

Biblical Principles for  
*A Strong Foundation*  
Discipleship Manual



Teachers Edition

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## *Dear Disciple,*

Praise the Lord! You have answered that call to be a disciple for the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Luke 14:33 "So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple."*

This verse is all about aligning our life to the priorities of God and keeping them in order. I believe strongly that when we are discipling a person we need to also keep this in mind. Let me encourage you to consider 4 main goals when discipling a person.

**The First Goal:** Helping the person develop a close daily abiding relationship with Jesus. This is a priority to Jesus.

*John 17:20-26 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."*

Being one with Jesus means much more than just being saved and forgiven: It also means having a close intimate relationship or fellowship with Jesus as He had with His Father God here on earth. For most believers this is *caught* not just taught. What I mean by *caught* is,

- A. They observe your example through the season you are discipling them.
- B. A constant encouragement that the greatest gift we received through salvation is intimacy with Christ. This is something Jesus desires of us.
- C. Exemplifying a heart that is in love with Jesus.
- D. Share what the Lord has been speaking to you in your own devotional time and how you are communing with Jesus throughout each day; this will inspire them and create a desire to have this for themselves.
- E. Challenge them to see Jesus in every situation and circumstance they face each day. *Matt 28:20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

Helping them work out these 6 simple steps each day will assist them in developing a meaningful devotional time each day.

1. Make a time each morning to spend time with the Lord Jesus.
2. Have them use this devotional book that gives them a daily dose of God's Word.
3. Have them begin with prayer; acknowledging to God that they are setting this time to be with Him and asking God to not only reveal His truth and promises but also their desire to know Jesus and to have this closeness He prayed for.
4. As they go through each lesson, taking notes and/or answering the questions, encourage them to listen with expectancy for the Holy Spirit to bring understanding and/or instruction from God to them (This is called: Meditating on God's Word).
5. Journal: Have them get a binder or note pad to start journaling what they have learned and/or their prayers to the Lord.
6. End with a prayer:
  - A. Giving thanks to God for His love for them and His desire for us to have this closeness.
  - B. If He has revealed any sin in their life, they need to confess it: Asking God for forgiveness and for the strength to flee and change.

*1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

- C. Ask God for the grace (power) to walk righteously through the day. Ask for His wisdom and the ability to commune with Him throughout the day.

*1 Thessalonians 5:17 "pray without ceasing."*

**The Second Goal:** To teach them the foundational principles of their faith. Our first devotional book "Biblical Principles for a Strong Foundation" will give them a good solid foundation to our Christian faith. *Mathew 28:20, "teaching them to observe all things"*

**The Third Goal:** Teach them how to tend to the things God has given to them in the correct way.

To *tend* means to take care of according to its needs and purpose.

*Matthew 28:19-20 "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, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

"...Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you..." This means to be about doing or obeying God's instruction in all areas of our life. Living righteously also means correctly tending to the things God has given to us or tending to it according to His will.

The greatest gift we received at Salvation was Jesus Himself. This is why teaching them how to have a relationship with Jesus and how to tend to this gift through a daily devotional life is the priority.

It is clear through Scripture what a person's priorities are, and second would be our spouse and or family. If the person you are discipling is married and/or a parent, they need to learn how to tend to those gifts correctly. This is why I strongly recommend after finishing this devotional book, if they are married and have children, you begin to disciple them in how to be a spouse and next, how to be a parent according to God's Word. You can use the Marriage is a Ministry and Parenting is a Ministry series that comes in CD, DVD, or Workbook form. Even if this person is or was divorced, a widow or their children are grown and out of the house, remember, the end goal is to make this person a disciple of others when you are finished. No matter if they believe they did everything wrong or right, they still need to hear what the Word of God teaches so they can someday teach others.

**The Fourth Goal:** Help them become a disciple themselves.

In most cases, the person you are discipling will begin to disciple others as they grow in faith and knowledge on their own. If not, and they are genuinely working out the things they have learned, encourage them to begin to pray about who God would have them disciple.

## Family Discipleship Ministries (FDM) Guide for using the

# Biblical Principles for a Strong Foundation Manual

## Leaders Manual for the Discipleship Workbook

This discipleship manual is designed for Christian men and women desiring to disciple others in biblical principles and perspectives using the Family Discipleship Ministries “*Biblical Principles for a Strong Foundation*” workbook.

### **ABOUT THE MANUAL**

The Manual differs from the workbook by including the scriptures (New King James version) Scriptures are printed in RED

Questions in the Manual correspond with the workbook and are printed in Blue. Where necessary, answers are provided.

The right margin has space for your personal notes.

The footers contain the chapter name along with the session and page number.

### **ABOUT THE WORKBOOK**

The Workbook is available in two forms.

1) As a free download online located at [parentingministry.org](http://parentingministry.org)

2) and in printed hardcopy form by LampPost Inc. and is available also at: [parentingministry.org](http://parentingministry.org) or [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

Both workbooks contain the same material however, the page numbers are not the same.

The manual will work with either workbook. You will notice the margins of the manual will have boxes with text. This refers to the page number of the particular workbook.

For example,

LP  
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This page of the manual corresponds with the LampPost Workbook, page 7

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1

This page of the manual corresponds with the Family Discipleship Ministries Workbook, page 1

**Q** Question

» Question related

**A** Answer

**STRONG FOUNDATION DISCIPLESHIP MANUAL**  
**USE WITH LAMP POST AND FDM ONLINE WORKBOOKS**

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# Who Is Jesus Christ ~ Lesson 1

## Who is Jesus Christ?

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If you could roll back the heavens like a scroll, what do you think you would see? The Bible teaches that there are actually three heavens. The first heaven is the immediate atmosphere surrounding us. The second heaven is our solar system, filled with planets, stars and the black unknown. Far beyond lies the third heaven, which the Bible calls *Paradise*. According to the Scriptures, this is the dwelling place or the throne room of God. Several incidents are recorded in the Scriptures where the heavens opened and mortal men were given the privilege of encountering the living God. What they saw and heard altered their perspective and transformed their lives.

Most of us focus mainly on our relationships with others and our daily circumstances. We are often weighed down with the activity, challenges, difficulties and sorrows that accompany this life. Is it possible that our perspectives and our lives could be transformed if we also looked into the heavens and encountered the God who is enthroned above?

The Bible, the Word of God unveils the reality and truths about heaven and God. We learn in the Bible that Jesus Christ, the Son of God is seated on a throne in heaven at the right hand of His Father. Man maintains a variety of views on the identity of Jesus Christ. Some believe Him to be a great prophet, teacher or humanitarian who lived and died long ago, while others see Him as a mystical character from the pages of the Bible. In Matthew 16:15 Jesus Himself addressed His followers with the question, “*Who do you say that I am?*”

The goal of these lessons is to come to know Jesus Christ as He revealed Himself in the Bible and to discover how we can know Him and enter into a life changing relationship with Him.

**Q Did you know that God wants to have a personal relationship with you?**

Yes  No

**Q Do you believe that knowing Jesus, and fixing your eyes upon Him can change your life?**

Yes  No

## Day 1

### JESUS IS OUR CREATOR

**Q Turn in your Bible to the following Scriptures and briefly write out what you learn about Jesus.**

» **Colossians 1:16** *For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.*

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» **Hebrews 1:10** *And: " You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth,  
And the heavens are the work of Your hands.*

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## JESUS IS THE SUSTAINER OF OUR LIFE

Christ is not only the wise and powerful creator of all life, He also faithfully sustains His creation.

**Sustain** - *To hold together, carry, to give support or relief to.*

Q **Turn to Colossians 1:17 and write the verse below.**  
**Colossians 1:17**

*<sup>17</sup> And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.*

Q **According to Hebrews 1:3, how does Jesus hold all things together?**

**Hebrews 1:3** *<sup>3</sup> who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our<sup>[b]</sup> sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*

## JESUS IS OUR REDEEMER

Two thousand years ago Jesus left His heavenly throne and visited the earth. He who created and sustains life would redeem and become the Savior of the world.

**Redeem** - *To buy back, to liberate, to recover by payment, to ransom, to rescue, to pay the penalty of, or to purchase or save.*

# Day 2

## WHY DID MANKIND NEED A REDEEMER?

The following verses reveal what Jesus saw from His heavenly throne as He looked down upon the earth. **Look up the following verses and briefly describe what God saw and how He described mankind.**

Q

» **Genesis 6:5**

<sup>5</sup> Then the LORD<sup>al</sup> saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

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» **Exodus 32:22**

<sup>22</sup> So Aaron said, "Do not let the anger of my lord become hot. You know the people, that they are set on evil.

» **Psalms 14:2-3**

<sup>2</sup> The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God.

<sup>3</sup> They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.

» **Psalms 53:1-3**

<sup>1</sup> The fool has said in his heart "There is no God." They are corrupt, and have done abominable iniquity; There is none who does good.

<sup>2</sup> God looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. <sup>3</sup> Every one of them has turned aside; They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.

Man was hopelessly lost in sin. From the beginning mankind turned and continues to turn away from the Creator. All of the pain, suffering and sorrows of this life are attributed to man's disobedience to and independence from God.

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**Sin is...any offense against God...exalting oneself against the Creator...any disobedience of the commandments of God...putting oneself in His place as the ultimate authority in one's life.**

Q \* As you look at your life personally and the world around you, do you agree with God's assessment of man?  
 Yes  No

Q \* Do you agree that man's only hope for healing is to turn back to God?  Yes  No

**Foundation Truth: Jesus Christ is the creator and sustainer of life. He came to earth to redeem mankind.**

# Day 3

## THE CROSS OF CHRIST

**Q** How did Jesus Christ offer man redemption from his state of sin? Turn in your Bible to the Scriptures below for the answer.

» **Ephesians 1:7**

*<sup>7</sup> In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace*

» **1 Peter 1:18-19**

*<sup>18</sup> knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

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Death by crucifixion was devised by the Romans and reserved for the lowest criminals. It was a shameful and painfully slow execution. The Bible teaches that Jesus was rejected by His people, forsaken by His friends, and condemned by the religious and government leaders. He was mocked, scourged (beaten on His bare back with a leather whip, containing exposed fragments of metal), His beard was plucked out and His face was spat upon. He was then stripped naked, as the Roman guards gambled for His clothing.

Our Creator was then nailed alive to the cross, where He hung, dying for six agonizing hours. For the first three hours, as He hung on the cross, many passersby mocked, while others wept at the horror. During the final three hours the sky turned black as the holy Father, who cannot look upon sin, turned away from His Son. Jesus was forsaken by His Father, as He laid upon Him the sins of mankind. On that day, over 2,000 years ago, our sins were inserted into His death.

**Q** Read John 19:30. What were the final words that Jesus uttered from the cross?

*So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.*

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**Q** On the cross Jesus Christ finished the work of redemption. According to 2 Corinthians 5:21 what do sinners become when they surrender to Christ?

*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

At the cross all of our sins were put on Christ. At conversion, His righteousness is put on us. The Innocent paid the penalty. The guilty are set free!

**Foundation Truth:** *Because of our sin we owed God a debt that we could not pay. Jesus redeemed us and paid our debt by shedding His blood on the cross.*

## WHY DID JESUS GO TO THE CROSS?

**Q** The author of Psalm 8 was amazed that the Almighty Creator cared for man. Why would Jesus leave the splendor of heaven, become a man, and die a brutal and humiliating death for sinners? The answer is amazing, yet very simple! Look up the following verses to discover why Jesus so willingly went to the cross.

» **Romans 5:7-8**

*For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. <sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

» **John 3:16**

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

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Jesus Christ did not die on the cross in order to establish the Christian *religion*. From His heart of love Jesus paid the highest price so that man could have a *relationship* with God.

## SAVED BY GRACE

**Q** Rather than turning His anger towards rebellious man, God extended mercy and grace. Read Ephesians 2:1-9 and summarize what you learn.

» **Ephesians 2:1-9**

*And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, <sup>3</sup> among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*

*<sup>4</sup> But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup> and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is*

*the gift of God,<sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

**Grace** - God's unearned favor and love; the goodness of God to the undeserving; the forgiveness of sins granted entirely out of the goodness of God, completely apart from any merit on the part of the person forgiven.

Because God's grace is unearned and undeserved there is nothing we can do to make Him love us more and nothing we can do to make Him love us less. He loves us because He is a God of love. He chooses to love us and desires to have an intimate and personal relationship with those He freely redeemed.

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**Mercy** - *The outward manifestation of pity. It assumes need on the part of him who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of him who shows it. It is used of God, who is rich in mercy, kindness or good will toward the miserable and the afflicted and joined with a desire to help them.*

Mercy means that, though we deserved judgement God instead extended His compassion and loving-kindness to us.

**Salvation is...**  
***deliverance from the power and effects of sin...***  
***liberation from darkness and delusion...***  
***rescue from divine judgement...***  
***preservation from death.***

To gain a clearer understanding of the redeeming work of Christ, read the following verses and answer the questions.

Q **How is salvation described In Romans 6:23?** *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Q **According to Romans 10:13, who can be saved?** *For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.*

Q **Read 1 John 2:2. For whose sins did Jesus die?** *And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.*

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**Propitiate** - *To gain or regain the favor or good will of, to appease or conciliate.*

Q **Who does God desire to save? See 1 Timothy 2:4-6.** *who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.<sup>5</sup> For there is one God and one Mediator between God and*

men, the Man Christ Jesus,<sup>6</sup> who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,

Jesus Christ died for the sins of the entire human race. He desires all men to call on Him and be saved from judgement and death.

## Day 4

**Is Jesus the only way for man to be saved?**

**Q** If we lead a good life, love others or attend church regularly, won't God accept us? Read the following Scriptures and write out what you learn.

» **Acts 4:12**

*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*

» **John 14:6**

*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

» **1 John 5:12**

*He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

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God made provision for man to enter into an intimate relationship with Him. A personal relationship with God is extended to the world, but only on His terms. We must enter in by the blood that Jesus shed on the cross.

**Foundation Truth:** There is no other way for man to be saved from the penalty of sin except by the grace of God and the sacrifice of Jesus. To reject the cross of Christ is to reject the only means of salvation, thus to remain hopelessly lost and guilty before God.

### HOW DO WE RECEIVE THE GIFT OF SALVATION?

**Q** To understand how to receive God's wonderful gift of salvation, read the verses below and write out the main points on the space provided.

» **Mark 1:15**

*and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."*

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**Acts 16:30-31**

*And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"*

<sup>31</sup> *So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."*

» **Romans 10:9-10**

*And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"*

*<sup>31</sup> So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."*

**To receive Christ as your Savior, you simply need to:**

- Confess (acknowledge, agree with God) that you are a sinner.
- Repent (feel regret, be sorry) and turn from your sins.
- Ask God to forgive you.
- Invite Jesus Christ to come into your heart and be your Lord and Savior.

Pray the following prayer:

*"Lord Jesus, I am a sinner. I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for me. I open the door of my heart to You and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of my life and make me the person You want me to be. Amen"*

- Q ● **Have you believed in Jesus Christ for salvation?**  
 Yes  No

**Foundation Truth:** *God's offer of salvation is free to all who will yield to Him in faith, repent of their sins and ask Christ into their hearts.*

# Day 5

**JOY IN HEAVEN**

- Q **Let's look up into heaven once more. What takes place in heaven when one sinner surrenders his life to Christ?**

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» **Luke 15:7**

*I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.*

» **Zephaniah 3:17**

*The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing."*

» **Luke 10:20**  
*Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather<sup>[a]</sup> rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”*

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14 **Philippians 4:3**  
*And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.*

» **Malachi 3:16**  
*Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard them;  
So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name.*

# Day 6

## WALKING WITH GOD

When we surrender our lives to Christ, we enter into an exciting journey with God. Growing in our relationship with our Creator and Savior is life-changing. As we walk with God, He transforms and blesses our life. **Turn in your Bible to the following Scriptures and fill in the blanks below.**

- » **Hebrews 2:1-** God is asking me to pay close attention to what I have learned so that I do not~ *Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.*
- » **Hebrews 4:2 -** God is urging me to unite what I have learned with *For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them,<sup>1</sup> not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.*
- » **Hebrews 4:16 -** God is inviting me to draw near to His throne to receive ~ *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*
- » **Hebrews 13:5,6 -** God is promising me that He will never ~ <sup>5</sup> *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”<sup>6</sup> So we may boldly say: “The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”*

Take a few moments to reflect on what you have learned in this lesson about God’s love for you, His sacrifice for your sins and His desires to have a personal relationship with you. **Use the space provided to respond to Him.**



## Abundant Life in Jesus Christ ~ Lesson 2

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### Abundant Life in Jesus Christ

The Bible teaches that believers in Jesus Christ have been given *a new and abundant life* in Him. As we will see in this lesson, Jesus has dealt with the mistakes and failures of our past, made provisions for our present life and promises us a glorious future.

