

HOME BIBLE STUDY SERIES

The Importance of Faith

- 1 -- "Oh You of Little Faith"
- 2 -- "Faithfulness"
- 3 -- "Un-Faithfulness"
- 4 -- "What Kind of Faith Do You Have?"
- 5 -- "A Faith Worth Dying For"
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Lesson One

"OH You of Little Faith"

(Mark 9:14-29)

In the above passage, Jesus is speaking to people who claim to believe in God. They had been the special chosen people of God for some 1500 years. They had all the evidences needed to have a strong faith in the "One True God" of Heaven. And yet, He called them a *"faithless and perverse generation"* (Mark 9:19). Jesus was continually outspoken about Israel's lack of faith and the greatness of the faith of some Gentiles among them (Matt. 8:5-10).

How Strong is your faith in God?
Is it your faith or your parents' faith?
How do you really determine the strength of your faith?
How would Jesus identify your faith?
Would He say to you, *"Oh you of little faith?"*
Would He call us a *"faithless and perverse generation?"*

BIBLICAL EMPHASIS UPON FAITH

The importance of faith is obvious in the Scriptures—even to a casual reader. It is vital to our acceptance before God and to our eternal destiny.

John 3:16 _____
Hab. 2:4 _____
Heb. 11:6 _____
1 John 5:4 _____

If we ever make it to Heaven, it will be because of our faith in God. The 11th chapter of Hebrews gives a strong emphasis upon man's faith in order to be right and acceptable to God.

WHAT IS THE CORRECT SOURCE OF FAITH?

People all over the world believe in many things, and in the words of Scripture, they believe in *"many so-called gods or lords."* (1 Cor. 8:5). From

whence does a faith in the "One True God of Heaven" come? The following will show the source:

- Psalm 19:1 _____
- Rom. 1:19-20 _____
- Rom. 10:17 _____
- James 1:21-25 _____
- John 20:24-31 _____
- 1 Cor. 2:5 _____

The Bible would seem to be critical in this whole issue of faith in God.

THE KIND OF FAITH GOD WANTS

- James 2:17, 19-20, 24 _____
- Matt. 7:21-23 _____
- Luke 6:46 _____
- What does obedience do concerning our faith? (James 2:21-22) _____

For a person to continue in the faith, what must he do?

- Acts 14:22 _____
- 1 Cor. 16:13-14 _____

GOD CALLS FOR A GROWING AND STRONG FAITH!

- 2 Cor. 10:15 _____
- Jude 20 _____
- Jas. 2:5 _____
- Acts 6:5 _____
- Titus 2:2 _____
- 1 Pet. 5:9 _____
- 1 Thess. 3:10 _____
- Heb. 10:22 _____
- 1 Tim. 3:13 _____

Why is God so concerned about our faith being strong?

- Is it possible that our faith can fail us? (Lk. 22:32) _____
- Can a person be deceived into "doubting" God? (James 2:5-8) _____
- Can a Christian go into unbelief? (Heb. 3:12, 18-19) _____
- Can a Christian depart from the faith? (1 Tim. 4:1; 5:8; 6:10) _____

THREE BASIC CHALLENGES TO FAITH

1. To believe and obey when others do not!

Who had left all to follow Jesus? (Matt. 16:24; 19:27-29) _____

Was this easy for them to do? _____

Do we face the same choice? _____

Matt. 10:37 _____

2. To believe and obey when I know persecution will come!

Are there any indication of this in Scripture? _____

2 Tim. 3:12 _____

Matt. 5:10-12 _____

Who serves as a good example of this? (**Acts 5:27-29**) _____

3. To believe and obey when I don't fully understand!

We have some outstanding examples of this in Scripture.

Job. He was a very good man, things went well; but, all of a sudden he lost his wealth, his children, and his health. This was not supposed to happen to those who love and serve God! His friends summed it up very well... "*Job, you must be a terrible sinner with such terrible things happening to you!*"

What was Job's reaction?

Job 1:22 _____

Job 23:10 _____

Job was never told why these things happened to him!

Peter. He saw Jesus walking on water and asked Him if he could do the same. At first, he walked on water, but then doubted and fell into the water. Peter was rebuked by Jesus!

