

*The
Distinctiveness
Of
Christianity*

12 Lessons

*Prepared by:
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2004

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Preface

“For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26)
The religion given by Jesus, the Christ, through inspiration of His Apostles by the Holy Spirit, is different—different from all other religions begun on this earth. Its uniqueness is obvious to all who make the comparison.

While some would say that it is radically different—it is not radical! Others might say it demands too much—but how can doing the things that greatly bless one’s life be too much! A religion that claims to be from God would have to be different from what men would do.

In these lessons we will briefly look at some of the things that makes Christianity different—but different in a very desirable way.

Paul E. Cantrell

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Lesson One

“The Distinctiveness of Christ, Himself”

INTRODUCTION

1. Luke 5:17-26
2. Notice the reaction of the people to what happened to the Palsy man:
 - a) They were amazed.
 - b) They glorified God.
 - c) Were filled with fear (Greatly impressed)
 - d) “We have seen strange things today”
3. Men often marvel at things that are different, distinctive.
4. The distinctive often has an especial appeal.
5. Define “Distinctive”.
 - a) Different, set apart from others, special
 - b) “We have seen strange things this day”
 - c) Causes one to be amazed or marvel.

DISCUSSION

I. THE LIFE OF CHRIST WAS DISTINCTIVE!

- A. In his birth. Matt. 1:18-23**
- B. He amazed his parents at age 12 in the Temple. Luke 2:48**
- C. He amazed his disciples in speaking to a Samaritan woman. John 4:27**
- D. The people marveled at his gracious words. Luke 4:22**
- E. The Jewish people were astonished at the authoritative teachings with which he addressed them. Matthew 7:28-29**
- F. His teachings on riches caused His disciples to be exceedingly amazed. Matthew 19:25**
- G. At His death, the Centurion glorified God at what he had witnessed. Luke 23:47**
- H. The women who saw Jesus resurrected trembled and were amazed. Mark 16:8**
- I. At His ascension, the disciples fell down and worshipped Him. Luke 24:52**

II. THE RELIGION OF CHRIST IS DISTINCTIVE!

A. In its power to change lives for the better. Romans 6:1-2

- 1) Christ's message has an appeal to the human heart.
- 2) It furnishes motivation to man to make changes in his life for the better. I John 5:3
- 3) This message has come from the mind of God to man to make him perfect or complete. II Tim. 3:16-17

B. In its ability to enlighten mankind. John 8:32

- 1) The gospel is a mirror to reveal man's inner being. James 1:23, 25.
- 2) It shows him his sinfulness and his need of a Redeemer. Luke 15
- 3) Helps man to see how far short he falls in living a life like God. Romans 3:23
- 4) It also tells us of God's willingness to save. John 3:16
- 5) It gives to man the Way, the Truth, and the Life. John 14:6

C. In its ability to help us correctly evaluate ourselves & things.

Matthew 16:26

- 1) It attaches greater value to the soul than to the things of this life.
- 2) Christ's death for sinful man shows this true value of man. Heb. 2:9
- 3) It sees even in the vilest sinner, something precious & worth saving.
- 4) The knowledge of Christ & the hope He gives is worth more than all the world has to offer. Phil. 3:10
- 5) Birth, wealth, fame, social acceptance, etc., dwindle into nothingness before the knowledge of the Cross of Christ.
- 6) The kingdom of God should be first in our lives. Matthew 6:33

D. In its ability to teach us how to live. Romans 12:1-2

- 1) Instead of hating our enemies, we are to love them. Matt. 5:43-45
- 2) Love is the mark of Jesus' disciples, not power, wealth, prestige, etc. John 13:35
- 3) The Christian life is distinctive!
- 4) Even in the face of persecution, there is joy. Acts 5:41; Colossians 1:24; II Corinthians 12:10; Jas. 1:3

CONCLUSION

1. Acts 4:13 (Saw the boldness).
2. They saw in them the distinctiveness of Christianity.
3. Such still needs to be seen in us today!

Lesson Two

“God’s Definition of a Christian”

INTRODUCTION

1. Acts 11:19-26
2. People have varying ideas of who is a Christian.
3. The reason why they are different, they come from human thinking.
4. If we really want to know who is a Christian, need to go to the source.
5. What God says about the matter is what counts.

DISCUSSION

I. THE WORD, “CHRISTIAN”, DEFINED:

A. Translates the Greek word, “Christianos”.

- 1) “One who belongs to or follows Christ”.
- 2) Word is used three times in the New Testament: Acts 11:26; Acts 26:28; I Peter 4:16.
- 3) Christ is the heart, core, and foundation of Christianity.

B. The term, we believe, was divinely given.

- 1) Isaiah 62:2
 - a) Name given when both Jew & Gentile made up the church at Antioch.
 - b) Gentiles saw God’s righteousness.
 - c) Name which mouth of Jehovah shall name.
- 2) Word for, “were called” (Chrematizo), was normally always used with what God calls.....(Matt. 2:12; 2:22; Lk. 2:26; Acts 10:22; 11:26; Rom. 7:3; Heb. 8:5; 11:7; 12:25)
- 3) It was not a derisive term.

II. SOME DEFINITIONS OF A CHRISTIAN BY GOD’S WORD:

A. He is one who feels indebted to take message to others.

- 1) Acts 11:19-20
 - a) Someone had to feel this debt and carry the gospel to the people of Antioch.
 - b) If all had stayed in Jerusalem, there would have been no Christians at Antioch.
 - c) Everywhere there are Christians, someone had to feel indebted to take it to them.

- 2) Let's don't forget those who brought it to us.
 - a) Do we feel a debt to repay to others?
 - b) Have we carried the message to others?
- 3) Persecution did not stop their mouths. (V. 19)

B. He is a Disciple.

- 1) Acts 11:26
 - a) A disciple is a learner & follower.
 - b) One that is taught and responds to it.
- 2) Are we a learner & follower of Christ?

C. He is one who has heard the gospel, believed and turned to the Lord.

- 1) Acts 11:21
 - a) Their hearts were open to the message of Christ.
 - b) Their hearts were convinced that Jesus was the Christ.
 - c) Upon believing the message, they turned to the Lord.
 - d) Acts 9:35
 - e) Those who believed and turned became Christians.
- 2) Questions:
 - a) Have we opened our hearts to God's message?
 - b) Have we believed it?
 - c) Have we turned to the Lord as God directs us?

D. He is one that cleaves to the Lord.

- 1) Acts 11:23
 - a) To cleave....to be glued to....fasten tight....hold on to.
 - b) It is like marriage....glued for life. Rom. 7:1-4
 - c) Spiritually, we are married to Christ.
 - d) A Christian is certainly one who cleaves to Christ.
 - e) He is not a quitter.
- 2) How firm are we cleaving to the Lord?

E. He is one that has been added to the church by the Lord.

- 1) Acts 11:24
 - a) He comes into a new relationship to God and to others.
 - b) He is part of a fellowship of the Redeemed.
 - c) Acts 2:41, 47
 - d) Christians are those added to the Lord, to His church.
- 2) Have you been added to the Lord?

F. He is one who assembles with other disciples.

- 1) Acts 11:26
 - a) He assembles together with them to enjoy fellowship with, and to worship God together with.

- b) Heb. 10:24-25
- c) It is a time of encouraging & exhorting one another.
- d) Acts 2:42, 46

2) Do we look forward to assembling with God’s people?

G. He is one whose life has been affected by the grace of God.

- 1) Acts 11:23
 - a) When Barnabas came up to Antioch, he saw what the grace of God had done in the lives of these Gentiles.
 - b) God’s grace had forgiven them, and given them an opportunity to begin a new walk in life. Rom. 6:1-4
 - c) Paul saw what the grace of God had done in Macedonia. II Cor. 8:1
 - d) Acts 11:24
- 2) What has the grace of God done in our lives?
- 3) Do we see our need of God’s grace constantly?

