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# “Oh, To Be Like Thee”



*Living Day to Day as a Christian*  
Volume II

Gene Taylor

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# Lesson One: The Disciple of Christ

## Introduction

1. Are you a disciple of Jesus? What does it mean to be His disciple?
  - Is it just being religious? Is it just “going to church?”
2. How does being a disciple affect one’s priorities in life?
  - a. How does it affect one’s decisions with family, friends and even one’s enemies?
  - b. What does a disciple want most in life?
3. A glimpse of discipleship is seen in Luke 5:11.
  - “So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.”
4. A disciple is a learner or follower, one who learns from and follows his master, and one who does what his master instructs.
5. Consider the example of Peter, Andrew, James and John.
  - a. They made the same decision you have made: to become a disciple of Jesus.
  - b. Their decision radically changed their lives.
6. Some pertinent questions:
  - a. What does a disciple of Christ want most in life?
  - b. What motivates a disciple to be like Jesus?
  - c. What is it a disciple does?

## I. What Does a Disciple of Christ Want Most in Life?

- A. He wants to be like his Master. (Luke 6:40)
- B. Being a disciple of Jesus means becoming like Jesus. (Rom. 8:29)
  - “Conformed” is the idea of being pressed into a mold—here the mold Jesus’ character.
- C. The essence of Christianity is to be like Jesus. (1 Pet. 2:21; Eph. 4:13)
  1. The Bible does not give specific instructions on everything we should do in every situation.
    - a. It often gives us principles by which we operate.
    - b. It always gives the example of Jesus.
  2. What would Jesus do?
    - a. The only way we can know what Jesus would do is to know what He actually did.
    - b. When we learn about His conduct, character, disposition, and love for God, then we are prepared to answer the question about what He would do.
- D. A critical point: to develop spiritually, we must learn of Him in order to be like Him.
  1. Christianity is the process of change and growth that makes us like Christ.
  2. Whether we term it Christianity, following Jesus or discipleship, the meaning is the same: becoming like Jesus.

## II. What Motivates a Disciple to Be Like Jesus?

- A. Motivation is a significant word.
  - It is from motive, related to motor—a force to move—thus it is motive for action.
- B. The Christian’s motivation is to be with Jesus. (Phil 1:21-24)
  1. The reward of heaven with Jesus gives him courage, motivation and endurance to continue discipleship on a daily basis. (2 Cor. 4:16-18)
  2. The disciple’s goal is to be like Jesus now in order to be with Him then. (1 John 3:2)

### III. What Is a Disciple to Do?

- A. He obeys Jesus instead of pleasing himself.
- B. He realizes one is to be a new man in Christ. (Eph. 4:22-24)
- C. The essence of obedience is submission. (Luke 5:1-6)
  - 1. Some questions on this text.
    - a. Did Peter want to go fishing again?
    - b. Did Peter think he would catch anything?
    - c. Why did Peter go fishing again?
  - 2. What does this episode teach us about obeying Jesus even when we do not understand His commands?
- D. Obedience is the test of our discipleship (Luke 6:46) and our love for Jesus (John 14:15).
- E. A disciple obeys Jesus:
  - 1. Even if his family is opposed to it. (Luke 14:26; Matt. 10:37)
  - 2. And does not allow “things” to control him. (Luke 12:15)
  - 3. Despite opposition from the world. (1 Pet. 4:3-4)
  - 4. At all times and in all places. (Luke 9:23)
    - a. A disciple continually follows Jesus by constantly monitoring his conduct and is always in the process of changing his life to conform to that of Christ.
    - b. Ultimately, discipleship becomes something we are not something we do.
    - c. Discipleship changes us not merely what we do.
    - d. Following Jesus gives us a new heart and soul.

### Conclusion

- 1. Christianity is a way of life in which we are becoming like Jesus.
  - In every situation and circumstance, the disciples asks, “What would Jesus have me do?”
- 2. Is Jesus your Master?
  - a. Obedience to Him is the standard by which we measure whether or not we are true disciples.
  - b. We must live in obedience to Him because He is the only way to heaven. (John 14:6)
- 3. Are you following the steps of Jesus today? (1 Pet. 2:21)

### Discussion Questions

- 1. Why is to be like Jesus the essence of Christianity?
- 2. What is involved in growing to be like Jesus?
- 3. How does the reward of heaven serve as motivation to be like Jesus?
- 4. What does the example of Peter in Luke 5:1-6 teach about discipleship?
- 5. Why is obedience the test of discipleship?

# Lesson Two: Distinctive Lives

## Introduction

1. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus sets forth the qualities that are to characterize those who would comprise His kingdom.
  - No passage is more representative of that than Matthew 5:43-48.
2. When Jesus asks the question, "What do you more than others?", He was telling those who were listening then and those of us today that our lives must be different from those who are in the world.
3. The lives of those who would follow Jesus are to be distinct.
  - a. Distinct: "Presenting a clear, unmistakable impression...readily and unmistakably appended." (Merriam-Webster.com)
  - b. Distinctive: "Serving to distinguish." (Ibid)
4. This lesson will set forth some things found in Scripture which show how we are to live distinctive lives.

## I. Our Lives Must Be Better Than Those Who Are Not Children of God

- A. We are not to live as the world lives. (Eph. 4:17-24)
- B. We should live for the will of God and not for the world. (1 Pet. 4:1-4)
- C. We are not to be conformed to the world. (Rom. 12:1-2)
- D. We are to be lights in the world. (Matt. 5:14-16)
- E. The world needs to see the difference. (John 13:34-35)

## II. We Must Live a New Life Directed by Our Lord Jesus Christ

- A. As Christians, we have been born again to a new life. (Rom. 6:1-4)
- B. We are to put off the "old man," the man of the world and sin, and then put on the new. (Col. 3:1-11)
- C. All things are to become new to us. (2 Cor. 5:14-17)
- D. We have been bought with a price, therefore, we should glorify God. (1 Cor. 6:19-20)
- E. We are to make a complete transition from self to Christ. (Matt. 16:24; Gal. 2:20)

## III. Becoming the Right Kind of Person Is a Process of Growth

- A. Proper physical growth requires at least two essentials: food and exercise.
  - Spiritual growth likewise requires those same two essential elements.
- B. Our food is the word of God. (1 Pet. 2:1-3; Acts 20:32; Jas. 1:21)
- C. Our exercise is to be obedient, applying the Scriptures to our lives, doing what the word of God says to do. (Jas. 1:22-25; Heb. 5:12-14)
- D. Worship, study and service builds us up, strengthens us. (Heb. 10:24-25)
- E. We must be disciplined or corrected. (2 Pet. 1:5-9; Gal. 6:1)

## IV. We Must Be Giving Our All Based on Our Ability and Opportunity

- A. In Mark 14:3-9, Jesus commended the woman who anointed Him by saying, "She has done what she could."
  - That is what He expects of His followers.

