the burden already at hand, and if not recognized and put to rout, it will bring defeat. In this lesson we desire to help the student to rise above discouragement to the point where he not only can live a more successful life himself, but also may be able to help some other hard-pressed soldier of the cross.

MEDITATIONS

THE CORRECT ATTITUDE—James 1:2—Count it all joy—Any misfortune or reverse in life, in itself, does not bring joy to our hearts, but having as great a God as we have, we are persuaded that each thing that comes our way is allowed by God, and He will see to it that it works out for our own good. Paul said (Philippians 1:12) that the things which happened to him were for the furtherance of the gospel. In the tests of life we must draw joy from the anticipation of the victory that is sure to come if we stay true to God.

TRIALS DEVELOP PATIENCE—James 1:3—Worketh patience—There is always a danger that a trial will develop discouragement, but it is expected by God that we face it with courage and suffer victoriously whatever may come; thus, our patience is increased.

PERFECTION, THE GOAL—James 1:4—Wanting nothing—The standard of perfection is Christ, and we must strive to attain to His stature. Therefore, we should learn to appreciate and be grateful for every trial that comes to us. The devil is intended as a stepping-stone to higher ground and always should be used as such. In Hebrews 5:8 we read that though Christ was a Son, He learned obedience by the things He suffered. Let us arm ourselves with the same mind.

WISDOM TO BE SOUGHT—James 1:5—If any of you lack wisdom—The Fountainhead of all wisdom is God. He issues wisdom to those who seek it, regardless of personality. It is the will of God that each one of us have an abundance of wisdom for every task that we face. Wisdom is not knowledge but power to use knowledge in a profitable manner.

A STEADY, UNWAVERING FAITH REQUIRED—James 1:6—Ask in faith—God is invisible because His glory is too great to be seen by man. Thus, man has some difficulty in believing in this invisible Being, even though there is abundant evidence of His existence everywhere we look. **Verse 7—Shall receive—**If the devil can cause us to doubt God momentarily we then lose the favor of God, and the thing we desire of Him will not be forthcoming. This opens the way for discouragement, which is the thing the devil desires, for he knows if he can inject discouragement, he has a better chance of defeating the Christian. We must learn to stand steady in the midst of the storms of life.

BLESSINGS FOLLOW ENDURANCE—James 1:12—That endureth temptation—In physical life the body grows and gets strong only as it is used. So is the spiritual life. If we do not exercise our spirit in overcoming Satan, we are sure to get weak and die. The crown of life awaits the overcomer at the end of life's way and is offered to all men, regardless of nationality or color.

TRIALS NOT UNUSUAL—I Peter 4:12—Think it not strange—Too often the Christian thinks because the force of trial surrounds him, he has displeased God or has backslidden. Maybe the day before he was on the mountaintop rejoicing in his salvation, but now everything is bleak and bare as a desert. Peter says this is not strange or unusual; therefore, do not become discouraged, but march on in God's army just the same as though nothing had happened. Instead of grief, exhibit joy, for the trial is plain evidence that the hand of God is upon you.

CHASTENING PRODUCES RIGHTEOUSNESS—Hebrews 12:11—Seemeth to be joyous—It is natural for us to avoid difficulty and to seek ease and pleasure, but the Christian, as a soldier in God's army, is sure to meet hardship. But always rest assured that God will not allow temptation beyond our strength (I Corinthians 10:13). God is always pleased with any righteous acts; therefore, He labors with us to the end that our lives may be abundant in them. This explains the reason for the trials of life.

DOING OUR PART—Hebrews 12:12—Lift up the hands—The devil knows well what a temptation it is to be guided by our feelings.

Therefore, he seeks to give us feelings that lead to discouragement and ultimate defeat. A wise Christian at once resists bad feelings and travels on just the same as though nothing had happened. Joy will soon return. **Verse 13—Make straight paths**—If a Christian is loaded down with discouragement, he cannot be a good example to the world nor to any other struggling soldier of the cross. So each day, regardless of our feelings or the circumstances of life, let us walk in the straight paths Christ helps us to choose. In so doing we will help some other injured soldier.

A RULE FOR SUCCESS—Hebrews 12:14—Follow peace—Peace is something that all men desire, but to which so few attain. It is human to want to defend ourselves, but such is not the gospel way. Strife stops at once when we refuse to strive. Holiness, the excellent state of sinlessness, is also the natural state of the Christian, and God forewarns us here that without it, no man shall see the Lord.

DILIGENCE REQUIRED—Hebrews 12:15—Looking diligently—In a natural army, a constant lookout must be maintained in order to be prepared against sudden attacks of the enemy. So it is in God's army. We must watch with much prayer and study of the Word of God so we can repulse all the attacks of the devil.

CONCLUSION

It is astonishing how little people know about the great warfare that is going on all about us in the spiritual world. The reason is that, spiritually, men and women are asleep. They have been taught that salvation is the act of joining church or being baptized. They have never escaped from the prison of sin; therefore, they are not confronted with the hot and fiery trials of the devil. Even the Christians of our day seem not to be concerned about laboring in prayer and studying God's Word, and many are falling out of the race. Too often those who find Christ soon go back to the world when discouragement overtakes them, because of the lack of diligent labor in the kingdom of God. Discouragement is one of the great enemies of the family of God, and every member is certain to meet it. It must be overcome or failure will result. This lesson should be carefully studied to the end that this enemy will be defeated every time an attack is made.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is the purpose of trials in the life of a Christian?
2. What scriptures teach us that if we do our part, the devil cannot defeat us?
3. What is one part of the Christian's armor that is sure to make us defeat the enemy, discouragement?
4. What is our part in meeting a trial?
5. What is the purpose of the chastening of the Lord?

LESSON NUMBER THREE FOR OCTOBER 20

THE CHRISTIAN FACES THE WORLD

Scriptures: I John 2:15-17; James 4:4; I John 3:1; John 7:7; 15:19; 16:33; 17:15, 16.

I John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

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

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

him not.

John 7:7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

John 15:19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

John 17:15 I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Memory Verse: These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.—John 16:33.

Aim: To show the sharp contrast between the Christian and the world.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Luke 6:20-38
Tuesday James 4
Wednesday John 7

Thursday John 16
Friday John 17
Saturday Romans 12

INTRODUCTION

The children of Satan have always been far more numerous than the children of God. They are constantly trying to pull God's children off the strait and narrow way, because the holy life lived before them is a source of constant condemnation. Since the Christian, as long as he lives, must live in the world, he must learn to resist their efforts. It is necessary that the Christian know in detail the differences of living that exist between the people of God and the people of the world. The study of the Word of God gives all the information that is needed. So, we will study this lesson, not only to be informed on this subject, but also to learn how to overcome the world.

MEDITATIONS

NO AFFECTION FOR THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD—
I John 2:15—Love not the world—Men of unredeemed souls, in search of pleasure to fill the void caused by the absence of Christ, have turned to the material things God has created, setting their affections upon them. They are not satisfied in their own indulgence, but would also try to involve the Christian. God tells us in this scripture that anyone who has his affection upon the things of the world is not a Christian. We can depend upon this evidence. Let each one examine himself and make sure that his affection is not upon the things of the earth.

THINGS OF THE WORLD DESCRIBED—I John 2:16—Lust of the flesh—The lusts of the flesh are the desires of the flesh; and when the desires are overindulged in or wrongly indulged in, they produce sin and are condemned by God. Paul said he brought his body into subjection and kept it under the Spirit's guidance (I Corinthians 9:27). **The lust of the eyes—**It was the lust of the eyes that led David to the extreme sin of murder. To satisfy the eyes of men and to get admiration for themselves is why some women dress as they do. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out." **The pride of life—**Life in all its complexities offers many opportunities for the manifestation of pride: pride in the ability to sing, orate; pride in physical might, physical beauty, mental powers, etc. These all speak of the world.

WORLDLY PLEASURES TO PASS AWAY—I John 2:17—The world passeth away—False teachers are trying hard to teach the religious world that the earth will not pass away. "Let no man deceive you with vain words." The days of this world are numbered, and Christ, very soon, will appear to reward all according to their deeds. Do not set your affections on the things of this world! **Abideth forever—**God promises eternal life, without exception, to the soul who will humbly do His will. "Whosoever will may come!"

GOD'S ENEMIES—James 4:4—Enmity with God—To be a friend of the world is to fellowship the manner of life of worldly people. This manner of life is contrary to the Word of God; therefore, he who fellowships that kind of life is an enemy of God. There is a great gap between the Christian and the world. We need to learn this early in our Christian experience.

THE WORLD KNOWS NOT CHRIST—I John 3:1—World knoweth us not—He who is truly born of God is God's son, and he who has the Spirit has His nature. Therefore, the world could no more accept a child of God than they could accept Christ Himself, because the holy and clean life of the disciple of Christ condemns them.

THE WORLD VOID OF GOOD WORKS—John 7:7—Works thereof are evil—The people of the world have their standards and

call people's works "good," according to their standards; but, according to God's standard, their works are evil and will receive an evil reward in eternity.

THE WORLD HATES THE CHRISTIAN—John 15:19—The world hateth you—Often this hatred flares into violent demonstration, resulting in the destruction of much life. Back of it all, of course, are the Satanic powers of hell. Men could not perform such deeds if they were not partakers of the nature of the devil. How vastly different is the nature of the Christian from that of the man of the world! The world is determined to live after the flesh; the Christian is determined to live after the Spirit. There follows a never-ending conflict.

TRIBULATION PROMISED—John 16:33—Shall have tribulation—Christ lived in the world and faced the most violent persecutions, but in it all He never turned from the path, never committed one sin. We, by faith, are given the same Spirit that Christ had; therefore, we can overcome tribulation as He did. But let every Christian prepare himself for tribulation, for it is certain to come.

