

Introduction

1. Read or quote the text. Two thoughts immediately strike one:
 - a. How wonderful it would be if everyone believed and followed the teachings of these verses.
 - b. How much trouble and misery in this world is caused by the inability of people to get along with one another.
 - (1) Parents can't get along with their children
 - (2) Employers can't get along with their employees
 - (3) Husbands can't get along with their wives
 - (4) The President can't get along with Congress
2. It is almost inevitable that differences will arise and it is also probable that the improper handling of these differences does more to hinder the spread of Christianity than either man's love of sin or his simple ignorance.
 - a. Our differences often end in unhappiness and bitterness
 - b. Friendship of years are broken
 - c. Christian influence is destroyed
 - d. People turn from Christ and his church in disgust over the behavior of professing Christians
3. The Bible speaks so clearly to our needs that its relevance cannot be rationally questioned. The Bible clearly speaks to our needs in how to get along with others.

Discussion.I. THE TRUTH; NOT LIES.

- A. Lying is one of those too common vices that destroy personal relationships.
 1. It is the way we choose to try to avoid embarrassing situations.
 2. It is the way we try to get out of unpleasant tasks.
 3. It is the way that produces moral deterioration and is really productive of no good.
- B. Paul wrote "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor . . ." Eph. 4:25.
 1. Our relationships would be on a much sounder basis if we could trust one another to be absolutely truth at all times.
 2. The special reason given for this relation in truthfulness is our relation to each other as members of Christ and therefore to one another.
- C. Lying is not the way to get along with one another.

II. RECONCILIATION; NOT ANGER.

- A. Anger is another destroyer of good relationships with others.
 1. True, there is such a thing as righteous anger---indignation at the sight of cruelty, injustice, and the like.
 2. But when anger is simply selfish resentment, then it is sin and must not be allowed to linger.
- B. Paul wrote "Be ye angry and sin not . . ." Eph. 4:26,27
 1. Learning to control one's temper would help considerably to make this world a better place.
 2. Jesus admonishes us to strive to be reconciled to our brother. Matt. 5:21-24

III. WORK; NOT THEFT.

- A. Another principle for getting along with others is stated quite simply---we must not meet "our needs, or greeds, at the exp ense of others, robbing ~~our~~ neighbors of the fruit of their labors to cover our own indolence."
- B. All of us are thankful that we live in a land that wants to help those who are poor, handicapped, orphaned, or incompetant, but we get quite upset, and rightly so, when we find this effort is being abused by those who are able, but indolent.
- C. The Bible clearly teaches "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." Eph. 4:28.
 1. One can not only steal cash and goods but one can steal time from his employer.
 2. We are not only to work to fill our own needs, but to help others who cannot support themselves.

IV. EDIFICATION; NOT OBSCENITY.

- A. "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." Col. 4:6
- B. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." Eph. 4:29
 - 1. So much of the conversation today is speiced with dirty language, cursing, and filth and has no redeeming value nad makes for trouble between those who use it.
 - 2. There is the lowering of the spiritual temperature of one when he engages in the use of filthy language.
- C. Filthy language is not the only kind of corrupt speech there is tale-bearing, false witness, contentiousness, etc.
- D. Language that leads to good relationships is language that edifies, builds up, and helps others.

V. FORGIVENESS; NOT RESENTMENT

- A. Eph. 4:31,32
- B. Bitterness and resentment will hurt both parties, but kindness and forgiveness will be helpful to both.
- C. Having received forgiveness from God we must be willing to forgive others, and a failure to forgive will not only affect our relationship with others, but also with God. Lk. 17:3,4; Mk. 11:25,26

VI. LOVE ; NOT DISCRIMINATION.

- A. Discrimination is always destructive of good relationships. Jas . 2:8,9; 1-4
- B. Discrimination and love are mutually incompatible. In the church of Christ, social, reacial, and economic barriers have no place, but only love which grants equal privileges and responsibilities to all.
- C. Discrimination is at the heart of much of the trouble between people today.

VII. WORKS; NOT JUST FAITH.

- A. There is no doctrine taught today that does more to alienate men from men and men from God then the doctrine that say all a man had to do is just believe.
- B. James denies the doctrine of faith only. Jas. 2:14-17
 - 1. It is no faith that does not express itself by love.
 - 2. The faith that works by love is the faith that makes for fellowship with God and a right relationship with our fellowmen as well.

Conclusion

- 1. Some of the principles for getting along with others are: the truth not lies; reconciliation not anger; work not theft; edification not obscenity; forgiveness not resentment; love not discrimination; and works not just faith."
- 2. All these have to do with human behavior. "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only" (Jas. 1:22)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Our age is one in which men think in terms of greatness.
2. What is the greatest thing on earth?
 - a. Some might answer the hydrogen bomb because of its destructive force.
 - b. Some might answer our country and it is great despite its weaknesses and faults.
 - c. Some might answer our school system and it is one of the greatest on earth.
 - d. Some might answer our economic system.
3. All of the above are great but the New Testament church is the greatest institution. Because some do not accept this fact, let's observe some reasons why.

DISCUSSION:

- I. THE CHURCH IS THE GREATEST INSTITUTION IN THE WORLD BECAUSE OF ITS DIVINE ORIGIN.
 - A. It originated in the mind of God. Eph. 3:8-11.
 - B. It was prophesied by the prophets. Isa. 2:2,3; Dan. 2:44,45.
 - C. It was built by Jesus Christ. Matt. 16:13-19.
 - D. It is guided by the Holy Spirit through the truth. Jn. 16:13.
- II. THE CHURCH IS THE GREATEST INSTITUTION IN THE WORLD BECAUSE OF ITS NATURE.
 - A. Daniel's prophecy shows its nature was to be unlike other kingdoms. Dan. 2:44,45.
 - B. The angel announced to Mary the eternal nature of the kingdom. Lk. 1:33.
 - C. Jesus announced that his kingdom was not of this world. Jn. 18:36.
 1. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. 2 Cor. 10:4.
 2. We are not fighting flesh and blood. Eph. 6:10-18.
 - D. Paul declared it is a kingdom that cannot be moved. Heb. 10:28.
- III. THE CHURCH IS THE GREATEST INSTITUTION BECAUSE OF THE PRICE PAID FOR IT.
 - A. Every institution that has ever been built cost a price. Schools, hospitals, church buildings, etc.
 - B. The price paid for the church was the precious blood of Christ. Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 6:19,20; 1 Pet. 1:18,19.
- IV. THE CHURCH IS THE GREATEST INSTITUTION IN THE WORLD BECAUSE SALVATION FROM SINS IS FOUND IN NO OTHER.
 - A. The Lord added to the church. Acts 2:47.
 - B. Salvation is in Christ. 2 Tim. 2:10.
 - C. The church is his spiritual body. Col. 1:19.
 - D. Christ is Savior of the body. Eph. 5:23.
 - E. The church encompasses all of God's family on earth. 1 Tim. 3:14,15.
- V. THE CHURCH IS THE GREATEST INSTITUTION IN THE WORLD BECAUSE IT HAS THE GREATEST HEAD.
 - A. The greatness of any institution generally depends on the head or leader.
 - B. Jesus Christ is head of the church.
 1. He is the head with all authority. Mt. 28:18.
 2. He is the head under which all things have been placed. Eph. 1:22,23.
 - C. The church has no earthly head or headquarters but always looks to Christ who leads her in the paths of righteousness.

CONCLUSION:

1. The church of my Lord is the greatest institution on earth because of its divine origin, her nature, price paid, salvation enjoyed therein, and her head.
2. You need to belong to the church, exalt her before the world and lead others to become members.

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 - D. It is called by the Holy Spirit through the truth. 1st Jn. 1:9.
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CONCLUSION

1. The church of my Lord is the greatest institution on earth because of its divine origin, her nature, price paid, salvation enjoyed, eternally, and her head.
2. You need to believe in the church, exalt her before the world and lead others to become members.

Introduction.

1. Does having the favor and respect of the people with whom we associate have any part in Christianity? "If men recommend a medicine they do not take, or exhort to obedience of a law which they do not themselves obey, or seek to inspire admiration for a virtue which they wear only as a cloak, or affect a love to the Savior which ends in no self-denial or sacrifice, they are hypocrites, and men despise them."
2. The success of an individual christian and of the church, as a whole, in a community may well be determined by the community's attitude toward them.
3. The Jerusalem church was a growing, successful church because:

Discussion.

I. IT WAS A RESPECTED CHURCH.

- A. "Praising God, and having favor with all the people." (A. 2:47) "respected by all the people." (Goodspeed)
- B. "And great grace was upon them all." (A. 4:33.)
- C. "But the people magnified them." (A. 5:13) *"held them in high esteem."*
- D. The Jerusalem church was a respected church because:
 1. It was a steadfast church. (A. 2:42) A church with conviction.
 2. It was a God-fearing church. (A. 2:43 Don't limit to church.)
 3. It was a united church. (A. 2:44) Division turn men from Christ, but unity to him. Jn. 17:20, 22.
 4. It was a church that took care of the poor. (A. 2:45)
 5. It was a church that was regular in her worship to God. (A. 2:46)
 6. It was a happy church. (A. 2:46)
 7. It was a church that faced her problems. (A. 6:1-5)
 8. It was a church that was interested in the souls of men everywhere. (A. 8:4; 11:22)

II. FAVOR AND RESPECT OF THOSE ABOUT US SHOULD BE HIGHLY DESIRED.

- A. "Popular favor should be regarded not as an end in itself, but as a means of promoting the Divine glory and human welfare."
 1. Joseph's favor with Potiphar (Gen. 39:4), the prison keeper (Gen. 39:21) and finally with Pharaoh enabled him to save his people during the famine.
 2. Samuel's great favor in the sight of the Lord and man enabled him to be Israel's greatest judge. (1 Sam. 2:26)
 3. Esther's favor in the eyes of all that saw her (Esther 2:15) and the king placed her in a position to save the Jews from Haman's evil desire.
 4. Daniel's great favor in the eyes of the "prince of the eunuch" enabled him to obey God and still meet the king's wishes. (Dan. 1:9)
 5. Jesus Christ increased in "favor with God and man." (Lk. 2:52)
 6. Cornelius, before his conversion, has a "good report" of the Jews. (A. 10:22)

- B. God requires a man appointed as an elder of the church "to have a good report of them which are without." (1 Tim. 3:7)

III. WHY MAY A CHURCH NOT BE RESPECTED IN A COMMUNITY?

- A. Prejudice. (Emphasize the power of prejudice)
 1. Prejudice kept the Jews from accepting Stephen's sermon, as recorded in Acts 7. (Acts 6:9-14).
 2. Prejudice keeps many communities from showing respect to the church even though the lives of the members may merit it.
- B. Ungodly church members tolerated by the church in her midst.
 1. Paul condemned the church in Corinth for tolerating a fornicator- (1 Cor. 5:1-5)

2. Paul commanded the church at Thessalonica to withdraw from those that walk disorderly. (2 Thess. 3:6)
3. One of the things the Lord had against the church in Pergamos was their having Balaamites and Nicolaitans in their midst. Rev. 2:14, 15.
4. Toleration of ungodliness will soon lead to disrespect and more ungodliness.

C. Haughtiness with the truth.

1. Those that have the truth are responsible for "speaking" it in love. Eph. 4:15.
2. Those that have the truth are responsible to instruct "in meekness those that oppose themselves." 2 Tim. 2:25.
3. Having the truth does not give one license to be haughty and disrespectful and cause others to disrespect the truth and the church.

D. Members of the church allowing many things to come between them and putting the kingdom first. (Ballgames, company, parties, visiting, etc)

III. SOME WAYS THE CHURCH MAY GAIN AND KEEP THE RESPECT OF THE COMMUNITY.

- A. By never forsaking mercy and truth. Prov. 3:3, 4.
- B. By every member of the church living a godly life in the community.
 1. Christians are to so live among the nations that even though they speak evil of us, they may be constrained to respect us and glorify God. 1 Pet. 2:12.
 2. Christians are to so live that those that speak evil of them may be ashamed. 1 Pet. 3:16.
 3. Christians are to so live that the enemies of Christ will never have the opportunity to speak disrespectful. 2 Sam. 12:14; 1 Tim. 5:14; Tit. 2:5.
- C. By serving Christ in "righteousness, and peace, and joy." Rom. 14:17, 18.
- D. By following in the steps of Christ (1 Pet. 2:21) who "increased... in favor with God and man." Lk. 2:52.
- E. By following the example of the Jerusalem church in being steadfast, God-fearing, united, liberal, zealous, hospitable, happy and thankful.

Conclusion.

The early church and the apostles were very successful. One reason was their gaining the confidence and respect of the people. Surely the souls of men are enough incentive for us to so live as to be respected, "not as an end in itself, but as a means of promoting the Divine glory and human welfare."

BUILDING THE CHURCH THROUGH PENETRATING THE WORLD WITH THE GOSPEL

Rom. 1:16,17-----

Introd.

1. To the church has been committed the tremendous responsibility of making known to the world "the manifold wisdom of God." Eph. 3:8-10.
2. The church is the "pillar and ground of the truth." 1 Tim. 3:14,15.
3. All of this means the church must penetrate the world with the gospel if she would build and grow. By penetrating the world we mean reaching and moving people to accept Christ.
4. Let us consider then:

Dis.

- I. THE CHURCH IS THE SPIRITUAL BUILDING OF GOD.
 - A. It is called the building of God. Eph. 2:19-21.
 - B. It has a builder. Jesus Christ. Mt. 16:18; Heb. 3:1-6
 - C. It has a foundation. Mt. 16:13-18; 1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20.
 - D. It is build of living stones. 1 Pet. 2:5.
- II. THE CHURCH IS TO BE EDIFIED--BUILT UP SPIRITUALLY AND NUMERICALLY.
 - A. "That the church may receive edifying . . ." 1 Cor. 14:5.
 - B. ". . . seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church." 1 Cor. 14:12.
 - C. "Let all things be done unto edifying." 1 Cor. 14:26.
 - D. ". . . but we do all things . . . for your edifying." 2 Cor. 12:19.
 - E. Other scriptures. Eph. 4:12,16,29.
 - F. The "word of his grace" is able to build us up. Acts 20:32; 1 Pet. 2:1,2.
 - G. If the word is able to build us up, and it is, this means:
- III. THE CHURCH MUST ACCEPT THE LORD'S WORD AS TO HOW TO PENETRATE THE WORLD WITH THE GOSPEL.
 - A. In accepting the Lord's word the church must first come to recognize that her own devised ways and means of penetrating the world" have largely failed.
 1. Some advocate greater participation in the social and civic affairs of the community, but, important as these things are, they have reached very few people.
 2. Some advocate bigger "Campaigns for Christ" and they do help make the church better known, but they have largely failed to bring great crowds outside of the church.
 3. Some have even advocated a "Crash Seminar" where all the brains of the brotherhood could get together and come up with a new idea or two.
 4. But everyone knows that all these ways and means, important as they may be have largely failed to make the Master and his message welcome to most of the world. Why? It's about time we paid attention to the Lord's word regarding the ways and means of penetrating the world with the gospel.
 - B. If the church is to grow and penetrate the world with the gospel she must be the light of the world and her good works be so abundant that the world will see and glorify God. Mt. 5:14-16.
 1. Jesus Christ went about doing good (Acts 10:38) and such deeds penetrated the world.
 2. Nicodemus was impressed by the works Jesus did. Jn. 3:1,2.
 3. Just as a tree is known by its fruit (Mt. 7:17) so the church of our Lord is to be known by its fruit (Deeds). Two questions could well be asked of the church as a whole or individual Christians:
 - a. What do ye more than others? Mt. 5:46,47.
 - b. How much more appreciation does the world have for the works of the church of Christ than she has for any other religious body in town?
 4. All of this means in very simple language that the world must see more than just a group of religionists that are long on profession and short on practice.
 - a. Pure and undefiled religion is a religion that does. Jas. 1:22-27; 2:14-16.
 - b. To say and do not is hypocritical. Mt. 23:1,2.

- C. If the church is to grow and penetrate the world with the gospel there must be greater love on the part of Christians toward each other. **Jn. 13:35; 1 Thess. 4:9,10.**
- D. If the church is to grow and penetrate the world with the gospel there must be a happy combination of public preaching and benevolence.
1. Do you realize that every time the Holy Spirit spoke of the Jerusalem church growing---penetrating the world---that penetration was in direct connection with preaching and benevolence.
 2. **Acts 2:47**----"favor with all the people"---daily additions. Why? **Acts 2:45.**
 3. **Acts 4:4**----"howbeit many of them which heard the word believed . . ." **Acts 3 and 4.**
 4. **Acts 4:33**----"and great grace was upon them all." **Acts 4:32.**
 5. **Acts 5:14**----"And believers were the more added to the Lord . . ."
 6. **Acts 6:7**----"And the word of God increased . . ." Provision for the widows.
- E. If the church is to grow and penetrate the world with the gospel there must be personal evangelism.
1. The apostles taught "daily in the temple, and in every house." **Acts 5:42.**
 2. Upon the persecution the Christians went everywhere preaching the word. **Acts 8:4.**
 3. Paul taught publickly and from house to house. **Acts 20:20**
 4. Christians are saved to save others. **Rom. 7:4.**

Conclusion

1. We may not like the conclusion, but let's face the fact squarely---"the early church had more concern about the ministry to the needs of humanity than we do" and the church grew tremendously. "But the same church, in our modern day, has lost the emphasis, altered its method of evangelism, and wonders why it gets a blank stare and cold shoulder from the world.
2. "Jesus designed the church to be in favor of the people, and for the world to glorify our Father because of the service we render in the world . . . The church will have that favor, that reception, that success in evangelising the world when it obeys the Lord, and when by its life and work it deserves that favor.
3. Then and only then will our preaching be as effective as it should. Then will we penetrate the world with our message, and more, we will save ourselves and them that hear us.

A CHURCH ON THE MARCH

Mt. 28:18-20-

Introduction.

1. When Jesus Christ gave these orders he was telling us to loose our tongues and speak the good news. The story is told that "when Cyrus stormed the capital city of the rich Lydian King Croesus, the defeated monarch put on his royal robes, mounted his throne, and awaited the end. When the king's son, who had been tongue-tied from birth, saw a savage Persian warrior about to impale his father on the point of a javelin, the awful agony of the hour caused him to break the bands that bound his tongue, and he cried, 'Persian, spare my father.'" (Willie White, "The Greatest Work In The World", p. 21) Lost souls are in far greater danger than death on the end of a Persian spear and we must break the bands that bind our tongues and speak for Jesus.
2. When Jesus gave these orders he was telling us to march for Him.
 - a. Bro. Ira North has written a book "You Can March For The Master."
 - b. "There is an old story told of Czar Peter, the "mad czar" of Russia. The Story informs us that Czar Peter had a royal body-guard, the elite of his troops, and that he was inordinately proud of his band. One day the Czar called his royal body-guard before him for inspection. How proudly he surveyed these crack troops. Suddenly his face became livid with rage: he had espied, on the coat of one of the soldiers, a button unbuttoned. One of his elite was careless in his dress. In a mad fit of rage, of which he was quite capable, Czar Peter said, "About face!" and his royal body-guard did an about face, turning to the north. Czar Peter said, "March!" and the soldiers marched--northward through the palace gates--northward through the streets--northward out of the city and through the countryside. The story tells us that the royal body-guard of Czar Peter marched to their death in the frozen wastes of Siberia, because a mad commander said, "March," and never gave the order to halt." (Willie White, p. 18) The Captain of your salvation and mine gave you and me the order to "Go" and he has never given the command to stop.
3. This is why it is so important that the church be on the march. Let's consider:

Discussion.

- I. THE CHURCH IS GOD'S ARMY. **REV. 19:19.**
 - A. Jesus Christ is the commander and captain of this army. **Isa. 55:4; Heb. 2:10.**
 - B. Each Christian is a soldier in the army. **2 Tim. 2:3,4.**
 - C. The enemy that we are fighting is the forces of evil. **Eph. 6:10-12**
 - D. The weapons used in this war are quite different from those used in most wars. **2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:10-18.**
 - E. We are assured of victory in this war. **Rev. 12:11; 17:14.**
- II. THE CHURCH (GOD'S ARMY) IS ON THE MARCH THEN, WHEN:
 - A. Her leaders (the elders) are constantly following the orders of the great commander to lead on to new fields.
 1. Jesus gave the order to march "Go!" **Mt. 28:19.**
 2. Elders must keep the army moving.
 3. This congregation will march as long as the elders stay ahead in leading.
 - B. She is actively engaged in mission work both at home and abroad.
 1. the church at Jerusalem was on the march because her members were engaged in going to others. **Acts 5:42; 8:4.**
 2. The church at Antioch sent out missionaries. **Acts 13; 16; 18.**
 3. The church mere must enlarge her mission program.
 - C. She carries on a benevolent program that fulfills the needs of the community and influences people.
 1. The church at Jerusalem looked after the needy. **Acts 6:1.**
 2. The church at Antioch. **Acts 11:27-30.**
 3. The church here will march only as she helps the people of the community her own, and those afar.

D. Every member (soldier) recognizes a personal responsibility to fill his place in the army. Eph. 4:14-16; 1 Cor. 16:13.

Conclusion.

A church will continue to march only so long as she constantly remembers that she is the support of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15) and is to make known the truth of God (Eph. 3:10). Remember, we are assured of victory because the great commander is able to deliver us from our sins and keep us to the end. (Eph. 3:20; 2 Tim. 1:12)

Song: "He Is Able To Deliver Thee."

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Introduction.

1. The day of the gospel meeting is past is a statement heard on every hand. Compare this with Paul's statement: "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1 Cor. 1:20)
2. "It is true the day is past when we can make a few announcements from the pulpit and in the church bulletins and get attendance. It is true the day is gone when we can depend only on pulpit preaching. There are too many things today to capture and hold people's attention---such as television. We must work hard if a gospel meeting is to be successful." (Otis Gatewood)
3. But the day of preaching the gospel is just as great today as ever (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15,16; Lk. 24:46,47). The responsibility of the church to make known the unsearchable riches (Eph. 3:8-11) and to defend the truth never changes (1 Tim. 3:14, 15) Also Jude 3. The obligation to lead souls to Christ (Rom. 7:4) and to recognize that the harvest is here (Jn. 4:34ff) ever remains.
4. In this study let us consider:

Discussion.

I. WHY ARE WE HAVING A GOSPEL MEETING?

- A. Some might say "We always have one in the spring. Its the things to do." (And to some this may be the only reason fro having a gospel meeting.)
- B. We are having a gospel meeting because the gospel needs to be preached. To preach the gospel is to preach Christ. Acts 8:35; 1 Cor. 2:1,2; 15:1-4.
- C. Why does the gospel need to be preached?
 1. It is God's power to save. Rom. 1:16.
 2. Men cannot come to God and have faith without hearing it. Jn. 6:44,45; Rom. 10:17.
 3. And men are lost. Rom. 3:23; Eph. 2:12.
 - a. Religious people that are following the doctrines of men. Mt. 15:9; 7:21-23; Rom. 10:1-3.
 - b. Good moral individuals are lost. Acts 10:1,6,22; 11:14.
 - c. Men and women that have obeyed the gospel but have gone back into the world (2 Pet. 2:20-22); those that are lukewarm (Rev. 3:14-17) and they need to be restored (Gal. 6:1; Jas. 5:19,20).

II. WHAT IS A SUCCESSFUL GOSPEL MEETING?

- A. Every gospel meeting is a successful meeting. God said my word "shall not return unto me void." (Isa. 55:10,11; cf. 2 Cor. 2:15,16)
- B. Man sets standards as to what determines a successful meeting.
 1. To some a meeting is successful if large crowds attend every night. (Do we depend too much on this?)
 - a. It is true that more people are affected.
 - b. It is true that more are encouraged to come.
 2. To others a meeting is successful if a lot of excitement is stirred up.
 - a. It is wonderful, but doesn't determine success necessarily.
 - b. "Its the lightning that does the damage, not the thunder."
 3. To others a meeting is successful when large numbers respond.
 - a. One of the first questions many people ask is: "Hod many responses did you have" and some determine the caliber of a preacher by the number of responses.
 - b. In fact many people would be surprised at a statement by Bro. Tant. One returning from one meeting he told a brother that it was one of his best. The brother asked excitely "How many baptisms did you have?" To which Bro. Tant replied "None, but we had fourteen withdrawls."
- C. A meeting is successful then:
 1. When the gosple is preached.
 2. When it accomplishes what the elders have in mind for it to accomplish.
 - a. Do we have in mind converting sinners or restoring the erring or both?
 - b. Do we have in mind stirring up the members and to encourage greater participation or what?

III. WHAT I CAN DO FOR THE MEETING?

- A. I can pray three times daily for the meeting. The preacher, song leader, individuals, etc.
- B. I can attend every service because:
 - 1. It will help me to grow into a more mature Christian. **Psa. 1:1,2; 2 Pet. 3:18; 1 Pet. 2:1,2; Heb. 5:12-14.**
 - 2. It will set and inspiring example before other Christians and the world. **Mt. 5:13-16; Phil. 2:14-16.**
 - 3. It will prove my love for God and for my fellowman.
- C. I can bring someone with me during the meeting. (Call by telephone, have them for supper and to the meeting.)
- D. I can be friendly and courteous with all our visitors.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Read or quote the text.
2. "No subject has greater prominence in the Bible than prayer, and yet many Bible students are growing more indifferent to its blessings and privileges." (Nichols and Whitseide).
 - a. "Have you ceased to pray, not because you have reached a definite conviction that prayer is futile, but because you have drifted into a prayerless habit by allowing the 'sweet hour of prayer' to be crowded out by duties that seem to be more pressing and more rewarding?" (Delmar Owens, "Prayers of Paul," p.10)
 - b. Have you become indifferent to prayer?
3. The disciples of our Lord made the request, "Lord, teach us to pray..." Lk. 11:2.
 - a. This is not a strange request, but rather one to be expected.
 - b. If we had been present we would have made the same request. "This request, uttered many centuries ago, still finds its echo in our own hearts."
4. It shall be the purpose of this series of lessons on prayer to deal with some of the following questions:
 - a. What is prayer?
 - b. What prayer is not.
 - c. What are the conditions of acceptable prayer?
 - d. What are some hinderances to prayer?
 - e. What are some specifics for which Christians can and should pray?
 - f. What are the scriptural positions in prayer?
 - g. Does God answer prayer and how?
 - h. What are some ways in which Christians can and should pray?
 - i. Etc.
5. Let's consider in this lesson:

DISCUSSION:

I. WHAT IS PRAYER?

- A. Prayer is both a privilege and a command. Rom. 12:12; Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6; 1 Thess. 5:17,18; 1 Tim. 2:1; Heb. 4:16.
- B. Prayer is as universal as man.
 1. As early as the time of Seth men began "to call upon the name of the Lord." Gen. 4:26.
 2. The Psalmist said all flesh would come unto Him "that heareth prayer." Psa. 65:2.
- C. Prayer is a cry, a supplication unto God. Ex. 22:23,27; Psa. 34:15.
- D. Prayer is the desperate urging and desire of the soul for God. Psa. 42:1,2; 63:1-3.
 1. "It is as natural for a needy man to pray or want to pray as it is for a hungry man to eat or want to eat. The failure to pray is not as bad as the cause of a failure to be God-conscious. Acts 17:28; Jn. 15:5.
 2. In the full Biblical picture it is easy to see that prayer is more committment than receiving.
- E. Prayer is described as:
 1. A beseeching. 2 Kgs. 20:1-3.
 2. Calling upon God. Acts 7:59; 2 Tim. 2:22.
 3. Lifting up the heart. Lam. 3:40.
 4. Lifting up the soul. Psa. 25:1.
 5. Pouring out of the heart. Psa. 62:8.
- F. "Prayer is that exercise of the soul by which it tries its wings in the upper air and seeks acquaintanceship with God." (J. H. Garrison)
- G. "The offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to His will, in the will of the Lord Jesus Christ." (Unknown)
- H. "The learned inform us that the last analysis of the word prayer shows it consists of two words with and vow; and that literally and primarily, it signifies a bind of ourselves to God in prayer, or with a vow."
- I. "Prayer comes from a word in the Hebrew, which signifies appeal, interpellation intercession." (Cruden)
- J. "John Bunyan, author of "Pilgrim Progress" and "Prayer is sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring of the soul to God, through Christ, in the strength and

assistance of the Spirit, for such things as God has promised."

