
“Oh, To Be Like Thee”



Living Day to Day as a Christian
Volume III

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Lesson One: Walking Worthy of One's Calling

Text: Ephesians 4:1

Introduction

1. Often, as Christians, our behavior is not consistent with our calling.
 - a. The New Testament commands Christians to walk worthy of their calling. (Eph. 4:1)
 - b. Calling: "The state of grace and blessedness to which ye are invited." (Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentaries*)
2. In this lesson, we:
 - a. Are going to illustrate what it means to walk lower than our calling by citing the example of Ananias.
 - b. Will see what Scripture tells us as to the reality and nature of our calling.
 - c. Will close by emphasizing how we must walk worthy of our calling.

I. The Example of Ananias (Acts 23:1-5)

- A. Ananias was the high priest before whom Paul made his defense.
 1. By Jewish law, the high priest was supposed to be holy, a man of mercy and justice.
 2. Paul did not realize Ananias was high priest because his conduct was lower than his calling.
- B. Ananias had lost, the vision of his office, his character and God so who could have guessed that he was a supposed servant of God.

II. The Nature of Our Calling

- A. The will of God in the gospel has called us from the world with its seasonal pleasures of sin and fascinations of the flesh to serve God as exalted sons and heirs.
- B. The Scriptures tell the Christian to:
 1. "See your calling." (1 Cor. 1:26)
 2. Make his calling and election sure. (2 Pet.1:10)
- C. The nature of the Christian's calling is:
 1. High (Phil. 3:14)
 2. Holy (2 Tim. 1:9)
 3. Heavenly (Heb. 3:1)
 4. According to God's purpose. (Rom. 8:28)
 5. Into the fellowship of His Son. (1 Cor. 1:9)

III. How to Walk Worthy of Our Calling

- A. The original text in its context tells us how this is done. (Eph. 4:1-3)
- B. According to the above text, we are to walk in:
 1. Lowliness—humility. (Rom. 12:3)

2. Gentleness—kindness. (Phil. 4:5)
3. Longsuffering and forbearance. (Col. 3:12-13)
4. Love—for God and others. (Col. 3:14)

C. We are to walk:

1. “Worthy of the gospel.” (Phil. 1:27)
2. “Worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him.” (Col. 1:9-10)
3. “Worthy of God.” (1 Thess. 2:12)

Conclusion

1. As a Christian, your calling is an upward one.
2. Make certain you always strive to keep the vision of your heavenward calling, its office, character and God.
3. Your behavior should never be lower than your calling.
4. You must walk worthy of the gospel, the Lord, God and your calling.

Discussion Questions

1. Why did Paul not recognize Ananias as high priest? What application can we make of that in relation to being Christians?
2. Why can the Christian’s calling be described as:
 - a. High?
 - b. Holy?
 - c. Heavenly?
 - d. According to God’s purpose?
3. What are some of the attributes of the worthy walk of the Christian? Define each.
4. How can a Christian walk worthy of:
 - a. The gospel?
 - b. The Lord?
 - c. God?
5. What are some ways in which the Christian can walk lower than his calling?

Lesson Two: Joy in the Lord

Text: Philippians 4:4

Introduction

1. No verse in the Bible permits the Christian to worry, instead he is told to rejoice. (Phil. 4:4)
2. Joy is strengthening to spiritual life while sadness and worry paralyze the soul.
3. The Christian's joy is not mere happiness because it does not depend on things or happenings around him.
 - a. He can, and is expected to, rejoice even in times of adversity. (Jas. 1:2-4)
 - b. He realizes that adversity helps him to develop character and provide spiritual growth.
4. What is it that allows the Christian to rejoice even in adversity? What are his sources of joy?

I. The Christian Has a God Whose Character He Can Always Contemplate with Pleasure

- A. There is no fickleness in God's character. (Jas. 1:17)
- B. He is holy. (1 Pet. 1:15)
- C. His is just. (Deut. 32:4)
- D. He is loving. (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8)
- E. He is merciful. (Lam. 3:22-23; 1 Pet. 1:3)
- F. He is impartial. (1 Pet. 1:17; Acts 10:34-35)
- G. He is longsuffering. (Rom. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:15)

II. The Christian Serves a God Who Cares for Him

- A. Consider the greatness of God. He is:
 1. Eternal. (Isa. 57:15)
 2. Infinite. (1 Kings 8:27)
 3. Omnipotent. (Jer. 32:17, 27)
 4. Omnipresent. (Psa. 139:7)
 5. Omniscient. (Isa. 46:10; Heb. 4:13)
 6. Creator of all. (Gen. 1:1; Neh. 9:6)
- B. God really cares for mankind. (Psa. 8:4; 1 Pet. 5:6-7; Matt. 10:29-31; Luke 12:6-7)

III. The Christian Has a Savior in Whom He Can Find Peace

- A. He realizes that without Christ he is nothing. (John 15:1-5)
- B. He knows that Jesus gave Himself as an offering for his sins. (1 Pet. 2:24; 2 Cor. 5:21)
- C. He is able to sing with joy, "Hallelujah! What a Savior!"