Matt. 14:25-31 _____

Would you have attempted to walk on water? _____

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Have you asked like Job, "*Lord, why did you let this happen to me?*" and He gives you no answer or explanation? Can your faith stand the challenge? Some times we over-simplify faith and prayer. They are both far more complicated than many of us have grasped. We need to deepen our faith in God and have a full assurance of faith! Could Jesus say to us as He did to Peter: "***O you of little faith, why did you doubt?***" Doubt comes because our faith in God isn't strong enough to deal with the challenges of life that often face us.

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW

True or False

- ___ 1. It is okay to have our parents' faith.
- ___ 2. Jesus called people who claimed to believe in God a "faithless generation!"
- ___ 3. "Faith" is said to be the Christian's means of Victory!
- ___ 4. All men can know that there is a Divine Being that has created all things.
- ___ 5. Man's worship of idols shows that we can come to a belief in God because of the evidences all around us.
- ___ 6. The Bible is man's only way of knowing there is a God.
- ___ 7. The Bible is needed so that man can fully know what God expects of him.
- ___ 8. A perfected faith is one that has works!
- ___ 9. Disobedience to Jesus is not a matter of a lack of faith.
- ___ 10. To be "sound in the faith" is to have a "healthy" faith.
- ___ 11. Paul said that the Thessalonian Christians were lacking in their faith.
- ___ 12. The Scriptures commends those who are "bold" in the faith.
- ___ 13. A saved person cannot go back into disbelief and be lost.
- ___ 14. The Scripture state that a Christian cannot depart from the faith.
- ___ 15. Faith in God is based on valid evidences.

Lesson Two

"Faithfulness"

(Prov. 20:6)

The wise man threw out a very pertinent question: *"Who can find a faithful man?"* The word for man is used in its generic sense which includes both men and women.

- Why would he ask such a question?
- Are such people scarce?
- Is it too hard for people to be faithful?

As we look closer at this concept, we need to define the term. How would you define it? _____

The Scripture speaks of certain Ones being "faithful!"

Ps. 119:86 _____

Hebrews 3:5 _____

Hebrews 2:17 _____

"Faithfulness" is said to be a _____ of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22).

Derivation of the word comes from the concept of faith, belief, trust. To be faithful is to be "full of faith!"

What do the following Scriptures say about "faithfulness?"

Col. 2:5 _____

Col. 1:23 _____

1 Tim. 3:11 _____

What is God calling on his people to be?

1 Cor. 4:2 _____

Rev. 2:10 _____

Heb. 3:14 _____

Many of the early Christians faced strong trials and temptations that tried their faith in God. Because we live in a time of relative peace and prosperity, our faith may not be put to the test as strongly as some of them faced.

But what would be our decision if we had to endure the kind of hardship that they faced? _____

Would we deny our commitment to Jesus? _____

If we are tempted to complain about services lasting a few minutes longer, what would we do if we faced real hardship as a Christian? _____

If we complain because the building gets too hot or too cold, what would we do if we faced terrible persecution for Christ? _____

Have we grown too soft? _____

Are we too caught up in this materialistic age? _____

If we are addicted to our material things, what would we do if suddenly we were called upon to surrender them all up in order to be faithful to Christ? _____

1 John 2:15-17 _____

FAITHFULNESS IS A VIRTUE

1. Because there are so few (Prov. 20:6). _____

2. Because God praises men by calling them faithful!

Col. 4:7 _____

2 Tim. 2:2 _____

3. Because blessings are promised upon the faithful!

Rev. 2:10 _____

Prov. 28:20 _____

Ps. 31:23 _____

Ps. 101:6 _____

Matt. 25:21 _____

4. Because such are like God!

Lam. 3:23 _____

Ps. 119:138 _____

CONTRAST

The Faithful (Matt. 25:21) _____

He was given a job to do and he did it well.

He was dependable.

He did what was expected of him.

The Unfaithful (Luke 16:1-2, 10-12) _____

He was a wasteful steward and did not do his job well.

If not dependable in few things, he won't be over many.

Faithful men and woman can give a good accounting.

