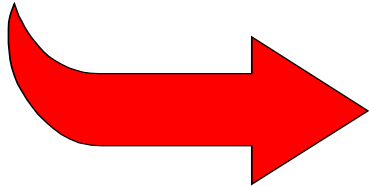


THE WAY



BIBLE LESSONS FOR
NEW BELIEVERS

Dear Friend,

These lessons are for new or young believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, or for anyone who wants to refresh their understanding of the basics of the Christian Life.

I pray that they will help to strengthen your faith, and that you will continue to grow day by day, and be established in understanding God's Word.

Please read each lesson several times, and complete the questions at the end of each lesson before moving on to the next lesson. The questions can be checked and corrected by turning to the Bible references indicated.

There is no need to send the lessons back to us, but if you have questions or need advice, do write to us at your nearest MRC address.

May Yahweh our Heavenly Father bless you and keep you all along the Way.

Your brother in the Messiah,

Don Stanton

THE WAY

The LORD ... your Teacher
will no longer be hidden,
but your eyes will see Your Teacher.
And your ears will hear a word behind you,
'This is the Way, walk in it.'
(Isaiah 30:20-21)

Bible Lessons for New Believers

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LESSON ONE

THE BEGINNING OF THE WAY

Have you received the Lord Jesus as your personal Saviour? You have made the decision to follow Him? That's wonderful! We rejoice with you, dear believer, and the angels in Heaven also rejoice, for this is no small decision you have made! It is the greatest decision you could ever make. The Almighty God has been graciously working in your life to bring you to His Way. Your decision has undoubtedly been the turning point of your life, and now you are discovering that everything seems to be new. That is a good sign, for the Scriptures tell us that when we receive Christ, everything does become new.

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, (the Messiah), he is a new creation; the old things have passed away; see, all things have become new.”
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

THE NEW BIRTH

When one repents of sin and receives Christ as his Saviour, he experiences what is known as “the new birth.” This is the **spiritual** birth by which one is born into the family of God, and enters the Kingdom of Light. It is also called **Regeneration**.

Before your new birth experience, you were “dead in trespasses and sins.” (Ephesians 2:1) You may have been religious, but you did not have spiritual life. That is why you did not care deeply for the things of God, and you did not know Him in a personal way. But now you have been made alive, and your spirit pulsates with desire to know the Lord and to feed upon Him.

The new birth experience is so necessary - for everyone, for, as the Lord Jesus said;

“This is the solemn truth I tell you; no-one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” (John 3:3)

The new birth is the beginning of the WAY.

THE NEW FAMILY

Through the new birth you come into the family of God; you become, in fact, a child of God.

“But to all who received Him, *Jesus*, to those who believe in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God.”

(John 1:12)

Now that you have this wonderful new relationship to God, the Father will train you in His ways. Just now, having become a child of God, you are “a babe,” but you will grow to maturity if you feed on the right things. The food that makes you spiritually strong is the Lord Jesus Himself, and His Word. So seek to develop regular prayer and Bible reading habits. It is in prayer that you speak to your new Master, and through the Word He speaks to you. Through this two-way fellowship, you “feed” upon Him. That's why Jesus said, “I am the Bread of Life.” (John 6:35)

In the family of God, you have very many brothers and sisters – other believers and followers of Christ. Remember, they are your family, and some of them will be of great help to you. Some will help nurse you. Others will help feed you, and teach you to walk in the ways of the Master. Others will help you to talk and to sing praises to God. After some time, you yourself will be helping other believers in various ways. So seek to continue in regular fellowship with other believers.

A NEW MASTER

The most wonderful thing about the new birth, is that it links you to the Saviour, the Lord Jesus, who now becomes your new Master. Before you received Jesus as your Saviour, you were serving a cruel, evil, master - Satan. You may not have realized you were serving him - he is so subtle. But, it is a fact, until the Lord Jesus breaks the chains of slavery and sets them free, everyone, voluntarily or involuntarily, serves the devil.

The believer is set free from bondage so that he may serve

the Living God. And service to God is not bondage. Rather, it's a JOY, for we are brought into a close relationship with the most wonderful Person we could ever know. We have the privilege of being an intimate companion of the Son of God.

“The Way” that we are now travelling, is actually the Lord Jesus Himself. The Master said;

“**I am the Way**, the Truth, and the Life; no-one comes to the Father, except through Me.” (John 14:6)

Everything concerning the Way relates to Jesus, so get to know him better each day. He will lead you and He will keep you right through to the end - the time when you are with Him in Heaven. Keep your eyes upon **Him!** Don't set your eyes on people who may, or may not, be good examples. People never come up to our expectations, but the Lord Jesus is never a disappointment. His promise to each one of his people is:

“You are My servant, I have chosen you and not rejected you. Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; definitely I will help you; I will uphold you with My righteous Right Hand.” (Isaiah 41:9-10)

A NEW JOY

When one experiences the new birth, he receives forgiveness of sins. This is not an imagination, but a reality which brings a deep sense of cleanness. And coming into personal fellowship with God, produces joy and peace. It is the result of knowing that you are, at last, right with God. You are saved!

The degree of joy we experience in the Lord, varies from time to time, and from person to person. It may be an ecstatic joy that thrills you through and through, that makes you want to shout and sing and to tell everyone about what the Lord has done for you. It may, on the other hand, be a deep, calm, joyous assurance that causes you to sit quietly in worship of God.

The joy is real in both cases. Yes, the joy is real, and while it abides in our spirit, and is experienced through our soul and

emotions, we need to remember that our emotions and feelings change. So we should not rely upon our feelings to give us the assurance of the Lord's Presence, and His love and salvation. As believers we may be more aware of the joy of the Lord on certain days, and not on other days. But we are called to walk by FAITH, trusting GOD, and not to go by our feelings.

If one day you do not **feel** elated and filled with joy, does that mean the Lord has left you, or that you have lost something? No, of course not! It is simply that your feelings are “off-line,” or in “low gear” at the time. God's Word has not changed, has it? No! His promise has not changed! His salvation has not been revoked! There is no need to be afraid because you don't have good feelings today. You have not renounced your Saviour, have you? No! Your decision to follow Him is still very much in force, and your relationship to Him remains secure.

Always remember: Your salvation does not depend upon your feelings, but on the Word and the promises of God.

A NEW PURPOSE

No doubt you are discovering that you now have a new purpose to live for. Your vision is changing. Many things that seemed so important to you before, have now lost their attraction. You are beginning to see that the things of the world are temporary - and that there is an eternity ahead of you.

As you climb further up the Way, you begin to understand the things of God more deeply. You realize that you have become a part of God's great plan - His eternal purpose. The Father's purpose in creating us was to make us His sons and daughters, so that we might bring pleasure and satisfaction to Him, and that we might enjoy His life and love for ever.

