

The Ideal Christian

#1—Qualities of Life

**(Qualifications of Elders & Deacons
Represents the Ideal Christian)**

12 Lessons

Prepared by:
Paul E. Cantrell

2010

Title Page

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Table of Contents

"The Ideal Christian-----#1—Qualities of Life"

LESSON	TITLE	PAGE
Lesson One	"Good Home Situation"	1
Lesson Two	"Blameless"	4
Lesson Three	"Temperate"	7
Lesson Four	"Sober-Minded"	10
Lesson Five	"Good Behavior"	13
Lesson Six	"Hospitable"	16
Lesson Seven	"Not Covetous"	19
Lesson Eight	"Gentle"	22
Lesson Nine	"Not Violent.....not quarrelsome"	25
Lesson Ten	"Not Self-Willed"	28
Lesson Eleven	"Capable Teacher"	31
Lesson Twelve	"Lover of Good"	34

Lesson One "Good Home Situation"

"The husband of one wife.....One who rules his own house well....Having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God)" (1 Tim. 3:2, 4-5)

Introduction

We are always looking for the ideal man or woman about us. There are several reasons for this:

- a) We are looking for an "ideal" marriage partner.
- b) We are looking for "good" people to become friends with and enjoy social relations that are very desirable.
- c) We are looking for "outstanding" people who can be examples for us to follow after. "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1).

Jesus, obviously, is the only "ideal person" who has ever lived—that is, from God's viewpoint. He was perfect! (2 Cor. 5:21). He did the Father's Will completely as He indicated on the Cross—"***It is finished!***" (John 19:30). But when we talk about the "ideal person," it has to be with the understanding that he or she is not perfect. We should not only look for the "ideal person," but shouldn't we also desire **to be** the "ideal person!" (Matt. 5:48)

Four study Books have been planned under the general title of "***The Ideal Christian!***" The plan is to have two of the Books to follow a listing of qualities that are given in several places and the other two will pull Scriptures from different places with special titles for each lesson. We hope that we can complete the series and have them ready for use in the near future.

A Person's Home life should be Ideal

One of the great tests of a person's life is in connection with his marital and family situation. We would expect this to be an example for all to follow and see that his marriage and home life are according to God's Will. Let's look at how a few Scriptures describe what this should be like:

1 Tim. 3:2—"***The husband of one wife.***" (See also—1 Tim. 3:12; Tit. 1:6)

God planned from the beginning that there would be one man and one woman for life! (Matt. 19:4-6). The Old Testament History reveals that some of the people who were acceptable to God had more than one wife—such as Abraham and Jacob. (Gen. 16:2; 25:6; 31:17, 30:1-13, etc.). Solomon had 1000 wives and concubines (1 Kings 11:3). I do not know why this was allowed by God. The above phrase could be understood to have reference to more than one mate at a time; and/or if a mate was divorced and married again; and/or if a mate had died and remarried. The "ideal" would seem to be—only been married to one person for life.

1 Tim. 3:4-5—"***One who rules his own house well.***" (See also—1 Tim. 3:12; Tit. 1:6)

The Greek word for "rule" can also be translated "to lead" or "to attend to." See the following references where this Greek word is used: (**Rom. 12:8**)—"Lead"—(**1 Tim. 5:17**)—"rule." This concept of "rulership" or "leadership" would generally have reference to the man in the home.

The "ideal" wife's role would be that of "submitting" to his rule or leadership (Eph. 5:22-25, Titus 2:5). This arrangement of male leadership is from God and the "ideal" man or woman will exemplify this concept in their home. The "man-woman" relationship in the home is a training ground for leadership in the Church also. The man must prove his leadership in the home and the woman proves herself to be a submissive wife in the home. Additional admonitions are given to the women in **1 Tim. 3:11**—"*Must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.*"

1 Tim. 3:4—"*Having his children in submission with all reverence.*" (See also—1 Tim. 3:12; Titus 1:6)

How to raise up and develop children is also a test of one's "ideal" status! Children are not only in submission to the parents' will; but, they submit out of an attitude of "reverence" or "respect." Both the father and mother need to be deeply involved with the training of their children in such a way that they are respectful of their parents. In the process of this training (disciplining), they are to be careful that they do not "*Provoke their children to wrath*" or "*Do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*" (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21). Titus 1:6 states that the "ideal" parent should have "*Faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.*"

Concluding Thoughts

If you were looking for the "ideal" person or Christian, would you want to know about his relationship in his or her home? The male-female arrangement, the husband-wife arrangement, or the parent-child arrangement are all very important to our society. You would expect the "ideal" Christian to have a happy, contented, and respectful home situation. Jesus seems to have been very close to Lazarus, Mary, and Martha; and when in the City of Jerusalem, we find Him in their home.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why would you want to find an "ideal" Christian?
2. Is it normal for a person to want to copy after another human being?
3. Why is Jesus looked upon as being the "ideal" person?
4. Why do you feel that a person's "home-life" is so important?
5. Does God allow plural wives today? Explain your answer!
6. Is there a difference in one's "ruling" or "leading" his family?
7. Why is the "headship" and "submissive" roles so important in the home?
8. Why is it important to have "submission" and "respectful" children?
9. How would you feel about an "over-bearing" parent(s)?
10. How would you rate your home situation on a scale of 1-10?

Lesson Two "Blameless"

"Must be blameless....if a man is blameless"

(1 Tim. 3:2, 10; Tit. 1:6)

We have already pointed out in our last lesson that the "ideal" Christian is not a perfect person! But the "ideal" Christian is one that should be "blameless." Even though the idea that is often communicated by this word would seem to indicate perfection; yet, we know intuitively, that it cannot mean perfection. We need to see how this word is used and come up with a concept that helps to identify the "ideal" Christian!

Examples of Blameless People

In this listing of qualities of the "ideal" person, both the Elders and Deacons to be appointed by the Church are to be men who are "blameless!" If there is any blame against them, they are not to serve as such, but to continue to get their lives right before God. Let's look at the examples that the Scriptures use to help identify what is meant by this expression "blameless."

Matt. 12:5—*"Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?"*

Jesus' disciples were hungry and as they walked through the grain field they pluck some grain to eat. The Pharisees saw it and accused them of breaking the Sabbath. Jesus used to examples to help them understand that His disciples were "guiltless" of breaking the Sabbath. He spoke about David and the men with him who were hungry and how they ate the showbread in the house of God which only the Priests were to eat (Matt. 12:1-4). He also spoke about the Priests who performed their services on the Sabbath and were "blameless!" (Matt. 12:5). Jesus pointed out to them that if they had understood things correctly they would not have condemned the "guiltless." (Matt. 12:6-7). Jesus' disciples were not guilty of breaking the Sabbath!

