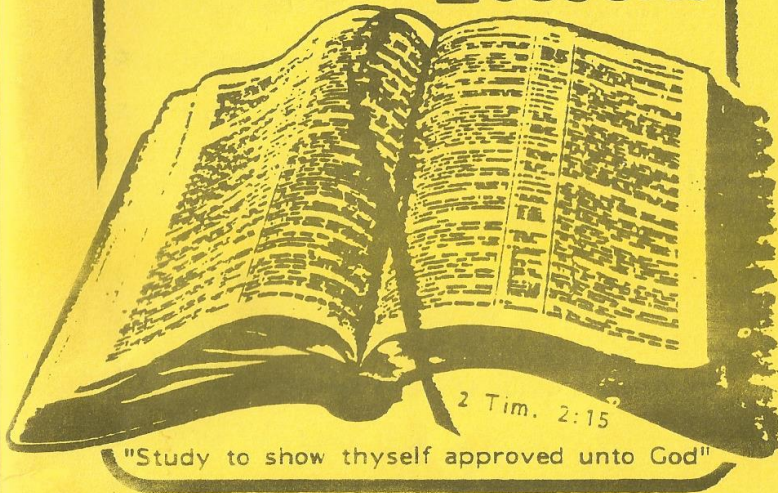


Bible Study Lessons



For Sabbath School Classes

For Teens and Adults

God's Moral Law

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INDEX

| LESSON | | PAGE |
|--------|--|------|
| 1 | An Unchanging God | 1 |
| 2 | Duty Toward God (Part 1) | 4 |
| 3 | Duty Toward God (Part 2) | 8 |
| 4 | Human Relations Commandments (Part 1)... | 13 |
| 5 | Human Relations Commandments (Part 2) .. | 17 |
| 6 | Human Relations Commandments (Part 3) .. | 22 |
| 7 | The Whole Duty of Man | 26 |
| 8 | The Two laws (Part 1) | 31 |
| 9 | The Two Laws (Part 2) | 37 |
| 10 | The Error of Self-Righteousness | 40 |
| 11 | The Way of Holiness | 44 |
| 12 | Every Thought Into Subjection | 49 |
| 13 | Pilgrims in a Hostile World | 52 |

AN UNCHANGING GOD

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS: Malachi 3:1-7; Revelation 11:15-19; Psalm 2:24-28; Isaiah 56:1-7; Corinthians 3:1-18; Matthew 5:1-19; Revelation 22:1-15.

MEMORY VERSE: *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and coneth down from the Father of Lights with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning"* -James 1:17.

COMMENTARY:

The unchanging nature of God is expressly declared by the Scriptures: *"For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed"* (Malachi 3:6). The memory verse of this study beautifully expresses this same truth. The Scriptures say, even our Lord, *"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today and forever"* (Hebrews 13:8).

In the Psalms we find this beautiful truth, *"I said O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: Thy years are throughout all generations. Of old, Thou hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture Thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end"* (Psalm 102:24-27).

Of course science authoritatively affirms that the half-life of the radioactive atom proves that there has been no past eternity of matter, that the universe is running down, just as is indicated in the second law of thermodynamics. But God is not running down!

God inhabits eternity, and in His sight a thousand years are but as yesterday (see Isaiah 57:15; Psalm 90:4). If we can but gain this realistic view of God, we will be able to rid ourselves of some of the short-sighted ideas, that have been palmed off under the title of "dispensational truth."

Everything Changing and in a State of Flux: In a world of constant mechanical and technological change,

constant political upheaval, constant revisions of mores and morals, mankind desperately needs to discover that there are unchanging absolutes that can be infallibly built upon. One of man's deepest needs is the need for security. But there can be no true security outside of God; there can be no understanding of God apart from the revelation of Himself in Christ Who IS the Expression of the Moral Law,

To attempt to change the moral law is to attempt to change the expression of God's Nature. The instructions from Moses on this point are explicit: *"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the Commandments of the Lord your God which I command you"* (Deuteronomy 4:2). In 1 John 4:16, we are told that *"God is love"*. In 1 Corinthians 13:4-10, the eternal nature of love is emphasized for us. In Romans 13:8-10, the relationship of love to the law is explained, We can conclude that when man attempts to change the moral law he attempts to change God's expression of love.

End-time Judgement: Daniel prophesied of a power that would *"speak great words against the most High, and think to change times and laws"* (Daniel 7:25). Isaiah described the inevitable course of this type of lawlessness and anarchy: *"The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word, The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left"* (Isaiah 24:3-6).

The wrath of God will be poured out upon this earth because of man's refusal to discipline himself according to these Divine Rules. All those whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life will be judged by this law, which the Scriptures refer to as a law of liberty (see James 2:10-12; Revelation 20:12-15).

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Does God change? James 1:17; Malachi 3:6. Does the creation change? Psalm 102:24-27; Hebrews 1:10-12; 13:8.

Answer

2. God is what? 1 John 4:16. What then constitutes the expression of God's nature? 1 John 5:2,3; Romans 13:8-10; 1 Corinthians 13:1-12.

Answer

3. What is God's plan for our lives and persons? Hebrews 2:10; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 4:19; Colossians 3:10; Hebrews 8:8-10.

Answer

4. On what basis will this world be judged? James 2:10-12; John 5:22; 12:47-50; Revelation 20:12-15; Luke 16:31.

Answer

5. How durable is God's law? Matthew 5:17-19.

Answer

6. What power do the Scriptures predict would attempt to change God's Eternal Moral Law? Daniel 7:7,8,19-22, 23-25.

Answer

7. What will be the ultimate result of man attempting to change God's law? Isaiah 24:3-6.

Answer

8. At what time will the kingdoms of this world become Christ's; and what is the basis for this judgment? Revelation 11:15-19.

Answer

9. What is God's view of time? Isaiah 57:15; Psalm 90:4. Should not we, then, have a greater respect for the Eternal, moral law?

Answer

10. Why will law one day be unnecessary even though its principles are Eternal? Revelation 20:6; 21:3,4; 22:1-5; Hebrews 10:16,17.

Answer

LESSON 2

DATE _____

DUTY TOWARD GOD -Part 1

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS: Matthew 22:34-40; Acts 17:15-34; Matthew 6:19-33; Psalms 149; 138; Isaiah 40:10-18,21-28.

MEMORY VERSE: *"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment"*

-Matthew 22:37,38.

COMMENTARY:

God Must Be First: God must be the first and motivating principle of our lives or the Divine order becomes perverted. Envious religious leaders posed a trick question for Jesus when they asked Him, *"Master, which is the great Commandment in the law?"* Jesus' answer was, *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind"*

(Matthew 22:36,37).

This involves a love which comprehends the whole personality, the mind, the intellect, the affections and emotions. This is undoubtedly the highest concept possible of man's relationship to his Maker. This contrasts greatly with the pagan, and heathen religions in which man attempted to appease or "buy off" the angry gods, who had caused his moral corruption and superstitious servitude. In heathen religions, man degenerated so low that he offered human sacrifices, and the temple priests and priestesses served as prostitutes.

However, it is impossible to love a being of which one has no concept. In order to love God, one must learn what He is like. Loving God involves the highest possible function of a sound and disciplined mind.

Jesus said, "*Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls*" (Matthew 11:29). Hebrews 1:3 declares that Jesus was the express or exact image of the Father. We can learn of God as we learn of Christ. Loving God with all our heart, soul, and mind, can become a glorious reality as we progress from learning of Him to actually surrendering our wills and our lives to Him.

Above All Gods: The first commandment in the Decalogue states: "*Thou shalt have no other gods before Me*" (Exodus 20:3). When God spoke the Commandments orally from Mt. Sinai, Israel had just been delivered from slavery in a world which knew many gods. Egypt worshipped even the Nile River as a god, but the true God, "Yahveh", had turned the gods of Egypt against her, demonstrating that He was above all (see Exodus 12:12; 18:11).

Later on, Israel was cautioned to beware of being involved with the gods of the inhabitants of Canaan (see Exodus 34:10-17). The judges of Israel are called gods in Psalm 82, but even those mortals who deserve our respect and our attention are not to be exalted or esteemed above Jehovah God. God is jealous and unwilling to share the praise and worship, which are rightfully His, with any person or thing.

In effect God says, "Look -no one else could ever love you like I do. No one else could ever make you happy or satisfy you. No one else could ever give you life or answer your prayers or keep you company so why should I (Jehovah God), share the devotion and worship rightly due Me with any one or anything?"

God's Offspring: "*....For in Him we live and move and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also His offspring*" (Acts 17:24-28). If we, then, are God's offspring, He has a right to our service and fidelity; and nothing -no person, situation or desire -has a prior claim to our service. All other purposes, whether they be education, business, hobby, wife or husband, children, parents, or political party are of secondary purposes in life.

The Sermon on the Mount: In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus discussed life's goals (see Matthew 5:19-34), and the tendency in the thinking of the majority

to set goals for this life only, or to make one's goals the work or merely subsisting from day to day. Jesus taught that this type of thinking is out of harmony with the Divine plan and Nature of God. Jesus taught people to seek God and His Kingdom first, and one's needs would be provided. Has He not always done so, even from the moment we were first conceived?

The Second Commandment: This is the commandment which is left out of the catechisms of over 400,000,000 professing Christians around the world. What a vast change of thinking would occur if this commandment was forcefully taught. This precept prohibits the manufacture and worship of idols, images and statues; and by precept, even some religious pictures.

Images are a clever, subtle device of Satan for the purpose of eroding God's Divine Order. It is a diabolical method of eroding worship of the true concept of Jehovah God by turning man to a God surrogate. Veneration of sacred images in the Roman Catholic faith includes uncovering one's head before them, kissing them, prostrating oneself before them. The weak explanation of many who venerate idols: "We don't worship them; they only serve to remind us" is rather facile and naive. We need to understand that the prohibition against graven images -of false gods - is also a prohibition against "likenesses" of the true God, Jehovah (see Deuteronomy 4:12,13,15,16,23,24).

Even the heathen recognized that the images they engraved or carved were only intended to remind them of the ones whom these images were supposed to represent. "*For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it*" (Romans 8:24,25). Images, then, represent a lack of faith and understanding on the part of those who use them.