Yes, God created us for Himself. The Scripture is clear:

“You are worthy, O LORD, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they exist, and were created.” (Revelation 4:11)

This is a thrilling reality, and the understanding of it, will greatly enlarge our vision, and lead us to . . .

NEW BEHAVIOUR

Yes, your behaviour has been changing since coming to the Lord Jesus, hasn't it? And yet, there is still much more that He needs to change in your life. Don't be afraid of changes! Whatever the Lord does in your life is for your betterment; so let Him mould you into His own likeness.

Let the Master take away any habits that are hindrances in your life. Let Him remould your life. Yes, He will change your behaviour, for He intends to make you more holy, more loving, more truthful, more pure, and more like Himself.

For sure, His perfect work in you will not be completed in a day, nor even in a single year. It will be a progressive work. You will **grow in Him day by day**, throughout your whole life.

“Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Master and Saviour, Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity (*for ever*). Amen.” (2 Peter 3:18)

NEW TRIALS

As you progress in this new Way, you will come across various trials and problems. These are only to be expected, for your old master, Satan, is now your new enemy - your enemy in a new way. And he does not take kindly to your deliverance from his clutches.

Another enemy you will encounter, is “the World.” Not everyone in the world will share your joy and faith in the Lord. Some of your friends will discard you. Some of your relatives may even persecute you, or cast you out because you have given your life to Christ - the Messiah. Now that your allegiance is to the Lord Jesus, you may not find yourself so welcome with the world as you were before.

You may find that some temptations become more acute now. You will certainly become more aware of the blackness of sin,

and it will grieve you whenever you fail. At times, it will seem that the battle between right and wrong is going on right inside you. But, young believer, never fear that you have lost salvation because of this warfare, or because of any failure.

In a later lesson we'll discuss this more fully, but for now, let us recognize that trials will come. The positive side, however, is that God uses our trials to develop our faith and maturity in Him.

“In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while you have been distressed by various trials, that the proving of your faith - *which is* more precious than gold that perishes, *though* tested by fire - may be found to *result in* praise, glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus the Messiah.”

(1 Peter 1:6-7)

We can be totally assured that in all our trials, problems, persecutions and temptations, the Saviour will be with us, not just to aid, but to deliver. **He will give us the victory.**

“Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Master, Jesus the Messiah.” (1 Corinthians 15:57)

“The Lord knows how to rescue the godly out of temptation and trials.” (2 Peter 2:9)

“No temptation has seized you that people do not normally experience. And God is faithful; He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able to bear. But with the temptation He will also provide the way out so that you may be able to stand up under it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13)

So friend, this is the beginning of the Way that leads to life eternal. We encourage you to press ahead in the Way, as we ourselves are doing. We are just a little ahead of you and we want to help you in the Way. The lessons following, we trust, will be a great help and blessing to you.

Please read over each lesson several times during the week to retain the contents in your mind. Also, **try to memorize some of the Bible verses** included in the lessons. They will be a good standby for you in the coming days.

TEST YOURSELF QUESTIONS

Use your Bible to check or find your answers.

1. What are the two ways in life that people follow? (Matthew 7:13-14)
a.
b.
2. On which way are you travelling?
3. What is the door or gate to the Spiritual Way? (John 10:9)
.....
.....
4. As a believer and follower of the Lord Jesus, can you expect your life to be trouble free? (John 15:18-20)
.....
5. When you came to Christ, what did you become? Or what new relationship to God do you now have?
a. A of God (John 1:12)
b. A of Jesus (John 15:15)
c. A Christ (John 15:8)
d. A part of the of Christ (Ephesians 5:23)
e. Part of the of Christ (Revelation 21:2)
6. What are the main things that happened when you received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour?
a. (John 3:7)
b. (2 Corinthians 5:17)
c. (1 John 3:2)
d. (1 John 3:14)

7. Who is your new Master? Does he enslave you, or set you free? (Galatians 1:4, John 8:32).
8. Does your salvation depend on good feelings? (Ephesians 2:8-9)
.....
9. If you wake up one fine morning feeling terrible, would you think that the Lord had forsaken you? (Hebrews 13:5)
10. Does God have a purpose for you? (Romans 8:28)
11. When you are attacked by the devil, how should you fight the powers of darkness? (Ephesians 6:11-18)
.....
.....
12. Why does the world hate you? (John 15:19)
13. Whose is the ultimate Victory? (1 Corinthians 15:57)
14. Write down from memory, one Bible verse from this lesson along with its quotation.
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

LESSON TWO

GROWING IN THE WAY

You truly entered a new way when you received the Lord Jesus as your personal Saviour. Now you need to grow up, to walk, and to progress on the Upward Way. You don't want to remain a spiritual babe, do you? Just as a baby needs to have the right food to grow physically, we need the right food to grow spiritually.

In this lesson we will discuss our spiritual diet and how we should take in this heavenly food. What type of food do we need? What has been provided?

There are four types of spiritual food and drink in the Bible:

1. The Milk of the Word
2. The Meat of the Word
3. The Bread of Life
4. The Water of Life.

These four items will provide a heavenly diet.

1. THE MILK OF THE WORD

We read of the Milk in the first Book of Peter:

“Like newborn babes, crave for the pure (*unadulterated*) milk of the Word, that you may grow in respect of salvation, now that you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.” (1 Peter 2:2)

The “Word” is the Word of God, the Bible. The ‘Milk’ means the fundamental truths from the more easy-to-digest portions of Scripture, along with the nutritious, strengthening precepts of God.

2. THE MEAT OF THE WORD

The following exhortation in the book of Hebrews is about those who are growing up in Christ:

“Anyone who lives on milk is still an infant without experience in *applying* the word of righteousness. But solid food is for the mature whose faculties have been exercised *and* trained by *constant* practice to discern good and evil.” (Hebrews 5:13-14)

We should not live solely on ‘Milk.’ We should desire stronger food also. ‘Meat’! Many Scriptures have very deep meanings and truths which are usually not digested on a first reading, or even on a tenth reading. A believer will be continuously discovering more of the wonders of the truth in the Word as he studies and meditates on it throughout his life.

DAILY FEEDING ON THE BIBLE

Disciples of Jesus should make a regular practice of feeding upon the Word of God daily. This is essential for our spiritual growth – it is more essential than eating our physical food.

To feed on the Bible, however, means more than simply reading the Scriptures. It is to take the words of God into your soul, so that they become part of you.

You need to continually remember that the Bible is the **Word of God**. It is not merely a historical or religious book. It is a holy book – and more; **it's the very message of God for YOU personally.**

Learn to value the Word of God. Learn to love the Word. It is God's love letter to **you**. God has caused every word to be written in just the right way, so that it might be food and encouragement for your soul.