- K. "Jesus conceived of prayers as a means of direct communication with God, as the establishment of a vital contact between himself and that One in whom all men live and move and have their being." ~~(Christ)~~ (Charles Chumley). *John 6:12*

II. WHAT PRAYER IS NOT?

- A. Prayer is not some sort of "stump speech" to God, a kind of vehicle to display one's proficient use of descriptive words.
- B. Prayer is not an emergency device.
1. Some people pray only when they are in need.
 2. Prayer is for all occasions. Phil. 4:6.
- C. Prayer is no substitute for obedience to the will of God.
1. Prayer without obedience won't work. Prov. 28:9.
 2. On the cross, Jesus asked God to forgive his murderers (Lk. 23:34) but it was not without obedience. (Acts 2:37-41).
 3. God will forgive any sin a brother confesses (1 Jn. 1:9) but we cannot ask God to forgive a brother who won't confess.
- E D. Prayer is not to be used to inform God and scorn men. Lk. 18:11,12.
- F E. Prayer is not a means of shaking one's puny fist in God's face and demanding "my will, not thy will be done." "Do this and I'll not serve thee."

III. WHAT ARE SOME HURTFUL THEORIES ABOUT PRAYER?

- A. Many theories, even among professed Christians, have contributed to the neglect of prayer.
1. Many do not ask "What does the Bible say and promise about prayer?"
 2. But "Is it possible for God to answer prayer?"
- B. One theory is based on the argument that God is unchangeable.
1. "Since God is unchangeable our prayers can have no effect."
 2. The unchangeableness of God in times past didn't keep Him from answering prayer, why should it today?
- C. Another theory is based on the argument that God is omniscient.
1. "God knows everything, our needs, and he withholds nothing, therefore there is no need to pray."
 2. It is true God knows everything (our needs, etc. Mt. 6:25-34) but He still tells us to ask.
- D. Still another theory is that miracles have ceased and God cannot answer prayer without violating the laws of nature.
1. First, the above is an assumption and one would have to know everything to prove such a statement.
 2. Second, God's law can operate in one of two ways or even more, and let us not be so presumptuous to assume that we've learned all of God's natural laws.
- E. Another theory is known as the reflex theory.
1. Some say that reflex influence is the only benefit one receives from prayer.
 2. But if reflex influence is the only benefit one receives from prayer then the heathen is as much benefited as the Christian.
 3. "In the very nature of the case the reflex influence is good only when we sincerely pray to one whom we believe hears us and is willing and able to grant us the desires of our heart." (Nichols)
- F. Sometimes Christians say "Some of my religious neighbors make too much of prayer. They have fashioned it into a substitute for many commands of Christ."
1. Beloved should we begin to use the window to go out because they use the door?
 2. The fact that some have abused prayer doesn't mean we should quit praying.

CONCLUSION:

1. There are more things wrought by prayer than the world dreams of.
2. Delmar Owens has well said "If we had more praying elders, deacons, teachers, preachers, and members, and more prayer for those who lead we would quit rolling marbles and begin to move continents in the name of the Lord."

INTRODUCTION:

1. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." (Mt. 13:44-46)
 - a. Jesus truly teaches the value of his church.
 - b. Jesus truly teaches that men ought to be willing to give up everything to obtain it.
2. The importance of the church is being minimized today, even by some who are members.
3. In our first study on this subject we noted five reasons for the greatness of the church and they were:
 - a. Divine origin.
 - b. It's nature
 - c. Price paid
 - d. Salvation therein.
 - e. Its head.
4. In this study, let's consider:

DISCUSSION:

- I. THE CHURCH IS THE GREATEST INSTITUTION IN THE WORLD BECAUSE OF THE EXCEEDING GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES AND BLESSINGS THAT BELONG TO HER MEMBERS.
 - A. The continued removal of all sins as we continue to walk in the light. 1 Jn. 1:7-10.
 - B. The privilege and power of prayer. Phil. 4:6; Eph. 6:18; James 5:16.
 1. Christ intercedes in our behalf. 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 4:14-16; 1 Jn. 2:1.
 2. The Holy Spirit helps in our prayers. Rom. 8:26,27.
 - C. The abiding presence of God and Christ. Jn. 14:23; 15:9,10.
 1. There is peace. Rom. 5:1; Phil. 4:7; Col. 3:15.
 2. This peace found only in Christ. Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 3:15.
 - D. The way of escape when we are tempted. 1 Cor. 10:13.
 - E. God's care for his children in supplying:
 1. Divine guidance for the asking. Jas. 1:5-7.
 2. Physical needs. Mt. 6:33; Mk. 10:28-30; 2 Cor. 9:6-8.
 3. Fatherly chastisement. Heb. 12:5-11.
 - F. The comfort of the Scriptures through life and at death. Jn. 14:1-3; 2 Cor. 5:1; 1 Thess. 4:13-18.
 - G. Assurance of eternal life in the world to come. 1 Pet. 1:3-5; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; Rev. 2:10; 22:14.
- II. THE CHURCH IS THE GREATEST INSTITUTION IN THE WORLD BECAUSE OF HER DIVINE MISSION WHICH IS THREEFOLD.
 - A. The preaching of the gospel to sinful and lost humanity.
 1. The church is the pillar and ground of truth. 1 Tim. 3:14,15.
 2. The church is God's great missionary society for preaching the gospel. Mk. 16:15,16; 2 Tim. 2:2.
 3. The plan followed by the early church got the job done. Acts 1:8; 8:4; 5:42; 20:20.
 - B. The extending of benevolence to the needy. Jas. 1:27; Gal. 6:10.
 1. Paul admonishes all Christians. Eph. 4:28.
 2. The saints at Antioch shared. Acts 11:27-30; cf. Rom. 15:25-27.
 - C. The edifying of her members. 1 Cor. 14:12,36; Eph. 4:14-16.
 1. In the physical realm time, proper food, proper exercise and freedom from disease are essential to growth.
 2. In the spiritual realm it likewise takes:
 - a. Time. Heb. 5:12.
 - b. Proper food. Acts 20:32; 1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:13,14.
 - c. Proper exercise. 1 Tim. 4:7,8; cf. Gal. 6:10.
 - d. Freedom from disease. 1 Pet. 2:1; Eph. 4:22-32.

CONCLUSION:

1. Jesus Christ wants every person to be a member of his church. You can be.
2. When you and I place the same value on the church as does the Lord we'll be members, defend it, and urge others to become a part.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field: the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof he hideth all that he hath, and goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. (Mt. 13:44-46)
2. Jesus truly teaches the value of his church.
3. Jesus truly teaches that man ought to be willing to give up everything to obtain it.
4. The importance of the church is being minimized today, even by some who are teachers.
5. In our first study on this subject we noted 7 reasons for the greatness of the church and they were:
 - a. Divine origin.
 - b. Its nature.
 - c. Its end.
 - d. Salvation therein.
 - e. Its needs.
6. In this study, let's consider:

DISCUSSION:

- I. THE CHURCH IS THE GREATEST INSTITUTION IN THE WORLD BECAUSE OF THE EXCELLENT WHAT SHE PRESENTS TODAY, AND BECAUSE THAT SHE IS THE ONLY INSTITUTION THAT CAN BE BUILT UPON THE FOUNDATION OF THE GOSPEL.
- A. The continued removal of all that is as we continue to walk in the light. 1 Jn. 1:7-10.
- B. The privilege and power of prayer. Phil. 4:6; Eph. 6:18; James 5:16.
- C. Christ intercedes in our behalf. 1 Tim. 2:1; Heb. 7:24-25; 1 Jn. 2:1.
- D. The Holy Spirit helps in our prayers. Rom. 8:26, 27.
- E. The abiding presence of God and Christ. 1 Jn. 3:9; 1 Jn. 3:10.
- F. There is peace. Rom. 5:1; Phil. 4:7; Col. 3:15.
- G. This name is found only in Christ. Eph. 8:12; 1 Cor. 3:16.
- H. The way of escape when we are tempted. 1 Cor. 10:13.
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- K. Assurance of eternal life in the world to come. 1 Pet. 1:5; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; Rv. 2:10; 22:14.

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- A. The mission of the gospel to sinful and lost humanity.
- B. The church is the pillar and ground of truth. 1 Tim. 3:15.
- C. The church is God's great missionary society for preaching the gospel. Mk. 16:15; 2 Tim. 2:2.
- D. The plan followed by the early church for the job done. Acts 1:8; 6:4; 13:2; 14:27.
- E. The extending of benevolence to the needy. Jas. 1:27; Gal. 6:10.
- F. Paul admonishes all Christians. Eph. 4:3.
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 - c. Proper exercise. 1 Tim. 4:7, 8; 1 Cor. 9:24; Gal. 6:10.
 - d. Freedom from disease. 1 Pet. 2:2; Eph. 4:22-24.

CONCLUSION:

1. Jesus Christ wants every person to be a member of his church. You can be.
2. When you and I place the same value on the church as does the Lord we'll be members, disciples, and yes others to become a part.

Introduction.

1. Read or quote the text.
2. We have much of the same problem in the church today as was in the garden of Gethsemane. While the Lord was praying. . . the disciples were sleeping. Mt. 26:36-40.
 - a. It has been said that "We are a generation of non-praying saints."
 - b. The Lord said "My house shall be called the house of prayer." Mt. 21:13 Is the Lord's house (the church) a house of prayer today?
3. Prayer should be of concern to every Christian for many reasons--let's mention two.
 - a. It is a primary part of living as God would have us live.
 - (1) "Men ought always to pray." Lk. 18:1
 - (2) "Watch ye therefore, and pray always." Lk. 21:36
 - (3) "In everything by prayer . . ." Phil. 4:6
 - (4) "Continue in prayer." Col. 4:2
 - (5) "Pray without ceasing" 1 Thess. 5:17
 - (6) "Give yourselves to prayer" 1 Cor. 7:5
 - b. Prayerlessness is sin. Samuel said to Israel "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." 1 Sam. 12:23
4. In this study let's consider:

Discussion.

I. THE MOST FAITHFUL MEN OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WERE PRAYING MEN.

- A. Abraham.
 1. He prayed for a son. Gen. 15:2ff.
 2. He prayed for Sodom. Gen. 18:22-32.
- B. Moses.
 1. He cried unto the Lord for Pharaoh. Ex. 8:12,13.
 2. He plead for the people when they sinned at Mt. Sinai. Ex. 32:31-33.
 3. He prayed for guidance. Ex. 33:12-16
 4. He prayed for Miriam. Num. 12:13.
- C. Samule.
 1. He prayed at the time the people demanded a king. 1 Sam. 8:1-6
 2. He said he would not cease to pray for Israel. 1 Sam. 12:19,23
 3. He cried unto the Lord all night in behalf of Saul. 1 Sam. 15:11
- D. David.
 1. He sat and prayed to the Lord. 2 Sam. 7:18
 2. He besought God for his sick child. 2 Sam. 12:16.

II. JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD PRAYED OFTEN.

- A. He prayed following his baptism. Lk. 3:21.
- B. He prayed all night before selecting the twelve apostles. Lk. 6:12,13
- C. After feeding the 5,000 he went into a mountain to pray. Mt. 14:23
- D. He prayed the great prayer of John 17
- E. He prayed three times in the garden of Gethsemane. Mt. 26:36-44
- F. He prayed on the cross. Lk. 23:34
- G. If Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God, recognized the need and value of prayer how much more should we.

III. THE APOSTLES AND THE EARLY CHURCH PRAYED OFTEN.

- A. They "continued steadfastly . . . in prayers." Acts 2:42
- B. Peter and John went to "the temple at the hour of prayer." Acts 3:1
- C. After being released from prison the apostles went to their company and "lifted up their voice to God." Acts 4:23,24.
- D. At the selection and appointment of the seven the apostles prayed. Acts 6:6.
- E. Peter and John prayed for the Samaritans. Acts 8:14,15.
- F. Peter prayed just before he raised Dorcas. Acts 9:40.
- G. Peter went upon the housetop to pray at the 6th hour. Acts 10:9
- H. When Peter was in prison "prayer was made without ceasing of the church." Acts 12:5
- I. The church at Antioch prayed just before sending Paul and Barnabas out. Acts 13:1-3

J. Paul was a praying man.

1. He prayed with the church at Antioch. Acts 13:1-3
2. He prayed after appointing elders in the churches. Acts 14:23
3. He prayed while in prison at Philippi. Acts 16:25
4. He prayed when leaving the elders at Ephesus. Acts 20:36.

Conclusion.

1. "A preacher was on the street of a small Oklahoma city just after the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor, and he overheard two Negro gentlemen discussing the state of the world. One of them was apprehensive about the future, but the other did not appear to be greatly concerned. The concerned one said: "Aren't you afraid?" The other replied, "Of course, I am a little scared, but I am depending on the 'fourth man'" (Prayers of Paul, p. 16,17) The preacher wondered what he meant until he remembered the story of the Hebrew children and the fiery furnace.
2. Each one of us needs to pray and depend on the fourth man in prayer.

"Conditions of Acceptable Prayer"

Lk. 11:1,2; Mt. 6:9-13

Introduction.

1. Read or quote Luke 11:1,2.
 - a. This is the only time in the record of the gospel where we have the disciples ever asking the Lord to teach them anything.
 - b. They recognized that knowing how to speak to God is more important than knowing how to speak to man. If a man can stand before God he can stand before men.
 - c. They also recognized that prayer is a taught trait and that it does not come separate and apart from instruction, practice and experience.
2. Prayerlessness is sin. 1 Sam. 12:23.
3. The importance of this lesson is emphasized by the fact that some prayers are unacceptable to God. Prov. 28:9
4. What are some conditions of acceptable prayer?

Discussion.

- I. OUR PRAYERS ARE TO BE ADDRESSED TO GOD, OUR FATHER. MT. 6:9.
 - A. Christians can address God as their Father because they are his children. Rom. 8:14-16; 1 Jn. 3:1.
 - B. Christians can know that God our Father:
 1. Knows what things we have need of. Mt. 6:8,32.
 2. Is able to know and give the good gifts we need. Mt. 7:11.
 3. Has said he will be our Father. 2 Cor. 6:17,18.
 - C. Christ prayed to his Father. Jn. 17:1
 - D. The apostles prayed to God. Acts 4:24.
- II. OUR PRAYERS ARE TO BE IN THE NAME OF CHRIST.
 - A. Many passages clearly tell us to pray in Christ's name.
 1. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do . . ." Jn. 14:13
 2. "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." Jn. 14:14
 3. Before Christ's death, resurrection and ascension they had not prayed in his name. Jn. 16:24.
 4. After his ascension he said "At that day ye shall ask in my name . . ." Jn. 16:26.
 5. Jesus is our Mediator. 1 Tim. 2:5
 6. He serves as our Advocate. 1 Jn. 2:1,2.
 - B. What does it mean to pray in the name of Christ?
 1. Prayer in Christ's "name is a prayer that is in harmony with whatever Christ has revealed concerning himself." (Hendricksen)
 2. "In Christ's name" means more than just saying it at the end of our prayers, in fact, it may become vain repetition (Mt. 6:7) if just "tacked" on as a matter of habit, as it is in many cases.
 3. Saying "In Christ's name" at the end of a prayer does not mean it is in Christ's name, anymore than failing to say "In Christ's name" means it is not in his name.
 4. Doing something in the name of the Lord does not emphasize what one says, but a recognition of the authority of that name. Cf. Jer. 14:14.
 - a. Many will say "Lord, Lord" in the day of judgment and claim to have done things in the name of the Lord, but they were not according to God's will, thus not in the Lord's name. Mt. 7:21-23.
 - b. Where two or three are gathered together in the name of the Lord he is there. (Mt. 18:20) that is, gathered in harmony with his will.
 - c. Jesus said many would come in my name, saying "I am Christ." (Mt. 24:5) But what they said was not in harmony with God's will thus not in his name.
 - d. Jesus told his apostles to baptize in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Mt. 28:19) But its obvious that baptizing in these names is not determined by what one says, for several reasons:
 - (1) There is no example of the apostles ever using these exact words when they baptized people.
 - (2) They didn't use the same terms every time when they commanded people

to be baptized. "name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38); "name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 8:16); "name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48)

(3) The apostles understood that as long as they taught and baptized according to the Lord's directions they were doing it in his name.

e. Everything we do is to be done in the name of the Lord (Col. 3:17) but this doesn't mean we have voice it verbally everytime to make it in his name.

III. OUR PRAYERS MUST BE FROM A HEART WITH A FORGIVING SPIRIT.

A. In the model prayer Jesus taught his disciples to ask forgiveness of their sins (Mt. 6:12) but explained that receiving forgiveness depended upon their forgiving others. Mt. 6:14,15.

1. I must ever be aware that the Father bestows unearned blessings (forgiveness) upon me.

2. In the same way I must forgive those that sin against me (even though nothing is done to merit it) if they repent. Lk. 17:3,4.

a. Jesus Christ was ready to forgive the meanest of men when they repented. Lk. 23:34; Cf. Acts 2:21-38.

b. Stephen was ready to forgive those that stoned him to death "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Acts 7:60.

c. In the same way if the Spirit of Christ dwells in me I will be kind, tender-hearted, forgiving even my enemies when they repent. Eph. 4:31,32.

Conclusion.

1. "Trying to Please The Master"-----"There is the story of a coal miner named Sam. "e didn't have much education. He had no account at the bank; his clothes were worn and ragged; and he had to walk a long distance to the mine and back home at night-----tired and aching. But on the way home there was a little church building, and Sam would always stop there and pray. The minister had noticed this for some time and one evening he stopped Sam and asked him, "Sam, I've been watching you stop here for some months to go in and pray. And I've noticed that you never stay more than a minute or two. Why are your prayers so short?" Sam looked down for a minute, then said, "Well, I don't know how to pray. But I know the Lord is pleased when I try--so I just come in and pray, 'Lord, this is Sam,' and I know the Lord understands." (Insta-Matic Facts, P-1-9)

2. Are you trying to please the Master? Then pray to God, in Christ's name, and with a forgiving spirit. Cf. 1 Thess. 5:17

Introduction

1. Saying there are some things the Lord does not know is not limiting the power or knowledge of the Lord.
 - a. God is omnipotent (all powerful). Mt. 19:26
 - b. God is omniscient (all wise). Psa. 44:21
2. This lesson will emphasize the interest of God in the salvation of the souls of men.
3. What then are some things that the Lord doesn't know?

Discussion.

- I. "THE LORD DOESN'T KNOW A SINLESS RESPONSIBLE PERSON."
 - A. All responsible human beings have sinned and are lost. Rom. 3:23; Cf. Eph. 2:12
 1. This includes your neighbor across the street.
 2. This includes the accountable being sitting next to you.
 3. This includes the heathen who have never heard the gospel.
 4. This includes you.
 - B. Of course babies and mentally incompetent individuals are not sinful. Acts 17:29; Mt. 18:3
 - C. Thus the Lord does not know a sinless responsible person.
- II. "THE LORD DOESN'T KNOW A SINNER THAT HE DOESN'T LOVE."
 - A. God so loves the world that he gave his only begotten Son. Jn. 3:16.
 - B. God showed his love while we were yet sinners. Rom. 5:8
 - C. Christ bore our sins in his own body. 1 Pet. 2:24.
 - D. God hates sin so much that he gave His Son yet loves every sinner so much that he was willing to give.
- III. "THE LORD DOESN'T KNOW ONE SINNER FOR WHOM HE DID NOT DIE."
 - A. Christ tasted death for every man. Heb. 2:9
 - B. The grace of God has brought salvation to all men. Tit. 2:11.
- IV. "THE LORD DOESN'T KNOW ONE RESPONSIBLE PERSON GOING FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN WITHOUT BEING SAVED ON EARTH."
 - A. He became the author of eternal salvation to those that obey Him. Heb. 5:9
 - B. What shall be the end be of those that obey not the gospel. 1 Pet. 4:17,18
 - C. The Lord will take vengeance on those that obey not the gospel. 1 Thess. 1:7-9
- V. "THE LORD DOESN'T KNOW ONE SAVED OUTSIDE OF CHRIST."
 - A. There is salvation in no other name. Acts 4:12.
 - B. All spiritual blessings are in Christ. Eph. 1:3.
 - C. Redemption and forgiveness of sins are in Christ. Col. 1:14.
 - D. Salvation in Christ. 2 Tim. 2:10
 - E. Blessed are those who die in the Lord. Rev. 14:13.
- VI. "THE LORD DOESN'T KNOW ONE RESPONSIBLE PERSON WHO WILL ESCAPE ETERNAL JUDGMENT."
 - A. All nations will be gathered before the throne of his glory. Mt. 25:31-46
 - B. All must appear before the judgment seat. 2 Cor. 5:10.
 - C. All must be judged according to his works. Rev. 20:11-15.
- VII. "THE LORD DOESN'T KNOW A BETTER TIME FOR SINNERS TO BE SAVED THEN NOW."
 - A. No escape if we neglect so great salvation. Heb. 2:1-4.
 - B. Now is the day of salvation. 2 Cor. 6:2.

Conclusion.

1. These seven things the Lord doesn't know emphasizes heaven's concern for us.
2. Have you obeyed the gospel. Remember only those saved on earth will enjoy heaven.

1. The first...

2. The second...

3. The third...

4. The fourth...

5. The fifth...

6. The sixth...

Introduction.

1. Read or quote the text.
2. Today we can ship raw iron ore to Japan, where it is worked into cars and other products and shipped back to this country at a cheaper price than we can do the job here. It's not because they know better how to do it, because much of what they do we have already done, but the Japanese worker is concerned with how much he can do each minute and the best possible way to do it. In this country one of the great problems in employment is employees seeing how little they can do. It is estimated that the average American worker is producing 30% of his capability.
3. One of the prevailing attitudes of our day is "how little" can I do and still get all I want. This same attitude prevails in the religious world and even in the church.
4. This whole attitude is the direct opposite of God's will for us. He desires that we do everything abundantly.

Discussion.I. What DOES IT MEAN TO DO THINGS ABUNDANTLY?

A. Webster defines:

1. Abundance--"An overflowing fulness; ample sufficiency; great plenty."
2. Abundant---"Existing in possessing abundance; abounding."
3. Abound-----"To be in great plenty, quantity, or number; to be prevalent."

- B. Young Analytical Concordance defines abundance, abundant, and abound: "To be over and above; superfluity; many; much, richly; to be multiplied; excess; above the common."

II. WHY MUST WE DO THINGS ABUNDANTLY?

A. God does things abundantly.

1. God gave water abundantly to Israel. Num. 20:11.
2. God blesses man abundantly. Job 36:26-33.
3. God forgives and pardons man abundantly. Isa. 55:7.
 - a. His grace has abounded through Christ toward us. Rom. 5:15.
 - b. We are begotten by his abundant mercy. 1 Pet. 1:3.
 - c. He remembers our sins no more. Heb. 8:12.
4. God is able and willing to do abundantly above all we ask or think. Eph. 3:20.
5. God "willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel" condescended to the level of man and confirmed his promise with an oath to give man every encouragement to enter heaven. Heb. 6:13-18.
6. God will minister an "entrance . . . abundantly" into the everlasting kingdom. 2 Pet. 1:11.

B. Christ does things abundantly.

1. He came to give life abundantly. Jn. 10:10.
2. He suffered abundantly.

C. The example of others.

1. The children of Israel gave abundantly to build the tabernacle. Ex. 25:1,2; 36:5-7.
2. Hezekiah commanded Israel to give the priest and Levite their portion and "The tithe of all things brought they in abundantly." 2 Chron. 31:5.
3. The Macedonians abounded in liberality even in poverty. 2 Cor. 8:1,2.

III. WHAT ARE SOME THINGS WE MUST DO ABUNDANTLY OR IN WHICH WE MUST ABOUND?

- A. We are to abound (to be over and above) in hope. Rom. 15:13. Being filled with peace and joy, made possible by what the Holy Spirit has revealed to us, we are to abound in hope.
- B. We are to abound in the work of the Lord. 1 Cor. 15:58.
- C. We are to abound in giving. 2 Cor. 8:1-7; 9:6.
- D. We are to abound in every good work. 2 Cor. 9:8.
- E. Paul prayed that the Philippians "love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment." Phil. 1:9-11; 1 Thess. 3:12; 4:9,10.
- F. We are to abound in helping others that "fruit may abound" to our account. Phil. 4:17.

G. We are to abound in thanksgiving for the great blessings and truths we enjoy in Christ. Col. 2:6,7.

H. We are to abound in a richer and fuller Christian walk so as to please God. 1 Thess. 4:1.

I. We are to abound in the Christian graces. 2 Pet. 1:5-11.

IV. WHAT ARE SOME ATTITUDES THAT DOING THINGS ABUNDANTLY WILL CHANGE?

A. "How little can I do and still be saved?"

1. When we have done all, we are still unprofitable servants. Lk. 17:10.

2. Paul did not say "How little" but:

a. "laboured more abundantly than they all." 1 Cor. 15:10.

b. Lived his manner of life abundantly. 2 Cor. 1:12

c. Loved abundantly. 2 Cor. 2:4.

d. "Endeavored the more abundantly" to see the face of the Thessalonians again. 1 Thess. 2:7.

e. Suffered abundantly. 2 Cor. 11:23-28.