The Law is Spiritual: Paul declared that the ten commandments are Spiritual (see Romans 7:14). Spiritually, we discern that idolatry involves substituting the human will and desired for the Divine will. The scripture states authoritatively that "*covetousness is idolatry*" (see Colossians 3:5). And in another place it is declared that even

"stubbornness is as...idolatry" (1 Samuel 15:23). When man's will and his lustful desires are substituted for the Divine will and God's place is overthrow and the result is, of course, chaos, confusion and all of the evil world conditions we see about us today. Idolatry then also involves the substitution of the human will and its inventions and creations for the Divine will and Its order and plan.

Worshipping God involves worshipping Him through the plan which He has ordained. God is to be approached through the Divine Intercessor Whom He has approved -Jesus Christ. 1 Timothy 2:5 tells us that there is ONE Intercessor between God and man; there are not two or three, or any number a willful person might wish to choose. There is ONE ONLY -Christ; He alone, at this present time dwells at the right hand of Glory (Mark 16:19), and all believers may approach the Throne of Grace through Him. (See Hebrews 4:14-16.)

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What is the first commandment in the Decalogue? Exodus 20:3. Was God indicating in this commandment that man might have other gods but they were to be of a secondary importance? Exodus 34:14; and Deuteronomy 6:14,15.

Answer

2. How great is our God? Isaiah 40:10-18,21-28; 42:8,9; 45:11,12,18; 46:9,10; 48:3,13; Jeremiah 51:15,16; also Psalm 139:14-16; Luke 12:6,7. How then can man worship the invisible God? John 4:24.

Answer

3. What right has God to require our loyalty and obedience? Revelation 4:11; Genesis 1:27; Isaiah 45:12; Psalm 104:30; 149:4; Job 12:10; 33:4; Malachi 2:10; Ezekiel 33:11; 1 Peter 1:18,19.

Answer

4. Is God unreasonable in asking our obedience? Romans 12:1,2.

Answer

5. How did Jesus sum up the first four commandments in the Decalogue? Matthew 22:35-40.

Answer

6. What is the second commandment in the Decalogue? Exodus 20:4-6. Was this commandment to be understood also as a prohibition against making images of the one True God? Deuteronomy 4:12,15-19,23. Why? Isaiah 40:18.

Answer

7. The second commandment is known as the prohibition against idolatry (see Leviticus 26:1). What else constitutes idolatry in God's sight? 1 Samuel 15:23; Colossians 3:5. Why!

Answer

8. One large group of "professing Christians" have eroded worship and prayers rightfully due Almighty God by teaching that the virgin Mary and other so-called saints are able to intercede for man with God and thereby should be prayed to. Is there any value to this teaching? 1 Timothy 6:14-16; 2:5. Is this not idolatry?

Answer

9. Is an idolator Spiritually rich? Isaiah 40:20.

Answer

10. Did God express concern that man might be diverted from true worship by anything at he "put his hand to do" religiously, even when it involved something that man had been instructed to do? Exodus 20:25; Deuteronomy 5:29.

Answer

LESSON 3

DATE _____

DUTY TOWARD GOD -Part 2

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS: Matthew 5:33-37; Acts 19:11-20; Genesis 24:1-9; Exodus 16:11-31; Ezekiel 20:10-21; Hebrews 4:1-11; Isaiah 66:15-24.

MEMORY VERSE: *"Moreover also I gave them My Sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them" -Ezekiel 20:12.*

COMMENTARY:

The Name of the Lord: The third commandment states: *"Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His Name in vain" (Exodus 20:7).* How common it is today to hear people idly use the Name of God or the Name of Jesus Christ, whenever the moment or occasion seems appropriate -at times of frustration or anger or rage; at times to express strong convictions.

Though the third commandment is certainly a prohibition against idly speaking the Lord's Name, its original intent or primary concept pertained to the type of situation mentioned in Deuteronomy 6:13, where people were commanded to swear in the Name of the Lord. They were not to falsely swear or promise to do a thing that they had no intention of performing.

God's concern at that time -just as it is now - was that those who profess to represent Him should be honest and forthright in their dealings with others, so that God's reputation might not be maligned in the sight of man. This is still a primary concern with our Father in Heaven today. Mankind will be drawn to God as His children create a true image of Him in the thinking people who have never known Him.

A Commandment: Anciently God Commanded, *"Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve Him, and shalt swear by His Name" (Deuteronomy 6:13).* And further, *"And ye shall not swear by My Name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the Name of thy God: I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:12).*

In the New Testament, Jesus changed the command in the **Law of Moses** which required people to swear by the Name of the Lord, by saying, *"Swear not at all".* But as we study this passage of Scripture (Matthew 5:33-37), we will determine that our Father in Heaven desires that our simple "yes", or "no", should be just as dependable an answer to those who would ask of us a question or favor, as if we had solemnly sworn before magistrates or kings.

In a very real sense, a professing Christian who does not live up to their high calling is just as guilty of taking the Name of the Lord in vain as were those who anciently dishonestly vowed in the Name of the Lord to perform certain obligations.

Anciently, the Lord had said through Moses, *"...neither shalt thou profane the Name of the Lord" (Leviticus 19:12),* and again in a very real sense, a person who professes to believe in God, and yet who "walks after the flesh", certainly is guilty of profaning and dishonoring the Name of the Lord in a more serious manner than for a non-believer to carelessly repeat the Lord's Name.

Remember the Sabbath: Some have referred to the fourth commandment as one that seals up God's Law. It identifies the Lord as the Great Creator. It is a memorial of creation, a veritable sign between God and His people commemorating creation (see Exodus 31:15-17; Ezekiel 20:12,19,20).

We are told clearly by Jesus Himself, that the Sabbath was made FOR man (see Mark 2:23-27). The strange and unreasonable arguments we hear today against keeping Sabbath all seem to ignore or twist the sense of what Jesus was declaring regarding the Sabbath. "MADE FOR MAN" does not mean, made against man, and "man" refers to more than just Israelites. The purpose regarding the Sabbath -stated in the Ten Commandments -that while this day was to be commemorative, its beneficial value to man was in providing him with a day of physical rest. Not only he, but all those under his authority, both man and beast. were to enjoy the rest.

Man's need for a day of physical rest in every week did not end at Calvary; neither did God's provision of the seventh day to satisfy that purpose end either. Of course the function of the day involved Spiritual rest and renewal also.

Rest is Glorious: To the weary body and mind, the very thought of rest is glorious. How many, under the rush and press of today's hectic world, have snapped under the pressures, simply because they foolishly and erroneously attempted to circumvent God's plan for the whole man. The Lord has said, *"Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is*

the Sabbath of the Lord thy God" - (Deuteronomy 5:13,14). The seventh day is the Lord's, but He made it for man and holds it, in a sense, in trust for man. Greedy, near-sighted man likes to steal the day from God so that he might use it for the work or carnal play instead of for worship and Spiritual renewal.

How often, when the Sabbath is mentioned, does man complain about the financial strain that would be placed upon his family if he should give up working on the Sabbath (Saturday) with its premium pay for overtime work. In regard to such a concern for material things, Jesus said, "*But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you*" (Matthew 6:33). When a person commits his life into God's hands, the Almighty then assumes the responsibility of providing for that individual in the same way a physical father provides for his favored son.

Target of Satan's Wrath: Because the Sabbath, by memorializing the creation and "Yahveh" God as Creator, would constantly remind man of the reality of creation as opposed to some of the theories postulated later, such as "evolution" or "spontaneous generation", it has been the one point in the moral law on which Satan has leveled the full force of his attack. If Satan can cause people to forget the day which commemorates the act of creation, then he can throw open the floodgates which he has now done, to liberalism, modernism, atheism, communism and all the rest of the philosophies which do not really require the existence of a miracle-working God.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What is the importance of the third commandment in the Decalogue? Exodus 20:7.

Answer

2. To what did this command specifically refer? Deuteronomy 6:13; Leviticus 19:12. Was this a commandment to use the Lord's Name profanely?

Answer

3. Did Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, nullify the instructions of Deuteronomy 6:13? See Matthew 5:33-37.

Answer

4. Anciently the reference to the Lord's Name was to the sacred name "Yahveh", but should we understand that today, even the Name of Jesus Christ is holy, and not to be used idly? Acts 4:10-12; 19:13-16.

Answer

5. Though the third commandment is not primarily a prohibition against-using profanity, it certainly forbids invoking the use of God's Name when speaking profanely. Does God hate profanity also? 2 Peter 2:7,8; James 3:8-12.

Answer

6. What is the fourth commandment in the Decalogue? Exodus 20:8-11. Which day is specifically named as the Sabbath? Exodus 20:10. What does it commemorate? Whose day is it?

Answer

7. For whom was the Sabbath made? For only the Jews? Mark 2:27. When was it made? Genesis 2:1-3, If it was made for man in the VERY BEGINNING, is it not obvious that God would have told man about it in the beginning?

Answer

8. When Israel served in hard bondage in Egypt, the Bible indicates that they lost the knowledge of which was the true Sabbath day. How did God reveal to them again which was the true Sabbath day? Nehemiah 9:13,14; Exodus 16:11-31.

Answer

9. What was being discussed in Mark 2:23-28, a 7,000 year period of time or a twenty-four hour day?

Answer

10. What was Jesus' custom and Paul's manner? Luke 4:16; Acts 17:2; 13:42-44; 16:13. What is a "born-again" Sabbath-keeper proclaiming to the world when he observes the seventh-day Sabbath? Hebrews 4:9,10. Will the time come when the whole world will keep the Sabbath? Isaiah 66:22,23.

Answer

HUMAN RELATIONSHIP COMMANDMENTS -Part 1

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS: Genesis 9:20-27; Ruth 1:1-18; John 19:15-27; Numbers 35:10-21,22-33; 1 John 3:11-18; Matthew 5:20-26.

MEMORY VERSE: "Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law"

-Romans 13:8.

COMMENTARY:

The Two Tables: "And Moses turned, and went down from the Mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables" (Exodus 32:15,16).

It is readily observable that man's duty toward God is the subject of the first four commandments of the Decalogue, and his duty toward his fellow-man, the subject of the last six. Some Bible authorities have placed the fifth Commandment with the first four, embracing our duty toward God, understanding it thusly: "Honor God's representatives in the home". It may seem strange to some, but a child's concept of God and righteousness will be based largely upon the life patterns he observes in his parents. Parents are, to children, the very voice of God, for the young are not generally able to understand the abstract; the authority of the parent is the only right and wrong they can easily understand.