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In order to enter into His abundance life we must place our lives completely in God's hands daily, walk in fellowship with Him and abide in His Word. By nature we are independent and self-willed. We must choose daily to deny ourselves, depend on Him and seek His will. He will be faithful to complete the new work he has begun in us and bless us with all spiritual blessings.

## Day 1

### THE GARDEN OF EDEN

In the beginning, God created the earth and placed the first man and woman in the Garden of Eden, a perfect environment. The word Eden means *delight* or *pleasure*. God provided everything that Adam and Eve would need. It was His good pleasure and desire to bless them with a happy, abundant, fruitful and satisfying life. God especially wanted to have continued fellowship with them, but something went terribly wrong!

**Q** Read Genesis 2:15-17. What one prohibition did God place upon Adam and Eve? What would happen if they disobeyed?

#### **Genesis 2:15-17**

*Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. <sup>16</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; <sup>17</sup> but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

As recorded in Genesis, chapter 3, Satan entered the scene, embodied in a serpent. He came as a thief to steal, kill and destroy that which God had intended for Adam and Eve. Satan's first tactic was to tempt Eve to doubt God's goodness.

**Q** What did Satan say to Eve in Genesis 3:1?

*Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'"*



Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—<sup>13</sup> (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. <sup>14</sup> Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. <sup>15</sup> But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. <sup>16</sup> And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. <sup>17</sup> For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) <sup>18</sup> Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. <sup>19</sup> For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. <sup>20</sup> Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, <sup>21</sup> so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Transgression** - To pass beyond a boundary; to violate or break a law or command.

**Condemnation** - To be pronounced guilty or deserving punishment.

**Righteous** - Innocent, conformity to law, to be absolved or acquitted from guilt.

## Day 2

### THE BLESSINGS OF KNOWING GOD

In Lesson One we learned that the salvation is received by faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation means that we are saved or delivered from the power and effects of sin. In addition, we are born again, justified, adopted into God's family and granted eternal life.

#### BELIEVERS ARE BORN AGAIN

**Born Again** - *Renewal or spiritual rebirth.*

**Q Read John 3:1-8. What did Jesus tell Nicodemus he must do in order to enter the kingdom of God?**

*There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.<sup>2</sup> This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."*

*<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

*<sup>4</sup> 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?"*

*<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*

*<sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'<sup>8</sup> The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."*

**Q Read Ephesians 2:1-5. What does Christ do for us when He saves us by His grace (verse 5)?**

LP  
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***Ephesians 2:1-5***

*And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,<sup>2</sup> in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,<sup>3</sup> among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*

*<sup>4</sup> But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,<sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),*

*When we surrender our lives to Jesus Christ we are born of the Spirit or, born again. God's Holy Spirit comes to dwell within our hearts and gives us new life, His life. He promises that He will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). The Holy Spirit imparts to us the very nature of God.*

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Because God has given us new life it is His will that we reject anything from our past that does not edify us or glorify Him. Removing the old and imparting the new is a gradual and on-going process that God brings us through as we walk with Him.

Q Are you willing to participate with God in this process and surrender all to Him?  Yes  No

Q As you reflect on your own life, is there anything that God has revealed to you that is hindering you from fully committing your life to Him?  Yes  No Explain.

**Foundation Truth:** When we surrender our lives to Jesus Christ we are born of the Spirit and given new life.

**BELIEVERS ARE JUSTIFIED**

**Justify** - To declare righteous, to pardon and absolve from guilt and punishment.

Q In Romans 3:23-26 we read that God is, “*just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*” From verse 25, what did Jesus do with the sins we previously committed? **Romans 3:23-26**

*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, <sup>26</sup> to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

Q Rewrite the blessing given in Romans 4:7-8.  
“*Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,  
And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom  
the LORD shall not impute sin.*”

Q Read Colossians 2:13-14. What did God do with our debt of sin?

*And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, <sup>14</sup> having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross*

LP  
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**Foundation Truth:** When we surrender our lives to Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven and we are declared righteous in Christ.

# Day 3

## BELIEVERS ARE ADOPTED INTO GOD'S FAMILY

**Adopt** - *To choose, to take up, to embrace; to take as one's own what is another's.*

God not only gives us new life and forgives all of our sins, but He also adopts us into His family, making us His own children.

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**Read John 1:12 and 1 John 3:1 and write what you learn about your adoption into God's family.**



**John 1:12** *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:*

**1 John 3:1** *Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!<sup>[a]</sup> Therefore the world does not know us,<sup>[b]</sup> because it did not know Him.*



**Read Psalm 103:13. How does God look upon His children?**

*As a father pities his children,  
So the LORD pities those who fear Him.*

We have a good Heavenly Father, who is full of patience, love and kindness for us. Because He created us, He knew us before we knew Him. In fact, He knows us better than we know ourselves. The depth of His love toward us is beyond our understanding.

The Scriptures provide a clear portrait of the Father-heart of God in the story of the prodigal son. **Turn in your Bible to Luke**



**15:11-24 and answer the following questions.**

**When the son came to his senses, what did he remember about his father? (verse 17)**

<sup>17</sup> *"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!"*



**How did the son plan to approach his father? (verse 18 and 19)**

<sup>18</sup> *I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you,"* <sup>19</sup> *and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."*



**How did the father receive him? (verse 20-24)**

<sup>20</sup> "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

<sup>22</sup> "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring<sup>[a]</sup> out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup> And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; <sup>24</sup> for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.

**Q** **Read Hebrews 12:5-10. As our Heavenly Father, what will God do in our lives?** *And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: " My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; <sup>6</sup> For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives."*

<sup>7</sup> *If<sup>[b]</sup> you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? <sup>8</sup> But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. <sup>9</sup> Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? <sup>10</sup> For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.*

LP  
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**Discipline** - To teach, train, to instruct, includes chastening and correction.

God begins a new work in His adopted children to train, teach and instill the family likeness in us. We will study His training process in Lesson Three.

One of the blessings of being a child of God is that we now become heirs of all that He possesses. **Read the following**

**Q** **verses to discover the riches of our inheritance.**

» **Read Psalm 50:10-12**

*For every beast of the forest is Mine, And the cattle on a thousand hills.*

<sup>11</sup> *I know all the birds of the mountains And the wild beasts of the field are Mine. <sup>12</sup> "If I were hungry, I would not tell you; For the world is Mine, and all its fullness.*

» **Read Haggai 2:8** *'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the LORD of hosts.*

**Q** **Read 1 Peter 1:4. Where is our inheritance?**



each seed its own body.

<sup>39</sup> All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds.

<sup>40</sup> There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. <sup>41</sup> There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.

<sup>42</sup> So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. <sup>43</sup> It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. <sup>45</sup> And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being."<sup>[b]</sup> The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

<sup>46</sup> However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. <sup>47</sup> The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord<sup>[c]</sup> from heaven. <sup>48</sup> As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. <sup>49</sup> And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear<sup>[d]</sup> the image of the heavenly Man.

<sup>50</sup> Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. <sup>51</sup>

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—<sup>52</sup> 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. <sup>53</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup> So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."<sup>[e]</sup>

<sup>55</sup> "O Death, where is your sting?<sup>[f]</sup>  
O Hades, where is your victory?"<sup>[g]</sup>

<sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Because God's plan for our lives extends throughout eternity, we ought to cease striving for complete fulfillment in the things of this life. God desires to bless our lives in this world, yet absolute happiness and fulfillment will not be fully attained until we arrive

at our eternal destination in the presence of our Heavenly Father and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

***Foundation Truth:*** *When we surrender our lives to Christ, we are granted the precious gift of eternal life*

Jesus came to earth to restore mankind to the blessed condition that God originally intended. In Him we are born again to new life, granted forgiveness for our sins, adopted into God's family and given eternal life.

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## Day 5

### THE ENEMY

Satan continues to come against God's people, just as he did in the Garden of Eden, attempting to rob us of God's blessings. His tactics have not changed. Satan's weapons are temptations, deceptions (calling evil good and good evil), condemnation and lies. Read the following verses and fill in the blanks.

**Q Matthew 4:3 – Satan is -**

**Matthew 4:3** *Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."*

- He wants to ensnare us in sin as he did before the Spirit of God faithfully took up residence in our hearts.

**Q 2 Corinthians 11:3 - Satan is -**

**2 Corinthians 11:3** *But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity<sup>[a]</sup> that is in Christ.*

- He wants to seduce and deceive us, leading us astray from devotion to the Father, who has mercifully adopted us.

**Q Revelation 12:9,10 - Satan is –**

**Revelation 12:9,10** *So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. <sup>10</sup> Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.*

He wants to fill our minds with guilt and regret over past failures and mistakes, as well as hopelessness about our future.

**Q John 8:44 - Satan is**

**John 8:44** *You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*

He wants to enslave us in deception and a multitude of fears.

» **Has Satan been using any of these tactics on you?**

Yes  No **Explain:**

# Day 6

## COMBATING THE ENEMY

**Q What does the Bible instruct us to do when we are attacked by our enemy?**

» **1 Peter 5:6-9** <sup>6</sup> *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,* <sup>7</sup> *casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*

<sup>8</sup> *Be sober, be vigilant; because<sup>[a]</sup> your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.* <sup>9</sup> *Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.*

» **James 4:7-10** <sup>7</sup> *Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.* <sup>8</sup> *Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.* <sup>9</sup> *Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.* <sup>10</sup> *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

**Q Satan does not flee because he fears us, but because He fears our God. Turn in your Bible to James 2:19. What do demons do in God's presence?** <sup>19</sup> *You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!*

Satan is not equal in power to God. He is a created being who will ultimately and finally be destroyed by God. **What two titles**

**Q are ascribed to God in Psalm 91:1?**

<sup>1</sup> *He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

In the Old Testament we learn of Satan’s attack upon Job, a righteous man. Though Satan brought destruction into his life, who was in control of Job, his circumstances and

**Q** Satan? Read Job 1:7-12 and 2:1-6 7 And the LORD said to Satan, “From where do you come?”

So Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.”

8 Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?”

9 So Satan answered the LORD and said, “Does Job fear God for nothing? 10 Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!”

12 And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person.”

So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

» **Job 2:1-6** 1 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. 2 And the LORD said to Satan, “From where do you come?”

Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.”

3 Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause.”

4 So Satan answered the LORD and said, “Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. 5 But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!”

6 And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life.”

**Q** According to Luke 22:31-34 who did Satan have to go through before he could assault Peter?

<sup>31</sup> And the Lord said,<sup>[a]</sup> “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. <sup>32</sup> But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.”

<sup>33</sup> But he said to Him, “Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.”

<sup>34</sup> Then He said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.”

Jesus said His followers are like sheep, and He is their shepherd. Like sheep we are defenseless against thieves and predators if

we wander from our shepherd's side. God calls us to draw near to Him, not only for protection from our enemies, but also because He longs to have fellowship with us.

***Foundation Truth:*** Though we have a powerful enemy we have an all-powerful God who exercises absolute authority over Satan and guarantees our safety as we put our trust in Him.

## FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

**Fellowship** - *Companionship and company; friendly relationship; a union of peers or friends; the habitual sharing, the constant giving to, and receiving from each other.*

God desires an intimate relationship with us. He saved us from our fallen condition and delivered us from our enemy so that we might have a relationship and fellowship with Him. We participate in this relationship in the following ways:

- \* **PRAYER** – Prayer is more than simply asking God to do something for us or to give us something. The following acronym (ACTS) is an easy way to remember the different aspects of prayer.
  - **Adoration** – worshiping and praising God for who He is; remembering His goodness, loving kindness, mercy, patience, etc. (**Deuteronomy 6:13**).
  - **Confession** – admitting our faults and failures to Him and receiving His forgiveness (**1 John 1:9**).
  - **Thanksgiving** – recalling His goodness and the blessings He has bestowed upon us (**Hebrews 13:15**).
  - **Supplication** – placing all of our needs before Him, fully trusting Him to respond and meet our needs according to His will (**Philippians 4:6-7**).
- **READING GOD'S WORD** – We come to know God more intimately, understand His ways, and align ourselves with His plans through reading, meditating upon and obeying His Word (**Psalms 119:105**).
- **CHURCH ATTENDANCE** – Consistently receiving the spoken word from the pastor and worshipping with the congregation helps us grow and provides opportunities to serve (**Hebrews 10:24-25**).



# The Fatherhood of God ~ Lesson 3

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## Day 1

### OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

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Among many people the term *father* does not evoke fond feelings. Instead, they have known only harsh fathers, who have been unable or unwilling to parent them as God intended. Other fathers, rather than being harsh, are weak or passive and have disregarded the love and training that God's Word says a father should give his children. Many simply neglect the responsibility altogether and abandon their families.

The Bible assures us that through Christ and His redeeming work, our creator adopts us and becomes our Father. As we will see in this lesson, our Heavenly Father is a perfect parent, faithful in His love and care, skillful to train, wise to guide, always available and committed to raise us up to maturity.

It has often been said that "we are all God's children." However, the Bible clearly teaches that though we are all God's *creation*, the Fatherhood of God is not universal. **Read the following Scriptures and note what you learn about who has the right to call God 'Father.'**

- » *John 1:12* <sup>12</sup> But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:
- » *Galatians 3:26* <sup>26</sup> For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.
- » *Ephesians 2:18-19* <sup>18</sup> For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. <sup>19</sup> Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

**Foundation Truth:** Only those who have surrendered their lives to Christ can rightly address God as their Father. God sent His Son to redeem us, forgive our sins and adopt us as His own children.

## Day 2

### A FATHER WHO KNOWS

Because our Heavenly Father is also our creator, He absolutely knows and understands

us uniquely and individually. **In the following Bible verses, you will learn how intimately acquainted God is with you personally.**

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» *Psalm 22:9-10* <sup>9</sup> But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me trust while on My mother's breasts. <sup>10</sup> I was cast upon You from birth. From My mother's womb You have been My God. *Psalm 71:6* <sup>6</sup> By You I have been upheld from birth; You are He who took me out of my mother's womb. My praise shall be continually of You.

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» *Psalm 103:13-14* <sup>13</sup> As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him. <sup>14</sup> For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. *Psalm 139:1-18* <sup>1</sup> O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. <sup>3</sup> You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. <sup>4</sup> For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether. You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it. <sup>7</sup> Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. <sup>11</sup> If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall<sup>[a]</sup> on me," Even the night shall be light about me; <sup>12</sup> Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You. <sup>13</sup> For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; <sup>14</sup> Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well <sup>15</sup> My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. <sup>16</sup> Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them. <sup>17</sup> How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! <sup>18</sup> If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.

God not only knew you before you were born, He chose your parents and uniquely formed you in your mother's womb. He has ordained circumstances in your life, whether joyous or difficult, to bring you to a place where you would seek Him. Though you did not know or acknowledge Him, He has watched over you and patiently waited for you to seek Him.

## Day 3

### GOD'S TRAINING METHODS

Lesson 3 ~ The Fatherhood of God

As a loving Father, God desires His children to grow into strong, healthy, mature adulthood. He wants us to share His attitudes, His view of life and to bear the *family image*, to be like Christ. To accomplish this, the Bible teaches that God disciplines us.

**Discipline** - *Training intended to elicit a specified pattern of behavior or character, to educate, to punish.*

**Q** Read Hebrews 12:5-11 and answer the following questions:  
*And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:*

*“ My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD,  
Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;  
6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens,  
And scourges every son whom He receives.”*

*7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

**Q** Who does the Lord discipline? (v. 6) *For whom the LORD loves*

**Q** What does this discipline prove? (v. 8) *8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons*

**Q** Why does He discipline us? (v. 10) *10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.*

**Q** What result does discipline yield? *11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

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Before we came to Christ we were *spiritual orphans*. We were self-centered and in the habit of indulging in sinful behavior. After we accepted Christ, God patiently and persistently set about to purge us of the thoughts, attitudes and actions that were not pleasing to Him, and replacing them with the *“peaceful fruit of righteousness.”*

Read Galatians 5:22-23 and list the *fruit* that God will produce in our lives.

Q

*22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*

As a wise Father, God has effective methods for training His children. He knows each of us intimately and understands our uniqueness. We should take great comfort in the knowledge that, though others may not understand us, our loving Heavenly Father does.

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God understands our temperament – the weaknesses, strengths and limitations of our personality. He also knows the temptations that accost us. God knows what gives us great joy and what brings us deep sorrow. He wisely takes all this into consideration as He works out His will in our individual lives.

It is true that God loves us just as we are, but it is equally true that, because He loves us, He will not leave us the way we are. He longs for us to share His holiness and to be transformed into the likeness of His Son!