Some of the writers of the Bible themselves have written in this strain:

“O how I love Your Torah - Your teaching! It *is* my meditation all the day.” “How sweet to my taste has Your Word been! *Sweeter* than honey to my mouth!” (Psalm 119:97, 103)

“Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart.” (Jeremiah 15:16)

Feeding on the Bible gives light to your mind, as well as food to your soul. It strengthens your faith, it helps to keep you from sin, it gives you instructions, and draws you closer to God. It guides you into all truth, and encourages you all along the way. So make feeding on the Bible, your daily habit.

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Set aside a time, especially each morning for this purpose. And close the day by reading a portion of Scripture.

1. **Decide what portion of Scripture you will study.** Be systematic in reading. Aim at reading right through the Bible. This does not necessarily mean starting at the first book and reading through to the end. It is better to have a balanced diet of Old Testament and New Testament.

You may decide to read a chapter of the New Testament in the morning and a chapter of the Old Testament at night. Many believers aim at reading the complete Bible within one year. This can be done by reading an average of four chapters per day.

One plan is to read two Old Testament chapters, one New Testament chapter and one Psalm or chapter of Proverbs each day. Some portions of the Bible you can read through more rapidly, such as the historical Old Testament books. You will want to read other sections more slowly and minutely, particularly the epistles of the New Testament. It is not how **much** you read, but **how** you read the Word that is important.

2. Before starting to read, pray and **ask the Master to speak to you**, and to feed you.

3. As you read, meditate on the Word, analyze it; **see what the message is. Think it over.** Is there any promise, or command, or any instructions for you in this portion? Any example to follow? Any error to avoid? What is God saying to you through the portion?

4. It is a good idea to **mark your Bible - underline any special words or verses** - or mark key words or subjects. This will help you to become more familiar with the Bible. You will find after some time, that you are able to find your way around the Book quite well.

5. **Pray about what you have read.** Let your “spiritual cud”

chew the food over throughout the day or night. It is good to memorize special verses. Then seek to obey and **live out the Word.**

3. THE BREAD OF LIFE

This may come as a surprise - the Bread of Life is a person? “What?” you say, “How can I eat a person? What bread is this?” It is the Person of the Lord Jesus. These are His words:

“I tell you the truth; Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world.’ So they said to Him, ‘Master, give us this bread always.’ Then Jesus said to them, ‘I am the Bread of Life; he who comes to Me will never go hungry, and he who believes in Me will never be thirsty.’” (John 6: 32-35)

Yes, Jesus is the Heavenly Bread, the Living Bread. We feast upon Him - not **physically**, but **spiritually**. As we spend time in His Presence, in prayer and fellowship, we will be “eating” the Living Bread. He will satisfy our souls and our spirits, just as ordinary food satisfies the body.

To partake of the Lord Jesus means partaking of His life. Without Jesus, we cannot have any spiritual life. This is clear from these words of the Lord:

“I am the Living Bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and indeed, the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.’ The Jews therefore *began* to quarrel with one another, saying, ‘How can this *Man* give us *His* flesh to eat?’

“Then Jesus said to them, ‘I am telling you the truth! Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood lives in Me, and I *live* in him. As the Living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father; so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.

“This is the bread which came down from heaven - not as the fathers ate the manna and died. He who eats this bread will live forever’.”
(John 6: 51-58)

These words at first seem very strange indeed, but we must realize the Lord is not talking about His physical body and blood. He is saying that we must partake of Him in such a way that **He becomes a part of us**. If we read and feed on His spoken and written word, and **commune** or talk with Him, we will be partaking of His very life - and the more we commune with Him, the more we will be “eating His body and drinking His blood” - partaking of His life. If we have His life and instructions active within us, then we truly live, spiritually, because of Him.

There is also another reason for the Lord saying that we are to “eat His body and drink His blood.” His body was offered on the cross as a sacrifice for our salvation. His blood was shed there, and this signifies that His life was given for the forgiveness of our sins. A person first partakes of salvation through faith in Christ, and he immediately partakes of the benefits of the sacrifice on the cross. Then, as a believer, he continuously partakes of the Living Bread - the Living Christ. You will find many verses in the Bible encouraging us to pray - to commune, and to talk with the Master. One passage says:

“Rejoice always! Pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”
(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

We are encouraged to pray always. Of course you can’t be on your knees, or meditating in a quiet place, all the time. But you can, and should talk to your Heavenly Father often - wherever you are - even while walking down the street, or even in the midst of hectic activity. Your hands, and even your mouth may be busy, but your spirit can be communing with the Lord. **Remember**, the Master is with you and in you. So commune with Him as often as possible.

HOW TO COMMUNE ?

This must be a very personal exercise on your part. There is no set pattern for prayer. A few points may help:

1. Let your prayer include much **praise and adoration of God**. The more you get to know Him, the more you will love and praise Him. (Philippians 4:4)
2. Always **confess** any faults or sins in your life that you are conscious of. (1 John 1:9)
3. Learn to give **thanks in every situation** (1 Thessalonians 5:18)
4. Let **your needs** be made known to God. (Philippians 4:6)
5. **Pray for others** - for the extension of the kingdom of God. (Ephesians 6:18)
6. **Talk** things over with the Lord. Be intimate in prayer.
“Continue *to devote* yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving.” (Colossians 4:2)

4. THE WATER OF LIFE

The Lord Jesus satisfies not only our hunger, but also our thirst. The Water He gives is Living Water. He offered it once to a woman in Samaria:

“But whoever drinks the water that I give him will never ever thirst again. Indeed the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up into eternal life.” (John 4:14)

In John, chapter seven, we read that the Living Water is the Spirit; that is, the Holy Spirit:

“Now on the final and most important *day of Sukkot*, the Feast of *Tabernacles*, Jesus stood and cried out, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes *and* trusts in Me, as the Scripture has said, “rivers of living water will flow from his innermost being”.’ By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were *later* to receive.” (John 7:37-39)

The Master gives us His Holy Spirit so that we may be fully satisfied in Him. As we “drink” of His Spirit, we become gloriously filled with His life and power, and our lives become

channels of blessings, bringing refreshment to others.

HOW TO DRINK OF THE SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit lives within every born again believer. He constantly fills us, and flows through our lives - as long as we walk "in the Spirit" - that is, in fellowship with the Master.

We need to maintain that fellowship by surrendering our lives to the Master each day. This will enable the Holy Spirit to flow like a **River of Living Water** through us, bringing blessing to others as well as ourselves.

But when sin comes into our lives, it causes us to walk "in the flesh." Selfishness, self-centredness, pride, disobedience, or holding anything back from God, will grieve the Spirit, and bring a blockage. Once the sins and blockages are dealt with, God will restore us, and the River will flow again.

How can we deal with the blockages? By **confessing** any **known sins** to God. This leads to an immediate restoration of fellowship with the Master. The blockages will then be removed.

A failure to confess our sins means our lives become a **stagnant pool**, and we become discouraged, or parched. Confession and surrender to the Master brings restoration, and then we may "drink" again of the Holy Spirit. (In Lesson 5, we will study more deeply, the work of the Holy Spirit.)