B. Those in Christ are to:

1. As they have opportunity, do good to all. (Gal. 6:10)
2. Always abound in the work of the Lord. (1 Cor. 15:58)
3. Practice pure religion. (Jas. 1:27)
4. Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior. (2 Pet. 3:18)
5. Be imitators of God and Christ. (Eph. 5:1; 1 Cor. 11:1)

C. Some questions:

1. If I have the ability and opportunity to worship God regularly and enthusiastically, and am not doing it, am I doing my best? Will God accept what I am doing?
2. If I have the ability and opportunity to correct my errors and improve my conduct, will God accept less than a sincere effort to do so?
3. If I have the ability and opportunity to do more in the work of the church, should I not start right now and do more and more – do the very best I know how to do?

**Conclusion**

1. The only way that God will truly recognize us as His own is if we are distinctly different from those in the world by conforming our lives to the will of God given by His Son, Jesus Christ.
2. “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.” (2 Cor. 6:17-18)

**Discussion Questions**

1. Why should the lives of Christians be better than the lives of non-Christians?
2. In what ways are the lives of Christians to be better?
3. How are Christians to make a complete transformation of their lives once they are in Christ?
4. What are some things that will build up the Christian spiritually?
5. What is involved in “giving one’s all” to the Lord and His cause?



# Lesson Three: Blessings and Responsibilities

## Introduction

1. Being a member of a physical family brings blessings but it also requires certain obligations.
2. A Christian is a part of God's family. (1 Tim. 3:15; Gal. 3:26-27)
  - Being a child of God and a "joint heir" with Christ (Rom. 8:17) carries certain privileges but there are also certain responsibilities as well.
3. This lesson will consider both the blessings and responsibilities of being a child of God.

## I. The Blessings

- A. Having God as one's Father.
  1. As Christians, God is "our Father." (Matt. 6:9; 1 John 3:1-2)
  2. God is Father to those who are:
    - a. Separate from the world. (2 Cor. 6:14-18; 1 John 2:15-17; Jas. 4:4)
    - b. Led by the Spirit. (Rom. 8:14)
- B. Wearing the greatest name.
  1. It is the name of Christ. (Phil. 2:9-11)
  2. It is the name Christ's disciples are to wear. (Acts 11:26)
  3. It speaks of the disciples' salvation. (Acts 4:12)
  4. It tells that one belongs to Christ. (1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Pet. 1:17-19)
  5. One must be baptized "in His name" in order to rightfully wear His name. (1 Cor. 1:10-15)
- C. Enjoying God's protection.
  1. The child of God does not have to fear others. (1 Pet. 3:13-14)
  2. Even if one suffers, he is blessed. (Matt. 5:10-12)
  3. Jesus gives assurance of the Father's watchful protection. (Matt. 10:27-31)
- D. Receiving proper provisions.
  1. Water unto eternal life. (John 4:10-14)
  2. The "Bread of Life." (John 6:51; Acts 20:32)
- E. Enjoying God's promises.
  1. Those of the faith have been given great and precious promises. (2 Pet. 1:1-4)
  2. These promises are sure. (Titus 1:1-2; cf. 2 Pet. 3:9)
  3. These promises include:
    - a. Remission of past sins. (Acts 2:38)
    - b. Access through prayer. (1 John 2:1-2)
    - c. Eternal life. (Titus 1:1-2)

## II. The Responsibilities

- A. Respecting God's authority
  1. Consider the command God gave to the children of Israel in Exodus 20:3-4.
  2. The same principles and commands to honor the authority of God are given to the children of God today. (Matt. 4:10; 28:18-20; Col. 3:17)

B. Defending God's cause.

- The Christian must:
  - a. Be set for "the defense of the gospel." (Phil. 1:17)
  - b. Put on the whole armor of God. (Eph. 6:10-17)
  - c. Not be ashamed of the word. (Rom. 1:16)
  - d. Be willing to wage warfare. (2 Cor. 10:1-6)

C. Learning the will of God.

- The child of God must:
  - a. Put forth diligent effort to be approved before Him. (2 Tim. 2:15)
  - b. Be filling himself with the word of God. (Col. 3:16)
  - c. Be longing for spiritual nourishment. (1 Pet. 2:1-2)
  - d. Be hungering and thirsting for righteousness. (Matt. 5:6)

D. Obeying God's commands.

1. Consider the teachings of 1 John 5:1-3.
2. Keeping God's commandments expresses:
  - a. One's love for God and Christ. (John 14:15)
  - b. One's faith in the word and promises of God (Jas. 2:18)

**Conclusion**

1. As the children of God, we should not expect to enjoy the blessings of being in the family of God without shouldering the obligations.
2. May each of us be a responsible member of God's family.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Define "blessings." How do they relate to being a Christian?
2. Define "responsibilities." Are responsibilities optional or required? Explain your answer.
3. List your greatest blessings in Christ as you perceive them.
4. What is involved in defending God's cause?
5. What does obeying God's commandments express? Why is that the case?

# Lesson Four: Rejoice in the Lord

## Introduction

1. As the people of God, we should be joyful. (Psa. 35:9)
2. Joy is promised to the people of God. (Psa. 132:16)
3. Rejoicing is commanded. (Phil. 3:1; 4:4; 1 Thess. 5:16)
4. In this lesson we will focus on rejoicing in the Lord so that we might be able to derive from our Lord the full measure of joy He offers us.