IN THE WORLD, BUT NOT OF IT—John 17:15—Keep them from the evil—The only hope of the world is the Christian, for he is the salt of the earth. When the Christian population decreases, as it is doing today, evil increases. The labor of a Christian is effectual only as he keeps himself unspotted from the world. Let us labor to this end that we might be preserved from the evil of the world.

CONCLUSION

A study of church history will reveal that the failures of religious moves for good through the years can be attributed to worldliness slowly eating its way into the lives of Christians. Usually the fault lies with the preacher, who fails to hold the standard of God's Word where it belongs. The Christian today needs to guard closely against the spirit of compromise, for there is more to attract and entice than ever before. Many of our religious organizations have degenerated into nothing more than worldly societies. God's people now, as always, are a separate and peculiar people. Some common enticements of our day are: the movie, gambling devices, outward adornment, cheap and trashy literature and pictures, television, internet, love for material things that are so numerous, etc. As Paul said he kept his body under, so we must learn the same lesson and do all that we can do to the glory of God.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Define worldliness.
2. What is the lust of the eyes?
3. What is the pride of life?
4. Why cannot we be friends of the world and God at the same time?
5. Why is it that a worldly person is usually uncomfortable in the presence of a Christian?

LESSON NUMBER FOUR FOR OCTOBER 27

THE CHRISTIAN FACES SICKNESS

Scriptures: Exodus 15:26b; Psalm 41:3; 103:3; Mark 16:17, 18; Acts 19:12; James 5:14, 15; I Peter 2:24.

Exodus 15:26b For I am the Lord that healeth thee.

Psalm 41:3 The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.

Psalm 103:3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.

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

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.

Acts 19:12 So that from his body were

brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

James 5:14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

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

I Peter 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Memory Verse: Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.—James 5:14, 15.

Aim: To teach the student his responsibility if he is attacked by sickness.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Isaiah 53	Thursday	James 5
Tuesday	Exodus 15	Friday	Psalm 103
Wednesday	Matthew 9:18-38	Saturday	Psalm 41

INTRODUCTION

True salvation delivers the soul from the clutches of Satan into the hands and power of God, and God desires to care for His children in every detail. This takes in every sickness. Men have gained some wisdom in regard to the human body. But if the body and soul (I Corinthians 6:20) belong to God, He has a right to say what shall be done with us in case of sickness. James 5:14, 15 gives the answer. We are given the privilege of trusting God for the help so often needed in our bodies. The Christian needs to learn God's great truth in regard to healing and give to the world the proper example of unwavering faith in God.

MEDITATIONS

HEALING ORIGINATES WITH GOD—Exodus 15:26b—The Lord that healeth thee—All true healing comes from God, but we

would not overlook the fact that the devil has a false healing which is so cunning that men are deceived. (Recall how the devil turned the rods of Pharaoh's magicians into snakes.) If a doctor operates, he must wait for God, by the power of nature, to heal the wound. Man cannot heal. God has the power to impose or remove sickness.

TRUSTING GOD IN A TRIAL OF SICKNESS—Psalm 41:3—The Lord will strengthen—Sometimes for the good of other souls and for the sick one himself and for the glory of God (Job is an example.) sickness is not removed at once. Even so, the sick one, if not healed at first petition, must not cast away his confidence but wait steadfastly upon the Lord. He will not be one moment late. The first motive at all times and in every circumstance must be to glorify God.

GOD WILLS TO HEAL ALL DISEASES—Psalm 103:3—Healeth all thy diseases—This brings courage and fortitude to the believing soul, for we are told that all sickness can be healed by God; therefore, we need not fear, regardless of what sickness may come to us. Just as God forgives all manner of sin, so He heals all manner of disease.

HEALING IN THE COMMISSION—Mark 16:17—These signs—Unusual things are certain to happen if God is given opportunity to have His way. Devil possession is an awful thing and can be remedied only by the power of God. To speak with new tongues is to speak a language not learned in the natural way. This is a sign or a very unusual thing. **Verse 18—Take up serpents**—This does not mean Jesus' followers are to pick up serpents voluntarily, but if they do so by accident, as Paul did when he was making a fire, God will do the unusual—not allow the bite to do harm. Do not think that God will protect anyone who, of his own will, picks up a poisonous serpent. Neither will anyone be protected if he purposely drinks poison. If by accident he should do so, God has promised that by faith in His name it will be harmless. **They shall recover**—Great protection is promised the believers here. Power from God is granted to them to heal the sick by the laying on of hands and prayer. By this simple procedure deliverance from disease can be obtained. Why do we not see more healings? The reason is because of lack of teaching and lack of faith. The Christian should not lack faith in his God of whom he says nothing is impossible!

A REMARKABLE THING—Acts 19:12—Handkerchiefs or aprons—It is foolishness to the world to believe that a piece of cloth can be sent from the body of a saint to a sick person anywhere and the disease shall be cured. But such is a reality, and should anyone be out of the reach of the elders, he has the privilege to write for a cloth that has been touched by a saint. We must be sure that the person from whom it comes is a saint. Our bodies belong to God, and He desires to

care for them in all sickness. Through experience, the Christian can develop full trust in God for every need of life.

GOD'S PLAN FOR THE SICK—James 5:14—Is any sick—Certainly this statement brings abundant hope to all, saved or unsaved. No one is barred. **Let him call—**The sick person's duty is to call. **Of the church—**Divine healing is trusted only with the one and true church of the living God. Healing and miracles are performed by false prophets and their witchcraft, but this is not divine healing. We must make sure that we do not trust our bodies to these deceitful workers. **Anointing with oil—**Oil is a symbol of Holy Ghost power and is usually applied in very small quantities to the forehead or sometimes to the affected places by a touch of the finger. It is applied only in obedience to God's command and has no virtue in itself. **Verse 15—The prayer of faith—**The prayer is offered by the elders, and God promises it shall save the sick. This part of the Word of God is as true as any other. The Lord does the work of bringing the patient back to health. If the one who is prayed for happens to be a sinner, if he will incline his heart toward God, he shall have his sins forgiven.

CHRIST PURCHASED HEALING—I Peter 2:24—By whose stripes—Sickness carries suffering with it, but our suffering was offset by the suffering of Christ when His back was bared and the lash applied. If anyone will believe this, he can have the blessing of healing; if he does not, he cannot.

CONCLUSION

We have had God's plan of healing laid before us in this lesson, and we should give it very careful study with the purpose in mind of giving complete application of it to our own lives. It is very evident that since He has made such abundant provision for us to be healed, it is His will to heal; and if it is His will to heal, we should present ourselves to Him for healing.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Define divine healing.
2. Is there healing besides that which is done by God?
3. How many diseases and sicknesses do the promises of healing cover?
4. Whom does God say to call in case of sickness?
5. What should a sick person do if he cannot get to an elder?
6. What are some of the signs that follow believers?
7. Is a Christian authorized to pick up serpents?
8. How was our healing purchased?

LESSON NUMBER FIVE FOR NOVEMBER 3

THE CHRISTIAN FACES FAILURE

Scriptures: Matthew 26:33-35, 69-75; Acts 2:14.

Matthew 26:33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.

34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

35 Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

Matthew 26:69 Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

70 But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was

also with Jesus of Nazareth.

72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

73 And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.

74 Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Acts 2:14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words.

Memory Verse: Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.—Hebrews 12:1.

Aim: To show that failures can come, but recovery is to be sought.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday **Matthew 14:23-33**
Tuesday **II Timothy 4:9-20**
Wednesday **I Thessalonians 3**

Thursday **Psalms 73**
Friday **Psalms 43**
Saturday **Psalms 121**

INTRODUCTION

In I Corinthians 10:12 we are told, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." We can say with safety, "By the grace of God, I shall not fall," for the grace of God is sufficient to make any Christian soldier stand. We must keep conscious of the fact that there is a possibility of our falling, for Satan is a powerful foe, and his glory lies in bringing defeat to the children of God, and then bringing them into hard bondage. The apostle John recognized the possibility and danger of failure, for he wrote in his first epistle, Chapter Two, Verse One, "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." He not only recognized the danger of failure, but also he comprehended the truth that by the blood of Jesus Christ it is possible (and highly advisable) to get back to God in full

communion. However, let no Christian live in fear of falling, but let him live, rejoicing in the hope and knowledge that, by the grace of God, he shall not fall.

MEDITATIONS

PETER OVERCONFIDENT—Matthew 26:33—Will I never—Peter was very confident, but his confidence was wrongly placed. He loved Christ and desired to defend Him with all his being, but he had to learn that his strength was too small for the task and that it was only as he was strengthened by the might of God that he could overcome. May God help us to learn this lesson that we must be slow to speak!

THE VOICE OF AUTHORITY AND TRUTH—Matthew 26:34—Jesus said—With an eye that seeth from the beginning to the end and a voice that never needs to repeat, Jesus was able (and still is) to guide and direct all who are submitted to His power. Here was a lesson that Peter had not learned: He did not visualize the power of the adversary, the devil, as far beyond his own; neither did he realize the word of Jesus was infallible. Had he done so, he would have instantly humbled his heart and asked Jesus to give him strength so that he would not fail. It seems that all the disciples were of the same mind as Peter, according to the latter part of Verse Thirty-five.

PETER'S SELF-CONFIDENCE INCREASES—Matthew 26:69—Peter sat without—Peter was now being separated from Christ; he was "sitting without." He who allows himself to be separated from Christ must stand alone, and he who attempts to stand alone is certain to fall. The first defense against falling, or failure, is to move closer to Christ. **A damsel came—**There is always "a damsel" prepared by Satan to force the accusation. In a normal Christian's heart, there is joy because he was and is with Christ.

