

**Bible
Study
Lessons
for adults**

Volume 15

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Volume 15

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Ideas for Teaching Adults

There are two qualities necessary to be a Sunday School teacher: You must love God and love people. The most important thing you need to do is to help your students experience the love of God. You can do this by living out your personal relationship with Jesus in front of them and by teaching them to have their own personal relationship with God.

Follow the instructions given on How to Prepare a Sunday School Lesson. Then follow these guidelines on How to Present a Sunday School Lesson:

How to Prepare a Sunday School Lesson *The Start of the Year*

At the start of this year of teaching, take about two hours to put all of the things that you would normally use at Sunday School in one packet or box. This will cut down on time each week that might otherwise be spent looking for the various items, since you will know where they are. Keep a record of addresses, birthdays, and contact details of all the students in your class.

Briefly read through the whole book of lessons to get an idea of the various monthly emphases. This will give you an overview and a sense of direction. You will know how many lessons there are on each topic and not get ahead of yourself in the teaching.

The Two Hours Each Week

- 30 minutes** **Read through the lesson and get introduced to it.** On Sunday afternoon, a full week before you teach the lesson, spend time getting acquainted with it. Pray for God to give you wisdom and insights into the best way of presenting the material to your class.
- 10 minutes** **Record your thoughts and ideas throughout the week.** Keep a small Sunday School notebook or paper with you. As an idea comes to you, write it onto this paper so you will remember it later.
- 20 minutes** **Read the Bible passage 3 or 4 times during the week.** Allow God's Word to change you as you think on it and read it. This reading will allow the truth that you are wanting to teach your class impact *your* life first.
- 50 minutes** **Bring your lesson together.** Get everything that you will need from your resource packet. Read through your notes and organise the lesson into a format that suits you and that you will be able to follow and understand the best.
- 10 minutes** **The last minute check-up.** This is the last thing that you do before you go to class on Sunday morning. Make sure that you have your Bible, your lesson, and any other materials you need. Review your outline or notes in your leader's guide one last time. Finally, take a minute or two to commit this lesson to the Lord and ask Him to use you. You have probably already prayed this several times during your devotions, but acknowledge your dependence upon Him once more.

HOW TO PRESENT A SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Learning needs to take place on all levels: emotional, spiritual, social, and mental. Christian Education intends to provide an interaction with the Truth of the gospel in such a way as to change the lives of the students. It is not enough to know and understand a concept mentally, the truth must affect every aspect of a person's life, from the way they think or feel about a subject to the way they respond and treat other people.

Your lesson time should be carefully planned and organised to put into practise your preparation and thought. We would like to suggest the following basic outline for your Sunday School class time. Times given are based on an hour class. Numbers in parentheses are for 45 minute classes.

Arrive at least ten minutes before class to prepare your teaching area and set out any lesson materials that you may need.

1. Use the first **10 minutes** to greet your students as they arrive. Allow a time of informal fellowship and discussion of events of the past week. Have the class offer various prayer requests. Start the lesson with prayer, allowing class members to pray for the different requests. Take attendance and receive the offering. Follow-up on any assignment from last week and review last week's lesson. Go over any questions anyone may have from last week's sermon as well.
2. Do the EXAMINE YOUR LIFE section during the next **15 (10) minutes**. Allow time for thinking and reflection; do not expect immediate responses on every question or activity. Feel free to make adjustments so the activities will be more relevant to your students' lives.
3. The next **15 (10) minutes** should be spent on the EXPLORE THE WORD section. Remember not to PREACH or READ to them. Present the lesson in your own words.
4. The next **15 (10) minutes** should focus on EXERCISE YOUR FAITH. Emphasize the importance of allowing the truth to penetrate the lives and behaviour of each one in their everyday life.
5. During the last **5 minutes**, close with prayer and clean up the class area before going on to church.

Review the success of the lesson as soon as you can. Spend a few minutes making a note of what worked and what didn't for future reference. Remember Sunday School teaching is all about building strong relationships with God, fellow Christians and other people.

Helpful Hints for Teaching Adults

The Fellowship Factor

Friends are the main reason that most people choose a church. From 75 to 90 per cent of the people who become church members already have friends within the congregation. In spite of the importance of good teaching in growing a Bible Fellowship group, good relationships are even more important! Fellowship is *not* something we do just to have a good time. Christian fellowship is an act of ministry because it helps people to have a sense of belonging.

To be an effective leader of an Adult Bible Fellowship group you should make it a high priority to develop and utilise the leadership skills of others in your class:

- *Involve them:* You can't do it all! The involvement of your group members can deepen their commitment and develop their leadership skills;
- *Affirm them:* Show your appreciation for your officers and leaders, and give them positive feedback;
- *Empower them:* Don't just give them a title, allow them to do the job;
- *Recognise them:* Don't let work done behind the scenes go unnoticed. Say 'thank you' often.

Spiritual Formation Foundations

The three steps of spiritual transformation:

- *Believing:* Faith in Christ cannot be separated from the Word. The proclamation of the Good News requires a response (see Romans 10:17).
- *Belonging:* We need each other! We need the example and support that come from community. It is important to know that we belong.
- *Becoming:* God isn't through with any of us. We are all in process. When we are serving Him and living out our faith, we are in a place where He can work in us.

The goal of every Bible Fellowship session is an obedient response to the truth of God's Word. Our purpose cannot be satisfied simply by sharing information. It is not enough for the truth to be discussed or examined or even acknowledged. We have the privilege of dealing with realities so significant that they demand a response. What begins as an exercise of reason should end with an exercise of faith. Our aim is for the truth of the Word to be internalised as belief and externalised as action.

The purpose of your Bible Fellowship group is life transformation. As leader, you will have the joy of seeing your investment in others produce remarkable changes in their living . . . sometimes. But you will also experience the pain of serving some who appear to be unchanged. How should you respond to those who seem unresponsive? Continue to be a faithful teacher and a true friend. Continue to look for opportunities to get close to them. Continue to trust God to do His good thing in the lives of those you serve!

Memory Verse

Putting God's Word to memory is one of the best defences we have against temptation. The Psalmist understood this, centuries ago when he said: 'I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you' (Psalm 119:11). It is true for God's people in every age. Encourage your Bible Fellowship participants to memorise *The Word to Live By* passage on a regular basis.

Reaching Beyond Ourselves

Service to others is not an extra to be tagged on to what we do now and then. It is an expression of who we are. Paul tells us to *serve one another in love* (Galatians 5:13). Your group is a perfect arena for participation in Christian service. In fact, thriving groups will always offer some kind of opportunity for meaningful involvement in ministry. Those areas of activity are often a key source of vitality within the group.

Lesson 1

WORSHIPPING ONE GOD

Scripture: Genesis 1: 26-27; Deuteronomy 5:1-21; 6: 1-9

Other references: Matt 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 13:14

Memory Verse: Deuteronomy 6:4-5

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength"

Explanation of the memory verse

God's call to the Israelites in the days of Moses is still the same to us today - that we love Him alone wholeheartedly. This means totally and intentionally giving our lives to Him. Our very being must be yielded to God alone. We are called upon to worship Him with all our hearts, soul and strength which include our emotions, time, finances and everything we do. It is an undivided love for Him.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

1. Explain the belief of the Triune God
2. Explain what it means to love God wholeheartedly.
3. Identify our task as believers in the one God

Introduction

Our text gives us a picture of the last days of Moses in the wilderness as he reminded the people of God about His covenant with them at Mount Sinai. The Lord warned the Israelites of what was ahead in Canaan. They were not supposed to be like the Canaanites who worshipped many gods, some of which were made of human hands. They were to worship the Lord God only, the one who had delivered them from Egypt (Deuteronomy 5: 6-7)

1. Worship One God (vs. 4)

The Lord our God is one but reveals Himself in three Persons as God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 13:14). This does not mean we have three gods who act as one, but we have three persons who are ONE God. In Genesis 1:26, 27 we read: "let US make man in OUR image, in OUR likeness".

Here God speaks to Himself implying that there are several persons who are One God as shown by the use of a singular pronoun in verse 27. We are made in the image of God and not of angels. The three Persons of the Godhead were all involved at creation (Gen 1:26). Therefore we must worship God only and not His creation.

2. Love God Wholeheartedly. (vs. 4-5)

a. God's call to us

God called the Israelites. This call is still the same for us to love Him with all our being, our time and our possessions. Love for God only can be simply expressed by worshiping Him alone. Worship involves private and public prayer, praise, giving, service and living to please Him. It also involves seeking His guidance first when making choices, total obedience to His leading, and trusting Him alone to help us through any problem or crisis. All we do or not do and how we do it counts in loving God.

b. The Problem.

In some of our cultures, believers worship God alongside their ancestors, which is in sharp contrast to God's first commandment (Deuteronomy 5:7). If only God is to be worshipped, we have a serious challenge as his children. Is God pleased when we worship Him together with our ancestors or our possessions?

3. Our Task as Believers

a. Love God only (vs. 5)

We are called upon to love Him only and are not allowed to worship any other god alongside Him. There is need for undivided loyalty and commitment. This calls for faithfulness to Him like a husband to his wife or a wife to her husband. Is this possible? Let us talk about this.

b. Obey His Commands (vs. 6)

As God's children, we are to obey His commands as laid out in the Ten Commandments and throughout the Bible. This entails hearing and doing what He says. If we love Him, it follows that we will obey Him willingly and with joy. If we do not do what He says, this means that we do not love Him.

c. Teach our Children

Every generation of the Israelites was required to worship the Lord God alone. In order for that to happen, parents had a God-given responsibility to teach their children about God and His laws. Teaching included setting a good example in worshipping the only true God. As adults, we also need to teach our children to worship God alone. To be able to teach our children about the worship of God alone, we need to be examples to them. We need to practice what we teach them. The responsibility does not stop with us. They too, must teach their children as we have taught them.

Discussion Questions

1. In what practical ways can we incorporate our belief in the Triune God in our daily life?
2. In what practical ways can we overcome the temptation to trust and turn to ancestors publicly and privately when facing a crisis?
3. In what practical ways can we teach our children to worship God alone?

Conclusion

We must worship one God and no other. Dividing our commitment and love between God and other gods hurts our relationship with Him. We must intentionally undertake our task to love Him, obey His commands, and teach our children to worship Him alone.

Lesson 2

WORSHIPPING A HOLY GOD

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 6: 1-8

Other references: Matthew 5:48

Memory Verse: I Peter 1: 15-16

“But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy””

Explanation of the memory verse

Every parent desires to see themselves in their children. In these verses, we are called to resemble our Father who is holy. It is the pride of every child to resemble a good father or mother. Holiness should be our lifestyle. We must live a holy life in every aspect of our lives. This includes our actions, thoughts and speech. We are to be holy when alone, at work, in business or at home.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson, learners should be able to:

1. Explain the holiness of God
2. Define holiness
3. Identify our challenges regarding holiness.

Introduction

At one of the schools in Ireland, a pastor asked the question, “What is holiness?” A poor Irish convert, in dirty, tattered rags, jumped up and said “Please your Reverence, it’s to be clean inside”. Yes, it is to be clean inside that result in a clean lifestyle.

1. The Holiness of God (vs. 1, 3)

Isaiah had a wonderful experience of seeing God and the angelic beings (seraphs) declaring the holiness of God. The holiness of God tells us of God’s nature and His character. It is who God is. He is a holy God. The holiness of God is His glorious fullness of His moral excellence, held as the principle of His own action and standard for His creatures. His holiness makes the ordinary man to have holy fear (vs. 5) as we cannot withstand His glory. It also makes us see our own sinfulness and we cry out for

help! And God in His love invites us to be holy as He is holy, for that is the only way we can fully relate to a holy God. In God, there is no sin or impurity whatsoever.

2. What does Holiness mean for us, then?

- a. The common meaning of holiness is to be set apart for God's use. The temple, priests, Levites, Christians, etc. are examples.
- b. A deeper meaning is to be purified from inbred sin so that the intentions of the heart will be pure before God. This entails being separated from sin and all that is unclean. Isaiah was cleansed from his sin (vs. 7).
- c. Having been cleansed, believers are then filled with the Holy Spirit to the exclusion of sin or whatever is contrary to holiness. We are totally devoted to God every moment of our life with an increasing desire to be more like Him. This act of God and our total devotion to Him manifests itself in a clean lifestyle that resists all evil.
- d. In this state, it is easier to allow God to use us for His purposes and glory. Isaiah was cleansed and then tasked by God (vs. 7-8).

3. Our Challenge in a Sinful World

- a. **Not to conform to the world** (vs. 5) – Many times we are tempted to conform to the standards of those people around us, just like Isaiah whose tongue was corrupted. In his case, it was an evil tongue, but in our situation, this may include bribery, cheating, dishonesty, lust, adultery and many other sins. The standard of our faith should be based on God who is holy, and never on the world and its cultures.
- b. **To be like our Father** (1 Peter 1:15-16; Matthew 5:48) – As God's children we are called upon to resemble our perfect Father. Every child should resemble his/her parents. But, it is sad that at times we do not live like our Father. The Lord Jesus emphasizes the call that we be holy or perfect like our heavenly Father, even though we live in a sinful world. It is possible to be holy.
- c. **To help the world conform to God** (v8) – God separates us for Himself so that He can achieve His purpose through us. His will is that we influence the lost world through holy living and sharing the gospel. Holy people are obedient to the Father's call to spread the gospel. However, our character and lifestyle play a great role in fulfilling God's purpose. Isaiah was more willing to go.

Discussion Question

1. From the lesson today, including the memory verse and the short story (introduction), what conclusions do you have about holiness?
2. What other challenges and temptations do you face daily regarding holiness as a lifestyle?
3. How can these be overcome?
4. What can an honest seeker after holiness do to be holy?

Conclusion

Holiness is the highest call of God to man. We believers need to live a holy life daily. Let holiness be a lifestyle because we worship a holy God. We need to be separated for God and from sin so that we can reach out to the world for Christ. Therefore, earnestly seek to be holy, for the God you worship is holy.

Lesson 3

JESUS CHRIST, THE HUMBLE SERVANT

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2: 5-11

Other Scriptures: John 1:1-3; 10:30; 14:11; 4:6; 4:31-33; 11:35; Hebrews 5:8; I Peter 2:22

Memory Verse: I Peter 5: 6

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time”.

The explanation of the memory verse:

It is human to seek a seat or title of honour, glory and fame. But, the Christian faith teaches the opposite: we are to be humble. Many times we fail to realize that when we exalt ourselves, we are taking over God’s work and leaving our work, which is to humble ourselves. When we talk of humility, we have no better model than Jesus Christ.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

1. Explain the deity of Christ
2. Identify the humanity of Christ
3. Embrace the lessons to be learned from Christ’s humility.

Introduction

Someone once said, “Humility is a virtue all preach, none practice, and yet everybody is content to hear. The master thinks it is good doctrine for the servant, the laity for the clergy, and the clergy for the laity.” In reality, who must be humble?

1. Jesus Christ is God (vs. 6)

Jesus Christ, the second person of the Triune, is God in his nature, power and work. Jesus Christ is equal to God. He was there from the beginning and He created all things (John 1:1-3). He is “in very nature God” (vs.6). This means that the essence of His being is God. That is why He could speak of being one with God the Father (John 10:30; 14:11). The Jews found it difficult to accept this truth and accused Him of blasphemy. It is therefore not surprising that even today, some people still find it difficult to believe that Jesus was and is truly God.

Because Jesus Christ is God, He is worthy of our worship, obedience and service.

2. **Jesus became human (vs. 7-8)**

During the early years of the Christian faith, false teachings about the deity of Christ, the God-Man, arose. These teachings held that Jesus was God only and that He was not a human being. However, just as much as He is God in His very nature, He also took our very nature and became human. He emptied himself of his glory and became human. To show his humanity, we learn that He got tired (John 4:6), ate food (John 4:31-33), wept (John 11:35), learned obedience (Hebrews 5:8), etc.

However, even though Jesus became man, He did not sin (I Peter 2:22).

3. **Jesus Christ, our model**

Jesus Christ came from heaven to earth to show us how to live with and for God. He is a perfect model of the following:

- a. **Servant-hood (vs. 7)** – Christ had to forego His rights and become a servant. A servant is one who takes instructions, obeys and works for the master. It is one who seeks to please the master always. The world around us wants us to be masters and not servants. But Jesus Christ teaches us the opposite because He became a servant Himself. The church can be different if all the believers would take up Christ's model of servant-hood irrespective of experience, office and social position.
- b. **Humility (vs. 8)** – Humility is being able to see others as important as oneself. We learn from Christ that even though He was God, he lowered himself to the point of an obedient servant and even to death on a shameful cross. Dying on a cross was the capital punishment of Jesus' day and thus it was a shame. With such humility our churches would be free from things like divorce, divisions, hate and power struggle among other evils.
- c. **God exalts the humble (vs. 9)** – Someone once said, "If you want to go up, go down." Many times we take God's work when we lift ourselves up in one way or another. Our God-given task is to humble ourselves, and God will lift us up in His own way and time. Christ humbled Himself and God exalted him and made him Lord of all. (v9–11).

Discussion Questions

1. What blessings can be realized in a local church if all believers would take up the spirit of servant-hood as we learn from Jesus Christ?
2. Following the example given in the introduction, in which other relationships is humility expected of others rather than given? So, in reality, who must be humble?
3. Humility has to be expressed in our daily lives as believers. Suggest some practical ways to show it.

Conclusion.

In today's lesson we have discovered that Jesus Christ is both God and Man. He humbled himself to be an obedient servant even to the point of dying on a cross. We are called upon to take His example to be obedient and humble servants as we serve Him by serving each other. Would you be humble?

THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Scripture: Matthew 28:19; John 5:19-21; 6:63; 14:15-23; Acts 5:1-11; Romans 8:1-27; 2 Corinthians 13:14

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should:

- a. Have grasped the truth that the Holy Spirit is God
- b. Have realized that Jesus Christ is in their lives by the presence of God the Holy Spirit
- c. Have begun to treat the Holy Spirit as God who indwells them

Memory Verse: 1 John 3:24

“Those who obey His commands live in Him and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.”

Explanation of the memory verse:

God has given believers his Spirit to live in them. Since the Holy Spirit lives in believers, God lives in them too, because the presence of the Holy Spirit in believers is the presence of God.

