

THE GOSPEL IN A NUTSHELL

A "FAT" CHRISTIAN TRACT



FOURTEEN FUNDAMENTAL BIBLE LESSONS

Diane S. Spears, Ed. D. Christian Education

The Gospel in a Nutshell: A “Fat” Christian Tract
Fourteen Fundamental Bible Lessons
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by Diane S. Spears, Ed. D. Christian Education

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To all wanting to know the “why’s” of Christianity

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INTRODUCTION

TO ALL TRUTH SEEKERS:

The word *Gospel* means “good news” and “to declare good news.” The Gospel is specifically the New Testament’s message of salvation through Jesus of Nazareth, the Gentile Christ and the Jewish Messiah. This good news is the availability of heaven in the presence of God as a final destination to all who will receive!

Every effort has been made to eliminate opinion and to correctly apply the Word of Truth—the Holy Bible. Truth is revealed by comparing Old and New Testament scriptures and not by taking one or two verses and running with them. An amusing story states that a man needed a “word from the Lord,” so he randomly opened the Bible and with closed eyes, pointed a finger at a scripture. Opening his eyes he read, “Judas went and hanged himself.” Being unsure if that was a message for him from the Lord, he repeated his random action and landed on the scripture, “Go and do likewise.” This example is silly, but some misinterpretations make one wonder if that is how they were spawned. If you disagree with any point in this manual, please do your own research with a prayerful attitude, with the Bible and with the free web sites that offer multiple Bible versions for comparison and literal translations from the original Hebrew and Greek.

This manual is like a “fat” Gospel tract. Repetition in these lessons is intentional, not to weary you, but because many verses have more than one application. Repetition is a proved and successful strategy for permanent retention of information, firmly embedding these truths into spirits and souls. We humans need to read, hear, and speak the Word of God often because the enemy

will cause confusion at every opportunity. Repetition of truth is an effective weapon against Satan’s attacks of doubt.

The Gospel In a Nutshell © is written to understand:

- why unbelievers are the way they are,
- what we have been redeemed from,
- how to stay “in the light”—life,
- where we are going.

A crucial piece in this study is the fact that we either believe the Holy Spirit inspired Scripture through human vessels—or not. One big clue to the Bible being the actual Word of God is the high standard that human beings would never require of themselves.

This manual includes many scriptural references, quoted separately and within parentheses in the text for verification of statements. Unless otherwise stated, scripture quotations in this study are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV). If there is a notable word difference where both the NKJV and the older King James Version (KJV), or if a definition is required for clarity, the KJV word or the definition will be bracketed in the NKJV quotation. Using both versions will further your study, because the KJV is calibrated to concordances that will provide the original Hebrew and Greek. Having your own physical Bible will enable you to locate books, chapters, and verses, and you will have the freedom to highlight, underline, and write your own notes for verses that catch your attention. Note the inconsequential differences between the KJV and the NKJV:

12 For the word of God is living [KJV: *quick*] and powerful, and sharper

than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division [KJV: *dividing asunder*] of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discern-er of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12, my inserts).

Differences between the KJV and the NKJV example are minor and are in the expression of the thought—not the content. The NKJV has updated antiquated words, is closer to the original Hebrew and Greek than many other modern translations and *paraphrases*, and often gives greater clarity to the KJV. When one compares many versions, critical omissions as well as opinions and inferences that deviate from the original will become obvious. Paraphrasing is dangerous due to the writer’s (or team’s) opinions rather than a translation based on the original languages. The only criticism about the NKJV that I agree with is that the poetry of the Psalms does not flow smoothly when compared with the KJV to which many of us have become accustomed.

HEADS UP

The Bible explains itself, so take Scripture at face value unless symbolism is obvious. To fully understand Christian doctrine will require acceptance, or at least consideration, that

- verses in the first two chapters of Genesis accurately describe creation, and give the reason for Jesus’ death and resurrection,
- Adam and Eve were real people from whom the entire world population are descended,
- the temptation by Satan in the Garden of Eden caused the Fall of humanity from God’s fellowship (Genesis 3).

You are encouraged to read the Bible daily and not just “to get it done.” Read with your

heart and mind open to what the Lord will reveal by asking the Lord to “open the eyes of your understanding (Ephesians 1:18)” every time you read Scripture. He delights in giving us wisdom and knowledge with some exciting revelations that remain “hidden” from those who neglect to seek earnestly. God’s Word is a grand, alluring, and holy hide-and-seek—a heavenly treasure hunt.

Scripture is so very powerful—like small-scale atomic fission safely exploding the understanding, transforming the heart and mind like no other speech or writing and is so much more powerful than my puny firecracker words.



P.S.: In this study, the lower case word heaven always refers to the third heaven—the location of God’s throne. The first heaven (Earth’s atmosphere) and second heaven (celestial space) will be identified as such as distinct from the third heaven. Pronouns referring to God are capitalized to honor Him and be consistent with most of the NKJV quotations.

PART ONE INTRODUCTION

Lessons One and Two

SALVATION of the HUMAN SPIRIT Salvation—Justification

SALVATION

Although the terms *born again* and *saint* are often used incorrectly, they apply correctly to true Christianity and mean *deliverance, preservation of the human spirit and soul from sin and the judgment of hell*. Other less frequently used terms are *twice-born* and *born from above*. Salvation of the human spirit is a one-time event for each person and is referred to as the *baptism into the body of Christ* (1 Corinthians 12:12, 27)—the first baptism.

The fundamental doctrines of Christian Gospel are:

1. Jesus' substitutionary death on the Cross of Calvary is payment in full for judgment we deserve.
2. His resurrection makes the born-again experience possible for new life.

Our "ticket to heaven" is so much more than admittance to that perfect place. It is *where Jesus is*.

JUSTIFICATION

Justification means:

1. complete forgiveness,
2. vindication from guilt and penalty for sin,
3. cleansing of our records in heaven through faith in Jesus's substitution for our sin.

We are justified as clean, and all the commandments of God are fulfilled in the Lord's substitutionary sacrifice. God sees the believer as holy through the blood of Jesus. Someone coined the catchy phrase: Justification means "just-as-if-I'd never sinned."

Lesson One
SALVATION of the HUMAN SPIRIT
Justification

UNSAVED: PREPARATION FOR SALVATION

DECEPTIVE INFLUENCES

If you are born again, this section will give you a clearer understanding of what you have been delivered from. You will also find clues about what to say to someone who does not yet know the Lord.

3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,
4 whose minds the god of this age [KJV: world] has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

17 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind,
18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart (Ephesians 4:17-18).

Who is “the god of this world”? Scriptures are clear on this point: Satan, our ultimate enemy, is the god of this age-world. The word “world” in Scripture usually refers to “world systems” such as political and economic systems and human philosophies—all with Satan as their disguised leader. Through deception, he stole Adam’s God-given authority over the Earth and continues being a formidable enemy who steals, kills, and destroys at every opportunity (John 10:10). However, born-again believers have that God-given authority restored by Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection.

71 That we should be saved from our enemies And from the hand of all who hate us,
72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers And to remember His holy covenant, (Luke 1:71-72).

Satan is the epitome of evil. He causes all confusion, distress, hatred, lies, murders and jealousies—all evil. People who are not submitted to God are under the influence or control of Satan and are pawns in his hands to cause trouble, whether or not they are aware of it. Nevertheless, God promised (the “Divine Covenant”)—a Savior who would purchase all humanity from Satan back to Him. This holy covenant for our salvation was between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and is fulfilled—a done deal. People had nothing to do with its fulfillment but to just believe and receive.

Satan, the Devil, desired heaven’s highest position as god of the universe. Pride motivated him to rebel against the Creator (*Elohim*) in the undetermined past, so God created hell for him and his ungodly angels (Matthew 25:41). Hell was never created for people, but anyone will go there if they allow Satan’s political, economic and philosophical systems (erroneous religions) to deceive them from receiving Jesus as Savior. Satan hates everything God loves, so he will try to “blind” our minds and hearts at every opportunity to keep us from God.

LOST

Why are people considered “lost” if the spirit is not “born-again”? Ever felt lost? No direction? Floundering? The common Christian term “lost” applies to those without eternal

life in Jesus. God knows where everyone is, and the Holy Spirit “woos” (beckons gently and lovingly) and leads to repentance (Romans 2:4), so that understanding emerges about God’s goodness in giving His only begotten Son. The only way to be “found” is to sincerely repent of all sin, believe and accept Jesus of Nazareth, the Gentile Christ and the Jewish Messiah, as Savior and Lord as our substitute in death. God has not provided any other route to heaven.

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After Satan loses a soul to the Lord, he lurks in the shadows always ready to pounce on the new believer with deceptive suggestions such as, “Your experience isn’t real. It’s just emotional.” Clinging to Scripture and ignoring emotions will produce victory over him. The Word of God is reality for a believer, but must be believed and applied to situations.

WHAT to BELIEVE?

Why is humanity so faulty? The beginning three chapters of Genesis relate reasons for what is now askew in this world and why human beings are so defective and needy. Critics, even some Christians, balk at the biblical story of creation because of politically correct public education with its insistence on evolution as true science. If we reject the literal verses of these Genesis chapters, we will not understand why Jesus had to come to Earth and suffer so drastically as our substitute. In addition, without this explanation in these chapters, we will never fully grasp

why evil exists, and why it seems to be winning. Evil does not make a bit of sense without the Bible’s explanations. When Scripture is considered with secular historical evidence and current events, the Gospel makes perfect sense.

12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned (Romans 5:12).

That one man was Adam. God the Father created Adam physically and spiritually *perfect* (*complete*) to rule over the earth. Through disobedience to God’s one commandment, Adam relinquished his God-given authority over the Earth to Satan. The result was called the *Fall* from the original perfect state in which Adam was created. That fall was sin—*iniquity*. Therefore, we can understand that all disobedience to God is sin. Adam’s sin plunged all humanity into sinfulness and separation from God’s fellowship that is humanly impossible to correct. All people born on this planet are “spiritually dead” because, as Adam’s descendants, we inherit his faulty DNA. Only God can rescue and restore us to the original purity through His infinite mercy and grace and with His “Grand Plan.”

When Adam disobeyed God’s command, he broke his close relationship with God. This rebellion infected Adam’s perfect DNA. The fall from God’s perfect creation through disobedience plunged all his descendants to the same polluted fate.

THE PROBLEM

What exactly happened at humanity’s fall from God’s perfection? Sin. Iniquity made us *unequal* to God’s holiness. Sin is like a computer virus that infected the first couple’s human spirits and souls making them unresponsive to God’s beckoning, although the conscience remained active by God’s grace. The virus reprogrammed the “hard drive”—

the human soul (mind, will, and emotion)—to the point that selfishness, violence, doubting the goodness of God and the wrong kind of fear became the norm. A new “app”—the Word of God—must reprogram the hard drive to override the iniquitous programming so that new functions (faith, understanding, and more) will be evident and natural.

Again, because we are descendants of this one couple, Adam and Eve, we all inherited this flawed DNA.

10 As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one;

11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.

12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.”

13 “Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit”; “The poison of asps is under their lips”;

14 “Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”

15 “Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16 Destruction and misery are in their ways;

17 And the way of peace they have not known.”

18 “There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Romans 3:10-18).

We may not feel that we are as bad as the above description states. Test yourself with questions, such as:

- Have I kept all God’s commandments?
- Have I ever told a lie?
- Have I ever been sneaky about anything?
- Have I ever stolen something but justified it to myself?
- Am I always peaceful?
- Do I always react or respond with love to everyone?

You might protest with, “But these are small things; I’ve never committed adultery or murdered anyone.” Protesting reveals a misunderstanding of God’s purity and holiness. “Little” sins as well as the whopping ones will disqualify us to be in His presence. Are we willing to admit that we are not perfect? Also, ask “Is God perfect?” We know that the answer to the second question is a resounding “yes.” Therefore, how can imperfect humans perfectly fellowship with a perfect God?

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

We all have fallen so far short of God’s perfection. Sin is sin and violates God’s law regardless of the category or intensity. Sin really means, “to miss the mark.” Perfection is the mark we aim for but all miss in our own strength.

10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, *he is guilty of all* (James 2:10, my emphasis).

We could all honestly say, “Ouch!” People assign degrees to sin and feel that murder is worse than lying. In human law, murder is greater because the ramifications to society are greater. Yet, in God’s law, sin is sin, no matter what category or how deep.

18 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness (Romans 6:16)?

Sin is bondage. The inherent danger in unchecked and un-repentant sin is that it will eventually lead to permanent spiritual death with no reversal. A person will be subject to (captured by) “forces” that are out of his control. Modern society has labeled these

“forces” as psychological or pathological pertaining to the mind and brain. However, the truth is that these forces are attacks from Satan (a title meaning Adversary) who is a real evil entity. He hates God, opposes everything God wants and aims to destroy us. His serpentine business uses and reuses the following successful strategies:

16 For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world (1 John 2:16).

The word “lust” can be applied to anything and means to desire something or someone so much that it aims a person’s life like an arrow toward the focused object. Lust can ruin a person’s life if left unchecked. God created us for fellowship, so we are to look up to Him for all our needs and desires. He knows better than we do what is good for us and what will righteously fulfill our desires.

7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life (Galatians 6:7-8).

God’s principle of sowing and reaping is found throughout Scripture. In the natural world, if we plant weeds, we will harvest weeds and never roses. God’s kingdom works the same. If we plant sin, we will reap more destruction and distance ourselves further from God. For example, suppose we lie about something. Our hearts will condemn us, and we will not be certain that others are telling the truth. That will produce or reinforce any insecurity we may already be experiencing. Only a heart free from guilt will have confidence toward God (1 John 3:21).

PREPARATION for SALVATION

The word *Gospel* means *good news*.

10 “for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

God has provided a way for all humanity to come out of sin and back into fellowship with Him. Human strength or will power can do nothing to change things because no one “measures up.”

44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day (John 6:44).

32 “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself” (John 12:32).

God the Father is continually drawing everyone to Himself through the wooing of the Holy Spirit. Just the response, “Yes, Lord,” opens God’s goodness to us.

SORROW

A vast difference exists between being sorry and having deep sorrow that leads to repentance. Being sorry is a start but could be only a result of being caught and wanting exoneration or at least a lighter punishment. When the realization comes that damage was done, that sin is lodged in the heart and that we are helpless to correct it, then deep sorrow begins true repentance.

10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death (2 Corinthians 7:10)

9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?”

10 I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings (Jeremiah 17: 9-10).

Deep sorrow leading to repentance is from the alarming realization that we have sinned against the Lord, not just against others or ourselves. We sometimes can see the effects our sin has upon ourselves, and upon others, but it is “an eye-opener” to realize that we have sinned against the Lord and have grieved the Holy Spirit.

This deep sorrow leading to true repentance is the first step toward being forgiven. We realize that we have fallen so far short of God’s perfection, and we come to the Lord for forgiveness—the beginning of permanent change in our lives. Repentance really means turning away—a complete U-turn—from sin—no circling back!

Asking for forgiveness without the U-turn of true repentance will not produce permanent change, because we must personally turn away from the sin with assistance from the Holy Spirit. We could be trying to change in our own power. Anyone who is still practicing sin after asking for forgiveness has not let godly sorrow produce true repentance in the heart and mind.

The U-Turn of true repentance is incomplete without a commitment to God’s righteous principles for living.

Repentance should be habitual for all—the new believers and seasoned “saints.” Because God does not correct everything in our lives the moment we are born again, we must practice true repentance often and every time the conscience and the Holy Spirit convict. Repentance will include things we have done or said wrong as well as things we have not done or said that we should have. Most of all, repentance opens our un-

derstanding to our faults that only the Lord can change.

WANT to KNOW HIM?

To conduct a life pleasing to God with the Holy Spirit’s help requires a willing heart to admit sinfulness, an understanding of our helplessness to correct self for permanent change and frequent repentance. However, avoid the mindset that you are “no good” and are worthless. No one is good except God, so we are all in the same boat on the same murky ocean of life. Jesus valued humanity so highly that He paid our penalty in full, and we are free to live in Him with joy because we are assured of His love when we repent and fellowship with Him. God values all human beings because He wants opportunities to lavish His love on us. God is love. Love gives and desires recipients.

6 For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die.

8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:6-8).

God made only one way. Jesus said, “I am the “Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me (John 14:6).” Jesus lived His human life without sin to be the perfect sacrifice and take our place in death. We are the ones who deserve death and separation from God because of our sin. However, Jesus became our substitute and settled the account in heaven. What a marvelous plan of God! From the foundation of the world God made provision for fallen man to come back into fellowship with Him.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning His

promise, as some count slackness, but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

4 who desires all men [people] to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4, my insert).

God does not want anyone to perish in hell. He wants to give everyone eternal life in His presence forever. All perish if they do nothing about securing citizenship in God's kingdom. God does not force any person to come to Him. We have free will to choose where we will spend eternity.

OUR ETERNAL FUTURE

Scripture states, "Now is the day of salvation."

2 For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2).

12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

We are eternal beings and will exist somewhere for eternity—either in heaven or in hell. There is no third choice—no purgatory. In heaven is the presence of God (eternal life) and in hell is the presence of Satan (eternal death and torment)—forever, and forever, and forever...