PETER'S FAILURE—Matthew 26:70—I know not—This testimony is the direct opposite of his glowing report so short a time before! Self-confidence, unaided by divine support, meets degrading defeat. His testimony not only devastated his own life but also was destructive to all who heard him. His denial was public. **Verse 71—Gone out—**Peter was going farther away from Jesus! His denial was certain to be more vehement. This maid addressed the crowd standing by, declaring Peter's identity. Here was his opportunity to testify before a crowd. **Verse 72—With an oath—**Peter was being stirred and not realizing what he was doing, he summoned indiscreet language to emphasize his denial. **Verse 73—They that stood by—**This incident was exciting the crowd, and an argument was produced to prove that Peter, without any doubt, was a follower of Christ. **Verse 74—The cock crew—**The words of Jesus came true. Peter became really violent in his denial,

just as much as he had been in declaring his devotion! How quickly failure can do its deadly work and ruin mankind! Peter's denial was complete; likewise his failure was complete.

PETER AWAKENED—Matthew 26:75—Wept bitterly—Peter awoke to the realization that he had failed the best Friend he had ever had and that he had lost his hope of eternal life. Of course, we know that his godly sorrow was real and that he returned to the Lord and found favor in His sight. It is supposed that at the end of his life he died on the cross, being crucified head downward, declaring that he was not worthy to be crucified as was his Master.

PETER BEING BOLD FOR THE LORD—Acts 2:14—Peter standing up—Peter, having repented of his failure, was filled with the Holy Spirit, along with the rest in the upper room, and let the Holy Spirit use him to bring a powerful message to the multitude that had gathered. As a result, around three thousand were saved.

THE MEMORY VERSE—Hebrews 12:1—Cloud of witnesses—Here the writer refers to those he mentioned in the previous verses: Abraham, Moses, and many others, who had faced great opposition, but through faith had won great victories. Let us take courage from these who have gone before, knowing that God is just the same today.

CONCLUSION

The Scriptures prove conclusively in this lesson there is danger of falling from the high calling of God in Christ Jesus and that some have fallen. In the person of Peter we find one whose faith did not utterly fail. (Jesus prayed that it would not.) In other words, though he momentarily denied the Son of glory, yet his confidence and faith in Him caused him to repent, retrace his steps and take up the cross where he had laid it down. This cannot be said of every soldier of the cross who fails, by any means. Many who run for awhile fail, never to run in the race again. Saul, given a new heart by God, disobeyed and died a suicide; the Spirit of God left him forever. The multitude that were saved out of Egypt did not all make it through. We are warned to take heed lest we should perish after the same example of unbelief. So, dear Reader, should you happen to meet with failure in your Christian pilgrimage, do not submit to discouragement, but return to Jesus and take up the cross where you laid it down. Follow the Master, and He will give you a crown of life!

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Under what conditions is it possible for the Christian to fail?
2. Under what conditions is it impossible for the Christian to fail?
3. Why did Peter fail?
4. Why was it that Peter would not listen to the words of Jesus?
5. If we meet with failure, what is the wise thing to do?

LESSON NUMBER SIX FOR NOVEMBER 10

THE CHRISTIAN FACES UNBELIEF

Scriptures: Hebrews 3:6-19.

Hebrews 3:6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.

11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

13 But exhort one another daily, while it

is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness?

18 And to whom swear he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Memory Verse: Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

—Hebrews 3:12.

Aim: To bring to light the awful influence of unbelief on the soul.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday John 3:1-21

Tuesday Jude

Wednesday Matthew 13:53-58

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Acts 21

Psalms 95

Hebrews 3

INTRODUCTION

If man were left to himself, doubtless, he would have little difficulty in exercising effective belief or faith in the invisible God. However, in every one of his waking moments he is exposed to the lying, cunning and deceitful influences of the enemy of God and man, the devil. The Word of God does not fail to warn us fully of his power and activities, giving many examples of his exploits. So, no one needs to fall victim to his intrigue, for besides the warnings that are so abundant in the Bible, we have the promise of the abiding presence of the Spirit of God, who offers all that is needed to defeat the power of darkness.

MEDITATIONS

**A CORNERSTONE IN CHRISTIAN BELIEF—Hebrews 3:6—
Over his own house—**The life of the modern Christian has failed to

give the unbelieving world the true understanding of this verse, thus encouraging unbelief. If the world could see, by the life of the Christian, that God has only one house, or family, and that Christ is actually the Head of that family, or house, it would mean death to all the religious divisions that are in the world. From this we learn that membership in some religious group is not salvation, but we must have membership in the family of God and then live a victorious life right up to the end if we expect to make it through.

A CURE FOR UNBELIEF—Hebrews 3:7—The Holy Ghost saith—Anyone who listens to God and obeys the voice of the Spirit is certainly going to escape unbelief. God does not use force but rather leads and guides. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Anyone who will not listen to the Spirit grieves Him, and He takes His departure. The devil is the opposite; he imposes upon mankind.

TURNING AGAINST LIGHT—Hebrews 3:8—Harden not—He who turns against the light is going to be guilty of unbelief; he cannot help himself. It is only by the entrance of the Word that light comes, and walking in the light as it comes gives favor with God. Each time a soul refuses to hear the voice of God, his heart becomes harder, and it is more difficult to believe.

A BIBLE EXAMPLE—Hebrews 3:9—Your fathers—The fathers referred to here are the children of Israel who were led across the Red Sea by Moses. Although having seen that great miracle of the destruction of Egypt’s army, they murmured when they had to eat manna and there was a water shortage. Had they believed God and added to that a generous amount of praise to His great name for what was done, there would have been an abundance of water.

SPIRITUAL INDIFFERENCE—Hebrews 3:10—Have not known—These people were more interested in what they were to eat and drink than they were in the true and living God. This is the situation of millions today, and, as a result, their souls are filled with unbelief, which means their destruction. God would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4). Therefore, all men can be saved if they will, but they are indifferent and careless, and death finds them unprepared.

UNBELIEF CLOSES HEAVEN—Hebrews 3:11—Shall not enter—God is a God of wrath as well as a God of love. His love flows toward every righteous act of man, and His anger flows toward every unrighteous act. Any man who dies in his sins shuts himself out of heaven. Even so, God demands full obedience to every known command today, and now, as then, anyone who fails to obey shall not enter into His rest.

TIMELY WARNING—Hebrews 3:12—Take heed—It is of the utmost importance that we watch constantly, lest the devil deceive us and plant the seeds of unbelief in our hearts. Unbelief always separates from God. To believe Him always draws us closer.

DEFENSE AGAINST UNBELIEF—Hebrews 3:13—Exhort one another—God wants the Christians to dwell together in holy fellowship. A brother who loves us may see something in our lives that we cannot see and by this kind exhortation assist us in avoiding the pitfalls of sin. Always value your brothers and sisters in the one body, the Church.

STEADFASTNESS REQUIRED—Hebrews 3:14-16—If we hold—There are trials and tests in the Christian race! It is necessary to hold our confidence in the Lord steadfast unto the end. The Word says that they who endure to the end, the same shall be saved. Though there were hundreds of thousands that came out of Egypt, not all believed; many fell in the wilderness, but not all; there were those who did believe. Let us encourage you to be among those that remain faithful.

SIN DISPLEASES GOD—Hebrews 3:17—That had sinned—Unbelief produces sin. Hebrews 11:6 declares, “But without faith it is impossible to please him [God]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Sin is repulsive to and the direct opposite of the nature of God; it is no wonder He hates it. The nature of sin requires that he who is guilty of it be punished.

CONCLUSION

A great deal of religious indifference has resulted from the modern teaching that it does not make any difference what we believe just so we are sincere; or that we should never say anything against another belief or faith. It seems that people would realize that the nature of the devil, which is to deceive and to lie, requires that he twist and distort the Word of God in order to get the people to disobey the Word of God. In Ephesians 5:6 we read, “Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.” If any man will seek God with all his heart, he will find Him (Jeremiah 29:13), and if he desires to know the doctrine, God will teach him (John 7:17).

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Name two good defenses against unbelief.
2. How many churches does God have?
3. Who is the Head of His church?
4. What is the result of turning against light?
5. Consider the experience of the Israelites in the wilderness.

LESSON NUMBER SEVEN FOR NOVEMBER 17
THE CHRISTIAN FACES HERESY (PART I)

Scriptures: I Corinthians 11:18, 19; I Timothy 4:1-6; Titus 3:9; Romans 16:17, 18; II John 10, 11.

I Corinthians 11:18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.

19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

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

2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:

5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

6 If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.

Titus 3:9 But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

Romans 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

II John 10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:

11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

Memory Verse: 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.—Galatians 1:8.

Aim: To inform the student of the Bible attitude toward false teachers of the Word.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday **Mark 13**
Tuesday **Romans 13**
Wednesday **Titus 3**

Thursday **Acts 19:13-20**
Friday **I Corinthians 11**
Saturday **II Thessalonians 3**

INTRODUCTION

The apostle Paul lists heresies as one of the works of the flesh and not a part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:20). *Vines' Expository Dictionary* says in regard to heresy, "HAIREISIS ... a choosing, choice; ... then, that which is chosen, and hence, an opinion, especially a self-willed opinion, which is substituted for submission to the power of truth, and leads to division and the formation of sects, ... such erroneous opinions are frequently the outcome of personal preference or the prospect of advantage."

In Ephesians 5:27 we read that God's church is to be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but in an effort to destroy the Church and

ruin her influence, Satan tries mightily to contaminate her with false teachings. Consequently, we frequently see men and women assembling themselves with the family of God, trying to force upon God's children their twisted interpretation of the Word as truth. As sentinels, men entrusted with the gifts of wisdom and discernment are placed in the true body of Christ, and it is their business to cope with the situation after the Bible manner. To some people, God's plan in this matter is hard; but, regardless of how hard it seems, His way must be followed if we are to be successful. In this lesson we desire to acquaint the student with the true facts as revealed in the Word of God in this matter. We are always safe in following God's plan. Heresy is the act of supporting or adhering to a teaching that is contrary to God's Word.