IV. The Christian Knows He Has a Bible Filled with Precious Promises

- A. The promises of God are exceedingly great and precious. (2 Pet. 1:2-4)

B. The promises of God include:

1. Forgiveness of sins. (Acts 2:38-39)
2. Access to and fellowship with God. (Rom. 5:1-2)
3. The intercession of Jesus. (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:25-26)
4. A way to escape from trials. (1 Cor. 10:13)
5. Eternal life. (Titus 1:2; 1 John 2:25)
6. The opportunity of prayer. (Phil. 4:6-7)

Conclusion

1. The life of the Christian is to be one of joy and peace.
2. "But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; let those also who love Your name be joyful in You." (Psa. 5:11)

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think the qualities of God listed in this lesson should elicit joy in the Christian?
2. In consideration of His greatness, why do you believe God cares so greatly for mankind?
3. Why is Jesus such a source of peace to the Christian?
4. Why can the promises of God be called exceedingly great and precious?
5. How does prayer contribute to peace in the life of the Christian?

Lesson Three: Pursuing Righteousness

Text: 2 Timothy 2:22

Introduction

1. Righteousness is the quality of being right, being in a state or condition acceptable to God and something we must do to be accepted by God. (Acts 10:34-35)
2. In order to pursue righteousness, one must flee from those things that are worldly, i.e., those things that belong to the realm of Satan
3. While commanding us to pursue righteousness, at the same time God demands that we flee the world and its allurements but He equips us to be able to flee the world by providing some sound counsel as to how we can avoid evil.

I. God's Demands in Relation to the World

- A. God expects us to be in the world but not of the world. (John 17:14-16)
- B. God expects us not to love the world. (1 John 2:15-17)
- C. God expects us to come out from among those who are worldly. (2 Cor. 6:14-18)
- D. God expects us to keep pure from the world. (1 Tim. 5:22)
- E. God expects us to be holy. (1 Pet. 1:13-16)
- F. God expects us to keep unspotted from the world. (Jas. 1:27)

II. A Strategy for Avoiding Evil

- A. The book of Proverbs contains instructions for youth so that they might live in a proper manner. (Prov. 1:1-5; 2:10-15)
- B. In Proverbs 4:20-27, Solomon reveals a strategic plan that all can employ to avoid evil.
 1. Make wisdom your life's goal. (20-22)
 2. Keep [guard] your hear with all diligence. (23)
 3. Never speak deceitfully. (24)
 4. Keep your eyes on what is good and pure. (25)
 5. Keep your feet from evil ways. (26-27)

Conclusion

1. It is vitally important for every one of us to avoid evil and pursue righteousness.
2. We must heed the instructions given by God in order to be able to accomplish that worthy goal. (Prov. 3:5-8; Phil. 2:14-15)

Discussion Questions

1. Define righteousness.
2. What are some things one must do if he is to pursue righteousness?
3. How can a Christian be in the world but not of the world?
4. What does it mean to be holy as God is holy?
5. From Proverbs 4:20-27, how is one to:
 - a. Make wisdom his life's goal?
 - b. Guard his heart with all diligence?
 - c. Never speak deceitfully?
 - d. Keep his eyes on what is good and pure?
 - e. Keep his feet from evil ways?

Lesson Four: Faith in Action

Text: Hebrews 11

Introduction

1. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is a great chapter on faith.
 - a. It defines what faith is. (1)
 - b. It shows that faith is essential to having a relationship with God. (6)
 - c. It reveals what faith does by offering numerous examples of those who were motivated by it.
2. The faith of those listed in Hebrews 11 was not passive.
 - a. It prompted them to be dedicated to God—devoted to Him and His service.
 - b. They demonstrated their faith to be real by dedicating themselves to God and His will.
3. These great examples of faith and dedication served as examples to those who were recipients of the epistle (Heb. 12:1-2) and serve the same purpose for us today.
4. In this lesson we are going to look to Jesus and to those individuals who patterned their lives after Him to see the faith and dedication they exhibited so that we might properly dedicate ourselves to the Lord and demonstrate that our faith is real.

I. The Example of Jesus

- A. Jesus came to earth for no personal gain (John 5:19, 30) but rather to do the bidding of the Father. (John 4:34; 8:29)
 1. The words He spoke were of God. (John 12:49)
 2. The works that He did were of the Father. (John 14:10)
 3. His thoughts were constantly to accomplish the purpose of the Father—man’s salvation.
- B. What we see in Jesus is supreme faith and dedication—a noble example worthy for us to follow. (1 Pet. 2:21-23)

II. The Example of the Twelve

- A. Consider the account of Peter and John before the council of the Jews. (Acts 4:18-20)
- B. Consider the account of all the apostles before the council of the Jews. (Acts 5:27-29)
- C. The apostles had only two alternatives: serve God or serve Satan.
 1. Their dedication caused them to make the right decision.
 2. Their dedication extended to the point that they were willing to die for Jesus—one by one they faced cruel, tortuous deaths.

III. The Example of Paul

- A. After his conversion, Paul lived his life with only one purpose. (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:19-20)
- B. Paul’s faith and dedication were great.
 1. He faced hunger, beatings, imprisonment, shipwreck, torture, slander, etc., but through it all his dedication never wavered.
 2. Because of his faith and dedication, he knew he would receive a reward. (2 Tim. 4:6-8)

IV. What About Us?

- A. Are we dedicated to a life of discipleship? (Luke 9:23)
- B. Are we dedicated to putting Christ first in all things? (Matt. 10:37-39)
- C. Are we dedicated to offering sacrifices to God? (1 Pet. 2:5)
- D. Are we dedicated to presenting our bodies as living sacrifices? (Rom. 12:1-2)
- E. Are we dedicated to worshiping in spirit and truth? (John 4:24)
- F. Are we dedicated to laboring in the Lord's vineyard? (Luke 9:62)
- G. Are we dedicated to keeping the unity of the Spirit? (Eph. 4:1-3)

Conclusion

1. The life of the Christian should be a life of dedication.
2. As each day passes, our faith, knowledge and dedication should be increasing.
3. A Christian who does not put his faith in action and who is not dedicated to the Lord is not a Christian at all.