*“But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory...”*

*-2 Corinthians 3:18*

**Transform** - *To change a thing into another or from one form to another, metamorphose.*

Q • Are you willing to yield fully to the Heavenly Father in this process of transformation?  Yes  No

## Day 4

### GOD’S TOOLS FOR TRANSFORMATION

As a potter has special tools to shape and mold a piece of clay into a beautiful vessel, God, like a master potter, has tools to shape and mold our lives. If we will yield to His gentle and firm touch in our lives, He will reshape us into individuals of inner strength and beauty. Let’s look at the three primary tools God uses in His transformation process; the Bible, our trials and difficulties, and other people.

#### • THE BIBLE

We learn the foundational truths of our faith and grow in that faith from daily reading of the Word of God. **Read the verses below and fill in the blanks.**

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Psalm 119:105 - *God's Word is a 105 Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.*

- » Hebrews 4:12 - *The Word of God is 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.*
- » Jeremiah 23:29 - *God's Word is like " Is not My word like a fire?" says the LORD, And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?*
- » Job 23:12 - *God's Word is to be treasured more than I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth More than my necessary food.*
- » Ephesians 5:26 - *God's Word sanctifies and that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,*
- » 1 Peter 2:2 - *God's Word as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby*

Q What truths have you learned from God's Word that have influenced the way you feel, think, or desire to live your life?

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As we read the Word our goal should not be to simply acquire Bible knowledge. Rather, our pursuit should and must be to know Jesus more intimately.

Q Turn in your Bible to John 5:38-40. Why did Jesus reprove the religious Jews? *But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. <sup>39</sup> You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. <sup>40</sup> But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life*

**Foundation Truth: The Word of God is a powerful tool that God will use to transform our lives.**

## • OUR TRIALS AND the DIFFICULTIES OF LIFE

Our Heavenly Father uses our difficulties to teach us, to mature our faith in Him and to bring us to a place of spiritual abundance. In the midst of our trials, we must rest in His grace, love and tender care.

Lesson 3 ~ The Fatherhood of God

We need to have God's perspective or we will become broken or hardened by our trials.

Q What does God's Word say about our trials and difficult circumstances?

» James 1:2-4 *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,<sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

» 1 Peter 1:6-7 *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,<sup>7</sup> that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,*

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» Psalm 66:10-12 *For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined. You brought us into the net; You laid affliction on our backs.  
<sup>12</sup> You have caused men to ride over our heads; We went through fire and through water; But You brought us out to rich fulfillment.*

Q Recall a situation in your life, presently or in the past when the Lord used difficult or painful circumstances to bring you closer to Him.  
Personal Answer

***Foundation Truth: If we are willing, God will use our trials to transform us into the image of His Son.***

### • OTHER PEOPLE

God places other people in our lives to counsel and encourage us, or, through disappointing experiences, to teach us to put our confidence in Him alone. Q What do you learn about others in the following verses?

» Proverbs 27:17 *As iron sharpens iron,  
So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.*

» Romans 1:11-12 *For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established—<sup>12</sup> that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.*

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Psalm 41:9-12 *Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted,  
Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me.  
<sup>10</sup> But You, O LORD, be merciful to me, and raise me up,*

That I may repay them.

<sup>11</sup> By this I know that You are well pleased with me, Because my enemy does not triumph over me <sup>12</sup> As for me, You uphold me in my integrity,

And set me before Your face forever.

» 2 Timothy 4:16-17 At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.<sup>17</sup> But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

Q What people has God put in your life to encourage you in your faith, or challenges you to be patient and loving?

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## Day 5

### THE PROMISES OF GOD'S TENDER CARE

Our Heavenly Father is ready to assume full responsibility for the life wholly yielded and devoted to Him. We are surrounded by His watchful care. **Read the following verses and fill in the blanks.**

Q

Psalm 91:4 - Above us are His He shall cover you with His feathers,  
And under His wings you shall take refuge;  
His truth *shall be your shield and buckler.*

» Deuteronomy 33:27 - Under us are His The eternal God *is your* refuge,  
And underneath *are the everlasting arms;*  
He will thrust out the enemy from before you,  
And will say, 'Destroy!'

» Psalm 34:7 - We are surrounded by The eternal God *is your* refuge,  
And underneath *are the everlasting arms;*  
He will thrust out the enemy from before you,  
And will say, 'Destroy!'

» Philippians 4:6-7 - Our hearts and minds are guarded by Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; <sup>7</sup> and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

In the following section, we will immerse ourselves in the truths of our Heavenly Father's promises to care for us.

### • THE PROMISE OF GOD'S PRESENCE

**Q** Read the following Scriptures and briefly write what you learn about God's constant nearness to us.

Psalm 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil;  
For You *are* with me;  
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

» Psalm 121:1-5 I will lift up my eyes to the hills— From whence comes my help?

<sup>2</sup> My help *comes* from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth.

<sup>3</sup> He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber.

<sup>4</sup> Behold, He who keeps Israel Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD your keeper; The LORD *is* your shade at your right hand.

» Psalm 139:7-10 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence <sup>8</sup> If I ascend into heaven, You *are* there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You *are there*. <sup>9</sup> If I take the wings of the morning,

And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, <sup>10</sup> Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.

» Hebrews 13:5-6 *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>6</sup> So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"*

As God's children, we should never feel alone. Our Father is ever watchful and always near.

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***Foundation Truth: In His tender care, our Heavenly Father is always with us.***

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• **THE PROMISE OF GOD'S PROVISION**

**Q** What do the following verses teach you about trusting God as your provider?

» Matthew 6:25-26 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

» Romans 8:32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

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

In Matthew 6:9 how did Jesus instruct His disciples to address God in prayer?

In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

» From Matthew 7:7-11, what will the Father will give to those who ask? “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. <sup>9</sup> Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? <sup>10</sup> Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? <sup>11</sup> If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

God knows what is best for us and gives only good gifts to His children. Out of His love and wisdom He often withholds from us what we ask, and instead He gives what He knows is best for us. These are opportunities for us to trust in His wisdom and goodness, though we don't always understand His ways!

Q Read Matthew 6:24-34. If God cares for the birds, whose Father He is not, we must believe that He will certainly take care of us, His beloved children. (Note in verse 32, the gentiles refer to those that do not know God.)

Q Do you currently have worries, concerns or cares?  Yes  No

Explain.

Q According to Matthew 6:33, what is the remedy for worrying? But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

We must make seeking God and our personal relationship with Him our first priority. As we develop the habit of committing everything to Him, and trusting Him in all things, He will enable us to overcome the sinful habit of worrying!

**Foundation Truth:** In His tender care, our Heavenly Father will meet all of our needs.

• **THE PROMISE OF GOD’S PROTECTION**

The Bible contains 365 commands to fear not. As children of the Almighty God, we can rest secure in Him.

**Q** Read the following Scriptures and write out what you learn about God’s protection of you.

- » 1 Peter 1:5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
- » Psalm 91:11,12 For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways. <sup>12</sup> In *their* hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.
- » Psalm 121:5-8 The LORD is your keeper; The LORD is your shade at your right hand. <sup>6</sup> The sun shall not strike you by day, Nor the moon by night. <sup>7</sup> The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. <sup>8</sup> The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in From this time forth, and even forevermore.

**Foundation Truth:** In His tender care, our Heavenly Father guards and keeps us.

**Day 6**  
**A FATHER WHO CARES**

Our Heavenly Father goes to great lengths in His Word to assure us of His discipline, protection and provision. We must respond in faith and entrust our lives and all of our concerns into His keeping.

While God’s glory, power and sovereignty are demonstrated in His creation, the depth of His divine character is demonstrated in His Fatherhood. God’s love, patience, kindness, mercy, and goodness

are revealed in His relationship with us, His children! **Look up the following verses in your Bible and write out what you learn about the character of our Heavenly Father.**

- » 1 John 3:1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!<sup>[a]</sup> Therefore the world does not know us,<sup>[b]</sup> because it did not know Him.
- » 2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us,<sup>[a]</sup> not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.
- »

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Ephesians 1:5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will

- » 2 Corinthians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort
- » 1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

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## Day 7

Q Go back through Lesson Three and review the six **Foundation Truths** that you learned. Rewrite these truths below.

**Foundation Truth:** Only those who have surrendered their lives to Christ can rightly address God as their Father. God sent His Son to redeem us, forgive our sins and adopt us as His own children.

**Foundation Truth:** The Word of God is a powerful tool that God will use to transform our lives.

**Foundation Truth:** If we are willing, God will use our trials to transform us into the image of His Son.

**Foundation Truth:** In His tender care, our Heavenly Father is always with us.

**Foundation Truth:** In His tender care, our Heavenly Father will meet all of our needs.

**Foundation Truth:** In His tender care, our Heavenly Father guards and keeps us.



## The Holy Spirit ~ Lesson 4

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### The Holy Spirit

In this lesson, we will study the biblical teaching on the Holy Spirit. This study is intended to clarify who the Holy Spirit is and give understanding of the wonderful work He desires to do in the lives of every child of God.

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## Day 1

### WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Unfortunately, there is much confusion on the subject of the Holy Spirit. Many believe that the Holy Spirit is an *influence* emanating from God or a *power* that God imparts to the Christian. However, the Bible clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit, in union with the Father and the Son form the Trinity of God. The Holy Spirit is equal in power and glory with the Father and the Son. The Father and the Son operate through the Holy Spirit.

Like the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is eternal, omnipresent (in all places at all times), omnipotent (all-powerful) and omniscient (all-knowing). **Q** Read the following Scriptures that describe the Holy Spirit and fill in the blanks.

- » Hebrews 9:14 - The Holy Spirit is how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?
- » Psalm 139:7-10 - The Holy Spirit is Where can I go from Your Spirit?
  - Or where can I flee from Your presence?
  - <sup>8</sup> If I ascend into heaven, You are there;
  - If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.
  - <sup>9</sup> If I take the wings of the morning,
  - And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
  - <sup>10</sup> Even there Your hand shall lead me,
  - And Your right hand shall hold me.
- » Luke 1:35 - The Holy Spirit is And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.
- » 1 Corinthians 2:10-11 - The Holy Spirit is But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. <sup>11</sup> For what man knows the things of a man

except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God

The Holy Spirit possesses defined personality traits. People often refer to the Holy Spirit as 'It,' but as you will see from the following Scriptures, the Holy Spirit is a divine person.

- He has a will - 1 Corinthians 12:11
- He loves - Romans 15:30
- He grieves - Ephesians 4:30
- He can be lied to - Acts 5:3
- He jealously desires us - James 4:5
- He can be quenched or suppressed - 1 Thessalonians 5:19
- He is insulted by man's rejection of the Savior - Hebrews 10:29
- He speaks - 1 Timothy 4:1
- He is the truth - 1 John 5:6

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***Foundation Truth:*** *The Holy Spirit is not a power or a mere influence, but a divine Person. He is God.*

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## Day 2

### THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES NEW BIRTH

Jesus Christ wanted His followers to understand the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. Turn in your Bible to John 3 and read His words in verses 1-8.

**Q** What did Jesus tell Nicodemus must occur in order to see the Kingdom of God? You must be born of the Spirit

Jesus taught that every man and woman must experience two births in order to go to heaven; a *physical* birth (water) and a *spiritual* birth (by the Spirit).

To help Nicodemus understand the Holy Spirit, Jesus likened Him and His work to the wind in verse 8.

- The wind blows where it wills, likewise the Spirit is sovereign and free, and no man controls Him. He works as *He* wills.

- The wind is invisible, yet powerful. You cannot see the wind, but its effects are visible. In like manner, the Holy Spirit is invisible, but evidence of His power is visible in individual's lives and situations.
- Finally, as air is life giving, so also the Holy Spirit gives life.

**Q** Turn in your Bible to the following verses and write what you learn about the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

- » John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life.
- » Titus 3:5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,
- » 1 Corinthians 6:19 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?

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### THE HOLY SPIRIT TRANSFORMS OUR LIFE

The Holy Spirit, invisible, yet powerful, comes to dwell in the hearts of all believers, imparting to us new life. We cannot see Him, yet the effects of His presence are visible in our lives. It is His work to transform each believer to the image of Christ. **Read the following Scriptures about the Spirit and write out what you learn.**

- » 2 Peter 1:3-4 as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, <sup>4</sup> by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.

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- » Ezekiel 36:26-27 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*.
- » 1 Corinthians 2:12-16 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. <sup>13</sup> These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. <sup>14</sup> But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. <sup>15</sup> But he who is

spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one.  
<sup>16</sup> For “*who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?*”<sup>[b]</sup> But we have the mind of Christ.

One aspect of the Good News of the Christian faith is that God is not asking us to reform or improve *ourselves*. By the indwelling Holy Spirit, God will conform and change us *from the inside out!* We participate in this process in transformation as we daily seek intimacy with Him. As we draw near to God in devotion and quiet time He gives us His heart, mind and His very nature. We must daily,

**Surrender** - *to undergo capture, to submit to the power of another.*

**Cooperate** - *to work together toward a common end.*

**Yield** - *give in, relinquish.*

**Submit** – *obey.*

**Foundation Truth:** *The Holy Spirit comes to dwell within each believer, to impart new life and to transform us into the image of Christ.*

## Day 3

### THE HOLY SPIRIT IS OUR HELPER

Hours before Jesus was arrested and crucified, He took His disciples to the upper room to partake of the last supper with Him, and to teach them. This teaching is contained in chapters 13-17 of the Gospel of John. Among many other topics of importance to Jesus, He taught His followers about the Holy Spirit, whom He would send to them after He ascended to heaven. **Read the following references in John and list what you learn about the Holy Spirit, our Helper.**



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- » **John 14:16-27** And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—<sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

<sup>19</sup> “A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. <sup>20</sup> At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup> He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

<sup>22</sup> Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?”

<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will

keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. <sup>24</sup> He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

<sup>25</sup> "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you.

<sup>26</sup> But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. <sup>27</sup> Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

» **John 15:26** "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.

» **John 16:7-15** Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. <sup>8</sup> And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: <sup>9</sup> of sin, because they do not believe in Me; <sup>10</sup> of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; <sup>11</sup> of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

<sup>12</sup> "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. <sup>13</sup> However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. <sup>14</sup> He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. <sup>15</sup> All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you

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Jesus told the disciples that the Holy Spirit would be *another* Helper, who would be *with* them and *in* them.

**Q** Read the Scriptures below and write out what the Holy Spirit does to help us.

» **Romans 8:26-27, Jude 20 - The Holy Spirit helps us** 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<sup>[a]</sup> with groanings which cannot be uttered. <sup>27</sup> 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*. **Jude 20** But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit

» **Romans 8:14, John 16:13 - The Holy Spirit is our** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. **John 16:13** However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but

whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

- » 1 John 2:27, John 14:26 - The Holy Spirit is our But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will<sup>ab</sup> abide in Him. John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.
- » Luke 12:11-12 - The Holy Spirit teaches us “Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. <sup>12</sup> For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”

## Day 4

### THE FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT

As we yield to the Holy Spirit He fills us. In Ephesians 5:18 this filling is compared to being intoxicated. As an individual consumes wine, they become influenced, affected, and even controlled by the alcohol. In a similar manner, as we surrender to the Holy Spirit He is able to influence, affect, and control us. As He purifies our thoughts, motives and desires, He is able also to transform our actions and behavior.

**Q** Turn in your Bible to John 7:37-39. In verse 37, what two things does Jesus ask the spiritually thirsty to do? 37 On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” 39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

**Q** From verse 38, what will then flow from their lives? 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”

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As we acknowledge our need (thirst), believe in Jesus and receive (drink) from Him, He will fill us to overflowing. His life will fill and overflow in us!

**Q** According to Jeremiah 2:13, what two evils did Israel commit? 13 “ For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me,

the fountain of living waters,  
And hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.

Rather than trusting God to fill them and meet their needs, the children of Israel abandoned Him, and sought out other sources of satisfaction and fulfillment. God told them that these methods would not *hold water* to Him!

### • THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit jealously desires our devotion. He is a gentleman and will not trespass our will or force our obedience. Jesus voluntarily offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins. In turn, repentant, forgiven sinners should respond by voluntarily surrendering to Him. As we yield daily to the Spirit, He will fill us up to overflowing. His living water will flow from within and produce fruit in our lives.

Q This fruit is described in Galatians 5:22-23. List the fruit below.  
22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Q What specific fruit of the Spirit has been lacking in your life?

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The measure of the Spirit's fruit in our life is directly related to our degree of dependence upon Him. Just as a fruit tree requires sunshine, water and healthy soil to produce fruit, the child of God must be absolutely dependent upon the Holy Spirit to bear the fruit of the Spirit.

