

HOME BIBLE STUDY SERIES

FAITHFULNESS

As a Christian

- 1. Sanctified and Cleansed**
- 2. A New Walk as a New Man**
- 3. Faithful in our Speech**
- 4. Faithful in our Lives**
- 5. Faithful in Worship**
- 6. Faithful in our Trust in God**

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Lesson One

"Sanctified and Cleansed"

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." It is because of this statement that we need the sanctifying and cleansing of the blood of Christ to set us free from the bondage and hold of sin and to make us a new creation in Christ. The Apostle said to the Corinthians that the unrighteous cannot inherit the kingdom of God! (1 Cor. 6:9). But we can be cleansed and set apart by God and be free from the bondage of sin (1 Cor. 6:11). ***"And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God!"*** In order for this to take place there must be a changing of the desires and affections of the heart. We are to love God with all of our mind, heart, and soul (Matt. 22:37). Our hearts must be purified in order to ***"see God!"*** (Matt. 5:8). Our hearts need to be ***"pricked"*** or ***"cut"*** by the message of God as the 3,000 were on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:37—so that we will turn our hearts toward God. They cried out wanting to know what to do. They were told to ***"repent"*** (change you heart towards God) and show it by ***"being baptized"*** (Acts 2:38). Paul, in his letter to the Romans, reminded them of the commitment they made when they became Christians: ***"Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"*** (Rom. 6:1-2). He then reminded them that the old man of sin was buried with Christ in baptism and they were cleansed by the blood of Christ and were raised to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4-5). The same Apostle reminded the Christians at Colossae that they had been raised with Christ and should be seeking the things which are above—that is, to set their mind (or heart) on things above, not on things on the earth (Col. 3:1-2). Christians are not cleansed and sanctified from sin to just keep on in the way of sin. We are challenged to turn from such.

WHERE ARE MY AFFECTIONS?

The reason why this question is important is dealt with by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount: ***"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*** (Matt. 6:21). What we treasure is shown by our affections! The question infers we have a choice to make! ***"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."*** (Matt. 6:24) So, we can place our affections on this earth and all it has to offer, or on things above (Col. 3:1-6). We are encouraged to logically place our affections, mind, heart, desires on things above where Christ is—in heaven!

REASONS GIVEN !

(Col. 3:1-6; Rom. 6:1-5)

“For you died...with Christ!” (v. 3). At one time (when baptized), you made a decision to die to the things of this world—to no longer walk the way of sin.

“...you were raised with Christ!” (v. 1). The old man of sin was buried in a watery grave. He was raised up to walk in newness of life.

“Your life is hidden with Christ in God!” (v. 3). We have found our place of safety and refuge—it is in Christ! We also have access to all spiritual blessings in Christ (Eph. 1:3).

“When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.” (v. 4). Our glorification depends upon keeping our affections on the right things. Not on fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness. (Verse 5). It is because of these things that God’s wrath comes upon the disobedient. (Verse 6) ***“For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.”*** (Rom. 6:19).

Our affections certainly should not be placed on: the Love of money. (1 Tim. 6:10); the Pleasures of this life. (2 Tim. 3:4); this world. (1 John 2:15); places of pre-eminence. (Luke 11:43); the praise of men over the praise of God. (John 12:42-43); the wages of unrighteousness. (2 Peter 2:15); and not on wearing titles. (Matt. 23:6-10). It is very important that we know where our affections lie. We must carefully examine our hearts.

FAITHFULNESS

“Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, but who can find a faithful man?” (Prov. 20:6). Are faithful people scarce? Is it too hard for people to be faithful? Do we need to take a closer look at this virtue? How would you define the term: ***“Faithfulness?”*** For sure, it must be a person who is dependable and can be counted on to stand firm. Would it not be one who does not waver or give up? Look briefly at the persons that the Scriptures point out are faithful:

a) Ps. 119:86; 138—God is faithful!

- The constancy or firmness of God towards man.
- He keeps his promises—He is worthy of trust.
- He is unchangeable, consistent—thus, dependable.

b) Hebrew 3:5—Moses was faithful in all his house!

c) Hebrew 2:17—Jesus is a faithful High Priest!