Two critical questions clarify what is at stake:

1. What if you believe in and follow the God of the Bible, devote yourself to Him and at the end of your life

learn that there is in reality a God. You will have lost nothing and gained everything.

2. What if you do not believe in the God of the Bible, and at the end of your life you learn that there is in reality the God of the Bible, you will have gained nothing, and will have lost everything.

No one can change their eternal destination after physical death. God does not send people to hell. People send themselves to hell by not making Jesus Savior and Lord. Delaying this decision is gambling with your eternal destination, because no one is promised another breath. The decision must be made while alive on Earth, and the sooner the better.

At creation, God gave human beings free will and respects our right to make personal decisions. He will not force anyone to be with Him. God our Father, through His Son Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, has made the way possible for imperfect human beings to live with the holy and perfect Creator for eternity. He is waiting to bless us in this life also, but we must give Him permission to direct our lives by inviting Him to be our Savior and Lord. Jesus paid in full our debt of sin by taking our place in death on the Cross of Calvary—our substitute in death. We deserve the beatings, the thorns, the disgrace He endured.

Be prepared to answer the following:

1. What does it mean to be "lost?" What does it mean to be "found"?
2. Who is the "God of this age-world"?
3. What does the word "world" usually mean in Scripture?
4. What was Adam's sin?
5. What is spiritual death?
6. What is a good definition of lust?

7. The word Gospel means _____.

8. Name at least three characteristics of God.

9. Describe the difference between being sorry for sin and godly sorrow.

10. Name some characteristics of Satan.

11. We are _____ beings and will exist somewhere forever either in _____ or _____.

12. God gave us _____ and respects our right to make our own decisions.

Lesson Two
SALVATION of the HUMAN SPIRIT
Baptism into the Body of Christ

THE BORN-AGAIN EXPERIENCE

DRAWING NEAR

The Holy Spirit constantly woos us. Why? Remember, God is love. He loves every detail of His creation. How do you feel when you love someone and it is not reciprocated? Love gives and is not satisfied until it is received and returned.

8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you (James 4:8a).

God draws nigh to us. All we do is believe with our whole heart that Jesus died because of His love for us, was buried and resurrected for _____ (put yourself here), repent of sins, ask Him to come into your life to be your Savior and Lord. Then tell someone about this important decision. You will thereby terminate your alliance with Satan, experience the “new birth,” then begin a salvation-sanctification-cleansing walk with Him leading to a life of victory and blessing.

3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

4 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:3-6).

Nicodemus was highly educated in God’s Law, a member of the ruling sect, and yet had difficulty with this concept. His first thought was only about physical birth. Jesus was speaking about the human spirit that is “dead” in sin and needs new life.

DEEPER THAN SKIN

Why is being born from above necessary? Thinking folks realize and believe “in the heart” that humanity is deeper than what is seen with physical eyes. The heart of man in Scripture almost exclusively refers to the inner man and is confirmed in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 by the Apostle Paul. Humany beings are complex and can be outlined as follows:

1. an outer being—a mortal body, the “earth suit,” the “shell,”
2. the inner being—the heart, the “nut” housed in the “shell” and composed of:
 - a. an eternal soul—the unique personality—also with three parts—mind-intellect, will-freedom of choice, and emotions; the likely location of the conscience that did not die at the Fall
 - b. an eternal spirit—the physical and spiritual source of life

The inner man (the nut) has senses with the same labels as the physical senses of the body (the shell). These are joint workings of the soul and spirit that affect the body.

1. The inner man “sees” with intellectual and spiritual understanding (Ephesians 1:17-19).

2. The soul “hears” and feels with the emotions and spirit (the human inner voice and the Holy Spirit’s voice).
3. The body feels, smells and tastes with memory (brain), intellect and emotion, all of which form new brain synapses;

We can all relate to music in our heads sung or played by the original artist, remembering someone’s voice, the aroma of popcorn, feeling love from another person without physical contact and more. God stated *They* (Hebrew: *Elohim*) made man in *Their* image and after *Their* likeness (Genesis 1:26-27). The eternal spirit is in *Their* image— a *moral image*. The soul is in *Their likeness*.

God is tri-fold (actually *triune/trinity*— complete unity—One God) but with a distinct difference from people in the likeness. God is an uncreated, everlasting and morally perfect Spirit without a *mortal* body. We could assume that God the Father has a spiritual body. God has a soul and he refers to his own soul as being pleased, delighted, angry, jealous, and even laughing (Isaiah 1:14; 42:1; 53:10-12; Jeremiah 12:7). Human beings are like Him in this respect.

BELIEF and CONFESSION

The born-again experience occurs with sincere repentance of all sin and with the wholehearted confession that Jesus died, was buried and was resurrected as the substitute for all sin. We become citizens of God’s kingdom and “saints” through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Feelings can confirm this experience—some people have deep emotional responses, others much less. However, faith does not depend upon emotion for confirmation. Faith depends on trusting the Word of God.

13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Colossians 1:13).

8 But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach):

9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Romans 10:8-10).

14 A man [any person] will be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth, And the recompense of a man’s hands will be rendered to him (Proverbs 12:14, my insert).

Understanding, repentance and faith allow the Holy Spirit to trade our dead spirits for new ones infused with God’s life! Believing with our whole heart is impossible unless the Holy Spirit gives this revelation as a gift (Ephesians 2:8-9). The Lord does not expect us to understand everything immediately. Understanding is not the same as believing. Our belief and faith will grow stronger as we begin to understand more and to realize that “walking” with God will require repentance and daily rededication and perhaps repeated during the day. We are not “born again” every day but we reaffirm our “second birth” daily. The genuine born again experience will give us a hunger and thirst for righteousness and lead us to earnestly seeking the Lord. We begin to shed old ways of thinking and speaking.

4 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God (1 John 4:15).

23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also (1 John 2:23).

BLESSED ASSURANCE

We can be certain that we are in Christ after we are born again.

13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13).

27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Galatians 3:27).

3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,

6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

7 For he who has died has been freed from sin (Romans 6:3-7)

12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead (Colossians 2:12).

5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism (Ephesians 4:5).

16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned (Mark 16:16).

The words *baptism* and *saved* in Mark 16:16

16:16 above are often interpreted to mean water baptism but actually refer to the first baptism—the born-again experience called the baptism into Christ—baptism into the body of Christ. The word “baptism” means a complete immersion. It signifies total immersion and identification with his death, burial and resurrection. We become citizens of God’s kingdom.

23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever (1 Peter 1:23).

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His (Romans 8:9).

THE HOLY SPIRIT at WORK

The first baptism—the baptism into the body of Christ—is only part of the Holy Spirit’s ministry. The Spirit and the Word are the primary agents of the born-again experience. Then, the Holy Spirit (Spirit of Truth) lives in us. He teaches, guides, corrects, convicts of sin, helps, comforts, and reveals secrets of God’s kingdom. The Holy Spirit is our very best friend on this planet and wants us to trust Him.

16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—

17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you (John 14:16-17).

13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of

promise,
14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory (Ephesians 1:13-14).

30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30)

22 who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee (2 Corinthians 1:22).

9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,

10 but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Timothy 1:9-10).

PURPOSE

We are not accidents. God has a plan and a purpose for every life. His plans and purposes are far greater than anything we could imagine. In addition, we will like it because God has given talents and gifts that match His purposes and that we enjoy using.

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:8-10)

16 knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ

Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified (Galatians 2:16).

1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1).

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:16-17).

"WALKING" IN FAITH

Faith is an important word for the believer. Faith caused us to receive God's grace for salvation. However, faith did not originate from us—it was the gift of God. The Lord wants us to know that we did nothing special (and never will) to earn salvation. Faith, grace, and salvation prepare us for productive citizenship in God's kingdom. We are His projects (workmanship) and He does the work in us through these gifts and more. After salvation, we do good works by obeying the Holy Spirit.

Our motivations change from trying to earn entrance into heaven with self-initiative to earning heavenly rewards through obedience to the Holy Spirit.

9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

A citizen of God's kingdom is chosen, a special member of royalty, a worshipper of

God, holy and separated (*fenced-in*, KJV: *peculiar*) from the world systems. We have been snatched from darkness (death) and brought into light (life).

19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Walking with God requires accepting responsibility to live according to His kingdom principles. Twice-born believers belong to God and should live pleasing to Him. The Holy Spirit will show us how and give us power to do this.

11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you (Romans 8:11).

THE DEPTH OF SALVATION

The Greek word in Scripture for salvation is *soteria*, an all-inclusive word denoting deliverance, preservation, and salvation. It includes material and temporal blessings:¹

- deliverance from danger and apprehension;
- spiritual and eternal deliverance granted immediately by God to those who accept His conditions of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus, in whom alone it is to be obtained, and upon confession of Him as Lord;
- experience of God's power to deliver from the bondage of sin;
- future deliverance of believers at the "snatching away"—the *rapture*;
- deliverance of the nation of Israel at

- the second advent of Christ;
- the sum of all the blessings (the "abundant life") bestowed by God on humanity
- in Christ through the Holy Spirit (such as healing, peace, joy, wisdom, prosperity and more).

HOW IT WORKS

Modern society criticizes Christian preachers as a whole without distinguishing true doctrine from falsehood. Some goofy belief systems are out there, so we must be able to compare them with God's Word.

14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher (Romans 10:14)?

Despite the criticism of Christians' belief in the Bible, the preaching of God's Word is one of the ways in which God calls us into His "hiding place (Psalm 91:1)" through the Holy Spirit. Everyone should listen to preaching with a "discerning ear" and a desire for truth. We can read God's Word for ourselves, but if we have not yet been born again, accurate understanding is difficult, and we may misinterpret.

4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? (Romans 2:4).

God is good. God is love. God is light. No darkness or anything bad can exist in Him and therefore, He has only our best in mind. He is not waiting to strike us with lightning but wants to correct us so that we will receive His more abundant life.

AN ALERT

Just believing Jesus is the Christ, the Jewish Messiah, who died on the Cross of Calvary, and that His blood cleanses us from all sin is not enough. The devils believe Jesus is the Son of God, and they tremble, but they cannot be saved (James 2:19).

Many people believe Jesus is God's Son, but are not born again. People who have grown up in a Christian home or a very religious environment may know about the Lord, but might not have given themselves to Him for a personal relationship, thinking they are OK with God. Everyone must take the step to really know the Lord personally, not just know about Him. Believing with our minds is necessary, but revelation from the Holy Spirit to our hearts (the inner being) brings about true repentance. Receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior for the born-again experience—a true second birth—will produce good and lasting fruit for God's kingdom. It produces a hunger and thirst for righteousness and a strong desire to be in God's perfect will.

If our behavior does not improve after confessing Jesus as Savior and Lord, we should keep seeking the Lord for the revelation to our hearts that the sinful habits and hangovers of our past could still be troubling us. It could also be simply a matter of guilt feelings, which is not the same as actual guilt that requires a penalty. When we are born again, we are already judged and justified by the blood of Jesus. Sometimes we need to forgive ourselves. As we mature in the Lord and until we are 100 percent cleansed, He will periodically reveal dirty ground the enemy can stomp on. We can then take the necessary steps to avoid trouble by allowing the Holy Spirit to cleanse us with the Word of God.

9 How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.

10 With my whole heart I have sought

You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!

11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You (Psalm 119:9-11)!

The Lord aims for a group of believers who are “without spot or wrinkle”—flawless. However, the only way to perfection is in Him.

27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:27).

At the instant of salvation, the believer experiences instant spiritual life, deliverance, and preservation from sin's judgment of hell. Salvation includes cleansing of the record of deeds committed against God's Law and declares the person righteous through Jesus's blood substitution for our tainted blood, even though the soul has not yet been retrained.

God gives new life—a new spirit, but not a new soul. Old things pass away upon conviction by the Holy Spirit, confession of sin and true repentance, believing Jesus paid the penalty for our sin and surrendering to his Lordship (2 Corinthians 5:17). We become alive to God allowing mutual communication and love. Remember, each human being's “old” spirit with the soul-personality is born eternally separated from God (“dead”). The spirit and soul exist at physical birth but with iniquity—the penchant for sin—firmly entrenched in the soul. God's remedy of exchanging the old for the new must be applied for eternal life. Again, it must be believed in the heart and confessed with the mouth (review Romans 10:8-10). If people do not yet understand true repentance, they will not reflect God's impact in their lives.

To be absolutely certain of our salvation, we must publicly confess to some person or group our belief that Jesus took our

our penalty, be baptized in water as a public declaration of our faith, and then submit daily to God for his leading. The good fruit produced by the Spirit of God in us will be the evidence that we are saved (Galatians 5:22-23).

Be prepared to answer the following:

1. What beliefs must we embrace to be saved?
2. Why does the “born-again” experience not mean that you know everything at once? Read Isaiah 28:10, 13 for a clue.
3. A walk in victory requires a _____ to God’s will.
4. How is understanding different from believing?
5. When we are born again, we are baptized into the _____
6. Why are preachers of God’s Word necessary?
7. Why is it important to receive everything the Lord has for us?
8. Where does faith come from?
9. What attribute of God leads us to repentance?
10. What part do “good works” play in God’s plan for our lives?
11. Name at least five things that accompany salvation.

REFERENCE

1. W.E. Vine [1952], *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, Thomas Nelson, Pub. Nashville, TN. 988.

PART TWO
Lessons Three through Thirteen

SALVATION of the HUMAN SOUL
Sanctification Process—Walking in the Spirit

SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification should begin after the born-again experience with the Holy Spirit's cleansing work. It is our obligation to cooperate with that "house cleaning." Sanctification is not only separation of the human soul from sin and the world's unholy ways of thinking and operating, but is also *separation unto God* for maturing in divine grace and holiness. Retraining the soul (mind, will and emotions) to agree with the Word of God is the goal. Daily fellowship and obedience will develop and strengthen a close relationship with the Lord for which He yearns.

Although a person is deemed righteous before God at the instant of salvation, actual cleansing of the soul to be pleasing to the Lord is not instant. Sanctification is a *process*, a daily growth and a life journey on the High Way to real destinations of Purpose, Truth, and Wisdom with the Holy Spirit's pointing out the correct signposts (scriptures) to follow.

God gives new life at salvation with righteous standing with Him. However, God does not give born-again believers a new soul. Instead, He provides the method to cleanse and renew the soul.

The soul is the unique personality specifically created unlike another and is exceedingly valuable to God. The human mind by nature functions in opposition to God and must be cleansed and *retrained* to think righteously. Remember the *virus* metaphor. The will must remain submitted to the Holy Spirit's guidance, and the emotions harnessed. Only the "washing of the water of the Word (Ephesians 5:26)" can "superimpose" the perfect image of Jesus over our disfigured sinful image so that we reflect Him by our righteous living.

QUESTIONS

By now you may have wondered why so much Scripture is referenced in this study. Scripture is God's Word and is superior to anything the most intelligent humans can say or interpret. Scripture contains *inherent authority and power* as no other words can, and combined with faith on our part can fulfill God's will!

If you passed over the scriptures lightly in the previous chapters, you have cheated yourself from the power of the Word to minister to you. I highly recommend that you re-read the two chapters before proceeding.

Lesson Three
SALVATION of the HUMAN SOUL
Sanctification Process—Walking in God’s Spirit

BAPTISM IN WATER

THE SECOND BAPTISM

Scripture instructs born-again believers (those baptized first into the body of Christ) to also be baptized in water—our “second baptism.” Because the word “baptism” means total immersion, we should practice total immersion in water. Some denominations “sprinkle,” and there are various stories about the origin, such as, people had no access to a body of water or the climate was too cold. However, scriptural examples of baptism in water either state or imply total immersion of a born-again believer in water. Complete immersion symbolizes and publicly announces total surrender and commitment to our Lord’s death, burial, resurrection and cleansing from all sin through His blood.

36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?”

37 Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him (Acts 8:36-38).

Controversy exists in the body of Christ about the following two scriptures.

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).

Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let

every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

These two scriptural directions can actually apply to both the first and second baptisms, but are used mainly for water baptism. They also appear to be contradictory. Matthew 28:19 mentions speaking the titles of the Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The book of Acts directs baptism in the Jesus’s name. The proponents of the practice of baptizing in the name of Jesus adhere literally to the book of Acts text that the disciples baptized in the name of Jesus, and to the following scriptures:

9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name (Philippians 2:9).

20 which He [the Father] worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church.

23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all (Ephesians 1: 20-23, my insert).

47 “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have re-

ceived the Holy Spirit just as we have?”

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days (Acts 10:47-48).

BOLD DECLARATION

As stated previously, water baptism is the public declaration of faith and commitment to the Lord. It finalizes and satisfies the salvation experience for the heart.

21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Peter 3:21).

Notice two specific things:

1. Belief in Jesus, repentance, confession and salvation came before water baptism; that is, a person must already be born again.
2. Pay special attention to I Peter 3:21. This scripture says that water baptism does not put away the filth of the flesh, but that it is an act of obedience (“answer of a good conscience toward God”).

Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:1-2), the Second Person of the Trinity. Therefore, the names (actually titles) of the Trinity automatically include the name of Jesus, the only begotten Son of God. However, to avoid perpetuating this dissention, ministers and congregants can always combine the name of Jesus with the Trinity titles when baptizing in water to literally obey both scriptures.