Finally: Avoid the wrong spiritual diet. Avoid bad food and harmful drinks. Avoid "junk food" - avoid feasting on the entertainment of the world. Avoid taking in the debased, frivolous and unsavory influences and standards of the unbelieving society in which you live. Don't feed on folly or idleness. Avoid worldly attractions; for the Scripture commands us:

“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives for ever.” (1 John 2:15-17)

TEST YOURSELF QUESTIONS

Use your Bible to check or find your answers.

1. How does one grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus?
(1 Peter 2:2, Hebrews 5: 13-14)
2. What use is the Bible in our lives today? (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
.....
3. Why is Jesus called the Bread of Life? (John 6:57)
.....
4. Who is the best teacher of the Bible? (John 14:26)
.....
5. Does God expect us to pay in some way for the food and drink that He provides? (Isaiah 55:1, Rev. 22:17).
6. What are some of the things that we need to avoid in the way?
 - a. (2 Tim. 2:16)
 - b. (2 Tim. 2:3)
 - c. (1 Thess. 5:22)
 - d. (1 John 5:21)
 - e. (Eph. 4:29)
 - f. (Eph. 4:30)
 - g. (Eph. 4:31)
 - h. (Romans 12:19)

There are nine Scripture portions quoted in this lesson.

Try to memorize some of them.

LESSON THREE

ESTABLISHED IN THE WAY

It is important for followers of the Lord Jesus to become firmly established in Him. Like a tree, our roots need to go down deep so that we might become strong and bear much fruit.

We need to be like a ship that sails under a strong command, with a powerful engine so that can sail right through the storms; and with an anchor that holds against the tides. We don't want to be like a rowing boat that is tossed to and fro by every gust of wind. Our ship must be under the **command of our Master, Jesus**, and empowered by the mighty **Holy Spirit**. Our anchor must be the **Word of God**, and our rudder, a **faith** that has developed through trusting the Lord in every circumstance.

One of the prayers of the apostle Paul, in the book of Ephesians, is a prayer for all believers to be rooted, anchored, and established in **Christ**:

“For this reason, I kneel before the Father of our Master, Jesus the Messiah, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, *I pray* that out of the riches of His glory, He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that the Messiah may dwell in your hearts through faith *in Him*. *And I pray* that you will be rooted and established in love, so that together with all the set-apart *believers*, you may be able to comprehend what is the width, length, height and depth of the Messiah's love - and to know this love which surpasses knowledge so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” (Ephesians 3:14-19)

So, you see, we need to go deep into the faith, and not be shallow, and tossed to and fro.

(By the way, there's a lot of “meat” in those six verses above.)

To be firmly established, it is important that we become members of a local church or fellowship. We need to meet regularly

with other believers to worship the Lord, to have fellowship, and to learn together. (True fellowship means “friendship around the person of Jesus.”). Some believers become “alone-ers” or drifters - they never have regular fellowship, and they usually do not become strong disciples.

Now I want you to see the truth of what “the church” is:

THE EKKLESIA – THE BODY OF CHRIST

(EKKLESIA is the Greek word used in the New Testament to refer to the Body of Called-out Believers; the Assembly - local and universal, comprised of all who have been redeemed and brought into union with the Messiah.

The word “church” is often used to translate the word *Ekklesia*. That is all right as long as we understand that the “Church” does **not** mean a building, a religion, or a denomination. The Church (the *Ekklesia*) is the “Body of Christ,” and it is comprised of **all true believers in the Messiah**. They are not of any one denomination, but are believers from all over the world.

The members are usually called “Christians” or “Messianic believers,” for they belong to, and follow Christ (the Messiah).

(Christ and Messiah both mean, “The Anointed One.”)

Not all “Christians” belong to the Body of Christ. A person may call himself a “Christian” and he may be a member of a local “church,” but he may not belong to the Body which is the *Ekklesia* - “The Body of Christ.” It all depends on whether he is a **born again believer**. If he is, then he belongs to Christ and is automatically a member of Christ's “Body.”

The *Ekklesia*, then, is the Body of true believers. We become members of this Body the very moment we receive Christ as our Saviour and are born again. There is absolutely nothing that another person, or a group of people, can do, to make us a member of the Body of Christ. Other Christians can teach us and guide us, but it is the Holy Spirit who makes us

a member when He comes to indwell our spirits. **He joins us to the body** - He links us to the Head (Jesus Christ) and to all other true believers. That's why the relationship between believers is so real and vital.

Two strangers may meet "accidentally," but as soon as they discover that they are both believers, they experience a oneness. That's because the Holy Spirit unites them both to Jesus, and to each other. This is not a theory or imagination, but a vital reality, and I'm sure that you have already begun to experience this oneness in your relationship to other believers.

Now let's look at the Bible's teaching about the church, in the thrilling book of Ephesians:

“The Messiah is **the Head of the Ekklesia** (the church), the Body of which He is the Saviour ... the Messiah also loved the Ekklesia and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of water with the Word, *and* that He might present the Ekklesia to Himself, a glorious *Bride*, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing - but that she should be holy and without blemish ... **for we are members of His body.**”
(Ephesians 5:23, 25-27, 30)

We have already seen that the “Church” is a Body comprised of saved people - true believers; and that the Head of the Church - the Head of the Body - is Christ Himself. (See also Ephesians 1:22-23)

Now in the above passage, the church is referred to as “her.” This seems strange at first, but the Scripture is teaching a second truth here - that the Ekklesia is also the **Bride of Christ**.

The Bride is a **corporate companion** prepared for the Son of God. It consists of millions of people who are called to share this intimate, eternal relationship with Jesus. In verse 27 above, we read of the time when the Church will be presented to the Messiah in all her glory. In Revelation 19, we read of the Marriage of the Lamb and the Bride, and of the marriage supper:

“Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His Bride has prepared herself.’ Bright and clean fine linen was given to her to wear; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the set-apart people of God. Then *the angel* said to me, ‘Write, “Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb”.’ And he said to me, ‘These are the true words of God’.” (Rev. 19:7-9)

This Marriage, or “Presenting,” will occur at the end of this age, after we have been caught up to meet the Master and are taken to Heaven - and before He comes to reign over the earth. (We have dealt with prophetic subjects in several of our other booklets, and we encourage you to study these.) For the present, be sure that as a member of the Ekklesia, you are a part of His Bride. The Lord Jesus loves you so much; therefore He is sanctifying you (that is, purifying, maturing and making you holy), and one day you will be presented to Him, to share His glorious, eternal life. This is thrilling, isn't it?

In the Ephesians passage (5:22-33), we find teaching about the relationship between a husband and his wife - a relationship which God intended to be one of love, based on the model of the love of Christ for His Bride, and the loving submission of the Bride to the Head.