The word "faithful" obviously comes from the concept of faith, belief, or trust. A person who is faithful is one who is full of faith! Col. 2:5 encouraged one to be steadfast in his faith in Christ. It suggests that things believed are held to consistently. He is one who continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from hope (Col. 1:23). And the word also carries with it the idea of not being an unjust person (Luke 16:10). But dependability and fidelity are key words that help to define a "faithful" Christians.

There was a man who was in the army that was stationed in Munich, Germany. He was a member of the church and met with a small group in the city. This particular day it was cold and snowing and it could have been easy to stay in bed, but he led singing and felt he needed to go. They were depending on him. He caught the bus to go down town. As he neared the meeting place, he saw an elderly couple walking in the snow. The man had lost his eyesight. His 78-year-old-wife had a lame foot. They could not afford to ride the bus. As he thought about them, he felt guilty in seeing this faithful couple walking in the bad weather and he was riding. He was ashamed of his thoughts about debating on whether to go to services that day. Their faithfulness was a great lesson to this young man.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The pure in heart will be blessed because they will be "faithful" to God—their hearts are set on Him! Their hearts have been captured by the hope of heaven and they are willing to make any sacrifice in order to obtain their hope (Rom. 8:24). The productive Christian is one who has a good and honest heart that helps him to be fruitful with patience (Luke 8:15).

We conclude that a faithful Christian is one who has been affected by the following things:

1. He has opened his heart to God and His Word (Heb. 4:7).
2. They have believed the message of God with their heart (Rom. 10:9-10).
3. They have obeyed from the heart the message delivered to them (Rom. 6:17-18).
4. They have set their heart on things above where Christ is (Col. 3:1-3).
5. They have a good and honest heart that is productive (Luke 8:15).
6. They, in singleness of heart, fear God (Col. 3:22).
7. They have sanctified the Lord God in their hearts (1 Pet. 3:15).

Lesson Two

"A New Walk as a New Man"

The Apostle Paul stated that the Christian is one who has died to the way of sin (Rom. 6:1-2) and has been buried with Christ in baptism (Rom. 6:4); but he also adds that he is raised up to walk in "*newness of life!*" (Rom. 6:5). Notice that Christianity is not just a negative—we no longer walk in the way of sin, but it is also a positive—we walk in the newness of life! The Christian is encouraged to present himself to God as a slave of righteousness (Rom. 6:19). We have also noticed from lesson one that God wants to capture our hearts and that our hearts need to be set on God and on things above. Otherwise, we will keep on living the same old life that we were living before. Our hearts must capture a sense of "compulsion" to live for God—our lives must be governed by a sense of "ought" in order to be faithful to death!

Christianity is looked upon as a "*way of righteousness*" (Prov. 12:28; 2 Pet. 2:21); a "*way of truth*" (2 Pet. 2:2); and a "*difficult....way*" (Matt. 7:14) that leads unto life and there are few who find it!

JESUS, AS OUR EXAMPLE

When we look at the life of Jesus we see a life that was driven by compulsion....a sense of ought....a life of "I must do!" At 12 years of age: Jesus went with his parents to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. As his parents started home, they discovered that Jesus was not with the group. They finally found him in the Temple discussing with the learned men. His mother's remarks: "*Son, why have you thus dealt with us? Behold, your father and I have sought you sorrowing.*" Jesus' reply is significant: "*How is it that you sought me? Don't you know that I must be about my Father's business?*" This was not a childish utterance or uncalled for smart remark! It revealed a tremendous compulsion that Jesus felt in his life. This compulsion did not subside in his life, but continued!

John 9:4—"*I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night comes, when no man can work.*"

Luke 4:43—"*I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.*" Jesus had a strong compulsion to do the work He was sent to do. He had a strong sense of ought, duty, or responsibility—and he did it.

Matt. 16:21—"*From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders*"

and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day."

John 3:14—*"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up."* The end result of that Duty was to die on the cross. He knew it had to come and He was facing up to it. He was also trying to prepare His disciples for it. Duty sometimes can be very demanding of us. Jesus' sense of compulsion drove Him even to the cross.

Luke 24:44—*"These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me."* A sense of "must" even in view of fulfilled prophecies. They must be fulfilled...all of them...too much depends upon them.