Discussion Questions

1. How does Hebrews 11:
 - a. Define faith?
 - b. Show the essential nature of faith?
2. Was the faith of those mentioned in Hebrews 11 passive or active? Explain your answer.
3. What application can the Christian make of the example of Jesus while He was on earth?
4. How is the faith of the twelve apostles demonstrated in Scripture?
5. How was the apostle Paul able to maintain his faith in the face of trial, adversity and suffering?
6. Which of the questions in Roman numeral four do you feel is most difficult for you when it comes to remaining faithful? Explain your answer.

Lesson Five: Fearing the Lord

Text: Proverbs 1:7

Introduction

1. The book of Proverbs is a very useful and practical book.
2. Our text tells us that the first step on the road to handling life's challenges and pleasing God is to develop a proper fear of the Lord.

I. Fear Defined

- A. The word "fear" may denote dread, terror, alarm or fright; that which disquiets or horrifies.
 1. That is not the fear the Lord wants us to have.
 2. This type of fear is to be "cast out" of our lives. (1 John 4:18)
- B. The fear God wants us to have toward Him is reverence or awe, respect and adoration.
 1. It is closely linked with love. (Matt. 22:36-37)
 2. It is closely linked with trust. (Psa. 115:9-11)
 3. It should be displayed in worship. (Psa. 5:7)
 4. It is manifested in keeping the commandments of God. (Eccl. 12:13)
 5. It brings blessings. (Psa. 34:9)
 6. People transgress when they do not possess it. (Rom. 3:10-18)
 7. It molds one's character.
 8. To be a Christian, one must be a God-fearing individual. (1 Pet. 2:17)

II. The Beginning of Knowledge

- A. The Hebrew word translated "beginning" may mean "principal part" or "chief part."
 1. The fear of the Lord is the chief part of true knowledge.
 2. The one who has never learned to fear God, no matter what else he has learned, is an ignoramus.
- B. "Beginning" in English may also mean "starting point" or "initial step."
 1. The foundation of true knowledge is the fear of God.
 2. Knowledge that is not built on that fear is worthless.

III. Scoffing Fools

- A. The English word "fool" translates a number of different Hebrew words so it does not always have the same meaning.
- B. A "fool" may mean:
 1. Boaster or one who makes a show. (Psa. 75:4)
 2. Stupid or silly person. (Prov. 1:22, 32)
 3. Thick-headed person. (Eccl. 2:19; 10:3)
 4. Wicked person. (Prov. 17:16)

- C. The “fool” in our text is one who is evil, wicked or perverse.
1. Such is the type of fool who is mean enough to despise wisdom and instruction.
 2. He does not wish to be told about his conduct, therefore, he scorns wisdom and instruction.
 3. His love of darkness prompts him to hate the “light.” (John 3:19-21)

Conclusion: Realizing the Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Knowledge

1. Let us walk in the fear of the Lord. (Acts 9:31)
2. Let us pass the time of our stay on this earth in fear. (1 Pet. 1:17)
3. Let us perfect holiness in the fear of God. (2 Cor. 7:1)
4. Let us submit ourselves one to another in the fear of the Lord. (Eph. 5:21)

Discussion Questions

1. Define the type of fear God would have the Christian have toward Him.
2. How is proper fear of God to be manifested?
3. How is fear of the Lord the beginning of knowledge?
4. Why is the “fool” in Proverbs 1:7 rightfully called a “fool?”
5. How will having a proper fear of the Lord impact the Christian’s conduct?

Lesson Six: Glorifying the Word of God

Text: 2 Thessalonians 3:1

Introduction

1. 2 Thessalonians 3:1 encouraged the brethren at Thessalonica to pray for that which had already been accomplished with them: that the word of the Lord run swiftly and be glorified.
 - a. Run swiftly: "Have swift progress through the world." (Marvin Vincent, *Vincent's Word Studies*)
 - b. Be glorified: "Acknowledged in its true power and glory." (Vincent)
2. In this lesson we will notice a number of ways in which the saints at Thessalonica caused the word of the Lord to be glorified recognizing that we can glorify it as they did.

I. They Received It as the Word of God (1 Thess. 2:13)

- A. They regarded the word that Paul had preached to them as divine in origin just as he had claimed. (Gal. 1:11-12)
- B. This is an important point because source determines the validity of any religious teaching.
 1. If its origin is heaven, it is to be obeyed. (Matt. 21:23-27)
 2. If its origin is man, it has no authority. (Matt. 15:7-9)
- C. God today speaks exclusively through His Son. (Heb. 1:1-2) Since Jesus is now God's exclusive spokesman:
 1. He has all authority. (Matt. 28:18-20)
 2. We must listen to Him alone. (Acts 3:22-23)

II. They Heeded Its Call (2 Thess. 2:13-14)

- A. They heeded the call of the word in "much affliction." (1 Thess. 1:6)
 - Though they had to face adversity, they were willing to do so to be obedient to the word.
- B. They turned to God from idols. (1 Thess. 1:9)
 1. They had not been schooled in the way of the Lord while young.
 2. They had not practiced the Old Law.
 3. They had been unfamiliar with the teachings of the prophets.
- C. Their hearts were good and honest and when the word was planted in them, they responded to its truths.