Luke 1:6—*"And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."*

These words were spoken about Zacharias and Elizabeth (parents of John the baptizer). To be blameless is to "**walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord.**" This obviously does not mean that they were perfect; but they were diligent to do everything that God required of them to the best of their ability. No one could point a finger of blame against them.

Phil. 3:6—*"Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."*

The Apostle Paul is speaking about himself before his conversion to Christ. He made every effort to keep the Law of God in every way. This obviously does not say that he was "perfect" or "sinless," but his conformity to God's Law was correct and atonement for sins were secured just as the Law commanded. If he had lived and died under that Law before Christ came, he would have been acceptable to God. However, since Christ had come and died to set in motion a New

Covenant, he was under obligation to serve God under this New System that set him free of sin through his faith in Christ.

Gal. 2:11—*"Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed."*

Before the men came up from Jerusalem, Peter ate with the Gentiles who were members of the Church at Antioch. But when these men came up, he withdrew and separated himself from the Gentiles because of "fear." He influenced others to *"act the hypocrite"* as well—even Barnabas! So, Paul openly rebuked him—*"because he was to be blamed."* In other words, Peter needed to repent of his "hypocrisy!" At that point, he was at fault—guilty of wrong-doing.

Heb. 8:7—*"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second."*

The writer is contrasting the two major Covenants and gives the primary reason for God giving a New Covenant—the first Covenant had a grave fault in it! Even though people could live according to the first Covenant and abide by all its commands and ordinances, they could not keep the Law perfectly. A "Law System" can only justify those who keep it perfectly! If you break the Law in one place, it is the same as being guilty of the whole Law (Jas. 2:10). The sacrifices under this first Covenant were ordained by God as a temporary measure for forgiveness in breaking the Law. But those sacrifices could not forgive people of their sins—in and of themselves. That is the reason why Christ had to come and live a perfect life and die in our place in order to set us free. What the Old Covenant could not provide, the New Covenant could give what "weak" and "sinful" mankind needed—**FORGIVENESS!**

1 Thess. 3:13—*"So that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints."*

Several admonitions are given to God's people to continue faithful all the way to the end so that we will be found faultless when we stand before the Lord in that Great Day of Judgment! He will find nothing to blame us for—no wrongs not made right—no sins that are not forgiven!

Concluding Thoughts

The "ideal" Christian will be "blameless" or "without fault!" He or she will be innocent and free of blame—*"not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she (the church) should be holy and without blemish."* (Eph. 5:26-27). The "ideal" Christian will not be open to censure—irreproachable—unrebukeable!

Questions for Discussion

1. To be blameless is to be perfect! If this is not correct, explain.

2. Jesus was told that His disciples profaned the Sabbath by their eating grain on the Sabbath. Were they guilty?

3. To be appointed as an Elder or a Deacon, a person must be without fault. How is this possible?

4. Jesus said that the priests under the Old Covenant broke the Sabbath. How did they do such?

5. How is it possible for a person to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of God?

6. The Apostle Paul said that he was righteous under the Law. Explain how.

7. Why did Paul say Peter was to be blamed?

8. What makes the New Covenant better than the Old Covenant?

Lesson Three "Temperate"

"Temperate.....not given to wine....not given to much wine" (1 Tim. 3:3, 11, Tit. 1:7)

In our last lesson we looked at the quality of "**Blameless!**" This is a person against which no evil can be proved. He has a reputation beyond reproach. No one can lay a charge of intentional evil against him successfully. He is penitent, sincere, and honest. He is trying his best to overcome sin in his life. He is quick to repent, confess, and pray when he realizes his mistakes. These thoughts make you think of a person who is in control of his mind and his actions! The word "**temperate**" is a natural follow-up term for the "ideal" Christian. This word is used to translate two Greek words. Other English words that various translations use are: **Sober or Sober-minded, Watchful, Self-Controlled or Self-Restrained**. Thus, a "**temperate**" person is one who can deny himself, be in control of his mind and actions, or be watchful over himself in restraining appetites and passions. He is one who uses moderation (balance) in his activities.

Passages where word is used

This term is used in the following passages that will give some indication of its use in the Word of God.

Acts 24:25—"*Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, 'Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.'*"

The Apostle was trying to help this Roman Governor see the need of living right according to the Will of God (and his own conscience), bringing his mind and actions into proper control so that he could be ready to face God in judgment! It was not the message that a man like him wanted to hear!

1 Cor. 9:25—"*And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.*"

If an athlete is to win the prize in whatever sport he competes in.....his mind and actions need to be brought into complete control. Paul's application to himself shows this concept clearly: "***But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.***" There is a strong emphasis upon "Will-Power!" We all realize that there is a strong struggle going on within our minds to bring us into the control of righteousness or unrighteousness. God wants us to "***Deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him!***" Sin wants to come into our lives and be in control of what we think, where we go, and what we do. One or the other will win out. Jesus said: "***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). If we want God to guide our lives, then we must bring ourselves into conformity to His Will. The real issue here is—"Who is in control?"

Titus 2:2—"*That the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience.*"

Older men are to be encouraged to be "sober" or "temperate!" You would expect this exhortation to be given to younger men who tend to be quick to act without proper forethought. But you would expect that by the time the young men become older, they had learned the importance of being temperate—that is, in control of his mind and actions.

A side-issue (Temperance)

"**Temperance**" has taken on the idea of total abstinence because of how it was used by the "temperance league" years ago. The emphasis should be on the need of self-control in the matter of "eating and drinking"—Not self-indulgence, but self-control! If you will notice that in the two listings of "Qualities" of Elders and Deacons that it stresses: "*not given to wine*" (1 Tim. 3:3); "*not given to much wine*" (1 Tim. 3:8). Neither of these expressions can be understood to say that a person should not drink any wine; but rather, not let the wine be in control, but you control the intake of wine. Of course, we all know that strong drink, uncontrolled, can do and has done much harm and damage in our world. Total abstinence is the safe course to pursue beyond any doubt, but not advocated in Scripture.

Concluding Thoughts

A temperate person is not only in control of his mind and actions, but he will have a well-ordered life before God and man. He is the "ideal" Christian! He lives a self-disciplined life, but enjoys the good things in life. He is watchful over his life so that he will not be displeasing to God—nor be a wrong example for others to follow. His mind, heart, and soul have been brought under the control and direction of Jesus, the Christ! He is moderate and watchful over his appetites, passions, language, and conduct. If a person wants to be an Elder, he must be a temperate man—that is, he is watchful over himself. If he is unwilling to exercise the self-control that is needed; then, how can he be a help to those in the church who are not in control. Do you want to be an "Ideal" Christian; then, learn how to be a temperate person?