Jesus had a purpose in life and He felt very keenly the grave responsibility laid upon Him by the Father. He felt pressed to be about His Father's business. Unfortunately, many Fathers and Mothers do not have the feeling of compulsion to serve God, much less their 12-year-old children. So many today live their lives without real meaningful purpose. They have no real direction---goals---no worthy purposes for their lives. The "musts" in Jesus' life were very strong! His parents should have realized from then on that His life was devoted to the Father. What a challenge for us today to have the same sense of compulsion—a sense of ought or "must" to serve God all of our lives—to be about our Father's business.

THE NEW LIFE OF THE NEW MAN

The way to heaven is not a PLAYGROUND in which we are called to PLAY, but a VINEYARD in which we are called TO WORK (Mark 12:1-9) or a FIELD that we are told TO HARVEST (Jn. 4:35).

It is not a PARTY at which we are to be ENTERTAINED, but a BATTLE-FIELD on which we are called to DIE (Eph. 6:11-20).

It is not a CARNIVAL of FUN and EXCITEMENT, but a WAY OF SUFFERING and being PERSECUTED (Matt. 5:11-12).

It is not a BED OF EASE, but a RACE which we are called TO RUN (Heb. 12:1).

It is not a BANQUET at which we are served, but a MEAL at which we do the SERVING (Lk. 17:7-10).

It is not a MATTER OF CHOICE of many ways, but a choice between a

It is not a CHOICE of MANY WAYS, but of a STRAIT and NARROW WAY that demands a CAREFUL WALK (Matt. 7:14; Col. 2:6).

It is not a LIFE OF SOLITUDE, but a FELLOWSHIP with others who are in the BODY OF CHRIST where each person functions as a MEMBER OF THAT LIVING BODY (Acts 2:41-47; Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 2:6-23).

What people think is really not all that important, but what God says that He expect of His people is extremely important.

(The above was written by Eldon Lewis and adapted)

WHEN DUTY BECOMES DESIRE

God wants of His creatures: **Heart Service, not lip service!** He wants Sincere, Committed, and heart obedience. *“Not with eye service, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.”* (Eph. 6:6). Jesus showed clearly the difference in heart service and lip service.

Matt. 23:25—*“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.”* Notice the emphasis upon the outward, but not the inside. Notice that he also said: *“But inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”* (v. 28).

Matt. 15:8—(Jesus quotes from Isaiah 29:13)—*“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.”*

God obviously wants to capture, woo, and win man’s heart. He wants heart allegiance, not lip service. He wants more than just outward conformity. His New Covenant has been purposely *“written & engraven on the heart.”* (Heb. 8:10). God wants man’s obedience—Not just out of terror & dread of His threatened wrath & punishment, but because we love Him for what he has done....and because we desire to please our Maker!

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We have a great challenge—(1) To work to make duty to become desire in serving God, and (2) To work to put our whole heart into our service to God. We are a NEW MAN in Christ. Let's live like redeemed people ought to live, but who also greatly desire to live such a life! And then, to God goes the glory!

"Faithful in Our Speech"

A great deal of specific teaching can be found in the Scriptures about the proper use of our speech. Its importance and dangers are continually mentioned. An interesting event happened about 1150 years before Christ. At this time Israel was governed to some extent by Judges. During this time an incident is recorded that had to do with pronunciation of certain words. It pointed out that their pronunciation gave them away and revealed their true identity (Judges 12:1-7). If you haven't read this yet, you may want to do so to satisfy your curiosity. Even today, we recognize people who have moved into the area from another section of the country by their accent. When we first moved to the Harrisburg area, we were straightened out very quick on how to pronounce "Lancaster!" It is not Lancaster, but Lancaster! We identify people by their Southern Accent, or their Bostonian Accent, or even their Virginia Accent, etc.

WORDS REVEAL THINGS ABOUT A PERSON

The mixed speech of some Jews revealed their inter-marriage with outsiders (Neh. 13:23-31). Peter's speech at Jesus' Trial revealed he was a follower of Jesus. (Matt. 26:69-75). The apostles' speech before the Jewish Council revealed they had been with Jesus. (Acts 4:13—*"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."*).

Man's foolishness or Wisdom is indicated by his words.