Therefore, water baptism does not give us new birth, but is part of the sanctification process (the path of righteous living). God’s will is for every born-again child of God

to be totally submerged in water as a public declaration that a believer’s life is no longer independent from God, but is totally submerged in Christ.

Be prepared to answer the following:

1. To what baptism does Mark 16:16 refer? Review lesson two if necessary.
2. What is the definition of baptism?
3. Why is water baptism important?
4. What three things must come before water baptism?
5. Water baptism does not save the soul, but is an act of _____ to God’s command
6. Water baptism is a _____ declaration of having identified with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

Lesson Four
SALVATION of the HUMAN SOUL
Sanctification Process—Walking in God’s Spirit
Baptism of/into the Holy Spirit

WHAT GOD WANTS

We are born again by the power of the Holy Spirit of Truth. However, the Holy Spirit’s work is yet incomplete. A deeper gift in the Holy Spirit is available to every born again believer and is the baptism (total immersion) into the Holy Spirit—the third baptism. It comes only after the born-again experience and is the power of God in our lives. God the Father desires all believers to receive the power of the Holy Spirit since it is a vital part of the sanctification process. Just as with any gift from God, the baptism into the Holy Spirit must be believed and received.

This gift of the third baptism may be one of the greatest controversies of Christianity. Some people have been taught that it is “not for today,” or that “it is of the Devil.” Scriptures will prove it is from God. Believers desiring to be all we can be for God need the power that comes with being baptized into the Holy Spirit.

GOD’S RESCUE PLAN

God’s plans, purposes and methods are found in His Word. Actively seeking truth by reading and studying will produce great rewards.

23 “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24).”

How do we worship in spirit and in truth? To do this requires a major mind-set change.

Human “carnal-fleshly” reasoning will never correctly understand truth without a revelation from God. The so-called “age of enlightenment” that exalts human reasoning is abominable to God, because our minds are finite and dangerously faulty.

6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His (Romans 8:6-9).

3 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3).

Human understanding wars against God’s ways. The Holy Spirit’s baptism makes perfect sense after receiving by faith. The Holy Spirit opens Scripture bringing enlightenment.

TWO ERRORS

Some denominations believe that a person is not yet saved if they have not been baptized into the Holy Spirit. Not true. Some think they have received the Holy Spirit’s baptism when they ask Jesus to “come into

their hearts.” Also, not true. It could come immediately after.

The first baptism, the “conversion experience,” is a new birth of the human spirit and is the Holy Spirit’s work of planting the seed of God’s Word in the soul. With the decision to receive the Lord, the believer becomes a new creation (KJV: *creature*), receives the Holy Spirit (*the Teacher*) and is made alive and responsive to God. However, the work of the Holy Spirit is incomplete with the new birth.

The next step is to be empowered for maturity and ministry with the Holy Spirit’s power. All who experience the Holy Spirit’s baptism will testify to the difference between receiving salvation and receiving this gift of the Holy Spirit’s power. Baptism into the Holy Spirit is like filling up to the “bursting point” of God’s Holy Spirit—like filling a one-half gallon container with a gallon of “living water” (John 7:38-39), and it “spills over” into other tongues and spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit baptism gives a deeper and more profound step in our salvation-sanctification process.

GOD’S HIGHER WAYS

The new birth is only one of the ministries of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit woos us to the new birth, provides guidance, instruction, and protection. Nevertheless, the new believer needs power from God to be obedient to all His commands, to overcome the “flesh,” to rightly divide the word of truth, and especially to be an effective witness for the Lord.

God wants every believer to be baptized with “power from on high” to progress in sanctification, learn more about the Lord and how He wants to bless and be useful to Him. Part of the Holy Spirit’s work in us is to teach, prepare for service, and guide us into fulfilling our individual purposes that fit into God’s over-all plan for His kingdom.

FULFILLMENT of PROPHECY

On the Jewish Feast of Pentecost, Peter quoted from Joel 2:28-29, which prophesied the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that took place for the first time.

17 ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams.

18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy (Acts 2:17-18).

To all appearances, it seemed to these early apostles as if they were living in the “last days” but was in reality the beginning of the last days. Several revivals of the Holy Spirit’s baptism have occurred over the centuries since that special Feast of Pentecost. The most recent major movement began in the 1970’s called the “full Gospel” or “charismatic renewal” (Greek: *charisma*, meaning “gifts”). Many Christians in different denominations were baptized into the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. One of the marvels and beauties of that movement was hundreds of people collectively singing in the Spirit with no discord.

Isaiah 28:11-12 prophesied the outpouring of the Holy Spirit from God:

11 For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people,

12 To whom He said, “This is the rest with which You may cause the weary to rest,” And, “This is the refreshing”; Yet they would not hear (Isaiah 28:11-12).

Paul referred to the above passage when he instructed the Corinthians about the purpose of speaking in other tongues, both privately and in the church (1 Corinthians. 14:21). Note that this is God speaking to His people,

and is refreshing and restful. People who have this experience will tell you it is both exhilarating and peaceful for God to speak through them. Note the two ways of referring to speaking in tongues:

- with stammering lips
- with another tongue.

Sometimes people will experience a combination of both: the person's jaw and tongue will be stuttering rapidly and/or the person will be speaking an actual language, with voice inflection and punctuation. This can be alarming to believers who have not been taught about this gift.

19 You will not see a fierce people, A people of obscure [KJV: *deeper*] speech, beyond perception, Of a stammering tongue that you cannot understand (Isaiah 33:19).

Isaiah says these people are not fierce. Jesus admonished believers to be as wise as serpents but also be as harmless as doves (Matthew 10:16). Note also that this obscure, (KJV: *deeper*) speech cannot be understood by human reasoning. The only way it can be understood is for God to give the gift of interpretation (1 Corinthians. 12:10). We must rely totally on God for all our knowledge about Him. John the Baptist prophesied the first coming of the Lord:

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire (Matthew 3:11).

Before His Ascension, Jesus commissioned His followers and told them how they are to serve Him:

15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

17 And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; 18 they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mark 16:15-18).

Notice that speaking with new tongues is only one of several signs that should follow believers.

Next, Jesus told them what they are to do before they could carry out his great commission:

49 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

HOW the CHURCH BEGAN

The biblical use of the word *church* means the "body of believers"—all twice-born believers are part of the church of the living God. For example, when scripture refers to the church in Ephesus, it means the group of believers in Ephesus, not the place of gathering or the building. However, modern usage includes the edifice and often overlooks the true meaning.

Acts 1:4-8 relates that the apostles are tarrying, and they were likely mystified about what to expect. The "Holy Ghost and fire" had been promised to them, but their understanding was probably clouded. Jesus' instructed his followers before his ascension to heaven:

4 And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart

from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me;

5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:4-8).

Try to imagine the people who participated in this first Pentecost church gathering. Most spectators, friends and relatives perhaps considered them loony. Nevertheless, the 120 waiting disciples had faith in what Jesus had told them. Jesus said to tarry, so they tarried, because they believed Him. Remember that Jesus appeared in bodily form to his disciples for forty days after His resurrection to instruct them. They waited in faith.

1 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation un-

der heaven.

6 And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.

7 Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?"

8 And how is it that we hear, *each in our own language in which we were born?* (Acts 2:1-8).

All these believers were filled with the Holy Spirit, and all began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit led them. In other words, the Holy Spirit rather than the individual person is motivating the speech. The phrase "noised abroad" can have two interpretations: the first being: the news traveled a great distance, and the second: it was noisy and attracted attention. Can you imagine 120 people all praising God in different languages? The noise would grab attention. Acts 2:12-18 continues the story:

12 So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?"

13 Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine." 14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.

15 For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.

16 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams.

18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit

in those days; And they shall prophesy (Acts 2:12-18).

The third hour of the day was only 9:00 AM, and yet those believers appeared drunk with new wine. Anyone who has experienced the Holy Spirit's baptism will confirm that the Spirit will fill a person with so much joy and peace that it is an ecstatic, light-headed feeling. However, alcohol is a failed substitute for this experience in the Holy Spirit.

Now look at Acts 8:14-17. A little time has passed since the first spectacular baptism in the Holy Spirit on that Feast of Pentecost. The apostles have been busy ministering in the Holy Spirit's power by preaching the Gospel and baptizing new believers:

14 Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them,

15 who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

16 *For as yet He had fallen upon none of them.* They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17, my emphasis)

Notice the difference between believers and "Spirit-filled" believers. Peter and John realized that the job was not complete if new believers had received just the good news (Gospel) about Jesus and salvation. They also needed "power from on high" to help them follow Jesus and to spread the Word.

Of special significance is the tenth chapter of Acts in which the house of Cornelius, the Roman Centurion, received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In a vision, an angel of God appeared to Cornelius, a devout Gentile, and told him to locate a man named Peter to preach to him and members of his

household. In the meantime, Peter received a vision in which God revealed that all believers in Jesus, whether Jew (the circumcised) or Gentile (the uncircumcised), are cleansed and receive a new kind of circumcision—that of the heart, and are therefore welcomed by God into His kingdom. Peter obeyed, and against Jewish regulations of never entering a Gentile home, accompanied the servants to Cornelius' house and began to preach God's word:

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.

45 And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

46 For they *heard them speak with tongues* and magnify God. Then Peter answered (Acts 10:44-46, my emphasis).

In the next chapter of Acts, Peter was severely criticized by the Jewish Christians for ministering to the Gentiles. Up until that time, all apostles and disciples believed that the Gospel was for Jews only (the "chosen" people of Israel. Peter had not laid hands on Cornelius or his family-guests to receive the Holy Spirit, as is the usual way of imparting the Spirit. However, God thereby demonstrated that He wanted all who believed in Him to receive His Holy Spirit, and not just the Jews. God confirmed that all born-again believers in Him are clean.

On another occasion, Paul met some believers:

2 he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

3 And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into

John's baptism."

4 Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied (Acts 19:2-6).

Why would Paul even ask new believers, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed"? Answer—He had not heard them speak in tongues. Speaking in tongues is the evidence that the baptism into the Holy Spirit has been received. We cannot be certain that a believer is filled with the Holy Spirit's power unless we hear that believer speak in tongues. Many scriptures confirm this. If we do not hear tongues, then we look at the fruit of the person's life. Some people speak in tongues only at the baptism into the Holy Spirit. Others use tongues only privately. However, infrequent use of tongues restricts power in prayer and ignores the personal benefits clearly described in Scripture (1 Corinthians 14:1-4). The Holy Spirit prays through us the perfect prayers:

26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8: 26-27).

Why does the Lord want all believers to be baptized into the Holy Spirit? It benefits believers in many ways, but the main objective

is to outfit us for service.

When a person asks for the baptism into the Holy Spirit, that person will receive power by faith, believing that God is good and gives the Holy Spirit to any believer who asks (Matthew 7:7-11, Luke 11:13). If speaking in tongues does not manifest immediately, that person should continue believing that they have received and continue thanking the Lord. Tongues will eventually manifest.

Be prepared to answer the following:

1. What does the word "baptism" mean?
2. Isaiah 28:12 prophesied that the baptism into the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues would bring _____ and _____ to the believer.
3. Isaiah 33:19 also called speaking in tongues _____ speech that could not be perceived.
4. John the Baptist prophesied that God would baptize believers with the Holy Ghost and with _____.
5. After Jesus ascended to heaven, the disciples waited obediently in Jerusalem for _____ from on high.
6. Are all born-again believers "Spirit-filled"? Explain.
7. What is the evidence of the baptism into the Holy Spirit?
8. What does the word "carnal" mean?
9. "To be carnally minded is _____ but to be spiritually minded is _____ and _____.
10. What is necessary to properly understand Scripture?

Lesson Five
SALVATION of the HUMAN SOUL
Sanctification Process—Walking in God’s Spirit
Baptism into the Holy Spirit, continued

CRITICISMS & REBUTTALS

The baptism into the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues (known and unknown languages) was, until around 1900, limited to a few denominations. Although still a minority, “Pentecostals” can be found among true Christians of all sects and denominations. Many people who have this experience do not recognize the value of this gift, because their churches have had little or no experience with it and are unable to teach its members. Among several reasons why churches do not teach the full Gospel are:

- Until the invention of the printing press, only wealthy people had access to a Bible and the majority of the population was illiterate.
- Traditional churchgoers ridiculed “charismatic,” “full-Gospel” or “Pentecostal” churches as less than respectable due to unusual and alarming demonstrations and reactions to the move of the Holy Spirit.
- Many modern churches have taught that only the early apostles spoke in other tongues and that tongues ceased after “apostolic times.”
- Some are taught that the purpose of speaking in tongues was to reach new believers in other countries where they went as missionaries. The hypothesis sounds reasonable to human minds so is not questioned. God can and does certainly minister to foreigners in this manner, but adherence to this belief limits God.
- Some teach that speaking in tongues is of the Devil.
- Many people are taught that they are

baptized into the Holy Spirit automatically at the new birth and that speaking in other tongues is unnecessary.

- Many people are too busy with the affairs of just plain living to seek the truth.
- A revelation from God about the truth of speaking with “other tongues” is required.
- The ultimate reason, of course, is that Satan attacks this doctrine mercilessly with misinformation, misunderstanding, fear and lies, because it is a profound weapon against him.

HAVE TONGUES CEASED?

How do we know that speaking in tongues is really of God? Criticism is abundant. Few seem to balk at the Holy Spirit’s baptism, but the subject of tongues upsets them. One of the scriptures quoted by those who try to “prove” that speaking in tongues nowadays is not of God is:

8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail [KJV: *cease*]; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away (1 Corinthians 13:8).

Opponents immediately jump on the statement “tongues, they will cease” and omit the rest of the scripture passage. We still need knowledge and prophecy, so why not tongues? Notice: “when that which is perfect is come,” meaning the second coming of Jesus, then we shall not need any of these things. Until then, we need everything God has to offer us.

TRUTH? Or CULT?

Some Christians who do not speak in tongues have accused those who do as belonging to a cult (a dominion of Satan). Fear of the mysterious, suspicion, misinformation, and perhaps jealousy are at work, because they are not successful in prayer, casting out demons, and more. Praying in tongues is evidenced when people are praying for themselves, others or while laying hands on another person, in healing and casting out demons (James 5:14-16). Something Jesus said is applicable to this accusation of tongues being of the Devil:

24 Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

25 But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.

26 If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? (Matthew 12:24-26).

Satan's kingdom is doomed to destruction, not just from his mistakes, but by the power that God has over him. Speaking in tongues by Christians is of God and stupefies the Devil.

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC PRAYER

Scripture has been twisted and used as ammunition against speaking in tongues:

5 I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.

19 yet in the church I would rather speak-ive words with my understanding, that

fl may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue (1 Corinthians 14:5, 19).

Most of the above chapter instructs believers about praying in church (that is, in a gathering). Paul is saying in effect, what good would it do, if I were to preach and speak ten thousand words in an unknown tongue unless there was interpretation for the edification of the church. He is talking about the gift of tongues in the church bringing a specific message from God and is different from the private prayer language

PURPOSE OF TONGUES

Gifts have been given to the Church to reveal God's plans and purposes for our lives and to spread the Gospel of His kingdom.

- *message from God to the church:* The gift of tongues with the gift of interpretation is a specific message from the Holy Spirit to a specific church gathering for a specific purpose that could be encouragement, admonition, correction or warning (1 Corinthians 14).
- *intercession:* Romans 8:26-27 gives us understanding of fervent intercession (prayer
- *for self, another individual or situation.* edification: building up, encouraging, impartation of knowledge

26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses [KJV: *infirmities*]. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8:26-27).

The words *weaknesses* and *infirmities* in the KJV not only mean *inabilities*, but also mean *sicknesses*. All of us have weaknesses, inabilities, and sickness, so we need someone to pray for us, because we might lack enough knowledge concerning the thing needing prayer. We are often clueless and all we can say in our own language is, “Oh, God, help me,” repeatedly. Of course, God hears us, no matter what language or words we choose, but the Holy Spirit’s intercession for us is the perfect prayer—He is the Perfect Prayerer with solutions. The Holy Spirit of God, knowing how to search hearts, and also, knowing the mind of the Father, will pray through us the perfect will of the Father according to divine plans and purposes.

The expression “groanings which cannot be uttered” in some modern Bible translations is interpreted as “sighs too deep for words.” The Holy Spirit is God, and can do anything, and if God is speaking, all kinds of sounds are possible. Our human reasoning and language often have no expression for the deepest things of the soul, but God knows all and can speak perfectly for us.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

In addition to the Holy Spirit’s perfect prayers is the benefit of edification (building up, strengthening) and re-training our minds:

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.

4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians. 10:3-5).

We need God’s help to fight the evil around us and the “old carnal man” (nature) within us. Praying in tongues is called praying in

the Spirit, and is a weapon that flesh cannot fight, and Satan is powerless against it. Tongues are not subject to our fleshly minds (limited human reasoning), because, unless there is the gift of interpretation, praying in tongues cannot be understood by human beings or by Satan. Occasional instances when the prayer language is understood as one of the earthly languages is also God’s purpose.

STRENGTH AND EDIFICATION

Praying in tongues is praying in the Holy Spirit. So, why pray in a language that we cannot understand? We trust the Holy Spirit to do the best for us. Praying in tongues

- by-passes natural understanding that could interfere with objections,
- is part of the “casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God,
- brings us into subjection to God, and into His perfect, divine plan,
- strengthens and enlightens and energizes the believer.