B. "How often can I miss the services of the church and still be saved?"

1. Doing things abundantly will make one fully believe and obey. Heb. 10:25.

2. He will realize that one attending all the services of the church is abounding in the work of the Lord in this area and that he is not habitually missing.

C. "The indifferent attitude about doing many phases of the Lord's work."

1. Christ was not satisfied with merely doing things, but did them abundantly.

2. Paul was not satisfied with merely doing things, he did them abundantly.

3. The early church did things abundantly. Acts 2:42; 4:32-34.

Acts 8:4.

Conclusion.

1. Beloved our lives either abound in the Lord's work or they are fruitless. 1 Pet. 1:8.

2. The resurrection of Christ guarantees our resurrection and that our labor is not in vain, therefore abound. 1 Cor. 15:58.

IS BIBLE STUDY REALLY IMPORTANT?

2 Tim. 2:15

918

Introduction.

1. Why is it that preachers continually emphasize the importance of Bible Study?
Have they just run out of other things to say, or is it really that important?
2. One thing to remember is that apostasy lurks just one generation away---it has been true in the past and it is still true today.
 - a. The days of Joshua were glorious in Israel.
 - (1) He served as the faithful minister of Moses.
 - (2) He was the servant of God.
 - (3) He was the bold and believing spy.
 - (4) He was the successor of Moses.
 - (5) He was captain of the hosts of Israel.
 - (6) He was the conqueror of Canaan.
 - (7) He has such influence that "the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua . . ." Jud. 2:7.
 - b. But after Joshua's death and the generation that was with him "there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel." Judges 2:10.
 - (1) One generation serves the Lord--the next does not.
 - (2) Why the swift change? What brought it all about? The answer is simple
Someone allowed a crop of children to grow up without proper instruction.
3. In emphasizing the importance of Bible Study we purpose to note the order of progression as it related to ancient Israel in order that we not make the same mistake.

Discussion.

I. FIRST, THERE WAS SPIRITUAL ILLITERACY--(HAVING LITTLE OR NO EDUCATION: SHOWING OR MARKED BY A LACK OF FAMILIARITY WITH.)

- A. "They knew not the Lord." Judges 2:10.
 1. Joshua faithfully instructed Israel in God's law during his days.
 - a. After they had conquered the land he told the eastern $2\frac{1}{2}$ tribes to "take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law." Josh. 22:5
 - b. A long time after they had entered Canaan and shortly before his death he gave instructions to all Israel. Josh. 23.
 2. But after Joshua's death there was a decline in instruction so that a spiritually illiterate generation grew up.
- B. They remembered not the great works God had done for them. Judges 2:10.
 1. At least 13 times in Deuteronomy God called upon Israel to remember him and his works for them.
 2. David sums up the reason for Israel's rebellion as forgetfulness of God and his great works. Ps. 106:7, 21, 22.
- C. Spiritual illiteracy can prevail today and will prevail unless we teach our children the word of God.
 1. In 1963 Brethren Wayne Emmons and Hugh Fulford, in preparation for some lectures at F.H.C. sent out questionnaires to 275 teenagers in seven states representing 15 different congregations. Here are the results:
 - A. 9% did not know who the world's first murderer was.
 - 10% did not know the apostle who betrayed Jesus.
 - 13% did not know that 2 Kings followed 1 Kings.
 - 14% thought Jesus was baptized for the remission of sins.
 - 17% did not know that Daniel was thrown in the lion's den.
 - 24% did not know the apostle who denied Jesus.
 - 24% did not know what man wrote more N.T. books than any other.
 - 24% did not know who was the cousin of Jesus who prepared the way for him.
 - 28% did not know how many books in the O.T.
 - 29% did not know how many books in the N.T.
 - 32% did not know who was the wisest man of the O.T.

- 32% did not know how many people were saved in the ark.
- 33% did not know who climbed a tree to see Jesus.
- 35% did not know how many people were baptized on Pentecost.
- 38% thought the ten commandment law was still binding today.
- 42% did not know who preached the first gospel sermon.
- 46% did not know who led the children of Israel in conquest of Jericho.
- 48% did not know who the first king of Israel was.
- 53% did not know how many dispensations of Bible history.
- 54% did not know who wrote the book of Acts.
- 56% did not know who took the second missionary journey with Paul.
- 68% did not know the apostle who took the place of Judas.
- 74% did not know who was the weeping prophet.

b. Item	Strongly against	Mildly against	Not Sure	OK. Under Certain Con.	Mildly Favor	Strongly Favor
Inst. Music	81%	75%	6%	3%	30%	0%
Marry a Non C.	13%	30%	23%	25%	4%	2%
Mixed Swimming	8%	8%	12%	37%	9%	28%
Social Drinking	84%	55%	3%	5%	2%	0%
Chap. Dancing	34%	10%	9%	18%	8%	19%
Unchap. Dancing	66%	8%	8%	10%	5%	1%

2. In early February, 1964, Thayer S. Warshaw gave a Bible test to 5 classes of college bound 11th and 12th graders and found them unfamiliar with simple Bible statements.
3. Each year Harding College gives Bible tests on basic facts to Freshmen and the children from church related homes make B's while children from denominational homes make A's.
4. Spiritual illiteracy prevails on the part of too many right here in this congregation.
 - a. High school boys and girls not even knowing where to find the books of the Bible.
 - b. A number of young and old alike have no earthly idea where to find passages that teach the plan of salvation.
 - c. Lack of understanding of some of the simple basic facts of Christian living.
5. Every generation must be taught the word of God.
- D. Forgetfulness of all that God has done for us can prevail today.
 1. The Lord gave his Supper to regularly remind of his great sacrifice. Mt. 26:26-28
 2. A failure to abound in the Christian graces is due largely to forgetfulness. 2 Pet. 1:5-11.
 3. Every generation must be reminded of God's great works.

II. SECOND, THEY FORSOOK THE LORD. "AND THEY FORSOOK THE LORD GOD OF THEIR FATHERS, WHICH BROUGHT THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT." Judges 2:12.

- A. Ignorance of God always leads to a forsaking of God.
 1. The Israelites forsook God.
 2. The apostles often said, "I would not have you to be ignorant." 1 Thess. 4:13.
- B. Forgetfulness of God always leads to a forsaking of God. Deut. 8:11-20; Psalms 106.

III. THIRD, THEY SERVED OTHER GODS. "AND FOLLOWED OTHER GODS, OF THE GODS OF THE PEOPLE THAT WERE ROUND ABOUT THEM." Judges 2:12

- A. Forsaking of God always leads to the acceptance of other gods.
 1. Man is a religious being and his heart will not long remain empty. Mt. 12:43-45.
 2. The Gentiles of Romans 1 left God and made themselves gods. Rom. 1:18-23.
 3. The tremendous guilt of such forsaking of God is aggravated by the character of the worship into which people fall.
 - a. It is false--worship of supposed gods which possess no divine power.
 - b. It is materialistic--the worship of idols in place of the unseen God.
 - c. It is immoral---worship of impure deities with impure rites.
- B. Forsaking of God always leads to immorality because this becomes the god of some.
 1. In Israel immorality abounded and "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Judges 17:6
 2. The Gentiles became immoral when they put God out. Rom. 1:24-32.
 3. Forsaking of God and his word explains much of the immorality of today.

IV. FOURTH, PUNISHMENT CAME FROM GOD.

A. God delivered the Israelites into the hands of their enemies. Judges 2:14

B. God will bring eternal punishment on those that disobey him. Mat. 25:46; Rev. 21:8.

Conclusion.

1. There is no hope if spiritual illiteracy prevails. Man made-gods will prevail, iniquity will abound, and destruction will follow.
2. We must diligently teach the youth of today lest a generation arise that knows not the Lord.

THE SPIRIT OF FEAR OR THE GRASSHOPPER COMPLEX.

Numbers 13:26-33--

Introduction

1. Is the church of our Lord making the progress she could and should make? If not, why not?
2. What do you think is one of the greatest hindrances to the church's progress today? Is it worldliness? Is it indifference? Is it negligence? Is it absenteeism? All these constitute hindrances, but are not the greatest?
3. One of the greatest hindrances to the advancement of the Lord's cause is the "grasshopper complex" or the "spirit of fear"--cowardice or timidity. Cf. 2 Tim. 1:7.
4. Let's consider:

Discussion.

I. THE SPIRIT OF FEAR HAS BEEN A PART OF THE WORLD FOR A LONG TIME.

- A. It was the spirit of fear that resulted in Israel having to wander in the wilderness for 40 years.
 1. Moses sent 12 spies into Canaan when Israel came to the wilderness of Paran at Kadesh. Num. 13:1-24.
 2. After 40 days the spies came back with a report. Num. 13:25.
 - a. Ten of the spies gave a report that discouraged the hearts of the people. Deut. 1:28; Num. 13:31-33.
 - b. Caleb said, "Let us go up at once." Num. 13:30.
 3. Their unbelief kept them out of the land of Canaan. Heb. 3:19.
- B. It was the spirit of fear that caused 22,000 of Gideon's 32,000 to return home. Judges 7:3.
- C. It was the spirit of fear that caused the Lord's disciples to cry out on the storm-tossed sea of Galilee, "Master, carest thou not that we perish." Mk. 4:38,40.
- D. It was the spirit of fear that caused failure in the parables of the talents and pounds. Mt. 25:25; Lk. 19:21.
- E. It's the spirit of fear that has kept the church in years past and even today, in many places, from advancing as she should.

II. WHAT CAUSES THE SPIRIT OF FEAR?

A. Lack of faith or little faith.

1. It was a lack of faith in God and his promises that led the ten spies to fear they could never overcome their land. Num. 14:11; 13:31-33. Heb. 3:19
2. It was a lack of faith that caused the Lord's disciples to be afraid on the sea of Galilee. Mt. 8:26; Mk. 4:40.

B. Criticism.

1. Some churches are so afraid they'll be criticized that they never make a move.
2. Some individuals are so afraid of criticism that they never commit themselves until they see which way the wind is blowing.
 - a. The parents of the blind man. Jn. 9:20-22.
 - b. The chief rulers. Jn. 12:42,43.

C. Living in the past.

1. Some churches are afraid to make long range plans or plans that involve a lot of money because certain ones remember the depression of the 30's. An elder of my acquaintance nearly always raises this objection.
2. Such individuals need to remember Paul's teaching. Phil. 3:13.

III. WHAT WILL A SPIRIT OF FEAR CAUSE MEN TO DO?

A. It will cause men to magnify the problems they face.

1. The ten spies considered themselves as grasshoppers in the sight of the people of Canaan. Num. 13:33. They forgot that one grasshopper with God is the majority.

1. Baptism Jackson

919-79
91

2. How many today, like the spies, fall short of the blessings of the gospel through magnifying the number and strength of adversaries, and their own weakness and difficulties?
- B. It, along with slothness, causes men to imagine problems and difficulties when there are none. **Prov. 22:13; 26:13.**

C. It causes men to say "It won't do any good."

1. On one occasion Jesus told Peter to "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught." **Lk. 5:4.**
 - a. Peter's first reaction was "it won't do any good." "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing."
 - b. But his faith triumphed and he said, "nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net."

2. Today brethren are called on to talk to sinners or erring Christians about their souls; but many say "it won't do any good." Such manifests a lack of faith in God's word. **Isa. 55:10,11; Rom. 1:16; Heb. 4:12.**

3. The Lord is calling on churches today to "launch out into the deep". Are we doing this or are we still fishing too close to the shore?

D. It causes men to say "I can't do it."

1. When God called on Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt he was afraid he couldn't meet the needs. **Ex. 4:10.**
2. The one talent man was afraid he couldn't do it; he couldn't please the Lord. **Mt. 25:25.**
3. How often do Christians today say, when a new idea is presented, "we can't do it." Some of the churches in Texas have the philosophy "we've never tried it before; it might work; let's try it." Always looking for new methods to advance the Lord's cause.

E. The spirit of fear causes us to think small because we are afraid of getting too big.

1. One of the charges often brought against the church at Madison, Tenn., is that they are too big.
2. Some brethren have the idea that a church ought not to have over 200 members.
 - a. "There is more work in a small congregation" we are told. Just what do you mean by work? Do you mean that more will have an opportunity to wait on the Lord's table, lead prayer, sing, etc. Some members of the church have the idea that this is their soul responsibility.
 - b. If you mean work is an opportunity to serve God's creatures then it follows that there will be more work in a larger congregation.

F. The spirit of fear keeps men and women from obeying the gospel. "I'm afraid I can't hold out". "I'm afraid I can't live the Christian life."

IV. WHAT IS THE REMEDY FOR THE SPIRIT OF FEAR?

A. Greater faith in God and his promises. **Mk. 9:23.**

1. Caleb was not afraid, despite the obstacles that faced them, because of his great faith in God. **Num. 13:30; 14:9; Josh. 14:9.**
2. Joshua believed God's promise and was not afraid. **Joh. 1:9.** He was sure "one man of you shall chase a thousand" with God's help. **Josh. 23:10.**
3. Gideon, with 300 men, went against the Midianites who "were like grasshoppers for multitudes" because he believed God had sent him. **Judges 6-7.**
4. Jonathan, at a time when Saul was scared and running from the Philistines, attacked a whole garrison of Philistines with his armour bearer because he believed "there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." **1 Sam. 14:6.**

- 919 - 79 91
5. David, with a staff, sling and five smooth stones, went against Goliath, because he believed that God who had delivered him out of the paws of a lion and bear "will deliver me out of the hand of the Philistine." **1 Sam. 17:37.**
 6. The church needs to have greater faith in God and his promises today.
 - a. We need to believe his promise when we put his kingdom first. **Mt. 6:33; 2 Cor. 9:13.**
 - b. We need to believe that "if God be for us, who can be against us?" **Rom. 8:31; Heb. 13:5.**
 - c. We need to believe that if we "launch out into the deep" great things will happen. **Lk. 5:4.**
 - d. We need to believe, like Paul, that we can do all things through Christ which strengthens us. **Phil. 4:13.**
 - e. "The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today." (Roosevelt, Franklin D.)
 - B. A realization that the fearful will be condemned to the lake of fire. **Mt. 25:30; Rev. 21:8.**
 - C. A realization that God has not given us the "spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." **2 Tim. 1:7.**
 - D. Praying daily that God will help our unbelief. **Cf. Mk. 9:24.**
 - E. A realization that the fearful become a hindrance to others.
 1. The ten spies discouraged and caused the hearts of Israel to melt. **Deut. 1:28; Josh. 14:8.**
 2. Officers in the army were to weed out the "fearful and faint-hearted" lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart. **Deut. 20:18; Judg. 7:3.**
 3. Robert Louis Stevenson said: "Keep your fears to yourself, but share your courage with others."

Conclusion.

1. God has not "given us the spirit of fear; but of power. . ." Let's "launch out into the deep."
2. The great hindrance to our progress many times may well be ourselves. Let's cast off the spirit of fear and cast out with greater faith in God's promises.

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PRAYER, NO. 4
"Conditions of Acceptable Prayer"
Lk. 11:1

920

INTRODUCTION:

1. "Trying to Please the Master" There is the story of a coal miner named Sam. He didn't have much education. He had no account at the bank; his clothes were worn and ragged; and he had to walk a long distance to the mine and back home at night--tired and aching. But on the way home there was a small church building, and Sam would always stop there and pray. The minister had noticed this for some time and one evening he stopped Sam and asked him, "Sam, I've been watching you stop here for many months to go in and pray. And I've noticed that you never stay more than a minute or two. Why are your prayers so short?" Sam looked down for a minute, then said, "Well, I don't have much to say--'cause I really don't know how to pray. But I know the Lord is pleased when I try--so I just come in and pray, 'Lord, this is Sam,' and I know the Lord understands. Copied (Insta-Matic Facts)
2. There are many times when all of us "know not what we should pray for as we ought" (Rom. 8:26) nor how to pray.
3. But we must ever strive to improve our ability to pray more acceptably to God. This involves learning the conditions of acceptable prayer.

DISCUSSION:

I. OUR PRAYERS MUST BE IN HARMONY WITH GOD'S WILL. 1 Jn. 5:14,15.

A. The importance of recognizing and doing God's will is emphasized in a number of ways.

1. In the disciples' prayer, Jesus taught them to pray "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Mt. 6:10.
2. Those that enter heaven are those that "doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Mt. 7:21.
3. Three times in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed "not as I will, but as thou wilt." Mt. 26:39,44.
4. Jesus said "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." Jn. 4:34.
5. Again, Jesus said, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine.. ." Jn. 7:17.
6. The former blind man said "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God and doeth his will, him he heareth." Jn. 9:31.

B. What is the full meaning of asking according to God's will?

1. To ask according to God's will is to "ask in harmony with what he has taught regarding prayer."
2. This limitation - "according to his will" - ~~is~~ necessary.
 - a. The well-being of the universe and of each individual is bound up with execution of God's will, therefore he cannot grant anything out of harmony with it.
 - b. It is necessary between two individuals (in some cases the same individual) may be asking for opposing things.
3. This limitation - "according to his will" - is beneficial.
 - a. A kind parent does not give those things for which a child asks if they will harm him.
 - b. In the same way God gives according to his will and wisdom.
4. This limitation - "according to his will" - allows a large sphere for the exercise of prayer. There are many things we know are according to his will.
5. This limitation - "according to his will" - means that we need to have our desires educated up to his will.
6. Just as Jesus could "and I knew that thou hearest me always" (Jn. 11:42) so we can know that he hears us and gives us our petitions if we ask according to his will. 1 Jn. 5:15.

II. OUR PRAYERS MUST BE IN FAITH.

A. Jesus said "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing ye shall receive." (Mt. 21:22).

B. James wrote that we are to ask in faith." James 1:5-8.

C. What does it mean to pray in faith?

1. First, it means faith that God is.
 - a. The atheist cannot pray because he has no God to which he can pray.

- b. The Pantheist cannot pray because his God is an infinite IT.
 - c. The Agnostic cannot pray because he doesn't know whether there is a God or not.
 - d. The Christian can pray in faith because he believes that God is. Heb. 11:6.
 - 2. Second, it means belief in one who is susceptible to human appeals.
 - a. The Deist cannot pray in faith because he thinks of God as a personal Spirit completely severed from the world and uninvolved in her present activities.
 - b. The Christian can pray in faith because, even though he knows the greatness of God, he knows that God takes notice of even a little sparrow falling to the ground and the number of hairs on our head. Mt. 10:29,30.
 - c. The Christian also knows that he is approaching one who fully understands. *Heb. 4:14-16*
 - 3. Third, it means belief that God will answer our prayers.
 - a. James tells us to ask for wisdom, but "let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." (KJV) "nothing doubting" (ASV)
 - (1) This means firm reliance upon God.
 - (2) "Doubting"...the chief idea is "inner debate; and it presents the picture of a person torn by conflicting notions, now disposed to feel this way, now that." (Woods)
 - (a.) It is "to be at variance with one's self" (Thayer)
 - (b) "It does not denote the utter absence of faith, it describes the disposition of a person who, at one moment, feels God will keep his promise, and, at another moment, that he will not." (Woods)
 - b. We believe God will answer our prayers because he is able to answer our prayers. Eph. 3:20.
 - c. We believe He will answer our prayers because we believe he keeps His word. Mt. 24:35; 2 Cor. 1:20.
 - 4. Fourth, praying in faith implies a "right state of mind for receiving that which we ask."
 - a. God's gift could be no moral blessing to one if there were no fitness to receive it.
 - b. The right state of mind is opposed to the critical spirit that questions and the doubting spirit that fears.
 - c. "Even we in common life make believing a condition. We gladly do things for others when they trust us fully."
 - d. It implies a complete dependence on the one to whom we pray.
- D. Brethren, the prayer of faith can move mountains. It is our want of faith that makes our prayers so weak.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Christians should pray with confidence.
- 2. Christians should pray with always.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Read or quote the text.
2. "The space that Christ gave prayer in his sermon on the mount should tell us the great importance that He places upon it for our lives as his disciples. Out of the one hundred and eleven verses in the sermon, eighteen are dealing directly with prayer - with many more that deal with it indirectly." ("A Treasury of Prayer," E. M. Bounds)
3. "No one is a firmer believer in the power of prayer than the devil; not that he practices it, but he suffers from it." (Guy H. King)
4. It is so important that we understand the conditions of acceptable prayer.
Some we have already studied are:
 - a. Addressed to God.
 - b. In the name of Christ.
 - c. A forgiving spirit.
 - d. In faith.
 - e. Thy will be done.
5. In this study, let's consider:

DISCUSSION:

I. WE MUST PRAY HUMBLY. Luke 18:9=14.

- A. Humbly means "having a low opinion of one's own importance or merits...not proud or haughty."
- B. The Pharisee's prayer was characterized by:
 1. Self-righteousness - "I thank thee, that I am not as other men are..." (v. 11) "Which trusted in themselves that they were righteous" (v. 9)
 2. Feigned piety - "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I Possess." (v. 12).
 3. Arrogance - Jesus said he exalted himself. (v. 14a) "despised others" (v. 9)
- C. The publican's prayer pictures:
 1. A man who recognizes his helpless, lost condition.
 2. A man who recognizes his entire dependence on God.
- D. Jesus shows that the prayer of the publican was accepted while the prayer of the Pharisee was rejected. (v. 14)

II. WE MUST ABIDE IN CHRIST AS WE PRAY. Jn. 15:7.

- A. The word "abide" means "to remain, continue" (Young)
- B. The importance of abiding in Christ is emphasized clearly.
 1. As a branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can we expect ~~w~~except we abide in Christ. John 15:4,5.
 2. If we abide not in him we will be cast forth as a branch. Jn. 15:6.
 3. If we abide in him we receive what we ask. John 15:7.
- C. How do we abide in Christ? By keeping his commandments. John 15:10.

III. WE MUST PRACTICE RIGHTEOUSNESS AS WE PRAY. 1 Pet. 3:12.

- A. Who is a righteous man?
 1. John declares that he that "doeth (keeps on doing) righteousness is righteous." 1 Jn. 3:7.
 2. The practice of righteousness distinguishes the children of God from the children of the devil. 1 Jn. 3:10.
- B. God's commandments are righteousness (Psa. 119:172) thus those who do God's commandments are righteous.
- C. God's eyes are upon the righteous with approval and his ears are attuned to their prayers. 1 Pet. 3:12.

IV. WE MUST BE KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS AS WE PRAY. 1 Jn. 3:22.

This verse suggests several things:

- A. First, the verbs are all in the present tense here and emphasize continuous action; whatever we keep on asking, we keep on receiving, because we keep on keeping his commandments and habitually practice the things that are pleasing in his sight." (Woods)
- B. Second, the child of God ever seeks to learn what the Father will is in order to please him.

1. Jesus said "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me..." Jn. 4:34.
2. Jesus said "the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." John 8:29.
3. It is God's desire that we understand what his will is. Eph. 5:17.
- C. Third, the child of God, learning what the FATHER's will is, will not ask for those things he discovers to be contrary to the Father's will.
- V. WE MUST PRAY FERVENTLY AND EARNESTLY. Jas. 5:16,17.
- A. It is the "effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man" that "availeth much."
1. The American Standard has "the supplication of a righteous man availeth much."
2. The word "effectual" carries with it the idea of "energetic," a prayer fitted to produce effect. It is not listless, indifferent, cold and lifeless.
- B. Elijah is an example of a man who prayed earnestly and got results. (Jas. 5:17).

CONCLUSION:

1. Prayer to be successful, must be according to God's condition.
2. Prayer is God's answer to fears and anxieties. Phil. 4:6,7.
 - a. The negative command: do not worry.
 - b. The positive command: in everything pray.
 - c. The result: the peace of God which passeth all understanding.
3. Let's pray more.

"Hindrances to Acceptable Prayer"
1 Pet. 3:7

INTRODUCTION:

1. Our text clearly reveals that our prayers can be hindered - "cut into" - "interrupted."
2. Prayer is a great privilege for each of us, yet how sad to pray and the prayer not be heard and answered..
3. What are some things that may hinder our prayers?

DISCUSSION:

I. HYPOCRISY HINDERS OUR PRAYERS. Mt. 6:1-6 -

- A. Hypocrisy (Hupokrisis) "primarily denotes a reply, an answer...then, play acting, as the actors spoke in dialogue; hence, pretence, hypocrisy..." (Vine).
- B. The prayer of the hypocrite is only acting and comes from the lips, not the heart. He pretends to give honor to God but really seeks the honor of men.
- C. The prayer of the hypocrite is deception.
 1. He deceives his fellow man.
 - a. He prays to be seen of men, but pretends piety for God.
 - b. Men praise him for his piety, but they are deceived.
 2. He deceives himself.
 - a. He gets what he seeks - the praise of men - but it is inconsiderate, fickle, and short lived.
 - b. He does not receive anything from God as he thinks.
- D. The prayer of the hypocrite is idolatry.
 1. He does not pray to the true God.
 2. He has made himself his god and men his idols, whose praise he seeks.
 3. In seeking the praise of men he puts their approval in competition with the favor and approval of God.
- E. The main fault of such a prayer is that my interest is in myself rather than the one to whom I am praying.
 1. The so-called "beautiful prayers" of today might fall in this category.
 2. "When a man begins to think more of how he is praying than of what he is praying, his prayer dies upon his lips." (Barclay)

II. VAIN REPETITIONS HINDER OUR PRAYERS. Mt. 6:7,8.

- A. Repetition is not condemned because our Lord said the same words three times in the Garden of Gethsemane. Mt. 26:44.
- B. "Vain repetitions" is from "battalogein" which means "to stammer, stutter, then to babble or prate, to repeat the same formula many times."
 1. The worshippers of Baal called upon him from "morning even until noon." 1 Kgs. 18:26.
 2. The Mohammedans will repeat the sacred syllable HE for hours.
- C. "Vain repetitions" imply a multitude of words without thought - "they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking."
- D. Such prayers:
 1. Creates carelessness and fatigue in the worshipper.
 2. Supposes ignorance or inattention on the part of God.

III. SIN HINDERS OUR PRAYERS.

- A. The Psalmist said "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Psal. 66:18.
- B. Isaiah said our sins and iniquities have kept God from hearing. Isa. 59:1,2.

IV. HARBORING A GRUDGE OR UNFORGIVENESS HINDERS OUR PRAYERS.

- A. We must forgive others if we would be forgiven.
- B. We must ever be conscious of how much we have been forgiven. Mt. 18:21-35.
- C. Unforgiveness erects a barrier between God and man.

V. SELFISHNESS HINDERS OUR PRAYERS. James 4:1-3.

- A. Sometimes we do not have what we want because:
 1. We seek it in the wrong ways. v. 2a.
 2. We do not ask for it. v. 2b; Mt. 7:7.