III. They Lived By the Gospel (1 Thess. 4:1)

- A. Through gospel preaching they had learned how to live (walk) in a manner which would please God.
 1. They were abounding in this way.
 2. They had "turned" to "serve." (1 Thess. 1:9)

3. Paul had confidence that they were doing “and will do the things we command you.”

(2 Thess. 3:4)

B. The gospel reveals a pattern for proper living. (Eph. 4:1; Phil. 1:27; 1 Thess. 2:11-12)

C. Pleasing God, which glorifies Him and His word, is the aim of purposeful living. (2 Cor. 5:9)

IV. They Became Good Examples (1 Thess. 1:6-7)

A. Gospel teaching is best reinforced by gospel living.

B. Consider Matthew 5:16 and Philipians 2:14-16.

V. They Sounded Forth the Word of the Lord (1 Thess. 1:8)

A. They knew the world needed what they had—the word of God.

B. Such is God’s plan for evangelizing the world. (2 Tim. 2:2)

Conclusion

1. We can glorify the word of the Lord today in the same manner as did the saints in Thessalonica did in the first century.
2. Are you glorifying God and His word with your life?
 - a. If not, who is being glorified by it?
 - b. Why not give yourself fully to God and His word?

Discussion Questions

1. Define glorify.
2. Why is it so important to receive the teachings of the Bible as the word of God?
3. How does ones obedience to it glorify the word of God?
4. Do you believe that gospel teaching is best reinforced by gospel living? If so, why? If not, why not?
5. Describe God’s plan for evangelizing the world.

Lesson Seven: “If Your Hand Causes You to Sin”

Text: Mark 9:43-48

Introduction

1. No one in his right mind will knowingly harm his body yet there comes a time when a person will consent to allowing a doctor to remove certain parts of his body.
 - a. We recognize the principle of sacrificing the lesser good for the sake of the larger good.
 - b. When a person’s diseased members endanger the rest of the body’s life, he will consent to have them removed.
2. Jesus referred to this principle by contrasting the higher good—entrance into life—with the lower good— life in this world with both of one’s members. (Mark 9:43-48)
 - This form of overstatement is intended to emphasize the truth that is taught.
3. There are a number of lessons to be learned from this teaching by Jesus in this text.

I. There Is Both a Heaven and a Hell

A. The reality of each of these is denied.

1. Atheists do not believe in either.

- “The idea of hell was born of revenge and brutality on the one side, and cowardice on the other...I have no respect for any human being who believes in it. I have no respect for any man who preaches it...I dislike this doctrine. I hate it, I despise it, I defy this doctrine...This doctrine of hell is infamous beyond all power to express.” (R.K. Ingersoll, Agnostic)

2. Several denominations and sects teach that though there is everlasting life, there is no place of eternal torment. Consider the view of the Jehovah Witnesses:

- a. “The doctrine of a burning hell where the wicked are tortured eternally after death cannot be true...” (*Let God Be True*, 99)
- b. ““What a horrible and disgusting subject! I do not want to discuss it. I have no desire to hear anything about that infernal place. We have plenty of hell here. Please do not start on such a subject!’ In disgust so exclaimed a woman with whom one of Jehovah’s witnesses was conversing. “Do you blame this woman for expressing herself in such a way? We do not. It would be natural for her to speak so, and also for all those who have been taught by Christendom to believe the God-dishonoring doctrine of a fiery hell for tormenting conscious human souls eternally.” (*Let God be True*, 88)

B. In Mark 9, Jesus revealed that both heaven and hell exist.

- Romans 2:5-10 is a reflection of what Jesus taught in Mark 9.

C. Matthew 25:46 not only speaks of the reality of both but that the duration of each is the same.

II. Nothing in This Life Is Worth the Loss of Salvation

A. Sin, by nature, separates the sinner from God and brings, as its punishment, eternal damnation. (Isa. 59:1-2; Rom. 6:23)

B. Jesus’ point: Anything which separates us from God and our hope of salvation is not worth what it costs.

- C. For many people this is a hard lesson to learn.
1. We seem to think too much of this world.
 2. We forget that everything in the world and all its pleasures are temporal. (Heb. 11:23-25; 1 John 2:15-17)
 - Whatever enjoyment sin can give, at best it will only last a short time.
- D. Seeing that the price of sin is so exceedingly high, there are some questions we must ask.
1. "Am I willing to spend an eternity in indescribable pain for the small amount of pleasure which sin can give?"
 2. "Are a few moments of temporal pleasure worth an eternity in hell?"
 3. "What in this life is able to give me enough satisfaction to make it worthwhile to spend an eternity in hell?"

III. Sin Is Horrible

- A. The text surely shows how horrible sin really is because, in it, Jesus proposed that it would be better to lose part of one's body than to be guilty of sin.
- B. Every sin one commits endangers his soul, therefore, he must:
1. View sin the way heaven does.
 2. Do all he can to avoid being guilty of sin.

Conclusion

1. Recognizing that these things are true, how should we live?
2. Without question, we must consider the higher good as more important than the lower good.
3. Our eternal salvation must take precedence over everything else in this life.
4. Anything which gets in the way of eternal life must be put out of our way regardless of how much it pains us in this life.

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to sacrifice the lesser good for the higher good?
2. Why do you think Jesus used this method of overstatement in regards to this topic?
3. Why do you think it is difficult for people, even Christians, to forego the pleasures of this world in order to reach heaven?
4. How does Jesus' teaching in this text demonstrate the horrible nature of sin?
5. What are some practical ways that sin can be avoided?