- 1) Prov. 15:2—*"The tongue of the wise uses knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools pours out foolishness."*
- 2) Prov. 15:7—*"The lips of the wise disperse knowledge: but the heart of the foolish does not so."*
- 3) Prov. 15:14—*"The heart of him that has understanding seeks knowledge: but the mouth of fools feeds on foolishness."*
- 4) Prov. 15:28—*"The heart of the righteous studies to answer: but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things."*
- 5) Prov. 18:6-7—*"A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calls for strokes. A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul."*

JESUS' WARNINGS CONCERNING OUR SPEECH

Jesus made it very clear that He did not expect a corrupt tree to bear good fruit,

and neither will a corrupt heart bring forth good fruit (Matt. 15:18-20). This is the reason for such admonitions as the following:

Prov. 4:23—*“Keep your heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”*

Matt. 12:35—*“A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.”*

It is imperative that our hearts be changed and filled with that which is **Good, Wholesome, Pure, Honorable, Trustful, etc.** And Jesus also warns that we will be judged by our words (Matt. 12:36-37). What about our hearts?

- a) Have they been changed...redeemed by Christ’s blood?
- b) Have they been filled since then with the righteousness of God?
- c) What do they revealed about us?

Let’s fill our hearts with the right things....so God will be pleased with us. Is your heart concerned about being right with God?

“SPEAK EVERY MAN TRUTH”

One day Adam is talking to God, and he asks, *“God, I’ve been wondering, why did you make Eve so pretty?”* God replies, *“Because I wanted you to like her.”* Then Adam asks, *“But why did you make her so stupid?”* God answers, *“Because I wanted her to like you.”* Ouch! The truth is not very pleasant! But God wants all of us to be truthful—even if it hurts us! **“Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor.”** (Eph. 4:25). The New Man puts away lying and speaks truth to others. What a challenge! But what a need! And what a blessing such can be!

Evaluate these quotations carefully and see if you can see the wisdom in such:

- a) *“Everyone wishes to have truth on his side, but it is not every one that sincerely wishes to be on the side of truth.”*
- b) *“The way of truth is like a great road. It is not difficult to know it. The evil is only that men will not seek it.”*

The following admonitions are given to us by God in regards to truth:

- a) Love truth. 2 Thess. 2:10
- b) Walk in truth. 1 Jn. 1:6
- c) Seek truth. Jer. 5:1
- d) Believe truth. 2 Thess. 2:12

- e) Buy and do not sell truth. Prov. 23:23
- f) Obey truth. 1 Pet. 1:22
- g) Rejoice in truth. 1 Cor. 13:6
- h) Speak the truth in love. Eph. 4:15

WHY SPEAK TRUTH?

Let's look a little further into several good reasons for speaking truth to our fellow-man.

TO BE LIKE DEITY!

1. ***God is truth!***---“*He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.*” (Deut. 32:4)
2. ***Jesus is Truth!***---“*I am the way, the truth, the life; no man comes to the Father but by Me.*” (Jn. 14:6)
3. ***The Spirit is the Spirit of Truth!***---“*When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth*” (Jn. 16:13).

Thus, when I speak truth—I am acting like God!

BECAUSE SUCH BETRAYS MY CHARACTER!

1. ***“Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, and rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.”*** (Exo. 18:21)
2. These men were chosen because of their character—they could be trusted as leaders. Men and Women of truth are those generally respected. Speaking truth brings trust, security, and dependability.
 - a) We can know what to expect.
 - b) It would be terrible to live in an atmosphere where no one could be trusted.
 - c) Survival of the Home, the Church, and even Society depends upon men and women of character.
 - d) If just 10 righteous people could have been found in Sodom & Gomorra—the cities could have been saved!

BECAUSE OF THE REWARDS OF SPEAKING TRUTH!

1. ***Speaking truth builds relationships!*** (Prov. 16:13).
 - 1) Friendships are established and held together by truth.
 - 2) Lies undermine and destroy relationships.
2. ***Jesus says the truth can make us free.*** (Jn. 8:32)
 - 1) Truth frees us from error or a lie.
 - 2) We need to walk in truth to receive the benefits of such.

IN CONTRAST—lies can do untold damage to a person's character.