Questions for Discussion

1. Why would a temperate person be an "ideal" Christian?
2. Why did the Apostle Paul preach self-control to the Roman Governor?
3. How do athletes in competition illustrate the need for temperance?
4. What is it that a person must do in order to follow Jesus?
5. Why can a person not serve two masters?
6. Why are older men exhorted to be temperate, but not the younger men?
7. Do the Scriptures teach total abstinence from alcoholic beverages?
8. What advice would you give to young people or your own children in regards to strong drink?

Lesson Four "Sober-Minded"

"Sober-Minded" (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8)

Have you ever been around a person who was drunk from intoxicants? Their mind is not clear; they don't make sense; and they don't make good decisions! Their mind is of little value to them and they can do some terrible things while intoxicated! No wonder God condemns the drunkard! (Gal. 5:21). When we use the word "**Sober**," our first thoughts are that a person is not drunk! However, there seems to be much more involved in the two Greek Words that are translated by our English words "**Sober**," or "**Sober-minded**" than that a person is free of intoxication. This is not the primary use of these two Greek Words: *Sophrone* and *Nephaleon*. Notice how the following Versions of the Bible translate these Greek Words: "**Sober-minded**" (ASV), "**Sensible**" (Williams), "**Self-Restrained**" (Con), "**Master of himself**" (Moffatt), "**Good judgment**" (Beck), "**Prudent**" (NASB), "**Discreet**" (TCNT), "**Serious-minded**" (Bas). In addition to the above usages, notice the following general comments about the use of these Greek Words:

1. **Serious outlook on life, sensible.**
2. **Mature judgment, prudent, dignified, quiet.**
3. **Not flighty or flippant.**
4. **Not excitable or passionate, but self-restrained, realizing the importance and earnestness of life.**
5. **Man capable of making wise decisions and strong enough to stand by them.**
6. **Balanced judgment (good common sense).**
7. **Temperate or moderate in thought or action.**
8. **Cool dispassionate reason, serious or subdued in demeanor, solemn, grave, sedate, unpretentious, humble.**
9. **Steady, calm, cool, temperate, well-balanced.**
10. **Collected and unimpassioned.**
11. **Sound and serious-mindedness, sound judgment, good sense, sound reasoning.**

Passages where the Greek Words are Used!

Titus 2:2—"*That the older men be sober (discreet), reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience:*"

1 Tim. 2:9—"*In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation (discreetness)....*"

1 Tim. 2:15—"*Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control (discreetness).*"

Rom. 12:3—"*For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.*"

Acts 26:25—"*But he said, 'I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason (discreetness).'*"

2 Cor. 5:13—"*For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; or if we are of sound maind (sober-minded), it is for you."*

Titus 2:4-5—"*That they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, home-makers, good, obedient to their own husbands....."*

A general definition of the use of these two Greek Words would be as follows: "*To be of sound mind, in one's right mind, to exercise self-control, to put a moderate estimate upon one's self, think of one's self soberly, to curb one's passions, be of sound mind.*" Young men or women are not often grave or sober-minded enough to care for grave responsibilities—especially in the spiritual realm. You do not think of a sober-minded person being silly or childish in his ways. This does not forbid humor or wit. Decisions must be made with gravity, not flippancy. a sober-minded person should be able to recognize the dangers to their soul of false-teachers and avoid such people (Rom. 6:17). This type of person shows "seasoning" in his thinking, judgments, and convictions. He would also be free from extremes. He or she shows the kind of judgment that indicates forethought (thinking things through ahead of time). While there is a time and place for levity, there is always the time for safe, steady, serious thinking. This type of person should do well in critical situations. There is a dignity about the bearing of such a person—yet, he is humble. Such a person shows **sound judgment, prudent thinking and actions, moderation, and discreetness.**

Concluding Thoughts

We are looking for the "ideal" Christian; and, here is one of their QUALITIES—"Sober" or "sober-minded." If you are looking for someone that is dependable and trustworthy, this is the one you are looking for! If men are to be **sober-minded** before they are appointed as ELDERS or SHEPHERDS over the flock of God, then this has to be a quality that describes the "ideal" person!

Questions for Discussion

1. What connection does the two Greek words have with strong drink?
2. What do you think is the best English word to use to translate the two Greek words?
3. Would "series-minded" be the same as "sober-minded?"
4. Why should older men be encouraged to be sober?
5. How are women to show their soberness (discreetness or moderation)?
6. Is reason a good translation in Acts 26:25?
7. Does humor and wit have a place with a "sober-minded" person?
8. Why would such a person be consider an "ideal" Christian?

Lesson Five "Good Behavior"

"Of good behavior.....Just.....Holy"

(1 Tim. 3:2, Tit. 1:8)

In this lesson we will combine some terms that would seem to fit together well—as you see above! Occasionally, when we want to give recognition to a person that we perceive as being outstanding, we will use this general expression—*"That person's behavior is very good!"* Instead of picking out one or more qualities in the person's life, we generalize. We will first look at the generalized statement and then at the two terms that may be considered more specific.

"Of Good Behavior"

First, it is interesting to notice the Greek word **Kosmion** that is translated *"Of good behavior."* This is the Greek term for the Universe (Kosmos). It's general meaning is *"To put in order, arrange, make ready, prepare, to adorn, to embellish with honor, gain honor, well-arranged, seemly, modest, decently."* The context would determine how it is used and its meaning. When it has reference to a person's life, the following expressions could be used:

1. Well-disciplined and orderly (decorous).
2. Well-mannered, well-behaved.
3. Orderly in dress and habits.
4. Kind, considerate, with his inward life corresponding to his outward bearing.
5. Be an example in all that promotes the welfare of mankind.
6. Conformed to order—regular—orderly course or plan—observes order, obedient, quiet, peaceable, not unruly, dignified, and unruffled.

To have the proper influence on the lives of others, a person must be orderly, and his work habits should be regular, proficient, and making progress. It is to impress people that the person knows what he is doing and where he is going. He is not slipshod in his dealings. Take note of the following admonitions:

1 Thess. 2:10—*"You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe."*

2 Thess. 3:7—*"For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you."*

1 Pet. 2:12—*"Having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation."*

1 Tim. 2:9—*"In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation.....but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works."*

A Just Life

The word "just" is used to describe not only an attitude toward others, but actions as well. This Greek word (Kikaion) is defined as *"one who renders to each his dues or passes just judgment on others whether expressed in words or shown by the manner of dealing with them."* This person is fair and impartial in his dealings with others. He allows no corruption to sway him. This person is one in whom the people can have confidence.