Q Are you willing to surrender all to God and trust Him to reproduce His life in you?  Yes  No

### • THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit not only produces the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, He also imparts spiritual gifts to us. The gifts of the Spirit cannot be earned. They are not merits for faithful service but graces from God. They are not related to our natural abilities, personalities or character traits. Three chapters of the New Testament are devoted exclusively to the teaching of the spiritual gifts. Read 1 Corinthians 12-14.

Q According to 1 Corinthians 12:7,11 to which members of the body of Christ will the Holy Spirit impart spiritual gifts?

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:

11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

Q What should be the main objective for exercising spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 14:12,26)?

12 Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.

26 How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

**Edification** - The act of building a structure. To instruct, improve or build up spiritually.

Q What results when the gifts of the Spirit are exercised with pride, selfishness or without love for the brethren? See 1 Corinthians 13:1,2

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

Because of the potential abuse in exercising the gifts of the Spirit, many Christians and evangelical churches avoid the subject altogether. **What words of warning does Paul give in 1 Corinthians 12:1 concerning the gifts?**

Q 1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant:

The gifts of the Spirit are listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10,28.

1. Word of Wisdom - Acts 6:10
2. Word of knowledge - 1 Corinthians 1:5, Romans 15:14
3. Special faith - Acts 3:1-16
4. Gifts of healings - Mark 6:13, James 5:14-16
5. Operations of miracles - Acts 5:12-15, Hebrews 2:4
6. Prophecy - Exodus 7:1,2, Jeremiah 1:9, 1 Corinthians 14:1-5,24,25,39
7. Discerning of spirits - Acts 13:9-11, Hebrews 5:14
8. Tongues - 1 Corinthians 14:1-5, Acts 2:3-11, Romans 8:26,27
9. Interpretation of tongues - 1 Corinthians 14:13,27,28

- 10. Helps - Acts 20:35
- 11. Governments - 1 Timothy 5:17

• The gifts of the Spirit are distributed to each member of the body of Christ.

**Q** Do you know your gifts?  Yes  No  
Explain.

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**Foundation Truth:** As we yield to the Holy Spirit, He produces spiritual fruit and imparts spiritual gifts to us.

## Day 5

### EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is *with* and *in* each believer to reproduce the life of Jesus in us. The term *Christian* actually means *little Christ*. Our goal is to become like Jesus.

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Because Christians live in a largely unbelieving and often antagonistic world, God has provided us with the strength to stand for Him. Jesus promised that His Spirit would come *upon* us to give us *power* to live the Christian life, and *boldness* to be a witness for Him.

**Q** From the following Scriptures, what did Jesus teach His disciples about the coming *upon* of the Holy Spirit?

**Luke 24:49** 49 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem[a] until you are endued with power from on high.”

» **Acts 1:4-8** 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[a] in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Q Acts 2 gives the account of the day of Pentecost. Describe the events below.

vs. 3-13 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 under 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? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.” 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.”

» vs. 14-36

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. 19 I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. 21 And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.

22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— 23 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken[b] by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death,

because it was not possible that He should be held by it. 25 For David says concerning Him:

*' I foresaw the LORD always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. 27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. 28 You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.'*

29 "Men *and* brethren, let *me* speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,[d] 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. 34 "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself:

*' The LORD said to my Lord, " Sit at My right hand, 35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" 36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."*

- » vs. 37-41 37 Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?" 38 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. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." 40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." 41 Then those who gladly[a] received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*.

- » vs. 42-47 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. 46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the

#### Lesson 4 ~ The Holy Spirit

people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

## Day 6

### THE MINISTRY OF THE SPIRIT

Just as Jesus Christ met the needs of His disciples during His earthly ministry, the Holy Spirit will minister to each yielded believer in very practical ways. In this section, we will learn that the ministry of Holy Spirit in our lives is to be our Comforter, Companion, Convicter and Counselor.

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- **COMFORTER:** "...He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever." -John 14:16

The comfort that the Holy Spirit offers is dual. When we are hurting or needy He offers us the infinite tenderness of a mother. But He also empowers us with courage to withstand the trials and frustrations of life. The word *comfort* comes from the Latin word *fortis* from which we get the word *fortify*.

LP  
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**Q** Write about a personal experience when you have known either the tender or the strengthening comfort of the Holy Spirit.

- **COMPANION:** "...I am with you always, even to the end of the age." -Matthew 28:20

As Christians, we are never alone, however, the circumstances of our life often press upon us and cause us to feel very much alone. In these times, we can become extremely vulnerable to the attack of the enemy of our soul. We must draw near to God, believing the promise of His loving, caring presence with us. In times like this, we should go to God's Word and let His companionship meet our emotional needs.

**Q** Read the promise in James 4:8a. How will you respond to loneliness, depression or the attacks of the enemy in the future?  
**8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**

- **CONVICTER:** "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin." -John 16:8

Because the Spirit is *holy* He will reproduce His holiness in us. Holiness means *separated unto God*. Any thought or action in our life that is not holy grieves the indwelling Holy Spirit. He does not

depart from us when this occurs, instead He convicts us or speaks to us through our conscience.

Our conscience is our inner judge, which warns us and lets us feel the Spirit's grief when we are contemplating or participating in sin. The Bible urges us to keep a clear conscience. If we learn to quickly respond with obedience and repentance to the Spirit's nudging He will keep us from sin.

**Q** Describe a time when you experienced the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Did you yield to that conviction?

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• **COUNSELOR:** "...And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor..."  
-Isaiah 9:6

God counsels us with His Word, through godly people and by the inward guidance of His Holy Spirit. As we spend time in God's presence, we will learn to hear His voice and to discern His will. Many Christians neglect to develop intimacy with God through daily devotions and continue to stumble through life, missing the guidance and counsel of the Holy Spirit.

**Q** Do you need God's wisdom today for a particular situation?  Yes  No  
Explain.

**Q** What promise does God give in James 1:5,6? 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, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

**Foundation Truth:** *The Holy Spirit is our Comforter in all of our difficulties, our ever-present Companion, our Convicter in times of temptation, and our Counselor when we need guidance and wisdom.*



## Spiritual Growth & Maturity ~ Lesson 5

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### Spiritual Growth and Maturity

## Day 1

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The Bible describes the new believer as a *babe* in Christ. Just as a healthy baby experiences the various stages of growth before reaching mature adulthood, the baby Christian must steadily progress on the path to *spiritual* maturity. Our Heavenly Father desires all of His children to develop into mature men and women of faith.

It is tragic when a baby fails to grow and become a healthy, mature adult. It is likewise grievous when a Christian stops short of spiritual wholeness and maturity. In this lesson we will study the life of the apostle Paul as an example to us to press on to spiritual maturity.

#### PAUL'S SALVATION

Paul was a religious man from his youth, though he did not come to faith in Christ until much later in his life. [Read the following Scriptures and write out what you learn about Paul's life.](#)



- » [Acts 22:3](#) 3 "I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.
  
- » [Acts 23:6](#) 6 But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!"
  
- » [Acts 26:4-5](#) 4 "My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. 5 They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.
  
- » [Galatians 1:14](#) 14 And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

Paul's zeal for his Jewish religion and its laws were displayed most vividly in his persecution of the Christian church. He believed that persecuting Christ's followers was a service unto God so he did it

Q with a clear conscience. **Read the Scriptures below and summarize Paul's actions toward believers.** (Note that prior to Paul's conversion to Christ he was called Saul.)

» Acts 7:54-60; 8:1-3

7:54-60 54 When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with *their* teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, 56 and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; 58 and they cast *him* out of the city and stoned *him*. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on *God* and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

» 8:1-3 1 Now Saul was consenting to his death.

At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him.

3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing *them* to prison.

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Acts 22:4; 22:19; 26:9-11

» 22:4 4 I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women,

22:19 19 So I said, 'Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You.

26:9-11 9 "Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. 11 And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

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» Galatians 1:13-14 13 For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and *tried to destroy it*. 14 And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

» Philippians 3:4-6 4 though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a

Pharisee; 6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

Many agree that Paul's conversion to Christianity was one of the greatest and most important events in church history. **Read the exciting account in Acts 9:1-22 and briefly rewrite the story in your own words.**

Q

1 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?"

Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.[a] It is hard for you to kick against the goads."

6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?"

Then the Lord *said* to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

7 And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. 8 Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought *him* into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Though Paul had lived a deceived life, His encounter with Jesus Christ completely transformed him. **Read his testimony in 1 Timothy 1:12-16 and write out some of the key points.**

Q

12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry, 13 although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 15 This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. 16 However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

**Foundation Truth:** *God does not choose us to be His children, or adopt us into His family because of any virtue of our own, but by His grace alone.*

## PAUL'S SERVICE

As an instrument in God's hand, Paul was sent out by Him, impassioned and empowered by the Holy Spirit to accomplish great things.

**Apostle** - *A messenger; one sent out on a mission, who derives his authority from the sender.*

## PAUL'S WORK FOR THE LORD

**Missionary and church planter** – The Lord sent Paul on three missionary journeys to areas where the gospel had not been previously preached. He established many churches in these cities. Paul's missionary travels are recorded in Acts, Chapters 13-21.

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**Preacher and teacher** – As was foretold, Paul preached Christ to gentiles, kings and the sons of Israel. Many believed in Christ, while others mocked and persecuted him. Examples of Paul's sermons are recorded in Acts 13:16-41 and Acts 17:22-34.

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**Writer** – Of the 27 books forming the New Testament, Paul was the author of thirteen and possibly fourteen of them. These books were actually letters or epistles written to churches he had established on his missionary journeys.

From prideful religious leader and persecutor of God's people to humble servant of the Almighty God, Paul's life is an example to all believers. Though few lives follow such extremes, we all like Paul have gone from darkness to light, from pridefully defying God's truth to humbly receiving His gift of salvation by grace.

Q What wonderful promise does God give to all believers in Ephesians 2:10?

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Q Do you believe that God has a plan and purpose for your life?  
 Yes  No

**Foundation Truth:** Regardless of our past mistakes or failures, God's calling and purpose for every believer is to have a relationship with Him and to serve Him by serving others.

# Day 2

## SANCTIFICATION

The biblical term for the Christian's maturing process is *sanctification*.

**Sanctification** - Separated or set apart unto and devoted to God. Separation from the practice of sin and all that displeases and is opposed to God.

The word can also be translated holy. Holiness is neither a feeling nor an experience but a lifestyle in which the character of the Son of God is developed within us and lived out in our daily lives.

**Q** Read 1 Peter 1:15,16 and write out the verses below.  
15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

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The process of sanctification has three major aspects; initial, progressive and ultimate sanctification.

### ● INITIAL SANCTIFICATION

Initial sanctification is what God does for every believer. This position bears no relationship to our behavior. At the moment of conversion He sanctifies or sets us apart unto Himself. All believers have been redeemed, cleansed, forgiven, justified and made righteous through the blood of Christ. If we are truly born again we are sanctified by God. The Bible calls us saints, not because we are faultless or sinless, but because Jesus took our guilt upon Himself on the cross and we are now blameless before God.

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### ● PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION

Progressing in sanctification is entirely dependent upon the believer's daily decision to abide in Christ and receive His power. God desires us to willingly surrender our lives to Him, and in a sense sanctify *ourselves*. As we yield to Him and desire His will in our life we will progress in sanctification.

Every time we consciously offer or present ourselves to God, set our minds on things above and walk by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are separating ourselves unto God and therefore progressing in sanctification. This moment by moment victory should be ever increasing as we come to know our own helplessness and God's absolute power in our life.

### ● ULTIMATE SANCTIFICATION

This absolute and final sanctification will occur when we are fully conformed to the image of Jesus Christ at His coming. As long as we are in our earthly bodies, we retain a fallen nature that is prone to sin. However, someday we will be fully conformed to the image of Christ when we depart from this life and awaken in His presence.

The following illustration helps us understand the process of sanctification:

*An expert of fine brass was searching through a pile of junk on the outskirts of the city, when he suddenly spied an old, battered brass pot. It was dirty, stained and beaten up, but his practiced eye recognized a thing of value. He made his way through the junk and picked up the old pot and set it apart by itself. In so doing, he sanctified that vessel. This is sanctification in its initial application. Of course he must spend many hours cleansing, straightening out the dents and polishing the old pot, until it becomes a thing of beauty to grace his table. This process is sanctification in its second application.*

LP  
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Jesus Christ searched us out of the junk pile of this world. When we responded to Him with saving faith He set us apart for Himself. He is now committed to cleanse us, straighten out our *dents*, polish us and make us a thing of beauty for His glory. Jesus is faithful to complete the work He begun in our life. Our part is to yield to Him daily. As we abide in Him and remain faithful to surrender to His will, we will feel His sanctifying hand in our life and experience all that He has for us.

In his letter to the Philippian church Paul wrote of his confidence in the Lord's faithfulness in the sanctification process. **Read**

Q

**Philippians 1:6 and rewrite the verse below.**  
**6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;**

***Foundation Truth:*** *God sanctified us when we received Christ as Savior and Lord. He continues to sanctify us as we walk with Him in love and obedience. One day He will welcome us into His presence and, in that moment, our sanctification will be complete.*

FDM  
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## Day 3

### Paul's Sanctification

Paul was saved and set apart for service by Jesus Christ. His heart's desire was to have fellowship with Christ, to make spiritual progress and to become more and more like Christ.

Turn in your Bible to Philippians 3 and read the entire chapter.

Q Why did Paul willingly suffer the loss of all things (verses 7 and 8)?  
7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

Q Though Paul *knew* Jesus Christ, what was his heart's desire (verse 10)?  
10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

**Intimate** - Marked by very close association, contact or familiarity.  
A warm friendship developing through long association.  
Suggesting informal warmth or privacy; of a very personal or private nature.

In the Old Testament, Moses asked God to give him a deeper knowledge of Himself and His ways. **Read Moses' prayer in Exodus 33:13.**

Q • Do you think this is the kind of prayer that God answers?  
 Yes  No

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Q How do we come to know a person intimately?

Q Is this the desire of your heart?  Yes  No

Q How do you think we can come to know God more intimately?

In Philippians 3:12-14, Paul confessed that he had not become fully mature. He then compared himself to an athlete running a race. He used three descriptive phrases to explain what he did in order to make spiritual progress. As believers, it is our part to,

**Lay hold** - To obtain the prize with the idea of eager and strenuous exertion.

**Press on** - To pursue with earnestness and diligence in order to obtain.

**Reach forward** - Stretching for the finish line as in a race.

Paul's comparison of the Christian to an athlete pressing on, laying hold and reaching forward emphasizes the truth that spiritual maturity is the result of commitment and discipline. Salvation is free to all who will repent and receive Christ, however, maturity is a daily choice requiring effort and sacrifice. Just as a casual athlete cannot

excel in his sport, a casual Christian will have minimal growth and transformation.

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**Foundation Truth:** *Spiritual growth and maturity requires commitment, endurance and personal effort.*

# Day 4

## Hindrances to Spiritual Growth

**Hinder** - *To interfere with the progress of, encumber, hold back, impede, obstruct.*

A runner in a race will be hindered from running strong and finishing well if he **focuses behind from where he has come, on other runners, or on himself** rather than on the goal. Paul addresses these three dangers in Philippians, Chapter 3.

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### • THE DANGER OF LOOKING BACK

**Q** According to Philippians 3:13, what one thing did Paul do?  
*13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,*

**Q** Based on what you have learned about Paul in this lesson, what events in his past do you think he needed to forget?

To forget in this sense does not mean to cease to remember, but to choose to put behind you. We must not allow past sins or hurtful memories to dominate the present and rob our future, but put them behind us and move forward in God's grace, forgiveness and power.

**Q** Turn in your Bible to 1 Corinthians 15:9-10. How does Paul describe himself and what Christ did for him?  
*9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*

**Q** Do you think Paul could have served the Lord as effectively if he had focused on his past failures and sin, rather than on the grace of God?  Yes  No  
Explain:

Though Paul was ashamed of his past, he knew that his freedom from it was found in repentance before God and walking in His grace. He could then forget the past and go forward.

Q Is there anything in your life that you believe is hindering you from running the race?  Yes  No Explain:

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Perhaps God has used this lesson to expose present circumstances or past memories that you need to commit to Him, and receive His guidance and healing in order to leave it behind you. If so, are you

Q willing to open up and share with your discipler, accountability person or prayer partner?  Yes  No Explain:

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### The danger of focusing on others

Q How did Paul describe some of the people in his life in Philippians 3:2,18,19?

3:2, 2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation!

18 18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 19 whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is their* belly, and whose glory *is* in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.

Q Read 2 Timothy 4:14-17 and describe Paul's experiences with others. How did he respond to them? 14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. 15 You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.