Children Must Be Trained: Small children do not automatically know to honor their parents. They must be trained to do this. The greater share of training of small children must of necessity fall upon the shoulders of the mother; and as children mature, more and more of the work of training children to honor their parents should fall properly upon the father. The father is always responsible to see that this

teaching and training occurs, but because of the necessity of providing for his family, he is not always able to spend as much time with the children as is the mother.

Adults Responsible In Two Directions: The fifth commandment places responsibility upon adults to train their children and also to honor their own parents. "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Proverbs 29:15). Children who go astray dishonor their parents, yet part of the blame for this rests upon the parents for having failed to be successful in training such a child.

This commandment also places a responsibility upon the parents to BE honorable, as seen in Ephesians 6:4: "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath." God's way as revealed in this commandment is far superior to man's way. Often we have heard of individuals who have risen to success and prominence, who then were ashamed of their common origins and their humble parents. But God has said: "Honor thy father and mother". Many of the nations have sent their older citizens "away from the camp" to die in loneliness and starvation when they became too old and feeble to contribute any longer to the common welfare of the community.

Thou Shalt Not Kill: Just four words, and one might think there could be little area for misunderstanding this commandment; but this is not the case. Some have understood this commandment so literally that they would not think of killing a fly, for fear of disobeying God. Some have used this commandment as a basis for conscientious objection to carnal warfare.

Some light can be shed upon this commandment by our Lord Himself, for He quoted it thusly: "Thou shalt do no murder" (see Matthew 19:18). There is a vast difference between murder and capital punishment. Murder involves the taking of another's life for personal profit, gain or because of personal hatred.

Israel was actually commanded by God to kill others both in warfare and in the execution of those who were transgressors of the Decalogue. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus made this commandment even more stringent when He declared that one who is angry with his

brother is just as guilty as the one who has actually taken another's life (Matthew 5:21-24). And John is even more explicit when he declares: "*Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him*" (1 John 3:15).

Murder then, begins with the way we think. If the intent to kill is lacking, we call the taking of another's life -manslaughter. Manslaughter often involves carelessness and indifference; under certain circumstances, a man-slayer was to be executed just as though he were a common murderer (see Exodus 21:28,29).

Even suicide would be prohibited under the sixth commandment. Man has no right to take a life -even his own - merely because he might be tired of life, or because his health might be failing, or because there might be frustration in any area of his life.

Responsibility For the Lives Others: Spiritually, we discern that God holds us responsible for conveying to others life-saving knowledge. If we withhold that knowledge, God will hold us personally responsible for their death (see Ezekiel 33:6; Acts 20:26,27).

There are many today who consider themselves to be reputable, upright citizens who are going to be surprised on judgement day to find that the charges against them are charges of MURDER. Here we are referring to those who are involved in the production and sale of products which snuff out human life prematurely, just as certainly as if they held a gun to a person's temple and pulled the trigger.

The tobacco industry and its responsibility for cancer and heart disease; the alcohol industry and its responsibility for alcoholism and associated diseases, not to mention the personal tragedies in terms of wasted lives, are certainly guilty before God. Many of the book and magazine publishers will find themselves guilty of spiritual murder for publishing the hardcore pornography which has spiritually poisoned the minds of millions. We think too of those who are involved in the drug traffic, who have caused untold anguish ... many becoming essentially dead while still living.

Perhaps the greatest sin of all is the Spiritual murder committed by those who profess to believe in

God while undermining the faith of young Christians. Jesus said that the individual who caused a "little one" to stumble would be better off being drowned in the bottom of the sea with a millstone about his neck (see Matthew 18:6). Why is Spiritual murder so much more serious in God's sight than physical murder? Perhaps Matthew 10:28 will give the answer: "*And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather, fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*"

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What is the fifth commandment in the Decalogue? Does "honor" include the concept of obedience? Ephesians 6:1-3. Does this commandment have a built-in promise?

Answer

2. How seriously should we consider this commandment? Exodus 21:15,17; Leviticus 20:9; Deuteronomy 21:18-21; Matthew 15:1-9.

Answer

3. Do children automatically know to obey and honor their parents? Proverbs 29:15,17. Are there any limits to obeying one's parents? Ephesians 6:1; Acts 5:29.

Answer

4. Is an order of respect revealed in Exodus 20:12? What kind of situation prevailed during Israel's apostasy in the prophet Isaiah's time? Isaiah 3:5,8-12. Does the fifth commandment require parents to be honorable? Exodus 20:5b.

Answer

5. Who will suffer when parents are not honorable? Exodus 20:5b.

Answer

6. What is the sixth commandment? Exodus 20:13. How did Jesus understand this commandment? Matthew 19:16-19. Discuss the difference between killing (manslaughter) and murder. Compare Numbers 35:10-15, and 35:22-25 with verses 16-21,30-33.

Answer

7. How was this commandment magnified in the New Testament? Matthew 5:21-24; 1 John 3:11-15. Have God's feelings about murder changed since the beginning? Genesis 4:8-12; John 8:44. Who instituted capital punishment? Genesis 9:6. Does the new dispensation teach the continuance of capital punishment? Romans 13:1-6; Revelation 13:7,10.

Answer

8. Is murder the worst sin a man can commit? James 2:10-12. Can a murderer then be forgiven if he repents and turns from his crime? 2 Samuel 12:7-10; Psalm 51:1-14.

Answer

9. What is the ultimate fate of all unrepentant sinners? Revelation 21:8. Why is Satan referred to as a murderer? John 8:44.

Answer

10. Where does responsibility for another's life end? Ezekiel 33:6; Matthew 18:3-7,10; John 8:44. What kind of person disclaims responsibility for the well-being of others? Genesis 4:8,9.

Answer

LESSON 5

DATE _____

HUMAN RELATIONSHIP COMMANDMENTS -Part 2

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS: Proverbs 5:1-23; 6:23-35; Matthew 5:27-32; James 4:1-7; Exodus 22:1-14; Ephesians 4:28-32.

MEMORY VERSE: *"Mortify therefore your members which are upon earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry"*

-Colossians 3:5.

COMMENTARY:

Holiness Required Today: At a time when man is proclaiming the new morality and declaring that the

old standards are no longer valid, the Bible continues to proclaim that the Divine Order is a way of holiness. Man today attempts to say that sex is merely a physical act, with no Spiritual dimension necessarily involved. Man today says that sexual desire is natural, and that the satisfaction of the desire should not be thought of as evil.

In God's Divine Order, marriage was ordained as the means by which man was to satisfy not only his sexual desire but also his need for intimate companionship and comfort. Anciently the Lord declared, "... *For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy*" (Leviticus 11:44; 1 Peter 1:16). Marriage is a holy provision for God's people, and this holy union is not to be marred or broken by man's lustful appetites.

To avoid unchastity, the Scriptures admonish, "*Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband*" (1 Corinthians 7:2). And again, "*Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled (or it is holy): but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*" (Hebrews 13:4).

This union in God's plan is intended to be for life, "... *What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder*" (Matthew 19:6). It is an example of faithfulness to God. If a person is incapable of being faithful to his life partner, whom he professes to love, why would he be more likely to be faithful to God whom he professes to love?

Adultery strikes a death blow to the union of man and woman, as it involves a breach of the faithfulness that they have pledged to each other. God refers to adultery and divorce in the Book of Malachi as "*treachery*" -see Mal. 2:14,15.

Whoso Committeth Adultery, Lacketh Understanding:

The seventh commandment is a prohibition against adultery. Anciently, when adulterers were discovered, they were stoned. With the execution of the adulterer, the family unit was of course, broken, and innocent as well as guilty persons suffered. Even today, adultery may strike a death blow to the family unit (see Matthew 5:32; 19:9). Jesus taught that fornication was the sole reason for divorce in God's sight.

Fornication is from the Greek word, "*porneia*" and does not have the narrow meaning that the word has in today's usage. According to *Strong's Greek Dictionary* it has the meaning of harlotry -including adultery and incest; figuratively: idolatry -fornication.

We can see about us on every hand today the tragedy which has occurred as a result of man's unholy lust for a few minutes of stolen pleasure. Adultery leads to divorces, broken homes, juvenile delinquency, murder, suicide, and financial burdens placed upon those who must maintain two homes.

News headlines increasingly declare that, across the nation, rates of divorce, desertion and illegitimacy are rising. Also increasing is an army of fatherless children -many of whom are heading for trouble in years to come. The innocent suffer for the sins of the unrighteous, and homes are robbed of fathers or mothers.

Jesus declared that adultery was a problem that began in the heart of man (see Matthew 15:17-20; 5:27,28); that man would be better off to make drastic changes in his life in order to rule his own spirit (see Matthew 5:29,30; Romans 13:14).

Thou Shalt Not Steal: The thief is one who is interested in taking the short cut, or in doing things the easy way. Adam and Eve were this world's first thieves, for they stole from a tree that was not their own.

We usually think of bandits and burglars when someone mentions this precept. What are some of the less obvious ways of stealing? Cheating on income tax; unauthorized borrowing of things from one's employer; stealing time by failing to deliver an honest day's work, and distracting and ridiculing others who might wish to give the employer their best.

Nationally, we are stealing from our grandchildren and even our great-grandchildren by allowing deficit financing of the federal budget. Many businesses steal from their customers and from their country through price-fixing and bribery. This type of businessman demands a free enterprise system in which to conduct his business, but works for the enactment of restrictive trade laws and tariffs which serve to prevent others from having that same freedom.

Thieves are people who want to get something for nothing, or they desire to prove that they are smarter than others and can earn a living by their wits. The tragedy is that most people, (even Christians at times), want to get "something for nothing", so to speak. The majority, then, express the same spirit or same attitude that the thief possesses. Because of this inborn inclination, people are usually easy prey for the confidence men. If it was not for the inborn dishonesty in man, no confidence man would ever be able to "fleece" his unsuspecting victims.

Because of man's desire to get something for nothing, he tries his hand at gambling, lotteries, drawings or taking a chance on the stock market. All of these things are merely different faces of the same coin. Every child of Adam is a potential thief -he only needs the right opportunity and the right excuse. The man who rolls back the mileage on the speedometer of his car before reselling it -is a thief, -just as much as is the confidence man.

The Son of Perdition: The only one of the twelve disciples who was lost was Judas. The Bible declares that he was a thief and had been stealing from Jesus and the others before he ever betrayed Christ for the thirty pieces of silver (see John 12:1-6; 13:29). The thief is out of tune with God, just as any other individual who would break any of the commandments. James declared, "*Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts*" -James 4:3,4.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What was God's original plan for man? Genesis 2:21-25. How long was this union to last? Corinthians 7:39.