Lesson Eight: Truly Converted

Introduction

1. The necessity of conversion is stated by Jesus in Matthew 18:3.
2. Its necessity is reiterated by the apostles. (Acts 3:19)
3. Conversion is a change brought about by the Holy Spirit working through the word producing faith, causing one to see the seriousness of sin and leading one to repentance.
4. There is more to conversion than hearing, believing, repenting, confessing and being baptized.
 - a. Matthew 18:3 is addressed to disciples.
 - b. Conversion is a continual process in which one is converted into the image of Jesus. (Col. 3:9-11)
5. "How can I know if I am truly converted?" "By their fruits you shall know them." (Matt. 7:20)
 - a. One's conversion produces a change which can be observed by God, himself and others.
 - b. In this lesson we will notice the characteristics of that change.

I. A New Creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17)

- A. There is to be a radical change as if one is recreated. (Eph. 4:20-24)
- B. God's purpose is to reshape a life which has been marred by sin into the likeness of His Son—but it does not come instantaneously. (Rom. 8:29)
- C. As long as one lives there will be a struggle between flesh and spirit. (Gal. 5:16-17)
 1. At times, "flesh" will seem to prevail.
 2. We must learn to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. (1 Pet. 2:11)

II. One's Purpose in Life Is Changed (2 Cor. 14:15)

- A. One no longer lives for himself but for the One who died for him.
- B. Conversion, then, is not an "experience" on which one relies but is an earnest desire and effort to live by faith in the One who died for him. (Gal. 2:20)
- C. Each of us should ask ourselves, "What is my purpose in life? Why are my chief objects and interests?" (Col. 3:1-4)

III. Seek the Kingdom First (Matt. 6:33)

- A. Really it is to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness first.
 1. It is seeking to be ruled by God's will. (John 14:21; 15:13-14; 1 Cor. 14:37)
 2. It is desiring to know God's righteousness—not establishing one's own. (Rom. 10:1-3)
- B. To be righteous, one must practice righteousness. (1 John 3:7-8)

IV. Delight in the Commands of the Lord (Psa. 40:8)

- A. It is to delight in:
 1. Knowing and doing the commands of the Lord.
 2. Learning, studying, hearing, teaching and doing God's will. (Psa. 119:111; 19:8)

- B. What is your attitude? Do you delight in knowing and doing His will or is it that you are not all that interested?

V. Delight in Worshiping the Lord (Psa. 122:1)

- A. Our worship is an expression of our love for the Lord.
- We should be filled with love and gratitude for what He has done for us.
- B. God is worthy of our worship. (Rev. 5:13)
- C. When we are motivated to worship only by obligation to duty, in time we will become weary.

III. Willing to Sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2)

- A. Consider the example of the sacrificial Macedonians. (2 Cor. 8:1-5)
1. First, they gave themselves to the Lord—their hearts were changed.
 2. They considered that they now belonged to the Lord along with all they owned.
- B. If I belong to the Lord in “body, soul and spirit,” all that I am and possess belongs to Him. (1 Cor. 6:19-20)

Conclusion

1. Lack of conversion is at the root of most, if not all, the problems in religion.
2. Have you been truly converted by obeying the truth of God from the heart?
3. Have you given yourself fully to Jesus Christ as not only your Savior but also your guide?
4. Are you allowing the will of God to mold you into Christ’s image?
5. Never stop the conversion process!

Discussion Questions

1. What is conversion? How is it accomplished?
2. What does it mean to be a “new creation?”
3. As a Christian, what is to be ones purpose(s) in life?
4. How is one to delight in:
 - a. The commands of the Lord?
 - b. Worshiping the Lord?
5. In what ways is a Christian to sacrifice?

Lesson Nine: Security in God

Introduction

1. We are a security-conscious people, yet, when it comes to that aspect of our lives which is most important, many times we are very insecure.
 - a. We doubt our salvation and feel very insecure in our relationship with God.
 - b. When asked, “Are you saved,” we answer, “I think so,” “I hope so,” or “I don’t know.”
2. We have many reasons to be secure in our salvation because God has given us many assurances in that we can know we have eternal life.
3. This lesson will consider some of the things that grant us genuine security that is only found in Jesus.

I. Security in Prayer

- A. Jesus taught security in the model prayer. (Matt. 6:9-13)
 1. To be secure, constantly acknowledge your absolute dependence on God.
 2. Pray concerning the needs of your soul—forgiveness, deliverance from the evil one, etc.
- B. Let us pray for God’s help in every thought, word, and deed so that all sin might be overcome and excluded from our lives.
- C. As we draw near to God in prayer, our hearts are shielded from anxiety. (Phil. 4:6-7)
- D. We are guarded by God as we ask His help each day, praising Him and giving thanks, confessing sin and asking forgiveness as needed.
- E. We should not have to live in expectation of defeat, we can be secure in the nearness of God through prayer.