II. How does one become a Christian?

- A. He believes and turns to the Lord. Acts 11:21*
- B. Upon believing, he repents and is baptized. Acts 2:38*
- C. He is obedient to the faith. Acts 6:7*
- D. He becomes a disciple to Jesus and is baptized. Matt. 28:18-20*
- E. Chart to illustrate (next page)*

CONCLUSION

- 1. We have just touched on things that identifies a Christian.
- 2. To call a person a Christian who does not measure up to the above things is a misuse of the term.
- 3. Be safe—be sure you are a Christian as God defines one!

EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION

Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16)

PREACHING	BELIEVE	REPENT	CONFESS	BAPTIZED	SAVED
3000					
Acts 2:14-47	V. 37	V. 38		V. 38	V. 38
Eunuch					
Acts 8:35-39	V. 36-37		V. 37	V. 38	V. 39

Saul Acts 9:17-18			V. 18	Acts 22:16
Cornelius Acts 10:1-48	V. 43	11:18	V. 48	V. 43
Jailer Acts 16:27-34	V. 31, 34		V. 33	V. 34
Lydia Acts 16:13-15			V. 15	V. 15

Lesson Three

“What Makes Christianity Attractive?”

INTRODUCTION

1. Philippians 1:27-30
2. Vision is a wonderful thing.
 - a) It is a gift from God.
 - b) But without something to see, it would be worthless.
 - c) God has amply furnished this too.
3. However, with the gift, comes the responsibility.
 - a) We can be tempted to sin through our sight. (I John 2:15-17)
 - b) Mother Eve was tempted. (Gen. 3:6)
 - c) Satan knows the value of sight and how to use it to lead into sin.
 - d) He makes things as attractive as possible to lure us into sin.
 - e) Illustration:
 - 1—The liquor makers know the value of appeal...making a thing attractive.
 - 2—They never show a man drunk wallowing in a ditch.
 - 3—Nor his wife and children half-naked & starving.
 - 4—Nor a car wreck with innocent people dead because of a man’s drinking.
 - 5—They show the attractive side of drinking only!
4. Also, unattractive things can turn us off.
 - a) This is the reason for so many admonitions to Christian to help keep Christianity attractive to the non-believer.
 - b) Illustration:
 - 1—Go into a café, order and get a fine meal.
 - 2—But if brought out by a waitress with filthy clothes and hands...might lose appetite.
5. God has designed Christianity to be the most attractive thing to man’s spiritual sight.
 - a) God’s people can help to keep it attractive.
 - b) Or, destroy it’s attractiveness in the sight of others.
 - c) Acts 2:47; Tit. 2:10
6. Four things are emphasized that helps to make Christianity attractive to others. (Phil. 1:27-30)
 - a) Our behavior.
 - b) Our Unity.
 - c) Our Peace & Assurance.

- d) Our Willingness to suffer for righteousness.

DISCUSSION

I. OUR BEHAVIOR:

A. John 13:35

- 1) Love of one another shows attractiveness of Christianity.
- 2) God's love makes the gospel attractive. John 3:16
- 3) Hatred and bitterness toward each other certainly takes away from its attractiveness.

B. Col. 4:6

- 1) Our speech should be with grace, seasoned with salt.
- 2) Compare the person who says right thing at right time with person that says wrong thing at wrong time.
- 3) Eph. 4:29, 32

C. Matthew 5:16

- 1) Good works make Christianity attractive.
- 2) Paul's admonitions to Titus (Tit. 2:10, 14; 3:8, 14)

D. Rom. 2:17-24

- 1) Consistency makes Christianity attractive.
- 2) The Jews inconsistency made Judaism unattractive to Gentiles. (Blasphemed God).
- 3) How consistent are we in what we say & do?
- 4) I Peter 3:1-4

E. Mark 14:3-9

- 1) What made the act attractive...."She had done what she could".
- 2) Why do we admire the widow's 2 mites? She did what she could.
- 3) Even though we are imperfect, Christianity will be attractive if we do our best.
- 4) Half-hearted Christians never make Christianity attractive.

II. OUR UNITY.

A. John 17:20-21

- 1) Jesus prayed that we would all be united as one so the world would believe that the Father sent Jesus into the world.
- 2) Acts 4:32; 2:47....no wonder!
- 3) Did you ever hear anyone say, "See how beautifully they argue with one another?"
- 4) Gal. 5:15
- 5) To act as one—cooperation, one mind, one judgment (1 Cor.. 1:10)

III. OUR PEACE & ASSURANCE.

A. Phil. 2:14-16

- 1) Murmuring, disputing, dissension are not attractive to others.
- 2) The world is looking for peace & assurance (confidence).
- 3) *“Once saved, always saved.”* Is this true? How can we know?

B. Phil. 4:6-8

- 1) When they see we have that peace that passes understanding, they will desire it too.
- 2) Unhappy & disturbed Christians do not really show the true attractiveness of Christianity.

IV. OUR WILLINGNESS TO SUFFER FOR WHAT WE BELIEVE.

A. I Pet. 4:12-16

- 1) Showing consecration & devotion makes Christianity attractive.
- 2) Showing a constancy in the face of trials.
- 3) Like Daniel as he was put to the test.
- 4) Like Paul in his efforts to preach.
- 5) It is hard to put down a person willing to suffer for beliefs.
- 6) No one is impressed with disloyalty & lukewarm Christianity.
- 7) It is not being radical, nor self-righteous!

CONCLUSION

1. We need to recognize our part in helping to make Christianity attractive to the world about us.
2. We have the best product in the world. Let's serve it to the world in a way that:
 - 1---we will not detract from it,
 - 2---but enhance it--With clean, dedicated, faithful lives.

Lesson Four

“What is the Difference Between Ordinary & Unusual People?”

INTRODUCTION

1. Can only a few gifted people be unusual and the rest ordinary?
 - a) This is the thinking of most of us.
 - b) But is it true?
 - c) Who said so?
2. Were unusual people at one time just ordinary like the rest of us?
 - a) If so, what did they do to become unusual?
 - b) Is it possible for an ordinary person to become unusual?
3. Read Luke 4:16-32
 - a) When Jesus came back to his hometown, he performs no miracles.
 - b) Why? He did in other towns.
 - c) Was it because of their outlook towards him? (Matt. 13:58)
 - d) Why did Jesus mention the widow of Zarephath?
 - 1—Was it because she believed in God’s prophet, and others did not?
 - 2—Was it because of what she did?
 - e) Why did Jesus mention Naaman, the leper, that was healed?
 - 1—Was he healed because he sought out a prophet of God?
 - 2—Were none of the Jews healed because of their lack of faith?
 - f) Notice the reaction of the Jews to Jesus’ statements. (Lk. 4:28-32)
 - 1—They were outsiders!!
4. Is it possible that the difference between the ordinary & the unusual is in their outlook & actions?
5. Look at other examples!

DISCUSSION

I. DAVID

A. David’s early life:

- 1) Youngest in family.
- 2) No real respect by older brothers.
- 3) Kept sheep for father while older brothers were at war.
- 4) Went to take good to brothers in battle.

B. When did David become unusual?

- 1) When he saw Goliath....heard what he said!
- 2) All fled and were afraid.
- 3) But David wasn't. I Sam. 17:26, 32
- 4) Saul's reservations. I Sam. 17:33
- 5) David's reply. I Sam. 17:34-37

C. What caused David to become unusual from that day on?

- 1) His faith in God.
- 2) His respect for God.

