

*Important  
Questions  
For  
Youth*

**12 Lessons**

Prepared by:  
**PAUL E. CANTRELL**

2006



# **Important Questions For Youth!**

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Lesson One

***“Youth in Search of a Guide for Their Life”***

(Joshua 24:12-15)

Joshua succeeded Moses as the leader of the Israelite Nation upon Moses' death. The Nation was assembled before him so that Joshua could impress upon Israel how good and gracious God had been to them and how abundantly God had blessed them. But he was also trying to impress upon them the necessity of facing up to a choice for their lives:

- a) Whether to serve the gods of their fathers before the flood;
- b) Whether to serve the gods of the people in whose land they now dwelt;
- c) Or, whether to serve the true God of Heaven!

He then clearly stated his choice: ***“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”***

Because man was created as a creature of choice he is constantly faced with making choices. There are obviously some things that you and I have had no choice in:

- a) I did not choose to be born into this world—my parents made that decision for me!
- b) I did not choose my particular family or circumstances either!
- c) I did not choose to have my particular body or looks as a person!

But....I do have a choice as to whether I will be resentful, angry, and cop out because of who I am or my circumstances in life; or, whether I will accept these *“facts of life”* and make the best of them!

I am a free moral agent—I have the power of choice! Every day of my life requires that I exercise this power. We have seen that our choices not only affect my own life, but sometimes the lives of others as well. We, thus, realize that for many reasons we need to make our choices wisely. In view of this fact—I need to ask the question—*“To what or to where or to whom do I turn to find help in making the wisest choices? What can I use as a reliable standard to build my life upon?”*

***The First Realization:***

**I NEED TO REALIZE THAT I AM NOT ALONE IN THIS SEARCH!**

**All mankind is in search for such a standard!** All of searching for something that will guarantee their happiness and well-being! However, this search is not all the same in every person. Some search sloppily, half-heartedly, and without a sense of urgency. Some just do not really fully realize the outcome of their efforts. Fortunately, there are those that do search eagerly, sincerely, and seriously. They do realize that the outcome of their efforts can be serious!

**This search is especially true of young people approaching adulthood!** They will soon be on their own and are realizing that they need something that is dependable as a standard. To you, this lesson has been designed to try to impress upon you the deadly serious nature of this search. Much is at stake:

- a) Your personal happiness and well-being is at stake.
- b) The happiness and well-being of people you know and love can be affected.
- c) The choices you make now will affect your life in the future.

It is very important to learn early that there is a basic law of “God” that we see all around us: ***“What a man sows that he will also reap.”*** (Galatians 6:7-8). All human actions have consequences that are either good or bad or possibly both! When we violate the physical “laws” of “Nature,” we suffer the consequences! But if this is true in the physical, what about in the spiritual realm—for man is more than just a physical body (Matthew 4:4). The wise man in Ecclesiastes gives us an insight as to why people break God’s spiritual laws: ***“Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”*** (8:11). But even though the consequences may not be experienced immediately, God’s word reminds us that there is a day of reckoning coming (Hebrews 9:27). Our choices can not only affect us here and now, but in the existence hereafter (Matthew 10:28; 19:28).

**A Second Realization:**  
**EVERYONE WILL MAKE A CHOICE!**

No one can force or coerce you into accepting one standard over another. God has made us so that we can make whatever choice that we choose. But the choice you and I will make! Again, we emphasize the importance of making the right choice of a standard! Let’s take a few minutes to see the kind of choices that we have to choose between.

**NATURALISM!** This approach suggests that man is only a higher form of an animal and that there is no God who created us. We just evolved from the lower forms of life. Therefore, there is no absolute standard for man to go by. Man makes his own rules as he develops to a higher form of being. This seems to have been the approach of the Epicureans mentioned in the Bible: ***Eat, drink, and be merry; for tomorrow we die.*** An up-to-date way of saying the same thing is: *“Enjoy yourself; it’s later than you think!”* Such people have concluded that there is no judgment or existence after death; therefore, the greatest pleasure is the greatest good. This choice has been popular through the centuries. “Evolution” has been used to explain the existence of all things. Karl Marx used this concept to advocate his communistic philosophy. Hitler used it to advocate his “Super-race.” This philosophy ultimately leads to the conclusion that *“Might makes right!”* It causes men to act like animals and justifies such on the basis of the philosophy to which they hold. A person has made this observation: *“If we want our children to behave like apes, then teach them the thesis that they evolved from such. If you want them to behave as God directs, teach them that they are the crowning of God’s special creative acts.”*

**IDEALISM!** This approach suggests that human reason is the ultimate reality. It advocates that human reason has the answer to every human problem. The mind of man becomes its own “god” or “standard!” It is the glorification of human reasoning. This philosophy is also called **“HUMANISM.”** But when important and critical questions are asked, it seems that confusion sets in. Such questions as:

- a) “What is the good?”
- b) “Whose reasoning will we follow?”
- c) “How do we determine who has the best answers?”
- d) “Which expert will we listen to?”

While we all recognize that human reasoning is very important in our life; but for it to be the ultimate standard by which we governed our lives....it falls far short—as human history has shown

clearly. The “wise man” said long ago: ***“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”*** (Proverbs 3:5-6).

**A REVEALED STANDARD!** If man is INCAPABLE of producing his own perfect standard by which choices are made daily, then it would seem that a revealed one from God is needed. The Bible claims to be that revealed standard by which man should live. It claims to be “truth” that can set man free from a lie (John 8:32)! It claims it can furnish man completely unto every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It claims that it can prepare me to face life victoriously; to face death calmly and with hope; and to face God in judgment with assurance! What better standard can you have?

**A Third Realization:**  
**THE RESULTS IS CONDITIONAL!**

It should be obvious that if one mixes his standards, he will have varying results. So, the outcome of my decisions will be determined by the kind of standard that I choose at that particular time. But when I begin to see results that I am not happy with, it may be time to re-evaluate the choice of a standard. God’s standard claims to be a perfect one with highly desired results (James 1:25; Matthew 19:29). But the desired results of God’s standard is also conditional!

**1) I must be willing to let God teach and direct my way of living!** Right actions and desired results come from right thinking. And right thinking comes from right teaching (Matthew 28:20). To follow my own personal wishes, desires, and feelings is not letting God direct me!

**2) I must be sure of what God is saying in His Word!** It must not be what I think, or want, or desire Him to say. I must deal with my prejudices and pre-conceived ideas. I need to realize my limited knowledge and open my heart to listen to the Word of God (Matthew 13:13ff). I need to diligently want to know God’s will for my life (Matthew 7:7).

**3) I must put God’s Truth into Action!** James talks about a man that deceives himself into thinking that all he needs to do is be a good listening of what God says. But while listening to God is important, it is also necessary to put what I learn into action (James 1:22). Truth makes us free only when we make it our truth by putting it into practice. My heart also needs to be in the doing of God’s word (Matthew 15:8). The Bible not only gives lists of things that are good and right, but as well lists of things that are wrong and bad (Galatians 5:19-23; Romans 1:18-32; Ephesians 4:32; etc.). The Bible also has principles that help me make proper decisions even about things not given in one of the list of things that are right or wrong.

**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

The best advice that young people can receive is given by Solomon in Ecclesiastes 12:1: ***“Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, ‘I have no delight in them.’”*** He also adds these words to show another reason why we should fear God and follow His counsel: ***For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.”*** (12:14).

Young people, please remember that your search for a standard is the common lot of mankind; and hopefully, you will make the right choice of a standard for your life. May God bless you to that end!

### **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

#### **True or False**

- 1. Joshua called upon God's people to make the right choice of whom they would serve.**
- 2. Man has been made to be a creature of choice, but has been given no standard by which to make his choices.**
- 3. Everyone is in search of a standard for their lives, either consciously or unconsciously.**
- 4. The Law of "sowing and reaping" is true both in the physical and spiritual realm of existence.**
- 5. Man has to be motivated, not coerced, into choosing the right standard for his life.**
- 6. We act pretty much like we are taught—or to the philosophy that we hold to.**
- 7. Human reasoning as a standard of conduct has failed miserably—but only in the last few years.**
- 8. A revealed standard from God is man's only hope in order to be prepared for life here and hereafter.**
- 9. God's standard is conditional upon us believing and living by it—if we want the right results.**
- 10. The wise man advises man to enjoy life while you are young because when you get old things can't be enjoyed as much.**

## Lesson Two

# ***“How Important is What I Believe?”***

**(Hebrews 11:1-6)**

“Faith” is very important in the Bible! The writer of Hebrews makes it very clear that a person must believe that God exist and that He is a rewarder of only those who seek Him. He also emphasizes that what a person truly believes is shown by his actions. James, the brother of Jesus, challenges a person to show that he has faith without any deeds (2:18). Obviously, it cannot be done! He also adds that faith without works is useless! (James 2:20). From the above indications we might conclude that a person’s actions are determined by what he believes. So, again we see that people are what they are taught—but to be more precise—what they believe that they are taught. What we are taught about God will cause us to be drawn to God—if we believe it. We not only will then believe in God but we will willingly do His bidding (live by His standard).

Children are taught by their parents in the home as they grow up until finally they go out on their own to form their own home. That early teaching is critical in the life of a child—especially at such an early age. But parents are not the only ones doing the teaching of children. Teachers in the school systems teach them various things for some twelve years or more. If these teachings conflict with what the parents have taught, a choice will have to be made by the child as to which one he will believe and act upon. Most of the problems in our society with youth come from either a lack of teaching by parents, wrong teaching by parents, or wrong teaching in our school systems. Such can bring either confusion to children as to what to believe or they will choose to believe the wrong things and act accordingly.

In this lesson we want to try to illustrate the importance—not only of proper teaching—but believing the right things as well. Seeing the outcome of beliefs is one sure way to evaluate our beliefs.

## **WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO BELIEVE IN CREATION?**

**1. Because belief in Creation gives logical answers to some very important questions.** Man exists on the earth! How did we get here? Who and what are we? What is our purpose for being here? Is there another existence for man after he dies? On and on the questions can be asked that we need an answer for that makes sense to us. We believe that believing in Creation helps to give logical answers to many important questions that we all ask.

**2. Because belief in Creation destroys belief in other philosophies of men.** Logically, man cannot honestly hold to conflicting or contradictory beliefs. A person either believes in one or the other, but not both. Belief in Creation will automatically discourage belief in the following things:

**Atheism.** The very term indicates a belief that there is no (A) God (Theism). A person would appear very foolish to advocate that he believes in God and at the same time he believes that there is no God!