1. He will not push to the forefront his own kin or special friends just because of the close ties.
2. He is one who will give no occasion for criticism and will make a special effort to avoid it.
3. He is one to whom any can take a problem and feel confident that his decision will be as close to that of Christ as any man's in the congregation can be.
4. He demonstrates fairness in his dealings with others and is not controlled by prejudice, passion, or selfishness.
5. If discipline must take place with his own family, he will be among the first to do so.

Passages that express this concept:

1 Pet. 2:23—*"Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously."*

Tit. 2:12—*"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age."*

Luke 23:41—*"And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong."*

A Holy Life

The word "holy" is used to describe a life that is lived *"undefiled by sin, free from wickedness, religiously observing every moral obligation, pure, holy, and pious."* It generally denotes a life lived free of defilement of sin. This person would have a close relationship with God and a devotion and consecration to God and shows it by his obedient life. This concept is very similar to the word "blameless." The importance of a "holy" life is seen in the following passages.

Heb. 12:14—*"Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord."*

1 Tim. 2:8—*"I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."*

1 Pet. 1:16—*"But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy.'"*

1 Cor. 3:16-17—*"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are."*

Certainly, a "holy" person is an "ideal" person! And so is a "just" person or one whose life is characterized by "good behavior!" Those who will not live this kind of life have no hope in the Day of Judgment!

Questions for Discussion

1. What is meant by the expression "No one is good, but One, that is God?" (Matt. 19:16)

2. Why is the word "Kosmos" used to identify our universe?

3. Is a person that is "well-disciplined and orderly" considered to be living a "good life?"

4. How is this Greek word (Kosmion) used with reference to godly women?

5. Who could be referred to as a "just" person?

6. Who has given us a good example of justness?

7. How would you describe a "holy life?"

8. Are "unholy" people lost?

Lesson Six "Hospitable"

"Hospitable.....Good report from without"
(1 Tim. 3:3, 7, 9)

This lesson will be combining some thoughts that are taken from 1 Timothy 3 that should fit together fairly well. The Home and the Family environment are very important in every society! It is the basis for all good societies! When the Home and Family are destroyed or undermined, that society is heading toward hard times. "Hospitality" is one of the desirable things that the home has to offer in our society. And, it is usually true that one's reputation in a community is judged by the activities of that particular Home.

Given to Hospitality

The ASV translates the Greek word (Philoxenon) *"given to hospitality."* The two words literally are—*"lover of strangers!"* It is to show a concern for people who are traveling and need a place to go—that is, to open up your home and be generous to your guests. It is the kind and generous reception and entertainment of strangers or guests in one's home. It is to be free with what one has been blessed with—to share the comforts of life with another. It is a way to show concern for people.

2 Cor. 12:15 _____

Phil. 2:19-21 _____

Luke's Gospel has an unusual statement that Jesus made in regards to inviting people into your home: *"When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just."* Jesus, obviously, is not forbidding us to have people over to our houses for a meal; but, he is saying that those who are blessed are those who extend hospitality to those who cannot repay you. This is true hospitality! There is also a strong emphasis given in Gal. 6:10: *"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."* Other passages that deal with this concept:

Heb. 13:2 _____

Rom. 12:13 _____

1 Jn. 3:17-18 _____

A Good Report from Without

Jesus stated that His followers are like "salt" and "light" in their community! (Matt. 5:13-16). One of the ways that our community can get to "know" us is what they see and hear about us in our home situations. When the early Church had a problem of the "Grecian" widows being neglected in the daily distribution (Acts 6:1-6), the Apostles told the Church to choose from their midst seven men who were: *"of good reputation and full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom"* to take care of the problem. They were appointed and the problem solved. The emphasis here is to appoint men in the Church who have good reputation among Christians. But what about the person's reputation outside the Church? Does the Christian's life command respect from non-Christians? How is his influence with those in his community and at work? Do his friends, neighbors, or fellow-workers respect him or her?

How Translated?

The following versions give their "best shot" at translating the idea of this phrase:

RHM—*"Honorable testimony also from them who are without."*

ABUV—*"Good testimony from those outside."*

TCNT—*"Well spoken of by outsiders."*

BAS—*"Good name among those outside the Church."*

BER—*"Favorable reputation."*

GSPD—*"Man of good standing with outsiders."*

KNOX—*"Bear a good character, too, in the world's eyes."*

If a person's reputation outside the Church is not good, he may do harm to the Church because of his hypocrisy. When a person is *"Nice to all at Church, but not on the job;"* it might be wise to watch him. If the person is sincere, his reputation will be good both in and out of the Church.

Concluding Thoughts

We are again reminded that we are looking for the "ideal" Christian as described in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. We are looking at Christians who open up their homes and extend kindness and comfort to those who have needs. We are looking at Christians who live their religion sincerely before all. If people are open and can be influenced towards Christ, it certainly will be by these we have been describing in this lesson.

Questions for Discussion

1. What does it mean that a person is "given to hospitality?"
2. Is it okay to invite friends or relatives into our homes for a meal?
3. Why do you feel that "hospitality" has been placed into this listing of desired qualities?
4. Why should we invite the "poor, maimed, lame, and blind" into our homes for a meal?
5. What is pure and undefiled religion?
6. How does a Christian influence others? What are some characteristics that he/she must have to be effective?
7. Could you improve on the translation: "*A good report from without?*"
8. Will a Christian's influence always be good in and out of the Church?
9. What is it, about these two concepts, that makes a person an "ideal" Christian?

Lesson Seven "Not Covetous"

"Not greedy for money.....not Covetous.....Not greedy for base gain"
(1 Tim. 3:3, 7; Tit. 1:7)

It may be of interest to notice that the listing of qualities in 1 Tim. 3:2-7 has two phrases that seem to be similar:

(v. 3)—*"Not greedy of base gain"*

(v. 3)—*"Not loving money"*

However, the first expression is found two more times in 1 Tim. 3:7 and Titus 1:7. This gives a strong emphasis on the issue of **money** and **possessions** and how we are to view them. Please also notice that 1 Tim. 3:3, 8 and Titus 1:7 all use the same Greek word (**aischokerdes**—"Not greedy of base gain"), while 1 Tim.3:3 uses a different Greek word (**Aphilarguron**—"Not loving money" also translated—"Not Covetous"). We will look at each of these Greek words and see how they are used here in Timothy and Titus, but elsewhere as well.