II. GIDEON

A. His life before a special event occurred.

- 1) Israel was in bondage to Midianites. Jud. 6:1
- 2) He was in a poor family. Jud. 6:15
- 3) He was least in his family. Jud. 6;15
- 4) God had sent prophet to warn them about their ungodliness, but they would not listen.
- 5) When an angel appeared to him, he questioned God. Jud. 6:12-13
- 6) Even when called to serve, he wanted a sign. Jud. 6:17

B. What made him unusual?

- 1) He threshed wheat at night and hid it from Midianites. Jud. 6:11
- 2) Others would have, but didn't....afraid!
- 3) When convinced, he obeyed the Lord. Jud. 6:25-27
- 4) What he was willing to do, made him unusual.
- 5) Later, 300 men with Gideon sent Midianites on the run.

III. MARY

A. Her life.....

- 1) Ordinary woman....believer in Jesus.
- 2) No indication she was endowed above others.
- 3) Unknown person in unusual sense!

B. What made her unusual?

- 1) She broke a jar of ointment and anointed Jesus for His burial. Mark 14:3-9
- 2) "She hath done what she could"
- 3) Mary did something that others were unwilling to do.

IV. POOR WIDOW & HER MITES.

A. Many widows mentioned in Bible.

- 1) Why was she unusual?
- 2) Why has she become a source of great encouragement to others?
- 3) She is not even named!

B. Was it what she did? Luke 21:1-4

- 1) She gave a gift that showed sacrifice, love & trust in God.
- 2) What she did made a difference!

CONCLUSION

1. Some names are unusual....names that will live in infamy (Judas).
2. What makes the difference is what we believe and do!
 - a) All have opportunities in life.
 - b) If we take advantage of them and do something about....be unusual.
3. "Blessed is the man who hears & does the Will of God."

Lesson Five

“Christians Prove All Things”

INTRODUCTION

1. Many feel insulted if you ask them to prove their religious beliefs by the Bible.
 - a) But God commands us to so do. I Thess. 5:21
 - b) He also commands us to be ready to give an answer to everyone that who ask us about our hope in Christ. I Peter 3:15
2. Some have made the observation: “O, you can prove anything by the Bible.”
 - a) If so, then what is the point of the command to prove all things.
 - b) It would be foolish....because you can “prove anything by the Bible.”
 - c) But, handling the Bible correctly, one cannot do so.
 - d) Thus, the command is valid....”Prove all things.”
3. Does this command allow one to believe anything he chooses?
 - a) Obviously not!
 - b) If it doesn't make any difference what one believes....why be concerned about proving anything?

DISCUSSION

I. DEFINE “PROVE”.

A. Definition:

- 1) To try, to tempt, to put to a test, to examine.
- 2) Usually with the idea of seeing if the person or thing is acceptable, dependable, or faithful.

B. Examples:

- 1) I Tim. 3:10---Appoint only approved men to be deacons.
- 2) Ps. 66:10---God tries his people.

II. WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR “PROVING ALL THINGS?”

A. Why God proves us:

- 1) To do us good. Deut. 8:16
- 2) To give us opportunity to show that we love Him with all our heart & soul. Deut. 13:3
- 3) To mature or perfect us. Jas. 1:2-4

B. Why do we need to prove ourselves?

- 1) So we can prove what is that good, acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Rom. 12:2
- 2) So we can prove our Love to God. II Cor. 8:8
- 3) So we can have rejoicing in ourselves. Gal. 6:4

- 4) So we can prove what is acceptable unto God. Eph. 5:8-10
- 5) To see if we are in the faith. II Cor. 13:5

C. Should we prove God?

- 1) Jesus said we were not to. Matt. 4:7
- 2) But God called upon the Jews to do so. Mal. 3:10
- 3) The reason behind testing seems to be critical.

D. Why prove all things?

- 1) So we can know what is good and hold to it.
- 2) So that we will not hold to the bad which cannot be proved.
- 3) All, not some!!
- 4) All people believe & do some of what is right!
- 5) But need to prove all things to be right!
- 6) Some is not what God is commanding!

III. WRONG BASIS UPON WHICH TO PROVE SOMETHING.

A. Assumption.

- 1) Many assume things in religion.
- 2) Expect you to take their word.
- 3) Example: "There are many good people in all churches, so all churches are good."

B. Accusation.

- 1) Jews accused Paul of being a pestilent fellow and a mover of sedition. Acts 24:5
- 2) Their problem: could not prove such. Acts 24:12-13

C. Misrepresentation.

- 1) Jews misrepresented Stephen. Acts 6:8-15
- 2) But they did not prove their claims.

D. One's feelings.

- 1) Luke 18:9-14
- 2) Pharisee felt he was right...but wasn't.
- 3) To go by feelings shows that we have not done what God commands...."Prove all things."

E. One's Parents.

- 1) Acts 7:51
- 2) They were proving things by what their parents had done.
- 3) But they were wrong.

F. One's Popularity.

- 1) Exo. 23:2
- 2) Are not to follow a multitude to do evil.

- 3) Jesus was not popular near the end of his life.....was he right or wrong?

G. Conscience.

- 1) Some have their consciences defiled. Tit. 1:15
- 2) Some have their consciences seared. I Tim. 4:1-2
- 3) How reliable would such consciences be?

IV. DOCTRINES THAT NEED TO BE PROVED:

A. What is the proof for faith only? Jas. 2:24

**B. Where is the proof for sprinkling or pouring and calling it baptism?
Rom. 6:4**

C. Where is the proof for “joining the church of your choice?”

D. Where is the proof for instrumental music in worship. Eph. 5:19

E. Where is the proof for the Lord’s Supper on another day and not every first day of the week. Acts 20:7

F. Where is the proof for preachers wearing titles? Matt. 23:1-12

**G. Where is the proof for the church celebrating Christmas and Easter?
Gal. 4:8-11**

CONCLUSION

1. Waiting till we die to prove all things is not wise.
2. Now is the time.
3. We are to prove all things and hold fast to that which is good.

Lesson Six

“Christians Deal with Inferiority”

INTRODUCTION

1. “More people suffer from “Inferiority” than pride or arrogance!”
 - a) Do you agree or disagree?
 - b) What would you base your answer on?
2. Do you consider “Inferiority” to be a sin?
 - a) Yes or No?
 - b) Is the Inferiority feeling or complex the sin....or.....
 - c) The results of such that becomes sin?
 - d) Some feel that the sin is in its effects.
 - e) One of the greatest enemies of being useful is feeling of inferiority.
 - f) “Grasshopper Complex” of Israelites. (Numbers 13:33)
3. How would you define “Inferiority?”
 - a) Low in order, degree, or rank (Captain is an inferior rank to major)
 - b) Lower in quality, value, or estimation.
 - c) To feel inferior to others.
 - d) A person lower in rank, status, or accomplishment than another.
3. Exodus 4:1-18

DISCUSSION

I. WHAT CAN “Inferiority” DO IN OUR LIVES?

A. Exodus 4:10

- 1) “I am not eloquent”, “I am slow of speech”, “A low tongue”
- 2) Causes us to avoid what God calls upon us to do!!
 - a) “Oh, I can’t do that”
 - b) Why? God commands us to do it!
 - c) Is it that we can’t because we have an inferiority complex or because we don’t want to?