Dan. 6:4 _____

He was true to his responsibilities—no fault found.

He was honest to the core.

It seems to be obvious that God judges more by man's character than by the number of talents, abilities, opportunities that he has. (Matt. 25).

THE VALUE OF FAITHFULNESS

A young lady who was a Christian married a non-Christian. He was attending services with her before marriage and thought he was interested and learning. After they got married, he stopped attending and even tried to get her to quit. But, she kept attending "faithfully!" After the first child came, she missed a couple of Sundays. But on the third Sunday she got in the car to go to services, but the car would not start. He had taken the coil out of it so that it would not start. But...she was determined to go and starting walking. Her husband then began to feel ashamed of himself. He went and took her to the services. That night he went with her to services. And shortly after that he became a Christian.

What would have happened if the wife had given in and stayed Home?

Was she rewarded for her "faithfulness?" _____

God has had recorded in His Book of Life the lives of many who have been faithful in their service to Him. As far as we know, all of the Apostles (except for the John) faced persecution and died a violent death because of their devotion and service to Jesus, the Son of God. He had recorded in Heb. 11 a long list of men and women that were examples of faithfulness. The chapter ends with these wonderful words:

"Of whom the world was not worthy!"

(Heb. 11:38)

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We trust and pray that God may continue to grant us the opportunity to serve Him in quietness and peace. But, if the time should come when our faith will be challenged to the fullest, may we be prepared and faithful to the end.

- o What about your life—could it be looked upon as a faithful Christian?
- o Can people see in your life that trustworthiness, dependability, and steadfast obedience to Christ's Will?
- o Or, do they see **wavering, uncertainty, on & off, Hot & Cold, and Instability?**

Faithfulness is a virtue! It is there in a person's life because he wants it there. And it is there because he has seen the value of faithfulness in his own life and in the lives of others as well.

Let's be Faithful People!

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW

True or False

- ___ 1. Men are more faithful than women.
- ___ 2. A person can be faithful and not believe in God.
- ___ 3. Faithfulness is something that God gives to His people.
- ___ 4. Hardship can test a man's faithfulness to God.
- ___ 5. The complaints of many Christians are insignificant as compared to what the early Christians faced.
- ___ 6. It is not wrong to "love the world" because God loved the world and gave His Son for our redemption.
- ___ 7. Faithfulness is consider a virtue because there are so few people who could be considered faithful.
- ___ 8. There are no guaranteed blessings to be given to the faithful.
- ___ 9. There is very little contrast between the faithful and the unfaithful.
- ___ 10. Daniel was a "fair" example of a faithful person.
- ___ 11. The character of a person becomes the chief means of judging a person.
- ___ 12. The world does not deserve to have faithful Christians in it.
- ___ 13. Heaven is promised only to the "faithful!"

Lesson Three

"....And Then Fell Away"

(Matt. 13:18-23)

The above wording comes from the old King James Version of the Bible. The New King James Version states: **"...he stumbles."** (v. 22). What sad words, but unfortunately they are factual! *"Once saved, always saved"* is a very desirable doctrine to want to believe in, but unfortunately....it is not factual! The previous lesson dealt with the value of faithfulness. In this lesson we want to study about unfaithfulness.

Can Christians be unfaithful and fall away? See the following Scriptures:

- Acts 20:28-32** _____
- 2 Tim. 4:1-5** _____
- 2 Thess. 2:1-12** _____
- Gal. 6:1** _____

It is obvious that the growth of the Lord's church is greatly hindered by people "falling away." But Jesus had this same problem in His ministry!

- Lk. 18:23** _____
- John 6:66** _____
- Lk. 22:2-6** _____

- Can we help to keep people from falling? _____
- Can we know what causes people to fall away? _____
- Can we help them to be faithful? _____

POSSIBLE REASONS FOR PEOPLE FALLING AWAY

1. Lk. 8:13 _____
2. 2 Pet. 3:17-18 _____
3. Luke 8:14 _____
4. 2 Thess. 2:10-12 _____
5. 2 Pet. 2:1-2 _____
6. Heb. 3:12, 19:4:11 _____
7. 2 Pet. 1:10 _____
8. 1 Tim. 3:6 _____
9. Jas. 1:1-4 _____
10. Jas. 1:5-8 _____