Answer

2. What would cause God to "unjoin" the husband and the wife? Matthew 19:9. (Note: Fornication, here, is from the Greek word "*porneia*" and means harlotry as well as incest and adultery. See also 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:16.)

Answer

3. How seriously does God consider this crime? Leviticus 20:10. This was prescribed under what was known as the "ministration of death", see 2 Corinthians 3:7. How is adultery treated under the New Covenant? John 8:1-11. What were Jesus' instructions to the woman taken in adultery? John 8:11.

Answer

4. What will be the penalty for adulterers under the "ministration of the Spirit"? Galatians 5:17-19; Romans 8:13. Why does man commit the crime of adultery? Proverbs 6:32; Matthew 15:16-19; Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 5:27,28.

Answer

5. What is the solution to this problem? 1 John 1:7,9; Ezekiel 11:19,20; Romans 13:14; 1 Corinthians 7:2,5.

Answer

6. What is the eighth commandment, and who were the first transgressors of the precept? Exodus 20:15; Genesis 2:15-17; 3:6,7. Will thieves inherit the Kingdom of God? 1 Corinthians 6:9,10; Zechariah 5:1-4.

Answer

7. Are there many types of stealing that are not generally recognized as such by this world? Proverbs 11:1; 20:23; Micah 6:11.

Answer

8. What should a repentant thief do if possible Exodus 22:1-13; Luke 19:8-10.

Answer

9. What was Judas before he ever betrayed our Lord? John 12:1-6; 13:29.

Answer

10. What is the solution to man's inclination to want something for nothing? 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 4:28; Luke 6:38; James 4:3,4; Matthew 6:9-11. To whom do all things really belong? Psalm 50:10,11.

Answer

LESSON 6

DATE _____

HUMAN RELATIONSHIP COMMANDMENTS -Part 3

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS: Genesis 2:16,17; 3:1-19; 4:1-9; 18:1-15; 39:1-20; 1 Kings 21:1-14; 21:17-29; Acts 4:33 through 5:11.

MEMORY VERSE: "*Blessed are they that do His Commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city*"
-Revelation 22:14.

COMMENTARY:

Faithful Witnesses A Necessity: Any nation aspiring to greatness as a people of justice and righteousness can achieve its goal only by its individual citizens becoming faithful examples and lovers of truth. In order for Israel to have been an example to the rest of the world (see Deuteronomy 4:5-8), it was necessary that she also be a dispense of justice, and this is only possible among a people that are faithful witnesses. . . Only in this way could Israel represent a Holy God.

When Israel as a nation failed to maintain the integrity of its individual citizens, then of course justice ceased to triumph, and she began her halting but sure decent into the bondage of sin; and eventually she suffered Divine chastisement in the form of physical slavery and dispersion among the nations. Nations or individuals succeed in proportion to their love for truth in all its facets.

An Age Of Untruths: In our own time when young people express a loss of confidence in the generation that is now over thirty, many thinking adults are inclined to agree that there does seem to be some basis for this loss of confidence. Never has there been a time it seems, when grown men have so little regard or love for truth. What a sickening spectacle to see men -supposedly the most respectable and honorable that their respective cultures can produce brazenly accuse one another of being liars while the whole world looks on via the mass-communications media!

How very few seem to love the truth just for itself? How many are committed enough to truth to just let the chips fall where they may? Not many, are committed enough to truth to just let the chips fall where they may? Not many to be sure. Yet, it is the truth which can make us free.

Why Do People lie? The immature lie in order to cover up their improper deeds and avoid punishment. The greedy lie in order to gain some material advantage. The spiteful lie about others in order to hurt or "get even". The fearful lie because of duress or coercion. The prideful lie in order to gain unearned esteem, or make themselves "look good". The lustful lie in order to satisfy their unholy appetite. The power-hungry lie in order to gain power or advantage over others.

The First Lie: Death entered the human family because of a lie. Billions are today held in one type of bondage or another because of political, historical, moral and spiritual lies. Entire social systems would literally fail today if the real truth were brought to light.

In view of the universal suffering traceable to untruths, the child of God must flee even the slightest temptation to become a part of deceit or dishonesty.

Thou Shalt Not Covet: This may be the last commandment in the Decalogue as far as chronology is concerned, but it seems to be first in all other respects. This precept must of necessity be transgressed before the others are violated, for sin always begins in the heart.

Before Almighty God ever created Adam and Eve, Satan coveted God's place, *"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High"* (Isaiah 14:13,14). Eve sinned because she first coveted the tree of knowledge, *"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave her husband*

with her and he did eat" (Genesis 3:6). Because sons of God coveted ungodly wives, violence soon prevailed to such a degree that God destroyed the human race with the exception of Noah's family (see Genesis 6).

Man's failure to perform the divine, will always begin with covetousness. God calls it idolatry (see Colossians 3:5).

Many who have seen the need and obvious benefits derived from following the other commandments have failed to see the harm in coveting. Remember, a person will always be motivated by his strongest desires, impulses or thoughts. Notice James on this point: *"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man; But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death"* (James 1:13-15).

This world and the things therein belong to our Father in Heaven, and we at best can never be more than mere stewards. We shall all give account to our Maker for the way in which we have handled and managed that which has been entrusted to our charge.

Covetousness leads to a love of the world and an alienation from God. *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever"* (1 John 2:15-17).

Solomon declared that in his time it was the slothful who were all day long involved in covetousness (see Proverbs 21:25,26). So it is today. Those who refuse to discipline their lives, their time, and their thinking, succumb to lust for that which others have achieved through their diligence, industry, discipline and vision. Paul learned that lust was sinful because it was forbidden by the tenth commandment in the Decalogue (Romans 7:7b): *"...I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet"*. Man becomes guilty of adultery when he lusts after women (see Matthew 5:27,28). - 24 -

The exodus of the Israelites {from Egypt is set forth as a negative example. Israel failed God because they lusted for evil things (1 Corinthians 10:5,6). Peter stated that lust was responsible for the corruption that is in the world (2 Peter 1:4).

Paul admonishes us not to make provision for fulfilling the lusts of the flesh (see Romans 13:14) We must as followers of Christ -Christians, be relentless in severing ourselves from those things which would lead us into covetousness and eventual sin and death (Matthew 5:29,30).

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What is the ninth commandment in the Decalogue? Exodus 20:16; Leviticus 19:11. What will happen eventually to those who transgress the righteous precept? Proverbs 19:5,9; Revelation 21:8,10,27; 22:14,15; Psalm 101:7.

Answer

2. Why do people lie? Why did Satan lie to Eve? John 8:44; 1 John 3:8. Why did Cain lie to God? Genesis 4:8,9. Why did Sarah lie to God? Genesis 18:15. Why did Potiphar's wife lie about Joseph? Genesis 39:7-17. Why did Jezebel have false witnesses lie about Naboth? 1 Kings 21:1-16. Why did Simon Peter lie about knowing Jesus Christ? Matthew 26:69-75.

Answer

3. What caused Ananias and Sapphira to lie? Acts 5:1-11. Who cannot lie? Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18. Who is better than a liar? Proverbs 19:22.

Answer

4. What has happened to many religious leaders? Proverbs 30:5,6; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; 1 John 2:4; 1 Timothy 4:1-4; Jeremiah 9:1-6; 23:9-14,25-32; Romans 1:25.

Answer

5. What was God's opinion of Israel in the past? Hosea 7:1-3,13. What will He one day say of them? Isaiah 63:7,8. What will the Gentiles one day decide? Jeremiah 16:19. How should the following verse be understood? Psalm 62:8,9.

Answer

6. What is the tenth and last commandment in the Decalogue? Exodus 20:17. What else is involved in the transgression of this commandment? Colossians 3:5. What did Paul say of this commandment? Romans 7:7.

Answer

7. What is responsible for the corruption in the world? 2 Peter 1:4. Did desire have anything to do with Eve's disobedience? Genesis 3:6. What does lust eventually produce? Matthew 5:27,28; James 1:13-15.

Answer

8. What types of people practice covetousness? Proverbs 21:25,26.

Answer

9. What caused Satan to rebel against Almighty God? Isaiah 14:13,14.

Answer

10 What kind of an example is left for us in 1 Corinthians 10:5,6? What kind of positive instruction do we find in the following Scriptures? 1 John 2:15-17; Romans 13:14.

Answer

LESSON 7

DATE _____

THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS: Luke 17:7-11; Ecclesiastes 1:1-18; 2:1-14; Revelation 22:1-15; John 15:1-10; Psalm 78:1-7.

MEMORY VERSE: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil"

-Ecclesiastes 12:13,14,

COMMENTARY:

Altar of the Unknown God: Our modern church world seems to be worshipping at the altar of the "unknown God", just as practiced by the Athenians of old. Of course you will remember Paul's sermon on Mars Hill to these people and his efforts to bring them to a knowledge of the One True God (Acts 17:15-34). The world church and its message have become man-centered. The appeal to today's man, trying to fill his spiritual appetite, is "attend the church of your choice this week; ample parking, refrigerated building; padded pews; special choir -all this in our beautiful new church building". Some church groups advertise the opportunity for involvement in their different programs and activities. These functions seldom include anything like "soul-winning".

To an ever-increasing extent we find the clergy involved in civil disobedience; participation in huge ecumenical church councils; (whose concern is not so much about spiritual dangers as it is about politics), the need for new social structures; support for student rebels; redistribution of wealth, etc. Great changes in the doctrine of this world's largest "professing" Christian church have masqueraded under the title of "renewal",

Man's Plans Supreme? It seems that in every area of the modern church world the emphasis is on man's need; man's goals; man's plans; man's programs and ideas; man's desire for social change, and for rebuilding present society and the present economic system.

A right understanding of the foregoing may be of some importance, but we cannot help but believe that, in all this feverish activity, the church world is worshipping at the altar of the "unknown God". We hear practically no reference in all of this as to what God might prefer -what He might think about some of these

shallow schemes. We do not hear any consideration as to what God's plans might be or what He is really trying to accomplish in this world.

God's great blueprint for life -the Bible -has been set to one side by men who no longer profess to believe in its Divine origin. Men are rejecting its standards, saying they are no longer applicable in this century. "We need a new morality" is the cry today. All of this has tended to create an atmosphere in which the majority of people seem to feel that keeping the commandments of God is optional. Some feel that, perhaps, some commandments should be kept, but the choice should be left entirely up to the individual. In essence, the majority of religionists seem to be saying, "If you want to take religion that seriously -then you can keep the commandments. But it is really a shame to put yourself back under such bondage". .