II. Security in Truth

- A. It is only by the truth, God’s word, that we can know we are secure. (1 John 5:13)
- B. Consider 1 John 3:9. “Whoever has been born of God does not sin,”
 1. “Does not sin” in the Greek is “present active indicative” which could be translated “does not keep on sinning.”
 2. By the power of God’s word in us, we do not keep on sinning.
- C. The word of God instructs and strengthens us day by day. (Heb. 6:10-12; 10:26)
- D. We must have a love of truth in order to be saved. (2 Thess. 2:10)
 1. Instead of loving truth, many have turned to different gospels. (Gal. 1:6-9)
 2. There is no security in the traditions and doctrines of men. (Matt. 15:9)

III. Security in Diligence on Our Part

- A. Peter showed that assurance of salvation is found in diligence on our part. (2 Pet. 1:5-11)
 - We “will never stumble” if we do these things.
- B. Some may say that diligence or strict obedience is legalistic and makes us insecure.
 1. Peter teaches strict obedience in this text.
 2. Paul taught strict obedience or diligence. (1 Cor. 9:25; Rom. 2:7)
- C. John showed we must guard ourselves from sin. (1 John 5:18-19)

IV. Security in the Promises of God

- A. Through the promises of God we become partakers of the Divine Nature. (2 Pet. 1:4)
- B. When one obeys the gospel God has promised to wash away all his sins. (Acts 22:16)
- C. When as Christians we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive them. (1 John 1:9)
- D. God has promised to aid us in our temptations, trials and struggles. (1 Cor. 10:13)

Conclusion

1. Christians have security—assurance of salvation—through prayer, the word, their diligence and the promises of God.
2. If you are a Christian, you can know you are saved.
3. If you become a Christian, you will join the body of the saved.

Discussion Questions

1. How does the Christian have security in prayer?
2. Why should a Christian not live with a spirit of defeat?
3. How does the word of God provide security to the Christian?
4. What role does obedience have in the Christian's security?
5. What are some of the promises of God which relate to the security of His children?

Lesson Ten: Fighting the Good Fight

Text: 1 Timothy 6:12

Introduction

1. The apostle Paul was well acquainted with the Roman soldier and he often used him to illustrate the responsibility Christians have in service to the Lord.
 - He uses him in that way in 1 Timothy 6:12.
2. We are spiritual soldiers fighting a spiritual conflict. (2 Cor. 10:4-6)
3. As good soldiers, we are not to be entangled in the affairs of this world. (2 Tim. 2:3-4)
4. We are to fight the good fight of faith.

I. We Must Fight

- A. Against the devil and his angels. (Eph. 6:12)
 1. He walks about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. (1 Pet. 5:8)
 2. We must steadfastly resist him. (1 Pet. 5:9; Jas. 4:7)
- B. Against falsehood and error.
 1. We should earnestly contend for the faith. (Jude 3)
 2. We, as Paul, must be sent for the defense of the gospel. (Phil. 1:17)
- C. Against worldly lusts.
 1. Fleshly lusts war against the soul. (1 Pet. 2:11)
 2. A war goes on within the individual. (Rom. 7:23-25)
 3. If we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. (Gal. 5:16-17)

II. We Must Fight the Good Fight

- A. It is for a worthy cause
 1. It is a fight in behalf of Jesus who enlisted us in the fight. (2 Tim. 2:4)
 2. Jesus is the captain of our salvation and He gives us eternal life. (Heb. 9:15; 1 John 2:25; Jas. 1:12)
- B. It is a stand for what is right.
 1. It is a stand with the Lord in the power of His might and with His armor. (Eph. 6:13-17)
 2. We must be brave and strong standing fast for what is right. (1 Cor. 6:13)
- C. It is a stand that glorifies God.
 1. Our efforts as good soldiers should be to bring glory to God. (1 Pet. 4:10-11)
 2. To God be the glory in all things forever. (Eph. 3:20-21)

III. We Must Fight the Good Fight of Faith

- A. Faith is the motivating force behind our warfare.
 1. We "walk by faith," "live by faith," and "fight by faith." (2 Cor. 5:6-8)
 2. Paul's faith enabled him to live a life of dedicated service. (Gal. 2:20)

- B. Faith is that which gives strength and courage. (Heb. 11:11, 31-40)
- C. Through faith we gain the victory. (1 John 5:4)

IV. Lay Hold on Eternal Life

- A. It is Jesus who gives eternal life. (John 11:25-26)
 - 1. Actually, He is eternal life. (1 John 5:20)
 - 2. We can share in what He is. (Phil 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2-3)
- B. We receive eternal life by patient continuance in well-doing. (Rom 2:6-7)

Conclusion

"I am a soldier. Even death cannot destroy me. For when my commander calls me from this battlefield, He will promote me, and then allow me to rule with Him. I am a soldier in the army, and I'm marching, claiming victory. I will not give up. I will not turn around. I am a soldier, and I am heaven bound, and here I stand! Will you stand with me as a good soldier of Jesus Christ?" (Anonymous)

Discussion Questions

1. Why was the Roman soldier such a good illustration of the Christian's responsibility in the battle he is to wage?
2. What is the good fight the Christian is to wage?
3. What are some things against which the Christian is to fight?
4. Why must the Christian engage in this battle?
5. How does one "lay hold on" eternal life?"

Lesson Eleven: Essentials for Doing the Lord's Work

Introduction

1. What would you cite as the greatest problem in the church?
 - One of the greatest problems is a lack of work.
2. Many times the Lord's work is not accomplished because Christians do not possess the proper attitudes.
 - This lesson will seek to list and explain some of them.

I. A Powerful Faith

- A. If one believes nothing, he will do nothing.
 - The example of the spies sent by Moses to spy out the land. (Num. 13:17ff.; 14:11-12)
- B. With faith "all things are possible." (Matt. 17:14-21)
- C. No works = no works and, conversely, no faith = no works. (Jas. 2:14ff.)