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP

- 1. Gal. 6:1 _____
 Do I have the right attitude? _____
 Do I really want to help...am I truly concerned? _____
 Do I realize that I too can fall away if not diligent? _____
*"The spiritually immature or self-righteous
 have no business trying to restore the
 fallen."*
- 2. Joshua 24:15 _____
 No one can force us to fall away! _____
 We can also choose to come back. _____
 We need to make the right choice. _____
- 3. Rom. 15:7 _____
 Do we accept people who are struggling? _____
 Do we believe in them and tell them so? _____
 How did Jesus treat sinners? _____
- 4. 2 Pet. 3:18 _____
- 5. Phil. 2:12 _____

THE NEED TO MATURE IN CHRIST

The writer of Hebrews challenged God's people to go on to "Perfection" or "Maturity." (Heb. 6:1). God wants us to develop to our fullest potential of usefulness (2 Cor. 7:1). Such maturity and potential can only come if we are faithful to the end. We not only need to have dependability, but stickability!

- Col. 2:6-7** _____
- Rev. 3:15-16** _____
- Heb. 3:14** _____

There is no "retirement" for the Christian! (Rev. 2:10). Spiritually, we start out as babes in Christ (1 Pet. 2:2). But at what age are we allowed to quit and "hang it up?" If Christ is enthroned in our hearts, we cannot keep from growing. He is "Lord" of my life, I just keep on submitting to His Will.

Phil. 3:12 _____

But the Apostle could say just before his death: _____

_____ (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

DEATH is the retirement time for the Christian!

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

At the very best that can be done, some are going to fall away and not be restored to their first "love" or their devotion to Christ. If Christ could not keep everyone faithful, what makes us think that we can? (Matt. 23:37). However, it is possible that we can be of help either in keeping some from falling away or help some to return (Jas. 5:19-20).

In a small town lived an elderly Christian who was "stone deaf." Yet, every Sunday morning and evening he was seen going to the assembly of the saints. Neighbors asked him in sign language: *"Why do you always go to worship when you can't hear a thing that is said?"* His reply was short, but clear: *"I want all my neighbors to know whose side I am on."*

Don't you know that Jesus was disappointed when the rich young Ruler went away sorrowfully (Lk. 18:23); and the multitude of disciples walked no more with him (John 6:66); and when Judas betrayed him for 30 pieces of silver. And yet, it was their choice—not the Lord's! He came to save sinners, but condemn them.

The Hebrew writer was trying his best to save people who were on the verge of falling away. Notice the appeals that he makes to them:

- Heb. 3:7** _____
- Heb. 3:8** _____
- Heb. 3:11** _____
- Heb. 3:12** _____
- Heb. 3:13** _____
- Heb. 3:14** _____
- Heb. 3:18** _____
- Heb. 3:19** _____

Unfaithfulness is in reality not only disobedience and rebellion against God, but it is also **UNBELIEF!**

Our challenge then is "on unto perfection!" Faithfulness, not unfaithfulness makes this a possibility. Only the faithful will endure unto the end and find "rest for their souls!"

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW

True or False

- ___ 1. *"Once save, always saved"* is a desirable doctrine to believe.
- ___ 2. A Christian can become unfaithful.
- ___ 3. Some Christians will not endure "sound doctrine."
- ___ 4. A person can fall away from what he never was a part of.
- ___ 5. A Christian who is overtaken in a fault needs to be restore.
- ___ 6. Jesus had no problems with believers falling away.
- ___ 7. There is only one reason why people fall away.
- ___ 8. Our choice can determine whether we are faithful or unfaithful.
- ___ 9. Faithfulness is necessary in order to attain maturity in Christ.
- ___ 10. The Christian is not allowed to retire from service to the Lord.
- ___ 11. A Christian may need to be restored to his "first love."
- ___ 12. James states that to restore the fallen is to save a soul from death.
- ___ 13. Judas didn't have a choice of betraying Christ, because the devil entered into him and made him to it.
- ___ 14. Unfaithfulness is a sign of disobedience and rebellion.
- ___ 15. Man can harden his heart against hearing the Word of God.