B. Sometimes our prayers are selfish.

1. God will not grant a request where the purpose is to satisfy selfish desires. To ask amiss "is to be influenced by low, mean, selfish considerations." (Woods)
2. God regards that which is used for purely selfish gratification as squandered and wasteful.
3. "It is possible for one to pray for ability to serve others when the chief reason for the desire is not the welfare of man, but lust for power, fame, notoriety, etc." (Woods).

VI. FAMILY TROUBLE HINDERS OUR PRAYERS. 1 Pet. 3:7.

- A. The word "hindered" is the rendering of a word which means literally to cut in, to interrupt."
- B. Strife and discord in a home cuts off and interrupts prayer - "the message to heaven is short-circuited."

CONCLUSION:

1. Hypocrisy, vain repetitions, sin, unforgiveness, selfishness and family trouble can hinder our prayers.
2. We must ever strive to keep open the line of communication with God.

Introduction.

1. Read or quote the text.
2. There are two great motivating principles of life which may characterize a person and determine his destiny.
 - a. There is the principle of fear.
 - (1) Kingdoms have arisen and fallen governed and directed by the principles of fear. (Hitler, Mussolini, Napoleon, etc.)
 - (2) One must fear God. Eccle. 12:13; Heb. 12:9.
 - b. There is the principle of love which is the greatest, strongest, and most everlasting power known.
 - (1) Love is the motivating factor that leads men to become Christians. Cf. Jn. 3:16.
 - (2) Christians may be burned at the stake, beaten, their heads severed from their bodies but the church will march on because it is founded upon the principle of love.
3. What is the principle that motivates your service to God---love or fear.

Discussion.

I. LOVE AND OBEDIENCE ARE VITALLY CONNECTED.

- A. Jesus said "If you love me, keep my commandments." Jn. 14:15.
- B. Again "If a man love me, he will keep my words . . ." Jn. 14:23.
- C. Again Jesus said "keep my commandments," Jn. 15:9,10.
- D. Obedience to the commandments of God ~~are~~ the only evidence of our love for God.
- E. Obedience to the commandments of God are not grievous to those that love God.
1 Jn. 5:3-5.

II. LOVE MAKES OBEDIENCE TO THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD EASIER.

- A. Love will lead one to obey all things commanded of the Lord. Matt. 28:19,20.
- B. There is a great difference in serving God because we love him and pretending to serve him occasionally out of fear.
 1. A member of the church who presumes to serve the Lord, basically out of fear, is no faithful and loyal to Christ.
 2. A member of the church who serves God because he's afraid he'll go to hell if he doesn't is, most of the time, irregular at the services of the church and undependable for service. Those who attend Bible Study and worship regularly do so because they love to do it.
 - a. The Lord's people who are most regular in worship and service are such because they love the Lord, not just because they fear hell.
 - b. Those who are motivated by fear are generally most irregular.
 3. Bro. V.E. Howard tells the story of a Christian woman (who is now dead) in Hot Springs, Arkansas, more than 30 years ago. She was then in her eighties but never missed Bible Study except for illness and was always present at the worship services. "During the entire four years of labor with that congregation, I observed that this devout Christian woman was always present for Sunday night services. She was never absent, unless actually hindered by illness. Even though she was some 80 years of age, there were a few times when she walked, in undesirable weather, to the church building for worship. Finally, just before I left Hot Springs, she called me to her home to talk with me. She said, 'Brother Howard, I won't be here much longer. My time is gone, and I don't have much goods in this world--only my home. I have always loved the church. I love the truth and I love to hear it preached; therefore I want to give my home, the last possession I have, to the church. At my death I want the church to have my home for the preacher's home. . . . Today a preacher in Hot Springs is living in that home.' Now my friends do you think that woman did all these things because she was afraid she would go to hell if she didn't. No!

III. LOVE WITHOUT FEAR SHOWS ITSELF IN WORSHIP TO GOD.

- A. Worship that is motivated by love, not fear, enables the child of God to pour out the feelings and emotions of his heart to God.
- B. Observing the Lord's Supper in Christian worship is a manifestation of love.

1. It is a command of God. Mt. 26:26-28.
2. Those who observe the Lord's Supper do because they love God, not because they fear hell.
- C. Faithful Christians do not give out of a fear of hell, but because of love.
 1. The one who gives because of fear usually gives as little as possible. He might go to hell if he didn't give a little.
 2. There is a lot of difference in doing things because you love to do them and in doing things because you're afraid not to.
 - a. "You can't help but get something out of something when, because of love, you put something into something."
 - b. A mother who gives out of love is not going to be robbed of her reward.
 - c. "One of the greatest problems in the church today is the fact that so many people have put so little into the work of the Lord and his church, and have gotten so little in return, that they have little sincere interest in the church." (Howard)
 3. Paul wrote the Corinthians that their giving was to "prove the sincerity of your love." 2 Cor. 8:8. Cf. v. 5.
- D. The Christian whose worship is motivated by love, is greatly inspired and uplifted through worship in song, prayer, and teaching.
 1. He knows that it is God's will for him to sing (Eph. 5:19) and his love for God causes him to truly make melody.
 2. Prayer is an intimate relation to one who loves God.
 3. God's children who love him, love his word. Rom. 1:16; Psalms 1:1,2.

Conclusion.

1. Perfect love casteth out slavish fear.
2. As our love increases our reasons for fear grow less and less.
3. Do you serve out of love or fear?

"SOME THINGS FOR WHICH WE CAN AND SHOULD PRAY"
Phil. 4:6

INTRODUCTION:

1. The Bible abounds with admonitions to pray regularly.
 - a. Jesus said, "men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Lk. 18:1.
 - b. Paul said:
 - (1) "Praying always with all prayer..." Eph. 6:18.
 - (2) "but in everything by prayer..." Phil. 4:6.
 - (3) "Pray without ceasing." 1 Thess. 5:17.
2. Sometimes Paul prayed with his brethren (Acts 20:31,38) and sometimes he prayed for them, but always he prayed with a definite aim.
3. There are so many things for which we can and should pray.
4. Let's consider:

DISCUSSION:

- I. WE SHOULD PRAY THAT GOD'S WILL BE DONE.
 - A. Jesus taught his disciples to pray "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Mt. 6:9.
 - B. Jesus prayed "thy will be done" (Mt. 26:42) and said his meat was to do his Father's will (Jn. 4:34).
 - C. Paul prayed that the Colossians might be filled with the knowledge of his will. Col. 1:9.
- II. WE SHOULD PRAY FOR THE DAILY NECESSITIES OF LIFE. Mt. 6:11.
 - A. It is God's will that we pray for our food but it is also his will that we work while we pray. Gen. 3:19; 1 Thess. 4:11,12.
 1. "You sin if you do not pray for your food, and you will go hungry if you do not work for it." (McCord)
 2. There is a great deal of truth in the story of a bear being on the loose close to two men. One said, Let's pray. The other cried, "Let's run while we pray."
 - B. It is God's will that we pray for our "daily" (Needful) necessities.
 1. Learning to live one day at a time will make life more cheerful and free of worry.
 2. One-day-at-a-time living is the secret that Dale Carnegie used to write a best seller "How to Stop Worrying and Start Living."
- III. WE SHOULD PRAY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF OUR SINS.
 - A. Jesus taught his disciples to pray "And forgive us our debts..." Mt. 6:12.
 - B. Peter told Simon to repent and pray. Acts 8:22.
 - C. God keeps us saved through our daily walking in the light and confessing our sins. 1 Jn. 1:7-9.
- IV. WE SHOULD PRAY FOR GOD'S HELP.
 - A. When confronted with a problem. 1 Sam. 8:1-6.
 - B. To face and overcome temptation. Mt. 6:13; 26:41; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Pet. 2:9.
 - C. When sorrowful and heavyhearted. Mt. 26:36-46.
 - D. When undertaking any work. Acts 13:3.
 - E. When afflicted. James 5:13.
- V. WE SHOULD PRAY FOR THE SICK. James 5:13,14.
 - A. Hezekiah was sick unto death but God added 15 years to his life in answer to his prayer. 2 Kgs. 20:1-6a.
 - B. Bro. A. /A. Moss was given six months to live, but he lived 5 1/2 years in answer to many prayers.
 - C. "A minister was visiting an old lady who was critically ill. But instead of the minister praying for her she, when asked by the minister if she would like to have prayer, replied, 'yes, but first let me tell you how I pray concerning my illness that you might keep it in mind.' These were her words, 'O God, if you have any need for me here, let me get well. Thy will be done. In Jesus' name, amen.'"
- VI. WE SHOULD PRAY FOR PREACHERS AND THE WORK OF THE LORD.

- A. Paul asked the Romans to "strive together with me in your prayers to God for me." Rom. 15:30.
- B. "Withal praying also for us..." was his request to the Colossians (4:2,3)
- C. The Thessalonians were told "Brethren, pray for us" (1 Thess. 5:25) "pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course." 2 Thess. 3:1.
- D. Everybody cannot preach but like Aaron and Hur held up the hand of Moses (Ex. 17:8-16) so you can hold up the preachers' hands with your prayers.
- VII. WE SHOULD PRAY FOR EARTHLY RULERS. 1 Tim. 2:1,2.
- VIII. WE SHOULD PRAY FOR THE WELFARE OF THE CITY WHERE WE ARE. Jer. 29:5-7; Psa. 122:6.
- IX. WE SHOULD PRAY THAT MORE LABOURERS ENTER THE HARVEST.
 - A. Jesus said the fields are white already to harvest. Jn. 4:35.
 - B. He said the harvest is plenteous but the Labourers are few. Mt. 9:37.
 - C. We should pray that more labourers enter and then enter ourselves. Mt. 9:38.
- X. WE SHOULD PRAY THAT OTHERS MAY BE SAVED. Rom. 10:1.
 - A. Paul prayed that Israel might be saved.
 - B. He did not pray that they be saved contrary to God's will, but through submission to God's righteousness. Rom. 10:2,3.
- XI. WE SHOULD PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER. Jas. 5:16.
 - A. Paul made mention of the Romans in his prayers. Rom. 1:9.
 - B. He thanked God for what he had given the Corinthians. 1 Cor. 1:4
 - C. He ceased not to give thanks for the Ephesians, mentioning them in his prayers Eph. 1:16.
 - D. He thanked God upon every remembrance of the Philippians and made request with joy. (Phil. 1:3,4) and prayed that their love might abound in knowledge and discernment. Phil. 1:9-11.
 - E. He prayed that the Colossians might be filled with the knowledge of his will. Col. 1:9,10.

CONCLUSION:

1. Prayer should, at time, ~~may~~ be general, but it should also be specific.
2. Our prayers can include many more things besides these mentioned in this lesson and more than they usually do.

INTRODUCTION:

I hear a voice speaking, it has spoken to me quite often in the past on Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, etc. You have heard it many times; our visitors have heard it. Yet you probably did not realize that you heard the voice or ever caused it to speak. Almost all of us here have at various times caused it to speak. This voice is not composed of sound like mine and yours, nevertheless it is audible, eloquent and powerful. "What is this voice?" you say. It is the voice of the empty seat. You don't believe an empty seat can speak and deliver a message! Then note how the empty seat in our:

1. Business speaks of indifference, lack of interest, carelessness, idleness, slothfulness, with the result-that individual is soon fired.
2. The empty seat in the home speaks:
 - a. Of loved ones who have died.
 - b. Who have married and established homes of their own.
 - c. Or of a prodigal son gone astray.
 - d. Or of a husband who has deserted wife and children.

When David's seat was empty (1 Sam. 20:25) it spoke to Saul and made him think that "something hath befallen" David. (1 Sam. 20:26).

DISCUSSION:

I. IN LIKE MANNER THE VOICE OF THE EMPTY CHURCH SEAT SPEAKS OF:

A. The Dead.

1. Some seats are empty because of death, but the works and memories of those who occupied them fill our minds and lives.

a. Rev. 14:13 - "their works do follow them." (Many seats in this congregation are empty because of death, but the sweet memories of those that occupied them linger on.)

b. Dorcas' works followed her. Acts 9:36-42. c. Heb. 11:4.

B. The Living.

1. It speaks of those faithful Christians that are now unable to attend the services because of sickness. (Mention the number in this community.)
2. It speaks of some who have apostatized by turning to false doctrines. Gal. 1:6-9.
3. It speaks of others who have gone back into the ways of the world. 2 Pet. 2:20-22.
4. It speaks of those that are lukewarm, indifferent and neglectful.

II. THE EMPTY SEAT OF THE LUKEWARM AND THE NEGLECTFUL SAYS:

A. To the Preacher: "Your sermon is not worth much."

1. Very few would be rude enough to say this to a preacher's face, but their absence says it.
2. The effectiveness and deliverance of many good sermons have been ruined by the voice of the empty seat. Several months ago Bro. Gus Nickols wrote an article in the Gospel Advocate on "Empty Benches." He expressed just how empty benches make a preacher feel when he gets up to speak. "But, positively, and affirmatively you are a failure! Your bad qualities overbalance your good ones. You are a dumb, listless bunch; and my sermons do you no good. However careful and powerful my preparation, when I arise to speak, and look into your expressionless faces, your empty gaze freezes my very soul for my sermon. You render it of little benefit to anyone. You intimidate me, and make me lose confidence in my ability as a preacher and a soul-winner for Jesus Christ."

B. To the visitor.

1. "We have no interest here. We say we are the true New Testament church, but deny it by our actions."
2. Regular attendance is not essential to salvation.
3. The story is told of the man that visited several churches trying to find the right one. One Sunday morning he attended the services of the church of Christ and went away concluding he had found the right one. But upon returning that night and finding only a handful he decided otherwise and went away sad and disappointed.

- C. To the elders and deacons. (We are sure to fail in the work we have planned to do. There are not enough present to make the contribution sufficient to meet the bills.

1. you talk well - Eph. 33:30-32
2. Not hearing little practical
Mt. 7:24-28

By my absence I'm going to prove that you are incapable, incompetent and unqualified to be elders and deacons.)

D. To the other members: "Why don't you stay away next Sunday morning, Sunday night or Wednesday night?"

E. To God and Christ.

1. I know that the gospel is your power to save (Rom. 1:16); that the church is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22,23) and the greatest institution on earth and that Jesus Christ died to save all (John 3:16), but all these mean very little to me. I had rather go to a movie, watch television, listen to the radio, go fishing than worship with you and seek to save souls. Why don't you stay in heaven and mind your own business and leave us alone?
2. My work, business or some other secular affair is more important to me than worshipping and serving you. I know that you said put the kingdom first (Mt. 6:33) but I'll put what I want to put first.
3. I don't really and sincerely love you, but I pretend I do. Jn. 14:23. *He who hates me hates my Father also*
4. You say you will punish me for all this (Heb. 10:25; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; James 4:17; Rom. 6:23; Rev. 3:15,16), but I don't really believe it and I'm daring you to do what you say.

CONCLUSION:

So you see, the voice of the empty seat speaks very eloquently, clearly, and distinctly some very terrible things concerning you when you are absent but could have been present if enough effort had been exerted. I'm calling upon every member of this congregation to help remove the voice of the empty seat from this congregation. This we all can do by resolving that we are not going to miss a single service and admonishing those that are missing to begin coming.

"TIMES, PLACES, POSITIONS"

Lk. 18:1

INTRODUCTION:

1. Our age is truly named when its referred to as the "jet age" not only because of this mode of travel, but also because we are constantly on the move.
2. Ours is a generation marked by uncertainty and fear. We have, in many cases, lost our moorings and attempt to cover our anxiety and frustration under a blanket of sound and motion.
3. Modern man seems to have few quiet moments and little time for meditation. But no matter how fast our movement or loud our sound, they cannot make us forget our needs that are all too real to us. Our problem is not new nor is its solution.
 - a. Isaiah said "in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." Isa. 30:15.
 - b. To a troubled land the Psalmist declared "Be still, and know that I am God." Psa. 46:10.
 - c. Christ, speaking to his exhausted disciples, said "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." Mk. 6:31.
4. The solution to many of our problems can be found in the quiet restfulness of prayer which emphasizes the importance of learning all we can about prayer.

DISCUSSION:

I. WHAT ARE THE SCRIPTURAL POSITIONS TO ASSUME IN PRAYER?

- A. At the dedication of the temple, Solomon first "stood before the altar" (1 Kgs. 8:22) and later kneeled. (1 Kgs. 8:54).
- B. The Psalmist said we are to "worship and bow down" before the Lord our maker. (Psa. 95:6).
- C. Elijah sat under a juniper tree and made a request to God (1 Kgs. 19:4) and David sat before the Lord and prayed (1 Chron. 17:16).
- D. Hezekiah turned his face to the wall on his bed and prayed. 2 Kgs. 20:1,2.
- E. Jesus fell on his face and prayed in the garden of Gethsemane. Mt. 26:39.
- F. Paul kneeled down and prayed with the elders from Ephesus. Acts 20:36.
- G. Paul said "I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands." 1 Tim. 2:8; cf. 1 Kgs. 8:22.
- H. The position which one assumes in prayer does not necessarily determine the effectiveness of one's prayer, but rather his disposition. The positions of bowing down and kneeling seem to have been taken more often than others.

II. THERE CAN BE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF PRAYER THROUGH A STUDY OF PRAYERS.

- A. There are seven important suggestions given by James about prayer in James 5:13-18.
 1. "Let him pray" (v. 13) suggests individual prayer.
 2. "Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him," (v. 14) suggests united prayer.
 3. "And the prayer of faith shall save him" (v. 15) suggests believing prayer.
 4. "Pray one for another" (v. 16) suggests intercessory prayer.
 5. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (v. 16) suggests fervent prayer.
 6. "He prayed earnestly that it might not rain" (v. 17) suggests specific prayer.
 7. "And he prayed again" (v. 18) suggests repeated prayer even though the request was different.
- B. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." (v. 16).
 1. "The attitude of willingness to confess sins is vitally important to prayer." (Baxter)
 - a. The proud, arrogant man can never pray. (Lk. 18:10-14).
 - b. Confession of sins puts one in the right attitude of prayer, the attitude of humility.
 2. We are to confess our sins "one to another." and pray "one for another."
 - a. The phrase "one to another" comes from the Greek word ALLELOIS, which suggests equality. All are sinners and need to confess their faults to others.
 - b. The phrase "one for another" comes from the Greek word ALLELOON and again suggests the idea of equality. All men regardless of position are in need of prayer.

- (1) When Abraham Lincoln was president he often greeted visitors who came to look at the White House. Once while expressing his happiness that they came he saw Henry Ward Beecher, the noted preacher from Brooklyn. He asked him to step aside and wait a few minutes. When others had gone he took Mr. Beecher into a side room, closed the door, turned the key and asked that Mr. Beecher pray for him and the nation. "No man ever occupies so high a position or has such virtue and strength in himself that he does not need prayer." (Baxter).
 - (2) I know that many of you pray for me, for the elders and for others and I pray for you.
- C. The Prayer of Jabez teaches us many things about prayer. 1 Chron. 4:9,10.
1. He was a humble man as there was no pleading of his own merits and accomplishments.
 2. It was an earnest sincere prayer - "Oh, that thou wouldest..."
 - 3.- It was directed to the right person - "the God of Israel."
 4. He asked for blessings - "bless me indeed."
 5. He asked for prosperity - "enlarge my coast."
 6. He asked for strength - "that thine hand might be with me."
 7. He asked to be kept from evil - "keep me from evil."
 8. He asked to be kept from sorrow, should evil overtake him - "that it might not grieve me."
 9. "And God granted him that which he requested."
- D. Paul's prayer for the Ephesians should be our prayer for each other. (Eph. 3:14-21)
1. That they might be strengthened in the inner man.
 2. That Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith.
 3. That they might be rooted and grounded in love.
 4. That they might understand the love of God and the fullness of the plan of God.
- E. Paul's prayer for the Philippians. (Phil. 1:9-11).
1. "that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment." (v. 9)
 2. "That ye may approve thing that are excellent." (v. 10)
 3. "that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ." (v. 10,11)

CONCLUSION:

1. Our prayers ought to be regular and full for each other.
2. Tremendous blessings come from God in answer to prayers.

"DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYERS?"INTRODUCTION:

1. Prayer must not hold a secondary place in our life because that puts God secondary in our life.
2. Prayer must be a "first choice" in our life and not a "last resort." One reason many individuals are so little for God and so little involved in His cause is that they are so little with God in prayer.
3. But many questions arise about prayer. Does God answer prayer? How does God answer prayer? Does my understanding as to how God answers prayer have a bearing on his answering it? etc.
4. In this study let's observe:

DISCUSSION:I. GOD HAS PROMISED TO ANSWER OUR PRAYERS.

- A. Jesus said "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:" (Matt. 7:7).
- B. Again "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do..." (John 14:13).
- C. Again "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." (John. 14:14).
- D. John wrote "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him..." (1 John 3:22)
- E. Again, John wrote "And if we know that he hears us..." (1 Jn. 5:14,15).
- F. God has promised to hear and answer our prayers and God always keeps his promises. 2 Cor. 1:20.

II. THERE ARE MANY BIBLE EXAMPLES OF ANSWERED PRAYERS.

- A. God answered Abraham's prayer for Abimelech. Gen. 20:17.
- B. God answered Hannah's prayer for a son. 1 Sam. 1:9-12ff.
- C. Solomon was given wisdom in answer to his prayer. 1 Kgs. 3:9-12.
- D. Fifteen years were added to Hezekiah's life in answer to prayer. 2 Kgs. 20
- E. God answered Job's prayer for his friends and for himself. Job. 42:8-10.
- F. God answered Elijah's prayer. Jas. 5:17,18.
- G. God does answer prayers

III. HOW DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER?

- A. The acceptableness of our prayers and God's answer to our prayers are not dependent on our understanding of how God does it, but we should learn as much as is revealed. We should remember that God answers prayer according to his infinite wisdom rather than ~~prayer according to his~~ according to our limited foresight.
- B. God answers every prayer in one of the following ways:
 1. God sometimes says yes.
 - a. He grants us that which we request because it is for our good and in harmony with his will.
 - b. He sometimes grants that which we request, which may not be for our good, but because we insist on having it. 1 Sam. 8:1-9.
 - c. He sometimes answers yes, but does not give us exactly what we asked for.
 - (1) Jesus requested that this cup might pass from him. God didn't remove the cup, but gave him the strength to bear it. Lk. 22:42,43.
 - (2) Paul asked God to remove his thorn in the flesh. God didn't remove it but gave Paul strength to bear it. 2 Cor. 12:7-9.
 - (3) He sometimes substitutes bread in place of the stone for which we ask. Mt. 7:9-11.
 2. God sometimes says no. James 4:3.
 3. God sometimes says wait a while. Paul prayed to go to Rome (Rom. 1:10) but it was at least two years before he went to Rome. (Acts 27,28)
- C. God's answered prayers helps us to better understand how he ~~will~~ answers prayer.
 1. God's answer to Hannah's prayer reveals several things about how.
 - a. She prayed for a son. 1 Sam. 1:10,11.
 - b. Elkanah, her husband, knew his wife. 1 Sam. 1:19.
 - c. The Lord remembered her. 1 Sam. 1:19.
 - d. Hannah conceived. 1 Sam. 1:20.
 - e. In process of time she brought forth a son. 1 Sam. 1:20.
 - f. Hannah recognized it as answer to her prayer. 1 Sam. 1:27
 - g. God granted the petition, but Elkanah and Hannah still had to follow the natural process of bringing a child into the world.

2. God's answer to Samuel's prayer for Israel's deliverance from the Philistines helps.
 - a. Samuel prayed with Israel that they be delivered from the Philistines. 1 Sam. 7:5-8.
 - b. God thundered with great thunder on the Philistines and discomfited them. 1 Sam. 7:10.
 - c. The Israelites smote the Philistines. 1 Sam. 7:11.
 - d. They recognized it as answer to their prayer. 1 Sam. 7:12.
 - e. God answered their prayer but they still had to do their part.
3. God made Hezekiah well in answer to his prayer.
 - a. Hezekiah prayed that he might be made well. 2 Kgs. 20:1-3.
 - b. God heard his prayer and said "I will heal thee." 2 Kgs. 20:5.
 - c. Isaiah took a lump of figs and laid it "on the boil, and he recovered." 2 Kgs. 20:7.
 - d. God answered his prayer in connection with the use of medicine.
4. God has promised to us life and we pray for life and health. Do we show a lack of faith in God and prayer when we eat food to sustain that life? No, we simply use the means to sustain life, believing that God's blessings will accompany this means.
5. God tells us to pray for the sick, but our prayers must be qualified by common sense. Jas. 5:14,15.
 - a. If one has lost a hand we are not to pray for another to grow, yet one intensely ill with fever would have a prayer for recovery.
 - b. "We would not pray for the sun to rise in the west, but trapped in fire we could pray for the wind to change."
 - c. In Matthew 24, Jesus describes the terrible punishment to come on Jerusalem. He did not pray for Christians that it not happen, but told them to pray that it not be on the Sabbath or in the winter. Mt. 24:20.
 - d. Elders are to pray and "use oil" which is a symbol of medicine. Elders were to pray in conjunction with doctors, not without them. James does not suggest prayer without medicine, neither must we suggest medicine without prayer.
 - e. Prayer for the sick accomplishes great things.

CONCLUSION:

1. Alfred Lord Tennyson said "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."
2. Of the 667 requests in the Bible 654 have definite answers.
3. POWER OF PRAYER Mr and Mr. Seamore of Jonesville (real people, fictitious town) had worked hard all their lives. Though they lived simply in a small, isolated farm home, people said they had money. One night, as she peacefully listened to the radio and he read, a masked man burst into the room, gun in hand. "Give me \$500," he shouted, "or I'll kill your wife!" Mr. Seamore rose calmly, picked up his Bible, and said gently, "Nellie, let's pray for this poor, lost boy." The two knelt side by side and began to pray earnestly for the bandit. He watched them, then dropped his gun. Sobbing, he knelt beside Mr. Seamore. The old man put his arm around the younger man's shaking shoulders. "You should call the police," the man wept. "I came to rob you..." "Why?" "It's my wife. She needs an operation or she'll die." "Then she'll have it," Mr Seamore said, "I'll lend you the money and give you a job so you can pay it back..." "But, why are you doing this?" "God gave me all I have, and I'll gladly share it with you." The "thief" still works for the Seamores, but he's like a son now. He and his wife attend church with the couple who literally "saved" their lives. Lucille Campbell Sunday Digest.

THANKSGIVING OR GRATITUDE

Col. 2:7; 3:15-17

INTRODUCTION:

1. Read or quote the text.
2. On Thursday, Nov. 23, we will keep what we call Thanksgiving Day.
 - a. The first Thanksgiving (as we know it) was celebrated by the Pilgrims in 1621.
 - b. George Washington proclaimed Thanksgiving Day in 1789.
 - c. In the year 1863 Abraham Lincoln issued his now famous Thanksgiving Proclamation that the 4th Thursday in November would be Thanksgiving Day.
3. It's always in order to be thank-ful and talk about it, but because more people are thinking about now than usual we purpose to discuss it today.
 - a.