## I. The Joy of the Wicked Contrasted to the Joy of the Righteous

### A. The joy of the wicked.

1. Is derived from foolish things. (Prov. 15:21)
2. Is short-lived. (Job 20:5)
  - The pleasure derived from sin is but “passing.” (Heb. 11:24-26)
3. It is vanity. (Eccl. 2:10-11; 11:8)
4. It should be turned into mourning. (Jas. 4:8-9)

### B. The joy of the righteous.

1. It is “inexpressible and full of glory.” (1 Pet. 1:8-9)
2. It is increased in the meek and lowly. (Isa. 29:19)
3. It is constant, not short-lived. (2 Cor. 6:10)
4. Trials, persecutions and/or hardships do not lessen the joy the Christian has, rather, they increase his joy. (Matt. 5:11-12; Jas. 1:2; Heb. 10:34; Acts 5:41)

## II. Some Reasons the Righteous Have for Rejoicing

- A. Temporal blessings. (Joel 2:23-24)
- B. Names written in heaven. (Luke 10:20)
- C. Salvation. (Psa. 21:1; 1 Pet. 1:5-6)
- D. Deliverance from bondage. (Psa. 105:43; Jer. 31:10-13)
- E. Divine protection. (Psa. 5:11-12; 16:8-9)
- F. Divine support. (Psa. 28:7; 63:7)
- G. The hope of glory. (Rom. 5:2)
- H. The success of the gospel. (Acts 15:3)

## III. Exhortations to Rejoice

- A. As righteous rejoice. (Psa. 68:3; 32:11)
- B. Serve God with gladness. (Psa. 100:2-5)
- C. Engage in all worship services with rejoicing. (Ezra 6:22)
- D. Rejoice in all our undertakings. (1 Thess. 5:16-18)
- E. Express our joy, especially in song. (Jas. 5:13)
- F. Promote joy in other people. (2 Cor. 1:24; Phil. 1:25)

G. Pray for joy in others. (Rom. 15:13)

H. Rejoice and be happy for we have received manifold spiritual blessings. (Isa. 61:10)

#### **IV. The Great Eternal Joy**

A. Saints will be presented to God with exceeding joy. (1 Pet. 4:13; Jude 24)

B. On the day of judgment saints will enter the joy of the Lord. (Matt. 25:21)

- Heaven is pictured as a marvelous place of happiness and joy. (Rev. 21:4; Psa. 16:11)

C. Through faithfulness, Christians can finish their course on earth with joy. (Acts 20:24)

#### **Conclusion**

1. Worldly people everywhere are looking for joy and happiness. They look for it in:
  - a. Worldly pleasures—material possessions.
  - b. All kinds of activities—employment, sports, hobbies, etc.
  - c. Friends, relatives, family, etc.
2. The Christian does not spurn any honorable worldly reward but he recognizes the greater value in that which is spiritual.
3. He rejoices in the things of the Lord. (Neh. 8:10; Psa. 35:9; John 16:22)

#### **Discussion Questions**

1. Cite examples in which the joy of the wicked is short-lived?
2. Why should the joy of the wicked be turned into mourning?
3. Why do adversities and trials not lessen the joy of the righteous?
4. What aspect(s) of your Christianity give you the most joy?
5. How can a Christian promote joy in others?

# Lesson Five: Rising Above Adversity

## Introduction

1. By becoming a Christian, you solved a number of problems.
  - a. The problem of guilt.
  - b. The problem of a purposeless life.
  - c. The problem of fear.
  - d. The problem of loneliness.
  - e. The problem of death.
2. But do not misunderstand, just becoming a Christian does not mean you will not have any problems. There are challenges to your faith, problems you have to face and adversities with which you will have to deal.
  - a. Jesus never promised a life free from problems, suffering and trials but He has given us that which we need to deal with all of life's adversities.
  - b. The early Christians suffered persecution because they were followers of Jesus.
    - 1) As time went on, the persecution escalated.
    - 2) Saul the persecutor became Paul the persecuted suffering many things because he was a Christian. (Acts 9:16; 2 Cor. 11:22-28)
3. Why did Paul, and others like him, go through all these things?
  - a. How was he able to endure them?
  - b. What inspired him to have such dedication and zeal for the Lord?
4. The answers to these questions are found in Paul's own writings so we will examine them to see the attitudes he had that allowed him to overcome adversity then we will know how to deal with the problems, suffering and adversity that come into our lives as Christians.

## I. Paul Recognized This World Is Not Our Home (2 Cor. 5:10)

- A. The context of 2 Corinthians 5:7 states that our faith to be with the Lord someday motivates us to live properly.
  1. To live properly, we must fully realize that this world is not our home.
  2. We need to be like Abraham who lived his life as a stranger in a foreign land. (Heb. 11:8-10)
- B. Peter identified Christians as "sojourners and pilgrims." (1 Pet. 2:11-12)
  1. Our citizenship is in heaven. (Phil. 3:20-21)
  2. God has already given us citizenship in heaven before we arrive there.

## II. Paul Recognized That There Is a Better Place (Phil. 1:21-23)

- A. He said that to depart and be with Christ is better. (Phil 1:21)
- B. Knowing heaven was a better place enabled him, as he dealt with adversity, to do so with the proper perspective. (2 Cor. 4:16-18; Rom. 8:18)
- C. He knew there was no comparison to the sufferings of this present time to the glory which is to come.