B. Acts 2:42

- 1) God wants his people to worship together, fellowship, etc.
- 2) But, the person who feels inferior tends to be anti-social.
- 3) He has a tendency to withdraw to himself.
- 4) But God intended that we associate, fellowship, worship together so we can encourage one another. Col. 3:16; Heb. 10:24-25

C. I Sam. 10:20-24

- 1) Saul seems to have had an inferior feeling about himself.
 - a) He had already met Samuel.
 - b) I Sam. 9:18-21
 - c) Samuel even anointed him King, secretly. I Sam. 10:1
 - d) But when Samuel tried to anoint him publicly, he had hidden himself from sight.
- 2) His feelings of inferiority was in contrast to God's appointment.
- 3) Illustration---2 girls.
 - a) Both in poor circumstances.
 - b) One wanted to drop out of school because she could not dress as well as others.
 - c) The other tried to encourage her: **"I cannot dress as well nor do I have all the things that others have, but I will not quit school. This is my opportunity to better myself"**.
 - d) She became valedictorian and president of her class.
 - e) What made the difference?
 - f) She saw...circumstances do not make the difference, but it is one's outlook about themselves.

II. WHAT ARE SOME CAUSES OF INFERIORITY?

A. Exodus 2:11-15

- 1) Moses killed the Egyptian in an effort to help his people.
- 2) But instead of helping, he hurt them & himself.
- 3) Moses had a defeatist attitude from then on...felt inferior.
- 4) Problem---Overconfidence or unwise zeal!
- 5) Remedy:
 - a) Admit failure in this attempt.
 - b) Recognize it was not because of inferiority, but unwise zeal.
 - c) Phil. 4:13
 - d) Give honor to God.
 - e) Moses succeeded in getting the people freed with God's help & guidance.

B. Matt. 25:19-30

- 1) One talent man was fearful, inferiority feeling, incapable.
- 2) Fear of losing respect of others....loosing face.
- 3) Fear of failure.
- 4) Remedy: "Better to have tried & failed than not to try at all."
(II Tim. 1:7-8)

C. II Tim. 2:21

- 1) Afraid to try something not prepared to do.
- 2) If it needs to be done, no choice but to try.
- 3) If fail, get better prepared.
- 4) Lack of preparation is a key to inferiority feelings.
- 5) Be sure our problem is not laziness.
- 6) Remedy: Trust in god's promises.
 - a) God does not ask the impossible. Phil. 4:13
 - b) Humble, but never inferior. Phil. 3:14

D. Acts 5:29

- 1) Being afraid of what they will say or do to us.
- 2) We want good things said to and about us.
- 3) Afraid of criticism.
- 4) Fear of what men can do or say.
- 5) Remedy:
 - a) Realize Heb. 13:5-6
 - b) There will always be blame & praise for anything done.
 - c) Believe God and obey.
 - d) Can't conquer inferiority by doing nothing.
 - e) Must want to, believe It can be done, ask God's help.

E. Matt. 25:24

- 1) Man only had one talent...went & hid it.
- 2) Fearful, inferiority feeling....not capable...fear of failure.
- 3) Inferiority because we have too little.
- 4) "If I had what so-in-son had, I could do wonders."
- 5) Remedy:
 - a) Not how much, but what I do with what I have.
 - b) Use it and we will be given more. Matt. 25:22-23

CONCLUSION

1. Are we failing to work because of inferiority feelings.
2. Nothing is inferior that is consecrated to God.
3. I Cor. 15:58

Lesson Seven

“Christians Deal With Sorrow”

INTRODUCTION

1. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
2. What is the danger of sorrow in our lives?
 - a) One of the gravest problems human’s face in life is sorrow.
 - b) Some have already fully tasted of its pains.
 - c) The remainder of us will more than likely face it too.
 - d) It can produce a crisis in one’s life:
 - 1—II Cor. 2:7---Can be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.
 - 2—Phil. 2:27---Sorrow upon sorrow (Lam. 1:12)
 - 3—Prov. 15:13---Our spirit can be broken.
 - e) How we deal with sorrow:
 - 1—Can determine our happiness here;
 - 2—Can determine our eternal destiny.
3. What are some synonyms of Sorrow?
 - a) Woe, Heaviness, Grief, Lamentations, Pain, Afflictions, Mourning, Oppression, Regretful, Depression, Dissatisfaction.
4. Look at an O.T. example of sorrow (Naomi).

DISCUSSION

I. WHAT BROUGHT ON NAOMI’S SORROW?

A. Ruth 1:1

- 1) Famine caused her family to move from their home to Moab.
- 2) This type of move is never pleasant.

B. Ruth 1:3

- 1) Her husband dies in a foreign land.
- 2) Widowhood is trying enough, much less in a foreign land.
- 3) Also, bad circumstances financially.

C. Ruth 1:4-5

- 1) Both of her sons die in a foreign land. (Ps. 18:4)
- 2) Death of children is often harder than death of a mate.
- 3) A mother looks forward to the time when:
 - a) Her children will make her proud of them;
 - b) She will be rewarded for her toil with them;
 - c) She can lean on them for support & comfort.

- 4) But now, the voices of her husband & sons are hushed to be heard no more.
 - a) Is life robbed of every joy?
 - b) Must one so continuously mourn until they, too, are carried to the silent city of the dead?

II. HOW DID NAOMI DEAL WITH HER SORROW?

A. Ruth 1:6-14

- 1) She did not give up & become like the Moabites in their idolatry.
- 2) She could have turned her heart away from God, but she didn't.
- 3) Her daughters-in-law respected her which shows she handled her sorrow well.
- 4) Ruth 1:19-21---"Call me Mara" (She did not close her eyes to the dark reality, but neither did she give up—She talked about it).

B. Ruth 1:6-7

- 1) She let her sorrow draw her closer to God and God's people.
- 2) She returned to her home & her people.
- 3) God's people are the best people on earth...great help.
- 4) Sorrow can strengthen our faith if we let it. (Jas. 1:2-4)

C. Ruth 2:20, 3:18

- 1) She believed that God could work things out.
- 2) She had hope that helped.

D. Ruth 3:1

- 1) In showing concern for her daughter-in-law, she was blessed.
- 2) Ruth 4:14-15
- 3) Throw self back into life & the purpose of life.

III. WHAT DOES GOD TELL US ABOUT SORROW?

A. Matt. 26:38

- 1) He experienced great sorrow in Jesus.
- 2) Isa. 53:3-4

B. II Cor. 1:3-4

- 1) God can comfort his people.
- 2) Isa. 51:3, 12; 52:9

C. John 16:20

- 1) He can even turn our heaviness, sorrow, into joy.
- 2) Esther 9:22
- 3) II Cor. 6:10

IV. HOW CAN GOD GIVE US COMFORT?

A. Ps. 119:50; 23:4; Rom. 15:4

- 1) Comfort from His word (Read, study, believe, obey)
- 2) Designed for our good & help.

B. II Cor. 7:13; Col. 4:11; I Thess. 5:14

- 1) Comfort from God's people.
- 2) So designed the church just for this value.

C. I Thess. 4:13, 18; Luke 16:25; Rev. 21:4

- 1) We have hope in Christ.
- 2) Lazarus was comforted in the after-life.
- 3) In heaven....no more death or sorrow, etc.

CONCLUSION

1. Sorrow comes as result of sin...God has the answer!!

Lesson Eight

“Christians deal with the Love of Money”

INTRODUCTION

1. Mark 10:17-22)
2. A young man ran to Jesus to ask, “*What must I do to inherit Eternal life?*”
3. But he went away grieved over the answer Jesus gave.
4. What answer did Jesus give that was so upsetting?
 - a) “*Go sell all you have*”
 - b) “*Give to the poor*”
 - c) “*You will have treasure in heaven*”
 - d) “*Take up your cross and follow me*”
5. He went away sorrowfully because he had great possessions!
6. Jesus gives two statements that give insight to a great problem of man:
 - a) “*How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God.*”(Mk. 10:23)
 - b) “*How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God.*”(Mk. 10:24)
 - c) Even his disciples were astonished at Jesus’ statements.