DISCUSSION:

I. THANKFULNESS SHOULD BE A PART OF EVERY CHRISTIAN'S LIFE.

- A. It should be a part of our lives because God has commanded us to be thankful. Eph. 5:20; Phil. 4:6; 1 Thess. 5:18; 1 Tim. 2:1,2.
- B. It should be a part of our lives because Jesus Christ has set the example. Mt. 26:26,27; John 6:11; 11:41.
- C. It should be a part of our lives because the early Christians set the example of such.
 1. Following the storm, on the voyage to Rome Paul "took bread, and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all." Acts 27:35.
 2. When the brethren from Rome met Paul he thanked God, and took courage." Acts 28:15.
 - 3/ Paul thanked God for the faith of Christians. Rom. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:4; Eph. 1:16.
 4. John pictures the elders at the throne of God giving thanks. Rev. 11:17.
- D. It should be a part of our lives because ingratitude is a grave sin in God's eyes and it is one of the most universal and deep seated of human vices.
 1. The unthankful are classed with the evil. Lk. 6:35.
 2. The unthankful are classed with all types of sinners. 2 Tim. 3:1-5.
 3. Ingratitude is heathenism in its nature. The heathen world, described by Paul knew God, but glorified him not as God and became unthankful. Rom. 1:20,21.
 4. Jesus took notice of the fact that only one of the ten lepers healed returned to thank him. Lk. 17:11-19.
 5. Thoughtlessness or forgetfulness is one of the greatest causes of ingratitude.
 - a. One would think that Israel would not forget and be ungrateful after all God had done for them but they did.
 - (1) Moses warned them again and again not to forget. Deut. 4:9; 6:10-12; 8:11-20.
 - (2) But ~~they~~ did forget and became unthankful and disobedient. Deut. 32:15-18; Judges 3:7.
 - b. The butler forgot Joseph in prison. Gen. 40:23; 41:9.
 - c. The nine lepers in their rush to get back to other things forgot to return and thank the Lord. Lk. 17:11-19.
 - d. One of the greatest causes of thoughtlessness is familiarity and taking things for granted.
 - (1) We are so familiar with so many blessings that we are not really grateful for them.
 - (a) We thank God for narrow escape and unusual blessings but take the common, everyday blessings for granted.
 - (b) "Borghild Dahl's book, I Wanted to See, tells how she was unable to enjoy the fullness of life because she was completely blind in one eye and had almost negligible vision in the other. As a child she didn't want to be different from the other girls, but when they played hopscotch, her

"On a
stormy night..."
(Read)

As we breathe (Thanksgiving Thoughts)

"Imagine thanking God for the privilege of washing dishes, of seeing rainbows in the falling snow." (Dr. John B. Oman)
(Poem) "DIRTY DISHES"

eyesight wouldn't allow her to participate. After the other girls had gone home, she would get down, with her eye almost on the ground, to learn where the marks were. She grew so familiar with the ~~marks~~ grounds that she became proficient in hopscotch and running games. "Then, at the age of 53, a miracle happened. She went to Mayo Clinic and, after an operation, her eyesight was improved forty times. She tells in her book how washing dishes became to her a new thrill. She could not only run her hands through the suds but she could hold them up and see the bubbles make tiny rainbows against the light. She could look out of the window as she worked and see the black-tipped wings of the sparrows as they flew through the falling snow. New joy and satisfaction - a whole new world - became hers. She closes that book by saying, 'Dear Lord, I whisper, our Father in Heaven, I thank thee, I thank thee, I thank thee.'"

(2) We take so many of our spiritual blessings for granted. (Preaching, Bible classes, periods of fellowship, etc.)

II. THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS FOR WHICH WE SHOULD GIVE THANKS.

- A. We should give thanks to God because he is our Creator. Psalms 100:3,4; 139:14.
B. We should give thanks to God for his providential care.
1. It is in him that we "live, and move, and have our being." Acts 17:28.
2. It is God that gives life, breath and all things. Acts 17:25.
3. God made the meats we eat to be received with thanksgiving. 1 Tim. 4:1-4.
4. It is from God that every good and perfect gift comes. Jas. 1:17.
C. We should thank God for victory through the resurrection. 1 Cor. 15:57.
D. We should thank God that we can triumph in Christ. 2 Cor. 2:14.
E. We should thank God for his unspeakable gift. 2 Cor. 9:15.

III. HOW CAN WE SHOW OUR GRATITUDE TO GOD AND MAN?

- A. We can show our gratitude to God in our worship.
1. The psalms written by David and used in worship by the Jews, and many by us, are full of thanksgiving. Psalms 103:1,2.
2. Our prayers should be made up of thanksgiving. Phil. 4:6.
B. We can show our gratitude by our offering.
1. The Jews gave a thank-offering unto God. Lev. 7:12ff.
2. Out of gratitude for God's mercies we are to offer a thank-offering. Rom 12:1,2.
C. We can show our gratitude by just thanking others for what they have done for us.
D. We can show our gratitude by doing for others.
1. One will do out of gratitude more than he will do out of fear or hope of reward.
2. "Gratitude, like love, lives not in words, but in deed and in truth. Often those who feel most what has been done for them say least about it; but they do most."

CONCLUSION:

1. Thankfulness is so needed and yet so often forgotten until too late.
2. We are prone to wonder what we can be thankful about. One little boy at ten had to begin wearing glasses but after a while he was so thankful, he said, for two reasons, "They keep boys from fighting me and little girls from kissing me."

WHAT SIN CAN DO

1 Jn. 3:4--

No. 4

940

83

Introduction.

1. Jesus Christ promises rest from sin to all that will come to him. Matt. 11:28-30.
 - a. Rest from the power and dominion of sin. Rom. 6:14.
 - b. Rest from the pollution of sin--defiling and corrupting. 1 Jn. 1:7-10.
 - c. Rest from the practice of sin. Gal. 1:4; 2 Cor. 5:15; 1 Pet. 2:24.
 - d. Rest from the penalty of sin. Rom. 6:23.
 - e. Rest from the presence of sin. Cf. Rev. 21:27.
2. Most of us have the ability to recognize the evil effects of sin in the lives of others, but fail to see the disastrous effects in our own lives many times.
3. What sin will do to the rankest sinner in the community it will do to you.
4. Let's each apply these remarks to our own lives.

Discussion.

I. SIN CONTAMINATES.

- A. The leper in the Old Testament was to cry "unclean, unclean" when approached by others. Lev. 13:45. You are "unclean, unclean" if you have not been born again.
- B. Living in sin makes one dirty, filthy, unclean.
 1. We are born spotless. Mt. 18:3.
 2. The world spots. James. 1:27.
 3. "Spotted by the flesh"--Jude 22,23
 4. Some in Sardis had not defiled their garments. Rev. 3:4.
- C. David's sin with Bathsheba made him feel dirty when he finally realized what he had done. Psal. 51:1,2,7.
- D. Sin's filthiness is vividly illustrated by the prodigal son in the pig pen. Lk. 15:11ff.

II. SIN SEPARATES.

- A. Sin will separate us from God. Isa. 59:1,2.
- B. Samson's great strength was gone one day because sin had separated him from God. Jud. 16:6-20.
- C. Sin always cuts off communion and fellowship with God--here and in hell. 2 Thess. 1:7-9.

III. SIN ENSLAVES.

- A. Jesus said that "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." Jn. 8:34
- B. One becomes "servants"--literally "slaves"--to that which one obeys. Rom. 6:16
- C. We are in bondage to that which overcomes us. 2 Pet. 2:19.
- D. Some examples of slaves to sin:
 1. The children of Israel had become slaves to Pharaoh and one living in sin becomes a slave to Satan.
 2. The alcoholic is a slave. 9½ to 12 million alcoholics--36 millions lives affected directly or indirectly--No alcoholic intended to become such. He knows it will corrupt the mind, destroy the body, and damn the soul, but he's a slave to the habit.
 3. The drug addict is a slave. When really hooked it may cost \$50 to \$500 a day to feed one's habit. Women will prostitute themselves and men will kill.
 4. Gambling can enslave men so that they will risk their lives and spend away the needs of their own family.
 5. The covetous man works 16 hours per day, has no time for God, Christ, the church, etc., worships the god of mammon because he has become a slave.
 6. Sinners are sometimes blind to their true condition.
 - a. The man who says "I can take it or leave it" is afraid to try leaving it.
 - b. One may imagine himself rich when he is poor. Rev. 3:14-17
 7. There is freedom and liberty in Christ. Jn. 8:32; 14:6; 17:17; Gal. 2:4; 3:26,27.

IV. SIN SCARS.

- A. There are many ugly scars in the physical realm, but nothing compared to a scarred soul.
- B. David knew that God forgave him of his sin with Bathsheba but he had a scarred soul the remainder of his days.
- C. The apostle Peter denied the Lord and probably blushed with shame every time he heard a rooster crow. He had a scarred soul. Mt. 26:69-75.
- D. Paul knew that God had forgiven him of his sins but he never did forget how he persecuted the church. 1 Tim. 1:13.
- E. Bro. Gus Nichols tells about a young lady in Jasper, Ala. who several years ago became pregnant out of wedlock. It brought shame to her, her family, and to the church. A Christian family adopted the baby, she made public confession and all cried and prayed with her. But as the weeks passed it was obvious something was bothering her. Bro. Gus went to visit her one Sunday afternoon and drove between two giant oaks up to her house. He sat in the swing talking with Mary and finally asked her what was wrong. She said, "Bro. Gus, you see those stripes on the trunk of that big tree?" He said, "Yes." She explained that lightning struck that tree years before but the scars were still there. She said "I know that God has forgiven me, but the scars are still there."
- F. Bro. Jimmy Allen tells about a man that prayed three different times in one of his meetings, always using the expression, "Lord, forgive us our neglected opportunity." When Bro. Allen asked him why, he explained: "When my wife and I first married, she wanted to start to church somewhere, but I was too busy." Later I became a Christian but she has never gone to church anywhere. That's why I pray like I do."
- G. Don't scar your soul. God can forgive sins but God cannot remove scars.

Conclusion.

1. Sin can make you feel dirty, separate you from God, enslave you, and scar your soul.
2. You need to purify your soul by obeying the truth today. 1 Pet. 1:22,23.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Read or quote the text.
2. In our first lesson on sin we learned that:
 - a. Sin means to transgress God's law either by actual transgression or by neglect.
 - b. Sin is deceitful, enticing, pleasant and something that grows.
 - c. Sin brought physical death, brings spiritual death, separates man from God, and results in eternal punishment.
3. In this lesson let's consider:

DISCUSSION:

- I. THERE ARE SINS OF IGNORANCE OR SECRET SINS - SINS ONE COMMITS BECAUSE OF A LACK OF KNOWLEDGE.
 - A. A man can sin through ignorance. Lev. 4:2; Num. 15:27; Acts 3:17; 1 Tim. 1:13.
 - B. God holds man responsible for his sins of ignorance. Lev. 4:13,22,27; Acts 17:30,31. 5:17
 - C. God will forgive sins of ignorance.
 1. David asked God to forgive him of his secret sins. Psal. 19:12.
 2. Sacrifices had to be offered under the law of Moses when one sinned through ignorance. Num. 15:27-29.
 3. The Jews crucified Christ through ignorance but God forgave them when they repented. Acts 3:17-19.
 4. Paul was forgiven of his sins of ignorance. 1 Tim. 1:13.
 5. We should daily ask God to forgive us of our sins of ignorance.
- II. THERE ARE SINS OF WEAKNESS - SINS THAT ONE COMMITS, NOT BECAUSE OF IGNORANCE, BUT BECAUSE OF THE WEAKNESS OF THE FLESH.
 - A. Peter was guilty of sins of weakness on at least two occasions.
 1. Peter really believed that he had the power to remain faithful to the Lord regardless of what happened, (Mk. 14:27-31) but he denied the Lord. (Mk. 14:66-72).
 2. Peter taught the truth about the Gentiles and circumcision (Acts 15:1ff; Gal. 2:12) but in a moment of weakness because of fear of the Jews, he refused to eat with them. (Gal. 2:12-14).
 - B. Paul fought the battle of refraining from things he knew were wrong but found himself doing. (Rom. 7:14-23).
 - C. God will forgive us of our sins of weakness if we will confess them. 1 Jn. 1:7-9
- III. THERE ARE ALSO PRESUMPTUOUS OR WILLFUL SINS - SINS THAT ARE HABITUAL, WILFULLY AND DELIBERATELY PERSISTED IN: SINS THAT ARE COMMITTED WITH AN OPEN AND HIGH HAND.
 - A. Man can sin presumptuously. Ex. 21:13,14; Num. 15:30,31; Deut. 17:12; 2 Pet. 2:10.
 - B. God warned the prophets of old to not speak presumptuously. Deut. 18:20-22.
 - C. David prayed that he might be kept from presumptuous sins. Psal. 19:13.
 - D. Saul is an Old Testament example of a presumptuous sinner. 1 Sam. 15.
 - E. God will not forgive sin that is persisted in. Heb. 10:26-29.
- IV. IN THE LIGHT OF ALL THESE TRUTHS WHAT IS THE REAL MEANING OF 1 John 3:9?
 - A. This verse teaches one of two things, namely:
 1. That it is impossible for a child of God to sin; that is to commit a single act of sin, or
 2. That a child of God will not deliberately, wilfully persist in sin - practice sin.
 - B. If the verse teaches that it is impossible for a child of God to commit a single act of sin, then:
 1. It teaches that "all born of God" are above sin - above every single act of sin.
 2. It teaches that if a man ever does sin then he wasn't born of God.
 3. It teaches that such men as Abraham, David, Paul, Peter, etc., never were children of God because they did commit acts of sin. (Gen. 12:13; 2 Sam. 11,12; Rom. 7; Gal. 2:11,12).
 4. It makes John contradict what he said Christians could do in 1 Jn. 1:8-10; 2:1,2.

5. It makes John contradict what Paul taught in 1 Cor. 9:27.
6. It makes Paul admonition to go on unto perfection in Heb. 6:1,2 an impossibility.
- C. 1 John 3:9 actually teaches that a child of God cannot wilfully persist in sin.
 1. The word "cannot" does not always mean impossible:
 - a. One of my friends asks me to go on a questionable pleasure trip and I answer "I cannot go." It is not impossible, but I cannot do it and still be faithful to the Lord.
 - b. Joseph's brethren told him, concerning Benjamin, "The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die." (Gen. 44:22)
 - (1) It didn't mean impossible.
 - (2) But he could not leave without causing his father great grief.
 - (3) Later he did leave.
 - c. Jesus answered the Pharisees on one occasion about why his disciples didn't fast by saying "as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast." (Mk. 2:19).
 - (1) It was not impossible.
 - (2) But they could not fast and still be in harmony with the purpose of fasting.
 2. Thus "cannot sin" does not mean impossible to commit a single act, but a child of God cannot practice sin and still maintain the standing of a child of God.
- D. Why cannot a child of God commit sin?
 1. His "seed remains in me" as the abiding rule and law. (v. 9).
 - a. His (God's) seed refers to the word of God. Lk. 8:11.
 - b. David hid God's word in his heart that he might not sin. Psal. 119:11.
 - c. As long as the word of God abides in my heart as the guiding and controlling law I cannot steal (Eph. 4:28), lie (Eph. 4:25) etc.
 2. Everyone born of God practices righteousness and not sin. 1 Jn. 2:29.
 3. To practice sin as a child of God destroys the purpose of which Christ died. 1 Jn. 3:5,8.
 4. The child of God strives to keep himself from that wicked one. 1 Jn. 5:18.

CONCLUSION:

1. The remedy for sin is the blood of Christ (Col. 1:13,14) which is applied through obedience to his will (Rom. 6:3,4)
2. Let us resolve to keep ourselves from sin.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Read or quote the text.
2. Many who condemn sin generally will condone and practice what they call "little sins."
 - a. They separate sin into "little sins" and "big sins."
 - b. God does not make such a distinction.
 - (1) God does label some sins "great sins" because of what they cause others to do. 1 Sam. 2:12-23.
 - (2) God does recognize some sins as more grievous because of what it gives his enemies an occasion to do. 2 Sam. 12:13-14.
 - (3) But all sin displeases God.
 - (4) Any sin unrepented of is enough to condemn us eternally.
3. The purpose of this lesson is threefold.
 - a. Point out the dangers of so-called "little sins."
 - b. Discuss some of the "little sins."
 - c. Show from the scriptures how to overcome "little sins."

DISCUSSION:

I. THERE ARE GREAT DANGERS OF SO CALLED "LITTLE SINS."

- A. "Little sins" often lead to other sins.
 1. The Psalmist emphasizes the progressiveness of sin. Psa. 1:1,2.
 2. Paul said evil men shall wax worse and worse. 2 Tim. 3:13.
- B. "Little sins" often lead others astray.
 1. Mother plays Bridge for prizes, later her son uses dice.
 2. Father keeps liquor around the house, later son or daughter encouraged to drink. A father and mother were informed that their daughter and her boyfriend were in the hospital following an accident. At the hospital they were told they had been drinking. The father was ready to kill the man that sold it to them. When he reached for his bottle at home to steady his nerves it was gone.
- C. "Little sins" will result in eternal damnation of the soul.
 1. The wages of sin is death. Rom. 6:23.
 2. Any sin and all sin is too dangerous to fool around with.

II. WHAT ARE SOME SO-CALLED "LITTLE SINS" AND THINGS TO WHICH THEY LEAD?

- A. Stealing pennies later leads to thousands. Eph. 4:28
- B. Hate often leads to murder.
 1. Cain hated Abel and killed him. Gen. 4:10; 1 Jn. 3:12.
 2. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer..." 1 Jn. 3:15.
- C. Lust leads to the open act of adultery.
 1. One can lust so as to commit adultery in one's heart. Mt. 5:27,28.
 2. David lusted after Bathsheba and committed adultery with her. 2 Sam. 11:1-4
 3. James says lust leads to sin. Jas. 1:14-15.
- D. Anger leads to wrath to malice. Col. 3:8; Eph. 4:26,31.
- E. Little "white lies."
 1. A lie is a "falsehood uttered or acted to deceive."
 2. Lies are a part of the old man (Eph. 4:25) and will result in eternal damnation (Rev. 21:8).
- F. Social drinking is considered a "little sin."
 1. Social drinking often leads to drunkenness and other evils.
 2. Drunkenness is condemned in the Bible and the only difference between a drunkard and a social drinker is degree, not kind. Prov. 23:29-35.
- G. Envy and jealousy leads to sinful acts.
 1. Envy moved Joseph's brothers to sell him into Egypt. Acts 7:9.
 2. Envy crucified the Son of God. Mt. 27:18.
- H. Making promises with no intention of keeping them is considered a little sin by many. Eph. 4:25.

III. HOW DOES ONE OVERCOME "LITTLE SINS."

- A. First, we must recognize them as sins.
- B. Second, work to overcome them. 1 Cor. 10:13.
- C. Third, learn to hate every sin and cleave to that which is good. Rom. 12:9.

CONCLUSION:

1. "Little sins" are dangerous and one must not be deceived into thinking otherwise.
2. Rid your life of all the little sins" and of all other sins.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Read or quote the text.
2. People who sin, do not, as a rule, want their sins exposed to the light of truth and righteousness. Jn. 3:19-21.
3. Proverbs 28:13 says "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper..." but our text says "Blessed are they...whose sins are covered."
 - a. There is a wrong way to cover sin.
 - b. There is a right way to cover sin.
 - c. "To cover up or over (epi, over) is, used in Rom. 4:7, lit; 'whose sins are covered over.'" (Vine)
4. In this lesson it shall be our purpose to study the wrong way and the right way to cover sin.

DISCUSSION:

I. THERE IS A WRONG WAY TO COVER SINS. Prov. 28:13; Rom. 4:7

- A. Adam and Eve tried to cover their sin.
 1. Job referred to Adam's way of covering sin as the wrong way. Job 31:33/
 2. First, they hid "themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden." Gen. 3:8.
 3. Adam tried to lay the blame on his wife. "The woman, she gave me of the tree and I did eat." Gen. 3:12b
 4. Eve said, "The serpent beguiled me..." Gen. 3:12a.
 5. Adam then tried to blame God for it all. "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me..." Gen. 3:12a.
- B. Aaron tried to cover his sin of making the golden calf by shifting the blame to the people. Ex. 32:21-24.
- C. Achan tried to cover his sin by hiding the stolen goods in his tent. Joshua 7:19-21.
- D. Saul tried to cover his sin by blaming it on the people. 1 Sam. 15:13-15.
- E. The Pharisees tried to cover their sins by appearing righteous unto men. Mt. 23:5, 14, 25-28.
- F. Some try to cover their sins by persecuting the one who preached against their sins.
 1. The Jews had Stephen stoned to death. Acts 7:51-58.
 2. Herodias had John the Baptist beheaded. Mt. 14:1-12.
- G. Some believe that the passing of time covers their sins.
 1. One may realize that he lied, deceived, misrepresented, etc., years ago, but he has persuaded himself that it has been forgotten.
 2. But man must know that the passing of times does not cover sins. 2 Cor. 5:10; Eccle. 12:14.
- H. Hiding from God, shifting blame, appearing righteous, persecuting the preacher, and time are the wrong ways to cover sin, in fact, they are denials of sin and that is dangerous.
 1. It is false because if a man pretends to be virtuous when he knows he is guilty, then his life is a lie.
 2. It precludes forgiveness because God will forgive only the penitent and an admission of guilt is essential.
 3. It confirms sin because it is not destroyed by being concealed, so it grows and hardens one's heart.

II. THERE IS A RIGHT WAY TO COVER SINS.

- A. The Psalmist said, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." Psalms 32:1, 2.
 1. They were not covered as long as he kept "silent." Psalms 32:3.
 2. He acknowledged them. Psalms 32:5.
- B. Again "thou hast covered all their sin. Selah." Psalms 85:2 No sin is really covered till it is forgiven!
- C. Proverbs 28:13b shows that one must confess and forsake his sins in order for them to be covered by God.

- D. Man's sins are covered by God when he meets the terms of God's forgiveness.
1. The alien sinner must hear the word of God (Jn. 6:44,45; Rom. 10:13-17; Acts 18:8); believe in Christ (Jn. 20:30,31; Heb. 11:6); repent of his sins (Acts 2:38; 17:30,31); confess Christ (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10); and be baptized (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16)
 2. The erring child of God must repent (Acts 8:22); confess (1 Jn. 1:8-10) and pray. (Acts 8:22)

CONCLUSION:

1. Man has never been able to conceal his sins from God.
2. God's voice has always caused man to come out of concealment and confess his sin.
3. Will you hear the voice of God today and let him cover your sins.

Introductio-n

1. Tead or quote the text.
2. The Bible is a book that demands our continued study because there are always new lessons everytime one reads and studi-es it diligently.
3. Honesty with God*s word demands that one try to study everything the scriptures say on a subject.
4. In this lesso-n we purp-ose to study:
 - a. The use of three in the scriptures
 - b. Man threefold relation to sin
 - c. Man's threefold need and application of the gospel.

Discussion.

I. THE USE OF "THREE" IN THE SCRIPTURES

- A. There are three divine persons in the Godhead. Rom. 1:20; Acts 17:29; Col. 2:9
 1. God the Father. Gen. 1:26
 2. God the Son. Jn. 1:1,2
 3. God the Holy Sp-irit. Acts 5:3,4.
- B. There are three di-spensations of sacred history.
 1. The Patriarchial. 2500 years. From Creation to the giving of the law.
 2. The Mosacial age. 1500 years. From The giving of the law to Pentecost.
 3. The Christian age. From Pentecost to the judgment.
- C. There are three classes of God's works---the miraculous, the natural, and the providential.
- D. There are three classes of those subject to obedience to the gospel.
 1. Those who have never heard the gospel. Mk. 16:15,16
 2. Those who believe, but have gone no further. Acts 2:38
 3. Those penitent believers who have not been baptized. Acts 22:16.
- E. There are three main facts to the gospel---the death, burial, and resurrection of Chri~~k~~st. 1 Cor. 15:1-4
- F. There are three major things involved in accepting the gospel.
 1. One must believe the facts. Jn. 20:30,31
 2. One must obey the commands. Mt. 7:21; Jn. 14:21
 3. One will receive and enjoy the promises. 2 Cor. 1:20; 1 Jn. 2:25.
- G. There are three major classes of work which the church must do.
 1. Preach the gospel to the lost. Mt. 28:19,20
 2. Build up; or edify itself. 1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 4:14-16; 4:11,12
 3. Prac tice benevolence--do good to all men. Gal. 6:10
- H. There are three classes of temptations. Lust of the f~~l~~esh, lust of the eyes, pride of life. 1 Jn. 2:15-17.
- I. There are three commands for the erring Chri~~k~~stian.
 1. Repent. A cts 8:22
 2. Confess. 1 Jn. 1:8,9
 3. Pray. A cts 8:22

II. THERE IS MAN'S THREEFOLD RELATION TO SIN.

- A. There is the love of sin. Micah 3:2; 1 Jn. 2:15; Jn. 3:19-21
- B. There is the practice of sin. Rom. 3:23
 1. The word commit in Rom. 1:32 means to practice.
 2. "Whosoever committeth sin i-s the servant of sin." Jn. 8:34
- C. There is the guilt of si-n. Lev. 6:4; Rom. 3:19; Jas. 2:10
- D. Man's threefold relation to sin emphasizes,

III. MAN'S THREEFOLD NEED AND APPLICATION OF THE GOSPEL.

- A. Since man loves sin, then he needs to be turned from the love of sin.
 1. The intellectual part of the sinner's heart is changed by facts. Jn. 20:30,31
 2. The emotions are changed by attraction.
 - a. Absalom changed the emotions of Israel. 2: Sam. 15:1-6
 - b. God changes the sinners love for sin to love for him by love. 1 Jn. 4:19; Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8

- B. Sin & man practices sin then he must be made to quit practicing it. Repentance is that which causes him to quit practicing sin. Lk. 13:3; Acts 2:38.
- C. Since man is guilty of sin then the guilt must be removed.
1. One may cease to love and practice sin and still be guilty. A thief quits stealing, but is still guilty if he hasn't paid the debt.
 2. Paul ceased to love and practice sin when the Lord appeared to him on the way to Damascus, but three days later he still had his sins and guilt. Acts 22:16.
 3. The guilt of sin is removed by the cleansing power of the blood of Christ.
 - a. Forgiveness is in Christ. Eph. 1:7.
 - b. Baptism puts us into Christ. Rom. 6:3,4; Gal. 3:26,27.