### **III. Paul Had Confidence in the Promises of God (2 Tim. 1:12)**

- A. His life was a life of faith and confidence in the promises of God.
  - He lived knowing that if his life were taken from him at any time, there was a sure abode reserved in heaven for him. (2 Tim. 4:6-8)
- B. How could he have such complete confidence?
  - 1. Because the Lord had promised such a place. (John 14:1-3)
  - 2. We can have that same confidence knowing the promise of heaven is certain. (Heb. 6:11-19)
- C. It is a tragedy when those who claim to be Christians are filled with doubt, fear, despair and uncertainty. (2 Tim. 1:7; Rom. 8:15)

### **Conclusion**

1. We have answered all our questions.
2. The answer to all these questions is that Paul lived with heaven in view—it was his all-consuming goal. (Phil 3:13-14)
3. We must live as Paul lived and realize this world is not our home, that there is a better place—a heavenly home and that God will fulfill His promises He has made.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Seeing that God is love (1 John 4:8), why do you think God allows suffering even among His own people?
2. How is one to balance his desire to remain on earth and be with family, friends, etc., and his desire to be with the Lord?
3. Name some of the things which make heaven a “better” place.
4. What is the proper perspective to have when dealing with adversity and suffering? How can one develop that perspective?
5. Seeing the sureness of the promises of God, why do you think so many Christians are filled with doubt, fear and uncertainty?

# Lesson Six: Brotherly Love

**Text: 2 Corinthians 7:1-16**

## **Introduction**

1. Since Christians are said to be children of God (Gal. 3:16-27), with God as their Father (1 Pet. 1:17), they comprise the house of God. (1 Tim. 3:14-15)
  - a. Being God's family, their relationship one to another should be like that of the physical family
  - b. We, therefore, need to understand this family relationship and how brotherly love is manifested.
2. The relationship the apostle Paul had with the church at Corinth demonstrates this love and its attendant responsibilities.

## **I. The Family of God at Corinth**

- A. It had been established by Paul on his second preaching tour among the Gentiles. (Acts 18:8)
  1. He had been their "father" in the faith. (1 Cor. 4:15)
  2. He had a special tenderness in his heart for them. (1 Cor. 16:5-7, 24)
- B. Because of certain sinful practices of which he had been made aware, Paul had to later write to them to condemn their wrong and encourage them to do right.
  - His language was strong and the condemnation severe, yet, he loved these people. (2 Cor. 2:1-4)

## **II. A Demonstration of Brotherly Love: An Analysis of 2 Corinthians 7**

- A. Brotherly love hinders wrong doing (vv. 2, 9)
  1. When one Christian loves another, that love will keep him from doing the other wrong.
  2. Paul insisted that in condemning the Corinthians for their error that he had not wronged them in any way even though he had insisted that a certain one of them be marked and excluded from the others. (1 Cor. 5)
    - a. That needed to be done and was done out of love.
    - b. He had not even wronged that man even though he resorted to what is often called "harsh treatment."
- B. Brotherly love requires faithful speech. (v. 4)
  1. To say that Paul had used boldness of speech is to put it mildly yet he loved them abundantly.
    - Brotherly love requires bold speech under some circumstances.
  2. He had resorted to irony in condemning them.
    - a. Irony: "A literary device which states the exact opposite of what is really meant." (Webster's)
    - b. He spoke with such language as to hurt their feelings. (v.8)
  3. His love for them compelled him to say the very things they needed to hear. (Eph. 4:15; Col. 4:6)

C. Brotherly love should be intense. (v. 3)

1. Undoubtedly referring to an earlier statement in this same letter, verse three is one of the strongest expressions of love imaginable. (2 Cor. 6:11-13)
2. The apostle Peter says brotherly love should be intense. (1 Pet. 1:22)

D. Brotherly love is joyous. (v. 4)

1. Five times in this chapter, in spite of his straight talk which brought them sorrow, Paul spoke of his joy in relation to them. (vv. 4, 7, 9, 13, 16)
2. Brotherly love brings joy. (2 Cor. 2:3; 1 Thess. 2:17-20; 3 John 4)

E. Brotherly love covers sin. (vv. 8-11)

1. The apostle Peter stated that love covers a multitude of sins. (1 Pet. 4:8)
2. 2 Corinthians 7:8-11 shows how love covers sin: Paul's love for them actually brought about their being made right again in the sight of God.

### **Conclusion**

1. What a living lesson Paul has given us on the subject of brotherly love.
2. Since he lived what he preached, we can follow his example. (1 Cor. 11:1)
3. "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." (1 John 3:18)

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Why is it important to understand the concept of the church being the family of God?
2. Does loving someone exclude correcting them or condemning their wrongs? Explain your answer.
3. Describe the proper intensity of brotherly love.
4. What are some of the joys derived from brotherly love?
5. How does love cover sins?



# Lesson Seven: Dealing with Trouble

## Introduction

1. It is common to humanity to have trouble befall us.
2. When trouble comes our way, we must learn to turn to God.

## I. The Example of Jairus (Mark 5:21-24, 35-43)

- A. In this text there is a tragedy—a twelve year old child has died.
  1. According to Jewish custom, a girl became a woman at age twelve.
  2. Here, on the threshold of womanhood, death comes.
- B. Jairus was a ruler of the synagogue.
  1. Most synagogues had a plurality of elders. (Mark 5:22)
  2. Elders presided over the assembly such as in Acts 13:15 in Antioch of Pisidia.
  3. These rulers were of considerable importance and high esteem.
- C. But, when Jairus' daughter fell ill, he thought only of Christ.
  - What he did is worthy of our imitation when trouble comes our way.
- D. Qualities that led Jairus to Jesus.
  1. A loss of prejudice.
    - a. He had no doubt heard about Jesus as a renegade Jew, a heretic, a winebibber, one who associated with tax collectors and sinners, etc.
    - b. Prejudice was an every day occurrence with Jesus. (John 1:11, 45-46)
    - c. Prejudice is making up your mind before the evidence is in. (Prov. 18:13)
    - d. Jairus forgot what prejudice he may have had when the need hit him for if it had ruled, his daughter would have remained dead.
  2. A loss of dignity.
    - a. "When he saw Jesus he fell at His feet..." (Mark 5:22)
    - b. Though a dignified ruler among the people, he humbled himself before Jesus.
    - c. Such is not a new story that in order to save life you lose dignity—consider Naaman in 2 Kings 5.
    - d. Many today will allow their perceived status and position in life to interfere with their spirituality.
  3. A loss of pride.
    - a. A man of considerable community esteem, Jairus manifested humility in coming to Jesus personally for it would have been normal to send a messenger.
    - b. He defied public opinion (John 12:42-43) and forgot everything except that he wanted help.