Earlier in Ephesians we read of how the Church, the Body, was formed by believers - both Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews) - being brought into this one new Body.

“So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh - *being* called ‘the uncircumcised’ by those who are called ‘the Circumcision’ *because of the sign* performed in the flesh by *human* hands - *remember* that at that time you were separate from the Messiah, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of the Messiah. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both *groups into* one, and has broken down the dividing

wall *between us* by abolishing in His flesh the enmity *and* the Law of commandments *contained* in ordinances - His purpose being to create in *union with* Himself one new man *out of* the two, *thus* making peace, and in *this* one body, to reconcile both of them to God through *His death on the cross*, by which He put to death the enmity.” (Ephesians 2:11-16)

Once, Gentiles were without hope and without God. Not belonging to Israel was a disadvantage, as the revelation, the promises and the covenants were all deposited with that nation. But now, through the sacrifice of Christ at Calvary, all who trust in Him are saved and brought into this **new** Body, the Body of Christ.

The inauguration of the Church took place on the Day of Pentecost, in Jerusalem, when the Holy Spirit came upon all the believers, baptizing them into the one body. (See Acts chapter 2)

“For as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of that one body, though they are many, are one body, so also is the Messiah. For by one Spirit we were all baptized **into one body**, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For indeed the body is not one member, but many.” (1 Corinthians 12:12-14)

Pentecost was the Biblical Harvest Festival of *Shavu'ot*, which came fifty days after the Resurrection of Christ.

Pentecost was the beginning of the New Testament *Ekklesia*; but ever since then, the Holy Spirit has been adding new believers to the body – every day - wherever they are, and as soon as they are born again. **We** may not always be able to tell if a person is a member of the Master’s Body or not, but **“the Master knows** those who are His.” (2 Timothy 2:19)

The Body has millions of members - the majority are already with the Lord in Heaven; the rest are still on the earth, and some are still to be born. Soon, the last member will be added, and then the Master will catch the believers still on the earth, up to Heaven, where they will be united with those who have gone before, and with the Messiah Himself. And there and

then, in Heaven, the Marriage will take place. What a day of rejoicing that will be!

BUILDING UP THE BODY

The Master is concerned that every member of the Bride should be established and built up, and ultimately brought to mature stature - to His fullness and likeness. Therefore He provides leaders and gifts (abilities and functions) for this purpose. Let’s take some of the MEAT in the following passage:

“And He *gifted and gave* some *disciples as* apostles, some *as* prophets, some *as* evangelists, and some *as* shepherd-pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the set-apart *believers*, for the work of service, for the building up of the Body of Messiah; until we all come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown, mature, perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Messiah, so that, we should no longer be children, tossed here and there and carried about by every wind of teaching, by the trickery of men, and *their* subtle scheming to lead *people* astray. But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him, who is the Head - the Messiah, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by that which every joint supplies, according to the effective working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.” (Ephesians 4:11-16)

THE LOCAL EXPRESSION OF THE BODY

Whenever a group of true believers meet together to worship the Lord, they automatically form "a local body" - a local expression of the whole Church. They are members one of another, united around the Head, and, in God's plan, having elders, pastors and teachers to build up the members. A careful examination of the text shows that each member has a special function and that each one should help build others up in the faith. (Read also 1 Corinthians chapter 12).

It is important then, that we become regular, faithful and

zealous members of a local fellowship. The size of the group, or its prosperity, is not important; nor is its "reputation," but it should be a true expression of the Master's Body.

On earth, we will never find a perfect church - one that is absolutely true in doctrine, holy and blameless in conduct, loving and charitable in all relations, fervently evangelistic in reaching the unsaved, exercising the gifts of the Spirit with abundance of spiritual fruit, and without friction or division of any kind. Every church should be working towards that perfection. Alas, all fall short in some way. But we should, at least, seek to be associated with a church, where ...

1. The Headship of Christ is acknowledged and God is truly worshipped.
2. The Bible is recognized as authority, and used for guidance.
3. There is fellowship, life and love.

HOW TO JOIN A LOCAL CHURCH?

You may already be a member of a local Church. If so, you may need to consider if this church is the right one for you. Do you receive food and fellowship there? Is Christ in the central place? Is it a Bible-believing fellowship? If not, then seek out a new "home."

When you find a good group, then approach the leaders of the church and ask about joining the fellowship. You can expect them to question you to make sure you are truly the Lord's. They will usually ask you if you have been baptized as a believer. So, let's consider the matter of Baptism.

BAPTISM

I am referring to "Believer's Baptism" by emersion in water. The work of the Spirit "baptizing us into the Body," is another matter. That is an inward experience, whereas water baptism is an outward expression of His work in us.

Should a person be baptized in water? Yes, definitely, for it is a

command to all believers:

"And Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the Name of Jesus the Messiah, for the forgiveness of sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'." (Acts 2:38)

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

Baptism does not make you a member of the Church; it does not wash your sins away, nor does it give you salvation or the Holy Spirit. Baptism is an **outward sign** of what has happened in you. It is a testimony to your faith in Christ.

Baptism in water is a sign. Going under the water speaks of **death**; coming out of the water speaks of **new life**. It shows firstly, that we were associated with the Master in His death at Calvary. It shows, secondly, that our "old life" has finished, and that, like Christ who was raised from the dead, we too, because of His life implanted in us, have been raised to newness of life.

Baptism is a wonderful sign and a privilege for the believer to publicly show his faith. So believer, be baptized if you haven't taken this public step already.

"What about child baptism?" you may ask. "Child baptism" is a dedication of a baby by its parents. It is not "believer's baptism." Baptism must come **after** you experience new birth.

In many cases, baptism helps to establish a believer as a true Christian, such as when he comes out of another religion. Because of the step of baptism, he may be cast out and persecuted, but to take a public stand with Christ, brings the Master's commendations.

"Everyone, therefore, who shall confess Me before men, him I shall also confess before My Father who is in heaven."