Conclusion

1. Man's threefold relation to sin emphasizes every man's need for Christ and his gospel
2. Faith changes man's attitude toward sin, repentance changes the practice, and baptism cleanses one from the guilt of sin.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Briefly review the background and give the setting for our text.
2. The words of our text were spoken on a particular occasion and with a limited meaning yet they express a very general truth - "our sins will not be done with us, when we are done with them."
3. The seriousness of this matter should challenge the attention of everyone.

DISCUSSION:I. SOME FACTS ABOUT THE DETECTION OF SIN.

- A. Every sin brings its punishment.
 1. This is a matter of divine law and it is inflexible. Heb. 2:1-3.
 2. Satan caused Eve to doubt the reality of this law and brought ruin to the world. Gen. 3:1-4.
- B. Every man reaps as he sows. Gal. 6:7,8.
 1. In the natural realm man always reaps what he sows (same kind) even though he reaps more than he sows.
 2. In the spiritual realm this text declares that our present choices determine our future.
 - a. "Our actions do not expire with their performance, nor our words with their utterance, nor our thoughts with the thinking of them." (Hastings)
 - b. "We are sowing, from day to day, the seeds of that character which will cleave to us in after life..." (Hastings)
 3. We receive from men according as we sow. Cf. Matt. 7:1,2.
 - a. If we sow evil we reap evil.
 - b. If we hate we reap hate.
 - c. If we sow envy and jealousy we reap envy and jealousy.
 - d. If we sow sparingly we reap sparingly. 2 Cor. 9:6.
 4. Sometimes men fail to recognize they are reaping as they sow because of the long interval between the reaping and the sowing. A child allowed its own way later brings a harvest of pain and shame.
- C. Our text does not say when our sins will find us out, but it does say, whether soon or late, detection is certain.
- D. Again our text does not say that all the sins one commits will be found out by men, but the sinner himself will be found out.

II. SOME WAYS IN WHICH SIN FINDS US OUT OR IS THE GREAT DETECTOR.

- A. Sin sometimes finds us out by being detected in this life. Sin practiced long enough is usually discovered by our fellowman.
- B. Sin sometimes finds us out through the conscience.
 1. Some escape detection in this life but they do not escape the conscience.
 2. Consciences worry them with remorse.
 3. The conscience keeps a sinner uneasy even when no man pursueth. Prov. 28:1.
- C. Sin sometimes finds us out in painful memories.
 1. Sinners can flee from the past but they can't alter it.
 2. There are those who would like a course in forgetting, but there is no forgetting and no altering the past.
 3. Paul. 1 Tim. 1:13; 1 Cor. 15:9.
- D. Sin sometimes finds us out in the painful consequences of past sins.
 1. One can repent and God will forgive the sins. Acts 2:38; 8:22.
 2. But one may still suffer the consequences for years to come. Drunkard, life dissipation. David, Jacob.
- E. Sin sometimes finds us out in an unhappy and ineffective present.
 1. Our past can keep us from enjoyment and full participation in the present.
 2. If one has filled his mind with evil thoughts in the past they will not easily be excluded now.
 3. If we have accustomed our minds to be filled with worldly, frivolous things in the past, that attitude will be with us in the present.
- F. Sin will definitely find us out in the judgment. Eccle. 12:13,14; Rom. 2:16; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Tim. 5:24,25.

III. THERE IS DELIVERANCE THROUGH THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST.

- A. In the natural realm, if one violates a natural law he inevitably suffers the consequences.
 1. If one touches fire, he will invariably be burned.
 2. If one throws himself off a cliff he will be crushed.
- B. In the spiritual realm the same would be true without any hope except for the sacrifice of Christ.
 1. We must find out sins out before they find us, drag them out of their hiding place, name them.
 2. We must truly repent and turn from them.
 3. The sacrifice of Christ does not check the consequences of our sins, but restores us to favor with God. Eph. 2:14-16.
 4. It gives us a new spirit with which to fight the forces that spring up every day. 2 Cor. 5:17.

CONCLUSION:

1. Sin is the great detector in the lives of men.
2. The only way to avoid the consequences and detection of sin is to try to avoid sin and stay away from it.

CHANGING BLESSINGS INTO CURSES

Mal. 2:1,2---

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Introduction.

1. The nation of Israel was blessed above all nations. They received the oracles of God. Rom. 3:2.
2. Israel did not lay these truths to heart and the book of Malachi gives seven complaints of God against them.
 - a. In Malachi 2:1 he denounces the priest.
 - b. In Malachi 2:2 he states the tragic consequence of their failure to give glory to God's name.
3. How sad it is to abuse privileges and have them turned into curses.
 - a. The tree of knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden was a blessing but Satan got man to abuse it and it became a curse. Gen. 3:14ff.
 - b. The brasen serpent was given to Israel as a blessing (Num. 21:4-9) but they abused it until it became a curse (2 Kgs. 18:4).
4. What was true of Israel is, sad as it is, still true of the church. Consider some of our blessings that are misused and the result is curses.

Discussion.

I. BIBLE CLASSES.

A. Bible classes are blessings provided they are not abused.

1. The knowledge of the Bible is fundamental to growth. Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Pet. 2:1,2; Acts 20:32.

2. Bible classes provide multiplied opportunities to increase one's knowledge, but Bible classes are not magic.

- a. One does not gain Bible knowledge just because classes are arranged.
- b. Bible knowledge is not automatic just because one sits in a Bible class.

B. Consider our present situation in the church.

1. There are more Bible classes in the church today than at anytime in her history.

- a. One would think that Bible knowledge would be at an all time high. But is it?

- b. There is less actual Bible knowledge in the church today than at anytime since the Restoration Movement began.

- c. Give your class a test dealing just with the fundamentals. The class that has 95% to pass will be the exception, not the rule.

- d. Why can such pitiful results come from so many blessings and advantages?

2. We have been abusing our blessings of Bible classes and they have turned to curses. What a strange paradox

- a. More classes than at anytime; less Bible knowledge and less respect for Bible authority.

- b. Classes to study the Bible and in many instances total disregard for its authority.

- c. Classes to study the Bible and, in many instances, they become shouting contests between the teachers and students (little respect for teachers and God in Bible classes.)

- d. More classes than at anytime and the church on the verge of apostasy.

- (1) The church is plagued with everything from Pentecostalism to fellowshipping denominations with their errors and practices.

- (2) The church is, in too many cases, having classes for classes sake and not because we are a Bible loving people.

- (3) The preacher may be preaching truth in the pulpit while error is being promoted in the class rooms.

3. Bible classes without a love for truth and Bible knowledge become curses. We have abused them.

II. BIBLE CLASS MATERIAL.

A. CLASS MATERIAL can be a blessing.

1. Bible class material was originally designed especially for congregations that had preaching once a month.
2. Bible class material was prepared to aid in studying the Bible and not for the purpose of supplanting the Bible.
3. Bible class material still has its place, but has it increased Bible knowledge? No!

B. Class material that takes the student away from the Bible instead of to the Bible is a curse.

1. Many have gone through the Bible school from preschool to high school and wouldn't know where to find a single thing in the Bible.
2. Ask some student to read a passage from the Bible and, in too many cases, they don't know whether to look in the Old Testament or New Testament and end up looking at the list of books in the front of the Bible to find something.
3. It is not unusual to see an entire class come to Bible class without a Bible.

C. Bible teachers have become so dependent on class material that multitudes could not just take the Bible and teach it. Many teachers have become so dependent on material that they are lost with a Bible.

D. When class material keeps teachers and students from becoming more familiar with the Bible it is a curse, not a blessing.

E. When we can truthfully say we have more class material than ever before, yet less Bible knowledge, then it has become a curse, not a blessing.

F. When the demand for Bible material is so great there is the danger that some are being prepared to sell and not as an aid to Bible study or to teach the truth. (In the material used in one congregation the statement was made that the Lord's Supper was for the forgiveness of sins.)

G. Materials for Bible study that takes people away from the Bible or that teach error are a curse, not a blessing.

III. BUILDINGS.

A. Meeting houses can be blessings.

1. They can be means to an end of preaching the gospel and building up the church.
2. But a meeting house never saved a soul and they are not a substitute for seeking the lost.
 - a. The meeting house provides a convenient place to teach, but it will not do the work of getting people to come or teach them.
 - b. Sometimes brethren work hard to visit, invite and teach their neighbors and then they get a nice building and all this stops. Where they once worked to get people to come they now sit back and say "Here it is in the building, come and get it if you want it."

B. Pride is one of the chief dangers of the human mind and buildings can promote this. "The building comes to represent the church rather than godly people using the building." (Camp)

C. Buildings can contribute to materialism, one of the dangers of our day. "They can become an outward show while inside are people that shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, blind leaders that think more of carpets and air conditioning than they do of lost souls; who push budgets and forget judgment, mercy and faith; who keep buildings swept, clean, and painted, while members live corrupt lives and discipline is a forgotten commandment; buildings that are beautiful outward, but within are lukewarm, dying and dead people spiritually." (Camp) Mt. 23:14-27 Such is a curse, not a blessing.

D. Still another danger and abuse of buildings are overdoing it.

1. How much money is to be spent on a building is a matter of judgment, but it must not be allowed to do away with common sense and the fulfilling of its main mission of preaching the gospel.

2. When a congregation saddles itself with a building debt that keeps it from preaching the gospel except in the building it becomes a curse instead of a blessing.
3. When more money is been invested in building than in preaching the gospel to the lost it has become a curse, not a blessing.
4. When buildings cause the stopping of support of foreign missionaries they become curses not blessings.

Conclusion.

1. God has given us so many blessings and he wants us to use use them.
2. Let's be sure that we do not cause God to curse our blessings.

When a conversation begins, it is with a friendly and that leads to a friendly
the next step in the process is to make a good subject of a friend.
When one comes to be interested in building a good friend, the first step is to
find it has become a habit, not a theory.
Then follows the step of showing one's interest in the other's life.
And then follows the step of showing one's interest in the other's life.

Conclusion.

1. God has given us the power of thought and he wants us to use it.
2. Let us be sure that we do not waste it on vain things.

The Covering Of Sin

In a refreshing declaration, an Old Testament writer affirms: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Psa. 32:1). In stark relief, another biblical writer says: "He who covers his transgressions shall not prosper..." (Prov. 28:13). The former passage *commends* the covering of sin; the latter one *condemns* such. How are these two inspired oracles to be reconciled? The solution to this seeming difficulty is quite simple actually. In the former text a blessing is pronounced upon him who has his sin covered by means of *God's forgiveness*. On the other hand, the writer in Proverbs is addressing the state of one who attempts to deal with his evil in a human fashion, rather than seeking Heaven's pardon.

Generally, man is a rebel. He does not seek to do the will of his Creator, hence, he is ever involved in wickedness. Jeremiah indicts haughty humanity as follows: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it?" (17:9). It is hardly a wonder that human beings, stubborn as they are, should seek, in their vain imaginations, a variety of methods by which they might avoid facing the responsibility for their violations of divine law. In this article, we will review briefly several of these attempts.

Denial.

One method of dealing with evil is simply to deny its reality. Atheism argues that sin does not exist. Humanists reason: There is no God. If there is no God, there is no objective code of ethics. If there is no code of ethics, there can be no transgression. Therefore, there is no such thing as sin. French philosopher Jean Paul Sartre contended that *whatever* man chooses to do is *right*; we can, he affirmed, "never choose evil" (279). And so, the skeptic covers his sin by contending that it has no basis in reality. Sigmund Freud characterized it as a mere "illusion." What a convenient way of ad-

ressing the problem of human evil! It is much like the case of the deluded patient who has been diagnosed with a terminal malignancy. In denial, to his physician he says: "Do not be concerned, doctor; I am fine. I do not believe in cancer."

Concealment

From centuries man has entertained the idea that he can hide his wickedness. If others do not know, what's the difference? The difference is: wrong is still wrong, whether others are privy to it or not. Adam and Eve sought to hide their shame from the Creator, but the effort was for naught (Gen. 3:8ff). After the battle of Jericho, Achan hid the forbidden spoils of battle beneath his tent, but God brought the rebellious deed to light (Josh. 7:20-22). A few years back, a country music song, "Slipping Around," typified the modern attitude. Concealment can be but a temporary respite. The day will come when that which has been done in secret will be shouted from the housetops (Lk. 12:3). God is the revealer of the *secrets* of men (Rom. 2:16).

Redefinition

Another ploy in dealing with evil is the alteration of vocabulary. Somehow we labor under the illusion that if we can but find a less emotive term by which to designate our vices, the evil has disappeared. And so, drunkenness becomes "alcoholism," adultery is merely an "affair," sodomy is "gay," and pornography is "adult literature." But, as Shakespeare once noted, "... a rose by any other name smells as sweet." And so it is—sin, under any alternate appellation, is still its vile self.

Rationalization

Rationalization is the mental process whereby one justifies his actions by assigning to them a motive that appears to legitimize the conduct. A student throws trash on the schoolroom floor and defends his act on the ground that if the janitor did not have work to do, he would have no job, hence no income with which to support his family! King Saul of Israel disobeyed Jehovah and refused to destroy the livestock booty taken from the Amalekites. He excused himself on this basis: "... the people spared the best of the

sheep and oxen, to sacrifice unto Jehovah your God" (1 Sam. 15:15). America is expert in the art of rationalization. A student cheats on his final exam and feels no guilt because "others are doing it," and he "must make the grade curve." After all, a future job is at stake. We abort our babies and defend the atrocity on the basis that we must not produce millions of youngsters who will not have adequate medical and educational facilities. Rationalization is a soothing lotion for dull conscience.

Legalization

Another way folks cover their sins is to appeal to the license of civil law. The claim frequently is: "Well, it's legal, isn't it?" A man sits in front of his TV and guzzles beer. Whose business is it? It's not against the law. A woman divorces her husband because she no longer finds him attractive. Subsequently, she marries a former boy friend. So what! It's legal. What many obviously do not understand is that civil law is *human* law, and not infrequently it is in direct violation of the will of God.

Substitution

Substitution is the idea one can engage in the vices of his desire, but it really doesn't matter, because he does plenty of *other* things to balance the account. Good deeds are thought to gloss over base conduct. This is the common philosophy of many within the Roman Church. One is free to pursue almost any lifestyle, provided he rattles off the appropriate number of "Hail Marys."

Conclusion

Human attempts to cover disobedience are futile. The wise person will let the Lord handle the problem—in his appointed way. In the divine plan of redemption, Jesus Christ becomes the "covering" ("propitiation"—Rom. 3:25) for sin. By virtue of the Lord's sacrifice at Calvary, and our response to his will, our sins can be covered. For further study, see: *Notes From The Margin*, p. 16. WJ

Sartre, Jean Paul (1966), "Existentialism and Humanism," in *French Philosophers from Descartes to Sartre*, Leonard Marsak, Ed. (New York: Meridian Books).

The Book Shelf

WORD MEANINGS

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Notes From The Margin Of My Bible

In the 9th chapter of the book of Hebrews, the inspired writer discusses the tabernacle arrangement of the Old Testament regime. Within that inner compartment, called the "Holy of holies," was the ark of the covenant. Within the ark were: the golden pot of manna, Aaron's almond rod, and the tables of stone inscribed with the ten commandments. On top of the ark was a lid called the "mercy-seat." In a manner of speaking, the mercy-seat concealed from the Lord's view the ever-condemning judgment of the law. Each year, on the day of atonement, the high priest entered the Holy of holies and sprinkled blood on the mercy-seat. The point conveyed by this imagery is this: It is only through the offering of blood that the condemnation of the law can be abated, and violations thereof covered.

In the Greek Testament, the original word for "mercy-seat" in Hebrews 9:5 is *hilasterion*, which denotes "that which makes expiation," or "propitiation" (cf. ASVfn). It carries the idea of the removal of sin. In Ezekiel 43:14 (LXX), the brazen altar of sacrifice is also called *hilasterion* (the propitiatory) because of its association with the shedding of blood for sin.

What is the significance of this? In the New Testament Christ is designated as our "propitiation" (Rom. 3:25). Jesus is the covering for sin, as previewed by these OT prophetic images. By means of his death, and our response to the requirements of "the faith" system, all our past sins are covered. Later in Romans, Paul pinpoints precisely *when* this occurs. It is when we, upon the basis of penitent faith, are buried with Christ in baptism, to be raised in "newness of life" (6:3-4). By our obedience to the divine commands, we are made "free from sin" (6:17-18). Too, whenever we sin as children of God, we may turn to Christ, who continues to be "the propitiation" for our sins—which blessing extends, potentially, to the entire world (1 Jn. 2:1; cf. 4:10). Thus, underline "mercy-seat" in Hebrews 9:5. Marginally note: See Romans 3:25. Then, beside Romans 3:25 make this notation: See 6:3-4; 17-18. Briefly, this ties together the Old and New Testament concepts regarding the covering of sin. wj

NOTES FROM THE MARGIN OF MY BIBLE

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Introduction.

1. Read or quote the text.
2. Coming to this the last Sunday and the last day of 1972 we suddenly realize how smoothly and quickly this year of our life has passed.
3. In our text Moses admonished Israel to look back over the 40 years God had led them in the wilderness and remember his great blessings.
 - a. They were to remember the day they came out of Egypt. Ex. 13:13.
 - b. They were to remember that they were slaves in Egypt (4 times stated in Deut.) Deut. 5:15; 15:15; 16:12; 24:18,22.
 - c. They were to remember the commandments of the Lord. Num. 15:37-41.
4. The New Testament likewise gives us several admonitions to remember.
 - a. We are to remember the death of our Lord. 1 Cor. 11:24,25.
 - b. We are to have in memory great and vital truths. 1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Pet. 1:15.
 - c. We are to have in mind the words spoken by the apostles and prophets. 2 Pet. 3:1,2.
 - d. Paul told the Hebrews to call to "remembrance the former days." Heb. 10:32.
5. God wants us to stop and look back and remember because memory has the power to move us to tears or bring joy to our heart. Psal. 137:1-6; Phil. 1:6.
6. In this lesson let's consider:

Discussion.

I. SOME LOOKING BACK THAT WE ARE NOT TO DO AND THAT WILL NOT BE HELPFUL.

- A. We are not to look back with a desire to go back to the ways we left.
 1. The children of Israel desired to go back to where they had been. Num. 11:4-6.
 2. Jesus taught that "No man having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Lk. 9:57-62. "The figure is that of a man who, while engaged in labor, instead of keeping his eye on the furrow while he is drawing, looks behind at some object which attracts his interest. He is only half at work, and half-work only will be the result." (Godet)
 3. The Galatians desired to go back to the law. Gal. 4:21; 5:1.
- B. We are not to look back and just remember all the dark moments of the past. Cf. Gen. 47:9.
- C. We are not to look back in such a manner as to constitute disobedience to God's will.
 1. Lot's wife looked back after God had said "Look not behind thee." Gen. 19:17,26.
 2. In warning about the destruction of Jerusalem Jesus told the Christians what to do and then said "Remember Lot's wife." Lk. 17:31,32.

II. SOME BACK AND REMEMBERING WE OUGHT TO DO AND THAT WILL HELP US.

- A. We should remember what God has done for us.
 1. He created us and gave us an immortal soul. Gen. 1:1,26,27; 2:7; Psal. 139:14.
 2. He gave His Son in order that we might be saved from our sins. Mt. 27; Lk. 19:10; 2 Cor. 5:13-15.
 3. He is longsuffering because he wants all to be saved. 2 Pet. 3:9.
- B. We need to remember the sufferings that so many have endured in order for us to enjoy the blessings we have.
 1. The prophets of old. Mt. 5:10-12; Heb. 11:32-40.
 2. The apostles of our Lord. Acts 5:40-42; 2 Cor. 11:23-28.
 3. The men and women of this congregation who have gone on to their reward.
- C. We need to remember what we were before our conversion.
 1. It was a constant remembrance of what he was before his conversion that moved Paul to such great heights. 1 Tim. 1:13-16.
 2. We were dead in our sins and separated from God. Eph. 2:1,12.
 3. It is a forgetfulness of what we were before our conversion that causes us to grow lax. 2 Pet. 1:5-11.
- D. You need to remember, if you have departed from God, what you had before you left.
 1. It was remembering how much better it was back home that moved the prodigal son to repentance. Lk. 15:11-21.
 2. The church at Ephesus was told to remember in order to be moved to repentance. Rev. 2:4,5.

E. We need to remember all the things it took to make this congregation what it is today.

1. It took dedicated and visionary elders.
2. It took sound gospel preaching.
3. It took enthusiastic and dedicated teachers.
4. It took enthusiastic and dedicated members inviting others and doing what they could.
5. It took dedicated personal workers trying to lead lost souls to Christ.
6. It took sacrifice, tears, and prayers on the part of so many.
7. It took entire dependence upon God to bless our efforts.
8. Brethren, it will take all these things to keep us where we are and continue to make progress in God's kingdom.

Conclusion.

1. Looking backward should help us be a more active individual in 1973. *How Do you Look Back?*
2. Remember, time waits for no man. The New Year will soon be here, but it will also soon be gone. How are you planning to use it?

a. Paul looked back with assurance + confidence.
2 Tim. 4:17

b. The Ephesians looked back in the realization they needed to return to their first love. Rev. 2:5

c. The rich man looked back with shame + regret. Lk. 16:19 ff.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Within the next few weeks it is the desire of the present elders that we appoint more elders and deacons. Therefore some lessons along this line are in order.
2. Several extremes can be encountered in a study of this subject:
 - a. We can have ~~have~~ a mind made up about certain points without having studied all the available evidence.
 - b. Two views are generally encountered about how many elders there ought to be.
 - (1) Some believe that every man that is qualified ought to be appointed.
 - (2) Others believe we ought to have as few as possible.
 - (3) What is the answer?
 - (a) First, the Bible does not say how many.
 - (b) Second, the Bible does say there is to be a plurality. A. 14:23
 - (c) Third, the number ought to be determined by the size and needs of each congregation.
3. In this series of lessons it shall be our purpose to study:
 - a. God's arrangement for the local church.
 - b. The qualifications of elders.
 - c. The duties of elders.
 - d. The duties of the church to elders.
 - e. The qualifications and duties of deacons.
 - f. The wives of elders and deacons.
 - g. The appointment of elders and deacons.

DISCUSSION:

I. ELDERS ARE A PART OF GOD'S ARRANGEMENT FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH.

- A. The church in Jerusalem had elders. Acts 15:406.
- B. Paul ordained elders in every church on the return part of his missionary journey. Acts 14:23.
- C. The church at Ephesus had elders. Acts 20:17.
- D. Philippi, sometimes called the model church, had elders. Phil. 1:1.
- E. Paul left Titus at Crete to "ordain elders in every city." Tit. 1:5.
- F. Peter exhorted the "elders which are among you." 1 Pet. 5:1.
- G. These men are made such by the Holy Spirit as he reveals the qualifications. (Acts 20:28).

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT CLEARLY REVEALS THE NEGATIVE QUALIFICATIONS OF MEN TO SERVE AS ELDERS.

- A. "Not give to wine." 1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7.
 1. All intoxicating drinks are meant. The Greek word here not only signifies the actual drinking, but also includes the man who is insolent or abusive.
 2. He must be a man who rules himself-is not ruled by habit or circumstances.
- B. "No striker." 1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7.
 1. "Ungoverned in temper, ready to resent insult or wrong, real or imaginary."
 2. "A pugnacious, contentious, quarrelsome person." (Thayer)
 3. Quarrelsome, one who strikes back at anytime at anyone who dares to disagree or who displeases him, one who lashes out at all who refuse to cater to him.
- C. "Not greedy of filthy lucre." (1 Tim. 3:3) "not given to filthy lucre." Tit. 1:7.
 1. "An elders must not be eager for base gain." (Thayer)
 2. "Not a money grabber." (Phillips)
 3. Men who desire the office as a personal means of profit are unworthy and men whose main interest is material things is unworthy.
- D. "Not a brawler." 1 Tim. 3:3 "not contentious" (ASV)
 1. The contentiousness condemned here is "that of a person who contends with reference to his own likes and dislikes where no principle of truth or righteousness is involved." (L. Thomas)
 2. He must not be a lover of strife, a trouble-maker.
- E. "Not covetous." 1 Tim. 3:3.
 1. Covetous means "inordinately desirous of something belonging to another."
 2. His desire for earthly gains must not influence his decisions in matters of right and wrong.

3. Covetous men will not give liberally and will not spend the Lord's money even when it ought to be spent.

F. "Not self-willed." Tit. 1:7.

1. Determined to have his own way; governed by one's own will; not yielding to wishes of others.

2. He must be uncompromising in matters of faith, but not headstrong and unyielding in matters of judgment.

3. Diotrophes is an example of such. 3 Jn. 9,10.

G. "Not soon angry." Tit. 1:7.

1. Hot-tempered men are not to be chosen as leaders.

2. Not easily disturbed or bothered and not resentful of every little thing.

3. Elders should be deliberate and take action only after much consideration.

H. "not a novice." 1 Tim. 3:6.

1. One newly received into the church; newly converted; a beginner.

2. "One who by inexperience is unfitted to act as a bishop or overseer in the church." (Vine.)

3. The reason that a novice is not to be appointed is "lest he be lifted up with pride." 1 Tim. 3:6.

CONCLUSION:

1. One of the greatest privileges enjoyed by any man is to be an elder in the Lord's church.

2. It also carries with it the greatest of responsibilities because it involves the souls of men.

3. Great care must be made in the selection of elders.

Introduction.

1. Read or quote the text.
2. One of the most important and responsible efforts on the part of a congregation is the selection of men to serve as elders.
3. Careful and prayerful consideration should be given to the qualifications given by God.
4. In our first study we observed God's arrangement for the local church and the negative qualifications.
5. In this study let's consider some positive qualifications.

Discussion.