One basic truth needs to be unquestionably established now and permanently: It is man's DUTY to keep God's Ten Commandments. They are not just something man might perform to demonstrate his last full measure of devotion. Commandment-keeping is the beginning of a life of walking with God. Commandment-keeping is intended to be the norm of life for God's children. This is the same as the norm expected of a citizen in obeying the laws of the land.

It the duty all men for to keep God's commandments. Man draws the death penalty upon himself when he feels that anything less is acceptable in God's sight. In other words, commandment-keeping is just doing what is reasonable. Man's problems have been unreasonableness, self-centeredness and self-indulgence.

Duty to God and Man: The ten Commandments reveal man's duty toward his fellow man. The Bible says about them that they are "*perfect, converting the soul*" (Psalm 19:7). If the church world would begin obeying and teaching the Ten Commandments, they would be able to leave the altar of the "unknown God" and progress to the point that is mentioned by Paul in Romans 8:14-17, where regenerated man can, because of the lending of the Holy Spirit, cry out "Father" in his concept of the One True God.

Our Father in Heaven, who sees the end from the beginning, has a blueprint upon which man is to build. If this blueprint is rejected, man should hardly be surprised to find the building turning out all wrong. The situation is similar to that of several high school drop-outs who went to work for a construction company and decided that the architect, who had completed ever so much schooling in engineering, design, and draftsmanship, did not know what he was doing in the designing of a certain building. They decided to make some "improvements" and changes to the plans. Of course the results were disastrous. Perhaps you can picture some of the confusion that ensued.

This is a good illustration of what man has done to this world -"improving" and "changing" God's blueprints. Please notice this Scripture from Isaiah: *"the earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws; changed the ordinances, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left"* (Isaiah 24:5,6). This earth is going to suffer a universal judgement because mankind will not perform its DUTY.

The Search For Fulfillment: Man today is trying to find "fulfillment", or to find himself, just as wise old King Solomon did some 3000 years ago. Aside from Jesus Christ, Solomon was the wisest man who has ever lived (see 1 Kings 3:12). He possessed an extremely inquiring intellect. Solomon was, among other things, a writer and lecturer on botany and zoology as well as theology. Solomon wrote 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs (see 1 Kings 4:29-34).

Almighty God permitted Solomon to experiment with different phases of life -to see if he might find fulfillment. In the Book of Ecclesiastes we have the record of Solomon's experiments. First, by seeking pleasure in its different forms: jesting, wine-inducing laughter; great building programs (including impressive houses, vineyards, gardens, orchards, pools and reservoirs). He possessed slaves and saw them give birth to children. He gathered about him entertainers, singers and musicians and, of course, great wealth. But, without God, none of these things really brought

satisfaction or contentment (see Ecclesiastes 1:16-18; 2:1-11). Solomon's conclusion was: "*Vanity of vanities, ALL is vanity*" (:emptiness -something unsatisfactory).

Solomon's conclusions of the best possible course for man to follow in this life is found in chapters 11 and 12 of this Book, and it concludes with the positive statement: "**Fear God and keep His Commandments**", for not only is this man's best possible course of life-action, but it is also his DUTY.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. How do we know that much of the religious world today is worshipping at the altar of the "unknown God"? 1 John 2:4.

Answer

2. How can we know that we are worshipping the One True God? 1 John 2:3,5; John 4:23,24.

Answer

3. God has done so much for us, but what can we do for Him? 1 Chronicles 29:11-13; John 14:15; 1 John 5:2,3. (Compare Scriptures)

Answer

4. Is it unreasonable for God to expect man to serve and obey Him? Romans 12:1,2.

Answer

5. What should be our attitude regarding our service to our God? Luke 17:10.

Answer

6. Did Jesus indicate that man's duty, keeping God's Commandments, involved service to both God and our fellow man? See Matthew 22:34-40. Is it not strange that so little is mentioned today about the first four commandments in the Decalogue? Why?

Answer

7. In the foregoing passage of Scripture (Matthew 22:34-40), did Jesus indicate that the first four commandments have now been replaced with ONE great commandment, or was He saying that this was a digest of the essence of the first four commandments?

Answer

8. Is God's requirement that His people keep His Commandments an unattainable goal? Luke 1:5,6; Revelation 15:12; 22:14.

Answer

9. What was Jesus' attitude toward the commandments of God, and what kind of an example did He establish for us? John 15:10; 14:5,6; 13:15.

Answer

10. Man is concerned with finding fulfillment in life. In Ecclesiastes 12:13, the word "duty" in our AKJ translation, is a supplied word. Read the verse without the supplied word. What then is the real essence of the verse as far as man's search for fulfillment is concerned?

Answer

LESSON 8

DATE _____

THE TWO LAWS!

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS: Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:22-33; Exodus 24:1-18; Deuteronomy 27:1-26; 28:1-14; Romans 7:7-25; 1 John 3:1-11.

MEMORY VERSE: *"Wherefore the law is holy, and the Commandment holy, and just, and good...For I delight in the law of God after the inward man"*

-Romans 7:12,22.

COMMENTARY:

MISUNDERSTANDING BRINGS GROSS CONFUSION: What gross confusion and chaos reign in the professing Christian world! What contradictions, inconsistencies and un-Christian attitudes have been expressed it

seems by nearly every group which claims to represent Jesus Christ, toward the other groups which also profess to represent our Lord! This debate and confusion seems to revolve around two principal points of doctrine; and it seems that the points of debate have not changed much over the centuries.

Every false cult errs on at least one or both of these two basic doctrinal questions: The person of Christ and the Law of God. A misunderstanding of the truth of the incarnation of the "Logos", or "Word of God", as Jesus of Nazareth, trips and causes most cults to stumble (please see 1 John 4:1-3).

The other basic doctrinal point would of course be the "Law of God". All of the following contradictory concepts are taught today by different churches and religious leaders: (1) The Ten Commandments are eternal, but the church has the right to interpret them and change them to suit herself. (2) Every commandment ever given in the Bible is in effect except for the sacrificial and ceremonial ordinances. (3) There are now no commandments at all that Christians MUST observe, because once a man's nature has been changed he will always, when led by the Spirit, just automatically do the correct thing. (4) There are now nine commandments for Christians, all but the Sabbath commandment were re-instituted in the New Testament. (5) There are only two commandments for Christians to observe now, (basing their argument on Matthew 22:34-40, where Jesus stated that the law and prophets were suspended from the two commandments, to love God with your whole heart, and to love your neighbor as yourself). (6) There is only one commandment now, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."

The key to unraveling this confusion is found, of course in the Bible itself. The key is in understanding that there were TWO SETS of laws given to Israel at Mt. Sinai. The first set, the "Ten Commandments", had existed from the very beginning, but had never before been given in a codified form. The first law was to last for a thousand generations, or as long as the present heaven and earth endure.

The other law, the "Book of the Law", containing administrative, judicial, and ceremonial ordinances was one that was imposed only until the times of reformation mentioned in Hebrews 9:7-10.

All Ten of the Ten Commandments are Taught in the New Testament: The whole Decalogue is taught in the New Testament as being the positive will of God for the new dispensation. And yet the other law is referred to by the Apostles and Elders of the New Testament Church as one that Christians were not expected to observe (see Acts 15:8-11,19-21,28,29; 21:25).

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**THE TWO
THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

(Moral Precepts that are, Spiritual, Holy, "Just, and Good".)

1. Was written by God's Own Finger on tablets of stone: Exodus 24:12; 31:18.
2. Was placed inside the "Ark of the Covenant" at the Command of God: Deuteronomy 10:5; Exodus 40:20; 1 Kings 8:9.
3. It is a perfect Law leading to the conversion of souls: Psalm 19:7.
4. was not destroyed by Christ: Matthew 5:17-19.
5. Was to be magnified by the Lord: Isaiah 42:21.
6. Gives the knowledge of sin; there is no transgression without it. Without it, sin would not be imputed: Romans 3:20b; 7:7b; 4:15b; 5:13b.
7. This is a Law of Liberty; it is "NOT" grievous: 1 John 5:3; James 2:10-12.

**LAWS
THE BOOK (SCROLL) OF THE
LAW**

(Contained Administrative, Judicial, Penal, Ceremonial and Sacrificial Ordinances)

1. Was the "handwriting of ordinances": written by Moses in a book: Colossians 2:14; 2 Chronicles 35:12. Also written on a monument of whole stones by Joshua: Joshua 8:30-32.
2. Was placed *in the side* of the "Ark of the Covenant" at the command of Moses: Deuteronomy 31:24-26.
3. Was an *imperfect* law leading to the subversion of souls: Acts 15:24.
4. Was abolished by Christ: Ephesians 2:15.
5. Was taken out of the way by the Lord: Colossians 2:14.
6. Was added because people were transgressing the Ten Commandments; was added as a consequence of sin: Galatians 3:19; Leviticus, chapter 3 through 7.
7. This law is a "yoke of bondage", which none were able to bear: Acts 15:10; Galatians 5:1.

8. Those who obey this Law and teach others to obey it, will be called great in the Kingdom of God: Matthew 5:19.

9. Those who keep this Law will be blessed: James 1:25; 2:10-12.

10. This law endures as long as the present heaven and earth: Matthew 5:17-19.

11. We must keep this Law if we would enter into life: Matthew 19:16-19.

12. This Law is established by faith: Romans 3:31.

13. This Law is Spiritual, Holy, Just and Good: Romans 7:14,12.

14, This Law was complete; God added no more to it: Deuteronomy 5:22; Acts 15:5,10,19,20,24.

15. This Law, contained in the *heart* of the Ark of the Covenant, under the old Covenant, and written in the *hearts* of believers under the NEW Covenant, will be the basis of judgement for the world: 2 Chronicles 5:10; Zechariah 5:1-4; Revelation 11:18,19.

8. Those who teach that this law must be obeyed, are tempting God and are subverting souls of believers: Acts 15:10,24.

9. Those who attempt to be justified by keeping this law, wind up under a curse: Galatians 3:10,11, and 5:14.

10. This law ended with Christ and His Death on Calvary: Colossians 2:14-17; Galatians 3:19-25.

11. This law outlined the death penalty for sinners; it was referred to as the ministration of death; it subverted souls: Acts 15:24; 2 Corinthians 3:7.