DISCUSSION

I. INSIGHTS INTO THE YOUNG MAN’S CHARACTER:

A. He came running to Jesus.

- 1) Eagerness as oppose to indifference.
- 2) All should be eager to be taught by Jesus.

B. His humility.

- 1) He kneeled to show respect to Jesus.
- 2) He was a ruler, but show humility in the presence of a greater.
- 3) Youth needs to learn respect & humility.

C. His Courage.

- 1) In spite of his high standing:
 - a) He did not seek a private interview with Jesus.
 - b) He asked before the whole crowd of people.
- 2) He did not conceal his sense of need & admiration for Jesus.

D. His discernment.

- 1) “Good master”---He recognized the goodness of Jesus.
- 2) Saw Him as a unique person among men.

E. His spiritual quality.

- 1) His question shows this....mind towards spiritual things.

- 2) Concerned for his soul, here & hereafter.

II. WHAT WAS THE FATAL FLAW IN HIS CHARACTER?

A. His riches meant too much to him.

- 1) He did not say, "What you say I will do."
- 2) His refusal was caused by a stranglehold of his money.
- 3) Jesus indicated that he trusted in riches. (Mk. 10:24)
- 4) Warnings: I Tim. 6:10; Matt. 6:24; Col. 3:5
- 5) He wanted the heavenly treasure, but would not give up his earthly possessions for such.
- 6) Jesus asked him to sacrifice present ease & comfort for future joy & bliss, but he sacrificed future bliss for present comfort.
- 7) He gave up the one vital thing he needed for the many material things that would soon perish.
- 8) When he came to Jesus, he thought he possessed his possessions, but found instead that they possessed him.

B. His was disobedient to the will of God.

- 1) He went away sad...but not because of his sin, but because of his inability to have both!
- 2) It was a sadness that would find no relief.
- 3) He bowed the knees to Jesus, but not his will.
- 4) He bowed his head without bowing his heart.
- 5) He feigned allegiance, but refused obedience.
- 6) He knew what he needed, but would not give up what he wanted.

CONCLUSION

1. Are we willing to give up all to follow Jesus? Mark 10:28-30
2. The Christian deals with the love of money.
 - a) That is the only way we can follow Jesus.
 - b) Our greatest desire is to have treasures in heaven, not on earth. Matt. 6:19-21
 - c) He seeks 1st the kingdom of God & His righteousness! Matt. 6:33

Lesson Nine

“Christians Deal With the Sin of Uselessness”

INTRODUCTION

1. James 4:17
2. The book of James is practical!
 - a) If you know to do good, then do it!
 - b) If you don't, your knowledge is useless.
 - c) And you sin!
3. It is possible to hear 3-4 lessons a week from the Bible:
 - a) Does it affect our lives?
 - b) Do I let God's truth affect my emotions as well as my will?
4. James' letter is filled with the need to do!
 - a) Jas. 1:22---“*But be ye doers of the work, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*”
 - b) Jas. 1:25---“*But whoso looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*”
 - c) Jas. 1:26---“*If any man among you seems to be religious, and bridles not his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is vain.*”
 - d) Jas. 1:27---“*Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*”
 - e) Jas. 2:17, 22, 24, etc.

DISCUSSION

I. MAN CAN SIN IN TWO BASIC WAYS:

A. Sin of Commission:

- 1) To do that which is wrong or against the will of God.
- 2) I Jn. 3:4---“*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*”

B. Sin of Omission:

- 1) To fail to do what we should. Jas. 4:17
- 2) Fail to abide in the doctrine of Christ. II Jn. 9

C. Illustrated:

- 1) Would you blaspheme God?
- 2) But do you fail to love Him? Which is the worst?

II. HOW DO THE FOLLOWING ILLUSTRATE THE SIN OF USELESSNESS?

A. The Fig Tree (Matt. 21:18-19)

- 1) It had leaves, but no fruit.
- 2) Figs was the reason for it's existence.
- 3) Jesus cursed it for it's fruitlessness....USELESSNESS!

B. The One Talent Man (Matt. 25:14-30)

- 1) The other two invested their talents & doubled what they were given.
- 2) They were praised for their fruitfulness.
- 3) The One talent man did nothing.
- 4) Condemned for his "Uselessness". (vs. 28-30)

C. The Rich man. (Luke 16:19-31)

- 1) He had opportunity to do good for Lazarus.
- 2) But failed to help.
- 3) With all he had...he was useless to God!
- 4) Condemned to a place of torment. (vs. 23)

D. The Judgment Scene. (Matt. 25:31-46)

- 1) We live in a world that is not perfect....sorrows, sickness, loss, death.
- 2) Opportunities to reach out to help others.
- 3) When we fail to look for and see such opportunities, we are useless to God.
- 4) These were condemned to everlasting punishment. (vs. 41-43)

CONCLUSION

1. Christians are to be fruitful, not useless in our world.
 - a) They are to be active in good works. (Tit. 3:8)
 - b) They are to seek to do good to all men. (Gal. 6:10)
2. At the judgment:
 - a) Will Christians be lost?
 - b) What will be the primary problem?

Lesson Ten

“Christians Deal With Failures”

INTRODUCTION

1. To be called a “failure” is not very pleasant!
2. To be called such is the ultimate put down!
3. We want to talk about “failures” for a little while.
 - a) Not failing to do petty things, but important things.
 - b) Things like TRUTH, RIGHT, MORALITY, INTEGRITY, HONESTY.
 - c) Failure in important, basic areas of living.
 - d) Failure as a human being before God.
 - e) Failure as a father or mother, wife or husband, child or parent.
 - f) Failure as a preacher, elder, deacon, teacher in the church.
 - g) Failure in our mission upon earth....to be an unprofitable servant.
 - h) Failure in the most important mission that man has.....to glorify God!
4. Illustration: (Luke 12:15-21)
 - a) Jesus called the rich man who gathered his goods into his barns;
 - b) And...who built new barns to store the abundance;
 - c) And who said to himself, take it easy, enjoy what you have stored up,
 - d) Called him a Fool!
 - e) Why? Not because he failed in the material realm, he didn't!
 - f) But because he failed in the spiritual realm!
5. Why is failing so critical—The end results! (Matt. 25:30)
6. The Life of Saul, the first king of Israel, vividly illustrates this kind of failure.
7. He succeeded in many things, but failed in the most important!

DISCUSSION

I. SAUL'S EARLY PROMISE AS A PERSON, LEADER, KING:

A. God's description of Saul:

- 1) 1 Sam. 9:2—*“A choice young man, and a superior person.”*
- 2) 1 Sam. 9:2—*“Not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he.”*
- 3) 1 Sam. 9:2—*“From his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.”*
- 4) 1 Sam. 15:17—*“Were little in thine own sight.”*
--*“The Lord anointed thee king over Israel.”*
- 5) Wisdom was shown by him at first:
 - a) After deliverance from the Ammonites.....

- b) The people wanted to slay those Jews that didn't want Saul as King.
- c) Saul said NO, no blood shed....we have won a great victory.....It is time to rejoice!

B. Evaluation:

- 1) He had a good start----great promise----good attitude---humble;
- 2) His potential was great as a leader for the people.
- 3) But, in spite of all this---he followed the route of failure, not success!
- 4) He wound up causing much heartache, bloodshed innocently.
- 5) And gave occasion to the heathen to blaspheme the name of God.