Introduction:

We have seen that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and he is God. We saw that Jesus and his Father are one. Today we are going to learn who the Holy Spirit is. He plays a very important role in our lives because he is the one who brings about the new birth in our souls, and he also lives in us on a daily basis. But who is the Holy Spirit? Some people believe him to be a spirit or wind who make people roll on the ground when they are possessed by him. Some see him as a power they need to do miracles or overcome demons. Who do you think he is? Let us take this time to hear from you before we hear what the Bible has to say about who the Holy Spirit is!

1. The Holy Spirit is God because his name is used together with that of the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

We believe that the Holy Spirit is God because the Holy Spirit is used by Jesus and Paul as equals together with the Father and the Son. Jesus Christ taught his disciples to

baptize new believers in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Putting these names together for the baptism of believers implies their equality. None of them is less than the others. This makes the Holy Spirit God like the Father and the Son.

Let us note that Jesus did not say in the names of, but in the name of; implying again that the three persons are one, and are equal. This is an indirect teaching of Jesus about his equality with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Paul uses the three persons in closing his letter to the Corinthians in this way; “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” In doing this, he emphasizes the role played by each of them in the life of believers. We all need the grace, the love and the fellowship of and from the Triune God so that we may share with each other and the whole world. The Holy Spirit is God in his own right.

2. The Holy Spirit gives life to people just as the Father and Son do (John 5:19-21; 6:63; Romans 8:11)

The Jews knew very well the fact that God the Father gives life because he is GOD. Jesus said that just as the Father gives life, he too, gives life to those he chooses to give (John 5:21). By saying this, Jesus was telling them that he himself is God too. He made himself to be equal with God.

In the same spirit, the Apostle Paul says that the Holy Spirit gives life to believers. He says, “He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you”. This is to say that we are given our spiritual lives by the Holy Spirit. If we do not have the Holy Spirit in our lives, we do not have the new life that God gives to all believers. So the Holy Spirit is equal to God.

3. The Holy Spirit is the other person of Jesus who has returned to his disciples (John 14:18-23)

When Jesus was about to leave for heaven, he told his disciples that he will not leave them as orphans; he will return to them (John 18). You and I know that the one who came to the disciples is the Holy Spirit. We need to understand that Jesus was saying that the Holy Spirit and Jesus were equal. The presence of the Holy Spirit is also the presence of Jesus Christ. In fact, Jesus said that he comes with his Father to live in the believer (John 14:18-23). This means that the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life is also the presence of the Father and the Son. So the Triune God lives in the believer’s life through the Holy Spirit.

4. The Holy Spirit knows the thoughts of God (1 Corinthians 2:11)

We believe that God knows everything. The Holy Spirit knows the thoughts of God the father (1 Corinthians 2:11). What does this mean to you? The one who knows your thoughts must know everything about you! Thoughts have to do with the inner most parts of me. If this is true, then the Holy Spirit knows everything about God. This means he knows everything just as God knows everything. This emphasizes the fact that the Holy Spirit is God and he must be understood and treated as God because he is God.

Discussion Questions:

1. What have you been thinking all along about the Holy Spirit?
2. What is your understanding now about the Holy Spirit?
3. What does this understanding about the Holy Spirit mean to you?

Conclusion:

The Holy Spirit is God in every way. He is the one who gives life to new believers. He gives life just as God the Father and the Son do. When we think of Jesus Christ being in our lives and ruling our lives, it is the Holy Spirit really who does all these things. The Holy Spirit is fully God and we need to know this and treat him that way. He is a person who wants to guide, teach and use us for the glory of the Triune God.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON

Scripture: John 3:1-8; 14: 16-17; Acts 5:1-6; Romans 8:1-27; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; Titus 3:4-5

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should:

- a. Have understood that the Holy Spirit is a person and not a power or a thing.
- b. Know that the Holy Spirit is the one who gives spiritual birth to believers.
- c. Have realized that the Spirit has his own mind and intercedes for believers.

Memory Verse: 1 Corinthians 12:11 - *“All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.”*

Explanation of the memory verse:

The Holy Spirit is a person and not a thing or some power. He is the one who gives the spiritual gifts to each believer according to his own decision, be it be healing, preaching or teaching. He has a mind of his own.

Introduction:

Different people from different denominations teach different things about the Holy Spirit. Because of some of these differences, we have many denominations. Each denomination has a responsibility to teach its members what they believe and why they believe as they do. What one believes will determine how one regards or treats the Holy Spirit. It is important for us to know and understand who the Holy Spirit is and what he does. In this lesson we shall look at those Scriptures that show that the Holy Spirit is a person. This will help us have a better relationship with God and will affect our day to day lifestyle.

1. The Holy Spirit has a mind of his own (Romans 8: 26, 27; 1 Corinthians 12:11)

In Romans 8:26-27 we find that the Holy Spirit has a mind. It says that the one who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit. This tells us that the Holy Spirit thinks. Because he thinks, he is able to make decisions. One of the things he decided to do is to intercede for believers. The Apostle Paul goes on to say that we do not know what to say when we pray. So the Holy Spirit speaks to our heavenly Father on our behalf.

If it is the Holy Spirit who really let our heavenly Father know what we are really saying in our prayers, should not we conclude that he is a person! Why this question? If the Holy Spirit is some power of God, he was not going to pray for us. He could be used by God to influence or do miracles. But this is not so. He thinks. He intercedes for believers.

1 Corinthians 12:11 says that the Holy Spirit is the one who distributes the spiritual gifts at his own discretion. Again, here the emphasis is on his mind to make his own decisions. This means that he is not a power to be used, but a person who decides for himself. He understands and knows what he is doing. It is a challenge for you and me to change our minds about the Holy Spirit and begin to respect him as a person. In the previous lesson we saw that the Holy Spirit was God. Today we see that he is not only God, but he is also a person. He has his own mind.

2. He is called the counsellor (John 14: 16-17)

In the gospel according to John 14:16-17, we read this; “And I will ask the father; and he will give another counsellor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth”. Who can say that a counsellor is a power or a thing that one might control? Here Jesus is not speaking about some power or something. He speaks about a person with a great responsibility as a counsellor.

In most cases, a person who goes to a counsellor is one who has problems in his life or family or is a leader who needs help. They do not go to some power or to some thing to find help. They go to a person whom they trust and know will help. Jesus says that the Holy Spirit is that person who is able to help us in time of need or difficulty. This should help you and me to want to be so close to him daily in order to find help nearby. He is the counsellor, helper or the one called to walk alongside each one of us.

3. The Holy Spirit is the one who gives believers new birth (John 3:5-6)

Have you ever heard of some power or something that has given birth to a living being like a person, a calf or a sheep? You have never heard of it. I have never heard of it. The Holy Spirit is the person who gives believers in Jesus a spiritual birth (John 3:5-6). It is his responsibility. He regenerates believers and makes them children of God. After this he gives them a testimony that now they are the children of God (Romans 8:16; Titus 3:4-5).

4. The Holy Spirit can be lied to (Acts 5:1-4)

Who has ever heard of someone lying to a power or lying to something? I have not. You and I know that a person lies to a person. You and I can lie about something to someone. So lies are from people and to people.

In Acts 5:2-5 we are told of how Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit while standing in the presence of the apostles. He was not thinking of the Holy Spirit who was in them, he thought about mere human beings who were standing there in front of him. Peter declared that he lied to the Holy Spirit. To confirm this, he died there and then. The

Holy Spirit is a person and he must be treated as a person. He deserves our respect and obedience.

Discussion Questions:

- a. How may you show that the Holy Spirit is a person?
- b. Can believers choose the spiritual gifts they want? Explain.
- c. How may you show that the Holy Spirit is not a thing or power? Explain.

Conclusion:

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Triune God. He is a spiritual being, therefore he is a person. He makes his own decisions. He distributes spiritual gifts to individual believers at his own discretion. He is a person. Respect and obey him.

Lesson 6

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Scripture: John 14:26; 16:5-16; Acts 15:8-9; Romans 8:1-27

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should:

- a. Know some of the works of the Holy Spirit
- b. Appreciate that the Holy Spirit is the only one who can tell a person that she or he is saved
- c. Realize that the lives of believers are controlled by the Holy Spirit
- d. Know that the baptism of the Holy Spirit purifies the hearts of believers

Memory Verse: John 14:26

“But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

Explanation of the memory verse:

The verse informs us of some of the works of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. Representing the Triune God, He teaches, he reminds and he counsels or comforts the believer as he walks alongside him.

Introduction:

There are those who believe that the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer is to enable him to speak in languages (tongues) that Satan and his demons cannot understand. In this way what they say to God is hidden to Satan and demons. However this teaching is not found in the Bible. And there are many other similar teachings that are not biblical. So, the question that you and I should consider is: What really is the work of the Holy Spirit? Let the class discuss briefly.

We have seen that the Holy Spirit is God and that he is a person, and not some power or a thing to be used by believers. In fact he is the one who should use believers in a holy and acceptable way. Today we shall learn more about the Holy Spirit and what he does.

1. The Holy Spirit convicts people of sin, righteousness and judgement (John 16: 8)

Jesus taught his disciples that when the Holy Spirit comes, he will convict people of sin, righteousness and judgement (John 16:8). This tells us clearly that when people are convicted of their sins and need for salvation, it is actually the Holy Spirit convicting them. The preacher merely preaches the message from God. The Holy Spirit takes the message received by each individual and uses it in the way that will convict them. Whatever happens thereafter will be the individual's response to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. The decision is left between the individual and the Holy Spirit.

2. The Holy Spirit testifies that we are saved (Romans 8: 16)

When a person gives his life to the Lord Jesus, he saves him. The question that arises is: Who tells this person that he is saved? Is this the work of the person who led the sinner to Christ? How will one know that now he is saved? Romans 8:16 says that the Holy Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. This is comforting. Why is this so? Because he is the one who gives spiritual birth to those who truly put their faith in Jesus Christ. The second person who can know is the very person who has experienced this spiritual birth. You ask why? Because the Holy Spirit testifies to the spirit of that person that he is now the child of God. You do not need to be told by someone that now you are saved because it is you who will tell others about the change you are experiencing in your life. They can only confirm what you tell them when they see the change in your lifestyle.

3. The Holy Spirit controls the lives of believers (Romans 8: 9)

One of the most exciting things about the Holy Spirit is that, instead of believers using him, it is the opposite that really happens. Roman 8:9 says; "You, however, are not controlled by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ". Two important truths are taught here.

- a. Every born again child of God has the Holy Spirit in his heart. Why? Because the one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Christ. The Holy Spirit serves then as an identifier of the children of God. We are marked by his presence in our lives.
- b. Every person who is the child of God is controlled by the Holy Spirit. You ask why? Because a child needs to be taught his new life. You do not expect a child to be born today and tomorrow he goes around independent from his mother. No. The newly born child needs the nourishment, teaching, guidance and control of the

Holy Spirit. Remember that you have been freed from sin and now you are bound to God who gives you his Holy Spirit to control you for the good. You are born again to be Christ-like! So, you need the control of the Holy Spirit!

4. The Holy Spirit purifies the hearts of believers (Acts 15:8-9)

When a person is baptized by the Holy Spirit, what really happens to that person? This is a valid question. On Pentecost day when the disciples were baptized by the Holy Spirit, tongues of cloven fire were seen on their heads. They began to speak in languages (tongues) understood by bystanders. What were the results of this baptism? The Apostle Peter testified in the Jerusalem council that their hearts were purified on that day (Acts 15:8-9). He adds that the same experience happened to believers at Caesarea where he preached. So, the result of being baptized by the Holy Spirit is a holy character because of the purified heart. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to purify the hearts of believers. Is your heart purified?

Discussion Questions:

- a. How will you know if you are a child of God? Discuss.
- b. What really happened on the Day of Pentecost to the disciples? Discuss.
- c. Are believers really free? Why then must the Holy Spirit control them?
- d. Who convicts people of their sins or need for salvation? Discuss.

Conclusion:

The Holy Spirit has many other things that he does in the lives of and for the believers. He wants to fulfil the purposes of God in and through our lives. He will not force his way if we do not choose to cooperate with him, but we may lose him, and as a result lose our fellowship with him.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:20-21.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should:

- a. Know that the Scriptures of the New Testament times were the Old Testament
- b. Realize that the Scriptures were written by men of God led by the Holy Spirit
- c. Be thankful that all that is necessary for our salvation is revealed in the Scriptures without error
- d. Grasp the truth that good character is produced by meditating on the Scriptures

Memory Verse: 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Explanation of the memory verse:

The Bible is the inspired word of God which he uses to educate those who believe in him. He uses it to correct, rebuke, teach and prepare believers to do what is good and beneficial to mankind according to his will.

Introduction:

If you were to travel in a country that you have never been before, and there is no one to show the way, how would you find the road to where you are supposed to go? Let the class discuss. It is true, you will need a guide or a map of the places and roads of that country, for without it you may not reach your destination.

Where would one go to find God’s instruction about how to go to heaven? Yes, the Bible.

What is the Bible?

The Bible is the map that leads every reader to where God wants us to go, to do and to be. If you want to know how to live a good and profitable life according to God’s standard, you will need to read or study the Bible. The Bible is the Word of God that he has given to humankind. It tells us about his plan for mankind, his will for our lives, and how to have a

living relationship with him. It also tells us how to live in harmony with one another while we are here on earth. It is a wonderful and needed book. The Bible is also called “The Scriptures” – this name is used many times in the New Testament.

1. How did God give us the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16)

In the letter to Timothy we are told that the Bible was inspired by God. This means that God, by the Holy Spirit, moved people who loved him to write the Bible with the purpose of instructing those who want to have a relationship with him. The Holy Spirit guided them to write it so that everyone might know what God expects of him.

The word used in the Bible for inspired is ‘breathed on’. It emphasizes that those who wrote the Bible were people who knew and obeyed God. They were led by the Holy Spirit to write what God wanted us to know and how to apply those things in our lives.

2. Did God give us the Bible word for word? (1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

No. God did not give us the Bible word for word! He used people like you and me. Those people loved and obeyed God. They wanted to do his will. They also wanted others to love, obey and do God’s will. They wrote the Bible as God spoke to them. They understood what God was saying to them. They took what God said to them and put it in the way that others might understand what God said to them. They wrote the Bible to different groups of people, expressing themselves according to their different personalities and cultures, yet saying the truth that God wanted them to say. This kind of inspiration is called “plenary inspiration” of the Scriptures. It means that there is the part of God and the part of the writer in the writing the Bible.

3. Are there any mistakes or errors that might lead us astray in the way the Bible was written? (2 Timothy 3:14-15)

No. There are no errors that might lead us astray from the purposes the Bible was written for. We believe that the objective for writing the Bible was to make known the will of God for men and lead them to a living relationship with him by believing in Jesus Christ our Saviour. That is why Apostle Paul said to Timothy, “and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through Jesus Christ” (v 15). In verses 16-17 he continues to tell us the other objectives of the Bible.

Something that is perfect is that which fulfils the purposes for which it was made. The Bible fulfils the purposes for which it was written, namely to bring people to a living relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

4. What are other objectives for the writing of Scriptures? (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

In verses 16-17 we read that: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work”. The Bible teaches people how to be saved from their sins through faith in Jesus Christ. It rebukes and corrects when we do what is wrong. It trains believers to become what God expects of our character in line with his will. The end result is a person who is equipped for every good work according to the individual’s spiritual gift. These are other objectives of the Bible.

Discussion Questions:

- a. How did God give us the Bible?
- b. What do we mean by “plenary inspiration”?
- c. Name some of the objectives of the Bible we learned today.

Conclusion:

The Bible is the Word of God. It is given to you and me to bring us to a living relationship with God our heavenly father through faith in Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. God expects us to read the Bible with the purpose of understanding it in order that we may do his will. God loves us so much that he has put everything he wants us to be in the Bible. Read it. Study it. Memorise it. Live by its directives daily.

Lesson 8

SIN AS A VIOLATION OF THE KNOWN LAW OF GOD

Scripture: Genesis 3:1-11; Matthew 22:34-40; I John 3:4

Memory Verse: I John 3:4

“Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.”

Explanation of the memory verse:

Every person driving a vehicle on public roads must have learned and passed an appropriate examination. That person must follow the road rules, signs and markings. If one does not follow those rules, one will be arrested (if caught) and fined or jailed if found guilty. The question is why is one arrested for driving one’s own vehicle the way one wants? It is because many people who have vehicles use the road too. It is to avoid accidents and protect human lives. One should not endanger other road users. That is why there are rules. Anyone who breaks the road rules is committing a crime because one has broken the rules of the road.

God has given people laws so that they will be able to live in harmony with him and with other human beings. If a person fails to live by these laws, it means that they have broken the law(s) of God. To break the laws of God is sin before God.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson learners should:

- a. Have gained the knowledge that love for God and fellowmen is the ultimate commandment that encompasses all of God’s laws
- b. Be able to define sin from a Wesleyan perspective
- c. Be able to differentiate between sin and mistakes

Introduction:

Killing another person is considered a crime. The person who has killed another person is called a murderer, a killer or a criminal. Let the class discuss the following questions:

1. Why killing another person is called a crime?

2. Why is the person who has killed another called a murderer, a killer or a criminal?

Crime is committed when a law of the country is broken. A criminal is a person who has broken the laws of his country and is found guilty by the courts of law. One will be called a murderer or a killer, thus showing the kind of crime they have committed.

Who declares guilty a person who breaks the laws of God? What will they be called? Let us see what the lesson today teaches us about this.

3. The Commandments of God

The earth is full of people whom God created. In order for these people to live in harmony with each other, God made rules that govern human relationships. These rules are also called commandments. To make it simpler for us to remember and to keep the commandments or laws of God, the Lord Jesus summarized them in this way, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as yourself. All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matt 22:37-40). If one loves God whole-heartedly, one will not break God's laws. Also they will not do harm to any person.

4. What is Sin

Anyone who breaks these commandments is committing what God calls 'sin'. Sin is a violation of the laws of God. In the Wesleyan perspective, sin is defined as "a voluntary violation of the known law of God by a morally responsible person (able to distinguish right from wrong)". This definition excludes children who have not yet reached the age of accountability and those who are mentally challenged. In 1 John 3:4 we read that, "Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness." When Adam and Eve broke the law of God in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-11), they committed sin. When you and I break the laws of God, we commit sin. We choose to do something against God's will. We are rebelling against God.

5. The Difference between Sins and Mistakes

There is a difference between sin and a mistake. Sin is committed by choice, knowingly and deliberately. On the other hand, a mistake may be defined as: "to err in opinion, judgement or perception due to inadequate knowledge, carelessness or inattention"¹. The incorrect decisions and actions resulting from these are unintended. However, all mistakes that one commits must be corrected when discovered or

¹ The Living Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language, Kellerman, 1981: 611

brought to one's attention, otherwise they become sin. Remember that sin is deliberately breaking the known laws of God.