MEDITATIONS

HERESY PRODUCES DIVISION—I Corinthians 11:18—Divisions among you—The Spirit of God never produces division! Division is always the result of the workings of an unclean spirit. Anyone who yields to the whisperings and workings of an unclean spirit is working against the Holy Ghost. No man can support division and the cause of Christ at the same time.

HERESIES CERTAIN TO COME—I Corinthians 11:19—Must be—Men do not go through for God on heresies, but on truth. Nowhere do we find that heresies shall make you free (They put men in bondage.), but it is the truth that makes us free. If a congregation is living where it should before God, when the devil endeavors to destroy the congregation with heresy, either by someone without or within, in due time, by obedience to the Word of God, the congregation will be able to expose and eject the heresy. It will be a time of purging; and when the battle is over, the congregation will be left pure and clean.

HERESIES COME FROM EVIL SPIRITS—I Timothy 4:1—Speaketh expressly—To speak expressly is to speak with emphasis and to warn with diligence. Men who were once sound in truth listen to seducing spirits and are led away from the faith. **Doctrines of devils**—The devil has nothing that could be called a Bible for the purpose of ruling his people. He takes the Bible and twists it until it can no longer be recognized in the courts of God as the Word. Thus, he deceives millions into believing that it is the Word of God. All doctrines that are contrary to the doctrine of God's Word are of the devil and should be renounced as such.

TELLING LIES FOR TRUTH—I Timothy 4:2—Speaking lies—It is not the nature of the devil to tell the truth. When he tells a lie, he is speaking of his own. But let us remember that Satan always works through men, and it is men who tell the lies instigated by him. The devil is able to sear the conscience of any man if he will let him. A seared conscience is not sensitive to the truth. Error becomes more

attractive than truth. A deceived man who thinks error is truth is certain to feel the wrath of God (Ephesians 5:6).

EXAMPLES OF HERESY—I Timothy 4:3—Forbidding to marry—The teaching of any religious organization that forbids normal men and women to marry is a doctrine of the devil. The Catholic practice of forbidding the priesthood to marry is an example of this and is heresy. **Abstain from meats**—The Adventists and the Jews teach the eating of pork is unscriptural. This is a doctrine of the devil and should be and is branded as heresy. **And know the truth**—Men who teach such things do so because they do not know the truth, or having known it once, now have their conscience seared.

EVERY CREATURE GOOD—I Timothy 4:4—Nothing to be refused—It is true that to him who esteems a thing unclean, it is, but no one can esteem any creature unclean from the standpoint of God's Word, for we see here that God declares all creatures clean. Only by wrong teaching (doctrines of the devil) do men esteem meats unclean.

MEAT PURIFIED—I Timothy 4:5—Sanctified—To sanctify meats to cleanse or make pure. God spoke His Word and all meat became useful as the food of man.

MINISTERS MUST TEACH THIS—I Timothy 4:6—A good minister—Any minister who is called of God will teach his people, at some time in the process of his preaching, the above truth. Paul told Timothy if he did so he would be a good minister. **Nourished up in ... words of faith**—It is the will of God that every Christian be nourished in the words of good, sound doctrine.

SOMETHING TO BE AVOIDED—Titus 3:9—Unprofitable and vain—Trivial questions such as, "Where did Cain get his wife?" etc., are of no spiritual value and need not be discussed. Time is much better spent and is more profitable in praising God and talking of His wonderful works.

HOW TO HANDLE A HERETIC—Romans 16:17—Mark them—Men cannot be tolerated and given their liberty in the Church of God who teach things that are contrary to the truth of God's Word. They must be marked openly, uncovering the error of their ways. Do not be found associating with them. Go out of your way to keep clear of them, thus says the Word of God. Today, most religious groups teach tolerance in regard to the beliefs of men, but the Word of God does not teach this kind of tolerance.

WE MUST TRY THE SPIRITS—Romans 16:18—Serve not our Lord—He who tries to build his own doctrine is not a servant of Christ but has some personal interest of his own. He may with oratory declare his position to be one of the most earnest devotion. Satan has many smooth-tongued men in his employ. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Any spirit that does not agree with God's Word is not of God and is to be avoided.

II John 10—Receive him not—The apostle John tells us in verse nine, “Whosoever transgresseth, abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ he hath both the Father and the Son.” The doctrine of Christ would include His virgin birth, His teachings, and His resurrection. There are many religious groups that are supposed to be Christian, yet deny the “doctrine” of Christ. John says such people who do not abide in the doctrine of Christ “hath not God.” A good example of the truth in this verse is to be found in the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ disciple who knocks on your door, desiring entrance that he may play a record or leave literature for the purpose of implanting his doctrine. He would teach you that there is no hell and that Christ, in due course of time, will set up an earthly kingdom. This is heresy. He is to be rejected. Receive him not into your house, and do not ask God’s blessing upon his work. This may seem hard, but we cannot deny that this is God’s command and must be obeyed.

DO NOT SUPPORT ERROR—II John 11—Partaker—We are to love everyone, even our enemies, but we are not to support those who are teaching error. Do not show a hateful attitude toward the person, but do not bid them Godspeed. To bid him Godspeed is to encourage him in his evil work. To give encouragement in this deception of souls makes the offender guilty with him. Let us be swift to voice our testimony against such that they may be delivered from their error.

CONCLUSION

Heresy is very widespread today; in fact, it is so universal that it has been accepted as truth. The man who attempts to follow the Word of the Lord in dealing with heresy meets much opposition and a cry of intolerance. We must not be moved by such accusations; the health, yea, the very lives of precious souls are at stake. Paul said, “Let no man deceive you.” If we do, we invite the wrath of God. Paul warned that men would rise from among the church of that day speaking things that were contrary to sound doctrine for the purpose of drawing disciples after them. Now after 2000 years we may be sure that the devil has become very accomplished in his work of deceiving the men of the earth. I trust that this lesson has awakened the student to this existing evil, and I pray that God will give each one the grace to conduct himself in this matter as the Word of God directs.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is heresy?
2. What will heresy do to a congregation if not handled according to the Word of God?
3. Why does God allow heresies to come?
4. Name two common heresies as taught by modern religion.
5. What attitude are we to take toward a heretic who has been warned twice?

LESSON NUMBER EIGHT FOR NOVEMBER 24

THE CHRISTIAN FACES HERESY (PART II)

Scriptures: Matthew 10:17-22; II Peter 2:1-3; I John 4:1, 2.

Matthew 10:17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;

18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.

22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

II Peter 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

I John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.

Memory Verse: Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.—I John 4:1.

Aim: To awaken the student to the dangers arising from association with false prophets.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday I Kings 18:7-26

Tuesday Galatians 2

Wednesday II Peter 2

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Matthew 26:36-56

Luke 11:14-54

Luke 13:23-28

INTRODUCTION

Let us remember always that the devil has nothing to do, day and night, but to ply his art of deception among the brethren and to lead captives off into the kingdom of darkness. So you may be sure he is at work trying to deceive the one you love and trust the most. Ofttimes he is successful, and men awaken to the fact that their closest and dearest friend has turned to be their enemy. Therefore, we must be on our guard, lest we fall a victim to the wiles of the devil. The importance of the situation is made evident to us by the fact that our decisions made in this world are going to determine where we shall spend our endless eternity. If our path of righteousness leads us away from

our closest friend, let us not turn from it! The reward at the end of the way is too great to him who is faithful to be forsaken for the passing pleasure and advantage of earthly friends.

MEDITATIONS

PERSECUTION A PART OF OUR INHERITANCE—Matthew 10:17—Beware of men—It is the man who is dominated by Satan of whom we are to beware. Satan expresses himself and vents his fury through humanity as he has opportunity. All truly saved men can be trusted and counted on. But carnal, unredeemed men often are driven to great extremes in opposing the kingdom of God. We should be prepared always for this.

CHRIST IS THE TARGET—Matthew 10:18—For my sake—When a man puts his trust in Christ and the ways of God are permitted to work out through his life, he at once becomes a condemnation to the world. This will incense the world; and, as a result, persecution gives a good opportunity to testify for Christ, and this is the purpose for which it comes. Let each Christian pray that he be a good witness of the grace of God in the midst of persecution.

GOD'S SPIRIT, OUR DEFENSE—Matthew 10:19—Take no thought—This is great encouragement to the Christian. God knows all things, even the plans of our enemies, and He can and will speak through us the very things that are needed at the time. **Verse 20—Speaketh in you**—The Holy Ghost will use your voice, but it will be His mind that speaks. How necessary it is that the Christian be filled with the Spirit at all times! We do not know what a moment shall bring forth.

BROTHER NOT TRUSTWORTHY—Matthew 10:21—Deliver up the brother—The devil does not respect family ties, but delights in molesting the tranquility of God's great institution, the home. He seems to be able to cause the greatest hatred when the difference is of a religious nature. Parents have been known to beat their children to the point of death because they accepted Christ.

THE COST OF LOYALTY TO CHRIST—Matthew 10:22—Hated of all men—We shall be hated of all men but Christians, men of whom there have always been few. This hatred fills the bosoms of millions of professors of religion, who, though they profess Christ, are void of the new birth and actuated by an inflamed carnal nature. War shall always exist between the child of God who is walking in the light and the soul who lives only for the world. **That endureth**—Faithfulness day by day brings the victory. The devil will battle as long as there is life; therefore, we must brace ourselves for an endurance race.