II. SAUL'S LIFE OF FAILURE IN HIS RELATIONSHIP TO GOD & MAN.

A. His basic disobedience to God's Law!

- 1) The Philistines had gathered to do battle with overwhelming numbers.
- 2) The Israelites were very uneasy, afraid, scattering from Saul.
- 3) Samuel had not come at the appointed time to offer sacrifice to God.
- 4) Saul "forced himself" to offer the sacrifice!
- 5) When faced with his blatant disobedience by Samuel:
 - a) He blamed the circumstances;
 - b) He blamed Samuel's coming late.
- 6) He found it hard to deal with failure correctly!
- 7) He was strongly rebuked by Samuel:—"*Thou has done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee....thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee.*" (1 Sam. 13:13-14)

B. His rash decision that almost cost Jonathan his life.

- 1) In a battle with the Philistines.
- 2) He forbade the men to eat until battle over & won.
- 3) Jonathan, his son, was unaware of this rash requirement.
- 4) He ate some honey because he was faint.
- 5) When told, he replied: "*My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey. How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found?*" (1 Sam. 14:29-30)

C. His open disobedience again:

- 1) God had decreed that the Amalekites would be destroyed.

- 2) Saul was to carry out this decree!
- 3) However, they brought back the king alive and best of animals.
- 4) When faced with his disobedience:
 - a) He tries to justify his actions.
 - b) Blames the people for bringing them back as an offering to God.
 - c) He insisted that he had obeyed the Lord.
- 5) Samuel's remarks: ***"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king."*** (1 Sam. 15:22-23)
- 6) He found it hard to admit his failure...until forced to do so!
- 7) Under these circumstances, confession & repentance not very genuine!

D. Saul walks more and more in the way of failure as a person.

- 1) He allowed resentment & pride to control his life.
- 2) He allowed envy & jealousy to cause him to do great evils to David and others.
 - a) His jealousy blinded him to his failures more and more.
 - b) Led him to plan and devise a way of David's death.
 - c) This failing, he openly pursues him to kill him.
 - d) David spares Saul's life twice, and strongly rebuked him.
- 3) Only then, did he admit openly to his failures!
 - a) 1 Sam. 24:17-18—***"And he said to David, You are more righteous than I: for you have rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded you evil. And you have shown this day how that you have dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into your hands, you killed me not."***
 - b) 1 Sam. 26:21—***"Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in your eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly."***
 - c) Sounds good, but was it sincere???

E. Saul in his desperation, disobeys God again!

- 1) The Philistines were gathering against Israel in great numbers.
- 2) Saul has lost all communications with God...Samuel is dead.

- 3) Saul turns to a woman of Divination for help.
- 4) ***“Call up Samuel”***
- 5) God allows Samuel to come up.....scares the woman!
- 6) He tells Saul that he & his sons would die that day in battle.

F. He who began with such great promise & potential:

- 1) Died in battle bravely.....
- 2) But died a failure in the most important areas of life.
- 3) He died with shame and sorrow, because of the woeful miscarriage of his life’s mission.
- 4) He failed to a great extent as a father!
 - a) His children had a very hard time respecting his actions.
- 5) He failed as a king!
 - a) Even though he did some great things.....
 - b) He misused & misspent his energies and those of his people to pursue after David, rather than the true enemy.
 - c) He showed petty jealousy of a greater man than himself.
- 6) Most of all, he failed as God’s child & His purpose as God’s King.
 - a) He was continually disobedient to the basic Laws of God.
 - b) He shed innocent blood.
 - c) In his desperation, he turned to Divination.
- 7) In each case, he could have overcome his failures by true repentance.

III. IMPORTANT LESSONS:

A. Realize.....we don’t have to be failures even when we fail at something. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

- 1) We might fail, and often do, but that doesn’t make us failures.
- 2) What makes us failures is....giving in and giving up.
- 3) Saul was not a failure at first, he became such because he gave in.

B. It is important that we are honest with ourselves and with others.

- 1) To try to deceive others and ourselves only makes us more vulnerable to additional failures.
- 2) Saul did this.....he became more open to failure.
- 3) He blamed others for his failures, and never seemed to faced the truth. (1 John 1:7-10)

C. Failures can be stepping stones to successful living!

- 1) Saul could have profited by his failures and dealt with them properly.
- 2) Instead, he became a failure!
- 3) Instead of growing, he became less of a man than he had been.

- 4) Failures don't destroy us....IT IS THE ATTITUDE WITH WHICH WE HANDLE FAILURES!
- 5) Saul would not be humbled---confess sincerely his sin---accept God's forgiveness. (Matthew 23:13-14)
- 6) Paul's attitude: ***“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...”*** (Phil. 3:13-14)
- 7) We can either let our failures drag us down.....
- 8) Or, make them stepping stones to greater heights in the Lord's service!

CONCLUSION

1. There is no reason under heaven for the Christian to fail in his life!
2. We have God's assurance, His help, His forgiveness, His strength.....
3. And we have the highest purpose for living and succeeding of all peoples on earth. (Romans 8:24; Revelation 2:10)
4. Are you walking the path of failure or success?

Lesson Eleven

“Christians Prize the Right Things”

INTRODUCTION

1. The apostle had learned a great lesson:
 - a) What to prize highly & correctly!
 - b) What to discard quickly!
2. He openly stated: (Philippians 3:7-14)
 - a) He prized having Christ in his life more than all that he had attained unto up to that time in his life.
 - b) He prized Christ so highly that he counted them as dung (garbage) in comparison.
 - c) That he would continue to press toward those things he prized the most!
3. So must we!
 - a) We MUST decide what we place the greatest value on;
 - b) Must decide the things that have lesser value or no value;
 - c) And hold to those things that we prize the most!
4. May we suggest 4 things we should prize highly!

DISCUSSION

I. PRIZE THE THINGS THAT GIVE VICTORY OVER DEATH!

A. Comments:

- 1) Death comes to all. (Heb. 9:27)
- 2) Since death comes to all, WHAT WILL SURVIVE DEATH?
- 3) That which survives death obviously becomes the more important.
- 4) What can I value that death can't touch?

B. Scriptures:

- 1) Matt. 16:26—*“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”*
 - a) Which is more important:
 - 1—The gaining of the world;
 - 2—Or, the losing of one's soul?
 - b) Which survives death?
- 2) 2 Cor. 4:16-18
 - a) The contrast is obvious:
 - 1—The outward, physical man perishes day by day.
 - 2—The inward man can be renewed day by day.
 - b) Which can survive death?

- c) Where should our emphasis be?
- d) What should we prize the most?

C. Comments:

- 1) Find those things that death can't spoil!
- 2) Don't place your hope on things that death does away with!
- 3) Death has a message...Choose those things that are eternal!
- 4) Col. 3:2—"***Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.***"
- 5) 1 John 5:4—"***This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.***"
- 6) 1 Cor. 15:57—"***But thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.***"

II. PRIZE THOSE THINGS WE ARE WILLING TO DIE FOR!

A. Comments:

- 1) If we are not willing to die for something...not worth much to us!
- 2) Seek, look for, find those things you are willing to pay the supreme sacrifice for!
- 3) These should be highly treasured in our hearts!

B. Scriptures:

- 1) Matt. 20:28—"***...to give his life a ransom for many.***"
- 2) Eph. 5:25—"***Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.***"
- 3) 1 John 3:16—"***Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.***"

C. Comments:

- 1) This kind of thinking helps us to lay aside the unimportant!
 - a) To let go of the hindrances;
 - b) To let go of the mundane;
 - c) To let go of the unimportant and take hold of the important!
- 2) Let's be sure what we have set our hearts on that we are willing to die for such!
 - a) That it is that valuable!
 - b) For...we will give our life for something.
 - c) Let's be sure it is worthwhile.
- 3) This gives great purpose to living...death takes a back seat!