Paul and Jude advise:

18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints-- (Ephesians 6:18).

20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit (Jude 20).

4 He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. (1 Corinthians. 14:4).

The word *edify* means to *instruct, enlighten, encourage, and build up*. Therefore, when we pray in tongues, we receive revelation in

our human spirit that finds its way into our minds and wills, then is released as wisdom, knowledge, and understanding of God's word and ways.

I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all (1 Corinthians. 14:18)..

Why would Paul make such a statement? Look at the effectiveness of his ministry for clues. Paul was perhaps the most edified apostle of Christ that the world has ever known. When God speaks through a person, in whatever language, known or unknown, that person's spirit will be edified with the knowledge and wisdom of God. God calls us to step up higher in Him, listen for the still small voice of the Holy Spirit, and then obey. Righteous fruit will result in heaven's rewards.

Be prepared to answer the following:

1. How is 1 Corinthians 13:8 applied incorrectly by those who insist tongues have ceased?
2. State the difference(s) between praying in tongues privately and in a church gathering.
3. Name as many purposes and benefits of speaking in tongues as you can.
4. What does the word "edify" mean?
5. How does speaking in tongues edify the mind?
6. How did the Apostle Paul receive so much edification? How is it available to us?

Lesson Six
SALVATION of the HUMAN SOUL
Sanctification Process—Walking in God’s Spirit
Baptism of/into the Holy Spirit, continued

WHY IS THE HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM NECESSARY?

POWER TO LIVE PLEASING TO GOD

Since a person receives guidance, instruction, and protection in the Holy Spirit when he or she receives Jesus as Savior and Lord, why is the Holy Spirit baptism necessary? This question was answered in lesson five but is repeated here as emphasis on the difference between the born-again experience (the starting point for eternal life) and the Holy Spirit’s power for maturity and service.

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right [KJV: *power*] to become [*to be*] children of God, to those who believe in His name (John 1:12, my insert)).

8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8).

According to these scriptures, all believers who have received Jesus (“saints”) are entitled to receive “power from on high.” Jesus not only died and overcame death, He also recaptured the authority God gave Adam (stolen by Satan). This restored authority is for born-again believers to successfully resist the subterfuges of the Devil. We are now victorious over spiritual death and sin through the blood of Jesus and are made capable ministers of the Gospel in the Holy Spirit’s power.

All born-again believers (saints) are positioned in Christ as cleansed from all sin, are considered righteous in God’s sight and have the Holy Spirit’s power *in measure*.

However, we will sin again simply because none of us on Earth are yet totally sanctified. The baptism of/into the Holy Spirit adds power and makes us overcomers, so we can go on to loving and serving Jesus and other people without the heavy burden of sin..

Without the Holy Spirit’s power to resist and overcome temptation, we make messes. However, we are victorious when we permit the Holy Spirit to work through us. Giving Jesus control over every area of our lives is part of our “walk” with the Lord, but the Holy Spirit guides us with greater power when we submit and pray in tongues so that we do not *practice* sin. God has abundant grace for forgiveness. The entire twelfth chapter of First Corinthians describes how this “power from on high” works through Spirit-filled Christians. We should be so excited about overcoming evil that we will also be effective witnesses for the Gospel of God’s kingdom.

CONTROLLING THE TONGUE

The tongue (spoken words) has been an issue since the creation of man. Our words can work for us or against us.

14 A man [*any person*] will be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth, And the recompense of a man’s hands will be rendered to him (Proverbs 12:14, my insert).

5 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!

6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our

members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell (James 3:5-6).

29 Let no corrupt word [KJV: *communication*] proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you (Ephesians 4:29-32).

What is corrupt communication? In addition to talking “dirty,” swearing or speaking the Lord’s name in vain, corrupt speaking is *any words* that disagree with God’s Word and steals our faith. Carelessness might allow unbelief or doubt to escape from our lips contrary to the Word of God, thereby corrupting our communication. In essence, speaking “corrupt” words cancels God’s specific word applying to situations that could have been fulfilled. The mind of man is not yet totally enlightened with all truth, so incorrect beliefs and habits will eventually show up in our speech. All of our speech should edify (build up) and encourage others and ourselves. Jesus spoke harshly to the Pharisees and teachers of the Law:

34 Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (Matthew 12:34).

How do we grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30 above)? Ignoring Him, disobeying Him, and speaking contrary to God’s Word will grieve Him. He will love us by correcting us.

Galatians 5:19-21 identifies carnal behavior that grieves the Holy Spirit. Do you think Jesus and the Father are also grieved when His kids are naughty?

Speaking in tongues bypasses the unenlightened parts of our minds and enables us to speak God’s perfect prayers. Our limited understanding does not participate in speaking in tongues, unless there is interpretation from the Holy Spirit. We give God control of our most unruly body part when we allow Him to speak those perfect prayers through us. Remember, we do not know all the details of every situation needing prayer, but God knows and has the perfect solution (words).

WHO IS THE SPIRIT OF GOD?

The Holy Spirit is a Person with all the attributes of God the Father. He is God, He is Holy, He is power, and He is love. All who receive the Holy Spirit’s baptism experience love they never knew was possible.

37 Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’

38 This is the first and greatest commandment.

39 And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

40 “On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:37-40).

Jesus told us to love our enemies. How many of us can love everyone unless we get that love from God Himself? God’s love is *agape* love, is far above human love and only comes from Him. Human beings cannot manufacture or perfectly imitate it. We can only let God flow his *agape* love through us to others. God could have given us this love and baptism experience in any manner He wished. He could have made the baptism in the Holy Spirit understandable to our minds,

but He chose to “hide these things from the wise and prudent,” (Matthew 11:25). Therefore, we must seek Him with humble hearts “in spirit and in truth” rather than with only our minds.

HAVE THE FAITH OF GOD

After we receive the Holy Spirit’s gift of power, our adversary, the Devil, goes into high gear and tries to steal our faith and make us question the authenticity of the experience. Satan’s tricks are well known to those who have received this gift of the Holy Spirit’s power.

- Satan will tell us that we are just making up the words. If we think this through, no one is humanly able to make up tongues for an extended time. Of course, speaking gibberish is possible, but no one can continue in it. When we receive this gift, we are able to speak in tongues for long periods if we choose and as led by the Holy Spirit.
- Satan will tell us that we received tongues from him and not from God. We must remember that we asked God in Jesus’ name to give us the Holy Spirit. The gift of tongues is from the kingdom of light and never from the kingdom darkness.

9 “So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

10 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

11 If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish?

12 Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If you then, being evil, know how to

give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Luke 11:9-13).

- Satan hates tongues because he cannot understand it unless it is a known human language. This does happen, but prayer in tongues is the Holy Spirit’s work that always defeats the enemy even if Satan is allowed to understand it. Those who receive the Holy Spirit’s baptism are Satan’s special targets because they are effective threats to his kingdom of darkness. He will especially try to bring trouble, confusion, frustration, and hardship with every opportunity. We may experience mechanical breakdowns, sickness, financial difficulty, and trouble in any areas not yet totally cleansed. He will try to make us think, “it’s not worth it to live for God.” This is precisely the moment we must remember our authority over the Devil in Jesus’ name and command that serpent to back off.

33 These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Everyone has trials and troubles in this life. We determine the outcome by faith that God is for us, so no one can successfully be against us (Romans 8:31)? We can “claim” victory by speaking the Word that applies to our situations. God will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5), and He promises to deliver us if we refuse to give up or give in. He will make all things work together for our good when we give every difficulty to the Lord and allow the Holy Spirit to pray through

us that perfect prayer of deliverance. (Romans 8:26-28).

All praise and honor and glory to our Lord Jesus Christ for giving us power to become and be sons of God so that we can carry out His commandment to “Love one another as I have loved you (John 15:12).”

1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children [KJV: *sons*] of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

2 Beloved, now we are children [KJV: *sons*] of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is (1 John 3:1-2).

Be prepared to answer the following:

1. Why is the baptism of/into the Holy Spirit necessary?
2. What is “corrupt communication”?
3. Why does the mind of man not participate in understanding tongues without the gift of interpretation?
4. Who is the Holy Spirit?
5. Name three tricks Satan uses to try to convince us that we did not receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
6. When trials and troubles come to you, what determines the outcome?

Lesson Seven
SALVATION of the HUMAN SOUL
Sanctification Process—Walking in God’s Spirit

DAILY STEPS

INTIMACY

Our relationship with the Lord should take priority and be demonstrated in seeking Him daily for direction, assistance, rest and peace for our souls. When we surrender our plans to the Lord, He can perfect them or change them according to His holy plan, delivering us from struggles of having no control over details or not knowing how to proceed.

23 Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me (Luke 9:23).

28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle [KJV: *mEEK*] and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

2 Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart!

3 They also do no iniquity; They walk in His ways (Psalm 119:2-3).

For victory in the Christian walk (sanctification process), adhere like glue to the Word of God. That is, be a “doer” and not just a hearer (James 1:23, 25). We need God’s grace for this. Ask Him for power to overcome lethargy, procrastination, and fear.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and

glorify your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith (Romans 1:16-17)”.

Faith is central to every detail of the sanctification process and is the foundation of righteousness. Abraham believed God’s promises before the event of the Cross, and that faith was attributed to him as righteousness (Romans 4:3). Never be ashamed of the Gospel—believers are on the winning side. The Gospel is good news for the planet destined for deliverance from ungodly systems bound in sin.

23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope [KJV: *faith*] without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,

25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching (Hebrews 10:23-25).

God’s Word says, “Do business (KJV: *occupy*) until I come (Luke 19:13).” In other words, responsibly fulfill assignments from the Lord. God is pleased when we counsel and inspire others to good works.

Nevertheless, for eternal rewards, those good works must first be inspired by God and are a result of obeying Him. Christians motivated only by zeal to honor the Lord and do good works tend to enthusiastically begin “programs” that are people-generated and not Holy Spirit-generated. “When activity substitutes for holiness, the cause begins to justify the activity. Activity then becomes necessary to preserve the cause, and dedication to the activity is equated with loyalty and holiness.” A t-shirt message says, “God is coming soon. Look busy.” This is funny because it spoofs much random human un-inspired activity going on in churches. Christians are vulnerable to deception through zeal. Works worthy of eternal rewards are a result of obeying the Holy Spirit’s timing and direction with compassion. We cannot earn eternal rewards based on our own ideas, even if they seem excellent.

WHAT GOOD WORKS LOOK LIKE

God’s priority list is to build righteous character in becoming increasingly like Him. His ultimate purpose is to conform us to His image through the Holy Spirit’s power working in us (Romans 8:29).

In these days of increasing persecution of Christians, attending as many gatherings of the saints as possible is critical. The gatherings of believers are a vital source of encouragement and strength to continue faithfully and full of power in our walk with the Lord.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering [*patience*], kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 gentleness, self-control [KJV: *temperance*]. Against such there is no law.

24 And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-25, my insert)

Notice that the word *Spirit* in the above verses is capitalized—our clue that the Holy Spirit is at work. Our spirits first receive from Him and then reflect His righteousness. The Holy Spirit gives power to bear this good fruit—the result of obedience to God—and we thereby build treasure in heaven. It is actually much easier than self-effort.

Self-effort toward developing these godly character traits is mostly ineffective and seldom permanent. Practicing them in cooperation with the Holy Spirit’s leading will be the only eternally successful effort involved. Many of us have tried to be “good” or even “perfect” and have failed miserably in some areas. All have natural strengths and attributes, but none have all the fruit unless the Holy Spirit gives power to reflect them. Correcting the spots and wrinkles from our inner beings is the Holy Spirit’s goal.

Christians are on the path toward conforming to Christ’s image, but we occasionally fail. We should definitely strive to display good character with the Holy Spirit’s guidance and power.

1 Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor strays in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.

3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper (Psalm 1:1-3).

Walking in the Spirit, delighting and meditating in God’s Word (“the law of the Lord”), will (over time) bring abundant prosperity and blessing. The Hebrew word for “meditate” is “to mutter” and reinforces speaking aloud God’s Word. The faith walk also requires patience and aligning our timing with His.

35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.

36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

37 “For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.

38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.”

39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul (Hebrews 10:35-39).

7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded (James 4:7-8).

With practice, resisting the Devil will become habitual and natural, and we will experience a progressively easier time drawing near to God.

RENEWING THE MIND (REVELATION OF GOD’S WORD)

Have you ever thought of God ‘s Word as *life*? The Lord told His disciples that He is the Bread of Life (John 6:35, 48, 51). He is the source of Living Water (John 7:38). A person could live in the desert for a long time on just bread and water, but Jesus was saying, that His bread and water are to sustain our spiritual life, not just for the body. Although, when the inner being (spirit and soul-personality) is healthy, the body will also become healthy. The Word of God heals and brings life. We are to “eat” this bread and “drink” this living water. Have you ever heard the expression, “You are what you eat?” That is also true of ingesting the holy bread and water of God’s Word. The bread of the Word supplies vitality, wisdom, peace, and so much

more, and the water of the Word cleanses our souls.

63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life (John 6:63).

17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17).

The Holy Spirit inspired individuals to write an everlasting record of human frailty and successes. The Bible teaches, convicts and warns us about what God hates and what He loves. The God of the universe reveals Who He is and His purposes for this planet. The Bible is the most powerful book ever written and has changed the lives of millions of individuals for the better. Scripture brings faith and hope. Again, God’s Word is life. Jesus said, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life (John 6:63).”

STRONG OPPOSITION OUT THERE

Why do a growing number of people oppose the Bible and react so strongly against its presence in public places? Do these people really know what is in it? A Bible is noticeable, whether being held or lying innocently on a table. Perhaps the heart of man subconsciously recognizes the Bible is truly the Word of God. Satan will influence the careless and rebels to:

- ignore the Bible’s instructions,
- believe that Scripture is either foolish or dangerous to society,
- alter the biblical doctrine.

ONE WAY

The strongest attack on the Bible is on its foundational truth—the narrow way to God.

People who want to widen that narrow path, openly ridicule the Bible, Christianity, and believers as obtuse, opinionated, and intolerant. "Tolerance" is a politically correct mantra but with altered definition: The original dictionary meaning of tolerance was "to politely allow beliefs and opinions of others to co-exist"—"a live and let live" attitude. Now it has changed in usage to mean "an obligation to accept others' beliefs, opinions, and behavior" in a conglomerate philosophy. Political correctness leads to grand scale confusion. The stage scenery is being constructed for the one world religion described in the book of Revelation that takes place during the future intense tribulation period.

God has never forced anyone to believe in Him, and Christians should never try that either. The truth: the Bible is narrow because God has provided only one Way to Him. He clearly states that Way is His Perfect Plan for all who want to participate. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man comes to the Father, but by Me (John 14:6)." If we object to that, we are calling Jesus a liar!

All other religions are based on self-generated good works. Christianity is based on the good works Jesus already did for us by living a perfect sinless life, led 100 percent by the Holy Spirit, and suffering the punishment we deserve for our sinfulness. We "couldn't cut it." Only One Way is narrow, but God has very good reasons for His Way.

POWER OF THE WORD

The Word of God will mature us.

2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby (1 Peter 2:2).

26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,
27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrin

kle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:26-27).

The Word of God chastens, corrects and cleanses, and then instructs in righteousness:

12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

The human spirit, soul, and body are so united that they are often indistinguishable. Only the Word of God can discern between the operations of the spirit and the soul. The first man and woman at creation had strong and completely open spirits in perfect fellowship with God. Their souls and bodies were in total subjection to their spirits. Christians now have that restored ability to discipline the flesh made possible through the complete sacrifice of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit in us. Nevertheless, maturity in the Lord is not automatic, because the kingdom of darkness still heavily influences our souls through old mind-sets and behavior patterns. Born-again believers are now in the kingdom of light and are victorious when completely submitted to God. The following is another admonition to renew our minds with God's Word so we will know His perfect will:

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.
2 And do not be conformed to this world-but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Romans 12:1-2).

Psalm 103:20 is dynamite encouragement to speak the Word of God instead of complaining about circumstances:

Bless the Lord, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word, Heeding the voice of His word (Psalm 103:20).

God's exceedingly capable angels are listening to hear us speak His Word with faith, so they can run quickly to carry it out. Angels and God can hear a whisper. This implies that if we do not speak God's Word, the angels will not be set in motion to carry it out. God's angels are not mind readers and will not respond to just good intentions. Speaking God's Word is also a faith-builder for us. Remember the scripture: "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

Someone said that studying the Word of God is like climbing a spiral staircase. We rehearse the same subjects but each time at a higher level of understanding. That is another powerful clue to study God's Word.

Be prepared to answer the following:

1. What must we do to have a victorious walk in Christ?
2. Good works must be _____ by God first and are a result of _____ Him.
3. Why is gathering with other believers important?
4. Name the spiritual fruit in Galatians 5:22-23.
5. What is still needed after a believer has done the will of God (obeying His Word)?
6. What happens when a believer resists the devil in Jesus' name?
7. Name the four profitable things that result from studying Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
8. What brings faith? (Romans 10:17)
9. What part of our being should be the strongest?
10. Who harkens to the voice of God's Word and why?
11. 10. What part of our being should be the strongest?
12. How is studying the Word of God like a spiral staircase?