## II. The Example of Job

- A. In times of tragedy, illness and setbacks, consider Job, the servant of God.
- B. Satan challenged God that Job only served Him because of his life of ease. (Job 1:6-12)
- C. Job loses all he has (Job 1:21-22) but even when covered with boils, he does not curse God. (Job 2:7-11; 13:15)
- D. Job begins to question God but Elihu tells him to fear God. (Job 37:14, 23)

- E. God begins to question Job. (Job 38:1-31)
- F. Job humbles himself (Job 42:6) and God blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning. (Job 42:12)

### III. "It Is Well With My Soul"

- A. Horatio Gates Spafford (1828-1888) was a Chicago attorney who had invested heavily in real estate on the shore of Lake Michigan.
  - 1. All of his holdings were wiped out by the Great Chicago Fire of 1871.
  - 2. His only son had died with little warning just two years before.
- B. Spafford planned a European trip for his family in 1873 but due to unexpected business developments, he had to remain in Chicago and send his wife and four daughters on without him.
- C. On November 22 their ship, the S.S. Ville du Havre, was struck by an English vessel, the Lochearn, and sank in twelve minutes killing over 200 people.
  - Mrs. Spafford cabled her husband, "Saved Alone. Your Wife."
- D. Spafford booked passage on the first available ship and left to comfort his heartbroken wife.
  - 1. One night the Captain told him, "I believe we are now passing over the spot where the Ville du Havre went down."
  - 2. While there, Spafford penned the words which so well described his own life—"When sorrows like sea billows roll..."
- E. Read the song.
  - 1. It is noteworthy he does not dwell on life's sorrows.
  - 2. The third verse focuses attention on the redemptive work of Christ.
  - 3. The fourth verse anticipates Christ's glorious return.
- F. In spite of personal tragedy, he could say, "It is well with my soul."

### Conclusion

- 1. In our quest for eternal life, we must see our need for Jesus. (Matt. 11:28-30)
- 2. We must also see our need for Him on a daily basis to help us through all of the troubles, trials, sufferings and adversities that life throws our way. (1 Pet. 5:6-7)

### Discussion Questions

- 1. Why does it seem that the Christian has to face so many troubles—often more than the worldly?
- 2. In asking Jesus to assist in facing and solving our problems, what role does humility, a loss of pride, have?
- 3. Do you think that God allows Satan to trouble His people today as He did with Job?
- 4. Did God ever give Job that answer as to why he was suffering all that came upon him? Explain your answer.
- 5. How, in spite of one's troubles, can it be well with his soul?

# Lesson Eight: The Christian and Suffering

## Introduction

1. The question, “Why does God allow suffering, sorrow, heartache and death, even among His own children?”
  - a. Was asked by Job. (Job 3:11-19)
  - b. Has been asked by every person who has walked upon the face of the earth who believed in God.
  - c. Has been asked by those who watch a child suffer in an Intensive Care Unit.
  - d. Has been asked by young children as they bury their parents.
  - e. Has been asked at the funeral of one who dies after years of suffering.
2. This lesson is not designed to determine the origin or cause of suffering but to better understand why God allows it and why Christians can rejoice even in the midst of trials.

## I. Suffering Keeps the World from Becoming Too Attractive

- A. The Bible tells us that we are “pilgrims” and “sojourners.” (1 Pet. 2:11-12)
  1. This world is not our home. (Heb. 13:14)
  2. God has prepared something better. (2 Cor. 5:1-5)
- B. If there were no suffering, no one would want to leave this temporary world or desire the eternal home and, therefore, prepare themselves for it.
- C. This life is so ordered that the world soon loses its attraction.

## II. Suffering Can Bring Out Our Best

- A. Those who suffer from illness often see this.
- B. We see this occurring quite frequently in times of natural disaster when someone loses a house to hurricane, tornado, fire, etc.
- C. This may be one reason why early Christians rejoiced in their trials—they understood tribulation could develop character, their own and that of others. (Rom. 5:3-4)

## III. Suffering Gives an Occasion to Silence the Enemies of God

- A. In the story of Job, Satan wanted to prove that God was wrong about Job—that he served God only because God had blessed him. (Job 1:9-11)
  - Job’s patience and perseverance under suffering silenced Satan.
- B. Likewise, God desires that we silence “foolish men.” (1 Pet. 2:15)
- C. By patiently enduring or doing good in times of suffering, the value of being Christians really shines through in the faith we have that sustains us in suffering and in the love we show towards those who suffer.

## IV. Suffering Makes Us Appreciative

- A. Since all of us receive so many good things in this life, it is easy to become prone to take them for granted instead of receiving them with gratitude toward God.
- B. Suffering can help us appreciate more fully good health, good friends and a loving family.

- C. A good example of how suffering can make one appreciative is that of the apostle Paul when he was in prison. (Phil. 1:3-8)
- D. Suffering makes us more dependent upon God.

#### **V. Suffering Helps Purify Us**

- A. Suffering can be like fire purifying gold. (1 Pet. 1:6-7; Job 23:10-12)
- B. Maturity can be developed through trials. (Jas. 1:2-5)

#### **VI. Suffering Makes Us Sympathetic**

- A. Paul wrote of the value of affliction as to how it can help us be better able to comfort others in their affliction. (2 Cor. 1:3-4)
- B. We may think we can sympathize with someone but until we have “been there” personally there is no true understanding of their hurt.
- C. Experiencing suffering makes us more likely to “weep with those who weep” (Rom. 12:15) and makes us better able to serve others.

#### **VII. Suffering Teaches Us How to Pray**

- A. We may be praying people—praying at the right times for the right things.
- B. In the midst of suffering, though, we learn how to pray “earnestly” with “perseverance” and “with groaning which cannot be uttered.” (Rom. 8:26)

#### **Conclusion**

1. Can we begin to see why a righteous and merciful God would allow suffering, even to the innocent?
2. If we look at suffering purely from man’s point of view, we will not understand why suffering is permitted but remember what God said through His prophet Isaiah—“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways.” (Isa. 55:8-9)
  - When we look at suffering from God’s point of view, then we can begin to appreciate why He would allow suffering to occur.
3. Never forget the words of Paul in Romans 8:35-39 which remind us of God’s never failing love.