Discussion Questions:

- a. What commandments of God are summarized in Matthew 22:37-40?
- b. What is sin? Allow the learners to talk about sin as defined above.
- c. What is the difference between sin and a mistake?
- d. Sometimes the elderly and those in authority may deliberately do or say something wrong and later apologize saying that it was a mistake. In some cultures this is considered as respect for the elders. Discuss.

Conclusion:

Since sin is a voluntary violation of a known law of God by a morally responsible person, any person who loves God in truth will not plan to commit sin. When we can distinguish sin from mistakes, we will be able to fully enjoy our redemption.

Challenge members to review their life in the past week, identify sinful acts they need to repent of, and commit to practically loving God and others better in the coming week. Close in prayer.

Lesson 9

SIN AS UNBELIEF IN JESUS CHRIST

Scripture: John 3:16-21; 6:25-40; Isaiah 64:65-67; Ephesians 2:8-10

Memory Verse: John 3:18

“Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”

Explanation of the memory verse:

What God expects from every person on earth is to believe (trust, lean, depend, cling) on Jesus so that that person may have a relationship with God. If one does not believe on Jesus, the Son of God, that person commits sin. So, to refuse to believe on the Son of God is sin.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should:

- a. Have the understanding that failure to believe in Jesus Christ is sin
- b. Have grasped the truth that the only work that one needs to do to be saved is to believe in Jesus Christ
- c. Have been convinced that faith in Jesus Christ is the only means to be saved
- d. Have been convinced that good works do not save any person from one’s sins

Introduction:

There are people who are good by nature. They do not do bad or evil things. They give to those who are needy. They help the helpless. Whenever there are needs or they are needed, they are there! They give of their possessions to the orphanages. They give their time, talents and money to wherever there are needs. These are good people in deed. Does not the Bible teach us to do these things? Surely, these people are righteous. They must be accepted in heaven. What do you say? Discuss.

Good works do not make us righteous people before God:

We have seen that sin is a voluntary transgression of a known law of God by a morally responsible person. But what if a person does not break any laws of God? Will such a person be regarded as a sinner? These are valid questions. They need to be answered

correctly. By nature there are people who are good who also do good things. Many of these people do not need to be taught about doing good things for others. We should think of those who give their lives to care for the AIDS infected people, those who care for the elderly in their homes or old age homes, and those who care for the terminally ill. They do these things voluntarily. These people are really involved in the work of God by caring for his people. Would not God accept their works as righteousness on their behalf? Does not God expect us to do these things? Surely he does! But what does the Bible say?

In Isaiah 64:6 we read that *'all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away'*. From this verse we realise that all good deeds do not make us good before God! It is true that they are helping God's people in their needs! It is true also that God expects those who are saved from their sins to do good works or do things that help others who are in need. But he does not say that our good acts will make us good or acceptable to him as righteous people. Putting their faith only in Jesus Christ saves them. Let us read Ephesians 2:8-10.

Faith in Jesus Christ Saves People From Their Sins:

What does God expects people to do in order for them to be acceptable to him? In John 6:29 we read that *"Jesus answered, 'the work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent'"*. From this verse we understand, therefore, that every person is expected to believe in Jesus Christ who is the one sent by God. We know that no one gets paid for the work one has not worked for. It follows then that God will accept no one if they do not believe in Jesus Christ, who is the one, sent by God. So the good work that God expects from every person in order to be saved or accepted by him is to believe in Jesus Christ whom he has sent.

Failure to Believe in Jesus Christ is Sin:

But one may ask, "What if I do not believe in Jesus? Does that matter?" Surely it does! The following are the words of Jesus himself, *"Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son"*.¹ What does this mean? It means that failure to believe in Jesus Christ makes one the same as the one who breaks God's known laws.² It makes one a sinner! So failure to believe in Jesus Christ is sin. This will also include those who are good by nature and yet fail to put their trust in Jesus Christ, the only Son of God who was sent for the salvation of the whole world.

¹ John 3:18

² I John 3:4

It is clear from our lesson that the only way to be saved from our sins is to believe in Jesus Christ the only Son of God who was sent specifically for our salvation from sin. It is also clear that failure to believe in Jesus Christ is sin.

Discussion Questions:

- a. According to our lesson today, what is sin?
- b. How is failure to believe in Jesus the same as breaking the known law of God?
- c. There are those who are good by nature. How may they be saved? Explain.
- d. Is there any other way that one might be saved from one's sins? Discuss.

Conclusion:

In our lesson today we have seen that failure to believe in Jesus Christ is sin, just like breaking the known law of God. We also saw that in order for one to be saved, one has to believe in Jesus Christ. Last of all, we saw that there is no other way that one may be saved from one's sins. Now the question is: Are you a believer in Jesus Christ? Are your sins forgiven by believing in him? If you are not sure, it will be a good thing for you to be sure.

Lesson 10

SIN AS FAILURE TO LOVE A FELLOW BELIEVER

Scripture: I John 4:7-21; John 13:34-35

Memory Verse: I John 4:20

“If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen”

Explanation of the memory verse:

God expects believers to love each other as God loves them. To fail to love is disobedience to God’s command of loving others. This is sin. On the other hand, one cannot claim to love God while one fails to love a fellow believer whom one has seen. For we only show that we love God when we love other believers.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should:

- a. Have gained the knowledge that it is sin to fail to love a fellow believer
- b. Have been encouraged to love every believer in Jesus Christ
- c. Have understood that one has to love his fellow believer as proof of loving God.

Introduction:

If two people have one and the same person as their friend, in the long run, the two will become friends of each other because of their friendship with their common friend. If two people love God to the point of willing to do his will in truth, then the two people will end up loving each other because they both love God. Our lesson for today challenges us to be genuine in our relationship with God and with one another. If we love God in truth, we must love one another no matter the circumstances.

Failure to Love Other Believers is Sin:

The first epistle of John is written to believers who were being misled to believe that what we do has nothing to do with our relationship with God. The Apostle John takes time to point out the need for believers to constantly love one another because this is the commandment given by Jesus Christ our Saviour to those who believe in him. The

question that we should ask ourselves is, why is it important to love other believers? Sometimes it is very difficult to love a fellow-believer. Others are just not easy to live with. To answer, let us look at the following reasons:

- a. We need to love one another because it is the command of God, “And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother” v. 21. Now a command is given with the purpose of obeying it. Let us think of a soldier. Every soldier lives every day under commands that he must obey. For every failure to obey a command or instruction, there is punishment. In some instances disobedience might result in the death of the disobedient soldier. Why? Because disobedience by a soldier may lead to disobedience by other soldiers that may lead to a dysfunctional army. The results will be a defenceless country.

In a believer’s life, a command to love other believers is not optional. It is binding. To disobey this command is sin. It is voluntarily transgressing the known law of God. This means that a believer who does not love other believers stands as an enemy of the very God one claims to love. Verse 7 says, “Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love”. To know God is the same as to be born again or to be saved. To hate another believer nullifies one’s salvation.

- b. We need to love one another because it is a proof that we love God. Look at verse 20; “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen”. Any person may testify saying that one loves God whole-heartedly, while one fails to love some believers; that means that, that person does not love God. In John 13:34-35, Jesus says that to love another believer is a sign that I am a follower of Jesus Christ; or I belong, together with other believers who love Jesus. God loves us. He expects us to love one another as a sign also of loving him.
- c. We need to love one another because love comes from God or love belongs to God. I John 4:7a says, “*Dear brothers, let us love one another, for love comes from God*”. If I received something that I am expected to pass it on to others and I fail to do so, I will be punished. Again to disobey God is sin. To fail to love others is sin. Why? Because I have broken the command of God that of loving other believers.

Loving believers shows that we belong to Jesus. According to Jesus, people will know that we are his followers if we love each other. In other words, it is the only testimony they will believe because it imitates the love of God for the world. They will see this love in their presence. We are commanded to love believers since this is a silent sermon about God’s love for the world. It is too influential.

Discussion Questions:

- a. According to our lesson today, why is it sin to fail to love other believers?
- b. Is loving other believers associated with our salvation? Explain.

Conclusion:

We have seen that to love other believers is God's command to Jesus Christ's followers. We also saw that it is sin to fail to love other believers. If we love other believers as Jesus loves us, the world will know that we are his followers. So to love other believers must be our lifestyle. Plan to love those who are difficult to love starting from today.

Lesson 11

SIN AS THE INHERITED INCLINATION TO SIN

Scripture: Romans 5:12-14; Acts 15:8-9; Psalm 7:11; II Timothy 4:6-8.

Memory Verse: Romans 5:12

“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.”

Explanation of the memory verse:

When Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, his sin resulted in both physical and spiritual death. His sin also affected all his generation after him. Each person is born inclined to evil. Because of his sin, we are all born with tendencies to sin. We all are dead spiritually, that is, we are separated from God. Not one person on earth is excluded from these effects from the sin of Adam. We call this ‘original sin’ or ‘inherited depravity’. This depravity is not dealt with at the point of the new birth. It remains in the new life of a born again child of God. However, no one is accountable for it until at such time that person rejects or neglects the remedy God has provided for it.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson, pupils should:

- a. Have realised that all human beings are born inclined to sin
- b. Have understood that Adam’s sin has affected all people even though they did not sin as he did.
- c. Have understood that original sin continues to exist with the new life until their hearts are purified by the baptism with the Holy Spirit.
- d. Have gained the knowledge that one is not accountable for original sin until one rejects the divinely provided remedy.

Introduction:

An inheritance is what your parents leave behind for you as your property. You do not choose what you will inherit, it is given you in the ‘will’ that your parents have decided and wrote down before they passed from this present life. You will know about your inheritance when the person appointed by your parents reads their ‘will’ for those who are left behind.

The original sin is what our first parents left for everyone who comes or are born after them. This original sin is so called because it first started when Adam and Eve broke the first law God gave them in the Garden of Eden. Ever since then, sin entered the world and infected everyone who is born in this world as seen in children. Parents, generally, teach their children what is good. Children have a tendency of doing what is not good. This shows this inclination towards evil everyone is born with. This is called depravity, original sin, inherited sin or inclination towards evil

The Difference Between Personal Sin and Original Sin:

In the past three lessons we have seen that sin is the voluntary breaking of the known law of God by those who have the power to choose not to sin. However in original sin, one does not choose to have it. One is born with this sin. We may say that it is a gift given us by our first parents, namely Adam and Eve. The fact that every person chooses to do evil even though no one taught him/her is proof enough that human beings are born inclined to evil.

Romans 5:12 says that the sin of Adam has infected every person even though they did not sin the way he did. It continues to say that all people die because of this sin. This may mean that if people on earth were not the offspring of Adam, they would have no inclination to evil. That we are all the offspring of Adam is seen in the description of the human race as shown in Romans 3:9-18. This shows that the human race is sinful. Our tendencies are towards evil. Even when we do what is good, it is generally for self-appraisal or is self-centred.

The New Birth Does Not Cancel The Original Sin:

You may ask; what happens to this original sin when one is born again? This is a good question. To answer this question one must ask another question, namely; were the disciples of Jesus Christ born again? Yes they were born again. Yet Peter said that on the Day of Pentecost their hearts were purified. (Acts 15:8, 9) This means that after one is born again, the original sin remains in the life of a believer until when the Holy Spirit convicts that person of the presence of this sin and challenges the believer to avail oneself to be cleansed from it.

It must be understood that one is not responsible for this sin because one did not do anything to have it. However one is responsible to avail oneself to be cleansed from it when one is convicted of such need. If one refuses to be cleansed from it, then one becomes responsible for it since one chose to live with it when one could have been freed from it. From that moment onwards, it becomes one's choice to live with this original sin. But you can be freed from it if you choose to be freed. The choice is yours.

Discussion Questions:

- a. What is original sin?
- b. Is there any person who is exempted from original sin?
- c. Are those who are born again free from original sin? Explain.
- d. When is one responsible for original sin? Explain.

Conclusion:

All human beings are infected with original sin since we all received it as an inheritance from our first parents. However, we are not responsible for it since we did not do any wrong thing to deserve it. Original sin is cleansed by the baptismal of the Holy Spirit at the time when the Holy Spirit reveals it to that person and one is willing to be cleansed. However, one is responsible for it only if that person rejects God's provision for cleansing it.

ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PERSONAL SIN AND INHERITED SIN?

Scripture: Romans 5:12-14; I John 3:4; 4:7-21; Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-19

Memory Verse: Romans 5:12

“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.”

Explanation of the memory verse:

Adam was given a law and he broke it. It was not given to the whole human race but to him. You and I have laws that are given to us by God. If we break them, we will be responsible. However, Adam, by breaking the law, left us crippled spiritually, because we have inherited his sinful nature since we are his offspring. We are therefore not responsible for the sin that we have inherited until we refuse God when he offers to cleanse us from it.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should:

- a. Be able to define original and personal sins.
- b. Be able to state the difference between original and personal sins.
- c. Have acquired knowledge that every person may choose to be freed from original sin just as one may choose to be forgiven his/her personal sins.

Introduction:

In the past four lessons we have studied about sin, looking at it as the voluntary transgression of a known law of God by a morally responsible person and also as an original or inherited depravity from our first parents. In the lesson for today, we want to look at the differences and similarities between them. In so doing we shall be able to understand each kind of sin and the remedy for each.

Sin is Twofold:

We believe that sin is twofold: that is sin is personal and that sin is an inherited depravity from our first parents.

Personal Sin:

By personal sin we mean that a morally responsible person has broken the known law of God voluntarily. This is not a mistake or due to infirmities or other situations that were beyond one's control. Sin is committed when one chooses to break the known law of God voluntarily. Let us look at the law broken by Adam and Eve, his wife, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die". (Gen 2:15) Look at the following statements:

They knew the law. They understood it. They made a choice to doubt God and believe Satan, a stranger. What were the results? It was immediate spiritual death (separation of God and man) and physical death later. This is personal sin. They chose voluntarily to disobey God. We, too, are held accountable for the sins we ourselves have committed.

Original Sin:

By original sin or inherited depravity, we mean that we did not choose to break any law of God nor did we choose to have this sin. One has this sin because we inherited it from our first parents, Adam and Eve. Everyone is born with this sin. We cannot avoid having it. The Bible puts it this way; "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned – for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come"

(Romans 5:12-15).

First, all people are regarded as sinners because of Adam's sin. This means that we have received from Adam an inheritance of evil in our lives. We did not choose to have this inheritance. We are born inclined to sin.

Second, because we have inherited this original sin, God chose not to regard us as guilty because of it. Why? Because, "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers, each is to die for his own sin". (Deut 24:16) Also because God is a righteous Judge, he will not send his people to hell because of someone's sin. (II Tim 4:8)

When is One Responsible for Original Sin?

You may ask this question. We have just noted that God is a righteous judge. Therefore he will hold us accountable for the original sin only after we have been convicted of the need to be cleansed from it and we refuse the offer. From then onward it will become our responsibility and we cannot blame Adam for it anymore. That is only because we refused deliverance from it by the cleansing of the Holy Spirit through the blood of Jesus Christ. Thus it becomes our responsibility by choice.

Discussion Question:

- a. Define both personal sin and original sin.
- b. Why God will not judge us for original sin?
- c. When is one responsible for the original sin?

Conclusion:

We must thank God that we are only accountable for our own sins, and not those of others. We must also thank him because we can be forgiven our sins and also be cleansed from original sin.

Lesson 13

THE ATONEMENT GOD MADE FOR THE ISRAELITES

Scripture: Leviticus 16:1-34; Hebrews 10:1-18; John 1:29; 3:14-17

Memory Verse: John 1:29

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.’”

Explanation of the memory verse:

The memory verse tells us of the work of Jesus Christ. He is the ‘sin offering’ who died on our behalf, taking our punishment. He is also the ‘scapegoat’ that carries away our sins. Hence he is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should:

- a. Have understood the atonement God made for Israel
- b. Know that that atonement did not remove sin, but covered it
- c. Appreciate the atonement God made for the world through Jesus Christ

Introduction:

In the Bible we are told about two covenants that were meant to deal with the sin problem in the lives of those who needed a relationship with God. We call these covenants ‘Old and New Covenants’. The Old Covenant was a way of dealing with sin among the people of Israel and everyone who would want to. There were sacrifices that were offered daily and those that were offered when one had committed involuntary sin. Once a year, the sin of all Israel was dealt with on the Day of Atonement. On that day the high priest would make an atonement for all Israel with two male goats so that their sins would be forgiven. He also made atonement for himself and his household with a bull and a ram. Today we shall learn more about this covenant and we shall also do a short comparison with the New Covenant atonement.

The Day and Place of Atonement:

The Day of Atonement fell in the beginning of the month of October in our calendar. All Israel went to Jerusalem where the temple of the Lord was. All sacrifices and offerings were done here at the temple where the priests of the Lord were ready to offer and sacrifice all offerings. This is the only place where

the sins of people could be forgiven. This is so because it is where the temple, the altar and the priests of the Lord were. God chose Jerusalem to be the dwelling place of his Presence and where sins of the people of Israel could be dealt with at the temple.

How was the atonement done? No work was done on this day. All Israel fasted on this day. The high priest first took a censer full of live coals from the altar, took two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense and took them behind the curtain in the Most Holy Place. He put the incense on coals in front of the Lord in order to cover the mercy seat with smoke to protect the high priest from death. He then offered first the sin offering (a young bull) for himself and his household. He sprinkled its blood in front of the mercy seat covering the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy Place. Second, he offered the sin offering (male goat) for all Israel. He sprinkled blood of the male goat in front of the mercy seat covering the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy Place. He also smeared the blood of both sin offerings on the horns of the altar of burnt offering that was in the courtyard in front of the temple. After making atonement for himself, his household and all Israel, he shall bring the live male goat forward and lay both his hands on its head, and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of Israel. The goat will carry on itself the sins of all Israel. This goat will be driven to a desert and left there. Then Aaron will offer the ram as a burnt offering for himself, his household and all Israel.

However the blood of these animals did not cleanse the people's sins, it only covered them. Because of this truth, the high priest had to make a new atonement for their sins yearly.

The New Covenant made by Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:1-18) literally takes away the sins of those who believe in Jesus. It also clears their consciences from guilt. The author makes a bold statement when he says, "Because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy", (Heb. 10:14). This is what salvation is all about! It is freedom from sin as long as one lives a life of obedience to one's Saviour and Lord. The Apostle John put it in this way: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his son, purifies us from all sin", (I John 1:7).