THERE WILL ALWAYS BE FALSE PROPHETS—II Peter 2:1—There were false prophets—The devil has been performing his evil

works for centuries and, of course, we need not think that we shall escape in this, the end of time when the devil knows that his days are short. **Heresies**—The devil knows that divisions in the family of God are very destructive, so we must follow the Bible instruction in dealing with them. They are certain to come. **Denying the Lord**—Only a man whose eyes are blinded could consent to such rank wickedness of denying the Lord. Certain destruction awaits any man who is so guilty.

FALSE PROPHETS ACCOMPLISH THEIR END—II Peter 2:2—Many shall follow—A man with a strong personality can sway multitudes of people, regardless of the worth of his message. We must learn to value the pure message of God above the personality of man. He who follows the false prophet cannot help causing the way of truth, or the gospel of Christ, to be disrespected.

PERSONAL AIMS OF THE FALSE PROPHET—II Peter 2:3—Make merchandise—The false prophet does not care about the souls of men even though he says so. In his heart he is interested in what he can be profited by his followers. Christ can save us from the deceiver. We must walk close to Him.

DETECTING FALSE SPIRITS—I John 4:1—Believe not every spirit—Because a man carries a Bible, or because a building has a tall spire, we are not to assume that such is the property of God. We are told to lay hands suddenly on no man and to know them who work among us. “By their fruits ye shall know them.” Any teaching that is not in line with the Word of God originates with a false prophet. We all need to be better acquainted with the Word of God and its Author. This is a good defense against the false prophet. **Verse 2—Hereby know ye**—A great deal of the opposition the early church received was from the Jews who denied that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. It was this class of people of whom John was speaking when he said that any spirit that denies that Jesus has come in the flesh is not of God, as is implied by the saying that every spirit which confesses that Christ is come in the flesh is of God. When the fruit of a man’s life is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, we know that he has the Spirit of God and is no false prophet or brother.

CONCLUSION

In his crafty work the devil has enlisted the labors of thousands of men who preach with power the misconstrued Word of God. Stoutly they can proclaim that it is the pure truth, and many are deceived. Therefore, we must seek God earnestly that we may receive only that which is ordained of God and that the pure truth of the Word of God may always be our portion. If we desire the whole truth and seek for it diligently, we are certain to find it. Your soul is worth more than the whole world, so guard it with the utmost care. Do not let the devil deceive you!

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Name one great reason why men will oppose bitterly the works of righteousness in the life of a Christian.
 2. Why do workers of darkness conceal themselves in sheep's clothing?
 3. Why does a Christian need not plan what he is going to say if he is brought before men because he is serving the Lord?
 4. How can a false prophet be detected?
 5. What should our attitude be toward a false prophet?
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LESSON NUMBER NINE FOR DECEMBER 1

THE CHRISTIAN FACES TRADITIONS OF MEN

Scriptures: Matthew 23:8-10, 15-23.

Matthew 23:8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.

9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

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

15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!

17 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the

altar, it is nothing; but whosoever swear-eth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

19 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.

21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.

22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

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

Memory Verse: Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.—Ephesians 5:6.

Aim: To show that by following the traditions of men we are sure to be led away from the truth.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Luke 20:1-26

Tuesday Luke 20:27-47

Wednesday Matthew 23:1-22

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Matthew 23:23-39

Mark 12:1-34

Mark 7:1-23

INTRODUCTION

It may be true that men have passed down to their children some traditions that have not been harmful to the soul, but in dealing with this lesson we are speaking of the commandments of men that have set at naught the pure Word of the living God. That there is much tradition and that the Word of God has been set at naught is proven by the fact that there are so many religious organizations in the world. The different organizations resulted from differences in teachings. If all men had taught the same thing, which would have been the case had they been led by the Spirit of God, they also would have dwelled together in one body. Again, let it be said that if men had been left to themselves, more than likely there would not have been any divisions. But men have always been harassed by an invisible enemy, the devil, who has whispered in many ears words that have been accepted as truth coming from God. Subsequently, they were written down and soon became the traditions of men, used to separate the people of God and gender strife and contention among those who should be the most stoutly united together in the bonds of peace and love. We do trust that by the means of this lesson we may awaken the student to the serious danger of being deceived by the subtle forces that are at work in the earth today in the religious world and that each student may be able to fortify himself against its onslaught.

MEDITATIONS

THE LOVE OF RECOGNITION—Matthew 23:8—Even Christ—To the man who has sold out everything and given Christ full control, the Word of God and His will is supreme, and death itself cannot deter such an one from loyalty to Him. We, as children of God, are all brethren, and each member of the true body of Christ has the same care one for another. There are no Bible grounds for the bestowing of the titles of Reverend, Doctor of Divinity, Father, etc. Any man who is called by God to the work of the ministry has received unto himself the position of a servant and is obligated to feed the flock of God diligently, faithfully, and carefully with the choice food of heaven, just as it is delivered into his hand from God.

PURELY TRADITIONAL—Matthew 23:9—Call no man your father—This is a direct denunciation of the Catholic practice of calling their priests, “Father,” and consequently can be termed nothing other than tradition developed by man and should be catalogued heresy. Rather than the priest’s being a servant to the people, the people become servants to him, as he often demands the most unreasonable and ungodly submissions. Another Catholic tradition is the practice of forbidding their priests to marry. The Bible declares that marriage is honorable in all (Hebrews 13:4); therefore what right has any man or organization to issue a decree contrary to this? This is merely man-made tradition.

CHRIST, THE ONLY MASTER—Matthew 23:10—Called masters—To be a master means that perfect control has been gained of the subject or situation at hand. Since Christ is the Fountainhead of all knowledge, no man can gain mastery of any subject unless Christ, by natural or supernatural means, imparts the learning to him. So humility and meekness require that we acknowledge at all times that Christ is the true Master and that all of the knowledge that we have has been imparted to us by Him. He who has received a degree of information in the field of learning and will, in men's eyes, merit the granting of a title, has nothing of which to be proud; he only has arrived at a place of greater responsibility, and in the judgment a greater accounting will be required of him. He who uses such to his own personal gain is indeed not educated at all, in the true sense.

PLANTING TRADITION—Matthew 23:15—Child of hell—In Matthew 15:9 we read, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." The Pharisees knew well the teachings of the law, but they were very poor in applying them in the practices of life. It is clear that in the process of making additions to their religious organizations they did not teach the pure truth of the Word, even though they knew it. Rather, they taught the traditions they had developed, and the result was that their disciples were further removed from the pure light of the gospel than they themselves were, for the disciples knew only what they had been taught.

TRADITIONS BLIND THE EYES—Matthew 23:16—Ye blind guides—How unfit a false prophet is to guide the moral feet of man! If any man needs to be walking in the holy light of the Word of God, it is the man who is entrusted with spiritual leadership. Too often the minds of men are turned by the flashing of a little gold or a few greenbacks. Happy is the man who will not be swayed by their power! It is evident that these people whom Jesus was addressing were guilty of this very thing. According to Matthew 5, we are commanded not to swear at all. It is through the process of teaching that God desires to implant the great truth of His Word in the minds of men. How very serious it is when men labor to impart that which is not truth under the instigation of Satan! **Verse 17—Whether is greater**—The gold was but an ornament of the temple. The temple was the place where God was worshiped. **Verse 18—He is guilty**—The devices of men are exceedingly foolish. Here we have another tradition set down for the regulation of worshipers. Jesus shows how foolish it is. Also, in the light of the revelation of the Spirit of God, there are many foolish traditions imposed upon the religious worshipers of today. **Verse 19—Or the altar**—The altar is, of course, in this verse representative of Christ; so at once we can see the foolishness of this tradition. Yet men were constrained to put confidence in this rank teaching. How often that great heart of God must be grieved as He beholds men, who, for their own glory and for the advancement of their own purposes, make

laws and rules to govern His people who have been redeemed by His own blood! There are still a few churches which have altars in them to which the poor sinner may go and there leave his sins, but how very few there are! The altar here is a symbol of the Lord Jesus, or rather it is a convenient place to meet the Lord Jesus. We can make the altar a thing of no consequence if we fail to contact the Lord after we get there.

JESUS EXPOSES TRADITION—Matthew 23:20—Swear by the altar—To swear or to make an oath is to make a declaration before another who is able to punish for misrepresentation. So, as before mentioned, to swear before the altar or temple is to make a declaration before the God of heaven who owns both. To follow this tradition, originating from man, and transgress the Word of God is certain to merit the wrath of God. In our Memory Verse we are warned, “Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.” Millions of people are held in danger of the wrath of God, not only in the Catholic Church, but also in the Protestant churches which lay aside and make void the Word of God by the traditions they preach and practice.

GOD’S THRONE IN HEAVEN—Matthew 23:22—The throne of God—In Psalm 103:19 we read that God has established His throne in the heavens and that His kingdom ruleth over all. It is ridiculous to think that God will move His throne and locate it upon earth, which is His footstool, for a thousand-year reign! This teaching, which is becoming so widespread, is only a tradition of men and must be classed by everyone who knows the truth as heresy. We must reject such false teachings or face the wrath of God.

SUBTLE DECEPTION—Matthew 23:23—Ye pay tithes—The Pharisees were very diligent in the payment of tithes and in religious formalities, but their formalities were, to a great extent, the result of ideas and customs and practices that were handed down from generation to generation (this is the meaning of tradition) and did not conform to the Word of God. Their tradition gave them license to disregard love for their brother and neighbor and mercy to the widows and orphans. If we neglect these things, our religion is vain indeed and is nothing more than a form.