16 At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.

17 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

Q In Acts 7:54-60 we read that Paul was present when Stephen was being stoned to death. Undoubtedly his witness made a lasting impression on Paul. How did Stephen respond to his persecutors.

54 When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with *their* teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, 56 and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; 58 and they cast *him* out of the city and stoned *him*. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on *God* and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Q Do you think this scene influenced Paul's attitude toward those who would later persecute, offend or hurt him?  Yes  No

Explain:

Q Paul forgave the offenses that others committed against him. For further insight into these offenses read 2 Corinthians 11:23-33. How much did Paul have to forgive? 23 Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I *am* more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. 24 From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 *in* journeys often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils of *my own* countrymen, *in* perils of the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness— 28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn *with indignation*? 30 If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. 31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. 32 In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; 33 but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

Q When teaching His disciples to pray, Jesus instructed them on the importance of forgiveness. Summarize what you learn in Matthew 6:9-15. (Note that forgiveness is not dependent upon the offender's worthiness to be forgiven.)

9 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as *it is* in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. 13 And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

14 "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Q Jesus also taught about forgiveness in a parable in Matthew 18:21-35. Read the parable and summarize its meaning. It is important to note that this parable is not about salvation, for salvation is

absolutely an issue of grace and is a gift from God given unconditionally.

21 Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"  
22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. 23 Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. 26 The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' 27 Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.  
28 "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' 29 So his fellow servant fell down at his feet[a] and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.'[b] 30 And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. 31 So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. 32 Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. 33 Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' 34 And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.  
35 "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

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The Bible teaches that an offense against another is like a *debt* owed. The one who is offended can either forgive the debt or demand payment. However, the consequence of unforgiveness is bitterness, which poisons the heart. As sinners we owe God an enormous debt that we cannot pay. When we receive Christ as our Savior our debt is graciously forgiven, the penalty for that debt being placed on Christ.

Q God continues to forgive us daily. He *commands* us to forgive those who have offended us. Turn to Luke 6:35 and write the verse below. 35 But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.

Q Is it possible that your spiritual growth been hindered because you have been focusing on others or failed to forgive?  Yes  No Explain:

Lesson Six, *Biblical Principles of Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, offers an indepth study on the subject.

## The danger of focusing on ourselves

Though Paul was a man who did many things which he would later regret, he also had the potential for confidence in his own accomplishments.

**Q** Read Philippians 3:3-6 and write below what you believe Paul is expressing.

3 For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit,[a] rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, 4 though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; 6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

As a Jew, Paul believed that he was a good, even a righteous man. In Philippians 3:6 he states that he was blameless according to the standard of his old life and religion. When he met Christ, he understood the reality of his fallen condition and ceased putting confidence in himself or in his own goodness.

**Self-confidence** - *Putting faith or trust in oneself and our own abilities.*

The biblical term for self-confidence is pride.

**Pride** - *To congratulate oneself because of something one is, has, or has done or achieved. Conceit, haughtiness or arrogance.*

**Q** According to Proverbs 16:18, what will always be the result of pride?  
18 Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.

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The dangers of focusing on self are many; self-centeredness, self-service, self-conceit, self-deceit, self-indulgence, self-seeking, self-reliance, selfishness and ultimately self-worship.

**Q** Read James 3:13-16. What do you learn about selfish ambition from these verses?

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

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Q According to Luke 9:23,24, what does Jesus say every believer must do? 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.

Q What do you think it means to deny yourself?

**Foundation Truth:** *To make spiritual progress, we must keep our focus on the goal of intimacy with Christ and spiritual maturity.*

## Day 5

### The Weight of Sin

Just as a runner in a race knows he will run faster and endure longer if he doesn't carry excess weight, Christians must constantly be aware of the *hindrance* of the excess weight of sin in their lives. Sin hinders us from making spiritual progress because it distracts us from our goal of spiritual maturity, separates us from fellowship and intimacy with our Heavenly Father and quenches the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Q How does Romans 14:23b define sin? 23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.*

God has made provision for us to *strip off* and *throw aside* the entanglements of sin, and be restored to a right relationship with Him, through *reconciliation*.

**Reconciliation** - *To restore to friendship or harmony.*

#### The steps to reconciliation WITH GOD

**Step 1 - Confess** - *To admit, own or acknowledge, to say the same.*

To confess our sins is to agree with God that our actions have truly been in opposition to His will and ways. What God calls sin is sin.

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*"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*  
1 John 1:9

**Step 2 - Repent** - *To be sorry, to change one's mind, to turn from sin.*

To request God's forgiveness is our response to being broken, sorry, and repentant that our actions have been against Him and have separated us from fellowship with Him.

### Step 3 - Believe and Receive

When we have obeyed Step 1 and 2, we must follow with the final step of believing and receiving. Based upon God's faithfulness and His Word, we accept His forgiveness, confident that our fellowship with Him will be restored.

*"And all things you ask in prayer, believing you will receive."  
Matthew 21:22*

Because we are weak in and of ourselves, we will regularly fail to live by God's standard of holiness. We will fall short of absolute love, kindness, patience, and forgiveness toward others. We have a natural *bend* towards selfishness; the potential to offend and be easily offended, to think more of ourselves and less of others, and to judgmentally hold the people in our lives to a standard that we ourselves cannot attain. Therefore, we must practice these steps daily!

**Q** When we have offended or sinned against another person, what does the Bible tell us that we should do? Read Matthew 5:23,24 for the answer. 23 Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

**Foundation Truth:** *As unnecessary weight slows a runner's pace, sin in our life hinders our spiritual progress.*

## Day 6

**Q** Throughout chapter 3 of Philippians Paul weaves the theme of his personal goal and the purpose for his life and existence. In verse 14 he characterized this goal and purpose as the *"upward call of God in Christ Jesus."* This *upward call* can be summed up in two words, Christ and Heaven.

**Q** As you read the following verses that describe Paul's goal, allow the Lord to speak to you about your own life. Consider your own personal goals and the purpose for your life and existence and write your thoughts below each verse.

### ● KNOWING CHRIST

*“..progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly...” v.8 (Amplified Bible)*

● **BEING FOUND IN CHRIST**

*“And that I may actually be found and known as in Him, not having any self-achieved righteousness that can be called my own...but possessing that genuine righteousness which comes through faith in Christ...” v. 9 (Amplified Bible)*

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**KNOWING CHRIST’S POWER**

*“For my determined purpose is that I may know Him - that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His person more strongly and more clearly. And that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection which it exerts over believers...” v. 10 (Amplified Bible)*

**BECOMING LIKE CHRIST**

*“...that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed in spirit into His likeness...” v.10 (Amplified Bible)*

**HEAVEN**

Read Philippians 3:11, 20-21. Write out the main points below.

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

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● **INVENTORY OF YOUR PERSONAL GOALS**

Q Do you have a desire to grow in your intimate relationship with Christ?  Yes  No

Q Do you want to become more like Christ in your daily life and actions?  Yes  No

Q Is spiritual growth and maturity your personal goal?  Yes  No

Are you willing to...

Q ...forget the hurts or wrongs in your past, ceasing to let them effect the present and your future?  Yes  No

Q ...forgive those who have failed, offended or hurt you?

Yes  No

Q ...deny yourself and daily submit to Christ as Lord of your life?

Yes  No

Q ...address the sin issue in your life by confessing and repenting of any known sin and believing and receiving God's forgiveness and restored fellowship?  Yes  No

Q What has God shown you that you you need to do to "...press on toward the goal..."?  Yes  No

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Paul was willing to expose his very heart to his readers. He confessed and gave an account of his faults and weaknesses, and boldly proclaimed his love for Christ and his passion for holiness and spiritual maturity. His life story is recorded for our encouragement and as an example for us to follow.

Q Are you, like Paul willing to be open, accountable and even vulnerable to others in order to make spiritual progress?

Yes  No

**Accountability** - Subject to giving an account, answerable, a statement explaining one's conduct.

If you don't already have an accountability person or prayer partner in your life, contact your pastor or other church leader and express your desire for this type of encouragement and accountability.

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## Day 7

Q Go back through Lesson Five and review the six **Foundation Truths** that you learned. Rewrite these truths below.

1) **Foundation Truth:** God does not choose us to be His children, or adopt us into His family because of any virtue of our own, but by His grace alone.

2) **Foundation Truth:** Regardless of our past mistakes or failures, God's calling and purpose for every believer is to have a relationship with Him and to serve Him by serving others.

3) **Foundation Truth:** God sanctified us when we received Christ as Savior and Lord. He continues to sanctify us as we walk with Him in love and obedience. One day He will welcome us into His presence and, in that moment, our sanctification will be complete.

4) **Foundation Truth:** Spiritual growth and maturity requires commitment, endurance and personal effort.

5) **Foundation Truth:** *To make spiritual progress, we must keep our focus on the goal of intimacy with Christ and spiritual maturity.*

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6) **Foundation Truth:** *As unnecessary weight slows a runner's pace, sin in our life hinders our spiritual progress.*

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## Forgiveness & Reconciliation

This chapter on Forgiveness & Reconciliation is not to be treated as just an academic study, but also an opportunity for the disciple to examine their personal life up to this point. What they are looking for is anything that may be creating a stronghold due to hurts or voids in one's past. A common one that is often overlooked is "parental voids".

What I mean by "Parental Voids" is: God has placed within each child a need to receive important physical and emotional things from both parents. When any or all of them have been compromised, this can create a void in a person's life that can manifest itself in the same way as an emotional wound or hurt does.

**Explanation:** A father is to provide proper leadership, a loving relationship toward his wife, love and proper affection toward the child, and proper, fair discipline. A mother is to provide a loving, nurturing environment within the home, love and honor her husband, love and proper affection and discipline toward the child. If a child does not receive these things due to ignorance or rebellion by the parents and/or experience of a divorce, these can affect a person's emotional well-being and even their spiritual development. This is why many teens today are gravitating toward carnal behaviors and Satan's temptations.

God created us with an innate self-preservation makeup. When we are hungry...we eat, cold...we look for warmth, etc. In the same way, when we have voids and/or hurts in our life, we will look to fill or heal them. Most adolescents do not know

this and do not know how to turn to God to fill the voids and find healing so they are vulnerable to their flesh and the devil, and often gravitate toward destructive mental thinking and/or behaviors to cope with these voids and hurts.

**Note:** There is **NEVER** a reason to sin and each person is responsible for their own actions.

Looking into these things and helping a person examine these areas in their life is NOT to place blame on anyone. The bottom line is: It was God who gave us our parents, knowing the mistakes they would make.

God did not want them to do things wrong or hurt their children. He gave them His Word to guide them and the Holy Spirit to empower them, yet He also gave them free will.

God promises us in *Romans 8:28 (NKJV)* “*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*”

God will use all of our experiences, good and bad, for His purpose. “*If*” we put our trust in Him and yield to His will in our life and that includes His way to fill the voids and mend our hearts through the forgiveness of others.

Satan uses these voids and hurts to his advantage. *2 Corinthians 10:4 (KJV)* says, “*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;*” A stronghold is a lie, false belief, bad sinful habit and even can cause blindness to spiritual truth.

*2 Corinthians 10:5-6 (NKJV) says, “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, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.”* Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ means examining what we believe and what we do and that includes why we believe or do the things we do and compare them to the **will** and the Word of God.

It is God’s will that each child receives these physical and emotional things from their parents, for it was Him who placed these needs within us; However, due to the fallen nature of mankind, the ignorance of God’s will, the gift of free will, and the lack of disciples who are willing to come alongside to teach and help them work out God’s instructions, many Christians are not tending to their families correctly.

If the Lord reveals a void or hurt that is clearly hindering spiritual growth, then that person needs to put their trust in God’s perfect way to receive healing and break the stronghold. Forgiving a person is an act of the will and it is a verb...it takes action: Actually telling a person that you forgive them, not just doing it in your mind.

Yes – this can be hard and may have some consequences in regard to the person who is being forgiven. *Luke 14:26-27 (NLT) says, “If you want to be my disciple, you must hate everyone else by comparison—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple.”* And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple. This scripture is perfect for



# Forgiveness and Reconciliation ~ Lesson 6

## Day 1

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### The Cost of Unforgiveness

The word *forgive* means literally, *to give away*. When a debt is forgiven, the rights to payment are *given away*. If someone injures us and we forgive them, we *give away* the freedom to continue being angry and resentful towards the one who wronged us. We absorb the loss ourselves. The word *pardon* is derived from the Latin word, *perdonare*, meaning *to grant freely*. True forgiveness is undeserved, unmerited and free. It is not *just* or *fair*. In the Scriptures, to *forget* means, *to let go from one's power*.

LP  
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When we refuse to grant forgiveness, choosing rather to maintain our *right* to demand payment for wrongs done to us, we also must be willing to absorb the cost incurred by that choice. Forgiveness is free, however unforgiveness is costly. Unwillingness to forgive results in *resentment*. Resentment, which means *to feel again*, clings to the past, reliving it over and over. Like *picking a scab*, resentment prohibits our wounds from healing.

In Hebrews 12:15 we learn that bitterness, like a deep root, takes a firm hold in the human heart, then grows, and produces *fruit*. However, rather than nourish others, this fruit is bitter, causes trouble and defiles others.

Most of us do not readily admit that we have been harboring unforgiveness. However, Ephesians 4:31 teaches that there is undeniable evidence in an individual's life that the bitter root of resentment is growing within their heart.

**Wrath** – An outburst of a strong, vengeful anger or indignation, seeking retribution.

**Anger** – A state of mind marked by fretfulness and grief.

**Evil speaking** – Unkind words, verbal abuse against someone, slander, wounding someone's reputation by evil reports, backbiting, insult and defamation.

**Malice** – Hateful feelings that we nurture in our hearts. A desire to see another suffer.

#### ● THE FRUIT OF UNFORGIVENESS

Ask yourself if any of the following are evident in your life.

- Pride
- Self-righteousness
- Self-pity
- Emotional instability
- Anxiety, tension & stress
- Health problems
- Eating disorders
- Lack of trust in relationships
- Lack of intimacy in marriage
- Sexual dysfunction
- Judgmental & critical of others
- Ultra-sensitive, easily offended
- Absence of peace & joy
- Broken fellowship with Jesus

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**Foundation Truth:** *Unforgiveness results in bitterness, defiles other relationships and troubles the human heart.*

## Day 2

### WHY FORGIVE?

Besides the before mentioned devastation that results from unforgiveness, we are to forgive because:

#### God commands it.

*“But love your enemies, and do good...and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”*

*- Luke 6:35,36*

Obedience to our Heavenly Father is not optional. If we pick and choose when we will and will not obey God’s commands, we will live unfruitful, ineffective and spiritually barren lives.

#### When we forgive others, we resemble Jesus and bear His likeness.

*“Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do’.” -Luke 23:34*

As Christians, we have the privilege and calling to carry the name of Christ to a lost world. In fact, the term *Christian* means *little Christ*. We must be willing to walk as He walked. Christ demonstrated forgiveness. He came to this earth to bring forgiveness to the guilty. He gave the commission to the church to continue proclaiming forgiveness. We must, if we are to rightly bear His name, forgive those who have offended us!

#### Forgiveness is the only means of breaking the cycle of blame and suffering.

Forgiveness offers the way out and an end to strife! It does not and can not settle all questions of blame and fairness, but once forgiveness is extended such questions become irrelevant. It does allow a relationship to start over and begin anew.

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This truth is demonstrated beautifully in the life of Joseph, recorded in Genesis chapters 37-45. Though he was misunderstood, mistreated, betrayed, abandoned by his brothers, and sold into slavery, he refused to allow the root of bitterness to take hold of his life. Shortly before being reunited with his brothers, he testified of the healing work that God had done in his life during the years of separation, as demonstrated in the naming of his sons. In Genesis 41:51,52 we read:

*“Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh, ‘For,’ he said, ‘God has made me forget all my trouble in all my father’s household.’ ”*

*“He named the second Ephraim, ‘For,’ he said, ‘God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction...’ ”*

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To forget in this sense does not mean to cease to remember, but to let go, to cease to let the memory of hurtful things control your present life. Joseph’s fruitfulness was directly related to his forgetfulness. Remember that resentment means to feel again. Joseph chose to trust God with his feelings, emotions and his past.

**Unforgiveness imprisons us to the past and locks out all potential for a fruitful life.**

During Joseph’s years alone in Egypt he allowed God to heal his heart, which had been broken by his own brothers and circumstances. Later, when given the opportunity, Joseph extended love, forgiveness and grace to his brothers. Joseph speaks to them in Genesis 45:

*“Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life...and to keep you alive by a great deliverance...He kissed all his brothers and wept on them, and afterward his brothers talked with him.”*

There was no blaming, no explanations demanded, only the voice of mercy and forgiveness. The way was cleared for Joseph and his brothers to be reunited and begin a new relationship.