There is a big difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant!

<u>In the Old Covenant</u>	<u>In the New Covenant</u>
Most Holy Place: only High priest enters	Most Holy Place: All worshippers enter
The priest had fellowship with God	All worshippers have fellowship with God
Sacrificed forced animals	Jesus willingly sacrificed himself
Sins are covered and not forgotten	Sins are forgiven and forgotten
Bodies are purified	Hearts and consciences are purified
Atonement is made yearly	Atonement was made once for all

We ought to be grateful for what God through our Lord Jesus Christ did for us while we were yet sinners. Now that we are his children by his own grace shown to us through Jesus Christ, we ought to be more obedient to show our gratitude and love for him.

Discussion Questions:

- a. How is Jesus Christ both a scapegoat and a sin offering?
- b. If the Old Covenant was the only way for salvation, how were we going to be saved since all the sacrifices and offerings were done in Jerusalem in Israel?
- c. Do the Jews get salvation from their by following the Old Covenant today?

Conclusion:

Close the class session with prayer of gratitude because of the salvation through the New Covenant.

Lesson 14

THE ATONEMENT GOD MADE FOR SINNERS

Scripture: Isaiah 53:3-12; II Cor. 5:18-21; John 3:16, 17

Memory Verse: Isaiah 53:6

“But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.”

Explanation of the memory verse:

This verse tells us that Jesus died in our place and God punished him instead of us so that by putting our whole trust in him, we may be forgiven of our sins and restored to a living fellowship with God.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should:

1. Be able to define atonement
2. Have understood why God made atonement for sinners
3. Have been convinced that this atonement is the only way men could have fellowship with God

Introduction:

When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, their sin brought about enmity between God and themselves. Because of their sin, everyone born after this sin is born being an enemy of God. There is no relationship between man and God. Because of this enmity, man is destined to live with Satan in hell suffering forever. Now the question is: Who is going to end it? Why must he end this enmity? How will that person end it?

Lesson:

What is atonement?

It is the restoration of fellowship between two parties who are enemies to each other. It is the reparation of fellowship between the two. In our lesson, we are talking about restoration or reparation of the fellowship between God and man. It is a plan to end enmity between God and man so that there is real fellowship between the two parties. It is a reconciliation of man to God. The Bible says that, *“God was reconciling the world to himself*

in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation," II Cor. 5:19.

Who is going to end the enmity between God and man?

Man committed sin. Man brought about this enmity between himself and God. Man is the offender. He has nothing in his possession that can bring an end to this enmity. The question is; who will bring an end to this enmity then?

The Bible tells us that it is God who moved first to bring about an end to this enmity between man and himself; *"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly...But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us,"* Romans 5:6, 8. It is not us who are making our way towards God! It is God who comes wooing us to himself! Without God ending this enmity, man is doomed forever to be in hell with Satan.

Why did God choose to make atonement? Why did he choose to end this enmity?

The Bible tells us that God chose to end the enmity because of his love for man, *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him"* (John 3:16, 17). This is Good News, the Gospel! It is God's love for us that moved him to end the enmity between himself and us sinners.

How will God make this atonement?

God chose to reconcile the world to himself by making Jesus Christ *sin*, the very thing he hates. We read in II Cor. 5:21, *"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God"*. In Isaiah 53:3-12 we see that God punished Jesus instead of us sinners so that we might become righteous people. Literally Jesus was put in our place then punished as if God was punishing us sinners, with the purpose of us sinners putting our trust in Jesus so that we might become righteous people. This is indeed Good News.

Discussion Questions:

- a. What do we mean by atonement? Explain.
- b. Who are the two parties that need to be reconciled to each other??
- c. How did God choose to reconcile the world to himself?
- d. Why did God choose to reconcile the world to himself?

e. What must we do to be reconciled to God?

Conclusion:

Atonement is the way God made reparation of his fellowship with man through the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. Each person is expected to put his trust fully in Jesus as his atonement. Without faith in Jesus, there will be no atonement. It is the responsibility of each person to accept Jesus as one's own atonement with God by putting one's trust fully in Jesus Christ.

Lesson 15

PREVENIENT GRACE

Scripture: Titus 2:11, 12; Romans 5:6-8; Ephesians 2:8-10; John 6:44; 15:5

Memory Verse: Titus 2:11, 12

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.”

Explanation of the memory verse:

God in his goodness has given every person his grace so that each person might be able to make right choices whether they are sinners or saved. There is no one who might do what is wrong and say that he was not able to stop, because every person has the grace given by God. We all can do what is right in our different situations because of God’s grace (unmerited and undeserved favour).

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should:

- a. Have understood the meaning of prevenient grace
- b. Be grateful for the prevenient grace of God that prepared their salvation
- c. Have grasped the truth that one’s salvation depends on God’s prevenient grace
- d. Know that each person is responsible to respond positively to God’s grace

Introduction:

Our lesson is about Prevenient Grace. Who can tell what prevenient grace is? Allow the class to respond. By prevenient grace we mean the love in God that goes to all people to prepare them for salvation long before they hear the Gospel. It is the grace that goes before any attempt from our side to want to change our lives towards God.

The Reason God Gave Human Beings His Prevenient Grace:

One might ask why did God give people his prevenient grace? This is a very important question! Why did he do that?

Let us understand that since Adam and Eve fell from their original holiness, they lost any possibility of choosing to come back to God by themselves. The fall of Adam and Eve made every person to be helpless and disabled to want to move from sin toward God. It is like a person born and brought up in darkness where there is no light at all. All that the person knows is only darkness. This person cannot choose between light and darkness because one knows only darkness. For this person to see the difference between darkness and light, someone has to bring light into that darkness so that the person might see the light and to be able to see the difference between the two. Secondly, the person who brought that light into the darkness must explain about the light and give reason why this person in darkness should choose the light instead of darkness. Only then can this person know and want to choose light against darkness. This is what God does to human beings through prevenient grace. Jesus said, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him". (John 6:44) "Apart from me you can do nothing". (John 15:5)

How Does Prevenient Grace Work?

But how does prevenient grace prepare people for salvation? When Jesus Christ died on the cross for and on our behalf, it was that working of prevenient grace, making it possible for us to be forgiven of our sins and to be cleansed from all unrighteousness. Paul says that God did this when we were still helpless; or when we were still unable to do anything for our salvation (Rom. 5:6-8). You see, it is that grace that went before we could find help and made a way for our salvation from sin.

Prevenient Grace Teaches and Enables Us.

In Titus 2:11, 12 we read that the grace of God teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions. This tells us that without the prevenient grace of God, we will not be able to choose what is good and right against what is evil and wrong. It is the grace that enables us, and not our own power or will. Our will is enabled by this grace to do so if we choose to do what is right. It also teaches us to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age. It is by God's grace that people are able to choose to do what is right whether they are sinners or already saved from their sins!

We Are Led to Salvation Through Prevenient Grace

Can one be saved without this grace? In the book of Ephesians 2:8 we read that for it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God. It is not our own doing. We cannot earn salvation! We cannot buy it! We cannot live good lives enough to deserve it! It is all of God's grace.

How should one respond to prevenient grace? Ephesians 2:8 says that grace is received through our faith, our trust in God. These are our arms of receiving the grace of God that brings our salvation from our sins.

Discussion Questions:

1. What do we mean by Prevenient Grace?
2. Why did God provide us with Prevenient Grace?
3. How does prevenient grace prepare people for salvation?
4. Can one be saved without this grace?

Conclusion:

Prevenient Grace is that grace that God sent to prepare us to come back to Him in repentance. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross on our behalf is part of the working of this grace. Because of this grace we are able to make right choices if we choose to do so. We do not deserve this grace because it is a GIFT from God to us. Let us be grateful and receive it with gladness and begin to live lives of obedience and self-control in this present age.

Lesson 16

WE BELIEVE IN REPENTANCE

Scripture: II Chronicles 7:14; Isaiah 55:6-7; Romans 8:12-17.

Memory Verse: II Chronicles 7:14

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

Explanation of the memory verse:

True repentance must include humility, turning away from sin, turning toward God and sincerely seeking after God, the sinner will receive forgiveness from God.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should:

- a. Have grasped the meaning of repentance
- b. Have recognized the ingredients that form part of repentance
- c. Have been challenged to make sure of their repentance

Introduction:

Repentance is the beginning step of a person who had turned his back against God but now wants sincerely to be united with God. He does not see any other way to be reconciled with God except to depend totally on the mercies and grace of God. He now surrenders his life to God unconditionally in order to be accepted before him. This person wants to build a new relationship with God.

What is Repentance?

In our church we believe in repentance. We expect every person who wants to be part of our church to repent. But what is repentance?

We use this word very often in the church and when a person wants to have a relationship with God, we tell that person to repent. But what is repentance? Let the class answer this question.

By repentance we mean that a person turns away from what he or she is doing and where he or she is going. It is a change of mind. It is a feeling of regret or remorse for what one has done. It is turning away from sin and to God. There must be an about turn or reversal in the lifestyle of the person who is repenting. Isaiah 55:7 says that one must forsake his ways and thoughts and turn to God who will have mercy on him and pardon him. Repentance is more than just raising one's hand and praying a sinner's prayer or a minister praying for you. There must be a right about turn toward God in one's life.

What is expected in repentance?

For repentance to be real, one must do the following as tabulated by II Chronicles 7:14. God expects these things from a person who is repenting, or from a person who wants to have a relationship with God. They are:

Humility: one must humble himself before God. No one has a right to be forgiven his sins. No one can demand forgiveness. It is out of God grace and his mercy that he is willing to forgive a sinner who humbles himself. No one deserves to be forgiven. Grace is unmerited favour that God gives an undeserving sinner. Mercy is God's love that causes him to help the miserable.

Turning away from sin or wicked ways: repentance is a decision one makes of himself. One must make a decision in his heart and mind to forsake sin and turn away from it. It is not God's work to make one leave his life of sin. It is your decision. You have decided to sin. Now you must decide to stop sinning.

- a. **Prayer:** prayer is to communicate with God. It includes confessing, asking, thanksgiving, praising, petition and intercession. God expects you to pray for yourself to be forgiven. A sinner needs to confess that he has sinned and ask God for forgiveness.
- b. **Seeking God:** to seek is to search for, to take pains to find God. It shows determination to find forgiveness from God. Nothing will stop a person who is repenting to find God's forgiveness.

When these requirements are met, God says that he will hear from heaven and forgive the repenting sinner. Note that it is God who forgives the repenting sinner and not the pastor. This means that the forgiven sinner will know himself of his forgiveness by God. You do not need to be told that God has forgiven you by any person. You are the one who will know first and begin to testify about it. Romans 8:16 say that the Holy Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

Who is it that must repent? The sinner must repent if there will be forgiveness of his sins. Isaiah 55:6-7 says that the wicked or the evil person must repent. It is the person who seeks

forgiveness who must repent. Any person who seeks forgiveness from God must repent of his sins. Only then will God forgive a sinner of his sins.

Discussion Questions:

1. What do we mean by repentance? Explain.
2. What are the requirements for repentance? Name them.
3. Who must repent? Are believers included here? Explain.

Conclusion:

Every person who needs to have fellowship with God must repent of his evil ways. There must be a change of a lifestyle in every person who has repented. The one who has repented is the one who will tell others about the change that has taken place in his life. This is not the work of the pastor or any other person who prayed with you. When God has forgiven you, he will let you know. You are the one who experience the joy of forgiveness.

AN EXAMPLE OF THE REPENTANCE THAT LEADS TO GOD

Scripture: Luke 15:11-24

Memory Verse: Luke 15:18-24

"I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men."

Explanation of the memory verse:

The young man here has made a decision to go back to his father with the purpose of giving his life unconditionally to him to be received, at least as a hired servant. He has repented and fully converted to his father's control.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should:

- a. Have grasped the meaning of repentance
- b. Have been challenged to make sure of their repentance
- c. Have been made hungry for repentance

Introduction:

In the church of the Nazarene we believe that any person who wants to have a relationship with God must first realize his sinfulness. He must realize that he cannot save himself. He must realize that he needs help outside himself, and this help is found only in God through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. This is clearly seen in the way the prodigal son found acceptance by his father who was representing our heavenly Father, who is God.

The young man in Luke 15 represents a person who had turned his back against God. This person had taken his life into his own control. He had nothing to do with God. He depended on the wealth God had given him. He became his own master, or the wealth became his master. When all his wealth was finished, he began to be in need. He sought help from other people, which they could not give. Finally he went to his father in humility and repentance where he was wonderfully accepted.

A self-sufficient person: 15:11-13

The prodigal son depended totally on the wealth his father had given him as his inheritance. He did not work for it. All that he had was a gift from his graceful father. He sought freedom from his parents who gave him the wealth. He chose to leave his home and went to a far-away country. He avoided control or advice from his father. He thought he had what he needed for his life. This is how we all behave concerning our parents, especially God. We feel we can take care of ourselves. We do not need God in our lives. We see ourselves as our own masters like this prodigal son.

A stubborn person: 15:14-16.

When all his wealth was gone, he decided to find help from other people other than his own father who gave him what he had. The ones he trusted in abused him. His life was degraded to the point of wanting to eat what was given to pigs. Our stubbornness does not help us but might destroy us. Without God we are hopeless and helpless.

A self-humbling person: 15:17-19

For him to find help, he needed to realize that he couldn't help himself, not even rich people of the country he was living in. He needed to realize where he went wrong. He needed to admit that he was wrong. He needed to admit that he needed his father more than anything else. He needed to swallow his pride and humbled himself. This he did by stating what he was going to say to his father. Read verses 17-19. Be open for questions from anyone who may want to ask.

A self-determined person to change his life completely: 15:20a, 21

In order for him to find help, he had to take a bold step. The Bible says that he got up and went to his father. This is a step of faith. He trusted his father so much that he got up and went to him determinedly. This was his only hope! It must have taken him a long time, but he was determined to find true help from his father. Our relationship with God, our heavenly father, will materialize only when we take a step of faith toward him without doubt. We must deliberately put all of our trust in God as our only hope as did the prodigal son.

An all-sufficient grace of his father: 15:20b, 22-24

To his surprise, he did not have to complete his confession, because his father was glad to have his lost son come back home. He was forgiven unconditionally. He was accepted as son who lost his inheritance. A celebration was arranged with the whole family rejoicing. Even his angry brother was brought to the celebration! How much more will God

welcome you and me when we truly repent like this son had done! He is more than willing to welcome you and me to his living relationship.

Discussion Questions:

1. Can any person have a relationship with God if that person trusts in himself? Explain.
2. According to our lesson today, how can you explain repentance? Explain
3. How would God accept those who truly repent of their sins and turn over their lives to God?

Conclusion:

Close the lesson giving opportunity to those who want to repent. Pray with them. Remember to give their names and addresses to the pastor for follow-up purposes.

Lesson 18

WE BELIEVE IN JUSTIFICATION

Scripture: Romans 5:1-2, 9-11, 15-21; II Corinthians 5:17-21

Memory Verse: Romans 5:1

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ!”

Explanation of the memory verse:

Those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ as sinners, their sins have been forgiven. Their records of all the wrongs and sins they have ever committed have been cancelled in the presence of God. They are no more God’s enemies. They have peace with God, and there is peace in their hearts as a result. This is to say that they have been justified.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should:

- a. Have grasped the truth that those who believe in Jesus their sins have been fully forgiven
- b. Have gained knowledge that those who have been pardoned have been made righteous
- c. Have gained knowledge that those who have been pardoned experience peace with God

Introduction:

In our last lesson we learned more about repentance and that it means to return to God with regret of our past lifestyle. You remember the prodigal son! Today we want to see what happens when a person had repented off his sins and turned his life over to God. We will learn about justification, the work done by God for every person who repents and turns to God in faith.

What is justification? Romans 5:18

We have to answer this question in order for us to understand and appreciate our lesson for today. “Justification is the gracious act of God as The Judge by which he grants full pardon of all guilt and complete release from the penalty of sins committed, and

acceptance as righteous, to all who believe on Jesus Christ and receive him as their Lord and Saviour.”³

This teaches us that God is the Great Judge of the whole universe. All people, old and young, will stand before his judgement seat one day to be judged according to the lives they have lived while on earth. On that day there will be no mercy. This is so because people have broken the known laws of God; that is they have committed sins. Every sin that is committed deserves punishment.

However God in his goodness and mercy has now provided the way to deal with sin before that Great Day comes. When Jesus Christ died on the cross, God, our heavenly father, judged Jesus on behalf of all humanity. Instead of God punishing us as sinners, he punished Jesus in our place, so that those who choose to turn back to God and put all their trust on Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, will be forgiven all of their sins and will be treated as if they have never sinned.

Can you be a righteous person? Romans 15:18-19; 2 Corinthians 5:17.

The good news of justification is that God does not only cancel our sinful record in heaven, he also does something wonderful in our hearts (lives). He makes us righteous. We were sinful, but now we have been made righteous because we have put our trust in Jesus Christ who was judged on our behalf. In other words, Jesus took our sins away, and then he gave us his righteousness. We became new creatures (creation). This is the wonderful news that needs to be proclaimed to others by those who are released from their past sins and made righteous through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

In 2 Corinthians 5:17, Paul says that the old are gone and the new have come. This means that everything that had to do with the sins the sinner committed have been washed away through the blood of Jesus Christ from the one who put his trust in him and the new has filled the place where the old was. This is glorious indeed! Every person who had turned back to God and put all his trust in Jesus Christ has been made a righteous person and can continue to be, so long as one continues to put his trust on Jesus Christ.

But how is the relationship between this person and God? Romans 5:1-2, 9-11.

In verses 9-11 we see that we were the enemies of God because we were breaking his laws, we were disobedient to him, in fact, we were rebellious. But now that we have repented, turned back to God, put our faith in Jesus Christ, we have been reconciled to God through the death of Jesus. There is now friendship between God and us. The enmity has been destroyed. A new relationship has been created. According to verses 1-2 there is now

³ Church of the Nazarene Manual 2009-2013, 2010: 32

peace between God and the person who has put his trust fully in Jesus Christ. Justification brings about inner peace between God and the repented sinner who trusted Jesus for his salvation.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is to be justified? Explain.
2. Can a sinful person be made righteous before God? Explain.
3. Do you think that there can be peace between God and a sinner? Explain.