- I. "IF A MAN DESIRE ("seeketh" ASV) THE OFFICE OF A BISHOP, HE DESIRETH A GOOD WORK."
 - A. "Epithumeo, to desire earnestly. . . stresses the inward impulse rather than the object desired." (Vine)
 - B. The word implies seeking after, implies eagerness, but not of an immoderate or unchristian character.
 - C. The office and work of an elder is one to be greatly desired.
 - D. Notice also that it is referred to as a "good work."
- II. "BLAMELESS" "WITHOUT REPROACH" ASV. V. 2
 - A. ". . . one who cannot be laid hold of . . . who gives no ground for accusation." (Vincent)
 - B. ". . . that cannot be laid hold of, hence, not open to censure, irreproachable." (Vine)
 - C. "If one is to be taken hold of there must be a handle, i.e. some obvious flaw in his character upon which men seize to bring upon him blame and reproach. The candidate for this office should be without a handle." (DeWalt)
 - D. It is said of Zacharias and Elizabeth "they were both righteous before God, walking in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." (Lk. 1:6)
 - E. Samuel's life was such that no charge could be brought against him. 1 Sam. 12:1-5.
- III. "THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE." v. 2
 - A. This forbids celibacy and polygamy.
 - B. "That he should have one wife, forbids having less than one as clearly as it forbids having more than one. If it be said that a man owns but one farm, it is just as clearly implied that he owns one as that he owns no more than one." (McGarvey, "The Eldership", p. 56.)
 - C. A man whose wife is dead and he is married again is still the husband of just one wife. Rom. 7:2,3.
 - D. A man who is scripturally divorced and married again (mt. 5:32; 19:1-9) is the husband of one wife, but whether it would be wise to use one as an elder of the church ought to be given long and careful consideration for a number of reasons.
- IV. "VIGILANT" V. 2 "TEMPERATE" ASV. TIT. 1:8
 - A. "In N.T. the meaning of the verb is always metaphorical, to be calm, dispassionate, and circumspect." (Vincent)
 - B. "Moderate; not excessive; moderate in the indulgences of appetites or passions; self-controlled."
 - C. It refers to an attitude of mind which is reflected in the life. It is an attitude of sober, careful judgment in all matters.
- V. "SOBER" "SOBER-MINDED" ASV. v. 2
 - A. "Of sound mind, sane, in one's senses. Curbing one's desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate." (Thayer)
 - B. A man of "balanced judgment" that is not carried away with every "wind of doctrine."
 - C. Should not be given silly childish things---does not exclude humor or wit.
- VI. "OF GOOD BEHAVIOUR" "ORDERLY" ASV. V. 2
 - A. "Well-arranged, seemly, modest; of a man living with decorum, a well-ordered life." (Thayer)
 - B. This has reference to more than appearance, although it includes that because

an "unordered, slovenly appearance is usually indicative of an unordered, slovenly mind." (DeWalt)

- C. He should have a "well-ordered life", not be "helter-skelter" in his thinking and activities.
- D. "A man disorderly in life and business would allow the church to become disorderly in its conduct." (Music)

VII. "GIVEN TO HOSPITALITY" V. 2 "A LOVER OF HOSPITALITY" TIT. 1:8

- A. philochenos-"hospitable, generous to guests, given to hospitality." (Thayer)
- B. Literally, a lover of strangers.
- C. The genuine desire to make ^{our} house the home of the needy and extend hospitality to all is greatly need today.

VIII. "APT TO TEACH" V. 2

- A. didaktikos-"apt and skilled in teaching." (Thayer)
- B. The characteristic does not refer to the willingness to teach, but to the ability to do so.
- C. "It is very important that elders should have aptitude for teaching privately as well as publicly. (2 Tim. 2:24-26)." (David Lipscomb)

IX. "PATIENT" V. 3 "GENTLE" ASV

- A. epieikes-"seemly, suitable, equitable, fair, mild, gentle." (Thayer)
- B. He is considerate and has a wholesome regard for the feelings of another.
- C. "Hence, not unduly rigorous; not making a determined stand for one's just due." (Vincent)

Introduction.

1. The selection of men to serve as elders in the Lord's church is a most serious matter and ought to be viewed as such by every member of the church.
2. A careful and thoughtful study of God-given qualifications will help us to do the best job in such a selection.
3. In this study we purpose to notice the remaining positive qualifications.

Discussion.

I. "ONE THAT RULETH WELL HIS OWN HOUSE." V. 4

- A. "Proistemi . . ., lit. to stand before, to lead, attend to (indicating care and diligence) is translated to rule. . ." (Vine)
- B. Joshus could speak for his house. Josh. 24:15.
- C. The husband is head of the house. Eph. 5:23.
- D. The man that is ruled by his wife should not be appointed to serve as an elder.
- E. Go home with a prospective elder and observe the conduct of his wife and children. Do they respect him? Is he regarded as competent by those who know him best?

II. "HAVING HIS CHILDREN IN SUBJECTION WITH ALL GRAVITY." V. 4

- A. His children are to be in submission to his will.
- B. The children are to exhibit that seriousness and sobriety of conduct which is in accordance with their father's office.
- C. "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" V. 5
 1. If a man fails at home he will surely fail in public.
 2. The man who shows inability to guide his own house certainly could not guide the church.
 3. "His rule or management of his family is the evidence of his ability to rule the church." (Lipscomb)
 4. Confucius, the Chinese philosopher said, "He who knows not how to govern and reform his own family can not rightly govern and reform a people."

III. "HAVING FAITHFUL CHILDREN NOT ACCUSED OF RIOT OR UNRULY." TIT. 1:6. "HAVING CHILDREN THAT BELIEVE." ASV

- A. "Believing, pistos, one who has been convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and the author of salvation." (Thayer)
- B. The children are not to be accused of:
 1. "Riot." It really means "inability to save" There must be no evil reports concerning a profligate or wanton life.
 2. "Unruly." This suggest ~~at~~ insubordination.
- C. How many children must one have to be qualified?
 1. Some contend that the statement means there must be a plurality and that all of them must be Christians.
 2. Some contend that one or more, with at least one or more being Christians.
 3. The use of the word children in the Bible shows that both a plural and singular application are proper.
 - a. Gen. 21:7. Sarah gave children suck, yet Sarah never had but one child.
 - b. Matt. 3:9. ". . . God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." If the use of the plural here does not admit a singular application then God is able to raise up children to Abraham, but He's not able to raise up one child to him.
 - c. Luke 14:26. "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." If children here does not admit a singular application, then the man who comes hating father and mother, but only has one child cannot be the Lord's disciple.
 - d. Eph. 6:1. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord . . ." Would the same command apply where there is just one child.
 - e. 1 Tim. 5:4. "But if any widow have children . . . let them learn first to show piety at home. . ." If a widow had only one child wouldn't that child

Add
some
comments
here

be under the same obligation/

- f. Sign at the hospital reads: "Visiting hours daily 2:30-4:30. No Children allowed." So you go with your one child. The guard stops you because you have a child, and you say "I don't have any children, I just have a child. Your sign reads "children."
- g. All parents with children are invited to the P.T.A Meeting. Does this eliminate parents with one child.
- h. Thayer says the Greek word "teknon" is sometimes used for "offspring", sometimes for "children" (Matt. 2:18), sometimes for "child" (Lk. 1:7) The term means either one or more. *O. What about adopted children? Raising children?*

IV. "MOREOVER HE MUST HAVE A GOOD REPORT OF THEM WHICH ARE WITHOUT." V. 7

- A. He must have a good reputation among them outside the church.
- B. The non-Christian friends and neighbors who knew him best "would be able to tell how uprightly and unblameably he conducted himself."
- C. A man who is the butt of ridicule and jokes by those "on the outside", due to his inconsistent life is more likely to fall into the devil's snare (trap) and bring reproach on himself and the church. One has said "The devil sets the trap and then reproaches those who fall into it."

V. "LOVER OF GOOD MEN." TIT. 1:8 "LOVER OF GOOD" ASV

- A. philagathon- "loving goodness." (Thayer)
- B. He must be a lover of all that is good and holy and it is obtained by setting the mind on those things which are good and lovely. Phil. 4:8.
- C. "If one loves the good, he will seek the good, and in seeking it himself, he will develop the trait in others." (Music)

VI. "JUST" TIT. 1:8

- A. "In the N.T. it denotes righteous, a state of being right, or right conduct, judged whether by the Divine standard, or according to human standards of what is right." (Vine)
- B. The ability to be fair at all times with all people is a most essential trait for an elder of the church.
- C. It specifically means here to render each his due and pass just judgment on others.

VII. "HOLY" TIT. 1:8

- A. hosios- "undefiled by sin, free from wickedness, religiously observing every moral obligation, pure, holy, pious." (Thayer)
- B. This emphasizes his duty to God. He is pure in character before God.

VIII. "HOLDING FAST THE FAITHFUL WORD." TIT. 1:9,10

- A. "Holding fast" means to cling to.
- B. The "faithful word" refers to the gospel, the truth delivered by the apostles.
- C. He is to hold fast to it that he may be able "both to exhort and to convince the gainsayer."

Conclusion

- 1. Great care should be given in selecting men to serve as elders.
- 2. But one must not feel that it's impossible to qualify because, with two or three exceptions all Christians must have these qualifications.

Introduction

1. Read or quote the text.
2. Strange doctrines were doctrines that did not originate with Christ or the apostles and were different from what they taught.
3. Bible doctrine has always been confronted with strange or different doctrines.
 - a. The devil is always busy trying to get Christians to lay aside the doctrine of Christ. Cf. 1 Tim. 4:1.
 - b. The New Testament epistles dealt with many strange doctrines false teachers were trying to bring in.
4. We are confronted with the age old problem in the church today and it is important that we recognize and deal with these strange doctrines.
5. In this lesson we purpose to discuss open fellowship or extending fellowship to most anybody.

Discussion.I. AT THE PREACHERS WORKSHOP, JANUARY 8-10, 1973, AT ABILENE, TEXAS, CARL KETCHERSIDE SAID:

- A. "I receive every child of God regardless of issues."
- B. "I love, welcome you, whether you agree with my views or not."
- C. "It is my conviction that every sincere believer upon the earth is in that fellowship if he has been immersed upon the confession of Christ as the anointed of the Lord."
- D. "I no longer think of men as Baptists, Methodists, etc., but I take men where they are . . . Indeed, I do believe that I have brethren within the framework of the Baptist Church, Methodist Church, etc."
- E. "I love brethren who:
 1. Believe Bible classes are wrong.
 2. Use one cup.
 3. Use an organ in worship.
- F. "Regardless of what one's views may be whether it be cups, Bible classes, instrumental music in worship, etc., they can never be used as grounds of separating one from the fellowship."
- G. "What one must believe in order to enter into the fellowship of life is more important than what one must believe in order to stay in that fellowship."
- H. In answer to the question, "Must a person understand, at the time of baptism, that it is for the remission of sins", he answered, "No!" Repent and be baptized is the command but remission of sins is something God does for man in heaven and not something man has to understand at the time."

II. THE ADVOCATES OF OPEN FELLOWSHIP HAVE THEIR ARGUMENTS WHICH MUST BE MET AND ANSWERED.

- A. First, they argue that the good news (gospel) is preached, believed, and obeyed by the sinner, but doctrine is what the Christian lives by.
 1. "What one believes in order to become a Christian is far more important than what one believes in living the Christian life." (Ketcherside)
 2. "The good news was perfect on the day of Pentecost. There was never a word added to the good news after the day of Pentecost." (Ketcherside)
 3. The Bible teaches that the gospel, the doctrine, the truth, and the word of God, all refer to the same thing.
 - a. ". . . and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." Acts 6:7
 - (1) The apostles preached the gospel on Pentecost. Acts 2:1-40
 - (2) The high priest accused them of filling "Jerusalem with your doctrine." Acts 5:28
 - (3) "Daily in the temple and in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." Acts 5:42.
 - (4) They gave themselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." Acts 6:4
 - (5) The word of God increased in Jerusalem. Acts 6:7a.

4. Elymas the sorcerer sought to turn away the deputy from the faith.
Acts 13:8.

- (1) When Sergius Paulus called for Barnabas and Saul "He desired to hear the word of God." Acts 13:7
- (2) They were preaching the word of God. Acts 13:5
- (3) Paul accused Elymas of perverting the right ways of the Lord. Acts 13:8
- (4) The deputy "believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord." Acts 13:12

c. The Romans obeyed that form of doctrine when they became Christians.
Rom. 6:17,18

d. The Corinthians obeyed the gospel when they became Christians and were to continue in the gospel. 1 Cor. 15:1-4

B. Second, they argue that the church of Christ is a denomination; and therefore it should fellowship other denominations.

1. "But the claim that we are "The Church", the exclusive body of Jesus Christ is unthinkable. We cannot commit ourselves to ourselves, and we cannot urge others to do so. By the mercy of God we are Christians, but we are Christians of a particular persuasion and a particular history. In other words, all our protestations to the contrary notwithstanding, we are a denomination. We should confess it and join all others denominational Christians in asking God's forgiveness and guidance." (Logan Fox in "Destiny and Disease?" in Voices of Concern, p. 30)

- a. Those who hold this view do not hold that sectarianism or denomination-
alism is wrong.
- b. "They do, however, hold that the church of Christ is wrong in being so
blind and stubborn that will not recognize and confess that they are a
denomination among denominations." (Jimmie Adcox)
2. Denomination means the "act of denominating or naming" (Webster) and Paul
clearly condemned the denominational beginning in Corinth.
 - a. They were dividing up into sects and following men and Paul besought
them to all speak the same thing. 1 Cor. 1:10
 - b. He then told that Christ is not divided, Paul was not crucified for
them and they were not baptized in the name of Paul. 1 Cor. 1:12,13.
 - c. They were wrong in trying to form denominations and follow men instead
of following Christ just as such is wrong today.
3. When one accepts the premise that the church is a denomination then he opens
the door to fellowship with all denominations, for if the church is only
a denomination, then there is no reason for refusing fellowship with any
denomination.

C. Third, they argue that we should practice open fellowship because no one can
know the truth for sure and therefore we cannot say that one particular man is
wrong and another is right.

1. The statement "we all cannot understand the Bible alike anyway" more clearly
reveals the idea.
 - a. It would be more correct to say we do not understand it alike due to
our prejudices and lack of study.
 - b. The problem about learning the truth is in the heart of the individual.
Mt. 13:1-23
2. The Bible teaches that one can know the truth.
 - a. "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Jn.
8:32. If one cannot know the truth then one cannot be free from sin.
 - b. John said he wrote Christians because they knew the truth. 1 Jn. 2:21.
 - c. We must abide in the doctrine if we would have the Father and the Son.
2 Jn. 9-11. How can we abide in a doctrine we cannot know?
 - d. We are to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith. 2 Cor. 13:5.
How can we examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith if we cannot
know the truth that makes up the faith?
 - e. The word of God is God's revelation to man. Rom. 16:25,26. "Revelation"
means "the act of revealing and communicating divine truth." If man
cannot understand it then God failed in writing the bible.

- D. Fourth, they argue that a refusal to fellowship all believers in Christ is contradictory to the love the Bible teaches.
1. Such an attitude shows either a complete misunderstanding of Biblical love or an unwillingness to accept it.
 2. Biblical love is not weak but is a benevolent attitude that seeks the best welfare of the person who is its object.
 - a. Is it unloving to tell a man that he must have surgery or die of cancer?
 - b. Is it unloving to tell a man he's going to fall to his death over a cliff if he takes one more step?
 - c. Is it unloving to tell a mother that her child has been hit by a car and needs to be rushed to the hospital?
 - d. Is it unloving to tell a man he's lost forever if he doesn't obey the truth?
 3. Biblical love obeys the Lord's commands (Jn. 14:21-23) and there are certain ones we are definitely told not to fellowship.
 - a. We must not fellowship those that live immoral lives. 1 Cor. 5:1-13
 - b. We must not fellowship those that walk disorderly. 2 Thess. 3:1-6.
 - c. We must not fellowship those that will not follow the apostles teaching. 2 Thess. 3:14.
 - d. We must not fellowship those that are factious. Tit. 3:10,11
 - e. We must not fellowship those that are teachers of error. Rom. 16:17,18; 2 Jn. 9-11; 2 Tim. 2:17,18
 4. There are boundaries of fellowship even within the church and God set those boundaries. It is not a lack of love to include everyone that God includes and exclude everyone that God excludes.

Conclusion

1. The arguments for open fellowship are seen to be invalid.
2. We must follow God's standard and extend fellowship where God requires and limit fellowship where God instructs.
3. "Open fellowship" is a strange doctrine.

Introduction

1. Read or quote the text.
2. There is only one true doctrine of Jesus Christ.
 - a. It was revealed by Spirit filled apostles. Jn. 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:6-13
 - b. It is complete. 2 Tim. 3:16,17
 - c. It is dangerous to preach anything else. Gal. 1:6-12
3. In our first lesson we studied the strange doctrine of "open fellowship."
4. In this lesson we purpose to study some more of the strange doctrines of our day.

Discussion.

I. "WHO AM I TO SAY THAT DENOMINATIONAL PEOPLE ARE WRONG WHEN THEY ARE SINCERE."

- A. When one questions some unscriptural practice some are heard to say, "Who am I to say that they are wrong when they are sincere?"
 1. The Bible nowhere makes sincerity alone the test of right.
 2. If sincerity is the standard of right then the only ones wrong are hypocrites, regardless of what they believe.
 3. Does sincerity change falsehood into truth? Does error become truth just because one is sincere in his beliefs?"
 - a. "If sincerity does not change error into truth it must follow that truth is not important if one is alright just because he sincerely believes error." (Camp)
 - b. The Bible teaches "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (Jn. 8:32) but the Bible nowhere teaches "Ye shall be sincere and sincerity shall make you free."
- B. The Bible clearly reveals that one's actions that are contrary to truth, regardless of how sincere, always results in God's displeasure.
 1. Uzzah was not killed because of his insincerity, but because of his error (rashness, margin) 2 Sam. 6:6,7
 2. If it does not matter what one believes so long as he's sincere then it should not matter what one does so long as he is sincere.
- C. The consequences of such a position are to destroy the Bible as a standard of faith and practice. Consider some questions:
 1. If sincerity becomes a substitute for truth then I ask, what truth does it become a substitute for?
 2. Who is going to decide which error can be sincerely accepted and please the Lord?
 3. Is it just specific error that can be sincerely accepted or is it any error?
 4. If it is only specific error and not any and every error who will determine the specific error and what will be the standard by which it is determined?
 5. If any error can be accepted so long as one is sincere, then what good is the Bible?
 6. Can one be sincere without the Bible? Are idolators sincere?
- D. It is not "who am I to say that people are wrong when they are sincere", it is what God says about it.
 1. Suppose one says "a man is justified by faith only" and I read James 2:24 which says a man is not justified by faith only. Am I the one that says he's wrong or is it God?
 2. Suppose a man says "one is saved before and without baptism" and I read Mark 16:16 which says baptism is essential. Am I the one that says he's wrong or is it God?
- E. The strange doctrine that one is alright if he's sincere did not originate with the Bible but with man.

II. "SOCIAL DRINKING IS APPROVED BY THE WORD OF GOD AND OUGHT NOT TO BE LABELED A SIN."

- A. In the Preacher's Workshop, Jan. 8-10, 1973, Batsell B. Baxter prepared a paper against social drinking. Jerry Holiman reacted to that paper and some of his statements and scriptures to prove his points follow:

1. "Jesus Christ was a social drinker which is embarrassing to most of us."
 2. "I do not advocate social drinking but I do say we ought to quit albeling it a sin."
 3. "Wine that makes glad the heart of man is a gift of God."
 4. "To label drinking a sin cannot be supported by the scriptures."
 5. "If drinking is a sin, did Christ contribute to their drunkenness by making wine."
 6. Luke 5:33 shows that John's disciples often fasted "but thaine eat and drink." He argues this shows the apostles drank.
 7. "Have we not power to eat and drink?" 1 Cor. 9:4. What an unscriptural use of a verse.
 8. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Cor. 10:31 "Yes, I can drink my cup of wine and give glory to God."
 9. "Drunkenness is a sorry state, but, please, do not condemn anyone's soul to hell for doing it."
 10. "Do not condemn as sinners those who drink."
- B. The scriptures condemn drunkenness and the use of those products that lead to drunkenness. Prov. 20:1; 23:29-32; Gal. 5:19-21
1. How much does one have to be under the influence of alcohol to be drunk? "The degree of drunkenness depends on the concentration of alcohol in the blood." (Yeakley)
 2. "The very first introduction of alcohol into the brain causes the shade of sedated sleep to descend over that portion of the brain that controls the intelligence, reason, judgment, and moral and religious convictions of the individual." (Haven Emerson, M.D.)
 3. "There is sin and guilt involved in this act of putting the conscience, will power, and self-control to sleep. And what we need to understand is that this is what happens first in the process of intoxication, not last. A person does not have to get 'dead drunk' before this happens. This is the first effect of alcohol on the brain." (Yeakley)
- C. There are many reasons why the Christian must practice total abstinence.
1. The scriptures condemn the use of alcohol beverages.
 2. The risk is too great physically. It destroys the body, the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19,20) and 1 out of 15 become alcoholics or problem drinkers.
 3. The risk is too great socially. The drunkard becomes an outcast of society.
 4. The risk is too great morally. It lowers one's inhibitions and dulls one's sense of right and wrong.
 5. The cost is too great economically. How can a Christian be a good steward of God (1 Cor. 4:2) and spend money on such a dangerous product.
 6. Our example will be wrong.
 - a. The non-drinking sinner will never be converted by the drinking saint.
 - b. Children will be led to use it.

Conclusion

1. The gospel (doctrine) of Jesus Christ is God's power to save. Rom. 1:16
2. Strange doctrines will condemn one's soul to hell.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Read or quote the text.
2. It is God's desire that every Christian be grounded in the truth and not carried about with every wind of doctrine. Eph. 4:14.
3. We are to be "Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith..." (Col. 2:7)
4. The only way to be established in the truth is to know the truth and be able to distinguish between it and strange doctrines.

DISCUSSION:

I. "MIRACULOUS GIFTS ARE STILL AMONG US TODAY."

- A. Leroy Garrett, at the Preachers' Forum, January 8010, 1973, in reacting to Frank Pack's paper, made some of the following statements:
 1. "My position is to let every man decide for himself about the miraculous gifts."
 2. "Pack says gifts are no more, but I disagree with him."
 3. "If God sees fit to bestow gifts, which I don't have, upon someone, I'll praise God for it."
 4. "We have the promise (Eph. 1:18) that the Spirit will enlighten the eyes of the understanding, which these gifts do."
 5. "Tongues and other gifts have existed all through the ages. This is the verdict of history."
 6. "The argument that 'when that which is perfect is come' (1 Cor. 13:10) means the completed scriptures and miracles would cease has several objections:
 - "a. It does not fit the context.
 - "b. The 'now' refers to one age.
 - "c. 'Then' refers to another age.
 - "d. We do not NOW have the perfect knowledge or the complete will of God."
- B. The Bible shows that the purpose of miraculous power and miraculous gifts was threefold:
 1. To reveal the truth. Jn. 16:13; Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4.
 2. To confirm the truth. Mk. 16:15-20; Heb. 2:1-4.
 3. To bear witness. Acts 15:7-9.
 4. These purposes have been fulfilled.
- C. The Bible shows that miraculous power was given only through the laying on the apostles hands.
 1. There is no evidence that anyone performed miracles except the apostles before they laid hands on the seven. Acts 6:1-7.
 2. The apostles, Peter and John, came to Samaria for the specific purpose of giving the Holy Spirit to the Samaritans by laying hands on them. Acts 8:14-18.
 3. Since this was God's means of transmitting this power to others, then, when the last apostle died, and those on whom they laid hands, miracles ceased.
- D. The Bible plainly states that miracles would cease.
 1. They would cease when "that which is perfect" was come. 1 Cor. 13:8-13.
 2. They would cease when the "unity of the faith" came. Eph. 4:11-13; Jude 3.

II. "DON'T PREACH DOCTRINAL SERMONS."

- A. More and more one hears members of the church who say "Don't preach doctrinal sermons!"
 1. What about telling a doctor to practice medicine, but don't use medicine?
 2. What about telling a lawyer to practice law, but don't use the law?
- B. Most agree that the sermon on the mount would be all right to use as the basis for a series of sermons.
 1. The sermon on the mount is doctrine. Mt. 7:28,29.
 2. If doctrinal sermons are out, so is the sermon on the mount.
- C. Paul's admonitions to Timothy and Titus show that one cannot be a true preacher without preaching doctrine.
 1. Timothy was to charge some that they "teach no other doctrine." 1 Tim. 1:3.
 2. A good minister is one that nourishes words of faith and good doctrine. 1 Tim. 4:6.

3. Give attendance "to doctrine." 1 Tim. 4:13.
 4. Take heed to doctrine. 1 Tim. 4:16.
 5. The doctrine not to be blasphemed. 1 Tim. 6:1.
 6. Man teach and consent to the doctrine. 1 Tim. 6:3.
 7. Paul preached doctrine. 2 Tim. 3:10.
 8. The scripture is profitable for doctrine. 2 Tim. 3:16.
 9. Timothy was to exhort with doctrine because some would not endure sound doctrine. 2 Tim/ 4:1-3.
 10. Titus was to speak the things that become sound doctrine. *Tit 2:1, 2*
- C. The doctrine that one should not preach sound doctrine is a strange doctrine.

CONCLUSION:

1. The strange doctrines that are being head in the church today are not to be accepted by Christians.
2. We must stand fast in the faith and oppose those who would preach a different doctrine.

Introduction.

1. The word "doctrine" or "doctrines" is found 6 times in the O.T. and 49 times in the N.T.
 - a. The "doctrine" of God is always referred to in the singular.
 - b. The "doctrines" of men are always in the plural with one or two exceptions.
2. It is important that we understand and be grounded in the doctrine of God.
 - a. One becomes a Christian by obeying that form of doctrine. Rom. 6:17,18
 - b. Christians are to continue in the apostles doctrine. Acts 2:42; 2 Jn. 9.
 - c. The only way to keep from being carried about with every wind of doctrine is to be grounded in the doctrine of Christ. Eph. 4:14.
3. One of the ways Christ and the apostles grounded their followers in the doctrine was by teaching and pointing out the doctrines of men.
 - a. "beware . . . of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Mt. 16:12
 - b. Paul warned the Colossians about some of the doctrines of men. Col. 2:18-23
 - c. Paul name some strange doctrines in 1 Tim. 4:1-4 and told Timothy to put the brethren in remembrance of these things. 1 Tim. 4:5,6
4. It shall be our purpose in this study to point out some strange sounding doctrines in the church today as presented and studied in the Jan. 7-9, 1974, Elders & Preachers Workshop at Abilene.

Discussion.

1. WOMEN ARE FREE TO DO ANYTHING IN THE CHURCH THAT MEN ARE FREE TO DO.
 - A. "But in Christ there is no male or female (Gal. 3:28) but they are all equal in every sense of the term." "In Christ a woman has been restored to her creation standing--equality in every sense in Christ."
 1. Gal. 3:28 clearly shows that all regardless of nationality or social standing can and must enter Christ on the same terms.
 2. Gal. 3:28 clearly shows that all can and do enjoy the same spiritual blessings in Christ.
 3. But Gal. 3:28 does not say that all distinctions are erased--a woman is still a woman and a man is still a man, slaves and masters, or else Paul's instructions to them mean nothing. Eph. 5:5-9
 - B. "Both in the image of God, both created to be fruitful, therefore neither one is subordinate to the other." "The subordination of woman took place, but God never legislated it." "The subordination of woman by Paul and others was based on Jewish prejudice, naturally the woman would be considered the weaker vessel." 1 Pet. 3:7
 1. These statements really mean there can be no subordinates positions on the part of anyone in Christ.
 2. God did legislate woman's subordinate place to man in Gen. 3:16
 3. To say that the apostles statements about women is based on Jewish prejudice is a basic denial of their writing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, or it is saying the Holy Spirit knew that what they were writing was not the truth but he let them write it anyway.
 - C. "1 Corinthians 11:3 which says that the head of man is Christ, the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God, has to do with origin and not authority or headship."
 1. It is true that woman was made from man. Gen. 2
 2. But, if Paul is talking about origin here rather than authority or leadership, Christ originated from God and was not eternal as he is pictured in other places.
 - D. "All authority has been delegated to Christ and he has not delegated authority to anyone---elders, husbands, etc.---but all are equal in Christ."
 1. Jesus gave authority to the apostles. ~~Mat~~ 19:28
 2. Paul said the Lord had given the apostles "authority . . . for edification." 2 Cor. 10:3
 3. Titus was to "speak and rebuke with all authority." Tit. 2:15

E. "1 Corinthians 14 allows women to preach and pray in the church." "A woman's place in the church involves whatever needs to be done and she is limited or used according to her ability, etc., otherwise there is no limitation." "To labor in the Lord" meant basically to preach Christ and since some women were co-workers with Paul, then some women publically preached Christ."