Lesson Four

"What Kind of Faith do You Have?" (James 2:17-24)

The strong emphasis on faith in the Bible certainly indicates its great importance in our lives. We cannot over-stress its necessity to be right with God, but we can pervert its proper place in the salvation of a man's soul. Below are just a few of the passages indicating its necessity:

- John 1:12 _____
- John 3:16 _____
- Rom. 1:16-17 _____
- Rom. 5:1 _____

However, it is a grave mistake to conclude from the above passages that justification before God is by "faith alone!" The very opposite is taught in many different ways. Please notice that Rom. 5:9 states that man is justified by Jesus' blood. One of two things is obvious:

- 1) Faith and the Blood of Christ are in conflict;
- 2) Or, they are both involved in our justification.

It should be obvious that if both are necessary to our justification; then, we are not justified by any "one" thing! If we look closely at this context, we can see that several things are involved:

- 1) Rom. 5:1 _____
- 2) Rom. 5:2 _____
- 3) Rom. 5:9 _____
- 4) Rom. 5:17-18 _____
- 5) Rom. 5:19 _____
- 6) _____

All are obviously involved, all are essential, and all mesh together to provide redemption for fallen man. It should be obvious that justification by faith alone is an impossibility. To hold to a "faith alone" doctrine would automatically eliminate God's Grace, Christ's Blood, Christ's Righteousness, and Christ's Obedience! The very term is very misleading. Man's salvation involves both God's Work and Man's Work in order to be completed.

But some would like to advocate that man's part in his salvation is by "faith alone!" They recognize that God has had to do His part. Now man must do his part....and that part is "faith alone!" Let's look at this concept a little more in depth.

CLARIFICATION

The issue is not whether faith is necessary to our justification or salvation—this is an obvious fact overwhelmingly stated in Scripture. The thing that needs to be clarified or dealt with is the question: *"What kind of faith do we have to have to be saved?"*

The Scriptures indicate that there are different levels or kinds of faith that men may have. The 12 disciples (later called apostles) had left all to follow Jesus. you would think that they really believed in Him. Yet, upon several occasions, He rebuked one or more of them for their "little faith."

Matt. 14:31_____

The apostles evidently got the message towards the end of Jesus' public ministry (3 1/2 years). It was shown by a request that they made of Him.

Luke 17:5_____

They were recognizing the weakness and shallowness of their faith in comparison to what it ought to be. Jesus' next statement to them was trying to drive this point home!

Luke 17:6_____

Here were men who had left all to follow Jesus—yet, their faith was far from what it ought to be.

MATTHEW 8:5-13

The apostles were in this audience, as well as many religious people. Here was a Centurion (a Roman soldier) and a Gentile who showed more faith than even Jesus' close disciples. Jesus marveled at the man's faith!

What kind of faith did he have?_____

Several passages indicate that there are different levels or kinds of faith:

Rom. 15:1_____

- 2 Thess. 1:3 _____
- 1 Thess. 1:3 _____
- Acts 6:5 _____
- James 2:5 _____

James, in his letter to Christians, takes a little different approach to the question of faith. He doesn't talk about a weak faith or a growing faith, but a "dead" faith! Read James 2:17-26 and answer the following questions:

- 2:17—What made it a dead faith? _____
- 2:18—How does one show that he has faith? _____
- 2:19—Who besides humans believe there is one God? _____
- 2:20—Who does James call foolish? _____
- 2:21—By what was Abraham justified? _____
- 2:22—What did Abraham's works do for his faith? _____
- 2:23—What Scripture did James quote that told how Abraham was Justified before God? _____
- 2:24—What does James say does not justify us? _____
- 2:25—How was Rahab justified? _____
- 2:26—What is a dead faith compared unto? _____

It would seem quite obvious that it is not only important what we believe, but our faith needs to be the right kind of faith, as well!

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We first need to have the kind of faith that brings us into a saved relationship with God. This faith not only puts its trust in the death of Christ for our salvation, but it is an active obedient faith"

Acts 2:37-41 _____

Then, as a Christian, this faith needs to be fed so it can grow, increase, and become full, complete, and steadfast!