12. This law is not of faith: Galatians 3:12.

13. This law contained carnal ordinances: Hebrews 7:16; 9:10.

14. This law was added because people were sinning: Galatians 3:19.

15. This law was only a schoolmaster till Christ should come: Galatians 3:19,24,25.

THE TWO LAWS -Part 2

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS: Psalms 119:9-16; 17-24; 41-48; 89-96. 97-104; 105-112; 161-168.

MEMORY VERSE. *"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His Commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His Commandments: and His Commandments are not grievous"*

1 John 5:2,3.

COMMENTARY:

Unless the Bible student is willing to concede that there were in fact TWO separate laws given at Mt. Sinai, he will be incapable of honestly reconciling some seemingly contradictory statements by Bible writers.

A Good Question: Can the same code of law be "spiritual", "holy", "just", "good" (see Romans 7:12,14), and at the same time be a law which is "against us", "contrary to us", with individual precepts which are carnal? (See Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 7:16; 9:10). Can the same code of law be abolished by Christ? (See Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14) ...and at the same time be established by faith? (See Romans 3:31). Can the same code of law be described as being "perfect, converting the soul"? (See Psalm 19:7) ... and at the same time be said to be "weak and unprofitable"? (See Hebrews 7:18).

Can the same code of law be described as being "truth", (Psalm 119:142,151) as being "righteousness" (Psalm 119:172), and at the same time said to be a law of shadows which ended at Calvary, because of its limitations? (See Galatians 3:19, Hebrews 9:9-11; Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14.) Have truth and righteousness ended?

Contrasting Instructions: The Apostles responded to the false teaching that a person would have to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses in order to be saved, with the reply, *"We gave no such commandments"*

(Acts 15:24); and *"Why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"* (Acts 15:10).

Contrast these conclusions with the instructions of Jesus to the rich young nobleman who had asked what he might do to have eternal life. The answer of Jesus was loud and clear, *"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."* These two passages of Scripture would seem like impossible contradictions, unless we recognize that Jesus was speaking of the Ten Commandments (see Matthew 19:16-19), and the disciples were speaking of *the other law: the BOOK of the Law*, containing the administrative, judicial and ceremonial ordinances and the ordinance about circumcision. It contained also the penalties for breaking the Ten Commandments.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Would a comparison of the following Scriptures seem to reveal a contradiction? Compare Matthew 5:17-19 with Galatians 3:19; Colossians 2:14. Is the "contradiction" resolved by recognizing the distinction between the two laws? 2 Kings 21:8.

Answer

2. Could the same code of law be said to be "Spiritual, holy, just and good" and at the same time said to be "against" or contrary "to us" with individual precepts which are carnal? Compare Romans 7:12,14 with Colossians 2:14; Ephesians 2:15; Hebrews 7:16; 9:10.

Answer

3. Can the same code of law be abolished by Christ and at the same time be established by faith? Compare Colossians 2:14; Ephesians 2:15 with Romans 3:31.

Answer

4. What did Christ command the disciples to teach? Matthew 28:18-20. Did Jesus command that the Ten Commandments should be observed? Matthew 19:16-19. Compare with Exodus 20:1-17.

Answer

5. If the disciples had been referring to the Ten Commandments in Acts 15:23,24, they would have been contradicting Jesus' instructions, would they not?—Did the Ten Commandments contain the ordinances regarding circumcision? Then the disciples were referring to the Book of the Law which prescribed circumcision. Leviticus 12:2,3.

Answer

6. Which was the law that was against the children of God? Compare Colossians 2:14 with Deuteronomy 31:24-26; Acts 15:5-10; Galatians 5:1; 3:10; Deuteronomy 27:26. How is the Ten Commandment Law described in Scripture? Romans 7:7,12,14,22,25; Psalms 19:7; 119:151,172,142,144. Is the Ten Commandment Law considered to be a "yoke of bondage"? 1 John 5:3; Matthew 5:17-19; James 1:23-25; 2:10-12. How is the Book of the Law described in Scripture? Hebrews 7:11-17; 9:9,10; 10:1; Acts 15:5,10.

Answer

7. How were the Ten Commandments first given to Israel? Deuteronomy 4:12,13; Exodus 20:1-17. What happened to the first tablets upon which the Ten Commandments were written? Exodus 32:15,16,19. Did God delegate to man the authority to break the instrument upon which His Will was recorded? Exodus 34:1.

Answer

8. What continuing and necessary function does the Decalogue perform? Romans 3:20; 7:7; 1 John 3:4. Would there be any transgression without the Ten Commandment Law to identify sin? Romans 4:15b. If there was no law, could sin be imputed? Romans 5:13b.

Answer

9. Could we say then, that if there was no law, there would be no sin; man would not be a sinner and he would not be lost? ... ! If man was not guilty of sinning, Jesus shed His Blood in vain. If there were no law to identify sin, then the Church has no Message for the world and it might as well close its doors!

Answer

10 What was the real message God was conveying in the Ten Commandments? Romans 13:8-10; 1 John 5:2,3; Matthew 22:34-40. How can God's True Church or people be identified? Isaiah 8:16; Revelation 12:17; 14:12; and 22:14.

Answer

LESSON 10

DATE _____

THE ERROR OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS: Isaiah 51:1-11; 64:1-7; Job 29; Psalm 7:8-17; Luke 18:9-14; Romans 3:1-10; 3:19-31.

MEMORY VERSE: *"For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"*

-1 Corinthians 4:6.

COMMENTARY:

STRANGE THINGS: A knowledge of the will of God, does strange things to people. They are never the same afterward. An awareness of God's will causes a person either to begin cleaning up his life, or his heart will harden, his conscience will become seared, and he will go deeper into sin, sealing his judgment by his reaction to God's will (see Revelation 22:11).

The central motive of every pagan cult is the concept that through the possession of special knowledge, given only to a select group of people, advantage may be gained over the rest of mankind. Such a person concludes, reflecting on his good fortune to be among the few "chosen" for such benefits -that probably he was singled out -chosen because of his superior ability or character!

The Bible reveals that there are, in fact, advantages in possessing the truth. Paul indicates that when he asks,...."*What advantage then hath the Jew -or what profit is there in circumcision?*" ..he answers, "*Much every way: chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*" But please

- 40 -

remember that, in God's order, being a possessor of Divine truth is a two-edged sword. A person must act on revealed truth or it becomes a curse (see Deuteronomy 27:26; Galatians 3:10; 2 Peter 2:20,21).

A Biblical Enigma: "Why the sufferings of Job?"

This has been an enigma to students of the Word for ages. God had declared that Job was "a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil" (Job 1:8). Why then did God even listen to Satan's accusations? Why did God permit Satan to afflict Job? Did God owe Satan the courtesy of testing Satan's jaundiced theories about Job? Did Job have some spiritual weakness his experience was intended to correct? What did Job, a "perfect man", have to repent of? (See Job 42:6). A correct understanding of the Book of Job reveals that Job had a problem of self-righteousness. Job's sufferings were not punitive but remedial -for the purpose of perfecting him. Notice in these Scriptures Job's lack of humility and his problem of self-righteousness: Job 29; 32:1; 34:5; 40:8. Job's afflictions gave him an understanding of himself -the ability to judge his status better (see 1 Corinthians 11:31).

In essence though, Job's experience probably developed through this sequence of events:

- (1) Job became aware of the will of God.
- (2) He began to practice it.
- (3) He began to receive the blessings and reap the benefits that always follow when one obeys the revealed will of God (see James 1:25).
- (4) As Job began to prosper he became impressed with his own importance, influence and righteousness.
- (5) God permitted Satan to afflict Job to help Job become able to see himself (see 2 Corinthians 13:5).
- (6) Self-examination brought self-judgement, followed by Spiritual purging of his wrong attitudes. Job exclaims: "Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6). Please compare Job's experience with Paul's as mentioned in Philippians 3:4-9.

A Teaching Parable: Another interesting example of the problem of self-righteousness is found in the parable Jesus spoke to those who "trusted themselves that they were righteous, and despised others". This parable is found in Luke 18, verses 9 through 14.

In this parable the pharisee, because he had acted on some of his religious convictions, trusted in HIMSELF that he was righteous. With his lack of Spiritual eyesight, he compared himself with others (see v.11) ... his Spiritual vision was blurred by his own accomplishments and he compared himself with the publican -so convicted of sin because his eyes had really been opened.

Obviously, though, God measures by a different measuring system than man. Jesus said that it was the publican who went home justified.

That parable is the pattern of the experience of many Christians. They learn of Spiritual principles that others may not be aware of and their ego becomes "puffed up". Immature Christians are comforted by the thought that they possess Spiritual truth that others are lacking. "WE are right, and the majority is wrong", is a pleasant thought to the carnal mind. A self-righteous person cannot grow Spiritually, for he is not conscious or aware of **ANY SPIRITUAL LACK**. As he compares himself with others, within the narrow confines of obedience to the new truth he has learned, he feels superior, smug, arrogant and self-righteous.

Saved By Grace: We should be careful to remember, the person who keeps all ten of the Ten Commandments as perfectly as he can, is equally dependent on being saved by GRACE as the Christian who might never have heard that the seventh day is the Sabbath. Anyone who is saved is saved by grace. All must be washed in the Blood of the Lamb and endure till the end.

Many Commandment-keepers do not seem to realize that they need Jesus as a Living Saviour to help them overcome the habit of sin -to intercede for them when they have sinned. They are in need just as much as a new-born babe in Christ, who may not yet even know the names of the Books of the Bible. Christian maturity produces an even greater dependence upon the Indwelling Christ. This is the exact opposite of what some may have been led to believe.

Man's natural failure comes from comparing himself with other men instead of Christ, Whom the Father desires to use as a Pattern for the remaking of our natures (see 2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:10). Anyone can choose a worse person to compare himself

with. We may look good to ourselves in such a comparison, but none of us can fail to see our own shortcomings when we measure ourselves with God's yardstick...*"For ALL have sinned and come short of the Glory of God"* -Romans 3:23.

When a sinner, by faith, accepts Jesus' Blood as a payment for his or her sins, they are completely forgiven of all transgressions, and stand perfect and justified before God. To the repentant sinner who has accepted Salvation by faith, Christ imparts His Own Righteousness. Can this individual improve on this relationship as he or she begins to keep the Commandments? Can they become more justified before God than when they were initially perfectly justified because of the death of Christ in their place? Can something be more perfect than something that is already perfect? Of course the answer from the Bible is a resounding NO! But on the other hand, can a man become less righteous if he willfully disobeys or refuses to walk in the light? Of course the answer to this question is YES. The willful sinner will even lose his or her salvation (see Hebrews 10:26-29).