**Agnosticism.** This word means that a person doesn’t know if there is a God (A—no; gnosis—know). The same thing can be said again about a person who claims to believe in

God and then turns around and says I am not sure there is a God. We certainly don't like to look foolish to other people!

**Fatalism.** This is a belief that *"What will be, will be!"* It is to believe that we have no choice in the things that happen around us and that there is no over-riding hand that controls all things. In that sense, it is to believe that there is no God.

**Pantheism.** This belief advocates that God is the heart and soul of the universe—that He and His Creation are one—(Pan—all; Theism—God). But the God of the Bible says that He is the Creator of all things, not the Creation itself (Genesis 1:1)

**Evolution.** There is an obvious evolving of things all about us. We can see it happening, it can be substantiated by facts and logical deductions. However, what is called "Organic Evolution" is a different concept altogether. This belief advocates that God did not create all things; they just evolved from something tiny to what we see now. A person cannot consistently believe in Creationism and Evolution at the same time—they are not compatible.

**3. Because belief in Creation makes it possible to believe what the Bible teaches.** First and foremost we need to believe in the God of the Bible. It tells us that:

- a) God is the eternal, infinite, and ever-existing One! (Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 57:15).
- b) That He is the intelligence behind this orderly universe (Hebrews 1:10-12).
- c) That He is not limited by time or space (Genesis 1:14-15).
- d) And that this universe is the results of purpose and planning by God (1 Peter 1:18-21).  
His foreknowledge indicates His purposes and plans to do what He did.
- e) The word "create" indicates His superiority over every thing. It means to bring something into existence that did not exist before. This gives the answer to the most probing question of all—*"How did all these things come into existence?"* It was obviously done by the power of God!

But we can also believe in the dignity and superiority of man over all other things that have been made or created. The Bible tells us that:

- a) Man had a beginning at Creation—God made them male and female (Genesis 1:26-27).
- b) Man is the results of the intelligent planning of God (Ephesians 1:4).
- c) Man was made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27).
- d) Man was the crowning of God's creation—He was the last to be created. All else was created before him for his use and for his ability to live on the earth.
- e) Man is body, soul, and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23).
- f) Man has been given the power of choice and is therefore responsible to his Creator (2 Corinthians 5:10).

### **WHY IS IT IMPORTANT NOT TO BELIEVE IN EVOLUTION?**

**1. Such a belief results in a rejection of God and the Bible.** The only reason for the belief in evolution is a denial of God! One of the first things that impressed me with reading about evolutionists over 30 years ago was that they did not want to believe in God. With a denial of God goes also the denial of the Bible. A person cannot consistently believe in Evolution and in God. Logically, one or the other must go!

**2. Such a belief requires an ignorant or prejudiced mind.** This sounds strong, but we believe it is true. People who believe in evolution are often ignorant of the facts and have a prejudiced mind to want to NOT believe in God! The Scriptures are very clear on the evidences for God that man has access to and needs to seriously consider them (Psalm 19:1-3; Romans 1:18-25). This is the reason why the Psalmists states: *“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God!’”* (14:1). The evidences are so over-whelming that man is said to be *“without excuse”* for not believing in God (Romans 1:20).

**3. Such a belief requires rejection of scientific facts!** In the first place, evolution is not a proven fact...it is a fanciful theory of unbelievers in God that have to have some kind of an answer as to how man got here! Also, there are established scientific laws that absolutely refute the possibility of evolution:

- a) The 2<sup>nd</sup> Law of Thermodynamics that states that the universe had a beginning and it is running down.
- b) The Law of Cause and Effect that states that for every effect there must be a cause. The universe is here, orderly, precise, and must have a cause behind it. The only logical answer is God! It is like someone who suggested that a print shop blew up and out of the explosion came Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary. Foolish, you say! Yes! And just as foolish to think that this universe just happened from an explosion!
- c) The Law of Bio-Genesis that states that life cannot come from non-life. This has been an accepted law for years. And yet, the evolutionists has to believe the very opposite or his theory is exploded. He must believe that life came from dead matter—contrary to all scientific experiments!

For a person to believe in evolution he has to be ignorant of the facts and evidences that militate against such a belief; or, he is very prejudiced!

**4. Such a belief has no valid standard for morality.** If God is a myth, there is no moral standard except what man comes up with—which is often very confusing and conflicting. Thus, if citizens of a democratic society wanted to make it lawful to destroy retarded children, the helpless cripples, the insane, and those too old to pay their own way...etc...what objection could the evolutionist offer? Just think of all the money such would save. Why should anyone, who does not believe in God, be squeamish about such? We shoot horses who are cripple and old dogs are put to sleep. And what is good old grandpa but an improved animal???? I am convinced that if the evolutionists ever succeed in their efforts, I doubt seriously that they would want to live in the society they helped to create.

### **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

It is quite obvious that we are creatures of choice. We can choose which one we desire to believe in: Creation or Evolution! But with the choice comes the results, the outcomes, the consequences. Older people in our society had very little exposure to the teaching about Evolution and we may under-estimate the effect of such teaching to our children and grandchildren. We are and we act out of what we have been taught and believe. Our children and grandchildren are facing this choice constantly. They are being exposed to such teachings even in the early grades at school. All kinds of books are being published for children subtly teaching Evolution as scientific fact. Our colleges and universities expose everyone to it on an even higher level of prejudice. If it is not too

late, it may be well to talk with our children and grandchildren to be sure they understand the differences, especially when it comes to seeing the outcome of such beliefs. Belief in Creationism is logical, common sense, and supported by all the factual information by scientific research. But more important, it is the only thing that offers any hope for mankind!

To add a little humor to this serious article, we will include a funny poem that says an awful lot about this issue....especially when it comes to seeing the results of our beliefs.

**“MONKEY TALK”**

Three monkeys sat in a coconut tree discussing things as they are said to be.  
Said one to the other, listen you two there’s a certain rumor that can’t be true.

That man descended from our noble race—the very idea is a mere disgrace.  
No monkey ever deserted his wife, starving her baby and ruining her life.

And you never heard of a mother monk leaving her little ones with others to bunk.  
Or, passing them on from one to another until they scarcely know who is their mother.

Another thing a monkey won’t do is build a fence around a coconut tree  
And let the coconuts go to waste,  
While he forbids others to taste.  
If I build a fence around this tree,  
Starvation would force you to steal from me.

Another thing monkeys won’t do is go out at night and get on a stew  
Using a gun, club, or knife,  
To take some innocent monkey’s life,  
Nor invade the privacy of another monkey’s wife.

Brothers, man descended—the ornery cuss—but he did not descend from us!  
(William McCleskey)

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

**True or False**

- 1. Evolution is rarely taught any more as a scientific fact.
- 2. A person can logical believe in Evolution and God.
- 3. It is important what we are taught and what we believe, because it determines our actions.
- 4. Agnosticism is a refusal to make a decision based on the evidence.
- 5. If God is the ever-existing One, then He is the logical reason for all things that exists.

- \_\_\_ 6. There are three basic scientific laws widely accepted by scientists that undermines the whole theory of Evolution.
- \_\_\_ 7. Evolutionists have no valid moral standard by which to guide one's life.
- \_\_\_ 8. Belief in God makes it possible to also believe in the Bible as the Word of God.
- \_\_\_ 9. To believe that man was created in the image of God gives dignity to human beings.
- \_\_\_ 10. Belief in Creationism is logical, common sense, and supported by all the factual findings of scientists.

## Lesson Three

***“Is it Important to Take a Stand?”*****(Matthew 13:18-23)**

Jesus told a Parable about a man sowing seed in four different kinds of soil. He compared the soils to peoples' hearts and their response to the preaching of the Word of God. One heart in particular is interesting in the light of our question for this lesson. It was referred to as “stony soil” which represented the kind of heart that quickly receives the Word of God with joy, but when persecution came; he turned from listening to God. He had not put his roots deep into the Word of God, but allowed his beliefs to be shallow and easily turned from. The challenge that Jesus gave to his hearers was—not only receive the Word with joy, but put your roots deep into the Word and take your stand with Him, so that you can be fruitful and productive as a Christian.

I grew up watching “Western Movies” each Saturday. They had their heroes. He always stood for Truth, Justice, and the Right! He would take that stand even if no one else would stand with him. Some of the more dramatic parts in the movie were when it looked like he would have to stand alone to fight evil. Then, at the last minute others would join him to fight the bad guys. The movies emphasized the desirability and necessity of someone taking a stand for that which is right.

One of the close disciples of Jesus, Peter, was outspoken in his stand for Jesus. He openly stated: ***“Though all men shall be offended because of You, yet will I never be offended.”*** (Matthew 26:33). He even added with emphasis: ***“Though I should die with You, yet will I not deny You.”*** (Matthew 26:35). We all know that to say we will stand with Jesus and actually do it in crucial times is two different things. Peter learned that lesson well! Afterwards, Peter not only stated he would stand with Jesus, but did it in view of threats of punishment (Acts 4:16-20). It is generally believed that Peter died a violent death because of his stand with Jesus—crucifixion!

**HINDRANCES TO OVERCOME IN ORDER TO TAKE A STAND**

In Luke 14:15-20, Jesus told about people who had been invited to a great banquet feast and the flimsy excuses they gave for not coming:

- 1) *“I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it....”*
- 2) *“I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them....”*
- 3) *“I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come....”*

While their excuses were ridiculous; yet, they gave them because they did not want to go to the great supper. This was typical of people then, as it is today as well. We can find all kinds of flimsy excuses for not taking a stand for truth and righteousness, but they are only flimsy excuses—and we do not take a stand! The following thoughts are suggestions of some things we have to deal with if we are to take our stand with Christ:

**1. “I don’t have time!”** A newscast focused on a growing number of abortions in Russia. Upon interviewing one of the doctors doing the abortions this comment was given: *“We don’t have time for morality.”* It seems that we have time for the things we won’t do, but not time for the things we ought to do. God’s people are encouraged to ***“redeem the time, because the days are evil.”*** (Ephesians 5:15). The idea is to make good use of the time that we have! But the real issue here is:

*“Is it morally right to destroy a human life because its continued existence is an inconvenience to me?”* (Read Genesis 9:6).

**2. Blaming our circumstances in life.** A TV panel group was discussing crime in the U.S. Two of the men contended that poverty and crowding in the inner cities is the root cause of crime. They said: *“It is not their fault; they are just reacting to their environment.”* But a police chief in North Carolina challenged this excuse. He pointed out that it is a moral and ethical problem that must be dealt with. The person who takes his stand with Jesus will deal with whatever he has to face up to in order to live right. The Apostle stated: ***“We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”*** (Read Romans 8:35-39).