Lesson Eight
SALVATION of the HUMAN SOUL
Sanctification Process—Walking in God’s Spirit

PRAYER: THE BELIEVER’S AUTHORITY

SUCCESSFUL PRAYER

Christians (and most other faiths) instinctively know prayer is important but often fail to pray regularly in our very busy lives. Prayer in agreement with the Word of God is the “hot line” to heaven—transmitting and receiving. Time spent in the Lord’s presence and listening for His “still, small voice (1 Kings 19:12)” is time redeemed from the enemy.

3 My voice You shall hear in the morning,
O Lord; In the morning I will direct it to
You, And I will look up (Psalm 5:3).

1 O God, You are my God; Early will I
seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My
flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty
land Where there is no water (Psalm
63:1).

17 I love those who love me, And those
who seek me diligently will find me (Prov-
erbs 8:17).

Frequent and habitual prayer is critical for daily spiritual victories, but even more so as we get closer to the Lord’s coming. That is, setting aside a regular time each day for prayer, Bible reading-study, and maintaining a constant open line of communication with the Lord throughout the day. Several of King David’s Psalms (songs) portray his habit of praying in the morning. Early morning before dawn is the best choice, because of less activity (“vibes”) in the atmosphere to interfere with our thoughts.

LOVE ENEMIES

A main concern for the world is the current proliferation of terrorism. Exactly how do we

love our enemies? The worldwide political atmosphere is a clue to failed strategies. Nations (especially the USA) have repeatedly tried diplomatic negotiations and appeasement with money and benefits. Have those strategies worked? Definitely, they have not. How about praying for the peace negotiations and the enemies? Is that radical, or what? What would happen if more people prayed for terrorists, governments and authorities? Small groups do, of course, but a world-size problem requires many large groups and perhaps a majority of the population, all in agreement praying for God to open the terrorists’ eyes to truth.

27 “But I say to you who hear: Love your
enemies, do good to those who hate you,
28 bless those who curse you, and pray
for those who spitefully use you (Luke
6:27-28).

We cannot love great or small enemies with the perfect love of the Lord unless He gives us that love. Discuss with Him the reasons why they are enemies. to see unlovely things about ourselves that need forgiveness. Perhaps we may be the reason they are enemies. In prayer, God might show us things about ourselves, which normally produces humility and understanding of the over-all faulty human condition. He will then instruct how to pray for them in our understanding and in the Spirit (in tongues).When we pray for personal enemies, we begin People who are ugly to others do not have the knowledge or the power to understand this is a spiritual battle perpetrated by our real enemy—Satan and his cohorts of darkness. Remember Jesus’s words on the Cross. “. . . “Father, for-

forgive them, for they do not know what they do (Luke 23:34a).”

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

18 *praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints (Ephesians 6:10-18, my emphasis).*

The above verses paint a vivid picture of spiritual armor required for warfare. No one is exempt from duty, and no soldier goes to battle without some protective clothing (defensive armor) and weapons. The Word of God (the Sword of the Spirit) is the only offensive weapon included in this list. Besides the weapon of God’s Word, we also have the powerful weapons of

- the name of Jesus (Mark 16:17)
- many Old Testaments names of Je-

hovah, such as Jehovah Shalom,

- praise,
- worship,
- fasting,
- prayer.

Ephesians 6:18 mentions all kinds of prayer. The purpose of the armor pieces is for effective and fervent prayer to “move mountains” (Mark 11:22-24), that is, to cause major changes for God’s will to be done on Earth.

Second Chronicles chapter twenty relates the story of King Jehoshaphat whose armies were surrounded by a strong enemy army. He sought the Lord fervently and commanded the nation to fast and pray. The Lord answered with instructions to set a band of singers at the front of the army who were to sing praises to God while marching into battle. They obeyed and God gave the Israelites victory. God said that He inhabits the praises of His people (Psalm 22:3), meaning the Lord’s presence is in our personal atmosphere when we praise Him!

WHERE, WHEN AND HOW

A great faith-builder is to relentlessly confess a specific scripture over a problem and then praise the Lord for “hastening” His Word (Jeremiah 1:12). Each believer should be clothed daily with the armor of God before even leaving home. We may encounter things or persons who would try to lead us away from walking with the Lord, so be prepared.

6 But you, when you pray, go into your room [KJV: *closet*], and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

7 And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words (Matthew 6:6-7).

The prayer “closet” is a private place alone with the Lord with no interruptions. The majority of communication with God should be in this private place. The passage above stresses humility. We are good witnesses when praying over meals in public—if with humble hearts. If we pray publicly in the hope of being noticed or commended, our reward will be strictly an earthly one, not eternal. Humility is the important factor in all prayer. The Lord knows and judges what is sincere and what is for show.

Paul said he prayed in the Spirit and in his understanding (1 Corinthians 14:15), so both are needed. Since we want prayer and time with the Lord to count, we should know the difference between vain repetitious prayers and habitual, effective prayers. The words *vanity* and *vain* mean *useless* and *uselessness*. For example, repeating the Lords’ prayer daily is common, and its reward depends upon our attitude and focus. If we think about what we are saying and involve our hearts, it will be effective. If we are reciting by rote and perhaps thinking about something less important, it will be useless repetition—in vain. Therefore approach the King of the Universe with whole hearts and with reverence and humility.

2 Set your mind [KJV: *affections*] on things above, not on things on the earth (Colossians 3:2).

Herein is another exhortation to guard our hearts and not let anything be more important than the Lord. Read the entire Book of Psalms with the idea of prayer and seeking the Lord. The Psalms are great prayer-prompts.

AUTHORITY AND POWER

15 And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every

creature.

16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;

18 they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover (Mark 16: 15-18).

All things are possible to those who believe (Mark 9:23), is a reminder that faith is a prerequisite for functioning with the authority the Lord has provided for believers. The idea expressed here about serpents and drinking deadly things means that believers will not need to fear things that could harm, for they have authority over anything harmful. It does not mean that believers seek out danger to show off, challenge or tempt the Lord (James 1:13-15). Believers have real authority over devils, sickness and disease, and things that could harm or kill. This message has been squelched by many denominations. Perhaps “spiritual blindness” and fear from Satan about dealing with him are the reasons.

12 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do it (John 14:12-14).

16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you (John 15:16).

23b Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.

24 Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full (John 16:23b-24).

The above verses clearly state believers have authority in Jesus' name. It is full power of attorney to act in His name, doing the works of the Holy Spirit by the leading of the Holy Spirit. We can receive by faith what we ask. When we know the Lord and His Word, we can be fully persuaded that He has only goodness for His kids. He wants all to be healed, delivered from darkness, prosperous, and full of joy. We can pray for these things for ourselves and for others with full confidence (faith) that He will answer the petitions. We are to be like Christ—Christ-like—the meaning of “Christian.” Everything Jesus did was good, healing the sick, casting out devils, and raising the dead, so we are to do the same when called upon by the Holy Spirit.

8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8).”

Jesus taught about His Father and His kingdom continually by His word and deeds. He asked His followers to do the same, to continue His ministry. That does not mean that we all have a teaching or evangelistic ministry. It means that all Christians with a close relationship with the Lord have power to pray with authority for our family, neighbors, co-workers, and more and to be healed, delivered from bondage and to overcome temptations in all categories.

HEALING

Disease (dis-ease, lack of physical peace) and sickness are not from God but result

ed from the original rebellion in the Garden of Eden that brought death to Earth. Human DNA has mutated and degenerated with each generation since.¹ Healing for the entire person (spirit, soul, and body) has been paid in full by the work of the Cross of Calvary. The Lord wants to set us free from disease and everything else that is not from Him.

4 Surely He has borne our griefs [Hebrew: *sickness*] And carried our sorrows [Hebrew: *pain*]; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.

5 But He was wounded [Hebrew: *struck down*] for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:4-5).

24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed (1 Peter 2:24).

Isaiah prophesied by the power of the Holy Spirit several hundred years before Jesus went to the Cross, that the Savior would provide salvation, restoration of peace with God, and healing. Peter wrote by the power of the Holy Spirit after the resurrection that Jesus had fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy.

Jesus was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. Because we are descendants of Adam and Eve, we inherited the inert spirit and tainted soul and are guilty of rebellion against the law of God from birth. The word *iniquity* means *lawlessness* and is related to the word *unequal*, which is the idea of unequal-ness to holiness. Adam's act of rebellion plunged the entire human race into spiritual death making humanity lawless and unequal with God's holiness. Jesus became the Second

Adam (1 Corinthians 15:47) and destroyed the power of sin over all humanity. We deserved death—He did not.

HEALING AND RESTORATION FOR THE SOUL

The “chastisement for our peace” was upon Jesus. He was humiliated on the Cross of Calvary, despised, rejected and shamed. The un-regenerated human soul without God is infected with sin, full of sorrow and grief without peace. The lack of peace can produce wrong thinking, wrong attitudes, wrong actions and many mistakes. Everyone needs to know that Jesus purchased perfect peace for restoration of the soul by his obedience in being our substitute in judgment and that it must be personally received.

Many believers go no further than salvation for the spirit, but the Lord also wants us to sanctify ourselves—that is, set ourselves apart from worldly influences to renew the soul to think, feel, and act like the Lord Jesus.

HEALING AND RESTORATION FOR THE BODY

Review: The word “griefs” in the original Hebrew means “sickness,” “sorrows” means “pain”, and “wounded” means “struck down.” “And with His stripes we are healed.” Jesus was so severely beaten that He was nearly unrecognizable as a man. Stripes were the bleeding wounds from the whip that tore his flesh. Bible scholars say that Jesus was whipped with the Roman scourge—a three-pronged leather whip embedded with pieces of glass and metal at the tips. He received thirty-nine wounds (“stripes”) on His back, the most that Jewish law would allow. Then came the anguish of His crucifixion! Oh, what excruciating pain our sin caused!

Allow the Lord to minister to every area of your life, spirit, soul, and body.

Be prepared to answer the following:

1. What is the best definition for prayer?
2. How do we learn to really love our enemies?
3. What do we fight in the spirit?
4. What are the defensive pieces and the one offensive weapon of spiritual armor listed in Ephesians 6:10-18?
5. What weapons do we have in addition to God’s Word?
6. What is the main purpose for the armor and weapons?
7. Where or what is your “prayer closet”?
8. Over whom do we have authority?
9. Over what do we have authority?
10. Describe how the work of the Cross has paid for our complete redemption (spirit, soul, and body).

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1. Brian Thomas. December 2015. Vol. 44 No. 5. “Four Scientific Reasons That Refute Evolution.” *Acts & Facts Magazine*. Institute for Creation Research. Dallas, TX 75229. 17

Lesson Nine
SALVATION of the HUMAN SOUL
Sanctification Process—Walking in God’s Spirit

GIVING

THE ULTIMATE GIVER

God’s nature is to give from His infinite and perfect *agape* love. “God so loved the world that He *gave* His only begotten Son (John 3:16, my emphasis).” God gave unselfishly, knowing that Jesus, the Son of Man had the freedom of choice given to every human being to tell the Father that He just could not go through with it. Jesus lived His life as a reflection of the Father, so He also had giving as His primary purpose. Jesus was obedient to the Cross of Calvary, because He knew that giving His life was the only way sinful humankind could be restored to fellowship with Father God. His *agape* love won the war between self and obedience. Since we are to be like Him, we must have giving in our hearts and demonstrate it. Giving opens the way for God to bless us.

38 Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you” (Luke 6:38).

GIVING AS “WORKS”

Paul wrote the following message to the church in Philippi to commend them for their giving attitude.

19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).

The Philippians were the only church (group of believers) up to that time that had responded freely to Paul’s ministry needs. Scripture does not state whether Paul made his needs

known or if they discerned his needs through a whisper from the Holy Spirit. Because of their sacrificial giving, he could confidently declare that God would meet all their needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. That is, God has all the resources in the universe to use on our behalf. James wrote, “if you see a brother or sister in need and you do nothing, then your faith is without works and is dead (James 2:15-17)”. Paul knew the Philippian church’s giving was sacrificial—they also had urgent needs, but they gave anyway. The Lord is pleased when we support valid ministries.

18 For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer is worthy of his wages (1 Timothy 5:18).”

Of course, giving is not restricted to finances. God looks for the willingness to give goods and services when we see needs and are able to help. Consult the Holy Spirit about the when, where, what, and how much.

DEADLY GIVING

Read about a couple named Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) as a warning. Many believers were selling goods and property to support the brethren, and were undoubtedly commended for it. Ananias and Sapphira announced that they were going to sell their property and give it all to the Apostles to further the Gospel. They evidently had the wrong motives of wanting commendation for a generous act, because they secretly decided to keep back a portion under the deception that they were giving all. The Holy Spirit revealed to Peter that they sought applause

and admiration from the crowd through deception, and they lost their lives. Peter did not accuse them of lying to him or to the other brethren—they lied to the Holy Spirit. Attitudes in giving are very, very important, so beware of pride sneaking onto the stage unawares. The Lord tells us that in proudly displaying our acts of charity we already have the empty, earthly reward (Matthew 6:2-6, 16-18). The Lord loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7), but He also wants truth and humility from the giver to qualify for rewards.

THE TITHE

The tithe is ten percent of a person's income—off the top—first fruits—before any other bills are paid or items purchased. Abraham was the first person recorded in the Bible to give tithes when he gave ten percent of all he had conquered from his enemies to Melchizedek, King of Salem, the priest of the most-high God (Genesis 14:17-20).

Tithing is a sensitive subject for congregations and for those who “run” church organizations. Some argue that the command to tithe does not apply to Christians because most of the scriptures about tithing are in the Old Testament. Nevertheless, the New Testament directs the ministers of the Lord to receive tithes (Hebrews 7:5-8).

The Lord makes it very clear in His Word that the tithe does not belong to us—it belongs to the Lord. The Lord does not need our money because He owns all the wealth of the universe. Consider the fact that we must give the Lord permission to lead us and bless us, so giving God His tithe is one way of giving Him permission to bless our finances. Think of the command to tithe as a “set-up” that obligates the Lord into blessing His folks. That demonstrates how much He desires to be part of our lives!

Incidentally, some people think the tithe can be on our net income. Well, of course, it can, but Scripture does not support that. Remember the Bible says that the

tithe is on the first fruits—the gross, before any bills or earthly obligations are paid. If we hold back the first fruits, we disqualify our giving from the blessing it could be. Sometimes, a tithe seems impossible and sacrificial, but God always makes a way for the ninety percent to stretch when we are obedient in tithing.

Malachi 3:10 says to bring the tithe into the storehouse. The Old Testament culture was agricultural, so the storehouse was a place in which food or goods were stored—crops, products and valuables. The prophet Malachi used it as a symbol for the Temple of worship that stored and protected Scripture, taught the people and supported the priests, Levites, and all the activities. Tithes and offerings kept it running and Scripture promoted.

New Testament storehouses are the same—the place where the Word of God is supported and spread with the added benefit of supportive fellowship. Our spiritual storehouses are places where we regularly worship, are nurtured and encouraged with the Word and fellowship. The purpose is to provide rich spiritual food for our souls and spirits to further the Gospel. The tithe is practical and keeps the lights on, the plumbing working, and food, housing and gas for the ministers so the Gospel of God's kingdom will be shouted in our neighborhoods. It also supports the ministers to be free from other employment so they have time to seek the Lord on our behalf.

The storehouse is not our favorite TV ministry, although ministry programming provides encouragement and teaching. Fellowship is the missing ingredient in televised ministry. TV ministries are usually in the missionary category of spreading the Gospel globally. Therefore, offerings, not tithes, should go to TV ministries to support the work of God around the Earth. If a believer absolutely cannot attend a local church, then a favorite televangelist ministry is appro-

appropriate to receive tithes. If we are able to attend a physical gathering, the local place of worship is where our tithes go.

Malachi 2:10 also states the wonderful promise that the Lord will open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings upon us that we cannot even contain. Even though it is perhaps a metaphor, we can imagine that windows in heaven would be large, perhaps gigantic. Verse eleven contains the promise that the Lord will “rebuke the devourer for our sakes (Malachi 3:11).” Remember that in Jesus’ earthly ministry, He rebuked devils and they fled, so we have seen that anything the Lord rebukes has to flee. Therefore, we can be certain that when we give tithes and offerings with humility, and for the most part, secretly, the Lord will protect our finances. We may endure temporary disturbing financial issues but not suffer permanent loss. Remember Job’s suffering? God restored to him doubly what the enemy had taken.

OFFERINGS

An offering is in addition to the tithe. The Old Testament directed the Israelites about when, how much and what their offering should be. The Holy Spirit will prompt us to see a need and give when we have the means to provide it (James 2:15-16). An offering can be finances or items, such as clothing, food, time and such. The Lord expects us to give offerings when we can. Compassion and obedience to the Holy Spirit’s leading are the ingredients that make our offerings reward-able.

Read again Luke 6:38 and think about the word “measure.” If we give a “teaspoonful,” we will be blessed with a teaspoonful in return. If we give a “bucketful,” we will be blessed with that same measure in return. This measure is actually based on the percentage given of what we have, not the specific size or amount of the offering. If we have a bucketful to spare and we squeeze out only a teaspoonful, we are limiting the

blessing for others and for ourselves.