- 1 Cor. 15:58 _____
- Rev. 2:10 _____
- Rev. 17:14 _____
- Heb. 3:12-14 _____

The reason for stressing faith is—"***Without faith, it is impossible to please God!***" (Heb. 11:6). But it is not enough to say, "I believe!" Our faith must be an obedient faith!

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW

True or False

- ___ 1. A person must now believe in Jesus in order to have eternal life.
- ___ 2. Salvation by "faith alone" is a very desirable doctrine to believe, but such teaching is incorrect.
- ___ 3. If we are justified by the blood of Christ, then we cannot also be justified by faith.
- ___ 4. Justification of man must involve God and Man.
- ___ 5. Man's part in his justification is by "faith alone."
- ___ 6. The issue is not whether man is saved by faith, but by "faith alone."
- ___ 7. The Bible recognizes different kinds or levels of faith.
- ___ 8. James makes it clear that man is not justified by faith alone.
- ___ 9. James uses 3 different persons to show that man is justified by an obedient, working faith.
- ___ 10. Repentance and baptism are activities of faith that makes our faith acceptable to God.
- ___ 11. A faith that is "alive" is a "growing" faith.
- ___ 12. It is not enough to say: "I believe!"

Lesson Five

"A Faith Worth Dying For!"

(Acts 26:24-32)

The apostle Paul had changed from Judaism to Christianity! It was out of strong convictions of Truth! He was supremely convinced that Jesus was truly the "Son of God!" He not only believed it himself, but tried to convince others of such....and he was even willing to die for his new found faith in Christ!

**What would cause a man to change from his father's religion?
What could cause a man to give up position & prestige in his past religion?
What could cause a man to be willing to die for his beliefs?**

Christianity must have something of great value for someone to make such changes and even to be willing to give up his life for teaching it. In this lesson, we want to look at three basic values of Christianity that makes it worth dying for.

A GREAT PURPOSE

Solomon, who the Scriptures say was the wisest man on earth, after trying all the avenues of satisfaction in this life, declared: *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."* (Eccl. 12:13) Is man's purpose no higher than to be born, live, eat, work, reproduce, and die? What does Christ offer as a great purpose for living?

1 Cor. 6:19-20 _____

Not only does Christ offer a great purpose for living, but the reward of fulfilling that purpose makes it worth dying for, as well! (John 3:16). All that we do, say, or think is to be directed toward glorifying God. He is our creator, our benefactor, and our savior—he deserves to be glorified!

Rev. 4:11 _____

Rev. 5:9-10 _____

Rev. 5:13 _____

Rev. 15:3-4 _____

A GREAT RELATIONSHIP

Anyone can have relationships with other human beings, and often on such limited terms. However, fellowship with God is not so easy to come by. There are strict terms of involvement, such as the following:

Heb. 11:6 _____

1 Peter 1:22-25 _____

Rom. 6:1-2 _____

Rom. 6:3-4 _____

Rom. 6:6 _____

Rom. 6:8 _____

Rom. 6:12-13 _____

Rom. 6:16 _____

Rom. 6:17-18 _____

Not only must we meet the terms of conditions in order to have fellowship with God, but we must continue to maintain that relationship by doing the following:

1 John 1:3-4 _____

1 John 1:5-6 _____

1 John 1:7 _____

1 John 1:9 _____

1 John 2:1 _____

1 John 2:4 _____

1 John 3:24 _____

1 John 4:16 _____

1 John 4:20-21 _____

The **Benefits** of such a relationship is what makes such so desirable, as the following Scriptures indicate:

Acts 2:38 _____

1 John 1:7 _____

1 John 3:1 _____

1 John 3:22 _____

1 Peter 5:6-7 _____

Phil. 4:6-7 _____

Rom. 8:28 _____

Matt. 6:33 _____

Heb. 5:8-9 _____

Such benefits are not promised to the non-Christian or even to the unfaithful Christian. If the non-Christian has the same benefits that the Christian has...why become a Christian?

But not only does the faithful Christian have all these benefits of a relationship with God (Eph. 1:3), but he also is blessed with a very desirable relationship with his fellow-Christians. We can enjoy the fellowship with other faithful, devoted, godly people of like-mind and spirit (1 Cor. 1:10-13).