Conclusion:

Is there anyone who wants to be forgiven his sins and brought into this relationship with God? Plan a time to pray with those who might want to turn back to God at this time. Give their names to the pastor for follow-up purposes. Close the class with a grateful prayer to God for making it possible for us to be righteous and have peace with him.

WHAT YOU SHOULD UNDERSTAND BY REGENERATION

Scripture: John 1:12-13; 3:1-9; Titus 3:4-7; I Peter 1:23

Memory Verse: Titus 3:5-6

“He saved us, not because of righteous things we have done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour.”

Explanation of the memory verse:

Doing good works saves no one, but salvation is because of God’s mercy on a sinner. The Holy Spirit uses the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse a repenting sinner from his sins. At the same time, one is made a new person or is born anew in the family of God.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should:

- a. Be able to define regeneration
- b. Know that regeneration gives them a new nature
- c. Know that by being born again, they will have the Holy Spirit living in them
- d. Know that when one is born again, the Holy Spirit will testify this fact.

Introduction:

We saw in the last lesson that when a person turns back to God in faith in Jesus Christ, he receives the forgiveness of all his sins that he has ever committed. He is justified. Together with justification, a person is also born again at the same time. This is also known as regeneration. In our lesson today we are going to learn about it.

What do mean by regeneration? Titus 3:5-6

The word ‘regeneration’ means to be born again. In John 3:3-8 Jesus Christ spoke to Nicodemus about the new birth. He told him that he needed to be born again. He was saying that Nicodemus needed to be regenerated. That was regeneration, to be born again. You and me have been born by our mothers. They have given us a physical birth. But for

any person to have a relationship with God needs a spiritual birth, to be regenerated. Every person needs this new birth

Who gives us a spiritual birth? John 1:12-13; 3:1-9; Titus 3:5-6

Jesus told Nicodemus that the Holy Spirit gives this spiritual birth. The Apostle Paul emphasized this in Titus chapter three. The Holy Spirit gives those who believe in Jesus Christ this new birth based on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to apply what Jesus Christ had accomplished on the cross on behalf of all sinners.

What happens in regeneration?

Justification is the work God does in heaven, as a judge, when he cancels all the sinful records of those who have repented and put their faith in Jesus Christ. this does not end there. In regeneration, as the Holy Spirit gives the believing sinner a new birth, he changes a sinner's sinful nature into a holy nature. The sinner is born anew, or the sinner has been made anew. Here the Holy Spirit makes us righteous in our inner being. He washes our hearts from sins. He revives our consciences. He gives us a testimony of what he has done in us! It is in Rom. 8:16 where it says, "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children". Not only this, the Holy Spirit begins to live in our hearts. We read in Romans 8:9 that "You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ."

Therefore, we now know and understand that those who are born again have been born by the Holy Spirit, and that the Holy Spirit lives in them. The Holy Spirit represents the Triune-God in the life of each born again believer. A believer is possessed by the Holy Spirit to guide him in his new way of life.

What are the benefits of being born again?

- a. Every person who is born again became the child of God. These are the words of Jesus Christ as found in John 1:12, "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.
- b. The Holy Spirit testifies in the spirit of the born again child of God that he is the child of God.(Romans 8:16)
- c. Every person who is born again receives a cleansing from all what is sinful. He receives a new nature. (Titus 3:6)

- d. Every person who is born again receives the Holy Spirit in his life. This means that the Holy Spirit, who is the representative of the Triune God, comes and makes your life his home. (Romans 8:9)
- e. Jesus said that the one who is born again will see and enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:3, 5) You begin to experience heaven while you are still in this world. This is a wonderful experience, to be born again!

Discussion Questions:

What is regeneration?

- a. How does one know if one is born again? Explain.
- b. When does one have the Holy Spirit living in his life?
- c. Who can enter the kingdom of God?

Conclusion:

Take time to pray with those who might want to give their lives to Jesus so that they may be born again. Close the class session by asking the class pray silently, thanking the Lord God for making this plan to make people to become his children.

WHAT YOU SHOULD UNDERSTAND BY ADOPTION

Scripture: John 1:12-13; Romans 8:12-17; I John 3:1-3

Memory Verse: I John 3:1

“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! .”

Explanation of the memory verse:

Everyone who is born again is born of God. For this reason God makes everyone who is born again his own children. This means that God is your heavenly Father. You are the child of God.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should:

- a. Know that those who are born again are born of God.
- b. Know that everyone who is born again has been adopted by God to be his child.
- c. Know that everyone who is born again has been made co-heir of God with Jesus.
- d. Know that those who are co-heirs with Jesus will also share his suffering.

Introduction:

In the last two lessons we learnt about justification and regeneration. Today we shall learn about adoption. Now justification, regeneration and adoption are what God does for and in the life of everyone who turns back to God in faith. God does all these three works of grace at the same time. We have divided them for the study purposes only.

What is adoption?

By adoption we mean that a person who is a stranger is accepted and given all the rights of being a child by the parents who want him to be their child. This means that what every child born in that home has right to, the adopted child has too. There is no discrimination between the adopted child and those born in the family. They are equal in every way.

When it comes to inheritance, it is divided equally amongst the children including the adopted one. Only grace can do this!

God, in his grace has adopted everyone who turned back to God in faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, to be his own child and has given that person every right as God's child. (John 1:12, 13; I John 3:1, 2.) Jesus himself calls these people his own brothers (and sisters). (Hebrews 2:10-17.) As children of God, every born again person must now learn to live as the child of God. (Romans 8:12-15)

Now that you are the child of God, what is expected from you?

- a. We need to learn from older brothers who have been taught to teach us, because Jesus Christ commanded those whom he taught to: "go and make disciples of all nations,... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you". (Matt 28:19, 20) Those who are born of God need to learn obedience and to avail themselves so that they might learn and grow. If a newly born would claim to know anything, parents would be surprised by the claim! It is the same in the spiritual life. Children need to be taught by those who have led them to Christ.
- b. We need to learn to follow the leadership of God the Holy Spirit, "because those who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God". Those who are born again have entered a new way of living. No one knows what is expected of him. But the Holy Spirit is ready to lead the obedient child of God in this new life. Just as parents teach their children what is expected of them, so is the Holy Spirit.
- c. It is expected for the child of God to share in the suffering of Jesus Christ while still in this world. The blessing of being the child of God goes hand-in-hand with suffering for his name's sake. As God's children we want to inherit everything that God has in store for us. This is very good and acceptable to our heavenly Father. But there is a price to be paid for that. We read that if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory (Romans 8:17). We do not like suffering! But, it is part of our being a child of God.
- d. There is some good news for those who are the children of God. Since we cannot avoid suffering if we want to be co-heirs with Christ, there is a great consolation for us. Our suffering for the sake of Christ cannot be compared with the glory that will be revealed in us (Romans 8:18). We do not know what it will be!
- e. We need to learn to talk to our heavenly Father every day. Jesus prayed very often. We should learn from him. This will help us to continue to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Discussion Questions:

1. What do we mean by adoption? Explain.
2. Who are adopted as God's children?
3. Why should God's children suffer according to the lesson today?

Conclusion:

Take time to pray thanking God for making those who believed to be his children. Pray for each learner to want to be teachable. Pray also for perseverance as each one meets with suffering for Christ's sake.

SALVATION: CLEANSING FROM INCLINATION TOWARDS EVIL

Scripture: Acts 10:44-48; 15:8-9; I John 3:8

Memory Verse: Acts 15:8-9.

“God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith”

Explanation of the memory verse:

The thing that Peter remembers about the Pentecost experience is that their hearts were purified by receiving the Holy Spirit by faith. This also happened to believers in Caesarea in Acts 10:44-48.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should:

- a. Have understood that original sin remains in the life of those who are born again.
- b. Have known that those who born again need to be purified from original sin.
- c. Hunger for cleansing from original sin

Introduction:

People that Peter preached to at Caesarea were already believers. How do we know this? There is no mention of their putting their faith in Jesus while Peter was preaching. We are told that while he was still speaking, “the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message”.⁴ Later in Jerusalem Peter explains that these people received the Holy Spirit just as they too did on Pentecost Day. He said that these people their hearts were purified just as the disciples’ hearts were purified too on Pentecost Day. Note that the disciples were already believers when their hearts were purified through the coming of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Let us note that wherever the Holy Spirit was given to people, they already were believers, that is to say, they were already saved from their sins.⁵

⁴ Acts 10:14

⁵ Acts 2:1-4; 8:14-17; 19:1-7.

From what were they purified?

The question that needs to be answered is, from what were they purified? The sins that people have committed are forgiven at the time they put their faith in Jesus Christ. Their hearts bear witness to their salvation. They know that they are God's children. Now, why do they need to be purified?

When Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, his sin resulted in both physical and spiritual death. Because of Adam's sin, we are all born with tendencies to sin or are inclined to evil. Not one person on earth is excluded from these effects from the sin of Adam. We call this 'original sin' or 'inherited depravity'. This depravity is not dealt with at the point of the new birth. It remains in the new life of a born again child of God. However, no one is accountable for it until at which time that person neglects or rejects the remedy God provides. The Apostles and the believers in Caesarea were purified from this inclination to evil; that is the original sin or inherited depravity

Why should believers be purified from inclination to evil?

A healthy child grows well, is happy and very active. A sick child is alive but does not grow well, unhappy and inactive. The future of the sick is bleak. Parents are not happy with their child. The child's ill health affects the whole family. To change the whole situation, help is needed for the child's health.

In the same way if the born again child of God is not purified from inclination to evil that is part of his life, he will not grow well in his spiritual life. As a result he will not be productive. This might lead to his falling from grace or salvation. In order to change these possibilities, God provides the purification of the life of the believer from this inclination to evil. The Holy Spirit through the blood of Jesus Christ does it. The death of Christ on the cross includes purification of the hearts of believers, I John 3:8. The works of Satan must be done away in the life of the children of God.

What will happen if one is not willing to be purified from the inclination to evil?

Let us understand the following truths that will help us appreciate God's plan for our salvation:

- a. Jesus came to this world in order to save his people from **their sins**, Matt. 1:21.
- b. Jesus came to this world to destroy all the works of the devil, I John 3:8.
- c. To be saved from sins means to be saved from everything that is sin. It includes the inclination to evil; that is the original sin.

- d. To be unwilling to be cleansed from inclination to evil is to choose to disobey God who wants to purify you from this sin. Disobedience is rebellion against. It is sin, Rom. 8:7.
- e. A person who is not cleansed from inclination to evil will be controlled by it. Any person who is controlled by the inclination to evil cannot please God in any way, Rom. 8:5-8. This means that he will live a sinful life, he will please Satan.
- f. Those who will enter the kingdom of God are those who do the will of our Father who is in heaven, Matt. 7:21-23.

Be wise! Seek to be cleansed from the inclination to evil; that is the original sin now. It is a gift from our loving heavenly Father to His dear children. That is why Jesus gave His life on the cross. It is paid for.

Discussion Questions:

- a. Does salvation include forgiveness of sins and cleansing from original sin?
- b. Why should we be purified from inclination to evil? Explain fully.
- c. What will happen if one refuses to be cleansed from inclination to evil?

Conclusion:

The salvation that Jesus gives, include salvation from personal and original sins. To be really saved means that one is also cleansed from original sin. The one who is cleansed from the original sin has a healthy spiritual. That person will grow well spiritually.

SALVATION: A LIFE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Scripture: Romans 6:15-23; Galatians 5:18-26

Memory Verse: Galatians 5:22-23

“But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

Explanation of the memory verse:

Those who are filled with the Holy Spirit produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which shows that a person is filled with the Holy Spirit. This fruit is love, which has different aspects as shown in verses 22, 23.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should:

- a. Understand that freedom from sin is being free for God lead your life in full.
- b. Know that those who are free from sin produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit.
- c. Hunger to walk in step with the Holy Spirit.

Introduction:

When we speak about salvation we are speaking about freedom from sins. This could be personal sins or original sin. Since this is the case, then everyone who is saved must be saved from all sins. This will include original sin. If a person is not saved from original sin, it means that the salvation that Jesus died for is not complete in that person’s life.

According to Romans chapter six, salvation implies freedom from the control of sin into the control of God of the life of the saved. Because this is the case, the fruit produced by the Holy Spirit will be the results in that person’s life.

Salvation is freedom from the control of sin that results in the control of God (Romans 6:15-23)

A sinner is a person who is under the control of sin. This person is free from God. The life that he lives pleases sin, that is Satan. This means that God is not pleased with this person’s lifestyle. The good that this person does is dictated by Sin as his master. This

means that what he does is sinful because of the source of his deed. The good that he does disguises his true nature only in the presence of people, but not God. He is a slave of sin. Note that to be the slave of sin **is not** a deliberate choice that one makes consciously. One thinks that he is he is doing what he wills, when in reality is doing the will of Satan. Satan hides behind what one wills. He controls the person while disguising his personality.

But a person who is saved from sin becomes the slave of righteousness – that is God. This person is free from the control of Satan and is under the control of God while he chooses to obey God. He knows very well that he is doing the will of God rather than his own. His lifestyle changes from being sinful to righteous. The difference is very clear between the two lifestyles.

Note that to be the slave of righteousness is a deliberate choice that one makes consciously. God makes it clearly to this person that he is doing God's will. Therefore no one who is saved can continue in sin or in disobedience to God. Why, because this person chose knowingly to be under the control of God.

Those who are saved from sin produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit: Gal 5:18-23.

A person who is free from original sin is different from the person who is not yet free from the original sin. The person who is not free from the original sin is divided in his loyalty to God. He fluctuates between God's will and his will. He fails to please God as we saw in Rom. 8:5-8 in the previous lesson. Therefore that person will produce the works of the sinful nature. Read Gal. 5:18-21.

But the person who is saved from the original sin, that is the one who is controlled by God, will produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that people are known by their fruit.⁶ If you want a banana, will you go to a fig tree? No! You will go to a banana tree. Therefore the Holy Spirit, that is God, controls those who produce the spiritual fruit.

Which is this fruit? It is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. This is a new nature of those who are saved from all sin. It is their trademark. Note that it is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. It is not their fruit. The Holy Spirit produces it while he controls their lives. It is the results of them being the slaves of righteousness. So you and I need to be controlled by the Holy Spirit so that he may produce his fruit in us. It is not enough to be forgiven your sins. It is not enough to be justified and regenerated. We need to be freed from the original sin and to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

⁶ Matt 7:15-20.

The added results of being saved from the original sin will be our walk in step with the Holy Spirit. Who does not want to walk along the Holy Spirit? No one. We all do want to walk along- side the Holy Spirit. It should be the desire of every born-again child of God to do so! Amos the prophet of old asked this question: “do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?”⁷ Yes, you and I must deliberately choose to be God’s slaves in order to enjoy the fellowship of walking side by side with the Holy Spirit daily.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is meant by ‘slave of righteousness’ as seen in Romans 6:19-22?
2. What is the trademark of those who are filled with the Holy Spirit? They are nine in all.
3. What is an added result of being saved from original sin?

Conclusion:

The blessing of being saved from sin will always result in bearing the fruit of the Holy Spirit. This is the goal of salvation for every person who seeks salvation from sin. Jesus came to save his people from sin so that they might produce the spiritual fruit.

⁷ Amos 3:3.

THE CHURCH: A PLACE TO BELONG

Scriptures: Ephesians 5:22-33, Romans 12:1-8

Objectives: At the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Define the term church
- b. Identify the head of the church
- c. Explain their role in the church.

Memory Verse: Matthew 16:18

“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it”.

Explanation of the memory verse

It is a miracle that the church is a very old institution of about 2000 years but is still going strong. This is so because the church belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ who is alive. Although the history of the church has not always been perfect, the church has survived all time persecutions and opposition from the devil.

Introduction

A story is told of a boy who was converted during a revival and desired to join the church. His father told him to live six months first to see if he could live his religion first. Later on, in the fields with his father they found a new lamb separated from its mother crying. The father told the boy to join it to its mother. The boy replied “I think we might as well leave it for six months to see if it can live or not, and if it lived could join it to its mother”. Feeling guilty, the father said “Put the lamb with its mother and join the church if you wish to”.

For the saved, the church is the best place to belong. This lesson is the first of a series that calls us to talk about the church and some of her key activities.

1. What is the Church?

The church is the community of those who believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and Saviour and have been saved from their sins regardless of denomination. The church

is also called the body of Christ. However, there are many other metaphors used in the Scripture to describe the church.

The word church is also used in several ways in everyday language:

- a. It can refer to a place where Christians gather to worship.
 - b. Church may refer to an organized community of Christian believers – a denomination.
 - c. The word church can refer to a local congregation.
- 2. Jesus Christ is the Head of the church (Ephesians 5:25-33).**

The church, as the people of God, is a living organism being built (Matthew 16:18) and owned by Christ who is alive. Being the head of the church, Jesus Christ does things for her benefit. He loved and died for her (vs. 25). He cleanses her through the word so that the church is holy and blameless (vs. 26-27). Christ cares for the church (vs. 29) as He supplies her with spiritual food and protects her from danger.

3. The role of believers in the Church (Ephesians 5:22-24; Romans 12:4-8)

As God's children we are the church of God.

We are required to submit to Christ, the Head of the church, in everything (Ephesians 5:22-24). Out of love and appreciation for what He has done for us we must voluntarily submit ourselves to Him. This should be out of love and not fear or a sense of duty. Submission involves obedience to His word.

Every believer, being part of the church is unique and has a special function (Romans 12:4-8). Like every organ of the human body has a particular role to perform for the benefit of the whole body, so is the church. The mistake that some make is to think that they have joined the church to rest and be served. We are called into the church to be participants not observers and to be contributors rather than consumers. Serving God and other believers makes the Christian journey more exciting and rewarding.

Discussion Question

1. What are some of the reasons people would join a church?
2. What should be our reason for joining a church?

3. List and discuss the roles of ministry in Romans 12:6-8. How does verse 3 help the church with its different gifts and ministries keep united?
4. What challenges or successes would your church experience if you adopted this attitude?

Conclusion

We are the church, the body of Christ and must therefore submit to Jesus Christ the Head of the church. We are to use our gifts to serve God and others. Let us as members of the body of Christ and show that we really belong to the church.

BAPTISM: A SYMBOL OF SALVATION

Scriptures: Matthew 3:1-11; 28:19-20; Acts 2:37-41; Rom 6:3-4

Objectives: At the end of the lesson learners should be able to

- a. Explain the meaning of baptism
- b. Name the requirement for baptism
- c. Explain the need for baptism
- d. Explain how one is baptized

Memory Verse: Matthew 28:19-20

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you”.