Aischokerdes

Let's look first at how the various translations understand how it should be translated: (KJV)—Not Greedy of, not given to, base gain; (ABUV)—Greedy of base gain; (RHM)—Not seeking by base means; (NOR)—Not addicted to dishonest gain; (TCNT)—Questionable money-making; (NEB)—No money-grubber; (MOF)—Addicted to pilfering. Thayer's Lexicon states: "Eager for base gain." The idea seems to be as follows:

1. One who gains his money dishonestly;
2. One who does not earn his money;
3. One's whose life is set on gaining material things;
4. One who thinks that life consist in the abundance of things possessed (Lk. 12:15);

The emphasis can be seen in other passages that deal with this topic:

1. One who is putting his emphasis on material things;
2. One who lays up for themselves treasures on earth and not laying up treasures for themselves in heaven (Matt. 6:19-21);
3. One who does not put the Kingdom of Heaven first in his life (Matt. 6:33);
4. One who is serving Mammon and not God (Matt. 6:24).

On the positive side of this issue:

1. One who recognizes his stewardship over possessions (1 Cor. 4:2);
2. One who cannot be bribed—he is not a mercenary (1 Sam. 8:3;12:3);
3. One who is skilled in making friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness (Lk. 16:9);
4. One who is not greedy or selfish and is opposed to the miser or the person who hoards up for himself;
5. One who does not secure his possessions under false pretense or dishonest means.

Aphilarguron

This Greek word is actually three words: A (not); Philo (love); Arguron (silver). Please notice the way the Translators have rendered this Greek word: (ASV)—No lover of money; (ABUV)—Not a money-lover; (RHM)—Not fond of money; (BER)—Not after money; (CON)—Liberal; (KNOX)—Not grasping; (PHI)—Must not be fond of money-grabbing. The NKJV translated the Greek word—*"Not Covetous."* There is another Greek word that is translated "Covetous" (**Pleonektes**) (1 Cor. 5:10; 5:11; 6:10, Col. 3:5; etc.). The translators evidently consider these two Greek words very similar in meaning. The passage in Colossians (3:5) is unusual in that it considers such a person the same as an idolater. In a general sense, a person could covet not only money, but flattery, farms, furniture, houses, automobile, livestock, etc.

A person can show by his liberality that he is not grasping after money. He does not put his trust in money. His goal in life is not to possess possessions just to have possessions. He is not anxious for money, nor does he put possessing possessions before service to God. He is more concerned about possessing spiritual wealth and its blessings than material wealth and the luxuries it brings. Greed is a miserable driver and the one who is caught up in the desire for such is to be pitied.

It is interesting to notice that to be "greedy for money" or "covetous" is listed with such sins as "fornication, adultery, drunkenness, Idolaters, homosexuals, thieves, revilers, and extortionists." (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Inspiration tells the Church to have no company with an unrepentant Christian who is a covetous person—not even to eat with them (1 Cor. 5:11).

Concluding Thoughts

As terrible as "greed" is or "covetousness" is—it seems that it is hard for people to understand what these terms mean and how to apply it in their lives. Have you ever heard someone confess that they were guilty of such? Whatever these terms mean—the "ideal" Christian is the opposite of such! He has put off the old things of the world and put on the new things as a Christian. His Master is not Mammon, but God and he shows it by his outlook and actions. He has learn how to live the "good life" that God provides for us.

Questions for Discussion

1. What else can man "covet" besides "money?"
2. What does it mean to "trust in money?"
3. What does it mean to be "greedy after base gain?"
4. What would be another word for "love" of money?
5. How does a person show that he is more concerned about laying up money in heaven than in laying up money on earth?
6. Does it matter how a man gains his money? Explain your answer.
7. If a Christian is "greedy after base gain" or "covetous," how should we treat him?
8. What does Jesus call the man who was not rich toward God in Luke 12?
9. Is there any difference in a Christian being "greedy for base gain" and one who does not make good use of the money entrusted to him? Explain your answer.

Lesson Eight "Gentle"

"But gentle....patient"

(1 Tim. 3:3)

I presume that you are getting the idea by now that "word studies" are not exactly easy to deal with at times. Instead of there being one word for a concept—sometimes there are more than one. Also, there seems to be overlapping of words into other areas. This is one of the main problems of communication—being sure that the other person understands the concepts you are trying to portray to him or her. The old King James Version translates this Greek word as "Patience;" while the new King James Version translates this Greek word as "Gentle." Notice the following differences in translations: (ASV)—gentle; (ABUV)—forbearing; (RHM)—considerate; (NEB)—forbearing disposition; (BER)—genial; (CON)—peaceable. The Greek word is **Epi-eikes** which is defined generally as: "**suitable, equitable, fair, mild, gentle, yielding, and pliant.**" A gentle person is one who can bear burdens without anger, who does not easily give up under discouragement, who is steady and steadfast, and who bears up under hardships—which helps to build confidence in God.

Passages where the Greek word is used

Please notice the consistency of translation in the NKJV of this Greek word, but also notice the other terms that are used with this Greek word. It is in very good company!

Phil. 4:5—"*Let your gentleness be known to all men.*"

Tit. 3:2—"*to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.*"

James 3:17—"*But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.*"

1 Pet. 2:18—"*Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.*"

2 Cor. 10:1—"**Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you.**"

**Jesus' gentleness is demonstrated in Phil. 2:5-8; Jn. 8:1-11; 1 Pet. 2:19-24.

Matt. 11:29—"*Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle (meek) and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*"

**This is a different Greek word that the New King James Version translates "gentle." (Praos—meek). This word is translated "lowly" in Matt. 21:5. It is translated "gentle" in 1 Pet. 3:4. It is translated "meek" in Matt. 5:5. There seems to be a "kinship with these two words!

1 Thess. 2:7—"*But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children.*"

**This also is a different Greek word (epioi—placid, gentle)

General Comments

Following are comments made about this term and its meaning or use:

1. One who is able to show sympathy, understanding, and forbearance.
2. Helps the weak.....walks and talks with others.
3. Considerate—with a wholesome regard for the feelings of another, as a mother for her child.
4. Because of patience, he can encourage others in their troubles.
5. One whom people will come to him for advice and counsel.
6. One who helps to keep troubles down in the home, church, society.
7. Having an enduring trust that God will work out that which is good from the very worst, which enables him to be composed, kind, and compassionate to those with whom he works or associates.
8. One able to take unkindness, as well as give kindness.
9. Not violent, arrogant, quick-tempered, or quarrelsome.
10. One who is moderate, yielding, and lenient.
11. He does not compromise truth or principle.
12. Gentleness is the tender action of unselfish love.
13. Jesus dealt tenderly with people in general, but strongly with others.
14. Gentleness is a noble, generous spirit with a gracious attitude and understanding and sympathy.
15. One who shows moderation, forbearance, and considerateness.
16. One who shows his concern for the well-being of others by equity and fairness.