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What was Job's real Spiritual problem? Job 29; 32:1; 34:5; 40:8. Was this not also a national problem with Israel? Romans 10:1-4.

Answer

2. What caused Job to feel self-righteous? Was it because he compared and measured himself with others? Is this wise? 2 Corinthians 10:12.

Answer

3. What brought Job to self-knowledge, self-judgement and repentance? Job 42:5,6.

Answer

4. Are we justified before God because of our own good works? Isaiah 64:6. Why is this so? Romans 3:23; 9:19; Isaiah 53:6; Ecclesiastes 7:20.

Answer

5. When Job repented, was he repenting of attitudes that he exhibited before he started serving God, or after?

Answer (Prepare to discuss)

6. What should our attitudes be regarding our service for the Lord? Luke 17:7-10. Why? Matthew 23:12.

Answer

7. In the parable of the pharisee and the publican (see Luke 18:9-14), the pharisee felt self-righteous. What was his attitude toward others? Luke 18:9. Did he measure himself with others? Verse 11. Is this wise? (2 Corinthians 10:12)

Answer

8. Which, the pharisee or the publican, went to his home justified? Luke 18:13,14. Would this indicate that God measures people differently than does man? Isaiah 55:8,9; 1 Samuel 16:7.

Answer

9. Why, despite his obvious piety, did the pharisee not go to his home justified? Isaiah 57:15; Micah 6:8; Luke 12:48.

Answer

10. If we should not feel self-righteous concerning our commandment-keeping, are we then to conclude that there are no advantages in keeping the Commandments of God? James 1:25; Psalm 1:1-3; Revelation 22:14.

Answer

LESSON 11

DATE _____

THE WAY OF HOLINESS

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS: Hebrews 10:14-25; Romans 6; 2 Corinthians 6:1-10; Ephesians 4:17-32; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-28.

MEMORY VERSE: "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" -Isaiah 35:8.

COMMENTARY:

Christianity, the Way of Life: In many places in the New Testament, Christianity is referred to as a "way". A way, according to one dictionary, is a "manner, mode; a direction, passage or progress, on a course; a plan or means for attaining an end". Of course these concepts agree perfectly with what true Christianity is.

We as Christians are traveling towards the Capital City of the Kingdom of God. It is true that we crossed the border and became citizens of the Kingdom the moment we accepted Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour; but we will not have reached the Capital City, "New Jerusalem", until we have traveled All The Way.

As we travel along the way, we find that from time to time we must engage in battle with the enemy we defeated when we accepted Christ. This enemy will be confined in prison when the King returns. We have little to worry about though, as long as we have taken along our armour and our swords (Ephesians 6:10-17).

Of course, this is figurative speech used to present the truth of the Spiritual Journey that Christians travel even if they never leave their homes. Once we take on the Name of Christ, we become the mortal enemies of Satan, and he will attack us wherever we are.

As we travel along the Way of Holiness, we become increasingly aware of the titanic battle between good and evil that we have become involved in. This is a battle for the control of the minds and wills of men; for if someone controls your mind, he controls all of you.

New Testament Writers are Concerned With Our Thinking: One of the central themes of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew -chapters 5 through 7), was that sin starts with the way we think. Paul stated in

Ephesians 6:12 that "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities..." Our fighting is mental and Spiritual.

It is true that many of the saints suffered actual martyrdom because of their faith in Jesus Christ. But even in this, we can see that Satan used the instruments of fear, pain, and uncertainty, in order to shake the faith and confidence of the saints in the goodness and faithfulness of God. We should not be deceived into thinking that Satan was totally unsuccessful in these tactics, for Paul himself stated that before his conversion he persecuted the Church of God and caused many to blaspheme (Acts 26:11).

Satan's greatest triumphs, however, have been from within. By infiltrating and undermining the visible world-church, he almost caused the true Gospel to disappear from the face of the earth. This type of attack has been the most insidious of all. By causing the world to be at peace with the Church, Christians were lulled to sleep. They felt no need for their heavy, uncomfortable armour (Ephesians 6:13-17); and feeling no external danger, they felt no need to be armed. So they ceased to carry their swords, and became easy prey for Satan. They settled down to get comfortable in a world that had been rejected by God.

Prepared To Fall Away: The Church enjoys religious freedom in part of the world, but, again, it has become content, complacent, apathetic, indifferent. - asleep! No wonder the Lord says, "...*thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked...*" "...*I will spew thee out...*". -Revelation 3:17,16.

The final condition of the Church pictured in the Message to the Church at Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-19), is a very pitiful one. The Church is here described as one that is wealthy as far as material possessions are concerned. Perhaps it has luxurious church equipment, the best-paid ministers and the most outstanding choirs; so when we read these Scriptures, we usually think of big churches in the most fashionable part of town, and breathe a sigh of relief that the Lord is not chastising us here.

Often it takes very few possessions to make people feel that they are rich, increased with goods, and

have need of nothing. Regardless of how much or little we have, we will never be acceptable to God if we have a self-satisfied, complacent, indifferent attitude. God will utterly reject a Christian who is lacking in zeal, enthusiasm, and excitement for his calling and profession in Christ.

It is important that we realize we have been chosen for Divine service. We have been "set apart" for the Holy Service of God. Holiness is doing the will of God. Many people labor under the misconception that it is possible to serve God without sanctification. If we can just do something for God like being a member of the church board, or singing in the choir, or doing custodial duties, or teaching a Bible class etc., then we should be left alone in the other areas of our lives.

Easy to Hurt: Christians with feelings such as these, are hurt very much when they do not seem to be appreciated. Some will even quit the church and return to the world. We should also be careful not to be deceived into thinking we may have gained some advantage with God and are due some special privilege because of anything we may have done. God willingly receives or accepts services only from those whom He has cleansed and "set apart", and who remain faithful to Him in every respect. The offering of unsanctified service will not accomplish any lasting, positive results, for the Scriptures tell us, *"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain"* -Psalm 127:1.

Not Gained By Works: Many who have stressed holiness above other qualities of a Christ-like life, feel that holiness can be accomplished in superficial ways, such as refusing to wear neckties, shirt buttons; refusing to shave, wearing dresses down to the ankles, a certain type of bonnet or dress ... these things may or may not be good, but they are not that which primarily constitutes holiness.

Holiness is not something we bestow upon ourselves. It is true that we are not our own, we should do everything that we can to abstain from the appearance

of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22), but the thing that makes us holy is the leading and indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our Salvation nearer than when we believed." -Romans 13:11.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1, How important is Holiness to Salvation? Hebrews 12:14. Would you then say this is a subject that needs greater attention?

Answer

2. Sanctification means "a setting apart" or purity, depending upon which Greek word appears in the original Text. The Greek word "*hagiasmos*" (purity) is at times translated, *sanctification*, and at other times *holiness*. Keeping this in mind, the question should now be -how does a person become holy or sanctified? 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2; Ephesians 4:23,24; Romans 12:1,2.

Answer

3. Will true holiness (purity) produce a "holier-than-thou" attitude in the believer? Titus 1:15.

Answer

4. Should holiness, when properly understood, have a profound influence on the entirety of our thinking? Philippians 4:8; Ephesians 4:23,24; 1 Thessalonians 4:7. (*Note: Holiness is interwoven with all the noble qualities of a Christ-like life. One could not obtain holiness apart from what Christianity is, in its entirety.*)

Answer

5. Another side of sanctification is the truth that the believer has been "set apart" for the service or pleasure of God. Was Paul sanctified or "set apart" by God for a definite purpose? Acts 9:15.

Answer

6. Was Paul's calling, as recorded in Acts 22:14-16, any different than that which is extended to every Christian?

Answer

7. Are not we also chosen vessels? Ephesians 1:14; and 2 Thessalonians 2:13.

Answer

8. Isn't this truth, that we are sanctified or chosen vessels, the ground for Paul's plea that, we present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God? Romans 12:1,2.

Answer

9. How will our minds be affected by this Divine and holy discipline? Romans 12:2; 2 Timothy 1:7.

Answer

10. What are we to do with our Spiritually renewed minds? Romans 12:2b. Is our sanctification God's will or desire? 1 Thessalonians 4:3.

Answer

LESSON 12

DATE _____

EVERY THOUGHT INTO SUBJECTION

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS: Matthew 4:1-11; 1 Samuel 18:6-15; Psalms 139:1-12; Romans 8:28-39; Philipppians 3:1-14; Philipppians 4:5-13; Colossians 3:1-17.

MEMORY VERSE: *"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name"* -John 1:12.

COMMENTARY:

The Power of Confidence: To the child of God has been given the right and privilege (John 1:12), to choose thoughts which will make his life an eternal success. What a wonderful Gift this is! It is actually the key that unlocks the door to an abundant, meaningful, purposeful life.

The central theme of many "great" worldly films, novels, dramas and operas revolves around the tragic outcome of individuals' lives when they find themselves unable to shake free from negative, depraved, destructive, foreboding thoughts. Worldly people seem to crave this type of entertainment. And they love to sympathize and feel sorry for these imaginary individuals who are trapped in the destructive maelstrom of fate. A look at the popular music of our day reveals the same truth. People seem to enjoy feeling sad, pitiful, and sorry for themselves and for others with whom they easily identify. The popular songs of our day usually portray unfaithfulness in love affairs, broken hearts, fits of melancholy and depression that the individual cannot overcome.

Are the Results Intentional? It seems sometimes that the world has but one goal in mind -to poison the intellect of every individual with a negative, defeatist, foreboding and depraved spirit! No wonder there are so many crimes, so many mental patients, broken homes, juvenile delinquents etc., for, *"As a man thinketh in his heart so is he"* (Proverbs 23:7).

Even Christians oftentimes react foolishly to situations and cause lasting difficulties for themselves. The story is told of the minister who had been feeling rather despondent for several days until he was shocked to find his wife dressed in black; whereupon he asked who had died. She replied: "Have you not heard? God is dead!" He was so ashamed of himself and the incident made such a lasting impression that he was not seen again without a smile and a positive attitude.

Immature Christians usually think of peace, harmony and minor triumphs as the outward token that God is pleased with them. But when things seem to go wrong, this then is evidence that God is no longer pleased with them and is punishing them for something they have either thought or done.