Now look at Mark 12:41-44 and Luke 21:2-4 that relate a story about a poor widow who gave all she had.

41 Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much.

42 Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans.

43 So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; 44 for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood” (Mark 12:41-44).

The story does not say what kind of a blessing she received, but according to Luke 6:38, she put herself into position to receive that good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over. The widow’s two mites represented all she had and was obviously more than a tithe. It was truly a sacrificial offering, and she gave when in need. She must have known that the Lord returns blessings much more abundantly than the offering. Now, the Lord does not often require giving all that we have, but we should be willing if He asks. The point is, be willing and always be led by the Holy Spirit. A rare time may come when the Lord will instruct not to give an offering. However, the tithe is always required, and there is a specific place for the tithe to go—the storehouse.

A great promise from the Lord is that he will restore to us what we have lost. Even though this scripture partly refers to future events, we can believe the Lord to fulfill it for us here:

25 “So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, The

crawling locust, The consuming locust,
And the chewing locust, My great army
which I sent among you” (Joel 2:25).

In addition to finances, the above scripture can also be applied to restoring peace, joy, health, victory over habits, and any other blessing you feel you have lost. Remember, good health is a blessing that saves money.

IMPORTANCE OF BOTH

Malachi 3:8-11 is a key scripture to understand why God requires tithes and give offerings:

8 “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings.

9 You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation.

10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try {KJV: prove} Me now in this,” Says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it.

11 “And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,” Says the Lord of hosts (Malachi 3:8-11).

God states that if a believer does not tithe and give offerings, the believer is a thief—a strong and startling statement leaving no wiggle room. Anyone who would steal from the Lord brings a curse upon himself. Ask yourself some pointed questions:

- Am I always in a “jackpot” about my finances?
- If I am, am I tithing?
- If I am tithing and giving offerings and my finances are not yet blessed, am

walking in faith that the Lord will fulfill His Word?

- Am I exercising patience that the Lord will reward me in His time?
- Am I giving offerings cheerfully, from obligation only or begrudgingly?
- Am I following the Holy Spirit’s leading in giving?
- Am I being a good steward of the money that the Lord does provide?

Most people have seasons of financial strain and blessing. Studying the financial principles in Scripture will impart wisdom to anyone who will look for them. God’s Word is absolute and He has absolutely promised to fulfill His Word. Therefore, we simply need patience, standing in faith to receive the promised blessings.

11 “So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it (Isaiah 55:11).”

The Lord challenges us to prove His faithfulness by giving our tithes and offerings obediently. He will fulfill His Word. Of course, all eternal rewards of giving depend first and wholly upon giving our hearts to the Lord (2 Corinthians 8:1-5). God honors His financial principles for earthly rewards even when unbelievers and heathens give tithes and offerings with sincerity and compassion. We can honestly consider God’s directions for giving as an investment in heaven for our benefit. He wants to reward His faithful ones!

The main purpose for the Lord’s command in giving both tithes and offerings is to honor Him with the very substance that could so easily become an idol.

Be prepared to answer the following:

1. What was Jesus' primary motive for coming to Earth as a human being?
2. Describe the difference between a tithe and an offering.
3. To Whom does the tithe belong?
4. How do we give God permission to bless our finances?
5. Name objects besides money that could be offerings.
6. Why did Paul tell the Philippian church that God would meet all their needs?
7. Who was the first man recorded in the Bible to give tithes?
8. Where should the tithe always go?
9. What does the phrase "windows of heaven" mean?
10. Define the storehouse.

Challenge: Find scriptures in the book of Proverbs about financial wisdom.

Lesson Ten
SALVATION of the HUMAN SOUL
Sanctification Process—Walking in God’s Spirit

THE BELIEVER’S REWARDS

FRUIT INSPECTION

Building treasure (rewards) in heaven (Mark 10:21) is achieved when believers bear “righteous fruit” here on Earth. This treasure is not for selfish gain, but is fruit that honors God and advances the Gospel of God’s kingdom on Earth. Our heavenly rewards are superb by-products of our obedience to the Lord.

- 1 “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.
- 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.
- 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.
- 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.
- 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.
- 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.
- 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.
- 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples (John 15:1-8).

Continue reading this chapter through verse sixteen. Jesus is the Vine (the source of life), and we are the branches that bear good fruit.

Bearing fruit is always the result of obeying God’s instructions, letting the life of the Vine flow through us. Allowing the cares of this life to squeeze our connection to the Lord leads to spiritual “anemia” with His life in us diminished or the flow stopped completely. Our Holy Gardener always prunes branches for more and better fruit, meaning anything that hinders our life with Him is cut away—correction that could be painful.

Always remember that humanity’s ideas and zeal are often misguided, incorrect, pitifully feeble, futile for eternal rewards and are nothing when compared with God-given ideas and gifts. Bearing righteous fruit is not based on how recognized or unrecognized we are on Earth—whether we are like Billy Graham or the custodian of the smallest church.

THE BEST FOUNDATION

All treasure building in heaven depends upon how we build our lives on the foundation of faith in our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

- 9 For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building.
- 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.
- 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
- 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw
- 13 each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be

revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire (1 Corinthians 3:9-15).

Verse fifteen alerts us to the fact that losing or not having any rewards is possible. Our magnificent God is a consuming fire (Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29). The obviously flammable wood hay and straw are spiritually valueless materials symbolizing works accomplished only in human reason and strength without the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit. They will not survive God's spiritual, purifying fire. Works inspired and directed by the Holy Spirit are like gold, silver, and precious stones that will survive the refining fire of the Holy Spirit and are worthy of rewards.

A jeweler knows that gold and silver must be purified gradually, so ore is placed in a crucible and a low fire placed under it. Debris begins to separate from the metal, is scraped off, and the fire is turned up slightly, causing more debris separation from the ore. The process continues until the gold and silver are pure and the jeweler can see his reflection. How about that as a beautiful symbol for the Lord purifying us through the work of the Holy Spirit until He sees His reflection in us! Some of the fiery trials can be painful, but if we cooperate, will emerge without the smell of smoke.

First Corinthians 3:9-15 above states if the works are like gold, silver, and precious stones, they will survive the refining fire of the Holy Spirit, and will therefore be manifested as rewards in heaven. It also directs our attention to the fact that, even if the works of a believer do not survive the refining fire of the Holy Spirit, that believer will still be saved (if he/she has not rejected the Lord) but without heavenly rewards.

How do we make sure that our works are the kind that will survive to become rewards in heaven? The answer: Obedience to the general instructions in the Bible with the Holy Spirit's specific instructions to us personally will earn rewards.

TIMING

The results of our fruitful labor often appear to be delayed. Therefore, faith to persevere is the key. Perhaps most of our rewards will remain hidden from us until we are in heaven. Some believers have spent years handing out Gospel tracts with no confirmation that anyone was saved. A famous missionary to Burma, Adoniram Judson (1788-1850) served for twelve years before he saw his first eighteen converts to the Lord. Impressive perseverance and confidence in God's calling on him! By the time he died, he had translated the local language and established 100 churches with over 8,000 members. Even if only one person is saved, the effort is always worth the cost. Each person is of great worth to the Lord.

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart (Galatians 6:9).

The Lord said we have need of patience (Hebrews 10:36) after we have been obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Remember the principle of sowing and reaping in the Kingdom of God? If we have been obedient in sowing what the Lord gives us, we will reap the harvest in its proper season, whether realized in this life or only as heaven's rewards.

CONFIDENCE IN GOD

Faith is confidence that the Lord always means what He says, and will stand by it. God cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Numbers 23:19). Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9:23).

If our hearts do not condemn us, we will have confidence toward God (1 John 3:21). Therefore, conversing with the Lord about anything that causes trouble, distress, or unbelief is the remedy. The Lord knows us better than we know ourselves, but part of our walk with Him is for us to learn about ourselves. When we are honest before Him, our confidence in Him grows, and we can believe that we are eligible to receive from Him. He loves us and desires to pour out abundant blessings upon us. Get into position to receive with daily repentance, forgiveness, and obedience.

22 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God.

23 For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.

24 Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them" (Mark 11:22-24).

Again, faith is of the utmost importance in our walk with the Lord. The original Greek in this passage should be translated, "Have the faith *of* God"—a significant difference. We are dependent upon God for even the faith to please Him! Ephesians 2:8-10 reminds us that faith for salvation is a gift from Him. Therefore, humility is always appropriate when we are seeking God for things. If we seek the Lord for His presence and fellowship first (Matthew 6:33), we will be satisfied with His faith that brings about answers to our needs.

ABUNDANCE

Some of our rewards will be realized in our lifetime on Earth. Remember that the word for salvation in Scripture includes multiple blessings—forgiveness, love, peace, joy,

deliverance, fellowship, security, sufficiency, fulfillment, supply, righteousness, prosperity, health, healing, and many other benefits. We are challenged to find scriptures for blessings from the Lord. Ask and then thank Him for their fulfillment. Our relationship to God is not as a child is to Santa Claus but as a child to his Heavenly Father. The Lord said He would meet our needs when we exercise faith, but he never promised He would give us all our wants. He earnestly desires to bestow temporal things including the ones already mentioned.

The Lord is most pleased when we seek Him for Who He is just to be with Him. Often we do not need to ask for anything if we seek the Giver and not just the gifts.

4 Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

5 Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass (Psalm 37:4-5).

If the Lord gave us everything we ever desired, we could be destroyed, because we have all asked for things without wisdom. Notice that the Lord said to seek Him and delight in Him. When we do this, He does three things:

1. He gives us the desires that we should have in our hearts; then
2. He grants those desires that He placed there; then
3. He grants many of the righteous desires that we already have that are good for us, that we can handle, and that agree with His plans for us.

God's nature is to bless. He gave the ultimate Gift—His only begotten Son, Jesus. He is a Giver. God is love. Love gives, and seeks a recipient.

Be prepared to answer the following:

1. What is the key to bearing fruit that results in building treasure in heaven?
2. How does a believer not gain rewards or lose them?
3. What is the purpose of spiritual fire?
4. How does patience help the believer?
5. What will cause a lack of confidence toward God?
6. What is both a financial and a spiritual blessing?
7. What three things happen when a believer delights himself in the Lord?

Challenge: Identify how the principle of sowing and reaping has worked in your life. How do you think you might have lost some rewards?

Lesson Eleven
SALVATION of the HUMAN SOUL
Sanctification Process—Walking in God’s Spirit

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

THE BELIEVER’S SECURITY

Some Christian denominations teach, “once saved, always saved.” That is, they believe salvation is permanent, no matter what the subsequent behavior. Some believe they were saved when baptized as infants. Scripture does not support these beliefs, because some behaviors will disqualify acceptance into heaven, and although dedication of infants to the Lord is proper, an infant is incapable of making a rational decision to be saved,

The absolute truth and the unfathomable price Jesus paid on the Cross of Calvary completely covers every sin anyone could ever commit. The real issue—the price Jesus paid for us has to be received by faith for it to be applied—for our names to be written in the lamb’s book of life (Revelation 13:8; 21:27). Salvation requires a conscious decision to be “on His side” and live there to receive and maintain this precious gift of eternal life.

5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (1 Peter 1:5).

Continued faithfulness and submission to the Holy Spirit’s leading and God’s power will “keep” us. Remember, we are not robots, because God did not rescind humanity’s free choice. When we become Christians, we are not yet perfect in action, and we fail. However, God sees us as perfect already through the blood of Jesus—as a “done deal.” Therefore, it behooves us to stay close to Him so this perfection will always be attributed to us. The Holy Spirit protects and corrects to steer us back onto the

the holy “high way” as soon as we realize our failures. Even if we are deceived and stumble onto a path away from the Lord, He will protect us for a while. However, if we reject His correction and continue on that path willfully, He is not obligated to protect us. We might or might not lose our salvation, depending upon how far the rebellion goes, but we might forfeit rewards and shorten, or lose our lives on Earth. That would be gambling with our future.

KEY TO SECURITY

Even non-believers in Christ quote verse thirty-two of the following scripture:

31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

32 *And* you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32, my emphasis).

What are Jesus’ disciples—born-again believers—free from? Bondage to sin! The key to having the truth making us free is to live in God’s Word (verse 31). Then, we shall know the truth and be free.

What is truth? A better question—Who is truth? Many people know truth facts, but that factual knowledge does not always help. For example, people who use tobacco know its harmfulness, but that knowledge does not set them free. Notice the little emphasized word and that begins verse thirty-two. Verse thirty-one makes verse thirty-two possible. Jesus is the Word, the Way, the Truth and the Life. Knowing Jesus personally and following Him is the Door to truth. Therefore, when we know and abide-live in Him, we will

have truth, freedom from condemnation and bondage to sin.

A door is a passageway to something. The entrance to heaven requires allegiance to Jesus—the only Way (John 14:6) and the only Door to truth. Note Jesus’s words about Himself:

9 “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:9-10).

27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand (John 10:27-29).

The Lord likens us to sheep that desperately need a shepherd. Sheep are followers by nature, and they follow a good shepherd, because they trust him. The shepherd leads them to green pastures, applies ointment on their wounds, rescues them when necessary, and leads them to the fold safely (Psalm 23). If we have made Jesus Lord of our lives, we are His sheep. He is the Good Shepherd who watches over us, gives us eternal life, and guards us from anything that would try to lure us from Him.

Reminder: The twice-born are also likened to a structure that God is building on the foundation of Jesus’s works of righteousness:

6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the

confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end (Hebrews 3:6).

Read the parable of the foolish man who built his house on sand and the wise man who built his house on the rock (Matthew 7:24-27). Jesus is the Rock, the foundation (1 Corinthians 3:9-11). He is able to build our structures correctly so we will not crumble or be destroyed in a storm or earthquake (any troubles in life). We do not want an unfinished edifice, so, construction must continue on a daily basis until “the end.” Building superb character takes a lifetime of quality materials—good character built by the Word of God.

3 You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier (2 Timothy 2:3-4).

Storms-troubles come to everyone—it rains on the just and the unjust alike (Matthew 5:45). God is not a troublemaker, but He does judge and teach difficult lessons that can be painful and troubling. Getting us through difficulties with the Holy Spirit’s guidance has the inherent blessings of victory, deliverance, and greater faith in Him as a loving Savior. We serve a good God (Matthew 19:17), Who has no darkness in Him—only light and good (James 1:17).

Some troubles are from unwise personal choices and some are from Satan, the prince of the power of the air whose intent is to destroy us at every opportunity. He will try to deceive us into worrying about succumbing to negative circumstances, and then corrupt our communication by our speaking doubt and unbelief. Too often bad choices are the root of troubles. No matter what the source, the Lord has promised to never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5) and

to see us through every storm. He also said He would work everything together for our good (Romans 8:28) *when we give Him permission to work*. Gaining insight about self and more about the Lord comes when we trust Him through a storm. We would be foolish not to glean wisdom from every difficulty.

OUR DUTY

The Lord expects some effort from us in this sanctification process but heavenly rewards depend upon cooperating with the Holy Spirit. The effort is not based on self but is the decision to yield to His leading or not. If our wills are so strong in one direction, submitting to another Boss beside ourselves will be a major struggle, even when we understand it is in our best interest.

12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12).

This scripture absolutely does *not* mean that we earn our way to heaven. Before the Apostle Paul was leaving the believers in Philippi, he commended them for their obedience to the Word of God while he was with them. He exhorted them to continue in that obedience since he would not be there in person to instruct them. They were “on their own” without his support and correction from his presence following the Lord according to the Word of God they had received. However, he did promise to pray continually for them. This scripture means that, after the born again experience, we decisively continue renewing our minds in God’s Word, fellowshiping with other believers and obeying the leading of the Holy Spirit. Again, this working-out-our-salvation is really the sanctification-cleansing-maturing-the-mind process.

FAITH

Everything we receive from God is by faith. The born-again experience is by faith. Healing is by faith. Prosperity is by faith. The real question is faith in what and whom? We can trust God is faithful and His Word is true. Faith in self, another person, object, or philosophy is a shifting sand foundation unable to withstand storms.

11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end,

12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises (Hebrews 6:11-12)

23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful (Hebrews 10:23).

14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end (Hebrews 3:14).

24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief” (Mark 9:24)!

Assurance of salvation is by faith and continuing in that faith. The Holy Spirit knows our helplessness and wants us to trust and rely on Him.

Finding specific scriptures to cover our situation and seeking the Lord with those verses in our mouths are the antidotes for waning faith. He is the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2)—our assurance. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17), read and expounded by preachers, increased by hearing our own voice speaking it, and through some anointed gospel music. All those resources and more will strengthen us.

WAVERING FAITH

What if faith wavers? Be concerned:

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting (KJV: *wavering*), for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways (James 1:5-8).

The above verses refer to a disciple of Christ, the born-again believer, who is unsure about things God clearly declares in His Word are His will and that He willingly gives to those who ask. This person's faith is wavering, he is double-minded, perhaps believing he is unworthy to receive or perhaps unrecognized sin or self-condemnation is interfering. His wavering faith is in essence no faith.