**3. To be silent when we need to speak out.** Teachers in our schools are being told: *“The teaching of values is not part of your job. Just deal with your subject matter.”* This totally ignores the fact that teachers communicate their values directly and indirectly. Silence and seeming indifference when confronting sexual immorality, lying, cheating, etc., implies that these things don’t really matter. The inspired Apostle Peter states: ***Be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear....***” (Read 1 Peter 3:15-18).

**4. The law of the land permits it.** Homosexuals defend their actions on the basis of their rights under the constitution. But are they only trying to excuse their sinful actions—to try to justify them in the eyes of others? The Bible, however, is very clear that such actions are a moral problem—a sin problem that needs to be dealt with (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). When the laws of the land and the laws of God conflict, Peter and the other Apostles showed us clearly the stand we ought to take: ***“We ought to obey God rather than men.”*** (Acts 5:29).

So, young people, you can either join the excuse makers or take your stand with Jesus against sin and evil in our world. Which will it be?

### **OVERCOME DECEPTION IN ORDER TO TAKE A STAND**

The Hebrew writer warns of the grave dangers of sin’s deceptions that lead away from God (3:12-14). Sin is deceptive—it is not open and honest with us as it ought to be. It promises one thing, but we end up receiving things that we don’t want. It makes sin to appear as right and something we ought to do—but it is wrong! The following thoughts (deceptions) can illustrate the struggle we will have if we want to take a stand with Jesus.

**1. “We need to relax about sex.”** People are too old fashion—they are not with it. We should not get uptight about the sexual revolution. If we will just relax, sex crimes would become less. However, from all indications, sex crimes and rape seem to be increasing more and more. The immoralities of mankind just get worse and worse. (Read Romans 1:18-32).

**2. “Our children need to be taught sex education in schools.”** Instead of slowing down the number of illegitimate births in America, the number of unmarried teenage girls having babies (or abortions) has increased greatly. What is so interesting is that the greatest number of illegitimate births occurred in areas where the Planned Parenthood Organization is successful in teaching sex

education unrestricted by the schools. (Read Galatians 5:19-21). Look at the kinds of sins that fornication is identified with!

**3. “We need to keep religion out of our public schools.”** Teachers just need to educate children’s intelligence. So, God was kicked out of the schools. Now our schools are plagued with crimes and dope and all kinds of immorality. Students are uncontrollable. The level of education is at all-time low. The drop-out rate is still bad. Officials do not know what to do. But why should they be surprised—they got what they wanted! They wanted a godless school system and got a godless society. (Reread Romans 1:21-26).

**4. “It is against the law to spank children.”** They should only be spoken to and privileges taken away. Yet, we have raised up the most unruly, wild and rebellious generation American has seen. Our jails are full and overflowing. Drug treatment centers are filled to capacity. (Read Proverbs 13:24; Ephesians 6:1-4).

Sin is deceptive and will use every means to cover up its real identity. If we are able to take our stand for truth and righteousness, we have to be able to know what sin is and its terrible consequences—and then, let people know what God says about it.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Young people, do you have the moral and spiritual courage to take your stand with Jesus? Will you not only live and do right, but will you openly let others know what God has to say on these and other moral issues? Jesus reminds us: *“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”* (Matthew 16:24).

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

#### True or False

- \_\_\_ 1. Persecution test our determination to stand with Christ—no matter what.
- \_\_\_ 2. Excuses are justifiable reasons for not taking a stand for right living.
- \_\_\_ 3. An excuse is a lie under the cover of being truth.
- \_\_\_ 4. Sin is not only deceptive, but it has to offer pleasure in order to entice us.
- \_\_\_ 5. God never gives up on sinful men.
- \_\_\_ 6. Discipline of children is commanded by God—it is not an option.
- \_\_\_ 7. Sex outside of marriage is not only a sin against God, but a sin against our own bodies.
- \_\_\_ 8. Homosexuality is a justifiable lifestyle.
- \_\_\_ 9. Abortion is acceptable with God provided it is done before the baby is born.
- \_\_\_ 10. Taking a stand with Jesus could be hazardous to one’s health.

## Lesson Four

***“How Can I Better Serve God?”***

(Proverbs 1:7-19)

Teenage years are critical times for young people. One of the main reasons is that they will make three of the biggest decisions of their life: (1) How will I earn my living; (2) Who will I marry and spend my life together with; and (3) Whether to serve God or not. We go back to Solomon’s advice to the young: ***“Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth....”*** (Ecclesiastes 12:1). Along with this admonition, it would be good to add that youth has much to offer to society that is good as well as to the kingdom of God. We hope this lesson will be an encouragement to you to be the best servant of God you can be!

The story is told of a factory worker in a communist country. He appeared each evening at the gate with a wheelbarrow of sawdust. The guards were suspicious that he was smuggling something out. They would look through the sawdust thoroughly, and find nothing. One of the guards retired and happened to run into the man on the street and asked him what he was smuggling. His answer was: *“Wheelbarrows!”* They were looking for the wrong things. May we suggest to you who are young—don’t look for the wrong thing! Don’t look to see how little you can do to serve God, but be challenged to see how much you can do! This lesson will be looking at three things necessary in order to be great servants of God in your youth!

**PREPARATION!**

**1. First, let yourself be taught the gospel of Christ to become a Christian.** Don’t have a closed mind and heart to the message from God (Matthew 13:15), but be open and concerned to hear what God wants you to do (Acts 17:11-12). Then, upon understanding and believing, be a doer of the word, not a hearer only (James 1:22). Beginning your life in Christ early makes it possible to accomplish more good to the glory of God; as well as, such can help you to avoid many of the evils that youth get caught up in.

**2. Next, expose yourself to as much spiritual training and learning as possible.** Seek it out, feel responsible, be desirous of being taught and trained in righteousness (Matthew 28:20; 2 Timothy 2:2; Colossians 2:6-7). Seek to learn the word of God, so that you can:

- a) Make your decisions wisely;
- b) Distinguish between truth and error, right and wrong;
- c) Be prepared to face the storms and trials of life successfully;
- d) Discern good and evil and deal with temptations successfully.

The wise man in Proverbs gives the following encouragement (3:1-5; 4:5-9).

**3. Also, don’t expect to be entertained all the time.** There is nothing wrong with fun, but it should not be the major emphasis. There is something far more important we need to be engaged in. When fun and games detour us from the real need in our lives, we have made a poor choice (Matthew 6:33; Matthew 4:4).

## PURITY

When we obey the truth (gospel), our souls are purified by the blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:22). It is God's will that we no longer walk in the way of sin, but to keep ourselves aloof from sin (Romans 6:1-2). In fact, God admonishes us: "***Be holy, for I am holy.***" (1 Peter 1:16). Then, how can you, as young people, be holy?

**1. Our bodies need to be kept pure.** One of the great promises that God gives to those who become Christians is that the Holy Spirit is given to them (Acts 2:38; 5:32; Romans 8:5-11). Paul reminded the Corinthians of this fact when he was warning them against committing fornication (sexual immoralities of all kinds). He added that the person who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. And then, he drives home this concept: "***Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?***" (1 Corinthians 6:19). He then adds, you have been bought with a price, you are not your own, therefore glorify the one who has bought you in your body and in your spirit.

**2. Possibly, more important (as to sequence) is the need to keep our minds and hearts pure.** Both the Old and New Testaments teach the necessity of this (Psalm 24:3-4; James 4:8; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; etc.). We should not fill our minds with dirty and immoral movies, dirty jokes, cursing, pornography, but fill them with that which is good and pure (Philippians 4:8; Titus 1:15; Matthew 5:8). Paul's admonition in Colossians 3:1-3 shows where the emphasis should be in regards to our hearts.

## PERFORMANCE

Christianity is not just something we receive, but something we also do! (James 1:22; Matthew 7:21). It is a great blessing to become sons of God (1 John 3:1), but it is also a great responsibility as well (Matthew 5:13-16).

**1. Sinfulness must be put off.** Before we can be considered righteous people, we must put off those sinful activities that identify us as "the world." The Apostle Paul made this very clear in his letter to the Ephesians: "***Put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts...***" (Ephesians 4:22). If we do not make a diligent effort to do this, it shows that we never really made a decision to turn to God and to righteous living (Romans 6:1-2).

**2. Righteous living must be put on.** If we want to be identified as a child of God, we need to act like a child of God. The Apostle John pointed out: "***Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God...***" (1 John 3:10). It is the person who practices righteousness that is born into the family of God (1 John 2:29). Again, Paul's admonition to the Ephesians: "***Put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.***" (Ephesians 4:24). Paul's admonition to Timothy is so appropriate to youth today: "***Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.***" (1 Timothy 4:12).

**3. Come out and be separate.** The Apostle's warning in 1 Corinthians 15:33 needs to be listened to carefully—*“Evil company corrupts good habits.”* The people we choose to be with can have a corrupting influence on our lives or an encouragement to righteousness. We are encouraged to make the right choice of companionship. The same Apostle quotes from Isaiah 52:11 that calls upon God's people to: *“Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.”* (2 Corinthians 6:17-18). Our challenge is not to go out into the wilderness and live our lives totally away from “the world,” but to stop participating in those things that are unclean being engaged in by our former companions. Rather, we need to be an example before them to influence them towards God and righteousness (Matthew 5:13-16). The real issue here is not whether to associate with non-Christians, but how concerned are you about their lost condition! Jesus saw the multitude of lost humanity and had compassion on them. He even ate with Publicans and sinners, but He influenced and taught them—not the reverse! If we compromise our Christianity when we are with non-Christians, it is evident that we are weak and in need of strength. We need to be in the company of strong Christians sufficiently to become strong ourselves.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Is this your question: *“How can I better serve God?”* We certainly hope so. And also hope that this study has contributed something towards giving insight as to how to do so. A “true” story is told of a homeless man who roamed the alleys of Los Angeles. He died as one would expect in an alley. But his death was a little different from other “street people.” He died with a bank account of \$207, 421.00. His father had died and left him all of this money. His relatives found him, told him of the money, and tried to force him to take it. He only took enough to buy an old car in which he would sleep when cold. He died December 14, 1989, with \$3.00 in his pocket and a fortune untouched. Sounds crazy doesn't it! But are we any different if we have been left a spiritual fortune to enjoy here and hereafter; but, we turn our backs on it and live in the bondage of sin and shame all of our lives? This street person lived a wasted life and died a futile death. What about us....are we living a wasted life away from God and then will die away from Him for all eternity?