II. A Joyful Heart

- A. Considering Philippians 4:4, Christians should not be continuously despondent and downhearted.
- B. Christians have many good things for which to be thankful.
 1. We are children of God. (1 John 3:1-3)
 2. We have all spiritual blessings. (Eph. 1:3)
 3. We will receive the crown of life. (2 Tim. 4:7-8)

III. A Continual Reliance on Prayer

- A. The prayer of the righteous avails much. (Jas. 5:16; Matt. 21:18-22)
- B. People who are not interested enough to pray are not interested enough to work.
- C. Christians know that God answers prayer (Matt. 7:7-11) and that prayer changes things.
- D. We should:
 1. Pray to the one who can change things.
 2. Pray about things that can be changed.
 3. Pray that if God does not see fit to change things that our desires may change to conform to His.
 4. Never give up our desire to make things change for the better by our prayers.

IV. A Personal Love

- A. Christians must have a love for the Lord. (John 14:23-24; cf. 1 John 5:3; 2:4)
- B. Christians must possess a love for the brethren. (Heb. 13:1; 1 John 4:20-21; Heb. 10:24-25)
 - To function collectively, there must be love and unity among brethren. (1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:1-4)
- C. Christians must show a love for the lost.
 1. They must follow the example of Jesus. (Luke 19:10)

2. They must have heaven's attitude toward them. (Luke 15:1-24)

D. If one does not have love, he will not care but then it really does not matter. (1 Cor. 13:1-3)

V. A Persistent Effort

A. Persistency of effort is the secret of success. (Luke 18:1-8)

B. An application and example.

1. Application: Noah took 120 years to build the ark.

2. The example of the apostle Paul. (Phil. 3:12-15)

C. Christians are to be living a life of persistent service. (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 15:58)

D. Christians are not to be discouraged by a lack of results.

1. The Lord judges on effort not on results.

2. We will not be condemned for a lack of results but will be for a lack of effort.

Conclusion

1. Every disciple needs to possess all five of these attitudes.

2. If the work of the Lord is going to be accomplished, it will be by those who are loving, joyful, faithful, prayerful and persistent.

3. Do you have what it takes to work for the Lord?

Discussion Questions

1. Do you agree that lack of work is a major problem among many congregations? If so, why? If not, why not?

2. Why is having a powerful faith important to doing the Lord's work?

3. What is the relationship between being joyful and doing the work of the Lord?

4. Why is prayer such an integral factor in effectively doing the Lord's work?

5. Why is loving the Lord and others an essential element in accomplishing the work of the Lord?

6. What is persistency? Why is it needed when doing the Lord's work?

Lesson Twelve: Overcoming Worldliness

Text: 1 John 2:15-17

Introduction

1. Worldliness is an ever-present problem for Christians in any age because it is difficult to live in the world but not be of the world. (John 17:11-16)
2. The Christian is to:
 - a. Put away the world since he is a new creation in Christ and all things are to become new to him. (2 Cor. 5:17)
 - b. Be unspotted from the world. (Jas. 1:27)
 - c. Be separate from the worldly. (2 Cor. 6:17-18)
3. The church at Corinth was plagued with many problems because of its worldliness. (1 Cor. 3:1-3; 5:6-7)
4. Some things to consider:
 - a. Any congregation that has problems has worldliness.
 - b. Worldliness is not just seen in what we normally think of as worldly actions but worldly attitudes are even more prevalent. (Gal. 5:19-21)

I. Worldliness as Set Forth in the New Testament

- A. Worldliness is any conduct or thought which is hostile toward God. (1 John 2:15-17; Jas. 4:4)
- B. When one of God's children engages in or longs for anything in this world which is hostile toward God, he/she is guilty of worldliness.
 1. Every individual has to make a choice such as Moses did. (Heb. 11:24-26)
 2. One who longingly looks to the world is unfit for the kingdom of God. (Luke 9:62)
- C. The Christian is to:
 1. Be able to discern good and evil—to know the difference between right and wrong, worldly and godly. (Heb. 5:12-14)
 2. Hate evil for even though he is surrounded by the world, he must be careful not to be influenced by it so that evil becomes good and good becomes evil.

II. Some Guidelines to Determine Worldliness

- A. Revelation.
 1. According to Scripture, is this obviously wrong?
 2. Consider passages which detail those things that are obviously wrong. (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Col. 3:5-9)
- B. Identity.
 1. If I do this, will it make me look worldly? (Rom. 12:1-2)
 2. If I do this, will I appear before others as a devoted Christian or a person of the world?
 3. If it will make me look worldly, then I cannot afford to do it. (Matt. 5:14-16)

C. Doubt.

1. If I do this, will it leave me with a clear conscience? (Rom. 14:23)
2. If I have doubts, if I cannot do it with a clear conscience, I better leave it alone.

D. Influence.

1. If I do this, will it likely have a weakening influence upon others?
2. If it would weaken others, I must abstain from it. (1 Cor. 10:23-33; 8:7-13; Matt. 18:6-7)

E. Control.

1. If I do this, will it produce in me an inordinate fleshly appetite?
 - a. Such an appetite is one that is unrestrained or out of control.
 - b. I am to put such appetites and desires to death. (Col. 3:5-6)
2. If I partake of this, am I likely to lose proper control of my thoughts and actions?
 - Will I act in a way that is unbecoming to a Christian?

F. Association.

1. If I do this, will it bring me under the weakening influence of evil companions? (2 Cor. 6:14-16a)
2. Evil companions corrupt. (1 Cor. 15:33)
 - You are not only known by the company you keep, you become like the company you keep.

Conclusion

1. For the local church of which you are a member to be what it ought to be, you must be what you ought to be.
2. Worldliness will be the demise of those who stay in the world but I am afraid it will also cause many of those who claim to be in Christ to be lost eternally.