God has given us *the* measure of faith (Romans 12:3) (we all start out equal) to even be saved (Ephesians 2:8-9). Our responsibility is to protect that faith, exercise and expand it. Never try to manufacture faith. New Christians easily make mistakes of asking for something that is not God's specific will for them. They "pump up" what they think is faith through zeal. Perhaps the person wants desperately to be a popular and wealthy musician, but the Lord has a different direction for his life. Music can certainly be part of that person's life, but it may not be the focus for his future. The danger is becoming bitter when the prayer is not answered. Whatever thing we hope or ask for must meet three criteria:

- agree with Scripture,
- be God's specific will for the individual,
- have confirmation from the Holy Spirit.

Everything we receive from God is by faith.

"for whatever is not from faith is sin (Romans 14:23b)." —ouch! Our merciful Lord understands our frailty and comes to our rescue when we call on Him,

6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

Everyone has moments of doubt and lack of faith. We could condemn ourselves and wallow in self-pity or decide to discuss it with the Lord. Remember: God is the author and finisher of our faith, so seeking Him is the answer. Remember the father who cried out to the Lord to help his faith.

19 And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.

20 For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God (1 John 3:19-21)

Why would our hearts condemn us? Sin condemns, whether conscious or unconscious, whether of commission or omission. Sin will prevent us from having confidence (faith) toward God. Remember, whatever is not of faith is sin" and "to him that knows to do good and does not do it to him it is sin" (James 4:17). Therefore, seeking the Lord for forgiveness restores faith and assures us that we are in God's will with the hope of eternal life, "for in Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28a)."

If we disconnect from the Lord and delay repentance, our faith and hope will continually diminish causing spiritual weakness and possible physical illness until we are restored. Quick repentance is the rescue

raft from rough seas.

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1).”

Faith is actually a *substance* in the spirit—the “currency of heaven.” The word “now” in the above scripture is not just an introductory adverb for the sentence—it means in the now and present time. The word “hope” implies something desired in the future. Faith that we have now is the substance and evidence that the desired (hoped for) thing will manifest in the future.

Be prepared to answer the following:

1. What must we do to be kept by the power of God?
2. How does one reject God’s protection?
3. What is the key to knowing truth?
4. Why does the Lord say we are like sheep?
5. Why does the Lord compare our lives with a house?
6. What are two main reasons for all the trouble we experience?
7. What should we learn through troubles?
8. What should we do if we lack faith?
9. What causes us to lose confidence in God?
10. Faith is a _____

Lesson Twelve
SALVATION of the HUMAN SOUL
Sanctification Process—Walking in God’s Spirit

STRUGGLES

CARNALITY

Honest folks will admit no one is yet “without spot or wrinkle” (Ephesians 5:27), However, if we use that as an excuse for not trying to please the Lord, we will slip into carnality. However, the good news is: those who are saved and allowing the Lord to correct them are seen already as without spot or wrinkle, completely cleansed of all sin by Jesus’s obedient substitution for our sin. Jesus became the sacrifice for our sin!

21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The word translated “carnal” in Scripture is from the Greek *sarkikos* meaning “fleshly, natural, sold as a slave, under the control of animal appetites and evil spirits, and full of depravity.”

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God (Romans 8:5-8).

To be carnally minded (human reasoning) is dangerous for the Christian. The carnal mind is enmity against (set in opposition to) God. Carnality will cause a person to operate without God’s superior wisdom and direction, to

misunderstand God’s motives and/or make terrible mistakes. A person either lives (operates) in God’s Spirit, in an evil spirit or in the human spirit—the flesh. No other option is available. People who are not born again live in the flesh and can be possessed by evil. Born-again believers can be afflicted, by evil, which is evil trying to possess.

New Christians need much re-training from “worldly” thinking. The human spirit is new and clean at the born-again moment, but the soul of man (mind, will, and emotions) is not yet 100 percent cleansed and matured—sanctified.

The salvation-sanctification process of walking in the Holy Spirit is severely hindered when operating in the flesh. Remember God gave humanity freedom of choice that must be submitted to Him on a daily basis to truly live in Him. Carnal reasoning always tries to take over and is a strong force originating from a mind that is not yet freed from worldly influences. The purpose of the born again experience followed by water baptism and baptism into the Holy Spirit is for the believer to function continually in the Spirit, to understand the Word, to overcome temptations that would cause bondage to worldly systems and to be a righteous example. We cannot please God unless we live by faith. Submitting our will to God daily, giving Him permission to correct and instruct sets us on the path to become the individuals God had in mind when He created us.

1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.

2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to

receive it, and even now you are still not able;

3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?

4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal (1 Corinthians 3:1-4)?

Notice some of the behavior described as carnal: envy, strife, and division. These Christians in Corinth were immature and unable to understand the deeper things of God. They were not walking in the Spirit.

SPIRITUAL WEAPONS

A struggle is involved in overcoming ungodly, fleshly desires and behavior. Even though we are in this human condition, we do not conduct spiritual warfare according to human methods.

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.

4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

An intense spiritual battle of good against evil persists, and must be engaged with spiritual weapons. What are these spiritual weapons? We know they are not guns, knives, and fists, or even debating skills. Debating with the enemy is futile because he will continue to accuse us of everything in our past. Reminder: God has made available some unique strategies and fail-proof weapons: the Word, the Name of Jesus, praise, worship, fasting, and all kinds of prayer. Review Ephesians 6:10-18 if necessary.

THE BATTLEFIELD

Where is the ultimate battle fought? 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 points to our imaginations (the carnal mind) as the battleground. A stronghold of the enemy is built over time when an imagination, a thought, a belief system or anything opposing God is not dismissed, rebuked or replaced with truth. Only God's power and strategies will conquer it. For example, suppose we have a fear that we might be killed or severely maimed in a car accident. We can rehearse that evil thought until fear has consumed our thought life. Psychology has proved that constant or excessive fear of an accident may cause us to make driving mistakes such as allowing distractions or making poor choices that could lead to an accident. Modern terminology calls it a "self-fulfilling prophecy." God promised He would provide divine protection by giving His angels charge over us (Psalm 91). Therefore, cast down the thought of destruction in the name of Jesus by repeatedly confessing God's specific Word about protection and thanking Him for it. His Word eventually replaces fear with faith that brings the desired results.

Fear comes from our adversary, the Devil. God can reveal an upcoming event that might cause momentary fear, but the safest place to be on Earth is in the Lord—His presence, (Psalm 91:1-16). In his presence is safety from fear, terrorism, pestilence, the enemy's traps, and accidents. This beautiful psalm is a great one to memorize for reassurance and deeper understanding of God's care for us. Therefore, fear of the future is unwarranted. Warning from the Holy Spirit of actual danger can prepare us but still without fear. Satan brings fear—faith comes from God. They are diametrically opposed. "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7). Any time we experience fear, we can be sure that Satan is trying to steal our peace, our

joy, perhaps our health or prosperity, maybe even our lives. Learn the principles of God's kingdom and consciously don the armor daily with gratitude by acknowledging what the armor pieces represent.

USELESS PHILOSOPHIES

Philosophies are human inventions and many contain paraphrases of wisdom from Bible verses. Some are twisted interpretations of true Christian doctrine, such as Unitarianism and Scientology. Some are closer to the truth than others, but all human philosophies are flawed because the foundations are not built on the Rock of Ages.

8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ (Colossians 2:8).

The philosophy undergirding all wayward systems is humanism based on a lie that human beings can be "little gods" with self-direction and self-sufficiency. The main idea of humanism is "self." Remember Satan's tactic with our ancestor, Eve, in the Garden of Eden? He told her she could be like God, knowing good and evil. The Garden of Eden story should be understood literally—an actual event—because it opens our understanding to Scripture and the reason for Jesus' suffering on the Cross. If Adam and Eve (or any of their progeny) had never introduced sin into God's beautiful creation, Jesus would never have had to die in our place.

The philosophies of the world have always opposed God's Word wholly or in part. Men who attempt to explain God or the universe in their understanding inspire philosophies, but they neglect to ask the Creator to reveal Who He is to them. The mind of man is finite (limited). The mind of God, of course, is infinite (unlimited). We cannot expect to know God unless He chooses to reveal Himself to us, which He has done in Scripture..

11 And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.

14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts (Romans 13:11-14).

This scripture advises casting off the works of darkness. How? Daily developing our relationship with Jesus in the Holy Spirit draws us to live in the Word, so that we will not plan to or accidentally fulfill ungodly fleshly desires.

GOD KNOWS AND SEES ALL

One of the major principles of God's kingdom—sowing and reaping—is always working, either for us, or against us.

7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life (Galatians 6:7-8).

God is never fooled or stymied. We can deceive ourselves, and most of us still have areas of our souls where the light of God has not yet touched. We sin knowingly and unknowingly, and we sin just because we neglect to walk in faith. The Lord promised forgiveness when we ask. He is able to soften the reaping because of His grace and mercy, *but do not count on it*. Always be prepared to reap whatever judgment has been sown. He works all things together for our good when we judge ourselves.

GOOD DOG—BAD DOG

An old Native American story found on many Internet sites illustrates astute understanding of the human internal struggle between good and evil:

A tribal elder is teaching his grandson about life. “A fight is going on inside me,” he says to the boy. “It is a terrible fight and it is between two dogs. One is evil—he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.” He continues, “The other is good—he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you—and inside every other person, too.”

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asks his grandfather, “Which dog will win?”

The chief simply replied, “The one you feed.”

Scripture clarifies these struggles:

17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish (Galatians 5:17).

The Native American parable and the above scripture superbly describe the battle between the flesh and the conscience whispering, “Do right.” The difference between this parable and the Word of God is that the parable enlightens, but the Word of God has innate transformation power. If we feed the flesh with ungodly thinking and behavior, our flesh becomes stronger than our spirit. The still, small voice of the conscience and the Holy Spirit becomes fainter. “Eating” (reading, studying, meditating) the actual spiritual food of God’s Word will strengthen us.

Remember Jesus’ said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” (Luke 4:4). He also said, “I am the Bread of Life” (John 6:35). Since He is the Word and the Bread of Life, we can “eat it” (internalize it).

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,

20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21).

The fleshly works in the above verses seem quite thorough, are clearly stated and leave no doubt. Some appear to be duplicates, but each has nuances of meanings and applications. A review of definitions is helpful:

- adultery: sexual activity with a married individual who is not the spouse
- fornication: sexual activity between unmarried persons, including self-gratification and all perversion from God’s created intent
- uncleanness: foul, dirty, morally defiled, such as pornography
- lasciviousness: lustful, lewd, lecherous, such as mentally undressing someone
- idolatry: making anything more important than God
- witchcraft: black magic, sorcery strictly forbidden such as astrology, consulting familiar spirits, sacrifice of infants and unclean animals, casting spells, necromancy—telling the future by communing with the dead (Deuteronomy 18:9-12); even rebellion against God is witchcraft (1 Samuel 15:23).

- hatred: not only violent dislike or abhorrence—the same as murder (1 John 3:15)
- variance: causing division, dissension or opposition without intent of reconciliation or correction
- emulations: imitation through jealous rivalry
- wrath: violent and resentful anger, rage, fury
- strife: heated, often violent dissension, bitter conflict, and a struggle between rivals;
- seditions: conduct or language inciting to rebellion against the authority of God
- heresies: opinions or doctrines at variance with the Word of God
- envyings: discontent and resentment aroused by thinking about another person's desirable possessions or qualities (covetousness);
- murders: no explanation needed
- drunkenness: no explanation needed
- revelries: uproarious or rebellious festivities, wild parties, orgies

Works of the flesh also include *unbelief* (Romans 14:23)! If we neglect to regularly ingest the Bread of Life (the Word), then weakness and sickness (spiritual anemia) will cause doubt and unbelief. Review John 15:1-16. Jesus explains the importance of staying connected to the Vine (Him) for a constant flow of life to and through us (the branches). Galatians 5:21 warns us of the danger and impending damage of operating in fleshly behaviors. The principles of God's kingdom will not work. God loves us so much that He makes His wisdom available in His Word to protect from destruction. He yearns for all people to be with Him and receive rewards for obedience when our lives on this planet are completed. Most of humanity is ignorant of the requirement to know Him *personally*—the reason He wants His followers to continue His ministry.

6 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death {KJV: *mortify*} the deeds of the body, you will live (Romans 8:13).

How do we put the flesh to death? Consider the flesh “crucified” with Christ (Galatians 2:20) by daily laying self on God's altar (submitting to Him), letting Him be Boss. We do not suddenly become perfect in our walk of sanctification. The problem we have about laying self on the altar is that we repeatedly crawl off. The maturing process whereby we continually submit ourselves to His correction and instruction is at His feet.

TEST OF TIME

Where is your heart?

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world (1 John 2:15-16).

30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment.

31 And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:30-31).

The above scriptures are clearly stated. Do not love the things of this world more than God. One test we can give ourselves is to take stock of how we spend our time. Do we watch TV for hours daily? Is there a hobby that consumes too much free time? Remember the Lord requires a tithe of all our income. How about tithing our time each day? Would that also please Him? A time-tithe of each day is 144 minutes (rounded up to two

and one-half hours). That tithe of time could include praying in our understanding, praying in the Spirit, Bible study, and ministering to others. If one complete time chunk is not possible due to work schedules and obligations, then divide it to fit. Examining the use of each twenty-four hours could bring revelation. The Lord does not condemn if we are unable to tithe our time but it is a worthy goal for all.

Nowhere in Scripture does the Lord say that He requires a tithe of our time. Reminder: He does say we can *redeem* the time (Ephesians 5:16). Redeem is to save something as in redeeming a coupon to save money. Redeeming time occurs when used for eternal purposes such as prayer, praise, worship, ministry and more, *making spent time eternally worthwhile*. Keeping our connection to the Lord during our busy days is often not easy but is possible. Remember: the other requirements for healthy spiritual development—fellowship with other believers, some recreation, and perhaps a hobby. The Lord will help us balance our use of time—just ask. The real issue is following the Holy Spirit's leading, deciding how much we want to please Him and how quickly and deeply we want to mature in Him.

PLEASING GOD

How do we follow the Lord's "greatest commandments"—to love the Lord first and to treat our neighbors right? The answer is easy. Ask the Lord for help, develop habits of regular study in the Word, pray "without ceasing," and learn how to conduct spiritual warfare. These are crystal-clear instructions. The Lord thoroughly understands our struggles—He overcame the same ones. God the Father sees us as perfect (made complete) in Jesus, for God "calls those things which do not exist as though they did (Romans 4:17)."

Be prepared to answer the following:

1. What kind of mind is an enemy of God?
2. Who cannot live in God's Spirit?
3. How do we overcome the flesh and live in the Spirit?
4. What is the difference between the milk and the meat of God's Word?
5. What is an enemy stronghold?
6. Where do the real spiritual battles take place? Why?
7. What is the opposite of faith?
8. Define humanism.
9. How are philosophies produced?
10. Name one of God's major principles that can work for us or against us?
11. How do we strengthen our inner self (spirit and soul) to be stronger than our flesh?
12. How does God see the born-again believer?
13. What does redeeming the time mean?
14. What is the main difference between a cultural parable and God's Word?

Lesson Thirteen
SALVATION of the HUMAN SOUL
Sanctification Process—Walking in God’s Spirit

WALKING IN DARKNESS

Darkness is a universally understood symbol for evil, sin and spiritual death. If a person walks in sin long enough, the result could be premature physical death. The doctrine “Once saved, always saved” is not true. Scripture states it is possible for a believer to turn away from God:

13 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God;” for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death (James 1:13-15).

The God-given free will allows human beings to either choose to follow the Lord or not. Scriptures confirm that if we give our hearts 100 percent to the Lord and submit ourselves to Him daily, we will not be easily tempted to draw away. Satan is a deceiver, and he will do everything in his power (greater than human resistance) to pull us away. Christians who allow the enemy’s deception to swerve them from the high, holy and narrow way into carnality will exhibit the presence of lust still lurking in the soul, opposing the Word’s cleansing power. Ignoring the conscience and the Holy Spirit’s conviction is dangerous.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we de-

ceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:6, 8).

Even though Christ’s sacrifice completely justified us, we still err because our sanctification (cleansing the soul, renewing the mind) is ongoing. We are fully saved but not yet fully sanctified. Good news! If the Lord returns before we are 100 percent sanctified, we are still accounted perfect and whole because of Jesus’ blood shed at the Cross. His blood is the cleansing agent in wiping out the unrighteous deeds in heaven’s record books (Colossians 2:14). However, we are not to stomp on this grace with muddy feet by willfully sinning, thinking we will be forgiven. Daily submission to the Lord with prayer, praise, worship, and reading of His Word is, therefore, crucial for Christians.

HATE

The only things believers are instructed to righteously hate are sin and evil (Psalm 97:10; Proverbs 8:13; Amos 5:15, and more). All other hatred will destroy us and could drag others into it.

11 But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes (1 John 2:11).

If we allow hatred toward people to grip one atom of our being, it will act as a toxin to our souls leading eventually to stumbling in darkness. Even a smidgeon of hate must be submitted to the Lord with sincere repentance and request to remove it. Hate has already been nailed to the Cross allowing freedom

from it, so hatred does not have to claim us. Jesus paid the complete price for our peace.

FROM UNBELIEF TO DECEPTION

Satan is the father of all evil, lies, sin and death. He causes doubt and unbelief by repeating on us his strategy he used against Eve by stating with a sneer, “You shall not surely die.” He insinuates there will be no retribution.