Concluding Thoughts

There obviously is a kinship between gentleness and patience—yet, they are in reality two different words that carry their own thoughts. If we were to offer a distinction between them, it may be:

Patience—Long suffering, endurance, and waiting on God.

Gentle—Kind, loving, understanding, and concern shown.

It may be hard to show gentleness without being patient with people. God is "longsuffering" with sinful and rebellious man not desiring that any should perish (2 Pet. 3:9). God is also patient with us in our weaknesses, sins, and failures. Patience could be passive, while Gentleness is active.

However, there is a time to be patient with people and also a time to be gentle; but, there is also a time to take the proper action to correct a situation. Yes, God is patient with us. Jesus is meek (gentle or lowly); but, in the Day of Judgment, proper actions will have to be taken by God to deal with the rebellious and disobedient. God's patience and Gentleness is designed to bring us to repentance; but, when repentance does not come—disaster follows! (2 Cor. 5:10-11; Heb. 9:27; Matt. 25:41-46). We need patience and gentleness to be shown to us; but let them both have their proper fruit in our lives!

Questions for Discussion

1. Why do translators use different words for the same Greek word?

2. Is it possible to translate a Greek word by the same English word in every context?

3. What are some terms (words) that are used in the same context with gentleness?

4. From the list of "General Comments" which one gives the best understanding of "gentleness?"

5. How would you distinguish between patience and gentleness?

6. Why is God patient and gentle with us?

7. Will this patient and gentle God also place us in a state of "everlasting punishment?"

Lesson Nine "Not Violent....not quarrelsome"

"Not violent....not quarrelsome....not quick-tempered"

(1 Tim. 3:3, Tit. 1:7)

We have chosen to combine three phrases or words that seem to fit into a similar category: not violent, quarrelsome, or quick-tempered. These are the words that the NKJV uses in 1 Tim. 3:3, and Tit. 1:7. But, as you might expect, the various translators are not consistent in their use of the same words. We will look briefly at all three phrases or words and see how the translators treat the three different Greek words.

Not Violent (Plek-tes)

This Greek word is translated in the following ways: (NASB)—not pugnacious; (AMP)—no combative; (WEY)—not given to blows; (BER)—not a fist-fighter; (PHI)—not violent; (RHM)—not ready to wound; (CIB)—not given to brawls; (LAM)—Not too ready to strike with his hand; (NOR)—not be ever ready to come to blows. Both Timothy and Titus give this quality (not violent) in their listing. The old KJV used the expression "no striker!" A general definition of the term is: *"A bruiser, ready with a blow; a pugnacious, contentious, and quarrelsome person."* This person is able to keep his strength and restraint in balance. Care and tenderness are not compatible with blows. The "ideal" Christian is not "trigger-happy!" One who does not lash out at others with physical blows or harsh words. A violent person is one who strives to force his will and ways on others who disagree with him. Admonitions given that would seem to fit this concept:

1 Tim. 6:3-5—*"If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself."* (See also Tit. 3:9-11).

2 Tim. 2:23—*"But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife."*

The kingdom of God is not ruled by a sword of steel (Matt. 26:51-52), but by the "golden rule" (Matt. 7:12)!

Not Quarrelsome (Amachon)

This Greek word is translated in the following ways: (ABUV)—adverse to strife; (RHM)—adverse to contention; (ASV)—not contentious; (WEY)—not pugnacious; (NEB)—avoiding quarrels; (BER)—conciliatory; (KNOX)—not quarrelsome; (PHI)—not be a controversialist; (KJV)—not a brawler.

A general definition of **Amachon** would be: *"Pertaining to or fond of contention or strife; disputations; quarrelsome; as a contentious person."* This person is one who does not quarrel noisily, loudly, angrily, contentiously; but rather is one who loves peace and pursues it—a

peacemaker, not a divider. One who is quarrelsome usually tears down more than all others can build up. He thinks that the only way to solve problems is by force, loud hollowing, or arguing. A contentious man is known for loving strife, disorder and quarrelling.

Not Quick-Tempered (Hor-gilon)

This Greek word is translated in the following ways: (WMS)—Not quick-tempered; (MOF)—Not hot-tempered; (NEB)—Not short-tempered; (KNOX)—Not a quarrelsome man; (BECK)—does not get angry easily; (BAS)—not quickly moved to wrath; (KJV)—not soon angry. A general definition of **Horgilon** would be: *"Prone to anger, irascible, soon angry."* Passages that can identify with these words:

James 1:19-20—*"So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God."*

Eph. 4:26-27—*"Be angry, and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil."*

Could you talk calmly and kindly to a person who was calling you every vile epithet that his mind could furnish his tongue? Could you hold your temper, even though he slanders you and the church and everything good and holy? If so, you are the "ideal" Christian! A hot-headed, impetuous man cannot judge coolly, nor handle difficult situations and problems with patient calmness. The "ideal" Christian avoids things that causes strife (1 Tim. 1:4; 4:7; 6:20-21; 2 Tim. 2:16; Tit. 1:14; 3:9). He will obviously not strive to "lord" it over people nor use physical force to get his way (1 Pet. 5:3; 3 Jn. 9-10).

Concluding Thoughts

God's plan is to change us into the image of His Son—to be more like God than like the Devil! (Eph. 4:31-32; Phil. 2:5; Matt. 5:48). The "ideal" Christian is one who is learning how to properly treat his fellow-man—and especially his brothers and sisters in Christ (Jn. 13:34-35). This person is bringing him or herself into the right way of living with other people (1 Jn. 3:7). They are learning to "turn the other cheek," "to go the second mile," "not to return evil for evil," but rather to return "good" for "evil!" The "ideal" Christian is one who Places others before himself (Phil. 2:3-4), rather than selfishly wanting his own way all the time. He is a promoter of peace, a positive outlook on life, and great faith in the God who fulfills His promises!

Questions for Discussion

1. What are the three Greek words that was studied in this lesson?

2. Why is it important to become acquainted (in some sense) with which Greek word is being used?

3. What does it mean to say that someone is "trigger happy?"

4. Why is it so important not to have quarrels in our midst?

5. What helps to keep a group unified?

6. Why is the Kingdom of God not to be ruled by the "Sword"?

7. How would you define:
 - a) Plektes—

 - b) Amachon—

 - c) Horgilon—

8. For what is a contentious man known?

9. Why is it important to be "swift to hear?"

Lesson Ten "Not Self-Willed"

"Not self-willed.....Not being puffed up with Pride"

(Tit. 1:7; 1 Tim. 3:6)

When people are put into positions of responsibility before they are sufficiently ready in mind, heart, and life—there is a danger of this person taking advantage of his position to get his way. In the business world, many seem to get by with such because they have authority behind them. But in the church and in the home, it is important that the issue of authority is not over-stressed and taken advantage of in either place. "Self-willed" people want their way, resent and deride others, and sometimes stubbornly push to get their way to the dividing and even the destruction of the souls of people. Such people will follow their own opinions regardless of the consequences to the church or to others in the church. They will view their conclusions as infallible and will demand their way. Such a person will refuse to cooperate unless he is pleased and generally thinks that the whole church should center in him and his thinking.