(Matthew 10:32)

TEST YOURSELF QUESTIONS

1. What are three other names for the Church?
 - a. (Eph. 5:23)
 - b. (Rev. 19:7)
 - c. (Rev 21:2,10)
2. How does one become a member of Christ's Body, the Church?
 - (1 Cor. 12:13)
 - (Eph. 2:8)
3. How should members of the Church treat each other?
 - a. (1 Thes. 5:11)
 - b. (1 Thes. 5: 13)
 - c. (1 Thes. 5:14)
 - d. (1 Thes. 5: 14)
 - e. (1 Thes. 5: 15)
 - f. (Col. 3:13-14)
 - g. (Gal. 6:2)
 - h. (James 4:11)
4. Was the Lord Jesus ever baptized?
..... (Matthew 3:13-17)
5. How many were baptized on the day of Pentecost?
..... (Acts 2: 41)
6. The Great Commission says that there are three vital things to do to establish the Church. What are they?
 - a. (Matthew 28: 19)
 - b. (Matthew 28:19)
 - c. (Matthew 28: 20)

LESSON FOUR

EXPERIENCING CHRIST, THE WAY

One of the most well-known statements of the Lord Jesus is His words to Thomas:

“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no-one comes to the Father, except through Me.”
(John 14:6)

The Heavenly Father is revealed in the original, God-breathed Hebrew Scriptures, by the Name of "Yahweh." This is His everlasting Name (Exodus 3:15). The meaning of the Name has to do with His eternal existence. Yahweh is the "Great I AM," **The Eternal One.**

The more you study the Scriptures, the more you get to know the Master, and the more you realize that Jesus is indeed, THE WAY. He is absolutely unique. He does not merely show us the way or teach us about the way - HE IS THE WAY. Likewise, He is the Life. He not only gives eternal life, but HE IS LIFE. The **Beginning** of our faith is Christ. He is also the **End** - the goal of our faith.

“I am the Alpha and Omega - *the A and the Z, the Beginning and the End* - says *Yahweh* the Lord , who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”
(Revelation 1:8)

“... fixing our eyes on Jesus, the Author *of the Faith* and the One who completes *and* perfects our faith.”

(Hebrews 12: 2)

Jesus is also the **Centre** of our very life, if we belong to Him. This is a precious and vital truth that I want you to understand through this lesson. I pray that our Father will reveal it to you in all its simplicity and power.

In the book of Colossians we read some important words concerning this “mystery”:

“... to whom God has chosen to make known among the *Gentile* nations, the glorious riches of this mystery, which is

Messiah in you, the hope of glory, whom we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man perfect, *mature and complete* in the Messiah.”
(Colossians 1:27, 28)

“For in Him (*the Messiah*) all the fullness of the *Eternal* Deity - *all the fullness of what Yahweh is* - dwells in *bodily form*, and in *union with Him - Jesus*, who is the Head over all power and authority - you have been made complete.”

(Colossians 2: 9, 10)

“For you have died, and your life is now hidden with the Messiah in God. When the Messiah, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.”

(Colossians 3: 3, 4)

The “mystery” is that CHRIST IS OUR LIFE, and He LIVES WITHIN US, and wants to LIVE OUT HIS LIFE, THROUGH US. (We are referring here, of course, to born again believers.)

This is not imagination, but a fact. It has awesome implications. All the fullness of God dwells in Christ - and Christ lives within us. He is not a God “way up there in the sky,” but the Almighty God **living within us**. It is by God's Spirit that Christ lives in us.

(In our next lesson we will study “The Holy Spirit.” more fully.)

If God lives within us, then He is the **resource for our every need**. If we need wisdom, He is within us. If we need strength, He is within us. But not only is He there to supply our needs; He is there **to take control of us**, and to make us a **dwelling place on earth for His glory**. We - frail creatures that we are - are vessels to bear the Life, the Personality and the Glory of God. The more you think about this, the more you see how tremendous it is.

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves.”
(2 Corinthians 4:7)

Now if Christ is in us - and He is the “hope of glory” - then

let us restate our beliefs, or rather, the Bible teaching about the Person of Jesus Christ:

THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Eternal Son of Yahweh the Eternal One. The following verses speak of the Sonship of Christ:

“JESUS . . . declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Master.”
(Romans 1:1,4)

“For *Yahweh, the Almighty* God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten (*His one and only, unique*) Son, so that whoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have eternal (*everlasting*) life.”
(John 3:16)

“For to which of the angels did He ever say, ‘YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU - *that is, I have established You in this unique relationship to Me, declaring that You are My Anointed Son*’? And again, ‘I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM, AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME’?” (Hebrews 1:5)

In the latter two verses, you read that Jesus is the “Begotten Son.” This expression confuses many as it seems to suggest that Christ was born or created. But that is not so. The word ‘Begotten’ (Greek: “*prototokos*”) is used only for the Lord Jesus and speaks about His **unique** relationship with the Father. It can also be translated as “prototype” - the “original model.” He is the **uncreated model** to which God will conform all of His redeemed children.

(The Begotten Son is just as “old” as the Father, for He is without beginning: The word “Son” in this context does **not** mean “junior;” nor is it speaking about His humanity; it is speaking of His unique, eternal relationship with the Father.)

2. Jesus is the Creator.

“*And* He is the image of the invisible God, the ‘First-born’ of all creation. For in Him all things in heaven and on earth were created, *things* visible and invisible, whether thrones or

dominions or rulers or authorities - all things have been created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the Head of the body, the Ekklesia (*the corporate Body of true believers who are in fellowship with the Messiah*); and He is 'the Beginning,' the 'First-born from the dead'; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything." (Colossians 1:15-18)

The word "beginning" in verse 18 is not saying He was the first created. The Greek word is *arche*, which means "ancient." In the Book of Daniel, the Lord is called "The Ancient of Days."

So, "the Beginning" is the "Ancient One," or the One who is before all things. It is a similar expression to those in Revelation 1:8 and Hebrews 12: 2 (quoted earlier) - the Alpha and the Omega (the A and the Z) - the Beginning and the End, and the Author and the Finisher. He is absolutely unique as the Creator.

In His Divinity, the eternal Son is so equated with Yahweh the Heavenly Father, that they seem to be one and the same. The Son is called by the same titles as the Father: "Everlasting Father, Mighty God, Saviour, Lord, the First and the Last." And yet we have read about the "unique, uncreated Son," who became the "unique Son of Man" in His humanity.

Simply put, Yahweh the Eternal One is the Father, the Son and the Spirit - one in unity - the holy Three-in-One.

3. Jesus is Yahweh Incarnate. Jesus was no less than Yahweh the Eternal One clothed in humanity. He became man in order to save us, and to share Himself in a form that we could easily understand. This is the teaching in Philippians 2: 5-8:

"Christ Jesus, who, although existing in the form of God - *being in very nature God*, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself (*still further*) by becoming obedient to the extreme of death, even death of an *execution stake - a cross*."

Jesus is **absolutely unique** in His incarnation. God has **never** been incarnated in any other form or person.

The original Hebrew Name of Jesus was Y'shua (Ye-**shu-a**) which means, "**Yahweh is salvation.**" Y'shua is Yahweh manifest in humanity. ("Jesus" is an English transliteration of Y'shua.)

4. The Saviour and Redeemer. Even as His **Person** is unique, so is His **work**. Jesus is the only One who can save people from sin. He saves, not merely by His teaching and example, but by His sacrificial and substitutionary death on the cross. He died in our place. The tremendous value of His death is in the fact that He was sinless, and that His life was eternal. It was more than the sum total of all human life in all the ages.

Many Scriptures refer to Jesus as Saviour.