III. PRIZE THOSE THINGS THAT ENHANCES RELATIONSHIPS!

A. Comments:

- 1) What if we could gain a:
 - a) Great career;
 - b) Great sum of money;
 - c) Great power over men;
 - d) Great prominence before men??
- 2) And, in the process:
 - a) Lose our wife, children, marriage, friends.....
 - b) Is it all worth it??
- 3) Are not relationships worth more than all the world has to offer?
- 4) God places a great emphasis upon such!

B. Scriptures:

- 1) 1 John 2:9-11; 3:14
- 2) 1 John 4:11-12

C. Comments:

- 1) If God so highly prizes his relationship with us, shouldn't we also?
- 2) If God puts so much emphasis upon a loving relationship with our fellow-man.....should we also?
- 3) *"Relationships repay many times over what you put into them."*
- 4) 1 Cor. 13:13—***"And now abides faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."***
- 5) Why?
- 6) Because it is the basis of all good relationships in life & eternity.

IV. PRIZE THOSE THINGS THAT BRING GROWTH.

A. Comments:

- 1) To Grow we must:
 - a) Not to be content with the status quo, no matter what age.
 - b) Make a determine effort!
- 2) Growth means progress is made.
- 3) Growth helps to make life meaningful and enjoyable.
- 4) Not to grow is to die before our time!
- 5) It is all too easy to stagnate, and not grow.
- 6) We need to prize those things that bring growth to our lives.
 - a) That expands our mind for good.
 - b) That expands our heart to others and the world about us.
 - c) That expands our soul in its upward path to God.

B. Scriptures:

- 1) 2 Cor. 4:16—*“Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.”*
- 2) 2 Peter 3:18—*“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”*
- 3) Rom. 12:2—*“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”*

C. Comments:

- 1) Place your roots deep in the Word of God that builds you up.
- 2) Lay the foundation deeply on solid knowledge of God and His Will for us.
- 3) Respond to the important call to live and grow and mature in Christ Jesus.

CONCLUSION

1. How encouraging it will be at the end of our lives:
 - a) To look back over a life that has prized the right things;
 - b) That has discarded the unimportant things;
 - c) That has placed our values on Eternal values.

2. How highly do you prize God’s Salvation & Eternal Life in Heaven?
 - a) Do you want to be saved more than anything else in the world?
 - b) Are you willing to pay the cost of being right with God and serving Him faithfully in this life?

Lesson Twelve

“Christians Learn How to Die”

INTRODUCTION

1. Death is the last thing we really want to think about or talk about.
 - a) Like to avoid the subject, if possible.
 - b) But sooner or later we have to deal with it.
 - c) We really need to be prepared for death and how to face it well.
2. Jesus’ example of facing death should help us to face death well also.
 - a) He die, committing his spirit into the hands of His Father. (Luke 23:46)
 - b) We should be able to as well.

DISCUSSION

I. HOW CAN JESUS HELP US FACE DEATH WELL?

A. He freely talked about the fact of death.

- 1) John 10:11, 15, 17
- 2) He knew his death would come soon, and would be a horrible one.
- 3) It did not stop him from talking about it.
- 4) It is going to happen, why not talk about it...as he did...so we can be better prepared for it.

B. He lived constantly in fellowship with His Father.

- 1) John 10:36-38; 8:55; 8:28-29
- 2) With such fellowship in life, it would be natural to turn to the Father in His death.
- 3) God is man’s only refuge in the hour of death.
- 4) Jesus died in peace and unafraid because of his constant contact with the Father.
- 5) II Jn. 9

C. He was prepared for death by His Obedience to the Father’s Will.

- 1) John 9:4; 4:34; 17:4
- 2) He finished the work the Father gave Him to do.
- 3) When we face death as Christ did, can we also say we have finished the work given to us.
- 4) II Tim. 4:6-8

D. He trusted and relied upon the word of God.

- 1) This was true in life as well as in death.
- 2) When facing temptations in the wilderness. (Matt. 4:1-11)
- 3) On the night of his betrayal when he prayed unto the Father, he gave in to the will of the Father. (Matt. 26:39)

- 4) He knew that his death was the fulfillment of Scripture. (John 1:29)
- 5) He died with Scripture on His lips. Lk. 23:46
- 6) The Scriptures had been his guide in life and now was also in death.
- 7) If we trust & believe the Scripture, it will take away the sting of death. (I Cor. 15:55)

E. He knew that death was not the end.

- 1) John 11:25-26
- 2) Death is a transition to another existence.
- 3) Jesus knew he would be raised & so would all men. (John 5:28-29)
- 4) Matt. 25:46

F. He faced death without hatred and resentment.

- 1) Luke 23:34
- 2) Stephen followed his example. (Acts 7:59-60)
- 3) He had plenty of reason for hatred:
 - a) He came to save his own, they rejected him. (Jn. 1:11)
 - b) They tried him falsely.
 - c) They scourged him, spit upon him, mocked him, betrayed him, etc.
 - d) Yet...no words of bitterness nor complaint came forth.
- 4) He even prayed for the one's crucifying him. Luke 23:34
- 5) The way to die without hatred is not to live with it. (Matt. 5:22).

G. He thought of others in His death.

- 1) His very death was for others. (Jn. 1:29)
- 2) While enduring a horrible death:
 - a) He prayed for His tormentors. Lk. 23:34
 - b) He forgave the thief. Lk. 23:43
 - c) He thought of his mother's welfare. Jn. 19:26-27
- 3) The way to think of others in our death is to live an unselfish life.

CONCLUSION

1. We all must die. Heb. 9:27
2. Our death will be a reflection of our life.
3. As we live, so shall we die.

*The Distinctiveness
Of
Christianity*

HANDOUTS

FOR

STUDENTS

Lessons 1-12

Lesson One

“The Distinctiveness of Christ, Himself”

QUESTIONS

1. Define the word “Distinctive.”

2. In what ways was Jesus distinctive?
 - a) Matthew 1:18-23

 - b) Luke 2:48

 - c) John 4:27

 - d) Luke 4:22

 - e) Matthew 7:28-29

 - f) Matthew 19:25

 - g) Luke 23:47

 - h) Mark 16:8

 - i) Luke 24:52

3. In what ways is the religion of Christ distinctive?
 - a) Romans 6:1-2

 - b) John 8:32

 - c) Matthew 16:26

 - d) Romans 12:1-2

4. What caused the Jewish leaders to marvel at Peter & John? (Acts 4:13)

Lesson Two

“God’s Definition of a Christian”

QUESTIONS

1. Where should one go to define who is a Christian?
2. What does the Greek word, “Christianos” mean?
3. Who give this term to the disciples of Christ? (Isaiah 62:2)
4. How is the Christian defined in Acts 11:19-26?
 - a) Acts 11:19-20
 - b) Acts 11:26
 - c) Acts 11:21
 - d) Acts 11:23
 - e) Acts 11:24
 - f) Acts 11:26
 - g) Acts 11:23
5. How does one become a Christian?
 - a) Acts 11:21
 - b) Acts 2:38
 - c) Acts 6:7
 - d) Matthew 28:18-20
 - e) Chart to illustrate

Lesson Three

“What Makes Christianity Attractive?”

QUESTIONS

1. What caused mother Eve to sin? (Genesis 3:6; 1 John 2:15-17)
2. Why do unattractive things turn us off?
3. What 4 things are given in Philippians 1:27-30 that helps to make Christianity attractive by Christians?
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)
4. In what ways does our **behavior** affect its attractiveness?
 - a) John 13:35
 - b) Colossians 4:6
 - c) Matthew 5:16
 - d) Romans 2:17-24
 - e) Mark 14:3-9
5. In what way does our **unity** affect its attractiveness?
 - a) John 17:20-21
 - b) Acts 4:32; 2:47
 - c) Galatians 5:15
6. In what way does our **peace assurance** affect its attractiveness?
 - a) Philippians 2:14-16
 - b) Philippians 4:6-8
7. In what way does our willingness to **suffer** for our beliefs affect its attractiveness? (1 Peter 4:12-16)
8. What part can I play in helping to make it more attractive to others?