A GREAT INFLUENCE

The Christian has the opportunity to exert a great influence for good upon this earth. Corrupt Christianity cannot have this kind of an influence, nor can the worldly-minded or carnally-minded person (Rom. 8:5-6; 1 Cor. 3:1-3).

Phil. 2:15 _____

Acts 26:18 _____

Such an influence can be far-reaching and endless in its impact for good. It can even lead many to eternal life. Our world is definitely a better place in which to live because of this influence.

Matt. 5:13 _____

Matt. 5:14 _____

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We believe that people should want to become Christians because:

1. It gives people the greatest challenge for living;
2. It offers the greatest of relationships and the blessing that comes from such;
3. It has the greatest influence for good in our world to bless mankind.

But people should also want to become Christians because it is a "Faith" worth dying for!

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW

True or False

- ___ 1. There is no "Faith" that is worth dying for.
- ___ 2. Christianity has very little to offer in comparison to other religions or the beliefs of men.
- ___ 3. The summation for man's existence and living is to be obedient to God.
- ___ 4. Another way of stating the same thing is for man to glorify God.
- ___ 5. Both the Father and the Son are said to be worthy of man's praise and glory and honor.
- ___ 6. Securing and keeping a relationship with God is relatively easy on man's part.
- ___ 7. One of the requirements of maintaining our relationship with God is that we must love our brother in Christ.
- ___ 8. God not only hears, but answers the prayers of those who keep his commandments.
- ___ 9. The person who claims a relationship with God but walks in darkness is said to be a "liar."
- ___ 10. Forgives of past sins and present sins is one of the benefits of a relationship with God.
- ___ 11. The "peace that passes all understanding" comes to only those who maintain their relationship with God.
- ___ 12. God's providential care is actually over all people—whether Christian or not.
- ___ 13. There is no purpose for becoming a Christian if the non-Christian has the same benefits that the Christian has.
- ___ 14. Christians and their influence for good is compared to both "Light" and "Salt."
- ___ 15. Christianity is a "faith" worth dying for!

Lesson Six

"Unbelief and Its Consequences"

(1 Cor. 15:12-19)

Shakespeare's quote, as follows, has been uttered many times: *"To be or not to be—that is the question."* But man has a greater question that he is faced with—*"Whether to Believe in God or not to Believe in God!"* There are two roads to travel in this life—Belief or Unbelief! All are traveling one or the other. Both ways have their natural, lawful, and logical outcomes! Belief brings its fruits. Unbelief brings its fruits.

Gal. 6:7-8 _____

What are the logical conclusions if one believes that Christ has not been raised from the dead?

- 1 Cor. 15:12-13 _____
- 1 Cor. 15:14 _____
- 1 Cor. 15:15 _____
- 1 Cor. 15:17 _____
- _____
- 1 Cor. 15:18 _____
- 1 Cor. 15:19 _____
- 1 Cor. 15:32 _____

Unbelief leaves one with no hope and we return to the way of bitterness and ungodliness. In this lesson, we want to look at four obvious outcomes of unbelief!

IT OFFERS NO REAL PURPOSE FOR LIFE

It has no answers to the crucial purposes for our existence that have any meaning or value. It cannot answer such questions as:

- Why are we here?** _____
- Why are we different from the animal world?** _____
- _____
- Does it matter that we are different?** _____
- What is the real meaning of existence?** _____
- _____

But belief has answers to these crucial questions that everyone will wrestle with sooner or later in their lives.

Eccl. 12:13 _____

1 Cor. 10:31 _____

The despair of unbelief is illustrated in a quote from Mark Twain: *"A myriad of men are born; they labor and sweat and struggle for bread; they squabble and scold and fight; they scramble for little mean advantages over each other. Age creeps upon them; infirmities follow; shame and humiliations bring down their pride and their vanities. Those they love are taken from them and the joy of life is turned to aching grief. The burden of pain, care, misery, grows heavier year by year. At length ambition is dead; pride is dead; vanity is dead; longing for relief is in their place. It comes at last—the only unpoisoned gift life ever had for them—and they vanish from a world where they were of no consequence; where they achieved nothing; where they were a mistake and a failure and a foolishness; where they have left no sign that they have existed—a world will lament them for a day and forget them forever. Then another myriad takes their place and copies all they did and goes along the same profitless road and vanishes as they vanished—to make room for another and another and a million other myriads to follow the same arid path through the same desert and accomplish what the first myriad and all the myriads that came after it accomplished—nothing!"*

Unbelief has a consequence—it envelopes one in a pessimistic swamp of despair. The history of man without God is empty and meaningless.