**Forgiveness relieves the burden of guilt in the offender.**

*“When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “What if Joseph bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong which we did to him!”...But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in God’s place?...So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.” Genesis 50:15-21*

Joseph’s brothers would have carried their grief and guilt to their graves if he had not extended forgiveness to them. Forgiveness, undeserved and unearned, removed the guilt. If Jesus had not

extended kindness to sinners, we would remain in the stranglehold of guilt. He made the first move toward us that made it possible for us to be reconciled to Him.

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**Foundation Truth:** God commands us to forgive and in doing so we bear the likeness of His Son and allow healing and reconciliation to begin.

## Day 3

### GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY AND MAN'S SUFFERING

**Sovereign-** *Possessing supreme power, unlimited wisdom, and absolute authority.*

*"All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him 'What have You done?'"*

*-Daniel 4:35*

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Psalm 139:1-18 teaches that God knows us intimately. All of our days were fashioned and ordained by Him. Before you knew God, or accepted Him as Lord and Savior He knew you and predestined all the days of your life. God gave you the gift of freewill. He chose you that you might follow Him, but also gave you the freedom to reject Him.

Many ask the question, "If God were sovereign and in control why do His children suffer?" The answer is simple, but must be accepted with a heart of trust and faith toward God. As we saw in Lesson One, we live in a fallen world. God has given all mankind freedom to follow Him and do good, and freedom to reject Him and choose evil. Therefore, both believers and non-believers are affected by the evil choices of others. God has an eternal plan; good will prevail and all evil, suffering and sorrow will cease. Until that time, if God shielded His children from evil, allowing only good, the unsaved would only be motivated to turn to Him for the guarantee of an easy life. This is the very argument that began the historic showdown in heaven between God and Satan in the life of Job.

Satan said to God,

*"Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face."*

*-Job 1:9-11*

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God *allowed* Satan to bring evil upon Job through the loss of his possessions, his children, and finally his health. God is a loving Father and does not *bring* evil into our lives, however for His purpose and for our ultimate good, He *allows* us to be touched by evil. The outcome of Job's suffering was trust, greater faith and intimacy with God.

Job did not understand *why* God was *allowing* him to suffer (God had declared in Job 2:3 that Job was a righteous man), therefore he asked God, "Why?" For several chapters Job agonizes over this question, seeking a satisfactory answer. God never answers the question, instead He directs Job's attention to His power and glory, which is displayed in His creation. Job is satisfied with a newfound understanding of the greatness of God.

When we suffer we, like Job, want an explanation. "*Why, why, why?*" One of the many lessons we learn from Job is that "*Why?*" is the wrong question. We should instead ask God, "*What?*" "*What are You trying to teach me? What is Your will for me in this season of suffering?*"

- Q • Knowing that God is sovereign, is there a part of your life that is beyond His power, wisdom, or authority?  Yes  No
- Q • Is there a day or a circumstance that has touched you that God did not know beforehand?  Yes  No
- Q • How should you respond to life's disappointments, difficulties, suffering, and trials?

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We can choose to harbor bitterness toward others; parents who failed us, a spouse who deserted us, friends who disappointed us, a drunk driver who killed a loved-one, and so forth, or we can place our faith in a sovereign God and forgive the offenses and failures of others.

When we accepted Christ as Savior and Lord, we trusted Him with our eternal destiny. We must also trust Him with our past experiences and our present circumstances. He alone can comfort us in and through our trials and strengthen us to do the right thing. He alone can bring good out of bad and restore relationships that have been broken. Our obedience to God's Word will give us peace and bring praise, honor, and glory to our Lord Jesus Christ.

***Foundation Truth:*** *God has the perfect plan for our life with all the details predetermined. Our responsibility is to ask "What is Your plan?"*

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## Day 4

### TRIALS AND TRIBULATION

Jesus taught His followers that trials and tribulations are part of the life of a disciple.

*"...In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."  
-John 16:33*

**Tribulation** - *Pressure, affliction, anguish, burden, persecution and trouble.*

Just as the refiner places the crude gold into the crucible and turns up the heat in order to bring the dross to the surface, God places His beloved children in the crucible of suffering in order to both refine us and transform us into the image of Christ.

*"He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the Lord offerings in righteousness."  
-Malachi 3:3*

If we trust Him in this process our lives will permeate with the love, hope and confidence of Jesus Christ. As others look at us, they will see Christ in us.

*"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son..."  
-Romans 8:28-29*

This verse does not say some things, but all things. The key is faith. If we choose to believe God's promises and trust Him in the midst of our trials and tribulations we will be victorious and God will be glorified in our life.



Are you willing to:  
Allow God to transform your life through your trials?

Yes  No

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Trust God with the pain that others may have caused in your life?

Yes  No



Obey God and forgive others in order to be set free from the bondage and pain that has resulted from unforgiveness in your life?

Yes  No

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What has God revealed to you personally in the area of forgiveness?



How will you obey Him?

“There are times, says Jesus, when God cannot lift the darkness from you, but trust Him. God will appear like an unkind friend, but He is not; He will appear like an unnatural Father, but He is not; He will appear like an unjust judge, but He is not. Keep the notion of the mind of God behind all things strong and growing. Nothing happens in any particular unless God’s will is behind it, therefore you can rest in perfect confidence in Him.”  
-Oswald Chambers

***Foundation Truth:*** *God’s Word tells us that God will use our trials and tribulations to transform us into His image.*

### **RECONCILIATION**

To reconcile means to restore to friendship or harmony, or to settle or resolve differences. It is the doing away of an enmity, and the bridging over of a quarrel. Reconciliation implies that the parties being reconciled were formerly hostile to one another. Because God loved the world and desired to reconcile man to Himself, He sent His Son to die in our behalf. The blood of Christ is the means of doing away with the enmity between man and God. Through Christ, we are reconciled to God. It is in God’s character to restore what has been broken. He desires to reconcile or restore us to one another.

The Scriptures instruct us in Ephesians 4:31 to *“Let all bitterness...be put away from you...be kind...tenderhearted, forgiving...”*

- Q**
- How do we put away bitterness?
  - How do we reconcile with someone who we have offended?
  - How do we repair the hurt we have caused others?
  - How do we forgive someone who has offended us?
  - How can we change our own feelings about a wrong done?

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## **Day 5**

### **IF YOU NEED TO BE FORGIVEN**

If you have wronged, offended or hurt another as an act of sin, you must:

**Step 1 - Confess your sin to God and ask Him to forgive you and to fill your heart with His love.**

*“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered...When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,” and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.”*

*-Psalm 32:1,3-5*

Take a moment right now to cry out to God, asking Him to forgive you and to fill you with His Holy Spirit to strengthen you to obey. God alone forgives sins. He forgives and He forgets. By faith, accept God’s absolute forgiveness and cleansing.

Step 2- If possible, go to those you have offended, confess your wrong actions or attitude, and ask for their forgiveness.

Six of the most powerful words  
in the English language,  
**“I was wrong. Please forgive me.”**

**Q Read Matthew 5:23-24 and write out your commitment to obey.**  
*23 Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*

*If possible, do this face to face. However, due to distance, you may have to communicate with the person by telephone or in writing. Don’t let distractions or other obstacles delay this act of obedience.*

Go to a trustworthy Christian friend, your discipler, accountability person or prayer partner and share with them what the Lord is doing in your life in this important area of forgiveness. Ask them to prayer partner with you and hold you accountable to follow through on your commitment.

**Step 3 - Spend time daily with the Lord in His Word and in prayer.**

*We develop an intimate relationship with the Savior and receive His wisdom and power through spending time with Him daily, allowing Him to speak to us in His Word and respond back to Him in prayer.*

**Q Write out your decision to the Lord to spend time with Him daily in prayer, reading of His Word and meditation.**

**Step 4 - Ponder the meaning of the cross and the sacrifice Jesus made for your sins.**

Take a moment right now and thank Jesus for all that He has done for you, for forgiving you for all of your sins, for His perfect plan of transforming you into His image through this trial, and for the gift of His Holy Spirit.

***Foundation Truth:*** *God's Word commands us to go to any we have offended and humbly ask forgiveness.*

## IF YOU NEED TO FORGIVE

If another person has wronged, offended or hurt you, as an act of the will you must,

**Step 1 - Pray and ask God for the strength to obey and forgive the person or persons.**

God promised to give us the strength to move mountains. This may be your Mt. Everest! We know that it is God's will that we forgive others, so we can be confident that if we ask for His strength, it will be granted.

"Whenever I see myself before God and realize something of what my blessed Lord has done for me at Calvary, I am ready to forgive anybody anything, I cannot withhold it. I do not even want to withhold it.

-Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

**Step 2 - Communicate your forgiveness to the person or persons.**

The word *forgive* is a *verb*, or an *action word*. To truly forgive requires you to *take action*. God is using His Word to speak to you right now, revealing truth for you to obey and *act upon*.

**Q** Read Jesus' parable on forgiveness in Matthew 18:21-35. Describe the two very different responses of the lord of the slave and the slave from verses 27 and 28?

*21 Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"*

*22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. 23 Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. 26 The*

servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' **27 Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.**

**28 "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!'"** 29 So his fellow servant fell down at his feet[a] and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' [b] 30 And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. 31 So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. 32 Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. 33 Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' 34 And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

35 "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

**Release** - To free fully, to relieve or dismiss.

**Seize** - To retain or keep hold on.

**Choke** - To throttle, strangle or drown.

**Q** According to verses 34 and 35, what did the lord of the slave do in response to the slave's unwillingness to forgive? 34 And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

35 "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

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Note: This Scripture is not teaching that a born again child of God will experience eternal ruin if unwilling to forgive. It does state that they will be imprisoned by their unforgiveness. See 1 Corinthians 11:30-32 and The Fruit of Unforgiveness from Day 1 of this lesson.

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Forgiveness is not an easy thing to do, therefore you must not try to stand alone, but seek the support and accountability of a mature Christian friend, spouse, or prayer partner.

"Forgiveness is not an emotion...Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart." -Corrie ten Boom

**Q** Write out your commitment to forgive the person or persons, and give yourself a date to contact them by, so you won't let yourself put it off!

**Q** Do I have to go to them in person?  
Can I call or write them instead?

In some cases, due to distance, cost of travel, safety to you, or the ability of the other person to be quiet long enough to let you say what you need to say, a letter, email or telephone call may be the best way for you to accomplish this.

Keep these points in mind when speaking or communicating in writing,

- **You are doing this out of obedience to your Heavenly Father who loves and cares for you.**

He wants you to be free from the bondage and oppression you have been experiencing as a result of unforgiveness.

- **You do not have to rehearse every detail or act of the offense against you.**

Many times, especially when forgiving parents, they are completely unaware of what they may have done that hurt you. In other cases, it may have been blatant sin against you, for example, sexual, physical, or emotional abuse, rape, abandonment by a parent, friend, or spouse, slander spoken against you, etc. In these cases, you can be more specific as to why you need to forgive.

- **Do not try to compel others to own up to their offenses.**

God has called you to obey, not to be a prosecuting attorney, jury or judge! Keep it short. In most cases, due to the high level of emotions, we can find ourselves saying things we did not plan on saying that may undermine the purpose of the meeting, letter, or conversation.

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- **Finally, ask them to forgive you for harboring bitterness toward them.**

Remember that what they may have done was wrong and offensive, but bitterness and unforgiveness is equally wrong.

***Foundation Truth:*** *God's Word commands believers to humbly forgive others who have offended or wronged them.*

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## Day 6

### MAINTAINING YOUR COMMITMENT TO FORGIVE

The person you have forgiven may continue to be a regular part of your life; possibly a parent, a child or a spouse. When this is the case you may encounter a spiritual battle after you have asked for forgiveness or forgiven them.

The forgiveness experience has changed you, but it has not necessarily changed them. God has had a major victory in your life in bringing you to this place of surrender and obedience, however, their position may not have changed! They may continue to hold onto bitterness toward you. If this is the case you need to seek God daily for His strength to extend mercy and compassion to them, without compromising.

**If you forgave a parent for being harsh and unloving, and asked them to forgive you for harboring bitterness, yet the next time you see them, they continue to be harsh and unloving, your flesh may want to react in the way you formerly reacted.**

God will be faithful to produce His fruit in your life as you surrender to Him moment by moment. You must keep in mind that your obedience in forgiving was not so that the other person or persons would change. Unless they surrender their lives and experiences to the Lord, they *cannot* change. Only God can change our hearts and renew our minds, and only if we surrender to Him.

Depending on the severity of your situation and the seriousness of the circumstances you may consider seeking godly counsel on appropriate and wise boundaries with the other person.

### OUR SPIRITUAL BATTLE

As you will learn in Lesson Seven, we are involved in a spiritual battle every day. Satan, does not want you to obey God or have victory over sin, therefore, he will attack your mind with past memories, evil thoughts, lies, temptations, and condemnation. You must exercise self-control and remember *what* and *whom* you are battling!

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This is the reality in which we live! Satan hates to lose ground in our lives. He does not like the idea that he has lost the ability to continue to rob us of God's peace and joy.

**How do we stop giving the devil *opportunities* to work his destruction in our lives?**

● **Take each thought that enters your mind and measure it by God's Word to see if it is from God, from your flesh, or from the enemy.**

**Q** *According to 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 what should we do with each thought that enters our mind?*

*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,*

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From Philippians 4:8, what kinds of thoughts should occupy our minds?

*8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.*

- **Pray in each instant of decision for God’s power to do His will.**

*“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”  
-Romans 12:21*

You may have developed the habit of responding to an individual with anger, self-defense or other negative behavior. In order to break this habit and develop godly responses, you must be in fellowship with Christ, sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and submitting to His will and ways.

- **Resist and rebuke the devil in the name of Jesus.**

*“Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil...dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”  
- Jude 1:9*

God wants you to be aware of the devil’s devices so that you can have victory. Unforgiveness is one of Satan’s most powerful tactics to keep God’s people in bondage!

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**What if the person that I am forgiving does not want to reconcile the relationship?**

You must keep in mind that you are only responsible for your part of reconciliation. Regardless of the position the other person takes, you must obey God by asking for and giving forgiveness. If the other person refuses to grant you forgiveness or if they do not acknowledge their wrong toward you, God will still bless you for your obedience and pour out His peace, grace, and mercy upon your life. You will still experience His freedom from your bondage regardless of the other person’s response.

You cannot place any expectations or requirements upon what the other person may say or do, but surrender all to the Lord and trust Him to work in the midst of your circumstances. This is a major inner personal battle that many people face with this act of obedience. We must not lean on our own understanding, but obey and surrender to God and His will.



# Day 7

## CONCLUSION

It is awfully hard to forgive. It is harder *not* to forgive. If we do not forgive, we deny what Jesus has done for us on the cross. Our experience of God's forgiveness is directly related to our ability to forgive. A readiness to forgive others is part of the indication that we have truly repented and received God's forgiveness. A broken heart toward God cannot be a hard heart toward others.

Pride and fear keep us from forgiveness and reconciliation. Refusing to give in, or be broken, insisting on our rights, and defending ourselves are all indications that our selfish pride is ruling our life, rather than the Lord. If fears of 'what-ifs' are consuming and controlling you, you need to pray for the faith to trust and obey God. Enemies are very expensive to keep. Matthew 18:21-35 warns that an unforgiving heart will put us in an emotional prison.

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Go back through Lesson Six and review the seven **Foundation Truths** that you learned. Rewrite these truths below.

- 1) **Foundation Truth:** Unforgiveness results in bitterness, defiles other relationships and troubles the human heart.
- 2) **Foundation Truth:** God commands us to forgive and in doing so we bear the likeness of His Son and allow healing and reconciliation to begin.
- 3) **Foundation Truth:** God has the perfect plan for our life with all the details predetermined. Our responsibility is to ask "What is Your plan?"
- 4) **Foundation Truth:** God's Word tells us that God will use our trials and tribulations to transform us into His image.
- 5) **Foundation Truth:** God's Word commands us to go to any we have offended and humbly ask forgiveness.
- 6) **Foundation Truth:** God's Word commands believers to humbly forgive others who have offended or wronged them.
- 7) **Foundation Truth:** God's Word tells us to continue in obedience to Him regardless of the responses or actions of others





- » 1 John 5:19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway of the wicked one.*

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## SATAN'S CONDITION AFTER THE FALL

Q When man fell into sin, he surrendered dominion of the earth to Satan. What do you learn about Satan from the following Scriptures?