Jer. 7:28—"So you shall say to them, 'This is a nation that does not obey the voice of the Lord their God nor receive correction. Truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth.'"

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What do our words have to do with revealing our character?

2. What is said about wisdom or foolishness and speech?

3. What is the connection of our heart and our speech?

4. What are some admonitions from God about Truth?

5. What are 3 good reasons for wanting to speak Truth?

6. Why do lies damage a person's character?

Lesson Four

"Faithful in our Lives"

This lesson could also be titled: **"The Challenge to be Different"** (1 Peter 2:9-12). Peter addresses his 1st letter to Christians in Asia Minor as:

- a) Pilgrims & Sojourners (1:1; 2:11)
- b) God's elect or chosen generation (1:2; 2:9)
- c) As people who have been born again (1:23)
- d) As living stones in a spiritual house (2:5)
- e) A royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own special people (2:9)

In the letter, he explains fully how such people ought to live! He challenges them to live up to their royal position in Christ, to be different from the world with which they were once identified, and to be not only committed in word, but in deed and in truth.

JESUS' ADMONITION TO HIS DISCIPLES

Jesus said that they were *"in the world....but not of the world"* (Jn. 17:11, 16). We live in a world that does not have the same values as God demands of His people! Christians, therefore, have a choice to make:

- a) Whether to change & conform to holy & godly living;
- b) Or, to conform to the world around us.

If we choose the latter:

- a) We will dress like they dress, and not like God says!
- b) We will talk like they talk, and not like God says!
- c) We will indulge in all kinds of wrong activities, and not the

kind God says that He wants!

We will then be identified with the world around us.....And they will not hate us! (John 17:14-18). The world usually hates those who are different from them. But if we want to be pleasing to God & acceptable to Him, we must live as God directs—even when it goes contrary to the world. (1 Jn .

2:15-17). Righteous living is a necessity—no excuses accepted! (1 John 3:7-10). Holy living is a direct command of God! (1 Peter 1:13-16). When God commands, we need to obey! He rightly expects us to make righteousness a guide for our lives. He does not require what we cannot do. And He makes allowances for our weaknesses—but not our rebellion! We are to pursue righteousness and not to pursue the world & be identified with them. Listen to God's admonitions to His people: *"For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness."* (Rom. 6:19)

The New Testament makes a strong appeal to God's people to be "separate from world."

- a) 2 Cor. 6:17—"*Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.*"
- b) 1 Thess. 4:3, 7—"*For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.*"
- c) 2 Cor. 7:1--"*Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*"

It is stressing the need to be separated from all forms of sin and consecrated to God. We have been called by the Gospel to holiness. We responded to this call in faith & obedience to the Gospel. We were then sanctified—cleansed—set-apart to serve God. "Sainthood" is a state into which we are called. It is also a walk in which we forsake sin & love righteousness. **Can the world see the difference?**

WHAT IT IS NOT!

Sometimes it is good to look at a subject from a negative viewpoint—that is, what godliness and righteousness is not!

It does not mean perfection.

- 1) We all sin or fall short of being like God (Rom. 3:23).
- 2) We all need continual cleansing by the blood of Jesus (1 Jn. 1:7).
- 3) We never get too old that we cannot be tempted to sin.
- 4) The Apostle Paul struggled with sin (Rom. 7:15-20)
- 5) He buffeted his body—as he fought sin in his life (1 Cor. 9:27).
- 6) But...our Goal & challenge is to be perfect as God is perfect. (Matt. 5:48; 2 Cor. 13:11).

It does not give us the right to look down on sinners!

- 1) We should realize that "*But for the grace of God, go I!*"
- 2) Jesus was a friend of sinners!
- 3) He cared enough to die for them.
- 4) But He did not live, talk, or act like them.
- 5) There is no room for pride in the Christian's heart for his holy life!
- 6) We can only take pride in God and what He had done for us.
- 7) We do not look down on those who:
 - a) Are caught up in Satan's trap;
 - b) Who are blinded by his deceit...living an ungodly life.
- 8) We need to care enough to take the saving Gospel to them also.