CONCLUSION

Let us be reminded of the words of Jesus when He said that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. It is our purpose in this lesson to impress the student concerning the dangers of tradition, of which there is so much in the religious world today. We cannot trust the salvation of our souls to the powers that be, religiously speaking. Everyone must work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. Doctrines can be developed so

near to the truth and scriptures used to sustain them that a great deal of care should be exercised lest we be deceived.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is tradition as developed by man?
 2. Why does man show such a proneness toward tradition?
 3. Why is it wrong to call anyone, "Father" (spiritually) on this earth?
 4. What does tradition do to the soul?
 5. How did the Pharisees succeed in making a proselyte "twofold more a child of hell" than he was before?
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LESSON NUMBER TEN FOR DECEMBER 8

THE CHRISTIAN FACES FORMALITY (Man-rule)

Scriptures: Colossians 2:13-23.

Colossians 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those

things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not;

22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

23 Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

Memory Verse: But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.—Matthew 15:9.

Aim: To warn against religious formality, which is a substitute for Christ as the Head of the Church.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Titus 1	Thursday	Isaiah 29:14-24
Tuesday	Matthew 15	Friday	Colossians 2:1-12
Wednesday	Isaiah 29:1-13	Saturday	Colossians 2:13-23

INTRODUCTION

In Colossians 1:18 we read, "And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." Thus, we see that we must put Christ first in everything. He must have first place in our hearts, and we must look to Him through His precious Word for guidance. His Word must become a part of us. It is not enough to have just a head knowledge of it but it must be right down in our hearts so that it motivates our every activity. Our modern churches, which have been founded by men, have become cold and formal and are ruled more or less by the church manual, disregarding the plain teachings of God's holy Word. The scripture quoted above tells us that Christ is the head of the Church, and the government thereof is to be on His shoulder. It is He who places the members in the body, and it is He who calls and qualifies the ministers for the various congregations. He knows the needs of each congregation; and when the Holy Spirit is permitted to have His way, He will provide the pastor who is best suited for the church. Modern ministers have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof. They deny the power to live a pure and holy life here in this present world. God has a marvelous plan for the governing of His church, and that is His Word and not the church manual. We are warned to beware of false prophets, and we are exhorted to search the Scriptures to see whether the things we hear are the truth or not.

MEDITATIONS

CHRIST IS OUR SALVATION—Colossians 2:13—And you, being dead in your sins—In this epistle Paul has been setting forth the greatness of Christ, that it is He who is the Head of the body, the Church, and that in all things He must have the preeminence. It was through this Christ that the Colossians had received forgiveness of sins and been born of the Spirit into the glorious kingdom of God and had become joint-heirs with Jesus Christ Himself. This experience must be real and not just a formal acceptance of Christ as is the custom today. A mere formal acceptance of Christ only makes one a professor and not a possessor.

OLD COVENANT EXPIRES—Colossians 2:14—Blotting out the handwriting—The old covenant which was lacking in grace expired. It was Jesus Christ whose death ended the old covenant and brought in the new; a perfect law that we are able to keep, once we have been cleansed by the blood of Christ. Thank the Lord we do not have to bring an animal sacrifice when we come to the house of worship. Truly, we have a "better covenant." Let us put our trust in the blood of Christ and not in church membership or the creeds and doctrines of men.

VICTOR OVER ALL—Colossians 2:15—Triumphing over them—In ancient time when a king's army captured the capital of

another country, he would come riding into the city in a triumphant march. This is the import of Christ's riding into Jerusalem on the little donkey. Not that He led an army that literally captured Jerusalem, but as King of kings and Lord of lords. Christ came down to earth and took upon Himself the form of a man to purchase our redemption from sin and to leave us a righteous example to follow. He went about doing good to all, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, forgiving sins. He came to do the will of the Father, and remained true to His calling. He was crucified on the cross, put in a borrowed tomb, but, thank God, the grave could not hold Him, and on the third day He came forth alive forevermore, triumphant over sin, death, hell, and the grave, perfecting forever our redemption.

BEWARE OF FORMALITY—Colossians 2:16—Let no man ... judge you—This has reference to the ceremonial part of the law which had been done away with, such as distinctions in meats and drinks, which were clean or unclean according to the law. Also, it includes certain feast days and particular sabbaths, which were required to be observed under the law. These ordinances were nailed to the cross and are no more to be kept. We must be careful to avoid every kind of religious formality. The Catholics observe certain formalities concerning the crucifix, making confession to the priest, ascribing honor to Mary, etc., which all are an abomination in the sight of God. We are commanded to worship God and Him only. **Verse 17—Which are a shadow**—All these things were merely types and had their fulfillment in Christ and were only to be practiced until He came. But now we are the body of Christ, and it is to Him that we must look for guidance, and it is Him upon whom we must set all our affections. He is the Head of the Church, and for any church to prosper He must have His rightful place as the Governor.

BE NOT DECEIVED—Colossians 2:18—Let no man beguile you—Here is a distinct warning against false prophets who come to us in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. It seems that in this place some were showing extreme humility, and through the worshiping of angels were trying to get the Colossians to depart from the Christian faith. Thus, we see the necessity of becoming firmly established in the truth so that we will not be carried about with every new doctrine that comes along. This is why it is so urgent that we study the Word carefully and be diligent in our prayer life that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. He is a real foe; and if you give him an inch, he will take a mile. The Word tells us to give no place to the devil and to resist him steadfastly. **Verse 19—And not holding the head**—These false prophets are not looking to Christ, the Head of the Church, for leadership, but are being led by the vain imaginations of their own fleshly minds. Let us look to Christ and let Him nourish us through His Word so that we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We

must never desire to put ourselves on display, but we must desire to hide behind the cross and exalt the name of Christ, for He alone is worthy of praise and honor.

BWARE OF CEREMONIALISM—Colossians 2:20—If ye be dead with Christ—Paul is here trying to impress the Colossians with the foolishness of observing these ceremonial ordinances. Since Christ had saved them and they were dead to the world and set free from its power and laws, why should they still desire to be subject to it? We must be free from the traditions and commandments of men and let God, through His Word, be our only Guide. **Verse 21—Touch not; taste not**—This is just an emphatic way of telling them to refrain entirely from observing any of the ceremonial ordinances of the old Jewish law. **Verse 22—Which all are to perish with the using**—These things were not of any spiritual importance, for all the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion passed away with the death of Christ on the cross, their purpose and end having been accomplished. **Verse 23—Which things have indeed a show of wisdom**—Although these ceremonies did present a certain show of wisdom and did seem plausible and reasonable, they were of no profit spiritually and, of course, should not be observed. Regardless of how humble we may be and how strictly we may follow the traditions and commandments of men, if we do not have the Spirit of God and His truth, it will not avail us anything. It takes the truth to make us free, for the Word says, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

CONCLUSION

The Word tells us that we are not our own, but that we have been bought with a price, the precious blood of Christ; therefore, we should strive to glorify God in our body and in our spirit which are His. We must worship God in Spirit and truth. We must steer clear of the cold, formal worship of our modern churches which do not declare the whole counsel of God. God has pronounced a curse on all those who deviate from His precious Word. We must work at our religion; we must be enthusiastic about it; we must really believe with all our hearts that it is the best thing this side of heaven. God will not tolerate lukewarmness and indifference; so it behooves us to be like David when he declared that his delight was in the Word of God and in it he meditated day and night. Also, he said, “Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.”

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Who is the Head of God's church?
2. Why must He have first place in our hearts and lives?
3. Why is it dangerous to follow man?
4. What is the danger in formal worship?
5. What is the best guard against deception?

LESSON NUMBER ELEVEN FOR DECEMBER 15
THE CHRISTIAN FACES EASE IN ZION

Scriptures: Revelation 3:14-22; Amos 6:1-7.

Revelation 3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

20 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.

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my

Father in his throne.

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Amos 6:1 Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!

2 Pass ye unto Calneh, and see; and from thence go ye to Hamath the great: then go down to Gath of the Philistines: be they better than these kingdoms? or their border greater than your border?

3 Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near;

4 That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall;

5 That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David;

6 That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

7 Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed.

Memory Verse: So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.—Revelation 3:16.

Aim: To awaken the student to the danger of being at ease in his Christian activities.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Hebrews 12
Tuesday Hebrews 4
Wednesday Isaiah 51

Thursday Isaiah 52
Friday Revelation 3
Saturday Amos 6

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson it is our desire to set forth the necessity of putting forth a real effort to run the Christian race successfully. The Christian life has been likened to a race with a real prize for the winners. We are all familiar with the great amount of effort that is required to win a

race in the field of sports. In these races men put forth every ounce of energy they have, knowing that it is the only way possible to win. The spiritual race that each of us is engaged in is ever so much more important than these physical races; then why shouldn't we give it the attention it deserves? Our souls are at stake and to lose them is the greatest calamity that could possibly befall us. It is almost incredible that so many people take their soul's salvation so lightly, many being satisfied with merely going to church when they feel like it. This will not win the prize at the end of the Christian race. When God saves us, He saves us for service. He has provided us with an armor to fight the good fight of faith, and He expects us to put it on and use it. As the lazy man is doomed to failure in the physical realm, so also is the man who is lazy spiritually. We must either advance or retreat.

MEDITATIONS

BEWARE OF LUKEWARMNESS—Revelation 3:14—These things saith the Amen—This is He who is true and faithful, and as immediately explained in this verse, the faithful and true Witness. He surely was being faithful to them in telling them of their sins. No matter how deep we may go in sin, Christ still loves us and will receive us with open arms if we will repent of our sins and forsake them. **Verse 15—Thou art neither cold nor hot**—What an awful state to be in, listless and indifferent! There is not much hope for one in this condition. God would have us decided in our stand and not "on the fence," so to speak. We must be earnest in our service to God and not apathetic. **Verse 16—Because thou art lukewarm**—Lukewarmness is one thing God will not tolerate. We are either going to be on fire for Him, or He will cut us off. We must have a sincere desire to please God in everything we do or say. We must consecrate ourselves to Him and let Him use us in any way He sees fit. We must have a hungering and thirsting after righteousness and a desire to further the cause of Christ. If we will do these things, we can have a prosperous and faithful life in the kingdom of God.