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

#### True or False

1. Being a separate people requires that we no longer have associations with unbelievers.
2. Serving God means that we become children of God.
3. Those who serve God most effectively are those willing to be taught and trained.
4. Purity of heart is more important than purity of body—but both are necessary.
5. Filling our minds with the wrong things doesn't mean I am a bad person.
6. Young people need a lot of fun and games to develop spiritually.
7. The pure of heart seek after God.
8. God requires that sinful practices be put away from our lives.
9. Compromising Christianity shows that we are weak and need to be with strong people.
10. “A wasted life and a futile death” can be the epitaph on many a grave stone.

## Lesson Five

***“What are Some Basic Preparations for Life?”*****(Proverbs 1:8-9)**

The Home and the Church are ordained of God! They are designed to compliment each other. They are not designed to take the place of one another. Sometimes parents get confused about the responsibilities of these two. For example, if a child goes astray, there is the tendency to blame the church. But the responsibility was not given to the church, but to parents (Ephesians 6:1-4). The church can only help to add to what the home does.

We have all heard the observation: *“As the home goes, so goes our nation.”* But the same thing can be said of the church to a great degree. The home is basic and has basic responsibilities to the children that are brought into that home. It is not the government’s responsibility to raise our children; but, neither is it the church’s responsibility. If our children are going bad, look at the Home! See if parents deeply love one another as well as their children. See if their priorities are straight.

The Home needs to meet the needs of its children! A basic need is for children to be prepared for life. There are at least three areas that are critical that we will look at in this lesson. Youth need to see their need of these three things.

**NEED FOR GOOD SELF-ESTEEM**

One’s “self-image” is how a person views himself. It primarily considers his abilities, powers, and performances. One’s “self-esteem” is how a person values himself. It deals with a person being satisfied with himself—to feel good about one’s self.

Teen years can be confusing times for youth. This is especially true when you look into the mirror and don’t like what you see. Or, when you make a fool of yourself in front of your peers doesn’t help your self-esteem. Or, when you are different from others in dress, thinking, actions, etc., it tends to affect how you value yourself. It is a struggle to keep a good self-esteem!

God knows this and has tried to help us by telling us things that will help to see our true value in God’s eyes especially. God tells us that we are living stones in a spiritual house and are a holy priesthood that can offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5). He later adds that we are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and His own special people (2:9). To realize what God is saying should help anyone’s self-esteem! A problem that has to be watched carefully is to take such things to an extreme and become self-centered, selfish, egotistical brats! Some homes have been guilty of such, as well as some churches in the use of these great truths. A passage of Scripture that helps to deal with such is: ***“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”*** (Philippians 2:3).

The following thoughts suggest possible things that will help to develop a good self-esteem in the child of God:

- a) Lean on God and accept His view of you.
- b) Learn to love and be loved.
- c) Develop a sense of belonging.
- d) Concentrate on your strengths, not your weaknesses.
- e) Learn to handle guilt correctly so you can feel good about yourself.
- f) Do a good job at what you can do.
- g) Set realistic goals to strive for.
- h) Learn to accept what you cannot change.

### **NEED TO LEARN HOW TO WORK**

A study was conducted of several unemployed men. One common factor came to the forefront of the evaluation—none had learned to work when they were young. Some of their families were well-to-do. Some were slightly handicapped and not required to learn to work. Some were in a home where no one cared if they worked. Many of them had “kind mothers” who told them: *“You will have plenty of time to work when you become an adult.”*

The Bible emphasizes the need to learn to work. We are to work with our hands what is good that we can, not only provide for ourselves and family, but to be able to help those in need (Ephesians 4:28). Those who will not learn to work and provide for their family have denied the faith and are worse than an unbeliever (1 Timothy 5:8). The Scriptures even go further! If a man will not work, don’t let him eat (1 Thessalonians 3:10). And if they continue in this way, the church is to withdraw from such a person (3:6). In Proverbs, the ant is used to condemn the person who will not work (Proverbs 6:6-11).

The following thoughts are suggested as possible principles of a good work ethic that should be in the life of every Christian:

- a) Honesty—no stealing—taking what does not belong to you.
- b) Taking care of your own responsibilities in the home.
- c) Be models for male and female roles.
- d) Show respect for one another.
- e) Be consistent and dependable.
- f) Set limits—don’t overdo and be a work alcoholic!
- g) Set a goal of being self-reliant and able to make it on one’s own.
- h) Train to be a working person of integrity.

### **NEED OF MORAL STANDARDS**

Youth not only need sexual moral standards by which to govern their lives, but they need ethical standards to help them make good decisions for living. The book of Proverbs is filled with admonitions to help youth, as well as older persons, live right (Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 22:6; Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

From all indications, it seems that most of the problems we are facing comes from unhappy and/or broken homes that do not provide the teaching nor proper examples for their children. If they do not get help from Bible Classes and sermons, the only place left for them to be properly taught is

the school system. And...they are in trouble! Teachers are afraid to teach moral and ethical standards that are widely acceptable or we have extreme liberal teachers who are trying to brainwash our children away from these acceptable standards. The following quotes come from the Boston Herald, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1992:

*“...they have time and energy...to reshape the values of other people’s children....”*

*“...our children are being brainwashed with the latest ideological fashion—whether about homosexuality, environmentalism, multi-culturalism, or a thousand other non-academic distractions.”*

*“The...fundamental objection to teaching this stuff is that we are not sending our children to school to have their values and psyches re-molded to suit the ideological zealots on world-saving crusades. It is cheap, cowardly, and dishonest to target children...and especially to do so behind the backs of their parents.”*

If this problem is solved it will have to be back in the home. That is where God put the job. Teaching and training in such concepts as: HONESTY, DECENCY, PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY, HONOR, RESPECT, ETC. The value of this kind of teaching helps to show the need to live a moral life. A child will be given direction for his life. The child can see the need to develop his own moral and virtuous character. It will help make the child understand that his own character is at stake in this matter.

A story is told of a person in Russia who lived in a small village. He vanished every Friday morning for several hours. People in the village began talking about him and wondered where he disappeared to. A newcomer to the village kept hearing people talk about the person, but no one seemed to really follow up to see where he went. He made the decision to follow him one day. He followed him into a wooded area. The man had taken an ax and chopped down a tree and cut up the wood for burning in a fireplace. He then took the wood to a poor section of the village where an old woman and her sick son lived. He gave them enough wood to last all week. He then quietly returned home and engaged in his normal activities. Here was a merciful, compassionate, and kind man helping someone weak and vulnerable. The moral of the story—be like that person! Children need to hear of and witness such acts to motivate them to do likewise.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Children need guidance and to be taught and trained in the right way to go (Proverbs 22:6). They need to be helped with: (1) Self-esteem; (2) Learning how to work; and (3) Learning moral and ethical ways to live. ***“The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself brings his mother to shame.”*** (Proverbs 29:15). Both parent and child need to be keenly aware of God’s arrangement and cooperate to the fullest to do the job right. There is nothing more beautiful than a happy home. Neither is there anything more desirable than a child properly prepared for life.

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

**True or False**

1. The church and the home should cooperate and compliment one another.
2. The church is primarily responsible when a child goes astray.
3. Self-Esteem is a wrong idea about one's self.
4. God's Word helps to build the proper self-esteem in a person.
5. Children need to enjoy their youth by having fun, not working.
6. By the time one is 18 he should be self-reliant.
7. Moral values can be instilled in a child that are contrary to nature and God's Word.
8. School teachers often take advantage of the classroom to teach their warped sense of morality or ethical standards.
9. The book of Proverbs provide very good insight on how to live morally and ethically.
10. Stories of good moral actions need to be a part of the teaching of our children.

## Lesson Six

***“What do Children Have a Right to Expect from Their Parents?”*****(Deuteronomy 6:4-9)**

*“I have my rights and they ought to be respected!”* Yes, we have our rights, but so do all others around us. Should my rights infringe on your rights? Being concerned and respectful of others is also a basic right that we all should enjoy. Our society talks a lot about people’s rights! Our Constitution is based on certain **“Inalienable rights.”** And...people’s rights should be respected by others. Our Law Courts should uphold the correct rights of its citizens.

But what about children, do they have rights? To whom can they appeal if their rights are neglected or taken from them? Will our Law Courts uphold their rights? Just what are their rights? Who determines what these are and who should enforce them? We believe that children have some God-given rights, and we believe that children have a right to expect certain things from their parents. We can’t look at all of them obviously, but we do want to look at four of these in this lesson.

**CHILDREN HAVE A RIGHT TO BE  
WANTED AND LOVED BY THEIR PARENTS!**

We believe that this right is both commanded by God and is a matter of common sense (Titus 2:4). The ungodly were condemned in Paul’s 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to Timothy because (among other things) they were without natural affection (3:3). If parents are commanded to love their children, there must be a need for such. This right is probably one of the most scientifically proven facts about children. Tests have been run to see what an absence of love would do to small children and the outcome has been shown to be disastrous!

When a society shows less and less love and respect for children, it is a sure sign of disaster ahead. A few years ago, a 28 year old father of three became an object of a manhunt. He had killed his wife and two of his three daughters. The 3<sup>rd</sup> was found in a trash dump with her throat slashed barely alive. When he was caught, he confessed, but had no regrets! How could anyone kill his own family and have no regrets?

But what about those fathers and mothers who don’t really care about their children—neglecting them and not showing true love for them—what is done about them? Instead of being punished, they are often featured in the company newsletter as an example of devotion and efficiency to the COMPANY! They are not reprimanded, but get a raise at work for their dedication beyond the call of duty to the COMPANY! And all the while their children are growing up as strangers in the home. A therapist or a coach may have to try, as best they can, to fill the role of parent. And then, there are those parents that abuse their children: Mentally, Sexually, and Physically—often causing great harm to the child for life. **Children have a God-given right to be loved and wanted by their parents!** The wise man states it clearly: *“Children’s children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.”* (17:6)

Children need to know they are loved by words, by looks, and by actions. Parents need to make time for them, know their interest, know about their problems, and have a listening ear. Remember, they have needs that need to be met. But what if they do not appreciate our love? That is their problem. They have a choice to accept or reject our love. But they still have a right to be loved by their parents.

### **CHILDREN HAVE A RIGHT TO BE PROVIDED FOR!**

*“But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”* (1 Timothy 5:8). The Apostle also stated a general truth in 2 Corinthians 12:14: *“For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.”* These provisions are obviously food, clothing, and shelter (the necessities of life)! And where parents love their children, they will provide for them and even sacrifice for them.

But there is a danger here that must be avoided! Love does not mean I give my children everything they want! To give them “brand-named” clothes when it puts the household budget in the red is not good common sense nor good use of money. Children need to be provided enough so they will be appreciative. But when they are not appreciative, they probably are getting too much and being spoiled. Parents have the obligation to provide what they need, not necessarily what they want. When healthy, wholesome food is put on the table, it shows love and concern for the child. But when they are continually fed junk food, it shows a lack of love or concern for their well-being. Such is not love, but indulging and spoiling children.