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- » John 14:30, I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.
- » John 16:11 of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.
- » 2 Corinthians 4:4 whose minds the god of this age 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.
- » Ephesians 2:2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,

## MAN'S CONDITION AFTER THE FALL

Man was originally created in God's likeness. Bearing God's image, Adam was undefiled and eternal. **After Adam's fall**

Q **whose likeness did the subsequent generations bear according to Genesis 5:1-3?**

This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. <sup>2</sup> He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created. <sup>3</sup> And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a *son* in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.

Q **How do the following Scriptures describe the human race? Note the use of the words *all* and *none* in these verses.**

- » Psalms 14:1-3 The fool has said in his heart, "*There is no God.*" They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good.  
<sup>2</sup> The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God <sup>3</sup> They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; *There is none who does good, No, not one.*
- » Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

- » Romans 3:10-18 As it is written: “ There is none righteous, no, not one;  
<sup>11</sup> There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.  
<sup>12</sup> They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable;  
 There is none who does good, no, not one.”<sup>[a]</sup>  
<sup>13</sup> “ Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced  
 deceit” “ The poison of asps is under their lips”;<sup>l</sup> <sup>14</sup> “ Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”<sup>l</sup>  
<sup>15</sup> “ Their feet are swift to shed blood; <sup>16</sup> Destruction and misery are in their ways;  
<sup>17</sup> And the way of peace they have not known.” <sup>18</sup> “ There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

Jesus affirms that all who do not have faith in Him continue to be lead by the devil’s influence. **Who, according to Jesus, is the father of all non-believers?**

Q

Read John 8:38, I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father.”

- » 41, You do the deeds of your father.”  
 Then they said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father God.”
- » 44 You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.  
 When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.

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Q **Read 2 Timothy 2:25-26. To whom are all non-believers held captive?**

in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,<sup>26</sup> and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.

**Foundation Truth:** *God’s entire creation was defiled when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. Satan continues to pursue man in an attempt to persuade him to deny his Creator.*

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## Day 2

### THE ENEMIES OF MAN - The World, the Flesh and the Devil

Most of us imagine that our enemy is someone who has offended or hurt us, therefore, we tend to focus on defending ourselves or contending with others; whether a driver who cut us off on the freeway or an estranged family member. However, the Bible teaches that our enemies are not other people, and that our struggles are actually *spiritual*. Our enemies are the world, our own flesh and the devil.

## THE ENEMIES OF MAN - The World

As we saw in the previous section, this world is now Satan's domain. The systems of this world, such as politics, economics, education, fashion, entertainment, and the philosophies of man are under his evil influence. But Satan's dominion is only temporary. This is God's world and He will reclaim it for Himself.

When Jesus became a man, He brought God's kingdom to the earth. **Turn in your Bible to Luke 17:20, 21. What did Jesus say to the Pharisees, the Jewish religious leaders?**

- » Luke 17:20 Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation;
- » Luke 17:21 nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!'<sup>[a]</sup> For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

We we are born again we become members of God's kingdom.

**Q Read Philippians 3:20 and Colossians 1:13 and write what you learn from these verses.**

Philippians 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ Though we are citizens of God's kingdom, we continue to live physically in this world, which is temporarily Satan's kingdom. We live in the midst of two opposing kingdoms.

- » Colossians 1:13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

Shortly before Jesus' arrest and crucifixion, He told His followers that the unbelieving world would hate them. **Turn in your Bible**

**Q to John 15:18-21 and 1 John 3:13 and comment on what you learn.**

- » John 15:18-21 "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you.<sup>19</sup> If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.<sup>20</sup> Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.<sup>21</sup> But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.
- » 1 John 3:13 Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you.

**Q** Turn in your Bible to Colossians 2:8. What warning does this verse give? How do you believe this verse applies to you personally?

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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

**Q** Read the Parable of the Sower in Mark 4:1-20. What are the three things that Satan uses to choke the Word of God from our hearts?

**A** **1 Tribulation and persecution**  
**2 Cares of this world**  
**3 Deceitfulness of riches**

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Satan is a poor loser! If he cannot possess a man's soul, he will be relentless to possess his affections, hold his attention and distract him from the kingdom of God to the trivial things of this world. **Look up the following verses. What wisdom and warnings are given for living in this world.**

**Q**

Romans 12:1-2 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.* <sup>2</sup> 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

» James 4:4 Adulterers and<sup>[a]</sup> adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God

» 1 John 2:15 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.

**Foundation Truth:** *God is asking His children to voluntarily refuse to identify with this world, and to live according to the principles of His kingdom.*

## Day 3

### THE ENEMIES OF MAN - The Flesh

Our flesh is our old sin nature; the habits, desires, thoughts and reactions from our life prior to surrendering to Christ. The flesh is our old *self*, or as Scripture says, our *old man*. The flesh wants to get its own way, cares only about itself, and does not

want to live according to God's standards or will. In one sense, Christians have two opposing natures dwelling within – the spirit and the flesh!

**Q What do you learn about the battle of our spirit and our flesh in Galatians 5:17?**

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

**Q Read Romans 6 and answer the following questions.**

**A What died with Christ? (vs. 2-11) Old Man or Self**

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**What did our old self die to and from what are we now freed? (vs. 2,6,7,10,11,)**

**Q&A Sin and death**

**Q What does God instruct us to do in our struggle against sin and our sin nature? (vs. 13,16,19)**

13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God

» 16 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?

» 19 I speak in human *terms* because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness *leading* to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness

**Q Romans 6 teaches us that before coming to Christ, we were slaves to sin. What must we be enslaved to now in order to have victory over sin? (vs. 16-18,19,22)**

**A Obedience to God and righteousness**

Jesus atoned for *all* of our sins on the cross. Our sin nature was crucified and buried with Christ. As we claim this truth and, in obedience, continually present ourselves to God and abide in Him daily, we are freed from the power of sin!

**Q Read Galatians 2:20 and rewrite the verse in your own words.**

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me

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# Day 4

## THE ENEMIES OF MAN - The Devil

Who is Satan? How does he work? Where did he come from? What is his final destination?

Many humorously imagine that the devil is a figure in a red spandex suit, holding a pitchfork, enticing us to do wrong. In reality the devil is the epitome of evil. All of the hurt and suffering of mankind has its origin in Satan. He is the enemy of God and God's children.

He is *not* the counterpart to God. He is powerful, but does not possess *all* power. He is cunning, but does not have *all* wisdom. He is able to wreak mass destruction, yet he himself *will* be destroyed.

Turn in your Bible and read Isaiah 14:12-17 and Ezekiel 28:12-19. These Scriptures give us background into who Satan is, how he works, where he came from and his fate.

Satan was originally a beautiful cherub or angel. His heart became lifted up with pride because of his beauty and he rebelled against God. In Isaiah 14, we read that five times he proclaimed, 'I will.' He wanted to rule heaven, the angels, the earth and the world. He said, "I will make myself like the Most High." He wanted to be God.

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- Q** **What was the immediate result of Satan's rebellion?** (See Ezekiel 28:16-17 and Luke 10:18)
- Ezekiel 28:16-17 **By the abundance of your trading You became filled with violence within, And you sinned; Therefore I cast you as a profane thing Out of the mountain of God; And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the fiery stones.**
- <sup>17</sup> **" Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, That they might gaze at you.**
- » **Luke 10:18 And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven**

When Satan was cast from heaven, the Bible suggests that he took one-third of the angels with him in his rebellion (2 Peter 2:4 and Revelations 12:4). These fallen angels or demons form Satan's army. In the Old Testament book of Daniel we learn that the demonic angels struggle against God's angels for control of nations, kingdoms and individuals (Daniel 10:13-21).

**Q According to Matthew 25:41 and Revelations 20:10, what is Satan's ultimate destiny?**

Matthew 25:41 Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

- » Revelations 20:10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where<sup>[a]</sup> the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever

Knowing that he will one day be destroyed, Satan relentlessly pursues his course of destruction, blinding the minds of unbelievers (2 Corinthians 4:4) and contending with God's

**Q children. Look up the following verses and briefly comment on what you learn about his tactics.**

- » Matthew 13:19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside
- » Luke 8:12 Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved
- » 2 Corinthians 2:11 Lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices

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2 Corinthians 11:14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light

1 Timothy 3:7 Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil

- » 2 Timothy 2:26 and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will

Satan is very powerful, wise, organized and relentless in his attacks upon believers and non-believers. Man is no match for Satan. The devil is wiser and stronger than we are in our own wisdom and strength. However, God has provided for us to have absolute victory in Satan's attacks. We need not be defeated, deceived, or destroyed by our enemy.

**Q What do you learn about our victory over Satan's attacks following verses?**

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because<sup>[a]</sup> your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

- » James 4:6-10 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup> Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded. <sup>9</sup> Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up

***Foundation Truth:*** As believers in Christ, we have three formidable foes, which we must always be on guard against; this world system, our fallen nature of ungodly desires and the devil.

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## Day 5

### VICTORY IN THE BATTLE

**Q** In this section, we will focus on Ephesians 6:10-18. Read these verses through several times before answering the following questions.

- » **Where does spiritual strength come from?** (v. 10) Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might
- » **How are we able to stand firm against the devil's schemes?** (v. 11)  
Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil

#### The Armor Of God

This spiritual armor has six components. Just as a soldier does not go to battle unless he is fully covered and armed, we must take up the full armor to stand firm in the strength of the Lord. It is important to note that most of the armor relates to the Word of God.

**Q** Fill in the blanks below describing this full armor.

Loins girded with truth  
Breastplate of righteousness  
Shod feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace  
**A** Shield of faith  
Helmet of salvation  
praying at all times  
Sword of the Spirit

Once the armor is in place, the believer is exhorted to all prayer at all times with all perseverance for all the saints. On every occasion and in all seasons we must have intimacy with our Heavenly Father through prayer.

As believers, living for Christ in a fallen world, we will continue to experience spiritual warfare. However, God has promised that we can stand firm in His victory and not be defeated by Satan. God will be faithful to keep us from falling and to deliver us safely to His presence in our heavenly home.

**Q Read Psalm 13:4 What will happen if we neglect to take up God's provision?**

*Lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed against him"; Lest those who trouble me rejoice when I am moved*

***Foundation Truth:*** *God has guaranteed His children absolute victory in our spiritual battles, as we walk in the complete armor He has provided.*

### SATAN'S FLAMING ARROWS

Ephesians 6:16 teaches that the evil one attacks Christians with flaming arrows. Before we study the nature of these arrows, let's first seek understanding through the Scriptures about the tactics Satan uses in these attacks.

**Q What word is used in Genesis 3:1 to describe Satan? Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"**

*Crafty - Wily, insidious, cunning or guile, with exceptional shrewdness.*

**Q Ephesians 6:11 tells us to put on the full armor of God in order to stand firm against what? Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil**

*Schemes - Trickery, strategy, methodical, art, skill or cunning.*

**Q What will Satan attempt to do, using his crafty scheming? See 2 Corinthians 11:3. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity<sup>[a]</sup> that is in Christ**

**Q According to 2 Corinthians 11:14, why do we not always recognize that we are under Satanic attack? And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light**

The following commentary on 2 Corinthians 11:14 from Barnes' Notes accurately describes spiritual warfare and Satan's offensive.



Because our enemy is cunning and knows our weaknesses we must be careful to guard our heart and mind from his attacks. God Word tells us exactly how we must do this.

## GUARDING YOUR HEART AND MIND

**Q** What do you learn from the following Scriptures about guarding your heart and mind from Satanic attacks?

» 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup> For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, <sup>5</sup> 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, <sup>6</sup> and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

» Philippians 4:6-8 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; <sup>7</sup> and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup> Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things

» Isaiah 26:3 You will keep *him* in perfect peace, *Whose mind is stayed on You*, Because he trusts in You

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» Hebrews 4:12 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

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Jesus was tempted by the devil, as recorded in Matthew 4:1-11.

**Q** Read these verses through several times. With each flaming missile from the devil, Jesus responded with the words, it is written. **What does this teach you about victory in spiritual warfare? We should fight Satan with The Word of God and Scripture**

**Q** What did the devil do in verse 11 as a result of Jesus confronting him with the truth of the Word of God? Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him

**Q** Read the instruction and promise in James 4:7 and rewrite the verse. Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you



of honor, respect, trust, morals, innocence, dreams and goals. Marriages are broken, innocent children are devastated and lives are shattered when individuals, refusing God's way, choose instead to fulfill themselves apart from Him.

**Q In our battle against the lusts of our own flesh, what are we instructed to do in**

**2 Timothy 2:22? Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart**

Those who do not know Christ are enslaved to sin, but the child of God has been set free from the grip of sin. **Turn in your**

**Q Bible to Galatians 5:16. What must we do in order to have victory over the lusts of our flesh? I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh**

### **ABIDING IN CHRIST AND WALKING IN THE SPIRIT**

Victory over our flesh and the pull of sin is only possible when we determine moment by moment to abide in an intimate relationship with Christ and walk in the Spirit. This relationship with God does not just happen, but is a continual act of our will, choosing to offer our body, mind, will and emotions to God. We must admit and acknowledge our own depravity; that we are hopeless and helpless without Him, and depend upon Him with the assurance that He will be faithful to receive and strengthen us.

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In Romans 8 we learn that abiding in Christ and walking in the Spirit means,

- Surrendering our minds (thoughts) to God's Spirit (verses 4-8)
- Putting to death the deeds of our flesh and fleshly desires (verse 13)
- Being led by God's Spirit (verse 14)
- Living in the freedom and blessings of being God's child (verses 15-17)
- Being helped in our weaknesses (verse 26)
- Living for God's purposes, rather than our own (verse 28)
- Being conformed to the image of Jesus (verses 29-30)
- Being freely given all things from God (verse 32)
- Being free from condemnation (verses 33-34)
- Experiencing a love relationship with Jesus Christ (verses 35-39)
- Having victory in our trials (verses 35-39)





# End Times ~ Lesson 8

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## End Times

Man has always been both intrigued and fearful of the unknown. The end of the world is the popular theme of many motion pictures today. Television talk shows often leave viewers spellbound with guests giving graphic accounts of their spiritual journeys or New Age experiences. Best-selling books have been written giving testimonies of those who claim to have died and then returned to tell their story. Even the current popularity of angels confirms man's interest in what lies beyond this life.

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Unfortunately, many speaking out today are not speaking reality and truth, but delusion. Some suggest that God is a bright light and that we need not fear death, because we will be embraced by this light when we pass from this life. As Christians, we must be careful and discerning so as not to become deceived. But, how can we know or discern truth from error?

## Day 1

God's Word is the strong foundation upon which all truth stands. Jesus Christ proclaimed Himself to be the only way, the only truth and the only life. In John 14:6 Jesus said "...no man comes to the Father but through Me." Jesus stated in John 10:9 that He was the door, "...if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved..." The test of truth from error is Jesus Christ.

- Is the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ being proclaimed?
- Is confession of sin, surrendering to Christ and obedience to His teaching being promoted?



**Turn in your Bible to Galatians 1:6-9. Use the space below to rewrite the warning contained in these verses. I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, 7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.**

What is the truth about our eternal destiny? What happens when we die? What will heaven be like? In this final lesson, we will answer these questions and explore the biblical teaching about the end times. This will include death, the rapture of the church, the tribulation, the second coming of Jesus Christ, the resurrection, the millennial reign of Christ, the judgements, hell and the believer's eternal heavenly home!

The Bible, written thousands of years ago foretold the events that are now coming to pass. **Read the following passages that describe the world situation during the end times.**

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**Daniel 12:4** “But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

» **Matthew 24:1-14** Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. <sup>2</sup> And Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not *one* stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

<sup>3</sup> Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will* be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

<sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup> For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. <sup>6</sup> And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all<sup>[a]</sup> *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. <sup>7</sup> For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences,<sup>[b]</sup> and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> All *these are* the beginning of sorrows.

<sup>9</sup> “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. <sup>10</sup> And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.

<sup>11</sup> Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. <sup>12</sup> And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

<sup>13</sup> But he who endures to the end shall be saved. <sup>14</sup> And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

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**1 Timothy 4:1,2** Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, <sup>2</sup> speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,

» **2 Timothy 3:1-7** But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: <sup>2</sup> For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful,

unholy, <sup>3</sup> unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, <sup>4</sup> traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>5</sup> having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! <sup>6</sup> For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, <sup>7</sup> always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

These events have always occurred but their frequency and intensity will build as the earth prepares for the second coming of Christ. The Bible likens the end times activities to a woman in labor. The contractions become stronger and closer together as the time approaches to give birth.