1. Even though some women had the gift of prophecy they were definitely forbidden to use it in the public assembly.
2. It is true that laboring in the Lord would include preaching Christ, but to conclude that because some women were co-workers with Paul they were publically preaching Christ is contrary to scripture and assumes too much.

F. "Paul's commands in Ephesians 5 for a wife to submit to her husband is in the broad context of Eph. 5:21 which says, 'submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of the Lord.' Thus a husband is just as obligated to submit to his wife as much as she is obligated to submit to him."

1. After stating that we are to submit to one another Paul then names the ones he is talking about:
 - a. Wives to husbands. Eph. 5:22
 - b. Children to parents. Eph. 6:1-4
 - c. Servants to masters. Eph. 6:5-8
2. If husbands are to submit to their wives and parents to their children and masters to their servants it is strange that Paul never mentioned it.

G. "All commands in the Bible that have to do with women are regulated by Gal. 3:28- 'for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.'"

1. This is assuming something that has absolutely no scriptural basis.
2. Actually Gal. 3:28 is to be understood in the light of all other verses that regulate the conduct of men and women.

II. THERE IS LIBERALISM IN THE CHURCH IN SOME AREAS.

A. Some views or liberal thought in the church today.

1. In 1967 several preachers and others met and planned to "disrupt" and "restructure" the church.
2. Out of this was born a new magazine--"Mission"--a magazine that promotes the social gospel, advocates open fellowship, upholds organic evolution, hold that the first tenet of good journalism is freedom of the press, etc.
 - a. This does not mean that every writer in "Mission" is liberal.
 - b. This does not mean that every article that appears in "Mission" is liberal
 - c. It does mean that the editor of "Mission" is very liberal in his views and that he intends to change the church.
3. The liberal element in the church does not believe there is a pattern or blueprint for the church.
 - a. "To say there is a pattern for worship is a fallacy."
 - b. "We cannot agree on what constitutes a pattern."
 - c. "No, there is no definite pattern for church organization. The church does not have to have elders and deacons to be a church of Christ."
4. "Truth is absolute but nobody can know all the truth, therefore one cannot be sure about any truth."
5. "Men could be writing by inspiration but insert some of their own views."
6. "The New Testament writers had a blanket of the Holy Spirit, but wrote some of their own theology."

B. Answers to the views presented.

1. God has always given a pattern for what he wanted man to do.
 - a. He gave Noah an exact pattern in building the ark. Gen. 6:14-16
 - b. He gave Moses an exact pattern for building the tabernacle. Ex. 25-40; Heb. 8:5
 - c. He gave Solomon an exact Pattern for building the temple. 1 Kgs. 5ff
 - d. Paul says we become a Christian by obeying that form of doctrine. Rom. 6:17,18
 - e. We are to hold fast the form of sound words. 2 Tim. 1:13
 - f. The early church had elders and deacons. Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1; Acts 15.
2. Man can know the truth. Jn. 8:32; 1 Jn. 2:21; 2 Jn. 9-11. Just because one cannot know all the truth does not mean one cannot know anything.
3. If men inserted their own views and taught their own theology then how are we to determine which are their views and which is the truth of God.

III. A MISSION BOARD TO OVERSEE MISSION WORK IS BEING URGED IN SOME PLACES.

A. Some of the views set forth to support the idea.

1. Acts 13 is usually considered a pattern for the oversight of mission work. Barnabas and Saul were sent out by the church at Antioch.
2. "But there are reasons to believe that there were several churches in Antioch and that a representative from each church made up the group that sent out Barnabas and Saul."
3. "Since elders are not specifically mentioned in Antioch then the men mentioned were probably preachers from the different congregations forming a mission board."
4. "In most cases the local church is the "fund-supplying" church and does not really oversee the work as to what goes on in the mission field."
5. "One elder from each congregation especially appointed to mission work and on a board would have more time to give to the matter and could better oversee the work."

B. Answers to the views set forth for a mission board.

1. There is really no scriptural basis for concluding there were several churches in Antioch. Acts 13 :1; 14:27
2. The views that representatives from different churches, or preachers from different churches, made up a board are purely assumptions to support an preconceived view.
3. It is true that local churches need to do more than supply funds, but the abuse of a scriptural practice does not justify changing the practice.

IV. THE AUTHORITY AND TENURE OF ELDERS IN THE CHURCH ARE BEING QUESTIONED.

A. Some of the views being set forth.

1. "One becomes a qualified elder by reason of qualifications, service, leadership, etc. The moral authority of service, leadership, etc., is the authority elders have." *Discuss Mt. 20:26; Mt. 28:18*
2. "Elders do not have authority by reason of office."
3. "Elders ought to be elected for one year at a time. History is fairly clear that the early church elected their elders for one year at a time."

B. Answers to the above views.

Num. 16:1 ff

1. It is true that elders are not to lord it over the flock (dictatorial type of authority) 1 Pet. 5:3
2. It is true that elders who do not lead, serve, etc., will have little influence and be able to exercise little authority the flock. Acts 20:28
3. If moral qualifications are all the authority elders have, then what authority does an elder have after appointment that he did not have before appointment?
4. If every congregation was ideal then "moral authority of service" might be enough but every congregation is not ideal.
5. If moral authority of service is all the authority an elder has then how could elders exercise discipline in a local church?
6. If moral authority of service is all the authority that elders have then why would a Christian be any more obligated to submit to appointed qualified elders than to men who are qualified, but not appointed?
7. If a man becomes qualified by service, leadership, etc., and this gives him moral authority then wouldn't a congregation be obligated to appoint every man that reaches this stage?
8. The word for obey in Heb. 13:17 is the same word used in James 3:1-5 in connection with "bits in horses' mouth"--exerts whatever influence needed to get the work done.
9. Those who advocate electing elders one year at a time say men ought to be appointed when they become qualified. Does a man cease to be qualified at the end of a year if the congregation decides not to reelect him again?

*Acts 20:28
1 Tim. 3:1-5
1 Thes. 5:13
1 Pet. 5:1-4*

3. *Elders have no more authority than any other member.*
4. *Elders cannot make definite assignments*
5. *Elders have a meeting of "elders only" to discuss the affairs of the church.*
6. *Elders cannot make a decision affecting the entire congregation.*

Introduction.

1. Read or quote the text.
2. Superior knowledge and great privileges do not guarantee against falling from God's favor as the example of the Israelites show. 1 Cor. 10:1-5.
3. All of us need to be reminded each day that it is possible to so live as to fall of God's blessings. The sins by which Israel fell are listed so that we might not do the same things. 1 Cor. 10:6
4. Let us observe the five specific sins named by Paul.

Discussion.

I. "WE SHOULD NOT LUST AFTER EVIL THINGS, AS THEY ALSO LUSTED." v. 6

A. Lust:

1. "Denotes strong desire of any kind . . . In Rom. 6:12 . . . the lust thereof, refers to those evil desires which are ready to express themselves in bodily activities." (Vine)
2. Sensuous desire; bodily appetite; commonly, sexual appetite as a degrading passion."
3. "Longing or eagerness to enjoy; to have an object or person. . . ."

B. Israel lusted after flesh--that which God withheld. Num. 11:4,5; Psa. 78:13.
(They never really went back to Egypt but they really desired to do so.)

C. The Corinthians lusted (eagerly desired) to continue participating in the heathen feasts. 1 Cor. 10:20,21

D. Lusting after evil things is still a sin of God's people.

1. Some Christians never participate in dancing but they have a strong desire to do so.
2. Some Christians never commit fornication but they lust (have a strong desire) Matt. 5:28, after some particular individual.
3. Some Christians never engage in worldly acts but they strongly desire to do so.
4. Some Christians never really go back into the world but they would like to.

E. Lusting after evil things leads to the outward acts. Rom. 1:22-24; Jas. 1:14,15.

II. "NEITHER BE YE IDOLATERS: . . ." v. 7

A. Idolatry means:

1. "the giving of absolute religious devotion and ultimate trust to something that is not God." (Webster)
2. "Moderate attachment or devotion to or veneration for something: respect or love that approaches that due a divine power." (Webster)
3. "An idolater is a slave to the depraved ideas his idols represent." (Vine)

B. Israel built the golden calf at Mt. Sinai. Ex. 32

C. The Corinthians wanted to continue participating in the feast of the idols at Corinth. 1 Cor. 8:6-13

D. Men still have their idols today.

1. The Catholic Church has all kinds of idols to "aid" them in their worship
2. Some Christians have money, pleasure, jobs, etc. as their idols.

E. The Bible clearly tells Christians to be no idolaters. 1 Cor. 10:7a.

1. Flee idolatry. 1 Cor. 10:14
2. Idolatry is a work of the flesh. Gl. 5:19,20
3. Covetousness is idolatry. Col. 3:5
4. No idolater will enter heaven. Rev. 22:15.

III. "NEITHER LET US COMMIT FORNICATION . . ." 1 Cor. 10:8

A. Fornication means:

1. "illicit sexual intercourse." (Vine)
2. "sexual intercourse between unmarried people . . . sometimes stands for and includes adultery." (Matt. 5:32; 19:9)

B. Fornication was committed by Israel with "the daughters of Moab." Num. 25:1.

C. Fornication is very grievous in God's sight.

1. One can commit fornication in the heart (Matt. 5:28) or in the actual act.

2. Christians are to flee fornication. 1 Cor. 6:18

3. Fornication is a work of the flesh. Gal. 5:19

II. "NEITHER LET US TEMPT CHRIST . . ." 1 Cor. 10:9

A. The word tempt or try "when applied to man means to present motives or inducements to sin; when used in reference to the Lord it means to try his patience, to provoke his anger, to act in such a way as to see how much he will bear and how long he will endure the wickedness of men." (Earnes)

B. Israel tempted God in a number of ways.

1. They doubted his power and goodness. Ex. 17:2,7; Psa. 78:18,19

2. They limited his power. Psa. 78:41

3. They failed to keep his testimonies. Psa. 78:56

C. Men can still tempt the Lord today.

1. The man that hears the gospel and then neglects it as unimportant and unnecessary tempts Christ.

2. Christians tempt the Lord when they continue to long for the sins for which he died to deliver them from.

3. The Christian tempts the patience of God when he does not walk according to God's will.

III. "NEITHER MURMUR YE . . ." 1 Cor. 10:10

A. Murmure means:

1. "To mutter, murmur, grumble, saything in a low tone . . ." (Vine)

2. "A complaint half suppressed or uttered in a low muttering voice . . ." (Webster)

3. "To utter with dissatisfaction."

B. Israel murmured on a number of occasions.

1. They murmured when they were hungry. Ex. 16:2;7,8

2. They murmured when they were thirsty. Ex. 15:23,24; 17:1-3

3. They murmured when they were discouraged. Num. 14:1,2

4. They murmured when evil doers were punished. Num. 16:41.

C. There was much murmuring during our Lord's personal ministry.

1. The servants in the vineyard murmured against the goodman. Mt. 20:11

2. The scribes and Pharisees murmured against the Lord's disciples. Lk. 5:30.

3. The Jews murmured about he said. Jn. 6:41

4. His disciples murmured. Jn. 6:61

D. There arose a murmuring in the early church. Acts 6:1.

E. Murmuring must not be a part of our life. Phil. 2:14; 1 Pet. 4:9

Conclusion

1. These things are our examples that we should not do as they did.

2. These things happened to them for example to us.

3. These things are written for our admonition.

4. These things are warnings to us to take heed lest we fall. V. 12.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Read or quote the text.
2. Zeal means:
 - a. "Ardor in the pursuit of anything; ardent and active interest; enthusiasm; fervor. Implies energetic and unflagging activity that manifests one's devotion to a cause or to an end."
 - b. "Ardor - an emotion like leaping flames, intense, but not always persistent."
 - c. "Enthusiasm - implies an objective or cause that is pursued with devotion."
 - d. A zealous person is one who embraces a cause and supports it with vigor and enthusiasm.
3. Knowledge means:
 - a. "The fact or condition of knowing something."
 - b. "denotes exact or full knowledge discernment, recognition..."
4. In this study we purpose to observe three main points:
 - a. Zeal without knowledge
 - b. Knowledge without zeal.
 - c. Zeal and knowledge.

DISCUSSION:

I. THERE CAN BE ZEAL WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE.

- A. Zeal without knowledge is heat without light, activity without guidance.
- B. There are many examples of zeal without knowledge.
 1. The Jewish nation had a "zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." (10:2) They hated idolatry, revered their scriptures, their temple, priesthood, sacrifices, festivals purity, etc., but they were not commended because they were without knowledge. Rom. 10:1-3.
 2. Peter had the zeal to defend the Lord but not the knowledge. Mt. 26:51,52.
 3. Saul of Tarsus was very zealous but he was ignorant. Acts 22:3,4; 1 Tim. 1:13.
 4. Many present day religious people manifest great zeal but are vastly ignorant of God's way.
- C. Zeal without knowledge is dangerous.
 1. Saul was ignorant of the truth about Christ and his zeal made havoc of the church. Acts 8:3.
 2. Israel was zealous toward God but blind to their true condition. Mt. 15:14.
 3. It causes men to destroy human lives thinking they're doing God a service. Jn. 16:2.
 4. A man with zeal will do something even though it is wrong. Rom. 10:1-3.

II. THERE CAN BE KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT ZEAL.

- A. Knowledge without zeal is light without heat and faith without works.
- B. There are many Bible examples of such.
 1. The church at Sardis had the knowledge but they were dead, there was no activity. Rev. 3:1-3.
 2. The Galatians had started well but their zeal had cooled. Gal. 5:7.
 3. Many present day Christians have the knowledge, but no zeal.
- C. Knowledge without zeal:
 1. Is a sinful state. Jas. 5:17.
 2. Will bring many stripes. Lk. 12:47.
 3. *Renderers are unacceptable to the Lord - Rev. 3:14-17.*

III. THERE CAN BE ZEAL AND KNOWLEDGE.

- A. Zeal and knowledge is light and heat, understanding and activity.
- B. There are many examples of such.
 1. The Lord Himself. Jn. 2:17.
 2. Paul, the Christian was such. Phil. 3:13,14.
 3. The Jerusalem church. Acts 2:41,42.
 - a. Their zeal showed itself in their desire to learn more of God's will. Acts 2:46.
 - b. Their zeal showed itself in their love for association with others. Acts 2:46. Do we love to associate with one another?

- c. Their zeal showed itself in their giving. Acts 2:45; 4:32.
- d. Their zeal is seen in their good works as ours must be. Acts 4:35; ~~6:1~~ 6:1; Titus 2:14.
- e. Their zeal is seen in the success they had in converting others to Christ.
 - (1) Zeal promotes success. Gal. 1:14.
 - (2) The church will grow when we are really filled with zeal for His cause.
- C. There is great blessedness in zeal and knowledge.
 - 1. A crown of righteousness at the end. 2 Tim. 4:6-8.
 - 2. Access to the tree of life in the paradise of God. Rev. 2:10.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. The greatest cause on earth demands our most zealous effort.
- 2. Let's let the people of this community see our zeal and devotion to the cause of Christ day by day.

965

SEVEN GREAT THINGS OF PENTECOST
Acts 2

INTRODUCTION:

1. In the long ago, the Psalmist stood amazed at the greatness of God's creation and was amazed that he was even mindful of man. Psal. 8:1-9.
2. Our age is one of many great people and great things, so many, in fact, that we fail to really appreciate all that we have.
3. Man's evaluation of what is great and what is not great may be, and often is, quite different from God's estimate. Luke 16:15.
4. In this study, let's consider seven great things of Pentecost.

DISCUSSION:

I. FIRST, IT WAS A GREAT DAY.

- A. Man's history is replete with great days.
 1. Who can measure the greatness of each of the six days of creation.
 2. Who can really grasp the greatness of the day when God gave the ten commandments on Mt. Sinai.
 3. Who stands not amazed at the great days of Christ's death, resurrection and ascension?
- B. Pentecost was a great day because it was one of the three annual feasts of the Jews.
 1. It was called the "feast of weeks" because it came seven weeks and one day after the Passover. Deut. 16:10,16.
 2. It was called the "feast of harvest" because on it the Jews presented the first-fruits of their wheat harvest. Ex. 23:16.
- C. Pentecost was a great day because of the events that transpired on that day.
 1. It was the beginning of the church or kingdom. Acts 2:47.
 2. It was the beginning of the work of the Holy Spirit through the apostles. Jn. 16:13; 2:1-4.
 3. It was the beginning of things being done in the name of the Lord. Acts 2:38.
 4. It was the beginning of additions to the church. Acts 2:47.
- D. Pentecost was a great day because all the events that transpired on that day affect man in time and eternity.

II. SECOND, THERE WAS A GREAT PREACHER.

- A. Man's standard of a great preacher may be altogether different from God's.
 1. Some people consider a preacher great because he is eloquent.
 - a. Eloquence may not teach people anything. Bro. A. E. Emmons, Jr., attended a meeting with his wife on one occasion and they heard an eloquent preacher. As they were leaving his wife remarked, "That surely was a great sermon." Bro. Emmons asked, "What did he say?" She could not remember. She had been impressed with the way he said it.
 - b. Eloquence does not guarantee against error as Apollos shows. Acts 18:24ff.
 2. Some people consider a preacher great if he can quote a lot of scripture (which is a fine characteristic) but the devil can quote a lot of scripture.
- B. Peter was a great preacher because:
 1. He loved the souls of men and sacrificed all to preach to them. Matt. 19:27.
 2. He was a prepared preacher having spent 3 1/2 years with the Lord.
 3. He was a courageous preacher as his sermon on Pentecost shows.
 4. He had a great message.

III. THIRD, THERE WAS A GREAT AUDIENCE.

- A. Some estimates place 100,000 Jews in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost.
- B. There were Jews out of every nation. Acts 2:5-11.

IV. FOURTH, THERE WAS A GREAT SERMON.

- A. Man has many standard by which he judges a sermon great.
 1. Some are great by the way they are said.
 2. Some are great because they say what one wants to hear. 2 Tim. 4:1-4.
 3. Some are great because of their edifying contents, etc.
- B. The sermon on Pentecost was great because of its contents.
 1. It presented the gospel in its completeness. 1 Cor. 15:1-4.
 - a. Facts to be believed.
 - b. Commands to be obeyed.
 - c. Promises to be received.

2. It presented the crucified Christ. Acts 2:22,23.
3. It presented the resurrected Christ. Acts 2:24-35.
4. It presented the glorified Christ. Acts 2:36.

C. It was great because it opened the hearts of men. Acts 2:37.

V. FIFTH, THERE WAS A GREAT QUESTION ASKED.

A. "Men and Brethren what shall we do?" Acts 2:37.

1. Man's soul is his greatest possession. Mt. 16:26.
2. Any question that has to do with his soul as the greatest question.

B. Paul asked, "Lord, what will thou have me to do?" Acts 9:6

C. The jailor asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Acts 16:31.

D. Every sinner ought to be asking this question.

VI. SIXTH, THERE WAS A GREAT ANSWER.

A. Some answers are great because of the work and effort necessary to get them.

B. The answer on Pentecost was great because:

1. It was simple.
2. It was true.
3. It showed man how to be saved from his sins. Acts 2:38.
4. It had all the authority of heaven and earth behind it.

VII. SEVENTH, THERE WERE GREAT RESULTS.

A. Some preachers have preached in meetings in which over 100 have been baptized

B. But 3,000 were baptized on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2:41.

CONCLUSION:

1. All of us should appreciate the seven great things of Pentecost - a great day, preacher, audience, sermon, question, answer, results.
2. Have you asked the great question and received ~~an answer~~ and obeyed the great answer,

INTRODUCTION:

1. There is a reason why we've had no singing up to this point.
2. The elders have decided that we'll have no more singingpause.....
like we've been having.
3. They know that the Bible teaches us to worship God in "spirit and in truth."
(Jn. 4:23,24)
 - A. They do not believe it will be any worse to just completely stop the singing than to continue to sing without the spirit.
 - B. They personally have felt this for a long time but it was really brought home to them this past week by an unfaithful member of the church who attends here son but has never been a member here.
 - C. This unfaithful member was asked what he liked and disliked about the church here. He said I like many things "but your singing is terrible. You have no life in it. The spirit is not there. The Faith Tabernacle (where I've attended) doesn't have the truth, but they have the spirit. 75% of the churches of Christ where I've attended do not sing in the spirit. If you doubt what I'm saying, just watch people sing and the attitude they have."
4. Consider:

DISCUSSION:

I. SEVERAL REACTIONS TO THIS INDICTMENT.

- A. First, it was one of grief.
 1. I thought "here is one who has been encouraged to be unfaithful by the kind of singing done by faithful Christians."
 2. I then thought "How many people have we discouraged from becoming a Christian by our singing or how many weak Christians have we discouraged?"
- B. Second, one of anger.
 1. No, not anger at the man that pointed it out.
 2. But righteous indignation toward myself and all of us that could and should do better in our singing, but don't.
- C. Third, one of determination:
 1. To do better myself.
 2. To help move each of you to sing with the spirit.

II. HOW DOES ONE SING WHEN ONE SINGS WITH THE SPIRIT?

- A. "This means the worship shall not be formal, local, and mechanical as it had been greatly among the Jews, but it should be from the heart. The heart shall be enlisted and the spirit molded by the truths of God, and that henceforth God will seek only the worship of those who worship him from the heart." (E. W. Dorris)
- B. "The word spirit, here, stands opposed to rites and ceremonies, and to the pomp of external worship. It refers to the mind, the soul, the heart. They shall worship God with a sincere mind...Spiritual worship is where the heart is offered to God..." (Albert Barnes, Presbyterian)
- C. To worship in spirit means that we yield our wills to God's will, our thoughts and plans to God's for us and for the world." (MayGregor, "The Moffatt. N.T. Commentary)
- D. "This means that the heart should enter each act...The motive must be right." (Frank L. Cox)
- E. "God seeks for genuine, and not formal worshippers, and for those who worship him in truth; i.e., those who render him the obedience of faith with a filial spirit, and not those who render him the empty service of types and shadows, ceremonies and rites, which, through disbelief, have lost their meaning." (J. W. McGarvey)
- F. "A man worships God in spirit, when, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, he brings all his affections, appetites, and desires to the throne of God..." (Adam Clarke, Methodist)
- G. "It signifies a worship in which the human soul holds intimate communion with the Divine Spirit..." (Pulpit Com.)
- H. To worship in spirit is "to make it a matter of the heart, the will, the spirit and the emotion and not merely a matter of physical atmosphere..." (Butler)

- I. "True worship includes a spiritual sense of the object worshipped, and a spiritual communion with it..." (Vincent)
- J. "This means that worship must spring from the inner man. Whatever there is about our worship that is outward and material, such as eating the loaf and drinking the fruit of the vine in the Lord's Supper, must be but the expression of the love, devotion, and desires of the soul. To go through the forms of worship, as singing, taking the Lord's Supper, and saying of prayers, without having our hearts in these forms, is mockery. The forms are but the vehicles by which the spirit of man expresses itself to the Father of spirits, and to offer him an empty vessel is an insult." (Leslie Thomas, Annual Lesson Com., 1949)
- K. "To worship God in spirit means that the worship must come from the heart. We must be sincere in our worship. Not only must we be sincere, that is, free from all insincerity, but the worship must proceed from the heart...This forbids mere formality and ceremonialism...When singing songs of praise and adoration to God, our thoughts must be upon God." (Leslie Thomas, Annual Lesson, 1953)
- L. "In order to worship in spirit, one must discipline his mind. He must not allow his thoughts to wander from the spiritual to the material things of life..." (Thomas)

Introduction.

1. In Ephesians 4:22-24 Christians are told to put off the old man and put on the new.
2. In Ephesians 4:25-32 Christians are told exactly what is involved in putting off the old and putting on the new.
3. In our text we are admonished to "be followers" or "imitators of God." because we are his dear children.
4. In Ephesians 5:2 ~~23~~ have the (1) pattern of love and (2) the walk of love.

Discussion.

- I. JESUS CHRIST IS THE PATTERN OF LOVE. "AND WALK IN LOVE, AS CHRIST ALSO HATH LOVED US, AND HATH GIVEN HIMSELF FOR US AN OFFERING AND A SACRIFICE TO GOD FOR A SWEET-SMELLING SAVOUR." Eph. 5:2
 - A. Who offered himself? "hath given himself." It was a voluntary act. Jn. 10:18; 15:13.
 - B. What did he offer?
 1. He "hath given himself"
 2. "Who his own self . . ." 1 Pet. 2:24; Heb. 10:10
 - C. For whom did he offer?
 1. He offered himself "for us."
 2. He offered himself while we were yet sinners and enemies. Rom. 5:8,10
 - D. To whom did Christ offer himself? "to God."
 - E. How did Christ offer himself? "as an offering and a sacrifice."
 - F. With what result did he offer himself? "for a sweetsmelling savour." *cf. Rom. 8:29,31*
 - G. With Christ as our example
- II. CHRISTIANS ARE TO WALK IN LOVE.
 - A. Love was the great duty of the law. Gal. 5:14; 1 Tim. 1:5
 - B. Love was the new commandment of Christ. Jn. 13:34
 - C. The love enjoined here has many characteristics:
 1. It must be a constant love like that of Christ. Jn. 13:1
 2. It ought to be a love that is well guided and controlled. Phil. 1:9
 3. It must be ardent in its nature. 1 Pet. 4:7,8
 4. It ought to be a decisive test as to our condition in God's sight. 1 Jn. 2:10; 3:14
 5. It must be a self-sacrificing love. 1 Jn. 3:16
 6. It must be a love in deeds, not just words. 1 Jn. 3:18
 7. It must be a love recommended by the highest examples.
 - a. "God is love." 1 Jn. 4:8,11
 - b. We are to walk in love, as Christ also love us."

Conclusion.

1. God desires each of us to follow him as his "dear children."
2. Christ is truly our example of how to walk in love.