RICHERS, A HINDRANCE TO SALVATION—Revelation 3:17—Because thou sayest, I am rich—When we begin to accumulate this world's goods, it seems we have a tendency to withdraw our affections from spiritual things. This comes about so gradually that we are not likely to notice it until we wake up to the fact that we have lost God out of our hearts. The Word tells us to set our affections on things above and not on things of the earth. If we take this scripture to heart as we should, and have a desire to see God's work prosper, we will use our surplus funds to further the cause of Christ.

BUY THE TRUTH, AND SELL IT NOT—Revelation 3:18—Buy of me gold tried in the fire—This was a symbolic way of counseling them to seek salvation, which is more precious than gold, and to put on the white and spotless robes of righteousness (for they were naked, spiritually speaking); also to seek the Holy Spirit that He might open

their understanding and guide them into all truth. If we will just humble our hearts and let the dear Lord lead us, we will have nothing to fear, for He will guide us safely into the promised land. **Verse 19—As many as I love**—How wonderful is God's love, even toward those who are in sin, with whom He strives as long as there is any hope! It is not His will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Sinner Friend, do not trifle with the mercy of God, but be grateful when the Spirit strives with you and humbly ask Him to give you the grace and courage to say, "No," to the devil and give your heart to God.

JESUS WANTS TO SAVE YOU—Revelation 3:20—Behold, I stand at the door and knock—Sinner Friend, this is a wonderful promise for you. God is no respecter of persons, and regardless of how deep you are in sin, this promise is yours! Just now He is standing at your heart's door, knocking and pleading for admittance. He wants so much to save you and put a new song in your heart so that you may be free from your load of sin and go on your way rejoicing. Won't you act on your better judgment and let Him in? You have nothing to lose, but everything to gain.

THE GLORIOUS REWARD—Revelation 3:21—To him that overcometh—Jesus came into the world as a man and lived a victorious life, overcoming sin and the devil and death. He is now sitting at the right hand of the Father on His throne in heaven. If we overcome sin and the devil as He did, we are to sit with Him in His throne in heaven. What more could anyone wish for? This is the greatest reward that can be given to man, and it is free to all who will seek it with their whole heart. What a pity that so few will take advantage of such a reasonable offer! **Verse 22—He that hath an ear**—God gave us ears to hear with, a mind to reason with, and a conscience to guide us. Let us make use of these God-given faculties and follow the Word of the living God and turn from the ways of sin into the paths of righteousness. Sooner or later, every person feels the urge to give his heart to God and serve Him. These remarks are made in the hope that they may encourage some poor, lost soul to obey this urge and get saved.

BEWARE OF A LIFE OF EASE—Amos 6:1—Woe to them that are at ease—This was a warning to the people of Israel who were hoping that, since they were God's chosen people, they would somehow be saved regardless of their iniquities. They were also trusting in their greatness to see them through. None of these things will be of any avail. Our trust must be in God, and we must live according to His Word. **Verse 2—Pass ye into Calneh**—The prophet was inviting Israel to take warning from the nations round about it whose gods were not able to save them in the time of trouble. Their gods had not been able to save the heathen nations, yet Israel was serving them. It seems almost impossible to learn anything from the experience of others; we all have to learn the hard way. **Verse 3—Ye that put far**

away the evil day—In spite of the warnings of the prophet, the Israelites were putting off the day of reckoning, and by their sins were bringing it nearer. We all should take warning from their sad experiences and “never put off till tomorrow what we can do today.” Today is the day of salvation, and now is the accepted time. We have no promise of tomorrow.

BEWARE OF LUXURIES—Amos 6:4—That lie upon beds of ivory—The prophet pronounces a woe on them who must have the best of everything and all the luxuries of life. We must learn to be content with the things that are necessary to live a consistent Christian life. Things in excess of this are likely to receive too much of our affection and thus be displeasing in the sight of God. These are some of the weights that the Word tells us to lay aside so we can run with patience the race that is set before us. **Verse 5—That chant to the sound of the viol**—Woe to them who indulge in the frivolous things of life just to pass the time away or to get a passing thrill! Life is too serious, and time is too valuable to waste any of it in things that are not profitable spiritually. Precious souls are dying all around us without God, and we simply cannot afford to be idle when the need of spreading the gospel is so urgent. **Verse 6—That drink wine in bowls**—Woe to them who spend their money for that which is not bread and have no compassion for the poor around them who are suffering for the necessities of life! Let us remember that we are only stewards of the things God has so marvelously blessed us with, and some day we are going to have to give an account to Him for the way we have used them.

THE RETRIBUTION—Amos 6:7—Now shall they go captive—The prophet diligently warned the people of his day, but they gave no heed to his plea, and their luxuries were taken away. They were carried away into captivity by their enemies. It is not possible to transgress the laws of God without paying the penalty. He has given us His written Word for our admonition and instruction, and we must live by it or lose our souls in hell. The wicked shall be turned into hell and all nations that forget God.

CONCLUSION

Solomon made this statement: “Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.” Jesus expressed the same thought when He said to Martha, “But one thing is needful,” which is to know God and do His precious, holy will. How wonderful it would be if we all could realize the truth of this statement and then diligently carry out this commandment! The study of this lesson certainly should help us to understand why God has pronounced a woe upon those who are at ease in Zion. We have to work to make a living in the world, for the Word says that if a man will not work, neither shall he eat. How much more is it necessary for us to keep busy spiritually so that our souls may be fed and be fat and flourishing!

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. How is the life of a Christian likened unto a race?
2. What is meant by being neither cold nor hot?
3. How are riches a hindrance to salvation?
4. What wonderful promise is mentioned in this lesson?
5. What is the wonderful reward mentioned?

LESSON NUMBER TWELVE FOR DECEMBER 22

JESUS COMES—ALL ENEMIES DEFEATED

Scriptures: Isaiah 35:1-6, 10; Matthew 1:21-25.

Isaiah 35:1 The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

2 It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.

3 Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

4 Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you.

5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out,

and streams in the desert.

10 And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Matthew 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.

22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

Memory Verse: And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.

—Matthew 1:21.

Aim: To show that it is through Jesus that our enemies are overcome.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday

Isaiah 9

Thursday

Luke 2:1-19

Tuesday

John 1:1-17

Friday

Isaiah 53

Wednesday

Mark 1:1-11

Saturday

Matthew 1:18-25

INTRODUCTION

The actual state of the unredeemed soul is described in Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?" With a world filled with such men we could expect nothing but turmoil. Within man there is no remedy for this terrible

situation; and the Lord, recognizing this, provided a remedy which really works. To redeem us back from the power of sin and the devil, God sacrificed His own Son, and through this sacrifice we can have deliverance from the evil forces that fill the human heart. In their place the Lord plants love to such a degree that he who possesses it will suffer wrong to himself rather than to do wrong. If this great love could be planted in the hearts of our rulers today, how very soon we could be able to settle all our differences.

MEDITATIONS

PROSPERITY PROMISED—Isaiah 35:1—Blossom as the rose—Many regard the rose as the most lovely flower and are delighted with its fragrance. What a change would take place should the desolation of the hot, dry desert be replaced suddenly by a beautiful rose garden! But the prophet is not talking about natural things in life, rather he is using natural things to portray spiritual things. So the promise of the prophet here is that the time shall come when men shall be delivered from the gloom and adversity of the events of life. A power shall be imparted to the lives of men that shall enable them to be happy even when faced with sorrow. This is for the present life and must not be interpreted to mean heaven.

SPIRITUALITY TO BE GREAT—Isaiah 35:2—Blossom abundantly—It is within the power of our God to deliver completely from the power of all our enemies with an abundant deliverance. So completely can He fill the human heart with joy that all sorrow is forgotten. Lebanon was noted for its fine cedar forests which were desired by many. Carmel was a mountain range in Palestine of particular beauty, as was also the plain along the coast called Sharon. All the beauty of these earthly things was to be exceeded in the spiritual life of him who accepted Christ.

TAKE COURAGE—Isaiah 35:3—Strengthen—It is the attack of the devil in his fury and dark accusation that brings weakness to the Christian soldier. Courage is bolstered when we hear this wonderful promise of our God. The Christian warfare is real and requires strength to go on the battlefield and rescue souls from sin, sickness, and discouragement.

GOD IS WATCHING—Isaiah 35:4—God will come—This refers directly to the coming of the Lord Jesus the first time. So, before His coming in the days of the prophets, those who believed this received courage also. It is wonderful to know that there is no problem too hard for the Lord. He can and will answer every cry of His children. When God moves His hand, the devil is helpless. There will always be those who are lately joining the Christian army who must learn the ways of the Lord and become aware of the wiles of Satan. Therefore, we can expect constantly to be helping some who have been made fearful by the events of life they have met.

ANOTHER ENEMY OVERCOME—Isaiah 35:5—Shall be opened—Sickness has long been a great enemy of man and has retarded his accomplishment. Lepers have been driven to colonies. The T.B. patients have been confined in distant sanitariums. The cripples have been held in wheelchairs. But, thank God, there is deliverance in the name of Jesus! God is the source of health and power. He has promised to deliver anyone who trusts in His name. **Verse 6—Waters break out**—The soil of many deserts is very fertile, and the coming of water causes it to produce. So it is in the life of a man. There is good soil, and the coming of the grace of God is certain to produce a life of beauty and richness.

DELIVERANCE COMPLETE—Isaiah 35:10—Shall flee away—The promise here is that complete victory shall be given to everyone who takes the name of the Lord Jesus. Zion is a term used to represent the Church of God, and it is God's plan to gather all of His children into the one body, held together, not by a book or a vow, but by the love of God that fills each heart.