It does not mean to totally separate from non-Christians

- 1) We are to be a light to the world—not withdrawn from the world.
- 2) We are in the world, but not of the world.
- 3) 1 Cor. 5 shows that we do not withdraw ourselves from worldly unbelievers. We obviously do not participate in their sinful activity, but we are to withdraw ourselves from worldly believers who will not repent.
- 4) Our job is to try to rescue people from Satan's hold—not ignore them.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

1. The Christian is one:
 - a) Who has changed from an earthly orientation to a heavenly one (Col. 3:1)
 - b) Whose life is in Christ—not in worldly things.
 - c) His thinking has been changed.
 - d) His language has been changed.
 - e) The things he reads has been changed.
 - f) The TV & Movies he watches has been changed.
 - g) The songs he sings has been changed.
 - h) The way he uses his money has changed.
 - i) The way he uses his time has changed.....etc.
2. We have two choices:
 - a) To serve our own desires.
 - b) Or, To live to honor God.
3. This is a hard choice at times—because we will be looked upon as "different!"
 - a) America has become a pagan nation.
 - b) It sanctions: abortion, homosexuality, sexual perversions, drugs, violent crimes, corrupt government officials, etc.
 - c) Our nation is fast turning to more & more ungodliness.
4. Our choice as a Christian is clear:
 - a) We either stand for holiness & righteousness;
 - b) Or, we fit in with our culture around us to appear "normal."
 - c) We cannot have it both ways!
5. What has been your choice?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is Peter's reason for addressing his letter to Christians whom he calls "pilgrims?"

2. Do people have a tendency to live up to the name they are given?

3. What does it mean: "We are in the world, but not of the world?"

4. Does God make allowances for our weaknesses and our rebellion?

5. Why does Paul refer to Christians as slaves of righteousness?

6. How can the Christian be separate from the world and still live among those of the world?

7. To live a "separated life" does not mean what three things?

8. Why are we to withdraw our association from an unrepentant Christian?

9. Why are people so afraid of "being different" from other people?

10. Why would Christians want to appear "normal?"

Lesson Five

"Faithful in Worship"

In a recent article that I read, a preacher was telling about someone vacationing in the East and needed to call and find out about a congregation with which to worship. He asked the preacher about their worship activities to see if it was one that he would be able to worship with. *"Do you use instrumental music in worship?"* The answer that came back was a little unusual, but not necessarily unexpected: *"We currently do not use instrumental music."* Does that indicate that it is just a matter of time before the instrument will be brought in? More than likely!

Corrupted worship to God is not a new thing! God was constantly having to deal with such with the Israelite nation (Isaiah 1:1-17) in various forms. And today, it is no different—men still profess to worship the God of Heaven, but do so with ungodly lives or by changing the worship to please them and not please God. Jesus called the religious leaders of his day "hypocrites" because they drew near to God with their mouth, and made an attempt to honor Him with their lips, but their heart was far from Him (Matt. 15:7-9). He concluded by saying that their worship was vain because they were seeking to please themselves by what they taught and practice rather than God.

THE CURSE OF IDOLATRY

Mankind, thru the centuries, has had a real problem with idolatry. The Prophets spoke strongly against such to the Jewish people. The Gentile world was caught up in idolatry. Even SO-CALLED "Christianity" has been faced with grave problems of Idolatry. Idolatry was a part of the cause of the great apostasy away from Truth. The remnants of such idolatry still remain today in religious groups claiming to be Christian.

- Images, relics that are sacred.
- Homage, adoration, worship is paid to them.
- Bowing before them, kissing them.
- Placing money before them, flowers, food, etc.
- Not only considered sacred...but miracle-working powers are attributed to them (cures, stop plagues, bring good fortune, etc.)
- They are made to be worshipped:
 - Sing to them
 - Pray to them
 - Burn candles to them.

If this is not idolatry—what would one have to do to commit such? But there are other forms of idolatry that we want to look at also.

HOW DO WE TREAT THAT WHICH GOD'S WORD CALLS HOLY?

Angels are called Holy—“*When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.*” (Matt. 25:31) How should we regard such? “*Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.*” (Col. 2:18) “*Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me, ‘See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren, the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.’*” (Rev. 22:8-9).

Angels are to be respected as God’s holy servants, but not worshipped. If angels, who are higher than men, are not to be worshipped...then, it is obvious men are not to be worshipped—nor idols.