#### **Discussion Questions**

1. If God is love (1 John 4:8), is it being untrue to His nature when He allows even the innocent to suffer? Explain your answer.
2. Why is it important that this world not become too attractive to us?
3. What are some ways in which suffering brings out our best?
4. How does suffering help purify the Christian?
5. How does suffering help develop sympathy?

# Lesson Nine: Dealing with Temptation

**Text: Proverbs 7:1-26; Genesis 39:1-12**

## **Introduction**

1. Mankind was introduced to the serpent in Genesis 3:1.
  - a. He is identified in Revelation 12:9.
  - b. He is our adversary (1 Pet. 5:8) who tempts us as he tempted Eve and Jesus.
2. How successful we are in dealing with temptation determines, to a great degree, what our eternal destiny will be.
3. This lesson consists of two examples from the Old Testament.
  - a. The young man devoid of understanding. (Prov. 7:1-26)
  - b. Joseph. (Gen. 39:1-12)

## **I. The Wrong Way: The Young Man Devoid of Understanding (Prov. 7:1-26)**

- A. He was in the wrong place. (vv. 6-8)
- B. He was in the wrong place at the wrong time. (v. 9)
- C. He was in the wrong company. (v. 10-12)
- D. He was given then heeded the wrong advice. (vv. 13-15)
- E. He was given the wrong appeal. (vv. 16-18)
- F. He was told no one else would know. (vv. 19-20)
- G. To no one's surprise, he fell. (vv. 21-23)

## **II. The Right Way: Joseph (Gen. 39:1-12)**

- A. He was susceptible to temptation. (vv. 6-7)
- B. He refused to be tempted from the very start. (vv. 8-9)
- C. He refused to listen to the woman. (v. 10)
- D. He avoided the presence of the woman. (v. 10)
- E. When confronted, he ran. (vv. 11-12)
- F. The result: he maintained his purity, innocence and integrity.
- G. Why was he successful?
  - He avoided temptation every step of the way.

## **Conclusion: In Dealing with Temptation**

1. Trust in the all-mighty God.
2. Be strengthened by God's word.
3. Do not be "void of understanding" or "senseless."
4. Be as Joseph and do not sin against God.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. How is our eternal destiny influenced by how we deal with temptation?
2. Why do you think so many people fall prey to temptation?
3. How do those with whom we associate impact the way we deal with temptation?
4. What qualities of character are seen in Joseph that allowed him to successfully overcome temptation?
5. Besides reliance upon the word of God, as Jesus did in Matthew 4:1-11 when He was tempted by Satan, what other things can help one overcome temptation?

# Lesson Ten: Identifying Sinful Attitudes

## Introduction

1. Sinful attitudes do great damage.
2. If I am going to be the kind of person God wants me to be and if I am going to do my part to see that the local church is what it ought to be, I must give attention to my attitudes.
3. It is important for Christians to consider their attitudes because peace and unity stem from proper attitudes, therefore, it is vitally essential for every Christian to place great emphasis on identifying and acknowledging sinful attitudes.
4. This lesson will identify sinful attitudes the Scriptures set forth.

## I. Attitudes of Pride

- A. Factious, sinful ambitions
- B. Being puffed up, conceited.
- C. "Doting" (KJV - 1 Tim. 6:3-5), "obsessed with disputes and arguments" (NKJV)

## II. Inner Feelings and Attitudes

- A. Jealousy. (2 Cor. 12:10)
- B. Envy. (Gal. 5:19-21)
- C. Evil suspicions. (1 Tim.6:4)
- D. Anger. (Eph. 4:31)
- E. Malice. (Col. 3:5-8)
- F. Bitterness. (Eph. 4:31)
- G. Hatred, enmity, animosity. (Gal. 5:20)
- H. Wrath. (Eph. 4:31)

## III. Attitudes of Words and Conduct

- A. Strife—debate. (1 Cor. 3:1-3)
- B. Clamor—loud quarreling. (Eph. 4:31)
- C. Backbiting—slander. (2 Cor. 12:20)
- D. Whisperings. (2 Cor. 12:20)
- E. Blasphemy. (Col. 3:5-8)
- F. Lying. (Col. 3:9-10)
- G. Wranglings. (1 Tim. 6:5)
- H. Tumults. (2 Cor. 12:20)

## IV. Resulting Divided Conditions

- A. Divisions. (1 Cor. 1:10)
- B. Heresies—factions. (Gal. 5:20)

## **Conclusion**

We must “put to death” sinful attitudes and change bad habits, words and conduct by having:

- a. More consistent study, teaching and application of the word of God to correct negative attitudes and to acquire the godly attitudes which are taught and demonstrated in Scripture.
- b. Each Christian give closer attention to humility in both feelings and attitudes.
- c. Each Christian praying to develop proper attitudes of heart.
- d. Godly attitudes emphasized with as much intensity as doctrinal truths.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. Why is it so important to abstain from improper attitudes and embrace proper ones?
2. Why is the attitude of pride so harmful?
3. Considering “the works of the flesh” in Galatians 5:19-21, list all of them that are sinful attitudes.
4. How is the local church impacted when its members have sinful attitudes?
5. How can one rid himself of sinful attitudes?



# Lesson Eleven: Living as a Pilgrim

**Text: Philippians 3:20-21**

## **Introduction**

1. We need to always be aware that we are only pilgrims on this earth for our citizenship is in heaven. (Phil. 3:20-21)
2. The Christian is not to look upon his life on this earth as the totality of his existence.
3. This life is but a brief transitory period that takes one from birth to death and then on to his ultimate destiny.