What if children do not appreciate how we provide for them? If the parent has used the best judgment and common sense in what he provides, and the child does not appreciate such—then, that becomes their problem. But they have a right to be provided for by parents.

### **CHILDREN HAVE A RIGHT TO BE TAUGHT AND TRAINED CORRECTLY!**

There is a strong emphasis upon this in Scripture (Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:21; Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Proverbs 1:7-8; 22:6, etc.). The reason may be because it is more critical than the rest. Unfortunately, this is the most neglected by busy, unconcerned parents. Following are some suggestions of what children need to be taught and trained in:

1. Children need to be trained early in life on what is right and wrong, what is kind and courteous, what is appropriate, and things to avoid.
2. They need to be taught how to make good, solid, sound, and lasting decisions for their lives.
3. They need to be taught to follow rules laid down for their good.
4. They need to be given meaning and purpose for their lives. Don't let them grope around, seeking a reason for their existence. (This seems to be one of the reasons for suicide among teens).
5. They need to be taught how to treat others about them:
  - a) With honesty and truth;
  - b) With respect and concern;

- c) As they would like to be treated!
- 6. They need to have their horizons broaden through varied experiences in life.
- 7. They need to be challenged to set and achieve worthwhile goals in life.
- 8. They need to have help from parents to build good self-esteem and confidence in themselves.
- 9. They need help to deal with peer pressure.
- 10. They need help to build a strong faith in God.

It is important that parents be in charge! They are the more experienced, more mature, and more knowledgeable. And yet, all the time parents are trying to work themselves out of a job:

- a) By preparing the child to handle responsibilities in real life;
- b) Teaching skills that help them to become independent;
- c) Teaching them courage, a sense of responsibility, willingness to cooperate, ability to communicate, and the ability to make good decisions.

It is important that children are taught to respect their parents (Proverbs 19:26; 20:20; 30:17, etc.). A lack of respect will boil over into other areas.

Failure to give proper discipline shows a lack of love (Proverbs 13:24; 2:11-12; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15, 17). God has warned parents about indulging their children. A child has a right to be disciplined by parents when needed. When we fail to do so:

- a) We permit selfishness, envy, and anger to control their lives.
- b) Instead of helping them, we hurt them.
- c) Instead of loving them, we hate them. (Don't flatter yourself by saying: "*Oh, I love my child too much to discipline*")—No! God says you hate your child! He deserves better of you!
- d) The child can become cruel, rude, overbearing, and untruthful. A child deserves to be disciplined to save his soul from death. A parent who will not do so is not a wise parent nor a loving parent.

What if they do not appreciate our teaching, training and discipline? That is then their problem...when we have done the best we can in love. They make the choice to accept or reject our efforts. But they have a right to be taught, trained, and disciplined for here and eternity.

**CHILDREN HAVE A RIGHT  
TO HAVE PROPER PARENTAL EXAMPLES SET BEFORE THEM!**

We know the importance of examples not only from everyday life with people, but from straight-forward Biblical teaching (1 Peter 2:21; 1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Timothy 4:12, etc.). One of the greatest institutions is the home. One of its most effective tools of teaching is a godly example by parents. Children have a God-given right to expect this of their parents. Evaluate the listing that follows:

- a) Parents who respect God, Christ, the Church, the Word of God, Messengers of God, etc.
- b) Parents who have godly attitudes and godly lives.
- c) Parents who are not hypocrites or always complaining about others.
- d) Parents who serve as a positive model—not a negative one. An unfaithful father not only can destroy his marriage, but teach his daughter to distrust men and teach his son to doubt the desirability of a family.

e) Parents need to show proper masculine and feminine roles in the family (Leadership and submissiveness).

Parents can either build or destroy their children's lives by their examples. A 17-year-old delinquent girl out west told her probation officer that she had never known a day when her parents did not fight. Such is sad!

### **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

Children have a right to be (1) wanted and loved; (2) provided for; (3) taught, trained, and disciplined to be prepared for life; and (4) proper examples set before them! When parents have done the best they can in love and children do not appreciate nor accept what parents try to do, then the burden is upon the child. One thing for sure...they may chose not to follow the way they were taught and examples set before them; but, they won't find it easy to put aside these things without dealing with their consciences!

### **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

#### **True or False**

- 1. Children have rights just like parents or adult do.**
- 2. Children who are denied their basic rights can grow up to be a nuisance to society!**
- 3. Grandchildren are said to be the crown of old men and the glory of their fathers.**
- 4. Parents ought to consider the desires of their children when providing things for them.**
- 5. Children given too much will usually want more and more—not appreciating what they do have.**
- 6. Parents who neglect proper training of their children often wind up being the losers.**
- 7. Children taught and trained early in life usually wind up being spoiled.**
- 8. Children not taught and trained properly could wind up becoming cruel, rude, overbearing and untruthful.**
- 9. Examples are critical for children to learn by.**
- 10. Masculine and Feminine roles need to be learned in the home by example.**

## Lesson Seven

***“Will You Avoid the Immorality Trap?”***

(Proverbs 5:1-13)

Two young people approached a friend that they felt they could trust. They had a problem and needed to talk with someone that could help them decide what to do about it. They had gone to a movie that had explicit sex scenes in it. After they had gotten back to their car, their excitement began to be expressed to one another that resulting in their committing “fornication” (sexual immorality). Unfortunately, this is not an isolated scene anymore. These two young people had fallen snare to the immorality trap. These are avenues of allurements that lead into sin and shame. These allurements are the Devil’s way of ensnaring us in sin. It is the purpose of this lesson to look at and evaluate some of these snares.

**THE ALLUREMENT OF IMMODESTY**

Why does God give specific instructions to women to be modest women (1 Timothy 2:9)? This would involve not only how she conducts herself, but as well how she dresses herself. Her main emphasis should be the dressing up of the inner person. The wise man in Proverbs 5:1-13 gives warning to avoid the immoral woman because the dangers are real. Immodest dress is suggestive, alluring to men, and designed to ensnare. To allow one’s self to be allured into sin will lead to death (spiritual separation from God—Isaiah 59:1-2). One cannot get caught up in this allurements without being burned (suffering the consequences—Proverbs 5:22-23).

**THE ALLUREMENT OF RATIONALIZATION**

God gives strong warnings about sexual immorality: ***“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”*** (Hebrews 13:4). Such activities are of the flesh and will end in eternal separation from God unless repented and turned from (Galatians 5:19-21).

Our age doesn’t like such “crude terms” as: **whore, harlot, immoral, unclean, etc.** It puts guilt trips on people. So we rationalize around the Word of God and give new names such as: **“situation ethics,” “loving relationships,” “new freedom,” etc.** By the time we get through we have taken the things that the Bible plainly condemns as being sinful and wrong and make them good and right. How? The situation makes it okay. Or, “I love him or her and its okay if I love them.” Sin is justified in the name of so-called “love!” By this method, both young and old are allured by rationalization into open sin and feel justified (or at least say they do). Breaking up marriages and remarrying is justified by rationalization. Almost any sin is made to appear right. Fornication outside of marriage is alright if you are on the pill and don’t get pregnant; or if it doesn’t hurt anyone, etc. It is okay to get too familiar, too loose—and if you slip, its okay too! This is an allurements into a death trap (Proverbs 6:32-33; 2 Timothy 2:22; Proverbs 5:8-9, etc.).

Even homosexuality is justified on the basis of rationalization—not Scripture. For the Scriptures plainly condemn such as rebellion against the natural and against the Will of God (Romans 1:24-27). It is justified by such things as:

- a) “It doesn’t hurt anyone.”
- b) “It is between two consenting adults.”
- c) “It is a sickness the person can’t help.”
- d) “I was just made this way.”

But in spite of the fact that the Scriptures strongly condemns such activity, **it is harmful to people.** Those who participate in such become sick in mind and soul. Their bodies can become diseased. It can destroy one’s relationship with God (if they ever had one). And...people can turn from this sin and be forgiven upon their repentance and obedience to God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Young people, **watch carefully for those rationalizations.** They are the Devil’s death trap!

### THE ALLUREMENT OF EROTIC PROMOTERS

What are they? Galatians 5:21 gives a listing of some of them: **carousing, partying, drinking bouts** that are designed to promote lustfulness. Also, a listing is also given in 1 Peter 4:3 of things that lead to death: **lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.** Lewdness or licentiousness is usually defined as indecent bodily movements designed to promote lustfulness—erotic promoters! Some of the most obvious today are: **pornographic literature, films, movies, TV programs, etc.** The designed purpose of these things are to incite to lustfulness. They are designed to fire-up sexual desires to a high pitch to get a thrill out of it. They try to stimulate erotic thoughts, lustful desires, and sexual fantasies. We must constantly be reminded that sexual enjoyment is acceptable only in marriage.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Parents need to realize that there is a great deal of confusion among young people about what is normal, right and expected. We must not fail our children by doing a lousy job of teaching them or by being too loose on them and giving them too much freedom. Yes! God can forgive these sins! But He does so with the demand: **“Go and leave your life of sin”** (John 8:11). But the consequences of sin will leave its mark on our souls. Young people need to be made fully aware that:

- a) The immorality trap is a dead-end approach to life and responsibility.
- b) It creates a world where gratification of self becomes an end in itself.
- c) It ignores the harsh realities of **guilt, unwanted babies, and heartaches.**
- d) It has no place for commitment to one another, respect of one another, or a place for God and His Will in our lives.

Young people, we plead with you not to take these warnings lightly—but seriously. Be sure that your life is committed to God’s way of living. Study on these things will continue in the next lesson entitled: **“Can You Flee Youthful Lust?”**

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

#### True or False

- \_\_\_ 1. People justify committing fornication in the name of “love.”
- \_\_\_ 2. Warnings against the immoral woman in Proverbs 5 seems to be one-sided.

- \_\_\_ 3. Engaging in sexual enjoyment outside of marriage is not altogether condemned.
- \_\_\_ 4. Fornication and adultery are both wrong and need to be repented of—turned from!
- \_\_\_ 5. Homosexuality can be repented of and be turned from to receive the forgiveness of God.
- \_\_\_ 6. Erotic promoters are anything that promotes the desire to fulfill our sexual desires.
- \_\_\_ 7. Pornographic literature, films, or movies are alright to see if you don't give in to the seduction.
- \_\_\_ 8. To rationalize is to try to salve our conscience because of something we do that is called sin by God.
- \_\_\_ 9. Indecent bodily movements are a “mastered art form” that should not be condemned.
- \_\_\_ 10. Immodest dress is suggestive, alluring, and designed to create sexual desires.