Apostles are called holy—“*Which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets.*” (Eph. 3:5) How should we regard apostles? “*As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshipped him. But Peter lifted him up, saying, ‘Stand up; I myself am also a man.’*” (Acts 10:25-26). Certainly, these men are due respect for their work’s sake, but not worshipped. Teachers & Preachers of the gospel should be respected, but not elevated above that which is written. “*Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.*” (1 Cor. 4:6).

Our bodies are called holy—“*If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.*” (1 Cor. 3:17). How should we regard our bodies? It is certain that we are not to worship it. But we are to treat it with respect. We are not to profane it by immorality & ungodliness.

Many things are referred to as holy in the New Testament:

- a) Holy faith, holy scriptures, holy brethren,
- b) Holy city, holy kiss, heaven is holy, etc.

But it should be obvious that such is not done with the idea of offering worship to them. Holy things are to be respected...not treated lightly. God alone is to be worshipped. “*Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘you shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’*” (Matt. 4:10).

4 PROBLEM AREAS

The Bible. There are two extremes positions that can be taken: a) Treating it with great disrespect...indifference...unconcern; or the opposite, (b) worshipping the physical book as sacred by putting it in an elevated place, keeping it dusted and beautiful, and revere it as a physical object of worship. The Bible should demand our great respect. It is the word of God. It should be read, studied, meditated on as a guide for our lives. We should not only be willing to hear its message, but being submissive to it.

The Lord's Supper. No where in the N.T. is this called, "Holy Communion." Therefore: a) The elements are not sacred in & of themselves; b) The bread & fruit of the vine are just that. It is a command of God that we partake of them. It is to be done on the first day of the week (Sunday—Acts 20:7). It is to be done in memory of Jesus' death on the cross for me. It is the spirit with which we partake of them that makes a big difference! **"Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."** (1 Cor. 11:27). The emphasis is not on the elements. It is on the attitude with which we partake of the elements. We do not worship the elements—but the God who died for us.

The church building. Under the O.T., the Temple was referred to as a holy place. It was to be given special regard, for it was where God's presence was among them. But that Temple has been done away, destroyed. It no longer plays a part in God's scheme of things. And no where does the N.T. depict the meeting place of Christians as sacred. To look upon a building as Sacred then becomes a form of Idolatry. True Worship can taken place in all kinds of situations: Rented quarters, Club houses, Theaters, Homes, catacombs, etc. Does worship in such places make them sacred and holy? Can only worship take place in them from then on? The answer is obvious!
It is the worship given to God that is sacred and holy. The place is an incidental. Reverence, respect, sacredness should be connected with the worship activity—not the building.

Making certain days holy. Under the O.T., the Sabbath was holy. It was not even a day of worship. It was to be a day of rest—no work to be done. To observe it as such showed Respect for God's Word. Other special days were set aside to be observed in special ways. But these days, as such, were not to be worshipped! Under the N.T., We have no such day or days called holy. None! Even Sunday—the Lord's Day—is not called holy. Special worship to God is to take place on this day. Such worship is holy before God...because God ordained it. But the day is never referred to as "Holy Sunday" or "Holy First Day of the Week." (Gal. 4:8-11). Men conceive of and originate holy

days....not of God. Is this a form of idolatry?? *"God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth!"* (John 8:24).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How far back in the Bible can we go to find corrupted worship?
2. What term did Jesus use to identify people whose hearts were not turn to God in worship?
3. What made their worship vain also?
4. Do churches today have problems with idolatry?
5. If so, name some of the activities that show this.
6. If something is called "holy," does that mean we ought to worship it?
7. What beings, persons, or things are referred to as holy in the New Testament?
8. Should we make images of Angels and Apostles and offer worship to them?
9. What are four areas in which men have tended towards idolatrous practices.
10. Should we originate a holy day and advocate that men should show special respect for that day?

*Lesson Six***"Faithful in Our Trust in God"**

Two things come to mind when we talk about faithfulness: (1) Being true to our word; and (2) Being strong in our faith and trust in God. We want to look at both of these concepts in this lesson.