Not self-Willed (Au-thade)

The following translations have been given to this Greek word: (WMS)—not stubborn; (MOF)—not be presumptuous; (NEB)—not overbearing; (KNOX)—not obstinate; (LBECK)—shouldn't do as he pleases; (BAS)—ready to give way to others; (KJV)—not self-willed; (NKJV)—not self-willed. A general definition of this Greek word would be: *"self-pleasing, self-willed, arrogant."* The following thoughts have been given by various writers to try to capture the idea of this Greek word:

1. This person is governed by his own selfish will and is not concerned about the wishes or thinking of others.
2. He is self-sufficient—presuming on themselves.
3. They follow their own opinions—which no authority can induce them to relinquish.
4. They are usually hard to reason with—not easily entreated.
5. It is to think of one's opinion as infallible.
6. He is often thought of as a "boss or bust" kind of person.
7. He refuses to cooperate unless he is pleased.
8. A self-willed person will often force a meaning to Scripture to justify his ideas.

2 Pet. 2:10

Much of the responsibilities of leadership in the church deal in areas of opinion and judgment, and not "doctrine." There is no room for compromise on doctrine, but there obviously is room for compromise in the areas of opinion and judgment. The person who is "not self-willed" is characterized in the following ways:

1. His views are not considered as infallible—willingness to yield to others when needed.
2. He is not one who is hard to reason with, but is easily entreated.
3. He is one who regards the rights, claims, feelings, and judgment of others.
4. He is always ready to listen with an open mind—to consider the judgment of others in all matters.

5. He is willing to give in instead of demanding his own way.
6. He would be looked upon as a meek person.
7. He does not do things through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind.

Phil. 2:3-4

We believe that 2 Pet. 2:6-15 gives a good picture of a self-willed person. Evaluate the list of things found in these verses describing an extreme false teacher:

1. Arrogant—self-assured.
2. Resist God's will in their lives.
3. Filthy conduct—lawless deeds.
4. Walk in the lust of uncleanness.
5. Despise authority.
6. They are presumptuous.
7. They are self-willed.
8. Not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries.
9. Speak evil of what they do not understand.
10. Count it a pleasure to carouse in the daytime—in their own deceptions.
11. Having eyes full of adultery.
12. Cannot cease from sin.
13. They entice unstable souls.
14. Their hearts are trained in covetous practices.
15. They love the wages of unrighteousness.

The Root-Problem is PRIDE!

One of the listings in 1 Timothy 3:6 points out the danger of pride on the part of one who is appointed as a leader in the Lord's Church. A novice (someone immature) will be in danger of getting puffed up with pride over being appointed to such a responsibility. However, from the statements above, it would seem that even older people who are "self-willed" would have the same problem of being puffed up with pride!

Concluding Thoughts

The wise man states: *"By pride comes nothing but strife, but with the well-advised is wisdom."* (Prov. 13:10). He also adds: *"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."* (Prov. 16:18). Truly, the "ideal" Christian is not a person who is self-willed or full of pride and haughtiness. The home, the church, nor society needs such people in positions of leadership.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is an outstanding mark of a "self-will" person?
2. What translation of this Greek word (authade) do you like in the Versions listed?
3. Do you feel or believe that you are a "self-willed" person?
4. In what AREA are most decisions made in the home and church—judgment or Doctrine?
5. In what AREA does Phil. 2:3-4 apply—judgment or Doctrine?
6. What stands out in your mind about the things describing a false teacher (2 Pet. 2:6-15)?
7. Do you believe that pride is at the root of a "self-willed" person?
8. How do you deal with a "self-willed" person?

Lesson Eleven "Capable Teacher"

"Able to teach.....not a novice.....holding fast the faithful word."

(1 Tim. 3:2, 6; Tit. 1:9)

James gives an admonition concerning those who would be teachers—**DON'T!** Well, it is not quite that bad—*"Let not many of you become teachers...."* (James 3:1) His reasons are obvious:

1. Such will receive a stricter judgment;
2. All people stumble in word;
3. The tongue is little, but it can create a lot of troubles;
4. It can be an unruly evil, full of deadly poison;
5. Out of the same mouth proceed blessings and cursings.
6. And, because people who do not have their tongue in control as they should, they can become a liability rather than an asset (Jas. 3:8; 1:26).

However, the Lord wants Teachers in His Church! He has planned for such! (Eph. 4:11). People need to be taught the Gospel and all that Jesus has commanded (Matt. 28:18-20). So, every Christian should want to prepare him or herself to teach others to some degree or another. The "ideal" Christian is one capable of teaching others by word or example or both—as well as privately or publicly (in the case of men) (1 Tim. 4:12).

Able to Teach (Di-dak-ti-kon)

This Greek word above is translated in the following ways in different Versions: (CON)—skilled in teaching; (WEY)—with a gift for teaching; (BER)—qualified to teach; (NEB)—a good teacher; (BAS)—a ready teacher. The idea seems to be that a person needs to have sufficient knowledge, experience, and maturity to be effective in implanting the Word of God in the hearts of others. Translators use the words: skillful, qualified, capable, suitable, appropriate; inclined, and disposed. Paul's Letter to Titus tells us how qualified—*"Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict."* (Tit. 1:9).

Anyone who desires sufficiently to be a teacher and will study and prepare themselves can develop the ability to teach. Obviously, some will be better teachers than others because of several factors—some of which are beyond our control. By all means, they can set an example before others by being good students of the Word of God.

The "ideal" teacher would be:

1. One who is knowledgeable enough to overcome error and sin in the church with strong and sound teaching.
2. One who can convince and convict those who honestly want to know God's truth (2 Tim. 4:2).
3. One who is not faint-hearted or weak-willed, but has the courage to face insubordinate men, empty talkers, and deceivers with God's truth.
4. One Who can be gentle to all and humbly correct those who are in opposition to God's Truth (2 Tim. 2:24-25).

Not a Novice (neo-phu-tes)

The idea seems to be that the "ideal" Christian would not be a new convert to Christ or a beginner in the faith. However, we have an insight to this concept in **Acts 14:20-23**:

1. Paul and Barnabas spent possibly, at the most, a year with some Churches in Galatia.
2. The Churches were made up of both Jews and Gentiles.
3. Yet, they had men qualified to meet the requirements of an Elder in all of these Churches.
4. These men were probably converted from "false religions," or "Judaism," or good moral people, but not connected with a religion.
5. The Apostle may have laid hands on some of the men to give them miraculous gifts that would help them in a leadership role.