Explanation of the memory verse

Every organization, society or group of people has a way of initiating new members. While baptism could be viewed as a way of initiating new believers it is more about those believers showing that they have accepted the grace of God to save them from their sins. It is in fulfillment of Jesus’ command for His followers to make disciples and baptize them in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Introduction

Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are the two sacraments that have been adopted by the church because Jesus had commanded that they be practiced. A sacrament is an outward sign of an inward grace of God. In this lesson we will focus on baptism.

One Nazarene preacher now gone home used to say, “Put a stone in water and take it out after 40 years, it will still be a stone.” Discuss this statement with the class in relation to baptism (*statement suggests that unless one has repented of their sins, baptizing them will not change them*).

1. Why believers need to be baptized (Matt 3:13,16; 28:19; Rom 6:3-4)

Baptism being a sign of the new life in a believer is an important step to be taken.

- a. Jesus Christ commanded that His followers be baptized (Matt 28:19). It is important that we obey His word.
- b. Believers need to be baptized because Jesus Christ set us an example by being baptized before starting His earthly ministry (Matt 3:13,16).
- c. Being an outward sign, baptism becomes a necessary testimony to believers and sinners that we are now God's children (Rom 6:3-4). The new convert identifies with the church.

2. Baptism is a declaration of our repentance (Acts 2:38, 41; Romans 6:1-4).

- a. The Scriptures clearly teach that baptism follows repentance. No one can be saved from sin through baptism. It is only by faith in Jesus Christ that we can be saved. But, through baptism we testify that we have been separated from our sins in order to live a new life in Christ. We have symbolically died to our sins and former lives, a death we share with Christ, and are buried with him; as we rise from baptism in purity, we share the new life brought by Jesus' resurrection.
- b. Having thus declared our faith in Christ we have identified ourselves with Him. We are therefore calling upon the onlookers to expect us to live differently as we, by God's grace, are going to change our ways.

3. How we are baptized

- a. We are baptized in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in accordance with His commandment (Matt 28:19).
- b. Believers in Christ may be baptized through immersion (dipping in water like in a river, swimming pool or baptismal pool), pouring or sprinkling.

Discuss Question.

- 1. Since baptism is a symbol of our salvation and once done it is not repeated like the Lord's Supper, what is its significance to a Christian's daily life?

Conclusion

It is important to be baptized as the Lord commands but let us be careful that we consider baptism as a necessary symbol of our repentance and faith in Christ.

Ask the learners to go and read Exodus 12 in preparation for next lesson.

THE LORD'S SUPPER: MEETING AT JESUS' TABLE

Scriptures: Exodus 12; Matthew 26:17-30; I Corinthians 11:23-34

Objectives: By the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. State the requirements for partaking in the Lord's Supper
- b. List reasons for taking the Lord's Supper
- c. Explain how saints are to approach the Lord's table

Memory Verse: I Corinthians 11:26

"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes".

Explanation of the memory verse

One of the flaws of humanity is forgetfulness. We tend to forget even the most important things and need to be reminded from time to time. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper gives us the opportunity to proclaim that Jesus Christ died for us and rose again until His return. We become witnesses by faith to His victory over death and that He will come again for His Church. That is another reason why we cannot forget what Jesus did for us.

Introduction

Exodus 12 gives us a historical background of the Lord's Supper. On the eve of the exodus from Egypt, each Israelites family sacrificed a lamb and ate it with bread without yeast. That became the feast of the Passover and from then on they were to commemorate that feast annually. The feast marked the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt.

Jesus Christ made it important to Christians by relating it to His death on the cross for the sins of the world. When He and His disciples partook of it just before His death, He commanded them to practice it in remembrance of Him. Thus it has been called the Lord's Supper. As per His word the church has always celebrated it. The wine represents His bloodshed for us and the bread stands for His body that was crucified on the cross. Christ has become to us the Passover Lamb (John 1:29). This sacrament is also celebrated as a

symbol for the realization of a spiritual union between Christ and the participant. Other names used for it include the Holy Communion or the Eucharist.

1. Who is to partake in the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:18; 1 Corinthians 11:17-26)

Jesus Christ had the last supper before He died with His disciples. He then commanded them to practice it in remembrance of Him. And from that the church started to celebrate the Lord's Supper. To take part, one should be a child of God who acknowledges and appreciates the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

2. Why it is important to take Holy Communion (1 Corinthians 11:24-26)

There are several reasons why the church should partake of this sacrament:

- a. Jesus Christ commanded us His followers to do so in obedience to Him. (vss. 24-25). Just as God instructed the Israelites to hold the feast of the Passover, Christ also commands us to do a similar thing. It is pleasing to obey His word and experience the grace that comes through it.
- b. Partaking of the Lord's Supper allows the saints to be witnesses of the Lord's death till He comes (vs. 26). We need to continue to proclaim, not only to the world but to ourselves too, that Jesus died for our sins. The Lord's Supper also gives us time to thank Him for the gift of salvation.
- c. As we eat the bread and drink the wine which reminds us of the sacrificial death of Christ, we are also reminded of the life, salvation and the spiritual blessings we have in Christ.
- d. Holy Communion inspires us to look forward to the Second Coming of Christ (vs. 26)

3. How to approach the Lord's Table. (1 Corinthians 11:27-34).

When we draw closer to the Lord's Table it is important to remind ourselves that we are meeting with the Lord Jesus Christ. It is therefore important to:

- a. Draw closer to the Lord's Table in faith and with appreciation, respect and humility (vs. 27).
- b. Expectantly allow His grace to flow into our life as needed.

Discussion Questions

A Christian lady, Gladys, visited her sister who belonged to another denomination. During the communion service, the deacon distributing the bread and wine skipped her. Gladys's little boy called out "You did not give mamma any".

Looking at Gladys's case:

1. Is there any scriptural ground for a believer not to partake in the Lord's Supper? Discuss.
2. Did Gladys deserve to partake of the Holy Communion on the day?
3. What advice can we give to a member of the local congregation who refuses to take part in the Lord's Supper?
4. In preparation for meaningful participation in the Lord's Supper, what should the individual do? What should the minister do?

Conclusion

When we partake of the Lord's Supper we obey His word, proclaim His death and resurrection till He comes. All saints are called upon to do so till He comes.

DIVINE HEALING: GOD'S ACT OF MERCY

Scriptures: Acts 3:1-16

Other references: Exodus 15:26; Luke 8:40-43; John 15:16b; Acts 4:4; James 5:15; Phil 2:25-27

Objectives: By the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Identify the source of divine healing
- b. Explain the means by which we are healed
- c. Explain divine healing as an act of mercy

Memory Verse: Matthew 4:23

“Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people”.

Explanation of the memory verse:

Sickness of any kind (physical, mental, social, etc.), usually bring despair because of the suffering it causes. And sometimes it seems like there is no end to it as we move from pillar to post seeking help. Yet, it is such a wonderful thing to realize that we have an all-powerful God ready to help us in all situations, sickness included. What Jesus went about doing healing every disease and sickness, He still wants to do today in and through His church.

Introduction

Although we mainly think in terms of the physical, divine healing occurs when God miraculously restores our brokenness to health. He sometimes chooses to use human intervention as with medical science. We cannot understand it but can only acknowledge and thank Him for the miracle of healing.

Allow any two learners to give short testimonies of how they were recently healed by God at some point in their lives.

1. God is our Healer (Acts 3:12-15)

God used Peter and John, His servants, in this act of healing. However Peter clearly explains to the onlookers that it was not through their own power that the man had been healed but God. God is always our healer. The Lord, Himself says that He is the Lord that heals us (Exodus 15:26). Many times we are tempted to rob God of His glory and ascribe it to men when healing takes place.

2. We are healed by faith in Jesus' Name (Acts 3:16)

For healing to take place in our lives we are to pray by faith to pray in Jesus' name.

- a. Faith is trust in God and totally depending on His promises. Peter trusted that God was able to make the crippled man well. It is important to trust God as our healer in times of sickness because He has promised to heal us. We need to depend on His promises.

The one praying for the sick person must have faith. Peter exercised that faith. He believed God was able to bring deliverance (James 5:15). The afflicted person should also have faith. Jesus Christ in many situations commended the faith of the sick (Luke 8:40-43)

- b. We need to pray for the sick in Jesus' name (vs. 16). Praying in Jesus' name means that our authority is derived from Jesus Christ and acknowledging that He alone can heal. Using Jesus' name is not magic but trusting that He alone is able to make all things possible (John 15:16b). It also involves knowing and being in His will. Peter did not have to keep on babbling and calling Jesus' name over and over for the man to be healed. But simply commanded the man to stand in Jesus' name. He may have been reminded of the times when Jesus simply gave instructions and people were healed and even freed from evil spirits. In Jesus' words, He only did what He saw His Father doing (John 5:19).

3. Healing is an act of God mercy

Therefore, even though we pray by faith and in His name we should always bear in mind that healing is out of God's mercy and never a right. God chooses to do His perfect will in the life of the sick person. God is not arm twisted by our prayers. Being a sovereign God, He does what he wants and what is best for us. God decides whether to heal or not (Phil 2:25-27). Our part is to humble ourselves in prayer.

God heals the sick, not just to make them well but for a purpose. In the case of the crippled man, an opportunity to preach the gospel was created for Peter and John (Acts 4:4).

Discussion Questions

1. How can we explain situations where saints have been afflicted by sickness but God has not healed them.
2. Is it a sign of faith or lack of it, when sick believers seek medical help?

Conclusion

God is the source of all our help including our health problems. He is personally interested in our spiritual and physical well-being. We need to trust Him when afflicted and thank Him for His acts of mercy.

SIGNS OF CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 24:1-44

Objectives: By the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. List some of the signs of Christ's second coming
- b. Identify the believer's role in preparation for His Second Coming.

Memory Verse: Matthew 24:36

"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father"

Explanation of memory verse

The Bible reveals God's truth that Jesus Christ will come again. But when, nobody knows. If we knew then we will no longer be living by faith. I believe that one of the reasons the day of His coming has been hidden is so that our walk will be of obedience and faith. This helps to show if our love for God is genuine.

Introduction

Through the ages the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ has created divisions among Christians. This is because when Jesus first spoke about His return, it seemed like it was going to happen during the lifetime of the disciples. And because it did not happen then, every generation is trying to fit it into its lifetime. Some have gone further from the truth to even try to set an exact date. At the outbreak of the war between Iraq and the United States and its allies in 1991, it was predicted that Christ was about to come, but that was not to be.

1. The fact of His Coming (Matthew 24:3, 26-27)

This text confirms that Jesus Christ will come again. As Christians we have been clearly instructed that Jesus Christ will come again, the same way He went (Acts 1:8). We also learn that our Lord is alive and that there is a glorious hope for believers. He was seen going and when He comes we shall also see Him. Whilst it was disappointing for the disciples to see Christ go, it will be a wonder to see him come

again to take his Church. His coming will not be a secret but He will be seen by all just like lightning.

2. Signs of His Coming (Matthew 24:1-29)

There are events that will take place as a pointer that Christ is about to come. The disciples had interest in the signs just like us today (vs. 3). Another reason why the church has been restless and tried to predict His coming, is because some of the signs have already happened, others are being repeated at varying degrees in every generation while others are still to come. Some of these signs are clear for us to understand while others are obscure as in verses 15-16.

Therefore, we find mockers in every generation who are questioning whether Jesus Christ is truly coming as He had promised. However, the important thing is not to figure out the signs but ours is to “be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him” (vs. 44).

3. What are we to do as believers?

As indicated above, some of the signs happened 2000 years ago, but till today Christ has not come. That calls for believers to take the warnings from Jesus Christ seriously. We have responsibilities while we wait for his coming. We must:

- a. Watch out (vs. 4) so that we are not deceived. We are to remain focused on the truth and be not led astray by the false christs.
- b. Stand firm to the end (vs. 13). Towards His coming some will be tempted to give up the faith for various reasons, but we are encouraged to stand.
- c. Preach the good news (vs. 14). We are called upon to spread the gospel so that many may be saved. This responsibility must be taken seriously
- d. To be prepared and ready everyday (vs. 44). We are to be always ready by living a holy life for we know not the day and He will come when we do not expect Him.

Discussion Questions

1. What practical commitments can believers make to live out each of the warnings above on a daily basis?

Conclusion

The important thing is for believers to be ready for Jesus' coming rather than focusing much on the times and signs, for that could be the devil's snare to distract us from the truth and being ready for this day. While it is important to be aware and take note of the times and the signs, we should not be consumed by its pursuit.

Ask the class to read the following Scriptures in preparation for the lesson next week:
Matthew 24: 29-44; 1 Corinthians 15:35-56; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Peter 3

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

SCRIPTURES: Matthew 24: 29-44; 1 Corinthians 15:35-56; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Peter 3

Objectives: By the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Explain what will happen at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ
- b. Look forward to it

Memory Verse: 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever”

Explanation of Memory Verse

We are always disappointed when people do not fulfil their promises. We lose our trust in them because we feel betrayed. However, God’s promises are always true. When Jesus was about to go back to heaven, He promised that He will come back. Yes, some day He will come back with a loud command, the voice of an archangel and the trumpet call of God. What a spectacle it will be and yet without spectator for all will be participating according to their destiny!

Introduction

Like all events, after much preparation, patience and perseverance on the part of the church, the Second Coming of Christ will happen. O, what a day it will be! ... glorious day that will be.

1. The event of the Second Coming

- a. It is unknown (**Matthew 24:36, 44**) – no one knows about that day except the Father. Not even the Son knows. Therefore attempts at setting a date are futile.
- b. It will be unexpected (**Matthew 24:36-50; 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3; 2 Peter 3:10**) – people will be relaxed and life will be going on as usual. They will be saying “peace”, “eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage” and busy with their daily chores in the field and at the mill ... and then He comes.

- c. It will be sudden (**Matthew 24:27; 1 Corinthians 15:52a; 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3; 2 Peter 3:10**) – its suddenness is likened to lightning, the twinkling of an eye and the coming of a thief. In fact, when He comes, there will be no time to say “here is the Christ” or “there is the Christ” for He will just come.

2. What will happen at the Second Coming

The Bible reveals some of the wonders that will happen when Christ comes again.

- a. “The Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God” (**Matthew 24:30; 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1Thessalonians 4:16; 2 Peter 3:10**) – no one will miss this event.
- b. That the dead in Christ will rise first (**1Thessalonians 4:16**). This will be a miracle to see the spirits and bodies of the saints reunited. Bodies will rise up from the graves. Believers do not die but fall asleep waiting for Christ.
- c. The resurrected bodies will not die again (**1Corinthians 15:35-57**). The new bodies will not be made of flesh and blood. Also, “death will be swallowed in victory” and will be finally conquered.
- d. To those who will be alive at His coming, their bodies will be changed miraculously in the “twinkling of an eye” (**1 Corinthians 15:51-52**) and then they will join the resurrected saints in the air. “And so we will be with the Lord forever” (**1Thessalonians 4:16**) for He will gather His elect (**Matthew 24:31**). What a glory it will be – truly an experience beyond human understanding!

As people with hope we are to encourage each other with the truth that the dead in Christ shall rise (**1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4:18**). We need to face life and death with hope looking forward to this day. We must continue to live holy lives (**1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; 2 Peter 3:14-18**).

Discussion Questions

1. Will it be possible to know each other at the resurrection? Explain?
2. Do you think there is going to be any surprises at His Second Coming? Explain.

Conclusion

Jesus Christ is coming again to take His Holy Church, and we are therefore called to live a holy life. Jesus Christ will only take people who are ready. Are you ready? Will you be ready when He comes?

THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT

Scripture: Revelation 20:11-15

Objectives: By the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Explain judgment in relation to believers
- b. Explain judgment in relation to sinners

Memory Verse: Revelation 20:12, 15

“And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. ... If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire”

Explanation of Memory Verse

As we live each day we rarely think that some day we will stand before God and give an account of our actions, attitudes and words. It seems to be a far-fetched idea. Even if we think of it, we assume that by then God will have forgotten our deeds. However it is important to take God’s Word seriously because the Day of Judgment is coming and no one will escape.

Introduction

One great preacher said, “Time will be no more when judgement comes and when it is no more, change is impossible. Once lost, lost forever---lost to all eternity”. Briefly discuss this with class.

1. What is judgement (Revelation 20:12b)

Judgement is the decision someone makes about another person’s action resulting in rewarding good deeds or punishing evil deeds. The last judgement is when God separates the righteous from the evil forever. God is a just judge and His justice will be without favour. Judgement for sinners and saints will be different.

2. The judgement of the saints

- a. Through faith in Christ believers have already moved from God’s wrath to eternal life (**John 3:17-18**).

- b. The moment we trust in Jesus, our sins are forgiven and we start to experience eternal life. We no longer stand condemned. Our names are automatically written in the book of life (Revelation 20:15). What a wonderful privilege for God's children!
- c. As believers we have already moved from God's wrath, it means that on the day of judgement, we will be receiving rewards from God. The quality of our work will be put to test (**1Corinthians 3:12-15**). We even learn that some will make it into heaven but with no reward or crown. Paul looked forward to that day and we should also do the same (2 Timothy 4:8).

3. **Judgement of sinners (Revelation 20:13-15)**

Sinners are already condemned (John3:18) and on that day God will formally take them to where they belong, that is, the lake of fire. They will spend eternity there. The resurrected sinners will be finally condemned on that day, for they have refused to believe in Jesus Christ during their lifetime.

4. **The basis of our Judgement (Revelation 20:12, 15)**

God is the most righteous judge and his judgement of each man's work is never flawed.

- a. Justice is God's nature (Rev 19:1-2a).
- b. All our actions have been recorded in the books (vs. 12b), and those records will be used for us or against us.
- c. Even our words will justify us or condemn us (Mat :12:36-37)
- d. We will be judged on what we did and not what others did to us (vs. 12b) irrespective of how bad they may be. This calls for Christian responsibility when people do bad things to us (Romans 12:21).
- e. Deeds committed and those we deliberately ignored will be counted for us or against us. Let us be reminded that if we know what is good and refuse to do it we sin (James 4:17).

Discussion Questions

1. Judgement in the courts of this world is based on being found out and the evidence of others. How is it different from God's judgement?
2. What do we learn of God's judgement with reference to "And I saw the dead , great and small standing before the throne----" (vs. 12b)

Conclusion

The only time we have to make everything right by trusting in Jesus Christ and live a holy life, is now. When the Day of Judgement comes it will be too late. God is the Most Righteous Judge of all times.