When two people get married they make a promise to one another that we call the "marriage vows." A vow is the giving of one's word that he will do what he promises! This is what Paul was emphasizing to these Christians in the Galatian churches. God had made a promise to Abraham that in his seed all nations would be blessed. God did not go back on His promise, but carried it out in Christ! The obvious lesson to us is that we need to also keep our promises to be faithful to God. All people should be honest & true to their word—their promises. But, of all people, the Christian certainly should keep his vows or promises! His word should be his bond.

His word ought to be able to be depended upon. He should fulfill his obligations. ***"Owe no one anything except to love one another..."*** (Rom. 13:8). The same admonition was given to Israel! ***"When you vow a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he has no pleasure in fools: pay that which you have vowed. Better is it that you should not vow, than that you should vow and not pay."*** (Eccl. 5:4-5). To make a promise with no intent to carry it out makes one a fool! Vows or Promises should be made only after serious deliberation.

MARRIAGE VOWS

The marital relationship has been ordained by God. ***"And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man."*** (Gen. 2:22). Marriage is not man-ordained, but God-ordained! Its importance & responsibilities cannot be over-emphasized. Dis-regard for the vows of Marriage has brought unending hurt & destruction upon the human race. People need to realize the importance of this union before entering into it. If done, it would help to avert broken marriages & broken hearts. Divorce and its terrible consequences could be averted.

Unfortunately, to teach God's Will on this subject today is not the most popular thing to do. Man feels he can direct his own steps without God's help. He doesn't want anyone telling him what to do or rebuking him for his wrong decisions. But all one has to do is look around you and see the mess we have made of God's wonderful arrangement. We need desperately to know God's Will about Marriage and live up to the vows we have made. Broken Marriages come

because of broken promises! When one is unfaithful to his mate, he is also unfaithful to his word or promises.

The outcome of unfaithfulness usually ends in divorce and remarriage. Such marriages may not be acceptable to God. The Bible gives only two acceptable reasons for re-marriage: (1) The death of a mate. (1 Cor. 7:39); and (2) Sexual unfaithfulness of a mate. (Matt. 19:9). One cannot live in an adulterous relationship and be right with God. (1 Cor. 6:9-11). Young people....Marriage is serious business! So, choose wisely your mate....don't be hasty. Realize that it is for life. Take your vows & promises seriously. Those of us already married need to evaluate how well we are living up to our vows and are we being faithful to our word?

MARRIED TO CHRIST

We become married to Christ when we obey the Gospel. We become a part of the Bride of Christ, the church. We make our vows to Christ at that time. *"Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God."* (Rom. 7:4). *"For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as chaste virgin to Christ."* (2 Cor. 11:2). This marriage was consummated when we were baptized into Christ! (Gal. 3:26-27).

The promises we made to Christ at that time were two-fold: (1) We made a promise to turn away from sin & disobedience to God; and (2) A promise to begin following Christ and do His bidding. No promise.....no salvation! (Rom. 6:1-4).

What are some things involved in these two promises:

1. *The obligation to meet & worship with God's people.* We are encouraged to put God's church or kingdom in first place in our lives. (Matt. 6:33). We are also warned about missing the assemblies of God's people. (Heb. 10:25). When I purposely miss, am I not breaking my promise to do Christ's will?
2. *The obligation to remember the Lord's Supper each week with God's people.* The early church continued steadfastly in this. (Acts 2:42). This was done in the assembly on the first day of the week. (Acts 20:7). It is a way of showing we are in fellowship with God's people. When I miss, am I not breaking my promise to obey Christ?
3. *The obligation to love the Lord, not the world.* We are warned not to love the world. (1 Jn. 2:15). We are encouraged to come out of the world. (2 Cor. 6:17-18). We are encouraged to seek things above.

(Col. 3:1-3). When our love for Christ lessens & our love for the world increases, have we not broken our promise to Christ?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What promise was Paul talking about to the Galatians that He had fulfilled?
2. Who is called a fool in connection with vows?
3. What does divorce tell us about our marriage vows?
4. What makes a marriage wrong in the sight of God?
5. In what sense are we married to Christ?
6. When do we make our vows to Him?
7. What are some promises involved in our new relationship in Christ?
8. What makes it possible for us to be strong in the Lord?
9. What does our disobedience indicate?
10. How is God our strength and shield?

Notes