The idea is that an immature person would have a struggle in maintaining a modest bearing with the responsibility of being an Elder. There would be the danger of becoming vain and conceited. It would seem that it is the inexperienced and incapable people being talked about because of their immaturity.

To be lifted up with pride is to become puffed up, conceit, and have too high opinion of one's self. There is a grave danger that the person could fall into the same condemnation that the Devil experienced.

Concluding Thoughts

It would seem obvious that the more mature, knowledgeable, and experienced in life a person is that the better teacher he will make—especially if he will **hold fast to the faithful word** that he has been correctly taught. A person's maturity comes from how he was taught and trained as a youth and how honestly he has lived up to his conscience in his life before he became a Christian. The teachings of the Word of God only makes him stronger and more correctly mature in his thinking and actions.

The "ideal" Christian will certainly show maturity in his thinking and actions. But that does not guarantee that he has reached ultimate maturity. It should be the goal of every Christian to strive to attain unto **"the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."** (Eph. 4:13). We do not believe that a person has to reach this fullness in order to be an "ideal" Christian. What do you think? More important, what are we doing about it?

Questions for Discussion

1. In what sense should we understand James' admonition—"*be not many of you teachers?*"

2. What are some possible reasons for the above statement of Scripture?

3. Why are teachers need in the Church?

4. Can all Christians be teachers?

5. What does the statement—"*Able to teach*"—indicate?

6. How qualified should a man be to teacher?

7. Can a "novice" teach his or her children?

8. How would you describe an "ideal" teacher?

9. How could men be appointed as Elders in a congregation after only a year's time in the church?

Lesson Twelve "Lover of Good"

"A lover of what is good.....Reverent.....Pure Conscience"

(1 Tim. 3:8, 9; Tit. 1:8)

We are at the end of our study in this lesson on the "Ideal Christian" as portrayed in the qualities required of Elders and Deacons (1 Tim. 3; Tit. 1). If men who are to be appointed as Leaders in the Lord's Church need to meet these requirements; surely, we could call them the "ideal persons" in the Church. We are using this expression in the sense of a higher challenge to be met by God's people...whether they are men or women. We will look at three additional expressions or terms that indicate this challenge in a person's life.

Lover of what is good (Phila-ga-thos)

If a person does not love that which is good, it is likely that he will not strive to be a good person himself. A person is known by the kind of company he keeps. If he is a lover of what is good, he will see the company of good people. Please look at the different ways this expression is used in the Scriptures:

1. "Lover of God" (*philotheos*) (2 Tim. 3:4)
2. "Lover of Strangers or Hospitality" (*philozenos*) (Tit. 1:8)
3. "Lover of Self" (*philautos*) (2 Tim. 3:2)
4. "Lover of Pleasure" (*philedonos*) (2 Tim. 3:4)

This love is to be without hypocrisy—It is to be Sincere!(Rom. 12:9). A lover of what is Good will have to be willing to "**Test all things; hold fast what is good**" and "**Abstain from every form of evil.**" (1 Thess. 5:21-22). Such a person delights in goodness. His concern, interest, and support are behind that which is good and that which accomplishes good in the Kingdom of Heaven and among men. He or she is one who is big-hearted and benevolent—willing to see and appreciate the good in all people. But, he or she will also hate every evil way, oppose the evil, the wrong, and the wicked ways. Such a person takes a lead in good, seeks for good, and encourages goodness in others.

One of the qualities for Deacons is the expression: "**not double-tongued.**" (1 Tim. 3:8). The Greek expression for this is (**dilogos**). This literally means to say the same thing twice or be given to repetition. But in this context, it is like a person who says one thing to one person and quite another thing to another person. We say that he is doubled-tongued or two-faced. A similar expression is found in James 1:8; 4:8. It indicates that a person can't make up his mind which thing to choose—righteousness or wickedness. A lover of what is good has made his choice! He is not hesitate, vacillating, or doubting; but knows the direction in which he or she will go or the company with which they will choose to associate.

Reverent (Semnous)

There are more than one Greek word that is translated "reverence" or "reverent." The above Greek word is found in at least three different places:

- ◇ Deacons are to be "reverent" (1 Tim. 3:8).
- ◇ Wives are to be "reverent" (1 Tim. 3:11).
- ◇ Olden Men are to be "reverent" (Tit. 2:2).

The idea of the word is—one who is serious and grave in attitude and life. One who is highly regarded because of his life. It seems to combine a sense of gravity with also a sense of dignity. Can you picture an "ideal" Christian that is not serious or show gravity about life and its challenges?

Pure Conscience (Ka-thara Su-nei-de-sei)

The third expression that we wanted to look at in this lesson is a "Pure Conscience." This is emphasizing the need for the person who is appointed as a Deacon that he must ***"hold the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience."*** (1 Tim. 3:9). The term "conscience" literary means—*"a knowing with."* It is the witness of one's conduct by his conscience. Obviously, the purpose of the conscience is to help determine what is good or bad. One who is a lover of what is good would determine this by his conscience (or by the teachings of the Word of God). Notice that the emphasis is on a "pure conscience!" The Apostle Paul gives us some insights to the work of the conscience in his inspired writings:

1. Men should live in all good conscience (Acts 23:1);
2. Men should strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men (Acts 24:16);
3. Men should avoid having a weak and defiled conscience (1 Cor. 8:7);
4. Men should strive to have a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. (1 Tim. 1:5);
5. Men should avoid allowing their conscience to be seared (1 Tim. 4:2);
6. Men should strive to have a good conscience towards God (1 Pet. 3:21).

Concluding Thoughts

It would seem to be obvious that if a person is a lover of what is good that he will need to be of a serious and grave mind and have a conscience that is pure and good in the sight of God and man. It is easy to see why that these qualities are emphasized for those who are to be leaders in the Church to have such. We would thus conclude that the "ideal" Christian would have these qualities in his or her life.

Questions for Discussion

- 1. Just because Elders or Deacons should possess all of these qualities, does that mean that the rest of us do not have to have them?**
- 2. What is the difference in being a "lover of good" and a "lover of good men (people)?"**
- 3. Is this "agape" love?**
- 4. What four other things or persons can we be "lovers of" (from Scriptures)?**
- 5. Why is it important for a Christian to test (prove) all things?**
- 6. What is a "double-tongued" person?**
- 7. What is a "two-faced" person?**
- 8. What three groups are encouraged to be "reverent?"**
- 9. How does a person have a pure or good conscience?**