OUR FINAL DESTINY

SCRIPTURE: Revelation 21:1-8, 22-27

Objectives: By the end of the lesson, learners should be able to:

- a. define eternity
- b. tell the difference between heaven and hell
- c. explain the need for repentance

Memory Verse: Revelation 21:27

“Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life”

Explanation of Memory Verse

Qualifications are important in today’s world if one is to enter a college or seeking a job. However qualifications can be waived in some instances. This is not so with God. For us to qualify for heaven we must have the right qualifications – salvation and holiness. We need to be qualified now.

Introduction

Discuss the following statement with the class: “Everybody wants to enjoy heaven after they die, but they don’t want to be heavenly-minded while on earth. True believers value heaven above everything else and are always ready to give up the world”.

What is Eternity?

Eternity is defined as the existence which is not limited by time and space. It also refers to “the age to come” after the resurrection. All mankind, saints and sinners alike are destined for eternity though in different places.

This may be difficult to understand, considering that we are used to days and time. The biblical truth is that in the next age time will be no more.

1. Eternity for believers (Revelation 21:1)

Believers will spend eternity in the “new heaven” different from the present one. This means certain experiences for the saints:

- a. Living in the very presence of God forever (vs. 3). That is going to be a wonderful time without comparison. No light is needed there (vs. 23).
- b. Comfort and consolation from worries, labour and pain of this world (vs. 4). The saints will be in continuous joy forever. What a glorious joy to seek after than the temporary joys of this world.
- c. Heaven is a place of great beauty (vs. 11, 18, 21). If one is found with a piece of gold in this world, it may mean a jail term, but not so in heaven.
- d. God is holy and dwells in a holy heaven prepared for a holy people (vs. 27). Our Nazarene call to holiness cannot be overlooked if we are to spend eternity in heaven.

2. Eternity for sinners (Revelation 21:8)

- a. Sinners will spend their eternity in hell or lake of fire. God never intended man to go to hell, but it was prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). People choose to go there.
- b. Hell is a place for eternal suffering (vs. 8). It is for punishment that sinners go there (Matthew 25:46). No one, including sinners, wants to go there. The Bible says sinners are actually “thrown into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15). It is a place of no dignity and honour. The fire is never quenched and in there, one is lost forever.

3. Importance of repentance (John 3:16)

God, out of his love, warns and gives us the best option to believe in Jesus Christ so that we have eternal life rather than perish. To perish is to die without hope. The good news is that the moment we believe in Jesus Christ we start to enjoy eternal life.

We can only make the choice here and today if we are to escape hell and enjoy the glory of heaven. If we don't repent now we will be lost forever. We have a personal choice to spend eternity in heaven or hell.

Discussion Questions

1. What surprises do you think will be found in heaven or hell?
2. Do you ever imagine a sad situation of missing your loved ones in heaven? What is your responsibility towards them to ensure that you all get to heaven?

Conclusion

Emphasize the need to spend eternity in the presence of God and to encourage students to share Christ with their lost relatives and friends.

CHRISTIANS AND ENTERTAINMENT

SCRIPTURES: 1 Corinthians 10:31-3; Ephesians 4:17-24

Memory Verse: 1 Corinthians 10:31

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God”.

Explanation of Memory Verse

Every Christian should allow God to be involved in every area of their life including business, school and leisure among others. Everything that we do should bring glory to God and if not there is a problem. The way we spend our leisure time is equally important and should bring praise to the Lord.

Objectives: By the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. List Christian guidelines to entertainment
- b. Identify steps to be considered regarding entertainment.
- c. Explain the effects of ungodly entertainment.

Introduction

Allow learners to list ways in which they spend their leisure time including modern and traditional music, dance, games, etc.). Briefly explain each item.

1. Christian guidelines to entertainment.

- a. Christian stewardship (**Romans 14:12**) - God has entrusted believers with many resources including leisure time. As we relax and enjoy ourselves we should bear in mind that we are still accountable to God on how we do it. Everything belongs to God.
- b. We are to be holy in everything (**Ephesians 4:22-24**) - Christianity is a lifestyle of holiness before God. We are to be holy in everything (1 Peter 1:15) including how we entertain ourselves. We are to pursue entertainment that encourages us to live a holy life. The way we relax should not violate the Word of God. Things like

television programmes and books that endanger our Christian values and morals are to be avoided.

- c. We are to stand up against all evil

Christians are to speak up against all practices that endanger Christian values. We are to speak against all entertainments that promote violence and immorality including all the literature (media) that makes sin to be appealing.

2. What believers need to do

Christians are to pursue holiness even though we live in a corrupt world. Therefore we must:

- a. Pray for discernment

We need to prayerfully seek spiritual guidance to enable us to choose between right and wrong, good and evil. In some cases there is a very thin line between light and darkness. Thus we must allow God time to speak to as we talk to Him about these things.

- b. Obey the Holy Spirit

Believers need to obey the guidance of the Holy Spirit as He speaks through our conscience for the benefit of our spiritual life. He will never lead us, individually and corporately, in ways that are contrary to God and to His Word. Any entertainment that weakens our conscience should be avoided.

- c. Stay away from ungodly entertainments (**Ephesians 4:22, Psalms 1:1**)

Practical steps like staying away from ungodly practices are very important. For example one can choose to avoid a book, magazine, TV show, music, etc. that promotes sin.

2. Dangers of unholy entertainments.

- a. Our conscience is weakened leading to a flawed character that will not be a good witness to the grace of God (**Ephesians 4:17-18**)
- b. We hurt the witness of the church (**1 Corinthians 10:33**)

It is always good to think of others and that more souls can be saved when we live right. The church can be ineffective in its witness through believers who indulge in evil entertainment.

Discussion Questions

1. As parents how can we guide our children in choosing the right ways of entertainment?
2. Identify and discuss some of the right ways to use our leisure time.
3. What can we do to help each other commit to healthy entertainment?

Conclusion

Summarise the lesson with this quote from John Wesley “Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God or takes away the relish of spiritual things, whatever increases the authority of your body over mind, that thing for you is sin”.

WORDLY PRACTICES TO BE AVOIDED

SCRIPTURE: Galatians 5:19-21

Objectives: By the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Explain the dangers of liquor, gambling and pornography
- b. Identify the Christian position on these.
- c. Identify the problems caused by these practices.

Memory Verse: 1 Peter 1:15

“But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do”

Explanation of Memory Verse

Christians are called upon to be holy in everything including the way we use our God given resources like time and money. Holiness is a way of life. Believers are to live a life separate from their past sinful ways.

Introduction

Ask the learners to identify and list ways in which intoxicating liquors, gambling and pornography have damaged our society.

1. **Intoxicating liquors must be avoided (Hosea 4:10-11; Galatians 5:19-21)**

People take beer, other intoxicating stuff and illicit drugs for various reasons but all these are just lies from the devil. Discuss some of those reasons with the class. Drunkenness leads to lack of understanding and wisdom. Nothing good but human misery and suffering of individuals, families and society come from these. These substances cause and add to social problems like family breakdown, financial difficulties, unemployment, spread of diseases like HIV/AIDS. Therefore, Christians must avoid all forms of intoxicating liquors and the like at all costs including its promotion (Habakkuk 2:15).

2. **Gambling (1 Timothy 6:6-19)**

Gambling may be defined as risking money or anything of value on something involving chance or an unknown outcome. It comes in various forms depending on one's culture and environment. Getting rich is no sin but the means by which we get rich must be godly. Gambling is a short cut the devil has put up for man to get rich. Also, when we think of those who benefit from it, we will realize that in some cases, gambling mostly rips off the poor to line the coffers of the rich. Riches should be as a result of work (1 Thessalonians 3:10).

- a. Have the learners list the various forms of gambling they know and discuss the problems that come out of them. Some of the problems include financial bankruptcy, misery, regret and suicide.
- b. As Christians we are to work honestly for our living. The means are important before God. Holiness is needed in all situations.

3. Pornography (Galatians 5:19-21)

When the Bible says "... and the like" (vs. 21), it includes all sin as a result of the carnal nature. This includes pornography. Through pornography the dignity of the human body is degraded and commercialized. This practice comes in the form of nude or partially dressed pictures that seek to promote sexual immorality. We have these in magazines, television, internet and other media. Pornography has created the following problems:

- a. A corrupt mind that leads man to sin
- b. Marriage has been undermined through this practice and yet God has limited sex to marriage only. Everything else is not good for us.
- c. Modesty and respect are destroyed leading to a corrupt generation. The future of our children is distorted morally.

Pornography should be avoided at all costs and as Christians we must speak up against it in order to have a morally upright society.

Discussion Questions

1. What should the role of the church be to oppose and overcome these vices?
2. How should the church work alongside parents in order to protect our children from these vices?

3. What scriptural help would you give to a new convert who used to survive on gambling and selling intoxicating liquors?

Conclusion

The Bible has final authority over us as God's children and so we are not to indulge in any of these vices. All those who do such practices (Galatians 5:21) will not inherit the kingdom of God. God has spoken in His Word and it will stand. We are to forsake sin and live to please God.

A HAPPY MARRIAGE (PART 1)

SCRIPTURES: Matthew 19:1-9; Colossians 3:1-21

Objectives: By the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Explain features of a Christian marriage
- b. Identify common causes of marriage breakdown
- c. Identify steps for a successful marriage

Memory Verse: Genesis 2:24

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh”

Explanation of memory verse

Marriage was designed by God to be a mutual union of one man and one woman for fellowship, love and helpfulness. The two should willingly and lovingly enter into this union making them one flesh. They are both to leave and cleave to each other if the marriage is to last.

Introduction

Someone said “Out of a dozen wedded couples four will divorce, six will hang on without joy or love because of children, career and church and only two will enjoy a happy marriage”. Briefly discuss the truth of this statement.

1. Features of the Christian marriage

Having been ordained by God, marriage should still be guided by God if it is to be fulfilling. The Christian view to marriage is different from the world view.

To the Christian, marriage should be:

- a. **Permanent** – God intended for the marriage covenant to be binding as long as both parties shall live (Matt 19:5-6). It is a sad story that today divorce is about to be considered a normal practice. For the marriage to be permanent both parties have to do their part faithfully.

- b. **A relationship of mutual love.** The motive to leave and cleave should be nothing but love. Real love wants to share, give strength to the other, respect and accept the other with his or her shortcomings. Real love has the capacity to be reconciled in times of disputes.
- c. **A relationship of helping each other (vs. 5).** We come together in marriage to complement each other and not to compete. We are to help one another. For marriage to work the two should be willing to lift up each other. This can be achieved through positive compliments that enhance positive self-esteem and care.

2. **Possible Causes of divorce.**

Even though God designed marriage to last for a lifetime, divorce has taken its toll due to man's fallen nature. Below are some of the causes of divorce to which the class may add:

- a. **Wrong foundation** – The way in which a couple enters into a marriage covenant has a bearing on the success or failure of it. If God and His will were not involved from the beginning of a marriage, the chances of failure are high.
- b. **Motive for marriage** – Several people have different reasons for entering into a marriage. If some of the motives are based on selfishness the marriage may not last. For example, if the man was only interested in the physical beauty of the woman.
- c. **Marital unfaithfulness (vs. 9)**
- d. **Financial status** – poverty or too much riches if not handled well can be a recipe for disaster in marriage.

3. **Making the marriage fulfilling**

For marriage to become a torture or a happy adventure, largely depends on the efforts of the couple. As Christians we need to:

- a. Pray for each other as a couple. We need God's grace in our marriages daily. If you love your partner you will pray for him or her.
- b. Patience with each other – there is need to bear with each other's shortcomings for we are only human beings and not angels.
- c. Seek counselling early- seeking help early to save a marriage is a sign of strength not failure as some would like to believe.

- d. Express love in very practical ways daily. Regular genuine compliments and small gifts can be very enriching to a marriage.

Discussion Questions

1. How has the extended family set up influenced the success and failure of marriages.
2. How do the rules for holy living in Colossians 3:1-17 enhance the truths learned today?
3. How would these rules impact marriages if seriously pursued by Christian couples.

Conclusion

Challenge each learner to identify one area in their marriage that would improve if they paid the price. Ask each one to pray for his or her marriage committing themselves to make it a happy one.

A HAPPY MARRIAGE (PART 2)

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 5:21-33

Objectives: By the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. Explain the role of the husband in marriage
- b. Explain the role of the wife in marriage.

Memory Verses: Colossians 3:18-19

“Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them”

Explanation of memory verse

God has designed marriage in such a way that each partner (husband and wife) has a role to play if the marriage is to be successful. When one fails to do his or her task the marriage is at stake. Husbands are to love their wives and wives are to submit and honour their husbands.

Introduction

Beginning with yourself, ask two other willing class members to briefly share testimonies of how their spouses showed them love, submission or honour in the past two weeks.

1. The role of the husband (Ephesians 5:25-29)

Husbands are called upon to love their wives by God. This love should be practical in everyday life. It should be expressed in the following ways:

- a. Husbands need to show their wives that they are worthy and of value (**vs. 28**).
Anyone who loves himself values himself. In light of the fact that we are one flesh, husbands are therefore to value their wives. Genuine and intentional compliments and appreciation in public and private should be made regularly.
- b. “...feeds...” (**vs. 29**) – Husbands need to meet the physical needs of their wives. Real love shares and gives. Clothing, food and gifts are some of the things that the husband can provide for his spouse.

- c. "...cares..." (vs. 29) – Every married woman needs to feel secure and protected with all tenderness from any insecurity. Security can be a result of faithfulness or protection from the extended family or any danger.

2. The role of wives (vs. 21-22)

To submit means to yield one's own rights or voluntary surrender. Submission helps to bring order and peace between two equal human beings. It is humility in practice. However it is not meant to mean blind obedience. Submission can be seen through:

- a. Honour and respect for the husband
- b. Obedience "as to the Lord" (vs. 22). Do it as if doing it to God, just like the church obeys Christ (vs. 23-24)
- c. Giving the husband preference in decision-making as the head (vs. 23)

Discussion Question

- a. What other ways can husbands express love to their wives?
- b. What other ways can wives show submission to their husbands?
- c. Identify some of the strengths and shortfalls of your culture regarding submission of wives.
- d. Some wives are abused in the name of submission. Discuss

Conclusion

It is God's plan that marriages are happy and successful. In order to achieve this, each partner must play their role faithfully. It is necessary to make an effort daily to be practical in our expression of love and as believers we need God's grace to help us. Ask learners to pray that they will make meaningful contributions to their marriages.

HUMAN LIFE IS PRECIOUS

SCRIPTURES: Exodus 20:13; 21:12-16

Objectives: By the end of the lesson learners should be able to:

- a. State the origin of human life
- b. Identify the ways in which human life can be terminated
- c. Explain the importance of love for others.

Memory Verse: 1 John 3:15

The Bible condemns all forms of murder and the New Testament further clarifies what murder is. Hating another person is called murder. This poses a serious challenge to us as many of us are found wanting. Murder is not limited to actual killing but includes the attitude of the heart.

Introduction

One day we were driving in one of the big cities of Africa when I came across a sign in bold letters “**Abortion done here.**” Killing in the modern world is no longer limited to guns and swords but has taken other forms. Due to evil, human life is unnecessarily lost every hour.

1. God created all life (Psalm 24:1)

God is the Creator of all life including human beings. Human life is very precious and it is no mistake that all cultures of the world respect death with all the dignity that life deserves. The value of man comes from the fact that man is created in the image of God (Gen 1:27). God’s image in man makes human life precious and it should not be wasted.

2. Living as Stewards (Exodus 21:12-16)

The law of Moses teaches us that we need to treat human life as a gift from God and we are to do all we can to value and preserve it. God has entrusted us with many things including life and as stewards we are to treat our own lives and that of others with dignity. We are accountable to God in the way we treat human life.

3. Forms of murder (Exodus 20:13)

This sounds like a very short commandment but is being violated daily in today's world. Murder as physical death comes in various ways including:

- Actual killing of another using a weapon
- Suicide
- Abortion
- Lack of care leading to the death of another person

The taking away of human life comes from selfishness and most of the times it is planned murder (Exodus 21:14). We even plan to hate another person. What are the possible reasons why people commit suicide and abortion?

4. The way of love (1 John 3:11-15)

We are called upon to exercise the law of love. Love for ourselves and others help us build a world of peace. We are enabled to seek the dignity of human life and do all we can to preserve life. This can be in various ways like care for the vulnerable and sick, love and care for the unborn and seeking no revenge of those who sin against us.

Discussion Question

1. What is the biblical response to abortion? What are some of the consequences of abortion?
2. Imagine yourself critically ill and put on a life support machine. Should your relatives and doctor switch off the machine to fast track your death?
3. How can the church help promote the value and preservation of human life?

Conclusion

All life, especially human life, is precious before God and should be treated with all the dignity it deserves. We are to consider ourselves as stewards, love ourselves and others and always seek to promote the value and preservation of life. Let us remember that anyone who hates his brother is a murderer.

HUMAN SEXUALITY

Scripture: Genesis 2:21-24; 19:1-25; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; I Corinthians 6:9-11

Memory Verse: I Corinthians 6:9-10

“Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor the drunkards nor slanderous nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.”

Explanation of the memory verse:

What is not acceptable to God is sinful. The verses tell us that we need to keep God’s standard of life in every aspect of our behaviour while we are in this wicked world in order to be accepted into God’s kingdom.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should:

- a. Understand that human sexuality is to be expressed only between a husband and his wife
- b. Understand that human sexuality is to be expressed out of love as a seal of the covenant between husband and wife
- c. Know that homosexuality in all its forms is perversion of human sexuality and is sin before God

Introduction:

We are living in a time when human sexuality is perverted in many ways. People are despised for being virgins. Others boast of having several sex-partners. Married men and women are despised for their faithfulness in their marriages. Homosexuality is being legalised in many countries. The question may be raised: what on earth is going on with human sexuality? Are human beings going to live their lives as if they have no conscience? What does God expect of those who have fellowship with Him? What does the Bible have to say?

Human sexuality is to be expressed in a husband and wife relationship:

In Genesis 2:21-24 God solemnized the first marriage between Adam and Eve; that is a man and a woman. He declared that man will leave his parents and be united to his wife, and that the two would be one flesh. Let us note that in this text:

- a. Marriage was solemnized between a man and a woman
- b. Man was to be united to his wife
- c. A man and a woman who are husband and wife are to be one flesh
- d. According to Genesis 1:28, they are to reproduce themselves.
- e. There is no other place where God solemnized any other relationship beside that of a husband and wife.