## Lesson Eight

**“Can You Flee Youthful Lust?”**

(2 Timothy 2:22; 1 John 2:15-17)

**“Flee Youthful Lust!”** Why the warning? And why call it “youthful lust?” Is it because our sexual desires are the strongest in our youth? It is so advocated from research and from experience. Thus, the warning for youth to deal with “youthful desires” should come at no surprise to anyone. And another obvious reason is that the younger we face such dangers, the less prepared we are to properly deal with such. It has been suggested that if children date as young as 12 years old, that there is a 90% change of sexual involvement. They are less able to say no and less able to weigh the consequences. The dangers are constantly being illustrated to parents by surveys that are taken. All of them now show that a high percentage of teenagers have had sexual relationships outside of marriage and that a large percentage of them become pregnant and usually have an abortion. And, that this is one of the reasons for such a high divorce rate of teen marriages.

When the question is asked teens why so many of them get involved sexually, their answers are as follows:

- a) Lack of a moral standard—no real teaching for guidance.
- b) Peer pressure—expected behavior to be accepted among the group.
- c) A sense of rebellion against parents.
- d) Curiosity and experimenting.
- e) The exciting sensations that are involved.
- f) Encouragement by what is seen in movies or on TV or in pornographic materials.
- g) Drugs and alcohol.
- h) Compromising situations—it is easy to get too involved to turn back.
- i) Easy birth control.
- j) Macho, popularity, desirability concept.
- k) Being pushed to grow up too soon—date too young.

**THE NEED TO MAKE DISTINCTION BETWEEN  
LOVE AND LUST!**

“Love” is often cited as the reason for sexual involvement! A news commentator was making some observations about the sexual assault trial of Kennedy Smith. She stated that a clarification was badly needed in the trial. She said there was a need for a clear-cut distinction between “love” and “lust.” We agree whole-heartedly with such an observation, and the Scriptures do make the distinction clear.

**LUST.** Young people are warned to flee youthful lust, so this must be bad. James tells us that a person is drawn into sin by giving in to his own desires and enticement 1:14-15). The Apostle Peter warns: **“abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.”** (1 Peter 2:11). We are warned not to give in to evil or wrong desires or passions that lead to sin. What are some things that promote lust:

- a) A loose woman (Proverbs 6:20-26).
  - Her flattery with her tongue to entice.

- Using her beauty to ensnare another.
  - Use of her fluttering eyelids.
- b) Wrong place (Proverbs 7:6-9)
- The man is called a simple one because he was void of understanding.
  - He was easy pickings.
  - In the darkness—hidden.
- c) Exposing one's self (like Bathsheba—2 Samuel 7:1-5)
- Took a bath where she could be seen.
  - Brought on temptation that led to open sin.
  - 1 Timothy 2:9-10
- d) Wicked men and their wives (Pornography, indecent movies, indecent songs, etc.)

The Christian young person is warned to flee such because the dangers are real! They are to run from it like Joseph ran from the house when his master's wife tried to entice him (Genesis 39:6-12). The Devil uses three avenues to tempt us into sin: The lust of the Flesh, the lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life (1 John 2:15-17).

**LOVE**. The Bible defines it as the greatest of all virtues (1 Corinthians 13:13; 2 Peter 1:5-8). The writer of 1 Corinthians illustrates what love will do (13:4-8). But the word "love" needs to be defined and clarified as follows:

- a) **EROS**. Erotic—physical sexual attraction (what some people call love is really lust).
- b) **STORGE**. Natural affection or family affection—closeness through kinship.
- c) **PHILEO**. Friendship, companionship, a natural closeness or affection for another.
- d) **AGAPE**. Highest concept of love—the love that God has shown to man—deep concern for the welfare of another.

True love or friendship will not do harm to the other person, nor will he violate their person. He will not cause the other person to commit sin or lead into sin. He will want the best for that person. But a person that does not love will want to satisfy his "lust" or "passions." Be sure you make the distinction between the two: love or lust!

### **WHY THE WARNING TO FLEE YOUTHFUL LUST?**

In the first place, it is because God loves us and wants to protect us from all kinds of dangers such as:

- a) All kinds of sexual diseases.
- b) To protect us from bad memories to haunt us the rest of our lives.
- c) To avoid confusion in our lives.
- d) The problem of breaking off relationships that never should have been started.
- e) To avoid an addictive involvement in sex outside of marriage.

In the second place, our parents are desirous of protecting us as well from these dangers. They actually try to convince us to stay away from those basic things that lead to entrapment, addiction, and ruination of our lives. Following are some examples:

- a) "Don't smoke." Why?
  - They know that there is an addictiveness connected with such.
  - There are also dangers of sickness and an early death.
  - And there are other complications.

- You may escape the worse of the consequences, but not all of them.
  - Parents want to protect us from these possibilities.
- b) “Don’t drink.” Why?
- They know it can be addictive with some people to the point of becoming alcoholics.
  - They know some of the very bad consequences of drinking that is illustrated all about us.
  - So, parents want to protect us from these possibilities.
- c) “Don’t look at pornography (books, videos, movies, magazines, etc.) Why?
- Because of the dangers that these things lead to.
  - They also can become addictive with bad results.
  - It is possible that it can lead to fornication or a rush into a bad marriage.
  - Parents want to protect us.

Obviously, there are other things that could be listed as well. But, hopefully, we can see that both God and parents are concerned for our well-being and happiness, as well as our eternal destiny. So, why not **flee youthful lust!**

### SOME PRACTICAL AND HELPFUL HINTS

**1. Be positive and firm in your resolve to flee youthful lust.** God can give us the strength we need to do so (Philippians 4:13). Take a stand for that which is right, wholesome, and good. Don’t leave room for doubt in other peoples’ minds. Don’t use expressions like: *“No, not yet,”* or *“No, I don’t feel like it just now.”* This leaves the door open for later temptations and misunderstanding on the part of others.

**2. Flee chances of lustful situation.** God warns us to flee! Don’t linger, don’t be indecisive, and don’t give opportunity to further temptation. There is a saying that warns of the danger of not fleeing: *“Look and you are hooked.”* The appetizer only indicates that the main course comes later.

**3. Write out your convictions to serve you for the future.** Determine when you will and will not date. Determine whom you will date—the kind of person you want to date. Determine how far you will go with your date. Write it down and stick with it.

**4. By all means, don’t leave wrong impressions.** Don’t leave the idea in other peoples’ mind that you might consider doing something later that is wrong. When you say “NO”—mean it! Dress modestly and thereby make a statement of your convictions by how you dress and conduct yourself.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The wise man states: *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”* (Proverbs 1:7). Don’t be foolish! Don’t think of Paul’s warning to flee youthful lust as something to be laughed at and passed off lightly. Fear God! Give heed to His warnings!

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

**True or False**

- 1. There is no distinction between “natural desires” and “lust.”**
- 2. The only real reason why youth people indulge in sexual activity is because of the exciting sensations.**
- 3. Failure to make a distinction between love and lust has led to many evils.**
- 4. A young person that dates as early as 12 years old stand a 90% chance of engaging in sexual activity.**
- 5. Dressing down one’s self can lead to lustfulness on the part of the man in particular.**
- 6. Joseph made it very clear that fleeing is the best reaction to temptation to lustfulness.**
- 7. True love for a person will certainly not entice them to commit sin.**
- 8. One of the problems of giving in to youthful lust is the bad memories to haunt us.**
- 9. Parents are too restrictive when they tell us not to Smoke, Drink, or look at Pornography.**
- 10. We can leave the wrong impression if we don’t say a firm “NO” to temptation.**

## Lesson Nine

***“How Wisely do I choose my Friends?”*****(Proverbs 1:7-19)**

The choosing of one’s friends is critical in one’s life—especially youth! It is significant that the first warnings given in the book of Proverbs is about choosing proper friends with which to associate. It strongly emphasizes that choosing the right friends and good can come, but choose the wrong friends and evil can come. In this lesson, we need to make a distinction between friends and acquaintances.

a) Acquaintances:

- Are not necessarily friends, but they can be.
- You know them, you may be around them at times, but they are not necessarily friends.
- You know a lot of boys and girls at school which are acquaintances, but not friends.

b) Friends:

- These are close and intimate acquaintances usually.
- They become comrades, buddies, and confidants—with whom you enjoy very close fellowship.
- It is these people that you feel comfortable around.
- It is these people that you can “tell all” to.

In this lesson, we want to explore some ideas on why we should choose our friends wisely.

**BECAUSE OF WHAT THEY HAVE TO OFFER****1. Proverbs 17:17—“*A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*”**

- a) A friend loves in prosperity or adversity.
- b) He is more than a friend in time of need.
- c) His friendship does not wear thin with years.
- d) It can even outlive unworthy treatment.

**2. Proverbs 18:24—“*There are friends who pretend to be friends, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.*”**

- a) David and Jonathan had this kind of friendship.
- b) They cared about each other—even when they should have been enemies.
- c) A friend sticks by our side through thick and thin!

**3. Proverbs 27:6—“*Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.*”**

- a) True friendship will dare to wound when for the welfare of a friend.
- b) But a superficial friend will flatter and gloss over—showing a lack of real concern.
- c) True friendship is shown when such a testing time comes.

**4. Proverbs 27:9—“*Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so does the sweetness of a man’s friend by hearty counsel.*”**

- a) Giving advice sincerely from the heart comes from a true friend.
- b) To be able to talk with someone who will listen, understand, and seek our well-being is a true friend.

Who among us does not need such friendship—both young and old? Such is a delight, a pleasure and makes life enjoyable. Because of the way we are made, we need such. We need to seek out such friends among both young and old. Even young people need older persons with whom they can be friends and with whom they can talk and counsel. They need such people that can be depended upon when the need is there.

### **BECAUSE FRIENDS INFLUENCE FRIENDS**

It is usually our friends that we allow to influence us the most. The disciples of Jesus were greatly influenced by Him (John 15:14-15). They were so influenced by Him that they gave their lives for him (John 15:13). Friends are the closest people to us. We are together more. We reveal more of ourselves to our friends. They are probably the strongest influences in our lives besides our parents...and obviously God! And since this is true, we certainly need to evaluate our friendships:

- a) Have we chosen them wisely?
- b) Are they influencing us away from the right path?
- c) Are we put in a position of choosing between their friendships and doing wrong?
- d) Do they try to interfere with my relationship to my parents or to God?

The warning has been given us: ***“evil companions corrupt good morals (habits).”*** We need to watch for signs that they may be influencing us in the wrong way and leave their fellowship.