"... God our Saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, (Yahweh), and one Mediator between God and men - the Man, Jesus the Messiah, who gave Himself as a ransom for all men - a fact attested to at the proper time." (1 Timothy 2:3-6)

Jesus is also absolutely unique as the Saviour.

"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

Look up these verses also in your Bible: Titus 2:11, 3:4-7; Hebrews 2:14-17; 1 Peter 1:18-19, 2:24, 3:18.

Much more could be said about the Person of Jesus, Y'shua, for He is also the Head of the Church, the Bridegroom, and the Coming King. He has more than 200 titles in Scripture, each of which amplifies His wonderful Person. And to you, young believer, is given the privilege to discover more and more of this unique One as you travel along The Way.

5. Jesus is the Resurrection. The term "first-born from the dead" in Colossians 1:18, is again not referring to the birth or origin of Jesus, but to His uniqueness in resurrection. The

Greek word for “first born” is again ‘prototokos’, so the expression can be translated as “Prototype of resurrection.”

It is a reference not only to the fact that Jesus rose from the dead, but that **HE IS the resurrection**. He was the **origin of life**, and the One who has total control over life and death. This is all implied in the claim of the Lord in John 11:25-26:

“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the **Resurrection** and the **Life**; he who believes in Me, even though he dies, he will live; and whoever is living and believing in Me will never die. Do you believe this?’ ”

Truly this is a tremendous claim. But it's true! Jesus is unique, and He is everything that He said He was. It is because of who and what He is, that our faith in Him is so real and vital.

SHARING HIS LIFE

Let us progress further. It is thrilling, dear believer, that our faith is **not merely believing the facts** about our wonderful Master, Saviour and God, but it is a real and vital **participation in His Life**. Our relationship to Jesus is not theoretical, but a living reality. It is also a very **personal** relationship, and He is quite capable of sharing Himself with every individual at the same time, and to the extent that the believer desires and is available to Him.

He lives within us, so let's learn to count on that fact, and learn to let His Life manifest in our behavior - in our actions, in our expressions, our smile, and in our words.

Since you were born again, believer, you have been experiencing the life of Jesus working within you. Now, I want you to guard against the subtle danger of drifting back to the “natural” life and thinking that you, yourself, should live out your Christian life in your own strength. Guard against the danger of thinking that you should “carry yourself” along the way.

Just as you first came to Christ, in faith, now continue to

follow Him - by faith. And faith means more than believing in Him - it means **trusting** Him, becoming **dependant** upon Him.

Here is a simple, but often difficult lesson to learn.

Jesus said: “Apart from Me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)

Then Paul said: “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13)

The lesson is, learn to be totally dependant on the Person of Christ within you, so that His life and power is released in your behavior and activity. Paul explained it this way:

“I have been crucified with the Messiah; and I no longer live, but *it is* the Messiah *who* lives in me; and *the life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

JESUS IS OUR MASTER

In order that He might live His life in us, the Messiah calls us to **surrender** ourselves fully to Him. He is our Master, so we must learn to recognise and obey His voice. But always remember, Y'shua (Jesus) is our ever-present, loving, gracious, and empowering Master.

The Lord Jesus has come into your heart, but He does not intend to take a back seat and remain hidden. He must live out His life in you. Therefore He must be permitted to enter and direct **every area of your life**. He will not force His way in; neither will He become a tyrant. But He will be in you, the Source of joy, peace, comfort, wisdom and strength.

He does not want to bind us, but to set us wonderfully **free** - free to live a Godly life - a life of **fullness**, and one that truly fulfils His glorious purpose in us.

On our part, there must be a constant surrendering to Jesus, as our Master - a surrendering of ourselves, our bodies, our wills, our affections and our resources to Him, so that He might live out His life through us.

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

CULTIVATE THIS WONDERFUL RELATIONSHIP

Young believer, the Eternal One has brought you into a wonderful relationship to Himself, so that you might experience more of His life and purposes. Don't neglect the GIFT that is within you. Learn to **love** your Master deeply. **Walk** close to Him and **obey** Him so that **His life** becomes **your life** and **your life** becomes **His life**.

Go carefully over these words in Ephesians:

“For this reason, I kneel before the Father ... *I pray* that out of the riches of His glory, He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that the Messiah may dwell in your hearts through faith *in Him*. *And I pray* that you will be rooted and established in love, so that together with all the set-apart *believers*, you may be able to comprehend what is the width, length, height and depth of the Messiah's love - and to know this love which surpasses knowledge so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”
 (Ephesians 3:14, 16-19)

TEST YOURSELF QUESTIONS

1. How does Jesus live within the believer?
 (Galatians 4:6)
2. Does the Master ever leave the believer, after He has come into him? (Matt. 28:20, Hebrews 13:5)

3. What are some of the reasons for the Messiah living in us?
 - a. (Colossians 1:18)
 - b. (1 Thess. 5:23)
 - c. (John 15:16)
 - d. (Eph. 2: 21-22)
4. Who is the older - God the Father, or God the Son?
 (John 1:1-2, 14:9-11)
5. Why is Jesus different to all other religious founders?
 - a. (1 Cor. 15:3)
 - b. (John 15:4)
 - c. (John 14:6)
 - d. (Acts 4:10-12)
6. If Jesus is our Life and our Master, what are some of our responsibilities?
 - a. (Matthew 16:24)
 - b. (Colossians 3:5)
 - c. (Colossians 3:8-9)
 - d. (Colossians 3:12-14)
 - e. (Colossians 4:4-6)
 - f. (Hebrews 13:15)
 - g. (2 Timothy 2:2)

LESSON FIVE

YOUR EVER-PRESENT HELPER ON THE WAY

A very definite promise of the Lord Jesus is that He would give His people **the Holy Spirit**:

“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever - the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him. But you know Him because He lives with you, and will be in you.”

(John 14:16-17)

“When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me.”

(John 15:26)

“... it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you ... But when He comes, the Spirit of Truth, He will guide you into all the truth ...”

(John 16:7, 13)

The Master is referring to the Holy Spirit, who is also known as the Comforter, or Helper. In Greek He is the “*Paracletos*,” which means, “one called alongside to help.” As you read the Bible, you will find quite a lot of teaching about the Holy Spirit and His work. Sometimes He is referred to as the Holy Ghost. But “Ghost” is an old English word that has changed its meaning. “Spirit” is a much better modern translation.

The Lord Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will be our Helper always, and that He will live in us. It is important then, that we understand clearly who the Holy Spirit is, and what He does in our lives.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON

Erroneous doctrine has often taught that the Holy Spirit is a power, and not a Person. The Holy Spirit is indeed the power of God, but He is **not** an abstract **force**. He **is** a **Person**. But

by “person,” we don’t mean a “human being.” It means He has “personality.” The Heavenly Father also is a Person, but He's not a man. The Lord Jesus, of course, took humanity upon Himself when He came to earth as a babe, but He is an eternal divine Person.