12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;

13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end (Hebrews 3:12-14).

SHIPWRECK

What happens if we let go of faith and a good conscience becomes soiled with sin?

19 having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck (1 Timothy 1:19).

3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be

spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him *Hebrews 2:3).

Sin wears alluring garments of wonder, pleasure, exhilaration, profit, and power. However, eventually those soiled garments are exposed after sin has a firm grip, and sin is revealed for the awful thing it is. By then, the person is in bondage and cannot extricate himself. If anyone walks in sin long enough, ignoring the conviction of the Holy Spirit, the heart becomes hardened

through rationalization. Everyone needs other believers alongside for exhortation and encouragement to correct the direction and to continue on the high, narrow and holy way of the Lord.

The Lord warns that we must not neglect a vital part of salvation—the sanctification process of renewing the soul in God’s Word. Neglecting or postponing sanctification is like leaving our building unfinished. An unfinished structure could be subject to weathering that would severely weaken it and eventually become unsafe, unusable and perhaps completely crumble. People who have “melt downs” are examples.

MY WAY OR THE HIGH WAY

A severe warning is coming! Weathermen are informed and adept at warning of impending violent weather. Christians should be even more skilled at detecting traps from the enemy through revelation from the Holy Spirit.

29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?
30 For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. And again, “The Lord will judge His people.”

31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10: 29-31).

Many believers are deceived into sin through popular culture, and when they realize it, they can repent and be restored into the proper relationship with the Lord. When people realize the deception but with no repentance, they are willfully continuing in sin—actually practicing sin. Remember, whatever sin is practiced will soon be entrenched into the

soul and the deceived person becomes more skilled at self-deception. Therefore, we are to practice righteousness That is possible with the Holy Spirit's assistance..

Suppose a person has a bad habit (anger, jealousy, overeating, smoking, drinking, forbidden sex, and more) that he knows is sin. Yielding to that bad habit is sinning willfully even though the person feels he has no control over it. That person knows it is sin and repents continually for the same habit. A situation like this requires the power of the Holy Spirit for deliverance. God is merciful to those who want deliverance. We have all learned sinful behavior from the environment, from families, and from what we could get away with. Bad habits belong to the un-renewed mind and passions of the body. Find God's Word that applies to your deliverance and pray that it will be fulfilled in you. Praying for another needing deliverance actually helps us. Giving mercy opens the door to receiving mercy. All things are possible to those who believe (Mathew 19:26; Mark 9:23).

REJECTING CHRIST

Scripture provides serious warnings about the possibility of getting so far out in sin that we cannot repent.

26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins (Hebrews 10:26).

4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

7 For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God;

8 but if it bears thorns and briars, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned (Hebrews 6:4-8, emphasis added).

This description of a believer who has participated in the deep things of God and yet turned away is very disturbing. The warning is to not take our salvation for granted or abuse it by sinning willfully. It is difficult to comprehend why someone would reject God, especially after knowing Him but it is possible. A gradual process of self-deception and lust is the process. This confirms why daily self-inspection is important. In the sanctification process, unrecognized areas of darkness in minds and emotions continue to lurk in the shadows that can lead us astray. Living in His presence and staying alert of the enemy's deceptions will be our safety net.

Hebrews 6:4-8 and 10:26, 29-31 call attention to the fact that the Lord expects loyalty. Therefore, if we willingly sin, we are saying that we do not value His sacrifice. Some cultures use the abbreviated word "dissed" for disrespect. Imagine "dissing" the Lord! They are ignorant and blinded by their own strong wills.

First Corinthians 6:16-17 clarifies this issue of gross disrespect and abusing salvation with the example of a believer (either gender) joining bodily to a harlot (prostitute) and becoming one flesh with the prostitute! Believers are joined in the Spirit to the Lord Jesus. Sexual impurity with a prostitute is like joining Christ to the prostitute—shocking! Implied is the inclusion of all sexual sin. The Lord will not partake of sin in any category. Therefore, we can assume that the believer who commits sin departs from the Lord and the Holy

Spirit is grieved and becomes “distant” from the believer until repentance. Sin is serious!

FEAR AND RESPECT

Why does the Lord place so much emphasis on repentance? True repentance is the basic need of all humanity, but the public may not be aware of that until someone shares the Gospel, the good news.

John the Baptist’s major message was repentance. Jesus began His ministry with messages of repentance. Without repentance and faith, we cannot please God. He is perfect, and we are not. Fellowship with Him is not possible until repentance has taken place and we have received Jesus as our perfect substitute for the punishment we deserve. God must see us through Jesus’ precious blood—the only substance that makes us holy and acceptable

These verses about walking in darkness and rejecting the Lord should produce a respect for God that Scripture calls the “fear of God.” We are not to walk in fear from our adversary—just be cautious. However, we are to fear and respect God’s power and judgment:⁵ But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him (Luke 12:5)!

31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:31).

Most of all, getting to know the Father God, the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit brings the realization that His goodness leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4). God is a Father in the perfect meaning of the word. Most earthly fathers desire to give good gifts to their children. Even more so, does our Father in heaven desire to give good gifts to those who ask (Matthew 7:7-11). We can pray a “security” prayer. Ask God to never let our hearts be hardened but always open and obedient to His commands and to give us a teachable and correctible nature. Our precious Lord

took every category of our sin on Himself, so we are saved forever if we continue in Him. Salvation is in Him only. The Lord Jesus lived the perfect life we cannot do. When we live in Him, His perfection is attributed to us.

Be prepared to answer the following:

1. The process of renewing our minds and emotions to agree with the Word of God is the _____ process.
2. How can a believer be pulled from the high and holy way?
3. Darkness is a symbol for _____, _____ and _____.
4. Why do Christians still err?
5. Name some soul toxins.
6. What happens to our hearts if we walk in sin, ignoring conviction by the Holy Spirit? How is it possible for a born-again believer to reject Christ?
7. If we sin willfully, we are stating that we do not value the _____ of Christ.
8. What does the “fear of God” mean?
9. What attribute of God leads us to repentance?

PART THREE
Lesson Fourteen

SALVATION of the HUMAN BODY—Glorification

GLORIFICATION

The indivisible spirit and soul-unique personality of human beings is eternal and will exist somewhere after death of the “earth suit”. The spirit and soul of born-again believers will immediately go to be with the Lord. They will receive a “glorified” body like Jesus’s body after His resurrection—an incorruptible body that functions with heavenly abilities. This is very good news. Unfortunately, the spirit and soul of people who have rejected Jesus as Savior and Lord are destined for hell.

THE FUTURE

Human efforts at managing the Earth are historically faulty. Although altruism is the motivation of some, power over others and efforts to control the world’s wealth has been the hallmark and the result of them all. Ideology originates from human noggins without God’s wisdom and direction.

The future of this planet and its inhabitants is prophesied in the Bible. All prophecies up to this point have been fulfilled exactly, so we have every reason to believe that prophecies for the future will also be fulfilled to the tiniest detail. Scripture explains itself when we know how to study. The Earth is destined for great trouble and disaster before it is all renewed to become stunningly beautiful.

Lesson Fourteen
SALVATION of THE HUMAN BODY
Glorification

THE FUTURE

SOLUTIONS

“Stop the world and let me off!” Are you dismayed, frustrated, astonished, and angry at the conditions and character displayed in current cultures? Does the degradation of politeness and respect worry you? Has it gone too far or is correction possible? The Bible assures us that all things are possible with God, but it also tells us that certain conditions must be met. The most important condition is national repentance. However, repentance will not occur unless people are told it is necessary. Intercessory prayer is the vehicle that can open the eyes of a nation to understand the need for repentance.

If enough Christians will agree in prayer for an awakening and a revival of God’s Word in a nation (and worldwide), then correction from the Lord can swing nations back to righteousness.

14 If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land (2 Chronicles 7:14).

If cultural lack of concern (or knowledge of the need) outweighs the intercession, a revival might not take place. The Lord always gives the choice of seeking Him or not. Just remain aware that God is able and desires to rescue people from the path to hell. Intercessory prayer must precede evangelism to be received by the masses. Will you join with other believers to pray for an awakening and revival?

What if revival does not occur? Events worldwide are lining up with the end-times

description in Matthew chapter twenty-four called the “beginning of sorrows.” If revival does is delayed, Christians can look forward to an “escape” plan found in the Bible that people refer to as the *rapture*. The hope of the rapture may cause some Christians to selfishly relax their concern about evangelism. Frustrated Christians have repeated the familiar “Beam me up, Scotty!” Even if you are not able to join an intercessory prayer group, the Lord hears all who pray and you can ask earnestly for your family, friends, neighbors, community and nation. Each born-again believer has the Holy Spirit’s power for effective and fervent prayer to “gather the harvest” of souls for the Lord.

THE RAPTURE

The rapture is too large a subject to cover adequately in this manual and will, therefore, include only basic information. The greatest controversy is about when it will take place. Another controversy is about the word rapture itself, because it is not found in the Greek text. The Latin Vulgate Bible uses the word *rapiemur* (translated from the original Greek New Testament). It means *ecstasy and overwhelming happiness*. The original Greek word is *parousia*, meaning *caught up*. The word rapture in English means *overwhelming happiness, a euphoric transcendent state, and a mystical transportation*.

The rapture is a “caught up event” in which believers will meet the Lord Jesus in the clouds. Some refer to it as “part A” of the second coming of Jesus, because He remains in the clouds when we go to meet Him in the air and does not yet set His feet on Earth. Some Bible scholars believe it will happen before the seven year tribulation pe-

riod described in Scripture, some half-way through the tribulation, and some right before the Lord descends to Earth at His second coming (“part B”) to rule and reign over all nations. Scholars in these three different “camps” choose different verses to support their beliefs. Scripture does not specify a time, but we are told we might know the “season” by paying attention to current world events and by studying the Jewish feasts.

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep [*a Jewish idiom for die-death*], but we shall all be changed—

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality (1 Corinthians 15:51-53, my insert).

The Lord will rapture His church in His timing. Guard against anyone setting a specific date on the calendar. We can know the general condition of the world as signs to look for, but Jesus warns not to follow false prophets who claim to know the date. The Christian’s obligation is obedience to His commandments through faith, watching for Him, and telling others the good news of the Gospel. Regardless of what we believe about the rapture’s timing, it would be foolish to risk missing it by gambling with sin. God will judge the person who does not judge himself. Respect

the grace of God that was made possible by the ultimate sacrifice of our Lord Jesus, the Gentile Christ and the Jewish Messiah.

Our bodies at the rapture will be changed from mortal (corruptible) to immortal (incorruptible). The incorruptible body will be a *glorified* body like Jesus’ body after His resurrection. Our bodies will no longer get sick, grow old, experience weakness, nor be limited to the material space and time we occupy now. Remember that Jesus walked through walls when He appeared to the disciples after He arose from the dead. We evidently will be able to go through walls and travel instantly or by supersonic speed without a visible method of transportation.

THE TRIBULATION

The tribulation period is described in the book of the *Revelation of Jesus Christ to John the Apostle* (the full title). Some Old Testament prophets alluded to it. Read Matthew 24:1-50, Mark 13:1-36 and Luke 21:15-36. Jesus spoke about troubles in the world for the last days, mentioning some of its serious and troubling events which He called the “beginning of sorrows” that might preclude the tribulation or signal its beginning. Scholars of “eschatology” (study of the end times) are divided about this matter also.

The Old Testament prophets call the tribulation “the day of the Lord” and “the day of the Lord’s wrath.” During this seven-year period, the Earth will experience a series of alarming judgments from God. Magnified and non-stop super troubles and disasters will come on the Earth in greater amounts and intensity than has ever happened.

36 Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (Luke 21:36).

Scripture indicates that the Lord will spare

born-again believers from going through all or the worst part of the tribulation, because this prophesied seven year period of intense suffering is the wrath of God poured out upon the unbelievers. Believers have already been judged in Christ.

7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains [KJV: *let*] will do so until He is taken out of the way.

8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (2 Thessalonians 2:7-10).

9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment (2 Peter 2:9).

10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come (1 Thessalonians 1:10).

The KJV word “let” in 2 Thessalonians 2:7 above above has changed over the centuries and now means “hinder” or “restrain.” This is an excellent example of word changes that must be updated for non-scholars. This scripture says something is hindering the mystery of iniquity from doing its full work and something will be taken out of the way, thus allowing the mystery of iniquity to charge ahead. That “something” is the Holy Spirit accompanied by the body of Christ (the church-group of saints) that has been

taking authority over iniquity wherever it is encountered. The Holy Spirit will be active in the Earth during the tribulation, because more souls will be saved, but will become martyrs. Therefore, give yourself to the Lord now if you have not already done so, because *practicing* resistance now will make it more difficult or impossible to receive the Lord then. Either immediately before or right after the Body of Christ is raptured and removed, the “Wicked” (the Antichrist) who is the working of Satan will be fully revealed. God will allow him to deceive as many as he can of those who were not raptured—left behind.

THE SECOND COMING

After the seven-year span of tribulation, the Lord will then descend from heaven with His saints—“part B” of the second coming and set His feet on Mt. Olivet (1 Thessalonians 3:13). These saints are the born-again believers who died over the centuries with those who were raptured. Together they are the kings and priests who will rule with King Jesus (Revelation 1:6; 5:10). The Lord will set up an earthly kingdom with its capital in Jerusalem for 1000 years (the millennium).

THE MILLENNIUM

The Bible provides enticing clues about the future of this old rocky planet. The 1000-year millennium will begin when Jesus judges the nations and reigns “with a rod of iron,” bringing correction to this wayward world.

15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God (Revelation 19:15)

The 1000 years of peace will see the Earth’s restoration to its Garden of Eden condition as it was at creation (Revelation 1:6; 5:10).

6 “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them.

7 The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den.

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.

10 “And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse [Jesus], Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious (Isaiah 11:6-10).

Satan and his hoard will be chained in hell for that same 1,000 years, and life on Earth will be free of evil. There will be natural human beings on Earth—those who survive the tribulation and their children to populate the Earth—who will need to be taught the Lord’s ways. All incorruptible glorified kings and priests who return with Jesus will have assignments in the new kingdom, perhaps to guide, instruct, and assist the natural human beings.

At the end of the 1,000 years, the Devil will be “loosed” from his prison in hell and will be allowed to deceive as many human beings as possible. Earth occupants during the millennium will be natural human beings who must overcome the natural self and submit to the Lord. Remember, the natural, un-renewed mind of man is an enemy of God. If they refuse to give up self-direction during this time, they will be among the victims of Satan’s final deception. There will be a rebellion and a war (Revelation 20:7-10). Of course, God will win.

FINAL JUDGMENT

After Satan’s defeat, God will resurrect the unrighteous dead and judge them with the living survivors of the tribulation and those born during the millennium at the great white throne. Anyone not found in the book of life will be thrown into hell. Satan, his angels, death and hell will be thrown into the lake of fire that burns forever. (Revelation 20:11-15).

8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Revelation 21:8).

NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

After the 1000 years, the complete defeat of evil, and the final judgment of humanity, God will create a new heaven and a new Earth (Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 21:1) lasting throughout eternity. Jesus will reign in the New Jerusalem. The Earth will be more beautiful than anyone can imagine at this point.

9 But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9).”

A New Jerusalem will descend from heaven as the capital (Revelation 3:12; 21:2), and will be so large that it could have a 1,500 mile foot print, and rise an equal distance into the air. Imagine living there!

Be prepared to answer the following:

1. What does the word “rapture” mean?
2. What is the seven-year period of God’s judgment called?

3. Why is setting a date for the rapture a big mistake?
4. At the rapture of the church (all the saints), our bodies will be changed from _____ to _____.
5. What entity is now taking authority over iniquity in the earth?
6. Who will rule and reign with Jesus for 1000 years?
7. Read Matthew chapter twenty-four and make a list of difficulties mentioned that are part of the “beginning of sorrows.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Diane Shields Spears lives in Texas with her husband, Truman, of forty years, has a B.A. in art, English and education, an M. A. in Christian counseling, and an Ed. D. in Christian education. Diane is Texas all level certified, and has been an educator off-and-on since 1964 in both public and private school settings.

Her last public assignment was with Edgewood I.S.D., San Antonio, Texas, as the Fine Arts Curriculum Specialist-Coordinator, and during her last year, Head of Visual Arts and full time instructor for the Edgewood Academy of Fine Arts.

Private educational settings include homeschools and private schools in grades five to eight core curriculum, K-8 music, and K-12 art.

Diane is now semi-retired. When her schedule allows, she spends time drawing, painting, writing curriculum, poetry and prose. She has taught adult Sunday school, children's church, and has served in various other church activities.

Diane has a background of personal achievement in the art world:

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- illustrating children's activity books
- author of several Bible based art instruction manuals.

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1. to recognize the hand of God in everything and to give Him glory;
2. to reconnect the Lord as the Supreme Artist into the process and excitement of
3. learning for both children and educators through the study and activity of art;
4. to provide resources for the Christian educator that:
 - a. help students make connections between the Creator, creativity, and personal maturity;
 - b. are organized for natural learning progression;
 - c. provide experiences for higher order thinking skills;
 - d. "stretch" academic and manipulative skills;
 - e. introduce students to famous artists and artworks incorporated into a seasonal and/or art elements/principles arrangement of art and craft production.

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