What do these truths mean to us today?

- a. Human sexuality is to be expressed in a marriage covenant relationship between a husband and his wife only. Why should this be so?
 - Marriage was officiated between a man and a woman. This means that there is love; that is a commitment to care, nurture and to nourish each other. There is a concern for each other's welfare for the present and for the future. In the epistle to the Ephesians⁸ we are told that a man has to love his wife as he loves his own body. He is to present her as spotless as possible. This could happen in a marriage relationship when it is understood clearly.
 - Man is to be united to his wife. This limits the expression of sexuality between a husband and his wife. In I Corinthians 6:9-11 we are told that sexually immoral, adulterers, prostitutes and homosexual offenders will not inherit the kingdom of God. So to express sexuality outside the marriage relationship is not allowed or is forbidden, especially for those who are in the kingdom of God; that is, those who have a relationship with God.
 - According to Genesis 1:28, they are to reproduce themselves. Where there is production, there is care for what has been produced. Children are to be brought up in an environment of commitment to care, nurture and nourishment for each other because they will need that too. Mainly the background that they are brought up in

⁸ Ephesians 5:25-28

will determine the future of those children. Children need both parents in their lives. They do not need a visiting father or mother.

- b. Homosexuality in all its forms is perversion of human sexuality. In Genesis 19:1-25 we are told a very sad story about the people of Sodom. This is a city where every male, both young and old, practiced homosexuality, v 4. Because of this, God destroyed the whole city. Leviticus 20:13 says that homosexuality, like adultery is punishable by death. I Corinthians 6:9-11 tells us that those who do this wickedness, including homosexuality will not inherit the kingdom of God. These practices are not acceptable to God. However, God's grace is sufficient to save to the uttermost those who believe. Those who are believers in Jesus Christ must express their sexuality only in a marriage relationship. It is where it belongs. Believers in Jesus Christ are a unique people. They live by the standard prescribed by God himself. Believers must be holy as God is holy.

Discussion Questions:

1. Where should human sexuality be expressed? Why?
2. Where should children be born and brought up? Why?
3. Is it possible for homosexuals to produce children naturally? Discuss.

Conclusion:

Human sexuality is a gift from God that should be expressed in a marriage relationship. It is meant for a husband and wife. Any perversion of human sexuality is sin before God. Human sexuality offenders will not inherit the Kingdom of God. Let us commit ourselves to God completely deny ourselves and learn to do his will.

MY BELONGINGS AND I BELONG TO GOD

Scripture: Genesis 1:1-31; Psalm 24:1-2; 100:3; I Corinthians 6:12-20

Memory Verse: Psalm 24:1

“The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.”

Explanation of the memory verse:

The universe is the creation of God. It belongs to Him alone. We belong to God. All that we have is His. We are only the managers of His property who will give an account of how we managed it.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should:

- a. Know that all mankind belong to God
- b. Understand that all our possessions are God’s
- c. Realize that mankind are only managers of God’s properties
- d. Appreciate that we are all accountable to God

Introduction:

“The Scriptures teach that God is the owner of all persons and all things. We, therefore, are His stewards of both life and possessions. God’s ownership and our stewardship must be acknowledged, for we shall be held accountable to God for the exercise of our stewardship. God, as a God of system and order in all His ways, has established a system of giving that acknowledges His ownership over all human resources and relationships. To this end all His children should faithfully tithe and present offerings for the support of the gospel.”⁹ Briefly discuss this *Manual* statement with the class.

Who owns the world?

The world belongs to God because He created it, Gen. 1:1-31; Psalms 24:1; 100:3.

⁹ Church of the Nazarene Manual 2009-2013, 2010: 57

Is there a person among you who would work hard for his own house and afterwards would not want to take ownership of that house? Why would that person do that?

God created the world to be his own. Psalm 24:1 says that the world belongs to him. In another scripture it says that he sustains it through his Son.¹⁰ When we think about the world we should include the whole universe. Vast as it is, it belongs to God, its creator. It is his property or possession. Whatever man is doing in or with it, man should always remember that it is not his, but God. The owner is concerned about how the world is treated.

The things that are in the world and those things we possess belong to God. Psalm 24:1a says that the earth is the Lord's and everything in it. When it says everything it means all things. It leaves nothing. So, all things belong to God. This means that whatever we claim to have belongs to God really. This leaves us as managers of the property of God. Now a manager must give an account of how he manages the property of the owner. This means that there are conditions under which he manages that property. He cannot just do as he pleases. God has left this world under our care. We must take care of it the way he wants. When we fail to take care of it, it will not function the way it was planned to. It might work against us instead of for our good.

What are the things that show that we are ill-treating the world?

- a. Soil erosion. What is soil erosion? Discuss. When we allow the rain to erode the top soil, it leaves us with no soil to provide us with food.
- b. Global warming. This is another problem that has been caused by our mismanagement of the world. We have unusual floods, rains, winds and unpredictable weather. We claim that it is nature. The truth is it is un-natural for the weather to be the way it is these days.

This is caused by our irresponsibility in managing the world God gave us to live in. because of our mismanaging it, it is reacting against us.

All people belong to God.

Psalms 24:1 and 100:3 speak with one voice when they say that all people belong to God. He made us for his own. We belong to God. This means that we were made for a purpose. Since this is the case, we have to know why we were created. It also means that we cannot just live anyhow we want. We have to live in a way that will please our creator. We have to live responsibly. One day we will give an account of how we have lived.

¹⁰ Hebrews 1:4

When the Bible says that we belong to God, all things belong to God; they include our talents and spiritual gifts. This means that we need to find out why God gave these gifts to us! How may we use them the best way to make him happy? How may our gifts give him the glory he deserves? When we entertain people with these gifts, we should also think of how it pleases him in the process. Why do we say these things? It is because we are his property, while on the other hand we are his stewards or managers. This means we will give an account of how we lived and how we used our talents and spiritual gifts.

All these things should give God the glory because they belong to Him. He made them for his own.

Discussion Questions:

- a. Discuss ways in which soil erosion could be minimised.
- b. How could global warming be minimised? Discuss?
- c. In which ways can we use our talents to give God the glory? Discuss.

Conclusion:

Close the class session by asking the class to take time in looking for ways in which they can help manage our world in a responsible manner.

ARE YOU A THIEF?

Scripture: Malachi 3:6-12; Exodus 25:1-9; 35:4-29; Matthew 25:31-46

Memory Verse: Malachi 3:8-9

“Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse – the whole nation of you – because you are robbing me.”

Explanation of the memory verse:

To give tithes and offerings is not a choice but God’s commandment. If one fails to do so, he is as bad as those who are breaking into people’s houses or robbing the banks. It is stealing from God!

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should:

- a. Have gained the knowledge that both tithing and giving are principles taught from Old Testament
- b. Understand that both tithing and giving are God’s command to His people
Know that failure to tithe and to give offerings is sin, because it is robbing God.
- c. Realize that our salvation and obedience to God’s decrees go hand-in-hand

Introduction:

“The Scriptures teach that God is the owner of all persons and all things. We, therefore, are His stewards of both life and possessions. God’s ownership and our stewardship must be acknowledged, for we shall be held accountable to God for the exercise of our stewardship. God, as a God of system and order in all His ways has established a system of giving that acknowledges His ownership over all human resources and relationships. To this end all His children should faithfully tithe and present offerings for the support of the gospel.”¹¹ Briefly discuss this *Manual* statement with the class.

¹¹ Church of the Nazarene Manual 2009-2013, 2010: 57

Who is the owner of everything?

God is the owner of everything. He owns the universe and everything in it. He owns every human being. This means that all human beings belong to God, and God alone. You belong to God. I belong to God. We all belong to God. We are not our own. So we cannot do what we want to do with ourselves without breaking the plan of God and his will about us! This means that we are accountable to God about what we do with ourselves.

Since God owns everything, it means that everything we have or earn belongs to God. If it belongs to God, we, therefore, must account for everything we have to him even though we claim them to be ours.

How do we show that all what we have belong to God?

This is a very important question. God has made a way for us to acknowledge that what we have is his. It is the way of tithing and of giving offerings for his ministry, namely the gospel.

You may ask; what will happen if I give neither tithe nor offering? To tithe and to give offerings is a command from God. To disobey God's command is sin. In Malachi 3:8-9 God accuses Israel for robbing him in tithes and offerings. In fact he says that they have turned away from God! Failure to tithe and to give offerings is the same as backsliding from God. It is equal to falling from grace. It is sin because one is disobeying God. In order for you and I to be in good relationship with God, we must tithe and give offerings.

What is tithing?

Tithing is giving ten percent back to God of what I have, own or earn. To tithe is to acknowledge that what I have, own or earn and myself belong to God. This is a minimum expectation God has for you and me. Failure to do this is robbery at its worst; that is robbing God himself!

Another expectation of God from us is giving offerings. We know the phrase 'freewill offering'. In Exodus 25 and 35 God commanded the Israelites to bring offerings that were to be used to build the tabernacle in the wilderness. Here God specified the kind of offerings they were to bring to him. He also said that only those who are willing to give must bring the offering that he wanted. Let us note the following facts about this offering:

- a. God told them that they must give the offering. It is not what people wanted to do. It is what God wanted them to do. This means that we give in obedience to God's plan. He initiated the giving.

- b. God specified the kind of offering he wanted them to give. Why? Because he wants to do specific things with it. Here we see that we give what God wants us to give and not what we want. We give for a specific purpose.
- c. God told them who was to give: Those who have a willing heart. This is a freewill offering because they are willing to give what God wants them to give. God chooses what they are to give. Their heart wills to give what God wants. Failure to give offerings is robbing God. Why? Because you give from what belongs to God! So both tithes and offerings are God's command to us.

Discussion Questions:

- a. Why do we have to tithe and give offerings?
- b. Who chooses what we must give as freewill offerings? Why?
- c. Why do we call offering 'freewill offerings'?

Conclusion:

We must always remember that what we have and ourselves belong to God. We are his property. We must always acknowledge that God is the owner by tithing. We are responsible to give willingly what God expects us to give so that the work of God may be fulfilled in our communities and the world.

WHY QUALIFICATIONS FOR CHURCH OFFICERS

Scripture: Exodus 18:13-27; Deuteronomy 1:9-18; Acts 6:1-7; Malachi 3:6-9; [Church of the Nazarene *Manual* (39)]

Memory Verse: Acts 6:3-4

“Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and we will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”

Explanation of the memory verse:

Elected officials, including the pastor, must be people who are known by the church members that they are full of the Holy Spirit. They must be people who intentionally avoid what is evil. They must not show partiality as the representatives of Jesus Christ.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should:

- a. Have the understanding of the qualities of those who could be church officials
- b. Know the people who could be elected as officers of the local church
- c. Have a desire to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ who are examples to others

Introduction:

“We direct our local churches to elect as church officers active members of the local church who profess the experience of entire sanctification and whose lives bear public witness to the grace of God that calls us to a holy life; who are in harmony with the doctrines, polity, and practices of the Church of the Nazarene; and who support the local church faithfully in attendance and with tithes and offerings.”¹² Briefly discuss this *Manual* statement with the class.

In our short discussion above we have seen that our church expects us to elect people into leadership who live holy lives, who are in harmony with the doctrine, polity and practices

¹² Church of the Nazarene Manual 2009-2013, 2010: 59

of the church, who are faithful in attending church services, and in tithes and offerings. In addition to these qualifications, let us look into what the Bible says about leaders in the church.

Church officers must be known to be:

1. Living Holy Lives (Exodus 18:21; Acts 6:3; Deuteronomy. 1:13, I Timothy 3:9, 10)

The Early Church demanded leaders who are full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. It was their standard of those who are elected into their leadership. Can we have leaders in the church who are less than this expectation today?

- a. A person who lives a holy life is the one who is full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:3). When we speak of a bottle that is full of water we mean that nothing is in the bottle except water. In the same sense the Holy Spirit fills that person to the exclusion of sin.

I Timothy 3:9 speaks of a clear conscience, meaning a holy heart that leads to a holy life. This person is able to do what God wills because the Spirit of God fills him.

- b. Deuteronomy 1:13 and Acts 6:3 say that leaders should have wisdom and understanding. Wisdom and understanding are used interchangeable in the Bible. The person who is wise avoids evil. If you and I understand God's plan for our lives, we will run away from what is sinful. Christian leaders avoid sin.
- c. Exodus 18:21 say that we should choose 'men who have the fear of God'. To fear God is to avoid evil (Job 1:1, 8). It does not speak of running away from God, but to run away from all that is opposed to God who is holy. The Apostle Paul said to the Corinthians, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1). Leaders lead by their example.

2. Trustworthy (Exodus 18:21; Malachi 3:8-10; I Timothy 3:3, 8, 11)

- a. Who does not want to be trusted? Trustworthiness is associated with honesty. These are characters rather than a wish. Both Old and New testaments demanded them from those who were in leadership. It is our standard too. If one is faithful, it means that one is dependable. It has to do with what one says. One's word can be trusted. One will admit that he said what he said though it was wrong. One who will not try to give excuses in order to look good to people. He fears no man but God.

- b. Leaders are trusted even when it comes to money. They are faithful in tithes and offerings. They set examples. They are not lovers of money, but of God, people and their responsibilities. Money is a means toward an end and not an end itself.

3. Respected by people (Deuteronomy 1:13; I Timothy 3:2, 7, 8, 11)

The last point in regard to leaders is that of being respected by people because of what you are. The respect says something about the character of a person as opposed to one's position. I Timothy 3:7 says that he must have respect from those who are not members of the church. This shows how important respect is. Leaders do not demand respect they earn it by their lifestyles. They do not show partiality in any way. They treat all people alike. A person is wrong no matter who or what they are. A person is right no matter who or what they are. He neither favours nor fears any person but respects all.

Discussion Questions:

- a. Name four characteristics of those who could be elected into church leadership.
- b. Why should people of good character be elected into church leadership? Discuss.
- c. What kind of leader does the Church of the Nazarene want in the local churches?

Conclusion:

We need leaders who are acceptable to God, who are respected by people and who are examples of our holiness heritage. Character is key in leadership. The proverb says that actions speak louder than words. Believers were first called Christians at Antioch by the world.

ORDERLINESS IN THE BODY OF CHRIST IS A MUST

Scripture: I Corinthians 12:12-30; 14:26-40

Memory Verse: I Corinthians 14:33a, 40

“For God is not a God of disorder but of peace... But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.”

Explanation of the memory verse:

The best place to have order and decency is among the followers of Christ. This is so because God is the God of Order and Peace. Jesus is the King of Peace. Church meetings should be peaceful because of its king.

Objectives: At the end of the lesson pupils should be able to:

- a. Have realized that their bodies work in a harmonious and orderly way.
- b. Have realised that church board or committee meetings are to be conducted in a harmonious and orderly way.
- c. Have been convinced that orderliness and peace should be part of every board or committee meeting.

Introduction:

“Subject to the applicable law, the articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws of government in the Manual, the meetings and proceedings of the members of the Church of the Nazarene, local, district, and general, and committees of the corporation shall be regulated and controlled according to *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised* (latest edition) for parliamentary procedure.”¹³ Briefly discuss this *Manual* statement with the class.

How does the human body work?

The body has different parts that work in harmonious ways. There is no confusion in the body. Each part does its work at the right time without disturbing the other parts. In fact

¹³ Church of the Nazarene Manual 2009-2013, 2010: 60

the other parts help the part that has a problem immediately without being asked to. They work to benefit each other, thus benefiting the body. They see to it that the work of the whole body is done perfectly by working in a peaceful and orderly way. The church should work in a similar way in all its meetings, boards and any other responsibilities done by the church.

How should the church conduct its board and general meetings?

The Bible says that all things should be done in a fitting and orderly way, (I Corinthians 1:40).

In its board and general meetings, the church should adopt a way of conducting them. Paul speaks about three prophets speaking one after another, or those gifted in tongues speaking one after another. This means that those who are in the meetings should learn to wait and listen to what others are saying in order to understand what is being said. In this way one will be able to respond in a fitting way even if it means opposing the other person. This will also enable the other person to respond to what is said instead of attacking the fellow board member. We can all sing together at the same time, but speak only one person at a time while others are listening. Let there be harmony in our meetings instead of disorder and confusion.

What does Robert's Rules of Order say?

Concerning the board and general meetings, Robert's Rules of Order gives us an order in which to speak in a harmonious way. It says that one person should speak while others are listening to what is being said. Then each member will speak until everyone has had a say before any other member speaks for a second time. When everyone had spoken for the second time, a decision should be taken instead of arguing over and over again. A vote by the members is a decision of the board. It settles the matter or makes a decision of what is needed to be done. This shows that a meeting or a board consists of many people and not just one or two outspoken persons. It is the board that is in session and not a person or certain individuals.

This implies that there should be planning and distribution of responsibilities among the members of the church according to each member's abilities and spiritual gifts. No one person can do everything. Why? Because no one person is gifted in everything! Read 1 Corinthians 12:27-30. The Holy Spirit has given church members different gifts for a purpose so that the body of Christ should work in a harmonious way. If one forces oneself to do everything, the church stops functioning.

What would the results be if we follow these rules?

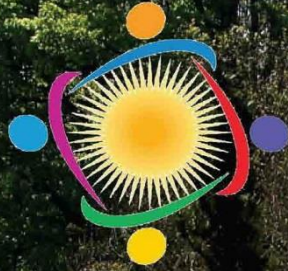
If these rules of order are followed, there will be no need for monopolizing the board meetings. There will be satisfaction to every member sitting in the board meetings. This will also do away with pride of dominating the meetings and bring about peace and unity in the church. The love of Christ that we speak so much about should be shown in the board and general church meetings. This is one of the places where we ought to practice what we preach or teach. What an opportunity to give God the glory he deserves! In this way all things can be done in a fitting and orderly way. The Bible says that God is not a God of disorder but of peace...and that all should be done in a fitting and orderly way (I Corinthians 14:32, 40).

Discussion Questions:

- a. Is there a person who has every spiritual gift? Why?
- b. Is it possible to have order and peace in the church board meeting? How?
- c. Discuss I Corinthians 14:40

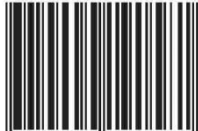
Conclusion:

Since God is a God of order and peace, the church meeting is the best place where we should learn order, peace and harmony. True spirituality should be experienced in our church meetings because the Holy Spirit in his holiness is in the church. The God of peace is also in the church. Let us allow God to take control of our lives even in the church meetings because we are his church.



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