MAN'S GREATEST ENEMY OVERCOME—Matthew 1:21—Save his people—Man's greatest enemy has always been sin. He has, within himself, never been able to find a way out of this enemy's hand. Jesus points the way out! His sacrifice saves people from their sins and not in them. It is wonderful to be free from the transgression of the Word of God.

CHRIST IS INCARNATED—Matthew 1:23—God with us—In John 1:14 we read that the Word (Christ) was made flesh and dwelt among us. He occupied a physical body in the person of Jesus. He proved that it was possible to live a life above sin in the flesh. He tasted the joys and sorrows of life and now is able to help us as we pass through the vale of flesh. **Verse 25—Firstborn son**—Actually of the seed of David was He born. He lived a normal life as a child and was subject to His parents. In due time He offered His life on the cross and thus defeated every enemy that can come against man.

CONCLUSION

With such a great gift in the form of a sacrifice, it is very evident that complete and perfect deliverance has been purchased for every man. Jesus died once for all. Therefore, if any man is lost, he will have no excuse. Even those who died before the flood without God have no excuse, for in the Garden of Eden, Christ was promised, and everyone who believed in the promise received the favor of God. No man will be able to come to God in judgment and say that he never had a chance.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is man's greatest enemy?
2. Can he, without assistance, free himself from this enemy?
3. Name a second enemy to the family of man from which Christ can and will deliver us.

4. What is the chief prosperity that is promised to the Christian?
 5. How great is the prosperity to be?
 6. What is there in the promises of God to encourage the weak?
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LESSON NUMBER THIRTEEN FOR DECEMBER 29

THE CHRISTIAN PASSES FOR THE PRIZE

Scriptures: Hebrews 12:1-17.

Hebrews 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave

them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

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

11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

Memory Verse: Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

—Philippians 3:13, 14.

Aim: To show that eternal life can be gained only by consistent and constant effort.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Luke 23	Thursday	Matthew 10
Tuesday	I Thessalonians 4	Friday	Philippians 3
Wednesday	I Peter 4:11-19	Saturday	I Thessalonians 5

INTRODUCTION

The true prize of life is not the gaining of material advantage or the making of a name, but the gaining of the experience of eternal life in the heart. This great truth is almost universally overlooked, and men who declare themselves Christians are entangled with the affairs of the world. They have lost sight of the fact that we are faced with a powerful enemy, who would cheat us out of eternal life if he could. Because of this, the battle becomes furious sometimes, for the devil has determined that if he can keep men from it no one shall know the joy of life eternal. Therefore, we are told to press toward the mark, or in other words, put forth real effort in running the Christian race. As a soldier, we must endure hardness, or adversity, for only they who endure to the end shall be saved. As an incentive along the way we are told to remember the wonderful things that God has promised to them who love Him.

MEDITATIONS

TESTIMONIES OF OTHERS—Hebrews 12:1—Cloud of witnesses—The eleventh chapter of Hebrews gives abundant evidence that it is possible for us to make it through. God wrought great miracles through the lives of His people during the centuries that have passed. Knowing that He is no respecter of persons, we may be assured that He will do great things for us. **Lay aside**—But in order to have the favor of God, there are certain things that we must do. One thing is certain. God never makes any allowances for sin. Sin always separates from God. Therefore, it must be laid aside. Some things that are lawful must be laid aside if they, in any way, hinder our service to the Lord Jesus. Then with patience we must meet every issue of life according to the teaching of the Word of God. To run well for awhile is not enough. We must run well until life is over if we are to win.

THE PROPER EXAMPLE—Hebrews 12:2—Looking unto Jesus—Jesus, after being tempted in all points as we are, demonstrated in actual life that sin could be overcome. One thing that encouraged Him was the joy that awaited Him at the end of the race. We are told that we are to be joint-heirs with Christ, if we remain faithful. Therefore, we have the same joy set before us. Jesus had the bitter experience of the shame of the cross with its agony. In no sense did He deserve such an experience, but He endured it because of the end that would be gained thereby. In Revelation 3 we are told that to him who overcomes shall be given the privilege to sit down in the throne of Christ, even as Christ overcame and is set down in His Father's throne.

REFLECTING—Hebrews 12:3—Such contradiction—Jesus was accused of being under the power of Satan, also of being a

winebibber and a glutton. He was accused of being born of fornication. He was mocked just before the crucifixion, but none of these things moved Him. He endured them, giving us a spotless example. Let us consider these things.

UNDER THE GREATEST PRESSURE—Hebrews 12:4—Unto blood—In the garden before the crucifixion when all the sins of the world were laid upon Him, knowing what the awful reward was that awaited the wicked, His mental agony became so great that Jesus sweat, as it were, drops of blood. Then actually on the cross He gave His very own life for all mankind. None of us has been under such pressure. Since so much has not been required of us, we should not be wearied in the least. We should press on gladly and receive whatever the Master calls upon us to bear. Sin is the result of yielding to temptation. God will never let the pressure be greater than we can bear. So, if we resist sin in all its appeals, we are certain to win, if we put our whole strength into it.

CHASTENING CERTAIN—Hebrews 12:5—Nor faint—It is the kindness of God that points out our errors and failures. Doubtless, failure to walk as close to the Lord as we ought has been the cause of failure and merits punishment from the Lord so that we may learn to walk closer to the Lord. It is far better that we suffer this chastisement and live than that we go unconcerned and lose our souls. We must spend no time feeling sorry for ourselves; rather, we should take courage and try again.

ALL ARE PARTAKERS—Hebrews 12:6—Scourgeth every son—All things are known unto the Lord. No moment of our lives passes by Him unnoticed. Each moment must measure to His standard; and if there is a departure, it must at once be rectified. Therefore, as Verse Seven declares, we must endure chastening to remain the sons of God.

NO CHASTENING, NO SPIRITUAL LIFE—Hebrews 12:8—Then are ye bastards—He who receives no chastisement of the Lord is not a child of God. A bastard is one whose parents are improper. A sinner is one whose father is not of God. As soon as anyone is born of God, God at once starts to train him according to the rules of His house.

EARTHLY PATTERN—Hebrews 12:9—Be in subjection—There is no child who does not need correction from its earthly parents; and when the child is corrected properly, honor is given unto the parent. Children should be in subjection to their parents. This is but for the short span of a natural life. How much more it is needful that we be in subjection to God and live forever!

GOD'S WAY IS BEST—Hebrews 12:10—For our profit—If we live with God in eternity it will be because we have partaken of His holiness here. We are the ones who are blessed by an improvement in moral conduct, for God is already perfect. It is to improve our lives that He chastens us. **Verse 11—Seemeth to be joyous**—Chastening

is always accompanied by suffering. Suffering is something that all men desire to avoid. But if we suffer at the hand of the Lord, we are going to be able to produce a better fruit of righteousness. We need to learn the difference between the accusations of the devil and the chastening of the Lord. Many people suffer under the accusation of the devil, but this only brings confusion and does not work the peaceable fruit of righteousness. We have no reward for suffering under the accusation of the devil.

ACCELERATE THE FIGHT—Hebrews 12:12—Lift up—The prophet Isaiah wrote, “Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence: he will come and save you” (Isaiah 35:3, 4). The words of this verse are addressed to those who were “worn out,” whose hands hang down, whose “knees shake” from weariness, and who may have been discouraged in the heat of the battle. These are encouraged to exert themselves, take courage, with the assurance the Lord will help them, and they shall conquer if they persevere.

NEEDED INSTRUCTION—Hebrews 12:14—Follow peace—When a man has been truly born of the Spirit of God and filled with the Holy Ghost, he then has the peace of heaven in his heart. He then wants peace with all men, saved and unsaved. He who fails of the peace of God has failed in eternal life. Peace is certain to be the result of the life that is filled with holiness; a war-like life is a result of sin. If our lives are void of holiness, we may be sure that we shall not see the Lord in peace.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps the greatest encouragement, outside of the prize at the end of the Christian life, is the faithful promise of the Father that He will not allow us to be tempted above that which we are able. If we learn early in our Christian experience that the devil is to be used as a steppingstone to higher ground in overcoming each successive trial, we gain in spiritual strength. Therefore, we should be grateful for every test of strength that comes our way, for a loving heavenly Father, with great care, has permitted it to come. The net result will be a better citizen for His heavenly country, and the one exercised will have a greater capacity to enjoy heaven.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is the prize for which a Christian labors?
2. Consider some of the battles as fought by the soldiers of the Lord in Hebrews 11.
3. What did Jesus demonstrate by living in the flesh?
4. Why is the Christian chastened?
5. If Jesus learned obedience through suffering, can we escape?
6. What is the trouble if anyone is free from chastisement?

Name _____

Class _____

Enemies of the Family of God

ADULT & YOUNG PEOPLE

FOR THIS QUARTER:

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- L#2. . October 13 . . . The Christian Faces Discouragement Page 6**
- L#3. . October 20 . . . The Christian Faces the World Page 10**
- L#4. . October 27 . . . The Christian Faces Sickness Page 13**
- L#5. . November 3 . . The Christian Faces Failure Page 16**
- L#6. . November 10 . The Christian Faces Unbelief Page 19**
- L#7. . November 17 . The Christian Faces Heresy (Part I) Page 22**
- L#8. . November 24 . The Christian Faces Heresy (Part II) Page 26**
- L#9. . December 1 . . The Christian Faces Traditions of Men . . . Page 29**
- L#10. December 8 . . The Christian Faces Formality (Man-rule) . . Page 33**
- L#11. December 15 . The Christian Faces Ease in Zion Page 37**
- L#12. December 22 . Jesus Comes—All Enemies Defeated Page 41**
- L#13. December 29 . The Christian Presses for the Prize Page 44**