Discussion Questions

1. What is worldliness? Why does it seem to be such a problem for Christians?
2. What were some of the problems the church in Corinth were experiencing because of worldliness?
3. What does it mean to be in the world but not of the world? (See John 17:11-16)
4. How is one able to discern between what is good and what is evil?
5. Define each of the following guidelines which helps one to discern between good and evil.
 - a. Revelation.
 - b. Identity.
 - c. Doubt.
 - d. Influence.
 - e. Control.
 - f. Association.

Lesson Thirteen: Am I Really a Christian?

Introduction

1. The prophet Haggai was among the first group of Jews, who under the leadership of Zerrubbabel, had returned to Jerusalem in 536 b.c. from captivity in Babylon.
 - a. At first there was great energy and interest in rebuilding the Temple.
 - b. After the altar was rebuilt and the feasts again instituted, when opposition arose the building stopped and the people gave their attention to building their own houses and to their own matters instead of to the Lord and His house.
 - c. Haggai was sent by God to get the people to properly prioritize their lives and to focus on things spiritual.
2. When studying the book of Haggai in a class setting, an interesting question was posed: "Do you believe Christians today are as concerned with God's work as with their own houses?"
 - a. This question prompted some discussion and a great deal of thought.
 - b. The key word in the question is "Christians."
3. Have you ever asked yourself: "Am I really a Christian in every sense of the word?"

I. A Christian Is a Follower of Christ

- A. One may only wear the name of Christ after submitting to the gospel for the salvation of his soul. (1 Cor. 1:10-13)
- B. On who has not or will not obey Christ has no right to wear His name. (Luke 6:46; Matt. 7:21-23)
- C. One who is not in Christ's body, the church, cannot wear His name. (1 Cor. 12:13)
- D. Just calling someone a Christian does not make them one.
- E. One must be a follower of Christ.
 1. More is involved in being a follower of Christ than merely attending or being a member of a local "Church of Christ."
 2. One must be loyal to Christ. (Luke 9:57-62)

II. A Checklist

- A. Did I obey the gospel from conviction or convenience? (Rom. 6:17)
- B. Am I willing to suffer as a Christian?
 1. A willingness to suffer shows deep conviction.
 2. The apostles rejoiced that they were worthy to suffer for Christ. (Acts 5:41)
 3. A spineless individual who will stand for nothing is far from being a Christian.
- C. Am I separated from the world in my recreation, language, literature, apparel, etc.?
 1. I am not to love the world. (1 John 2:15-17)
 2. I am to come out of the world and the worldly. (2 Cor. 6:14-18)
 3. I am to seek the things that are above and put to death those things that are on the earth. (Col. 3:1-11)
- D. Am I really devoted to the church?
 1. Do I really love the brethren? (1 Pet. 1:22; John 13:34-35)
 2. Do I attend the minimum or maximum number of services? (Heb. 10:24-25)

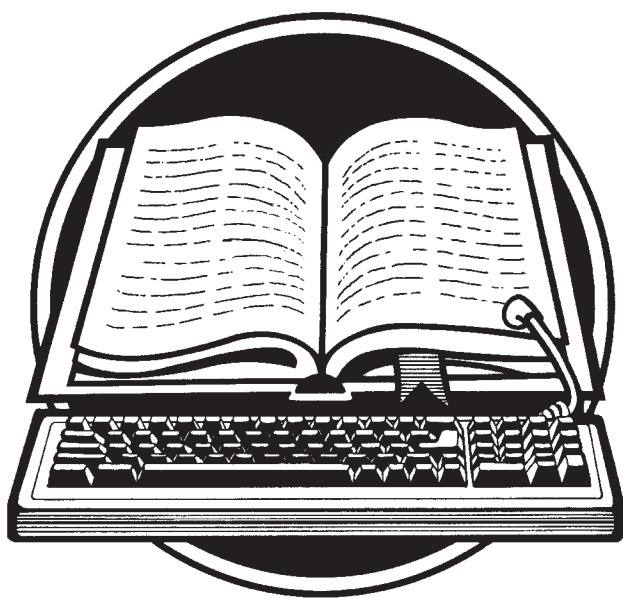
3. Do I give liberally or miserly? (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7)
 4. Am I concerned and do I try to help when my brother or sister is in need whether that need is physical, financial or spiritual?
- E. Do I appreciate strong preaching? (2 Tim. 4:1-4)
1. Am I offended when my sins are condemned?
 2. How do I react when religious error is exposed?
- F. Am I growing in the faith? (2 Pet. 3:18; 1:5-9; Gal. 5:22-23; 1 Pet. 4:16)

Conclusion

1. Looking at this lesson, how did you measure up?
2. Can you honestly say you are really a Christian?
3. If not, why not do that which is necessary to be one?

Discussion Questions

1. What was the main problem of the children of Israel in the time of Haggai? Do you think Christians today might be plagued by that same problem? Explain your answer.
2. Who is entitled to wear the name of Christ? Upon what is it contingent to keep wearing that name?
3. What is involved in being a follower, disciple, of Christ?
4. What is the difference between obeying the gospel out of conviction and obeying it out of convenience?
5. Give an honest answer to the following questions then explain why you have given that answer.
 - a. "Are you willing to suffering as a Christian?"
 - b. "Are you really separated from the world?"
 - c. "Are you devoted to the Lord and His church?"
 - d. "Do you appreciate strong preaching?"
 - e. "Are you growing in the faith?"



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