Lesson Four

**“What is the Difference
Between Ordinary & Unusual People?”**

QUESTIONS

1. Can only a few gifted people be unusual and the rest ordinary?
2. Were unusual people at one time just ordinary like the rest of us?
3. What does Luke 4:16-32 indicate to you in this regard?
 - a) Why did Jesus not perform miracles in His hometown? (Matthew 13:58)
 - b) Why did Jesus mention the widow of Zarephath? (Luke 4:24-26)
 - c) Why did Jesus mention Naaman, the leper? (Luke 4:27)
 - d) What was the Jews' reaction to Jesus' thoughts? (Luke 4:28-32)
 - e) Is it possible that the difference between the ordinary & the unusual is in their outlook & actions?
4. What caused David to become unusual? (1 Samuel 17:26, 32, 33, 34-37)
5. What caused Gideon to become unusual? (Judges 6:1, 15, 12-13, 17, 11, 25-27)
6. What made Mary unusual? (Mark 14:3-9)
7. What made the poor widow unusual? (Luke 21:1-4)
8. Does it make a difference what we believe and do?

Lesson Five

“Christians Prove All Things”

QUESTIONS

1. Should the Christian feel insulted if called upon to prove his religious beliefs to another person? (1 Thessalonians 5:21)
2. What is a Christian told to be ready to do? (1 Peter 3:15)
3. Is it possible to just prove anything by the Bible?
4. Is one allowed to believe anything he chooses?
5. How would you define “Prove?” (1 Timothy 3:10; Psalm 66:10)
6. Why does God prove us? (Deuteronomy 8:16; 13:3; James 1:2-4)
7. Why do we need to prove ourselves?
 - a) Romans 12:2
 - b) 2 Corinthians 8:8
 - c) Galatians 6:4
 - d) Ephesians 5:8-10
 - e) 2 Corinthians 13:5
8. Should we prove God? (Matthew 4:7; Malachi 3:10)
9. How much are we to prove? (1 Thessalonians 5:21)
10. What are some wrong basis for proving something?
 - a) Acts 24:5, 12-13
 - b) Acts 6:8-15
 - c) Luke 18:9-14
 - d) Acts 7:51
 - e) Exodus 23:2
 - f) Titus 1:15; 1 Timothy 4:1-2

Lesson Six

“Christians Deal With Inferiority”

QUESTIONS

1. *“More people suffer from ‘Inferiority’ than pride or arrogance?”*
____ True or ____ False
2. So you consider “inferiority” to be a sin? ____ True or ____ False
3. How would you define “inferiority?”
4. What can “inferiority” do in our lives?
 - a) Exodus 4:10
 - b) Acts 2:42
 - c) 1 Samuel 10:20-24
5. What are some causes of “inferiority?”
 - a) Exodus 2:11-15
 - b) Matthew 25:19-20
 - c) 2 Timothy 2:21
 - d) Acts 5:29
 - e) Matthew 25:24

Lesson Seven

“Christians Deal With Sorrow”

QUESTIONS

1. What is the danger of sorrow in our lives? (2 Corinthians 2:7; Philippians 2:27; Proverbs 15:13)
2. What brought on Naomi’s sorrow? (Ruth 1:1, 3, 4-5)
3. How did she deal with her deep sorrow?
 - a) Ruth 1:6-14
 - b) Ruth 1:6-7
 - c) Ruth 2:20; 3:18
 - d) Ruth 3:1
4. What does God tell us about sorrow?
 - a) Matthew 26:38
 - b) 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
 - c) John 16:20
5. How can God give us comfort?
 - a) Psalm 119:50; 23:4; Romans 15:4
 - b) 2 Corinthians 7:13; Colossians 4:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:14
 - c) 1 Thessalonians 4:13, 18; Luke 16:25; Revelations 21:4

Lesson Eight

“Christians Deal With the Love of Money”

QUESTIONS

1. What answer did Jesus give the Rich Young Ruler that caused him to go away sorrowful? (Matthew 18:18)
2. What two statements of Jesus were given in verses 23-24 that indicated what his problem was?
3. What do the following statements indicate about the character of the young man?
 - a) He ran to Jesus
 - b) He kneeled to Jesus
 - c) He called Him “good master”
 - d) The question he asked
4. What do you consider was the fatal flaw in this young man’s character?
5. What warnings are given in 1 Timothy 6:10; Matthew 6:24; Colossians 3:5?
6. Was the young man disobedient?
7. What reward is promised to those who follow Jesus? (Mark 10:28-30)

Lesson Nine

“Christians Deal With the Sin of Uselessness”

QUESTIONS

1. How do these passages illustrate the sin of uselessness?
 - a) James 1:22
 - b) James 1:25
 - c) James 1:26
 - d) James 1:27
 - e) James 2:17
 - f) James 2:22
 - g) James 2:24
2. In what two ways can man sin?
 - a) 1 John 3:4
 - b) James 4:17
3. How do the following illustrate the sin of uselessness?
 - a) Matthew 21:18-19
 - b) Matthew 25:14-30
 - c) Luke 16:19-31
 - d) Matthew 25:31-46
4. What are Christians admonished to do?
 - a) Titus 3:8
 - b) Galatians 6:10

Lesson Ten

“Christians Deal With Failures”

QUESTIONS

1. Who can fail at things in life? (Romans 3:23)
2. Why was the Rich Farmer called a fool? (Luke 12:15-21)
3. Why are failings in life such critical things? (Matthew 25:30)
4. How does King Saul illustrate a life of failure?
 - a) 1 Samuel 9:2; 15:17
 - b) 1 Samuel 13:13-14
 - c) 1 Samuel 14:29-30
 - d) 1 Samuel 15:22-23
 - e) 1 Samuel 24:17-18; 26:21
 - f) 1 Samuel 28:5-7
5. What keeps the Christian from being a failure in life?
 - a) Ephesians 2:8-9
 - b) 1 John 1:7-10
 - c) Matthew 23:13-14
 - d) Philippians 3:13-14
 - e) Romans 8:24
 - f) Revelations 2:10

Lesson Eleven

“Christians Prize the Right Things”

QUESTIONS

1. Upon what basis do we learn to highly prize things?
2. Upon what basis did the Apostle Paul make his decisions on what to prize?
(Philippians 3:7-14)
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)
3. What four things should the Christian highly prize?
 - a) Hebrews 9:27; Matthew 16:26; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Colossians 3:2; 1 John 5:4; 1 Corinthians 15:57
 - b) Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 5:25; 1 John 3:16
 - c) 1 John 2:9-11; 3:14; 4:11-12; 1 Corinthians 13:3
 - d) 2 Corinthians 4:16; 2 Peter 3:18; Romans 12:2
4. What do we prize more highly than anything else?

Lesson Twelve

“Christians Learn How to Die”

QUESTIONS

1. Why do people seemingly want to avoid talking about death?

2. How can Jesus facing death help us today?
 - a) John 10:11, 15, 17

 - b) John 10:36-38; 8:55, 28-29

 - c) John 9:4; 4:34; 17:4

 - d) Matthew 4:1-11; 26:39; Luke 23:46

 - e) John 11:25-26; 5:28-29

 - f) Luke 23:43; Acts 7:59-60

 - g) John 1:29; Luke 23:34, 43; John 19:26-27

3. Why do we need to be concerned about death? (Hebrews 9:27)