### **BECAUSE WE NEED FRIENDS**

**1. We need good, true friends who really care.** We need friends who are willing to show their concern (Galatians 6:2), who have a listening ear (James 5:16), and one to whom I can tell my problems to and know it will go no farther. I need a friend who really cares when I am in danger of straying away from the right (Galatians 6:1).

**2. We need friendships that are good and wholesome.** We need friends that are helpful and not hindering (Ephesians 5:11). We need friends that will help me not to overrate myself and my strength (1 Corinthians 10:12). We need friends that really want us to go to heaven someday.

**3. The greatest friend that we need is Jesus!** He wants to be our friend. He has already proven his great, loving, and merciful friendship (John 15:13). His friendship has much to offer us not only in this life, but in the life to come. He is understanding, available, dependable, faithful, trustworthy, etc. There is not a greater friend that one can have than Jesus.

### **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

How good of a job are we doing in choosing our friends? Have we shown wisdom, good judgment, and proper concern? But another side of the picture is very important—**What kind of a friend am I?** We show our friendship to others by our actions. He said that we could show our friendship to Him by keeping His commandments (John 15:14).

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

**True or False**

1. Friends and acquaintances are not really the same thing, but can be.
2. There is only one difference between a friend and an acquaintance.
3. A friend will love us at all times, even when we may mistreat him.
4. David and Jonathan (in the Old Testament) were examples of true friends.
5. Friends are 3<sup>rd</sup> in line as being the greater influences on our lives.
6. Friends who influence us in the wrong direction are not really our friends.
7. A friend can expect me to bear my deepest soul to him.
8. Our parents are our greatest friends.
9. A most important question is: what kind of a friend are we?
10. We prove our friendship to Jesus by keeping His commandments.

## Lesson Ten

***“Will You Listen to David’s Challenges  
to Youth?”*****(1 Samuel 17:20-54)**

The church faced great challenges when it first began; and, within some 30 years its mission to carry the Gospel to all the world had been generally accomplished (Colossians 1:23). But the church in every age has its great challenges:

- a) To see that every Christian is well-grounded in the faith.
- b) To develop a visionary and evangelistic outlook.
- c) To encourage men and women to devote their lives to the furtherance of the Cause of Christ.
- d) To develop a warm and loving fellowship that causes people to want to belong.
- e) To build strong centers to radiate the Gospel to others.
- f) To develop greater and better leadership with great vision.
- g) etc.

One of the greatest resources to accomplish these things is our youth! But they must be challenged, developed, and equipped for these great tasks. The primary purpose of this lesson is to place David’s challenge before our youth so that they will be challenge to be a part of these things above. And, that we older ones may be a source of encouragement to them as well as an example in word and deed.

We want to challenge our youth with the simple story of David and Goliath as found in 1 Samuel 17:20-54. Israel was engaged in battle off and on with the Philistines. There was a lull in the battle because of the challenge by the giant Goliath. No one in Israel would accept the challenge to do individual battle with him. David comes to where the army of Israel was encamped to bring food and supplies for his brothers. Upon hearing the challenge by Goliath, he is amazed that no one would accept the challenge. He accepted it and was able to defeat him with his slingshot and a rock. From this simple story there are some very challenging concepts.

**THE CHALLENGES OF DAVID**

**1. The Challenge to feel responsibility keenly (1 Sam. 17:33).** What could a youth do in a crisis like this? This was a man’s job, not a boy’s! However, we ask: *“Who had the faith needed to do the job—men or a young man?” “Who killed the giant—men or a young man?”* There are some things youth cannot do, but don’t mark them off! Every age of mankind has its own peculiar challenges and responsibilities. You should never say: *“I am too young to have responsibility!”* God records some young people who answered great challenges: JOSEPH, DANIEL, THE 3 HEBREW YOUNG MEN WITH DANIEL, JOSIAH, etc. It was said of Josiah: ***“For in the eighth year of his reign (16 years old), while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth (20 years old) year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.”*** (2 Chron. 34:3). You

have to know something about the background to realize what a courageous and brave thing that King Josiah was doing (in his youth). He led his people in one of the great restoration movements known among them. *“And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.”* Talk about feeling responsibility—he did! He was concerned for His people and their response to God David felt that same responsibility.

**2. The Challenge to develop a great faith in God (1 Sam. 17:37).** Faith is vital! Without a strong faith, our enemies are too great for us—just like the rest of the Israelites who were afraid and fearful. Young David achieved because he had an unswerving faith in God. The Apostle John said: *“And this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith!”* (5:4). It is true for youth as well as for adults.

- 1) There is no greater person to believe in than Jesus, the Son of God.
- 2) There is no greater life to follow after than the life of Jesus Christ.
- 3) There are no teachings greater to believe in than the teachings of Christ.

**3. The Challenge to develop an active involvement (1 Sam. 17:32).** David could not sit on the sidelines and shake in fear like the rest. He saw the need and responded to it. He got involved actively. The results were electrifying for all. Our youth must see the need to get involved! Christianity not only involves abstaining from sinful practices, but it is a doing religion. James said: *“To him that knows to do good and does it not, to him it is sin.”* (4:17). Youth must not be satisfied with just being against things that are wrong; but, they also need to do those things that are right. Youth need to be challenged to give themselves without reservation to serve King Jesus.

- 1) There is no greater person to be involved with than Jesus Christ.
- 2) There is no greater cause to be devoted to than Christianity.

**4. The Challenge to be willing to put their lives on the line (1 Sam. 19:5).** David got involved—even to the point of putting his life on the line. God’s honor and God’s name was at stake—he had to uphold both!

- 1) Youth need to be challenged to respect God and His Name like David.
- 2) Not to use His name lightly or in vain.
- 3) Be willing to give their very being to uphold His Name.
- 4) Be willing to serve Him, no matter what the cost!
- 5) To realize: *“If a thing is not worth dying for, it is not worth living for.”*

Young people, there is not greater name to honor, respect, and to uphold than the Name of God. There is no greater One to whom to devote your life in service than He.

**5. The Challenge to realize the Battle is the Lord’s (1 Sam. 17:47).** The battle and the outcome is the Lord’s. We just need to have sufficient faith to put ourselves into His hands to be used. We are His soldiers and He is our captain. Today, we have our giants to fight as well: Atheism, Materialism, Religious Division and Confusion, Sensualism, Immorality, Indifference, Ungodliness, and Unrighteousness. But it is the Lord’s battle and we need to give recognition to such as David did: *“You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted.”* (17:45). Our success, as David’s, depends upon the Lord and not flesh. *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do*

*not war after the flesh: (for our weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds”.*” (2 Cor. 10:3-4). What greater commander could we fight under than God? What greater battle could we be involved in than the one for Truth and Righteousness?

**6. The Challenge to behave wisely (1 Sam. 18:5).** Because David conducted himself wisely, God blessed and prospered him in all his ways (18:14). But, the important things that needs to recognized is that:

- 1) He did this in the midst of trying circumstances.
- 2) He had to respect an authority that was weak and ungodly at times.
- 3) He had to deal with expressed envy against him from the King.
- 4) He had to deal with great popularity in a humble way.

How much we need youth who can behave themselves wisely before others....especially, in all kinds of situations and trying circumstances.

**7. The Challenge to prevail in the battle of life (1 Sam. 17:50).** He not only prevailed in the battle with Goliath, but in other battles as well. He is referred to as *“a man after God’s own heart.”* In a general sense he *“did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that He commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.”* (1 Kings 15:5). Youth needs to be challenged to live and fight the battle of life wisely; so that the same great concepts could be said of their lives by God as well! But most of all to be able to say as did the Apostle Paul: *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith....*” (2 Tim. 4:7).

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The future of the church will look very bright if our young men and women can be challenged to live like David and who will be willing to give themselves wholly to God; and, especially, if they will step forward to meet the challenge to be trained to be effective servants of God. May God grant to our youth the strength and wisdom to meet these challenges in their lives—as well as we adults!

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

**True or False**

1. God had a lot of David’s life recorded so that he could be an inspiration to us even today.
2. David was probably a older teenager when he met Goliath in battle.
3. Josiah was 16 years old when he began to seek after God with all his heart.
4. Daniel was probably 17 years old when he was take captive and put to the test by what foods were placed before him.
5. The three Hebrew young men were about the same age when they were thrown in the furnace of fire.
6. David’s faith in God’s care had been tested before the met with Goliath.

\_\_\_7. The sacrilegious reference to God's Name and Honor was what caused David to go into

battle against Goliath.

\_\_\_8. The Bible teaches: "If a thing is not worth dying for, it is not worth living for."

\_\_\_9. The battle is the Lord's, we are just the person he works through.

\_\_\_10. It is said of David that his life was one of wise decisions.

## Lesson Eleven

**“Will You Set High Goals for Your Life?”****(Proverbs 6:6-8)**

Can you imagine the following happening? The Captain’s voice comes over a loud-speaker of a big JET PLANE: *“Now there’s no cause for alarm, but we felt you should know that for the last 3 hours we have been flying without the benefit of a radio, compass, radar, or navigational beam. We are lost! I am not sure where we are or where we are going, but we sure are making good time.”* Many go through life making excellent time, but have no idea of where they are going. They are drifting with the tide and whichever way it flows, they go!

To drift with the tide is easy to do. It takes no real effort. It doesn’t even require a backbone, courage, or strength of character. There is no real challenge in such actions. But you can’t be like the ANT and drift with the tide! (Proverbs 6:6-8). To live a life of diligence, courage, and character requires much effort. To live such a life successfully requires setting High Goals for one’s life. Are you willing to set high goals for your life?

**WHY IS SETTING HIGH GOALS SUCH A CHALLENGE?**

**1. Because it requires that we have a major focus for our life.** Jesus stated it clearly in Matthew 6:24: *“No man can serve two masters....”* We either focus on God and His Will for our life or the only other one is upon mammon—this world and what it has to offer us. James warns that a double-minded man won’t get the job done (James 1:8). Such a person is too easily pulled aside. We need to focus—to trust fully in one and go after it. It is the one-minded person that gets what he goes after (Phil. 3:13-14). We need to focus on the highest goal of life—to **serve God!**

So many things are calling for our attention. It is so easy to be satisfied with the lesser goals of life. If we are to sort out from among the many to arrive at the most important thing, it will require: (1) Time, thought, and prayer; (2) To take stock of our abilities and interests; and (3) To take into consideration the Wisdom of God. Happy is the young person that can focus in on one major purpose or objective for his life.