## **I. Christians Are Pilgrims**

- A. Christians must have the same attitude that was exemplified by the patriarchs as seen in Hebrews 11:13-16.
- B. Pilgrim defined.
  1. "PAREPIDEMOS...an adjective signifying "sojourning in a strange place, away from one's own people" ...is used of O.T. saints, Heb. 11:13;...of Christians, I Pet. I:I...the word is used metaphorically of those to whom Heaven is their own country, and who are sojourners on earth." (W.E. Vine, Expository of NT Words)
  2. "...prop. one who comes from a foreign country into a city or land to reside there by the side of the natives; hence stranger; sojourning in a strange place, a foreigner,...in the N.T. metaph. in ref. to heaven as the native country, one who sojourns on earth: so as of Christians, I Pet. 1:1;..." (J.H. Thayer, Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon)
- C. Christians "here...have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come." (Heb. 13:14)

## **II. Consequences of Being a Pilgrim**

- A. Separation, alienation from the world: one must view himself as a foreigner in the world.
  1. The Christian must realize he is in the world but not to be of the world. (John 17:11-16)
  2. The Christian must always answer to the law of his homeland, heaven. (Phil. 3:20; Acts 5:29; Psa. 119:49-56)
  3. The Christian is to pass the time of his stay here in "fear." (1 Pet. 1:17)
  4. The Christian is to conduct himself honorably while among the nations. (1 Pet. 2:11-12)
- B. A realization of the brevity of life: one must understand and emphasize the transitory nature of life.
  1. The Christian must recognize the truth of James 4:13-15.
  2. The Christian must note that "Now is the day of salvation" was written to Christians. (2 Cor. 6:2)
  3. The Christian must awaken to his responsibilities now. (Rom. 13:11-12a)
- C. A focus on the end of the journey: one must never lose sight of heaven.
  1. The Christian must reflect upon the example of the patriarchs. (Heb. 11:13-16)

2. The Christian must duplicate the desire of the apostle Paul. (Phil. 1:23)
3. Heaven should be the daily goal of the faithful child of God. (Col. 3:1-4)

### **III. The End of the Pilgrim's Journey: Home (Rev. 21:1-3)**

- A. "God is to make His dwelling-place with men. The word used for dwelling-place is skene, which literally and initially means a tent; but in religious use this word had long since lost any idea of an impermanent and a passing residence. There are two main ideas in it here. "(i) Skene is the word which is used for Tabernacle which was the skene par excellence. This, then, means that God is to make His tabernacle with men for ever and ever. That is to say, God is to give His presence to men for ever and ever. Here in this world and amidst the things of time our realisation and experience of the presence of God is a spasmodic, a fleeting, a transitory thing, which comes and goes, at the mercy of our own changes and of the chances and changes of life. But life in heaven will be nothing other than life permanently in the presence of God." (William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible*)
- B. "Here in this world and amidst the things of time our realisation and experience of the presence of God is a spasmodic, a fleeting, a transitory thing, which comes and goes, at the mercy of our own changes and of the chances and changes of life. But life in heaven will be nothing other than life permanently in the presence of God." (William Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors*)

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What are some of the effects of having one's citizenship in heaven?
2. What does it mean to be in the world but not of the world? (John 17:14)
3. What attitude(s) was exemplified by the patriarchs as seen in Hebrews 11:13-16?
4. Why does living as a pilgrim help one focus on the brevity of life?
5. Why is it important for the Christian to keep his focus on the goal of heaven?

# Lesson Twelve: The Christian's Relationships

## Introduction

1. Peter wrote his first epistle to Christians who were about to suffer persecution (4:12-16) in order to encourage them to continued faithfulness in spite of the persecution and remind them that their character and conduct should be above reproach even when persecuted.
2. In the course of accomplishing his purpose, he cites many diverse relationships the Christian sustains and what his attitudes and actions should be in regard to those relationships realizing that every relationship the Christian sustains is affected by his relationship to Christ and that his relationship to Christ is affected by how he conducts himself in his other relationships.
3. This lesson will observe those relationships and carefully note how the Christian is to conduct himself in each of them.

## I. To the World: Pilgrim and Sojourner (1 Pet. 2:11; 1:17)

- A. Christians do not have this world as their home.
  1. Those who are Christ's are not of this world. (John 15:18-19; 1 Pet. 1:17)
  2. The Christian's citizenship is in heaven. (Phil. 3:20-21)
- B. The faithful of old all recognized this concept (Heb. 11:13-16) especially Abraham. (Heb. 11:8-10)
- C. Therefore, Christians must conduct themselves honorably before the world by abstaining from fleshly lusts and doing good works. (1 Pet. 2:11-12)

## II. To Government: Subject (1 Pet. 2:13-17)

- A. The governments of men exist for two God-ordained purposes. (v. 114)
  1. "The punishment of evil-doers."
  2. "The praise of those who do good."
- B. Seeing that governments are from God, the Christian must:
  1. Submit to them. (Rom. 13:1-5)
  2. Pay taxes. (Rom. 13:6-7; Matt. 22:15-22)
  3. Pray for governments. (1 Tim. 2:1-3)

## III. To Work: Earn a Living (1 Pet. 2:18-19)

- A. The Christian is to work to provide:
  1. His own food. (2 Thes. 3:7-12)
  2. For his family. (1 Tim. 5:8)
  3. For those in legitimate need. (Eph. 4:28)
- B. In his work, the Christian is to "work as to the Lord." (Col. 3:22-25; Eph. 6:5-8)
- C. If abuses come, the Christian should take them patiently and act as Jesus would.

## IV. To the Home: Husbands and Wives (1 Pet. 3:1-7)

- A. Wives.
  1. To be in submission to her own husband. (Eph. 5:22, 24; Col. 3:18)
  2. To be a help to her husband. (Gen. 2:18)
  3. The needs of her husband are physical, domestic, emotional and spiritual.

B. Husbands.

1. To dwell with his wife with understanding. (v. 7)
2. The role of the husband.
  - a. Be the head of his wife. (Eph. 5:23)
  - b. Honor his wife. (1 Pet. 3:7)
  - c. Provide for the needs of his wife which are physical, intimate, emotional, intellectual and spiritual.