Undaunted by Difficulty: Paul's outlook in the face of tribulation, persecution, hunger, danger or even the threat of death itself should be a wonderful example for all of us. In Romans the eighth chapter, verses 35--39, we read: *"Who shall separate us from*

the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword? As it is written, for Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

And we read in Philippians 4:11-14, "Not that I speak in respect to want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound, and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Yes, it is a constant battle to control our thoughts. Someone has said that wrong thoughts seem to come up like weeds in a garden. They have to be continually uprooted. The best way to assure that they won't come back as readily next time is to plant something positive in their place. This is a very good picture. Our beautiful flower garden is our mind...Beautiful if beautiful thoughts, goals, and principles have been planted there...Beautiful, if it has been weeded, watered, fed, well cared for and rocks removed. But like a garden, the weeds come up naturally; the flowers have to be chosen and planted!

A Crippling Misconception: One of the lies that cripples the children of God is the idea that we have sinned because an unclean thought has crossed our minds. The basis for this misunderstanding seems to be found in Matthew 5:28, where Jesus stated that to look upon a woman lustfully was to commit adultery with her in one's heart. Jesus is here, as well as in other places, showing that sin starts with the way we think (Matthew 5:21-48). The Scriptures say that Jesus was in all points tempted..."like as we are, yet without sin" -Hebrews 4.15.

Some seem to think Jesus was "almost tempted"; but the Scriptures tell us that He was literally tempted!

He thought about what Satan said, felt a desire to do the things Satan suggested, but rejected the thoughts. We must do the same.

To hold on to a sinful, degrading thought is just as much a sin as to actually commit the act. A person will be drawn to situations which will prove to be his undoing if he has been harboring, holding onto, and toying with lustful desires.

David knew that God knows our thoughts, for in Psalm 139:2-4, he wrote: "*Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether.*"

For wrong thoughts to cross our mind is not sin in itself. It is our duty, however, to reject such thoughts and to declare authoritatively, "I choose not to think those negative thoughts, in the Name of Jesus". Then, put positive thoughts in their place, just as Jesus did when He was tempted of Satan. He replaced every temptation with a positive answer from the Scriptures, saying: "*It is Written*" -Matthew 4:1-11.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Who was the original sinner of the Universe? John 8:44. What was the original sin of this being? Ezekiel 28:15,17; Isaiah 1:12-14.

Answer

2. Was Lucifer(Satan) wise? Ezekiel 28:12 Shouldn't he have known to reject the thoughts mentioned in Ezekiel 28:17?

Answer

3. When Jesus was tempted of Satan after His forty days fast, how did He react to the subtle suggestions from Satan to prove that He was the Son of God? Matthew 4:3-7. Might Satan also tempt us to prove that we are really children of God? Is the means that Jesus used to defeat Satan also available to the least follower of Christ?

Answer

4. How highly does God rate the ability to control our attitudes or thought patterns? Proverbs 16:32.

Answer

5. Would a person who was willfully living in sin be able to control his thoughts? Isaiah 57:20-21.

Answer

6. Would effective control of our thoughts affect our speech?

Answer

7. Would even our health be affected by effective control of our thinking and attitudes? Proverbs 16:24; 17:22; 3:7,8. Would this be as effective as a prescription that a doctor might give? Proverbs 17:22.

Answer

8. How did Paul react to distressing situations? Romans 8 verse 28; Philippians 4:11-13; Romans 8:35-39.

Answer

9. What are we instructed to do with our thinking? 2 Corinthians 10:4,5; Colossians 3:2; Philippians 4:8.

Answer

10. Will effective thought control guarantee good mental health? 1 Timothy 1:7.

Answer

LESSON 13

DATE _____

PILGRIMS IN A HOSTILE WORLD

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS: John 17:6-21; Romans 12:1-8; 1 John 5:1-13; 1 Corinthians 1:1-18; 1 Corinthians 3:16-23; 1 Corinthians 2:1-16; 1 John 2:1-17.

MEMORY VERSE: *"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."*

- 53 - -1 John 2:16,17.

COMMENTARY:

The Phillips Translation of the New Testament, brings out the meaning of the **MEMORY VERSE** even more plainly when it states, *"For the whole world system, based as it is on men's primitive desires, their greedy ambition and the glamour of all that they think splendid, is not derived from the Father at all, but from the world itself."*

Not the Possession of Christians: This world belongs to Satan and to his seed or children, for we read in Luke 4:5-8 that Satan took Jesus *"...up into an high mountain, shewed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto Him, All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will give it. If Thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is Written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."*

Jesus did not deny that the world and the kingdoms thereof were Satan's. I often wonder why we so easily lose sight of this truth. Man, as influenced by Satan and his own baser or carnal nature has perverted the entirety of his environment. From man's diet to his dress, to his means of housing, transportation, entertainment, religion, social clubs, games, ideals, goals, philosophies -all are either totally based upon wrong principles or have become influenced or perverted by those who are enemies of God. How different will be the world to come when everything false shall have been stripped away!

A Fool's Paradise: It is almost as though the world were one big glittering nugget of iron pyrite -"fool's gold" -or a tremendous zircon -"glass diamond", luring people to purchase that which is only imitation, false, having no genuine or lasting value.

When the Beatles bragged that they were more popular than Jesus Christ, they were coming right out in the open and admitting that they were actually in competition with Him, for the hearts of the young of the world. They knew that with millions of young

- 54 -

people gone astray, this is a statement of literal truth. They knew also that their type of entertainment was never intended to be something which would lift youth spiritually. Their music is attractive to the baser nature; it stimulates course, sensual appetites!

Jesus stated that it was the cares of this world (Matthew 13:22), and the deceitfulness of riches, which choke the Word of God in a Christian's life and cause him to be unfruitful. In 1 John 5:4-5, the Truth is clearly brought out that the world is one of the things the children of God must overcome. If not it renders them unfruitful and they are taken away from the vine (John 15:1-2).

Yes, children of God must overcome the devil, the flesh, and the world. The world screams for attention. It seems to promise excitement, adventure, success, fulfillment, fame, wealth, knowledge, wisdom, the good life; but it only delivers frustration, emptiness, failure, disillusionment, disease and death.

Hard to See Through: The tragedy is that the world's evil nature is not immediately apparent. God's way only seems to be a defeatist, dull, boring, lifeless crutch which this world's failures use to rationalize away their shortcomings. Nothing could be further from the truth! God's way is **THE WAY EVERLASTING:** the way of love, serving, giving joy, contentment, fulfillment, purpose, eternal success, abundance and maturity that never leaves a let down or an unpleasant aftertaste.

Why would the world hate so bitterly a way which not only promises but delivers all this? Because it is blind. This is the only way adequately to describe a condition of unreasoning optimism, an attitude that would labor under the delusion that the things God promises to the righteous as a reward for orderly, obedient lives could be obtained by others with their short-cut methods.

The word "world" in the New Testament usually is translated from the Greek word, "kosmos", meaning, arrangement; i.e., decoration: including its inhabitants, ordered arrangement as disordered by sin. The Bible brings out clearly that true Christians are ambassadors or representatives of a foreign kingdom living in a hostile environment. For example, "in the

world ye shall have tribulation" -John 16:33;
"therefore the word hateth you" -John 15:18,19.

You Cannot Depend On It: Not only does "The fashion of this world pass away" (1 Corinthians 7:31), but it seems to change from month to month, year to year and decade to decade; and yet, it never produces anything better or different than it has already produced in spite of the lofty, visionary goals and ideals that it proposes. Yes, the five year plans the New Deal, Fair Deals, Square Deals, Great Societies, New Frontiers, the Communes, People's Liberation Parties, the Universal religious societies, have all failed to offer any real solutions to the world's ills; and yet, that doesn't seem to daunt in the least those who offer ever new proposals with glittering "tinsel and wrappings".

The only perfect society on the face of the earth with real, practical and workable solutions to the world's problems is the "Church". And yet, the solutions it has, did not originate with it, but are from the Father Himself! That is why the world hates the Church, for the work of the world is motivated by Satan, and its solutions are Satins ideas.

Cannot So Much As Depend On Ourselves: The Scriptures admonish us: "*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart: and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones" -* Proverbs 3:5-8.

If we seek God's leading for all we do, we will not be shipwrecked by the siren's call of the world. The things of the world -its allure, latest fashions in clothing, hairstyles, fads, -luxuriously designed beyond our needs, as well as fine homes, furniture, household appliances, movies, television entertainment, luxurious vacations, worldly ambitions and politics -will lose their glamour and appeal as we seek God's perspective and guidance.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. In what kind of world do we find ourselves? Galatians 1:4; 2 Peter 1:4; 2:20. How widespread is the condition described in the preceding Scriptures? 1 John 5:19. Why is the world like this? Revelation 12:9; 2 Corinthians 4:3,4; Ephesians 6:12; John 8:42-45.

Answer

2. Why did our Father love the world and how much did He love it? John 15:19; Matthew 13:44; John 3:16,17.

Answer

3. "Sophistry" is the art of making clever but unsound arguments. This is the wisdom of the world. What does God think of it? 1 Corinthians 1:18-21; 1:26-31; 3:18-23. Does God use a different type of wisdom? 1 Corinthians 2:4-8.

Answer

4. For whom did Jesus pray? John 17:9. What did He pray? John 17:15. Would a monastic life then be contrary to Jesus' prayer? How about a religious community made up only of members of an individual denomination? 1 Corinthians 5:9,10,11.

Answer

5. Why did Jesus not want His own to be taken out of the world? Matthew 5:13-16.

Answer

6. Is the world a dangerous place for a Christian to be? Revelation 12:12; Matthew 18:7; John 15:18,19. Should we then try to make peace, or be friendly with the world? James 4:4; Romans 12:1,2.

Answer

7. What constitutes the basic principles or rudiments of the world? Colossians 2:8; 1 John 2:16,17, How many of us were at one time involved in the ways of the world? Ephesians 2:1-5.

Answer

8. After studying the following Scriptures, explain what Jesus meant by His statement in John 12:5; Ephesians 6:1,2; John 19:26,27; Matthew 12:46-50; Luke 14:26; 1 John 3:15.

Answer

9. What is the choice Christians must make? 1 John 2:15. Have all been able to make the right choice? 2 Timothy 4:10. How do we gain victory over the world? 1 John 5:1-5.

Answer

10. What might people say about us if we were to completely yield our lives to God? Acts 17:6.

Answer

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