IT FORCES ONE TO BELIEVE ONLY IN SELF

Mankind can come to know God, but chooses unbelief instead (Rom. 1:18-21). So, he replaces God, the Perfect One, with himself, the imperfect one!

How can man know there is a God?

Gen. 1:26-27 _____

Ps. 19:1-3 _____

Acts 17:28 _____

Man has the intelligence and reasoning powers to know that God exists. God's power and authority is obvious! But God has also given an inspired record to tell of His existence, His works, and His plans for the redemption of man. And still man chooses to believe in himself rather than God.

The inferiority of unbelief is obvious! Man's objects of worship have always been inferior to the Creator. Men have worshipped the Sun, Moon, Stars, idols made of wood, stone, and metals—all are inferior to the one who created these objects (Rom. 1:22-25). Even in our modern age (as we tend to call it) **Science** is worshipped as the ability of man to save himself. But in reality the products of Science can be transformed into a hideous serpent whose bite can destroy all. And...without a basis for a righteous moral standard, man's technology becomes a constant threat for wholesale human destruction.

Unbelief merely replaces the idea of God with a deified view of man and his work. Their inferiority is obvious!

**IT DESTROYS ALL DESIRABLE HOPE
AFTER THIS LIFE**

Man without God is a man without hope!

Eph. 2:13

1 Cor. 15:19

Without God:

1. Man has no possible answer for coping with evil or suffering.
2. He loses his main and only real basis for the dignity of man.
3. Evil continually bombards his heart with deep despair & gloom.
4. Then comes death—what then? **NO HOPE!**

Quotes from well-known unbelievers expressing their hopelessness:

1) Voltaire—*"Strike out a few sages, and the crowd of human beings is nothing but a horrible assemblage of unfortunate criminals, and the globe contains nothing but corpses. I tremble to have to complain once more of the Being of beings casting an attentive eye over this terrible picture. I wish I had never been born."*

2) Goethe—*"I have ever been esteemed one of Fortune's chiefest favorites; nor will I complain or find fault with the course my life has taken. Yet, truly, there has been nothing but toil and care; and I may say that, in all my seventy-five years, I have never had a month of genuine comfort. It has been the perpetual rolling of a stone, which I have always had to raise anew....Men will become more clever and more acute, but not better, happier, and stronger in action, or at least only at epochs."*

Surely life must have more to offer than these outlooks of unbelievers.

IT DOES AWAY WITH A SURE MORAL STANDARD

The basis for a moral standard is gone with unbelief. If there is no God to whom man must give an accounting, then there is no basis for moral actions. If there is no moral standard from God, then man becomes his own moral standard. Such standards are designed to satisfy man's own personal sensual desires (Rom. 1:26-31). Our society today is reflecting this concept.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Without God, purpose, hope, and a moral standard, what is the outcome?

1. An alarming increase in immorality, divorce, broken families, etc.
2. We will see greater and more open political corruption.
3. We will see greater unrest among our youth who are groping for meaning for their existence.
4. With more immorality there will be more disease, suffering, and suicides.
5. There will be more perversions of our social relations and a loss of dignity and integrity of the human heart.
6. The debasing of man leads to disgusting practices (Rom. 1:32)

How grateful we ought to be:

1. That God has revealed Himself to us;
2. That He has given us meaning & purpose for living;
3. That He has given us hope for life eternal;
4. That He has given us a moral standard by which to live for our own good.

We need to show our gratitude by:

1. Putting our faith and trust in Him;
2. Being reconciled to Him;
3. By obeying the Gospel to be saved;
4. By living a life that glorifies Him among men.