C. When both husband and wife have correct attitudes, it will ensure both domestic tranquility and spiritual well-being.

**V. To Fellow Christians (1 Pet. 3:8; 1:22)**

A. To be “like-minded” is to have the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5) which according to 1 Peter 3 in relation to brethren involves:

1. Mutual love, humility and compassion. (v. 8)
2. Not returning evil for evil. (v. 9)
3. Refraining one’s tongue. (v. 10)
4. Turning from evil to good. (v. 11)
5. Seeking peace. (v. 11)

B. To “love one another fervently with a pure heart:”

1. Is to love in deed and truth. (1 John 3:8)
2. Shows that one truly loves the Father. (1 John 4:20-21)

**VI. To Satan: Soberly Resist (1 Pet. 5:8-9)**

A. Satan is bound but not helpless. (Rev. 20:2)

B. In relation to Satan, the Christian must stay out of his realm and be ready to defend himself when he shoots a “fiery dart.” (Eph. 6:16)

**Conclusion**

1. The practical information given to us by the apostle Peter ought to guide us every day.
2. In respect to all our relationships, we must first and always submit ourselves to the will of God knowing that if we conduct ourselves as He desires that we can look to an eternal heavenly reward.

**Discussion Questions**

1. What is to be the Christian’s attitude toward civil government?
2. What does it mean to “work as to the Lord?”
3. Describe each area in which both husbands and wives are responsible to one another.
4. What are some of the effects upon one’s brethren if a Christian possesses brotherly love?
5. What are some of the things which help the Christian resist Satan?

# Lesson Thirteen: Personal Goals

## Introduction

1. Imagine a basketball team in a championship game, all pepped up in the locker room, charging out on the court only to find the goals removed.
  - a. What kind of game would that be?
  - b. What would be the purpose of the game?
2. A successful person is a person with goals in life because success is defined as the progressive realization of a worthwhile goal.
  - a. As long as one is moving towards a goal, he is successful.
  - b. When one stops progressing, he stagnates and becomes a failure.
  - c. This principle is true in whatever realm one may consider.
3. As a Christian, in relation to goals:
  - a. Do you have goals?
  - b. What goals should you have?

## I. Grow in Grace and Knowledge (2 Pet. 3:18)

- A. It takes more than just being baptized, attending services and being good.
  - These are necessary but they barely scratch the surface if one stops there.
- B. Growth is measured by:
  1. Fruitfulness. (John 15:1-6)
  2. Increase. (2 Cor. 9:6-11)
  3. Addition. (2 Pet. 1:5-11)
- C. The Christian is to “know Jesus.” (John 17:3)
  1. To “know Jesus” is more than an acknowledgment that there is such a one or a passing acquaintance.
  2. To “know Jesus” is to study Him and take Him and His teachings into one’s heart.

## II. Learn More of God’s Will (John 8:32)

- A. We generally learn in one of two ways: incidentally or purposefully.
  1. This applies in the schoolroom and in life in general.
  2. It also applies to learning in the church.
- B. One’s attitude toward learning the will of God should be that which David had. (Psa. 119:97-104)

## III. Help Convert Someone to Christ (Jas. 5:19-20)

- A. Aside from the salvation of his own soul, saving others should be a matter of utmost importance to the Christian.
- B. “Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.” (Dan. 12:3)
- C. One needs to prepare to “mine the treasure” of a soul.

#### **IV. Prepare for Greater Service (2 Tim. 2:20-21)**

- A. Do you have any desire to render greater service to the Lord?
- B. Do you:
  - 1. Have short-range goals?
  - 2. Have long-range goals?
  - 3. Plan to someday serve as an elder, deacon, Bible class teacher, etc.?
- C. Do not dream of or wish for these things—PREPARE!

#### **V. Heaven: The Ultimate Goal (Phil. 3:20)**

- A. Sometimes I wonder if some members are really planning on going to heaven because their service to God is haphazard or hit-miss.
- B. Do you really want to go to heaven?
  - 1. What are you doing to make sure you do? (2 Pet. 1:10)
  - 2. Is your attitude the same as that of Paul in Philippians 3:7-16?

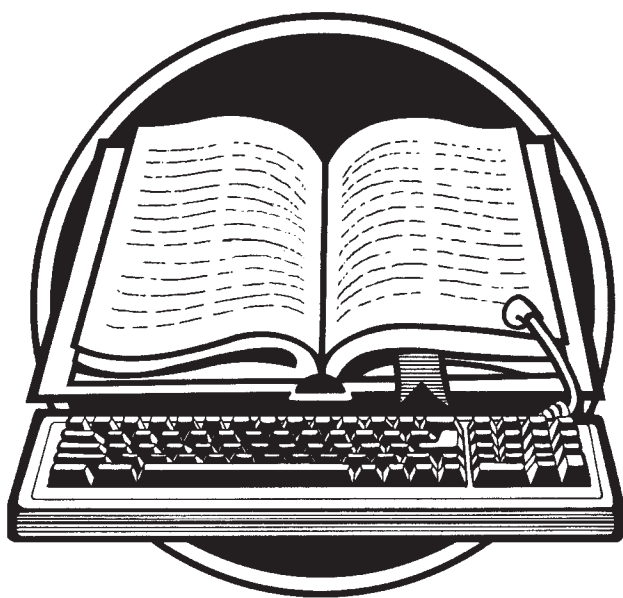
#### **Conclusion**

- 1. Whatever is important to you in this life will determine your ultimate goal. (Gal. 6:7-8)
- 2. We must examine our present goals and evaluate the direction of our lives.
- 3. If our goals are only for the things of this world, we must establish new ones that will lead us closer to the Lord and ultimately lead us to heaven.

#### **Discussion Questions**

- 1. What is the relationship between goals and success?
- 2. Why do you think spiritual growth is greatly emphasized in the New Testament?
- 3. What role does each Christian have in bringing lost souls to Christ?
- 4. What attitudes are needed if one is going to be of service to the Lord and his fellow man?
- 5. Besides those named in the lesson, list other goals you think a Christian should have.





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