### THE DEATH OF THE BELIEVER

Death is a fearful fact of life. In fact, in Job 18:14 death is called “*the king of terrors*”. God has instilled within each of us the will to survive. As believers in Jesus Christ, we need not live this life fearing death or hopelessly grieving over saved loved ones who have passed away, but should be diligent to share the good news of Jesus Christ with those who are perishing without the knowledge of the Savior. **Read the following Scriptures and write what you learn about the death of the believer.**



- » Hebrews 2:14,15 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage
- » 1 Thessalonians 4:13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.
- » Psalm 116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His saints
- » Proverbs 14:32 The wicked is banished in his wickedness, But the righteous has a refuge in his death.

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### THE BOSOM OF ABRAHAM

Before the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, all men who died went to Sheol or Hades. Sheol was located in the heart of the earth and was divided into two compartments, separated by an impassable gulf. One part was called Abraham’s bosom, where all

those men and women of faith went to be comforted by Abraham when they died.

The other part of Sheol was the abode of the wicked, where unbelievers were sent when they died.

**Q Read the story that Jesus taught about Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16:19-31 and write out the main points below.**

Luke 16:19-31

There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. <sup>20</sup> But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, <sup>21</sup> desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell<sup>[a]</sup> from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. <sup>22</sup> So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. <sup>23</sup> And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

<sup>24</sup> "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' <sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. <sup>26</sup> And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

<sup>27</sup> "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, <sup>28</sup> for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' <sup>29</sup> Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' <sup>30</sup> And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' <sup>31</sup> But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead'

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When Jesus was crucified He descended into Hades, emptied it of the righteous and ushered them to Paradise. **Read the following**

**Q verses and write out what you learned.**

**Matthew 12:40** For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth

» **Ephesians 4:8-10**

Therefore He says: " When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive,

And gave gifts to men." 9 (Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first[b] descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things

Today when the righteous die they are immediately taken to Paradise, into the presence of Jesus Christ. In Paradise, God's children are both conscious and comforted by Jesus Christ. Paul was given a vision of Paradise as recorded in 2 Corinthians 12:4. The unrighteous continue to go to Hades to await the resurrection and final judgment. **Read the Scriptures below and answer each question.**

**Q What did the Lord say to the thief on the cross in Luke 23:43?** And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise

**Q What was Paul's desire?** Philippians 1:21-23 For to me, to live Christ, and to die *is* gain. <sup>22</sup> But if I live on in the flesh, this *will mean* fruit from *my* labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. <sup>23</sup> For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better

**Q What was Paul's confidence?** 2 Corinthians 5:1-8 For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, <sup>3</sup> if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. <sup>4</sup> For we who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. <sup>5</sup> Now He who has prepared us for this very thing *is* God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. <sup>6</sup> So *we are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. <sup>7</sup> For we walk by faith, not by sight. <sup>8</sup> We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord

**Q Read the account of the martyrdom of Stephen in Acts 7:54-60. What did he cry out in verse 59?** <sup>59</sup> And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on *God* and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit

**Foundation Truth:** *When Christians pass from this life, they are immediately ushered into the presence of Jesus in Paradise.*

## Day 2

### THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

The *rapture* refers to the event when Jesus Christ will snatch His church out of this world. The phrase *caught up* is found in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. It is the Greek word *harpazo*, which means to be *snatched away*. The Latin equivalent is the word *rapio*,

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where we get the word rapture. **Turn in your Bible to the following Scriptures and write the key points.**

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 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. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words

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**1 Corinthians 15:49-58** And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear[a] the image of the heavenly Man.

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, 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. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”[b]

55 “ O Death, where is your sting?[c]

O Hades, where is your victory?”[d]

56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord

» **Matthew 24:36-44** But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven,<sup>[a]</sup> but My Father only. <sup>37</sup> But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>38</sup> For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>40</sup> Then two *men* will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. <sup>41</sup> Two *women* will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. <sup>42</sup> Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour<sup>[b]</sup> your Lord is coming. <sup>43</sup> But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour

the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. <sup>44</sup> Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

» **1 Thessalonians 5:1-11** But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. 11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing

God's Word teaches that at the rapture of the church Jesus Christ will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel and with a trumpet blast. What a day that will be! The believers who have died and been in God's presence in paradise, will be resurrected and, together with living Christians, will be transformed "in the twinkling of an eye" and receive glorified bodies patterned after Christ's own resurrected body. Our earthly bodies, made of the dust of the earth are temporary. Our heavenly bodies will be eternal, suited for eternal life in heaven.

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What will our glorified heavenly bodies be like? Will we have actual physical bodies? The answers to these questions are found as we read about the body of Jesus after His resurrection. **Turn in your**

**Q Bible to Luke 24:31, 36-43 and John 20:19-29 and use the space below to describe what you learn.**

**Luke 24:31** Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight

» **Luke 24:36-43** Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you."<sup>37</sup> But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit.<sup>38</sup> And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?<sup>39</sup> Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."

<sup>40</sup> When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>41</sup> But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled,

He said to them, "Have you any food here?" <sup>42</sup> So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>43</sup> And He took *it* and ate in their presence.

» **John 20:19-29** Then, the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled,<sup>[a]</sup> for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace *be* with you." <sup>20</sup> When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

<sup>21</sup> So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." <sup>22</sup> And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained."

<sup>24</sup> Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord."

So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

<sup>26</sup> And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" <sup>27</sup> Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

<sup>28</sup> And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

<sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, "Thomas,<sup>[b]</sup> because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed

**Foundation Truth:** *Believers will receive their perfected, heavenly bodies at the rapture of the church.*

## THE GREAT TRIBULATION

According to Job 5:7, "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." Jesus warned His disciples in John 16:33, "in the world you shall have tribulation." An undeniable and inescapable reality of life is the presence of problems, trials, and tribulation. We all experience minor irritations and disappointments, and sometimes, major hurts and sorrows. However, the great tribulation is a specific seven-year period in which God pours forth His wrath and judgement upon an unbelieving world.

In the days of Noah, God removed the righteous before bringing judgement and wrath upon the earth with the flood. Likewise, before God again brings mass judgement upon the earth with the





verses 7-8

5. Christians converted during tribulation are martyred – verses 9-11
6. Terror and environmental disasters - verses 12-17

### The Seven Trumpets

The breaking of the seventh seal in Revelation 8:1 is followed by silence in heaven, then a series of seven trumpet sounds. As the angels sound forth the first six trumpets, the earth continues to experience the wrath of God until the seventh trumpet, which announces the coming reign of Christ. Follow along in your Bible Revelation 8:2-9:21 and 11:15-19.

1. One-third of the earth burned up - 8:7
2. One-third of the sea becomes blood - 8:8-9
3. One-third of the rivers are made bitter - 8:10-11
4. The moon and one-third of the stars are darkened - 8:12-13
5. Tormenting creatures are released from the bottomless pit - 9:1-12
6. One-third of mankind is annihilated by an invading army - 9:13-21
7. Thunder, lightning, earthquake and hail storm - 11:15-19

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### The Six Bowls of Wrath

At the blast of the last trumpet, another series of judgements is poured forth, described in Revelation 16 as seven bowls filled with the wrath of God.

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1. Sores appear on those who bear the mark of the beast v2
2. The sea becomes blood and all sea life is killed - verse 3
3. The rivers and springs of water become blood - verse 4
4. The sun scorched men with fire - verse 8
5. The kingdom of the beast became darkened - verse 10
6. The Euphrates dried up to prepare for the coming battle v12
7. Lightning, thunder and a great earthquake - verses 17-18

### The Battle of Armageddon

As the sixth bowl of God's judgement is emptied, it ushers in the great battle of God, the battle of Armageddon (16:13-16). The kings of the earth and their armies will be gathered to battle for on last world war. With the modern development of atomic weapons, and their destructive possibilities, the potential for warfare to totally destroy mankind is very real. This war ends in the final return of Jesus Christ to this earth. The Lord will return to save mankind from absolute annihilation!

**Foundation Truth:** *The tribulation is a seven-year period, following the rapture of the church, when God will pour forth His wrath upon those who have rejected His Son.*

## Day 3

### THE HEAVENLY SCENE

While the world is experiencing the outpouring of God's wrath, the raptured church is in heaven with Jesus! Two great events are taking place in heaven; the judgement (bema) seat of Christ and the marriage supper of the Lamb.

### THE JUDGEMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

Jesus Christ took the judgement for our sin on the cross. We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus. The judgement seat of Christ is not a judgement of condemnation. All believers will stand before Christ and be judged and awarded for their faithfulness and service. **What do you learn about the judgement seat of Christ from the following Scriptures?**



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**1 Corinthians 3:11-15** For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire

» **1Corinthians 4:5** Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God

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» **2 Corinthians 5:9-11** Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. <sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. <sup>11</sup> Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences

**Q** Like the crowns awarded to contestants in the Olympic games, believers will be awarded crowns. **Read the following references and list these crowns**

- A**
- 2 Timothy 4:7,8 - The Crown of **RIGHTEOUSNESS**
  - James 1:12 - The Crown of **LIFE**
  - 1 Peter 5:4 - The Crown of **GLORY**

**Q** **Because of our love for Christ and awe in His presence, what will we do with our crowns?** Revelation 4:10-11

the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

<sup>11</sup> “ You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power;

For You created all things, And by Your will they exist<sup>[b]</sup> and were created

### **THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB**

After the judgement seat of Christ, the entire body of Christ will sit down together with Christ and partake of a banquet, the marriage supper of the Lamb. Christ will finally be joined for eternity to His bride (the church). **Describe the supper below.**

**Q**

Revelation 19:6-9 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the<sup>[a]</sup> Lord God Omnipotent reigns! <sup>7</sup> Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” <sup>8</sup> And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

<sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God

» **Matthew 26:29** But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom

» **Luke 12:37** Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down *to eat*, and will come and serve them

» **Luke 14:15** Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, “Blessed is he who shall eat bread<sup>[a]</sup> in the kingdom of God

## THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

The second coming of Jesus Christ will be one of the most dramatic events of all time! Christ's first coming to earth was marked with lowliness; born in a stable in an obscure village to a poor virgin, and heralded by common shepherds. His second coming will be a full display of His awesome power and glory.

At the completion of the marriage supper of the Lamb, Christ, along with the church, will rise from the supper table, mount white horses, and return to the earth as the battle of Armageddon rages. **Read**

**Q Revelation 19:11-21 and describe the scene.**

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had[a] a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean,[b] followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp[c] 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. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,[d] 18 that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free[e] and slave, both small and great." 19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. 20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh

Christ will come to the earth with His church to execute final judgment upon unrepentant mankind. **Read the following**

**Q exciting verses and write what you learn about the second coming of Christ.**

**Zechariah 14:1-4** Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, And your spoil will be divided in your midst. 2 For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off

from the city. 3 Then the LORD will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle.

4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two,

From east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south

» **Matthew 24:27-31** For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 28 For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other

» **Acts 1:11** who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven

» **Revelation 1:7** Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen

***Foundation Truth:*** After Christ gathers His Church to heaven at the rapture, the believers will be given rewards for faithful service, join Him in the marriage supper and accompany Him as He returns to the earth for His second coming.

## Day 4

### THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST

The millennium will be the thousand-year period following the second coming of Christ. Satan will be bound. Christ will set up His kingdom upon the earth. The raptured saints, along with the tribulation saints ( Revelation 6:9-11), will reign with Christ. **Read the following verses and describe the millennium.**

Q

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**Isaiah 2:1-5** The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem <sup>2</sup> Now it shall come to pass in the latter days *That* the mountain of the LORD's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains,

And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say,

“Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.”

For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup> He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore. O house of Jacob, come and let us walk In the light of the LORD.

» **Isaiah 11:5-10** Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist. <sup>6</sup> “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. <sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

<sup>8</sup> The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> “And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious

» **Revelation 20:1-6** Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. <sup>2</sup> He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; <sup>3</sup> and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

<sup>4</sup> And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a<sup>[a]</sup> thousand years. <sup>5</sup> But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years



name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father

As they stand before the white throne of God, the unsaved will acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ, unto their condemnation, not unto salvation.

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## Hell

Many people reject the biblical doctrine of hell and reason that because God is a God of love He would never send anybody to hell. God is a God of love but does not send anybody to hell. He provided a way of escape through the blood of His Son. Therefore, people choose hell for themselves by rejecting the Savior. See John 3:16-21.

## Q What is God's heart toward man regarding hell and judgement?

Read 1 Timothy 2:3-6 and 2 Peter 3:9  
1 Timothy 2:3-6

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father

### » 2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance

### » Summarize what you learn in Psalm 7:8-12.

The LORD shall judge the peoples; Judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, And according to my integrity within me.

<sup>9</sup> Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, But establish the just;

For the righteous God tests the hearts and minds.

<sup>10</sup> My defense *is* of God, Who saves the upright in heart.

<sup>11</sup> God *is* a just judge, And God is angry *with the wicked* every day.

<sup>12</sup> If he does not turn back, He will sharpen His sword; He bends His bow and makes it ready

God is a righteous judge who has a right to judge! If sinners refuse to repent and receive forgiveness God will judge them. Jesus brought grace to man but also boldly taught the reality of hell. Read the summarize the following teachings of Christ.

### » Matthew 13:42

And will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth

» Matthew 13:50  
And cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth

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Matthew 25:41  
Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels

» Matthew 25:46  
And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life

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

**Foundation Truth:** Christ taught that whoever rejects Him will face condemnation and judgement.

## Day 6

### A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH

When Jesus was preparing His disciples for His ascension to heaven, He sought to stir up within them a longing for heaven.

**Q** Read the following Scriptures and summarize Jesus' words.

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John 14:1-3  
Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup> In My Father's house are many mansions;<sup>[a]</sup> if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also

» John 16:22 Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you

Heaven is the place of supreme happiness because it is our Father's house. He is the head of His house. Everything about heaven reflects His holiness and glory. As members of God's household in heaven, we will live eternally in absolute peace, security and fulfillment. Never again will we know fear, sorrow, suffering, loneliness or hardship.

### THE GLORY OF HEAVEN

In God's word we get a glimpse into the things that our Father has prepared for us. As you read Revelation 21 and 22 let God minister to you, encourage you as He reveals heaven to you and stirs up within your heart a longing for the Father's house!

**Q Complete the spaces below, describing heaven.**

**A**

- Heaven is a place where God (21:3) will dwell with people
- God will (21:4) wipe away every tear from their eyes
- There will be no (21:4) more death, nor sorrow, nor crying
- God makes all things (21:5) new
- The one who thirsts (21:6) water of life freely to him who thirsts
- He who overcomes will (21:7) inherit all things
- Heaven is brilliant, like (21:11) a jasper stone, clear as crystal
- The wall is made of (21:18-20) jasper
- The 12 gates are made of (21:21) twelve pearls
- The streets are made of (21:21) pure gold
- The temple in heaven is (21:22) Lord God Almighty and the Lamb
- Heaven is illuminated by (21:23) the Glory of God
- The gates will never (21:25) shut
- The citizens are those who (21:27) are written in the Lamb's Book of Life
- In heaven, there is a river of (22:1) water of life, clear as crystal
- There a tree of (22:2) life
- There is no (22:3) more curse
- There is a (22:3) throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it
- In heaven we will (22:3-5) reign forever and ever

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Though we long to go to heaven, it is very human and natural to have questions and concerns. Will I still be me when I get to heaven? Will I know and recognize my loved ones? Will I remember this life? Carefully read the following Scriptures which address these questions.

- In Luke 16:19-31, Lazarus and the rich man retained their identity.
- In Matthew 17:2-3 Moses and Elijah were recognizable as themselves when they appeared to Jesus, Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration.
- In Mark 16:9-14 the disciples recognized Jesus Christ after His resurrection.
- In Philippians 4:3 we learn that our names are recorded in the Book of Life, signifying our eternal individuality and identity.

***Foundation Truth:*** Heaven is a wonderful place, which God is preparing for all believers, where we will finally enjoy absolute love, joy, peace, freedom, fulfillment, and a right relationship with God and others.

## Day 7

### CONCLUSION

We began these lessons by looking up to the heavens and pondering our God who is enthroned on high. He created all things and continues to sustain His creation. Two thousand years ago He visited this earth in order to redeem the lost. Jesus Christ, the Son of God provided salvation for man by shedding His blood on the cross. The Holy Spirit dwells in each believer, empowering us to live a sanctified life. Our Heavenly Father has prepared a home for us and someday He will welcome each of His children home. How should we, who have put our trust in Jesus Christ, respond to the goodness of God?

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**Q** In 2 Peter 3:3-18 we are challenged to consider both God's judgement, and our own conduct and behavior. **Fill in the blanks below.**

Verse 11 - I should be conducting myself

Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness

» Verse 12- 13 - I ought to be looking for and hastening looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? <sup>13</sup> Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells

» Verse 14 - I must be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless

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98 Verse 17 - I need to be on guard against being led away with the error of the wicked

» Verse 18 - I should be growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