**2. Because it requires that we successfully deal with failure.** We all fail at one or more things we try; so, how do we handle this failure (Rom. 3:19-23)? We all fail to live up to the Law of God! Does that mean there is no hope for us? If we dwell on our failures, there is no room for hope. We need hope and we need to see the possibilities. Setting High Goals automatically looks for success, not failure! Jesus has given us every reason for believing that we can reach high goals in life (Phil. 4:13; Rom. 8:37).

**3. Because such requires persistence.** If an unjust judge (Luke 18:1-8) will give into a just request after awhile, how much more can we expect God to do so. Jesus is emphasizing the value of persistence in an undertaking. Paul’s statement illustrates the point (Phil. 4:13). Persistence requires:

- 1) Control of our thoughts, our time, and our efforts.
- 2) It means I will have to be selective in my involvements.

3) It is to set high goals and hang in there—day after day!

4) One man expressed it: *“Hang on until you wear out the demons of discouragement.”* Failure is only permanent when we allow it to be so!

**4. Because it requires that we take one step at a time.** It is not accomplished over-night. It is like Jesus illustrates in Luke 9:51—Jesus set his face steadfastly to go up to Jerusalem. But how long did it take him to get there? It wasn't the next day—that is for sure! He set His goal—taking one step at a time to fulfill His goal. And, when these steps may not be convenient, what then? We still must take one step at a time. We act, whether convenient or not! The one that takes the giant leap shows his impatience and usually missing the mark. We have a song we sing: *“One Step at a Time, Dear Savior.”*

### **IF HIGH GOALS ARE SUCH A CHALLENGE— WHY SHOULD I WANT TO HAVE THEM?**

**1. Because God wants me to be challenged to do my best.** It is obvious that most of us would not live up to our full potential without challenges. We would be content to live on a carnal level when we are perfectly capable of living on a high spiritual level (Rom. 8:6). Meeting and dealing with challenges has value to my life (1 Cor. 15:58; Phil. 3:14, 9-11). This kind of life has great rewards—here and hereafter!

**2. Because it gives meaning, purpose, and direction to my life.** I am here on this earth for some purpose. I need to find what it is and strive to accomplish it. Goals are a way of saying:

- a) I have found that purpose!
- b) I have direction now for my life!
- c) I have meaning for my existence!

Why do parents ask, or even friends, *“What do you want to be or do when you grow up?”* Is this just a conversational pierce; or, is it a recognition that all of us need goals for our lives. Here are some thoughts worth repeating:

- a) *“Aimlessness is an invitation to misery.”*
- b) *“Without a purpose, life is meaningless, empty and open to all kinds of worries, fears, and depression.”*
- c) *“On the heels of an empty life follow the shadows of dullness, defeat, and self-rejection.”*

These sayings are just another way of saying that I need purpose and direction for my life. Without such, I will have worries, fears, depressions, dullness, defeat, and self-rejection.

If you were to ask the Captain of a ship what his next destination is, he could tell you quickly and easily. He knows where he is going. He knows how long it will take to get there. He knows what is involved in getting there. Which ship would you like to be on: (1) One that the Captain knows where he is going and why; or (2) One with no destination? Which ship represents your life? Jesus came with one major goal in life—to die to redeem mankind. All other activities were merely a means to that one great goal. We, too, both young and old, need a major goal for our lives and see that all other activities are a means to that end.

**3. Because it will help me make better use of my time, talent, and energies.** Jesus had His major goal and stated: *“I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming*

*when no one can work.*” (John 9:4). I can either waste my time and energies on non-essentials; or, I can spend them on accomplishing the great goal for my life. Jesus knew where He was going—do we? He focused all His energies to accomplish His goal—are we? His strength, abilities, talents, time were used wisely—are our’s? The effectiveness of His life is obvious—is our’s?

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We need to choose wisely our major focus for our lives. We then need to set goals worthy of the name of Christ (whom we serve). Will it be said of us, as of the mountain climber, *“He died climbing?”*

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

#### True or False

- \_\_\_ 1. It is easy to be satisfied with the easier or lesser goals in life.
- \_\_\_ 2. All people need goals, but more so, one special goal that is supreme.
- \_\_\_ 3. Jesus tells us that we have a choice of two major goals: God or Mammon.
- \_\_\_ 4. How we deal with failure will determine how we accomplish our goals.
- \_\_\_ 5. Failure is only permanent when we allow it to be.
- \_\_\_ 6. The impatient to get there usually winds up missing the mark.
- \_\_\_ 7. There is value to setting goals and either attaining them or missing them.
- \_\_\_ 8. I can feel satisfied without doing my best in life.
- \_\_\_ 9. Purpose for living is not all that important in accomplishing goals.
- \_\_\_ 10. Using my abilities, talents, and time are necessarily involved in reaching goals.

## Lesson Twelve

***“Will You Answer the Call to Commitment?”*****(John 6:59-68)**

As youth, you are coming into your fullness of powers and abilities. You have a great deal to offer to someone or something. As a general rule, you will commit your life to someone or something. The question is—to whom or to what will you commit your life? Various ones are calling for your commitment!

a) **God is calling for it.** *“Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth....”*

(Ecclesiastes 12:1). *“Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.”*

(Romans 12:1).

b) **The Devil is calling for it.** *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as*

*a*

*roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour.”* (1 Peter 5:8).

c) **Sins of all kinds are calling for it.** They are alluring, pleasant, and offer pleasures

(Hebrews 11:25).

And, we would like to add, we are calling out to you—*“Commit your life and heart to God!”* (Psalm 37:5). Who has more right to our hearts and lives than God? Give your youth and your entire life to Him!

**WHAT THIS COMMITMENT IS NOT!**

**1. It is not just religious involvement!** A person can be involved in things, but not committed to them. There was a “supposed” conversation between a Pig and a Chicken about who is the most committed to serving mankind. The Chicken said: *“I furnish him eggs every morning.”* The Pig quickly added: *“But in order for him to have ham with his eggs, I have to give myself.”* The Chicken was involved, but the Pig was committed! The church at Laodicea was involved in religious activities, but not really committed to God (Revelation 3:15-16).

Many of the early Christians were involved and committed! They gave up their former religious beliefs and connections. They gave of their possessions and of themselves freely. They were willing to endure persecution, rather than deny Christ. They even gave their lives for their belief. They were committed to something worth sacrificing, suffering, and even dying for.

**2. It is not a divided commitment!** A choice must be made—*“...you cannot serve God and Mammon.”* (Matthew 6:24). *“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”* (Matthew 16:24). We cannot go in two different directions. Jesus said: *“You are for me or against me!”* (Matthew 12:30). Joshua put it clearly: *“Choose you this day whom you will serve....”* (Joshua 24:15). We encourage you to commit your ways to the Lord with an undivided loyalty.

**THIS COMMITMENT IS TO JESUS AS LORD!**

Peter’s sermon in Acts 2 makes it very clear that we are to commit to Jesus as Lord (2:36). He confronted the Jews with the idea that Jesus is either Lord and Christ; or, He is just another

deceiver! He was calling for them to make a decision. In the words of Pilate: ***“What shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?”***

For Jesus to be Lord, we must die to self and sin! We no longer live, but Christ must live, reign, and direct my life from now on (Galatians 2:20). What does the death of Jesus mean to you?

- a) Was it just the death of another innocent man (a good man)?
- b) Was it just a miscarriage of justice that we see all the time?
- c) Or, was this death unique among deaths?
- d) Was it a death that is able to make us free?
- e) Was it a death that shows commitment to me (to save me)?
- f) And do I realize that it is also calling for my own death “to self”—to be committed to Jesus as Lord? (Matthew 16:24).

Jesus’ Lordship requires submission to Him as Lord (Luke 6:46). It is more than mere words. It means surrender of our wills to Jesus’ will. It is to do what He wants, not what I want. Peter was put to the test and failed! He bragged about his commitment to Jesus (Matthew 26:33, 35), and when the time came, he went back on his word. Peter had true commitment in word, but not in deed. What do we have?

### **THE REWARDS OF COMMITMENT TO CHRIST**

In order to fully appreciate what Jesus offers to us, we need to see some of the promises that He has made to those who will commit their ways to him:

- a) Salvation from the just penalty of our sins (Acts 2:38).
- b) Escape of eternal torment for my sins (Matthew 25:46).
- c) Guidance for a happy and useful life (John 15:5).
- d) Help in making critical decisions (James 1:5; 3:17-18).
- e) Meaning and purpose for my life that is uplifting and challenging (Matthew 16:25-26).
- f) Hope of an eternal reward with God that is far beyond anything this world has to offer (1 Corinthians 2:9).

But in addition to the above, look at the value of commitment to Jesus now!

- a) You avoid many sins that bring terrible consequences—even if forgiven (Galatians 6:7-8).
- b) You will live a happier life—not one wasted in riotous living (Matthew 5:1-12).
- c) You can be helpful to others even in your young years (Eccl. 12:1).
- d) You will glorify your Maker properly, even in your youth (1 Corinthians 10:31).

But most of all—to whom else can you turn for such blessings? Jesus questioned His Apostles—***“Will you also leave Me?”*** Peter’s answer is right on the point: ***Lord, to whom else can we go, You have the words of eternal life!”*** Young people:

- a) To whom else can you go for salvation?
- b) To whom else can you turn for so much value?
- c) To whom else can you turn for a CAUSE worth living and dying for?
- d) Who else deserves your gratitude, devotion, and loyalty more than Jesus?
- e) To what person can you turn and follow that is greater than Jesus, the Son of God?

f) For whom else can you give up your life and receive so great a reward?

### **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

Young people, Jesus is calling you to follow Him—to be committed to His ways, His truth, His church, and His people. Have you committed your life to:

- a) The greatest person—The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God?
- b) The greatest cause—The Cause of Jesus Christ?
- c) The greatest reward—Eternal Life with God?

### **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

#### **True or False**

- \_\_\_ **1. The call for commitment comes from many sources.**
- \_\_\_ **2. God has more right to our heart and life than anyone.**
- \_\_\_ **3. The early Christians showed us what half-hearted commitment led to—persecution.**
- \_\_\_ **4. A divided commitment is in reality no commitment.**
- \_\_\_ **5. If a person does not commit to Christ, he automatically commits to Mammon.**
- \_\_\_ **6. Commitment requires the death of ourselves.**
- \_\_\_ **7. Disobedience is a sure sign that Jesus is not Lord of my life.**
- \_\_\_ **8. We are expected to be committed to Christ without Him offering any reward.**
- \_\_\_ **9. There are many others to whom we can turn in order to go to a place of reward.**
- \_\_\_ **10. Our commitment must be made to Jesus without reservation!**