The Spirit's personality is referred to in the Master’s teaching:

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My Name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance everything I have said to you.” (John 14:26)

The Lord does not refer to the Holy Spirit as “it,” but as “He.” Moreover, only a **person** could be a helper and teacher.

Other verses in Scripture also show the personality of the Holy Spirit. He **intercedes** (Romans 8:26), He **speaks** (Rev. 2:7), and loves, for He can be **grieved** (Eph. 4:30).

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD

The Holy Spirit is usually referred to as the Third Person of the Eternal Trinity - the Three-in-One. This does not mean that He is inferior, or junior to the Father, or to the Son. He is equally God, and He is called by a number of titles, including, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of Yahweh.

An absolutely **false** teaching that's been going around, says that the Holy Spirit is the God-Mother, who should be referred to as “she.” This is utter nonsense and unscriptural. In trying to understand the Eternity Deity, we should avoid the danger of trying to fit God into our human concept. Man’s concept of God always falls very short. Imaginations are not realities. We must accept what God has declared about Himself in the Bible. And remember, God is so great and so vast, that we may need all of eternity to get to know Him fully.

The Bible says that the Father is God, Jesus is God and the Holy Spirit is God. We must accept then, that God is known or manifest as three persons, and that those Three Persons are the one Eternal God.

Along the way you will sooner or later come across various misconceptions, such as - “Only the Father is God”, or “Father and Son are God, but not the Holy Spirit.” Then there is an extreme view which says that there are three Gods. Another extreme is known as the **“Jesus only teaching.”** This says that there is one God - not three persons; there is only Jesus. It says that the “Father” is actually Jesus, and the “Holy Spirit” is Jesus, therefore, there is only one Person - Jesus. This teaching tries to simplify the Eternal Deity, but it falls short of the revelation, and is very confusing.

These extremes arise out of attempts to “explain” God. But, you can’t do that satisfactorily with limited human reasoning. You might find some Bible verses to help support ideas, but they will always clash with other Scriptures when used wrongly.

We must accept what is revealed in the Bible - that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are Three Personalities, but together, are One eternal God. Thus, while we see the Son talking to the Father, we can accept statements of Jesus, such as:

“He who has seen Me has seen the Father.” (John 14:9)

The “Three-in-One” are so closely involved and linked, that we cannot separate Them . . . except in words.

Often the question comes up: Should we worship the Holy Spirit? Some quote John 16:14, which says the Holy Spirit will glorify Jesus, and not Himself, suggesting that Jesus should be given central place in worship. Others believe we should pray to and worship only God the Father. (John 4:23)

It is true that we are told to come to the Father through the Son, and that we are to pray “in the Spirit,” and in the Name of the Son (John 14:6 Eph. 6:18, John 15:16). But the Scriptures say:

“Moreover, when He brings ‘the firstborn’ (*the Origin, Model, Head and Heir*) into the world, He says, ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him!’”
(Hebrew 1:6)

The wise men worshiped the baby Jesus (Matt. 2:11). And

the redeemed in Heaven also worship the Lord Jesus:

“And they sang a new song: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals, for You were slain, and by Your blood *You* have redeemed us to God out of every tribe, language, people and nation’.”
(Revelation 5:9)

A problem is created if we think of the Father, the Son and the Spirit as “three Gods.” That is NOT the Bible teaching. The Bible and church doctrine is that the Father, the Son and the Spirit are co-equal, and are co-eternally God. The three are manifestations of the ONE eternal Divinity. Each has various functions, but in substance they are the one eternal Divinity.

We must certainly acknowledge that both the Son and the Holy Spirit are our God, even as the Father is. And so, in view of the great commandment which Jesus quoted to the devil,

“You shall worship YAHWEH the LORD your God and serve Him only” (Luke 4:8. Deut. 6:13),

we can say that we do not worship one, two or three personalities, but God in His entirety.

Always remember, the Holy Spirit is our ever-present Comforter. He is the wonderful, gracious, loving Person of God living inside us. (Romans 8:11; 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 1:22, 5:5; 1 John 3:24).

Now let us consider some important aspects of . . .

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is an Executive who carries out the plans of Yahweh. He moved in Creation (Gen 1: 2). He inspired the writing of the Scriptures - the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21). He strives with men to turn them from their sin (Gen. 6:3; John 16:8). He exalts the Person of Jesus and turns hungry souls to Him (John 16:14; Galatians 4:6). He does a miraculous work - the new birth - in the heart and life of sinners who respond to the call of God (John 3:5-7). He continues His work in the believer - sanctifying, purifying and perfecting (1 Thess. 5:23-24; 1 Peter 1:2), and He gives the believer assurance of salvation. (Romans 8:16).

The Holy Spirit seeks always to fill the believer with Himself, and to empower him to live for Christ and to witness of His saving grace. (Acts 1:8). He teaches us more of the ways of God, (Romans 8:15), and He also prays for us. (Romans 8:27)

Finally, the Holy Spirit will raise us up (if we should die before the Lord comes), and take us to the Father's House. (Rom. 8:11)

Let us now come to the most important aspect of the Holy Spirit's work in us:

THE HOLY SPIRIT WANTS TO FILL OUR LIVES WITH HIMSELF AND HIS POWER

In a number of places in Scripture, we see that believers were filled with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:4, 4:8, 31, 7:55, 9:17-18, 13:9,52).

In Ephesians we read the command:

“BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT.” (Ephesians 5:18)

What does this mean? Paul uses the expression, “filled up to all the fullness of God.” This phrase has been expanded in the Amplified Bible, giving a fuller meaning –

“That you may ... know the love which surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God - that you may have the richest measure of the Divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself.”
(Ephesians 3:19)

That is the meaning of being filled with the Spirit. It is indeed a mysterious, an awesome, and yet a wonderful and thrilling experience. It is God possessing us completely. It is not an “experience” for experience's sake, but the means by which God releases His life, love, joy, holiness and power in and through us.

If we are filled with the Holy Spirit, then our lives become truly spiritual - full of Godly characteristics that bring peace and joy to us, and blessing to others. If we are filled with the Holy Spirit, then God's power will be working through us so

that we become truly effective instruments in His work of saving and building up others in the faith.

It does NOT mean that all our troubles are over and that there is an instant removal of every difficulty. But it does mean that the power, love and grace of God are free to operate in our lives as the Master intends.

When we are born again, the Holy Spirit fills us, and gives us great joy. But after some time we may find that something has "gone wrong," and we feel "empty."

When this happens, we need to confess our sin and failure. This leads to the refilling with the Spirit.

Sadly, instead of confessing our failure immediately and being refilled with the Spirit, we often start walking under our own steam, and quickly lose the joy of the Lord.

There will be periods in our lives when God seeks to show us our own inadequacy, our failures, and our need to be filled anew with the Spirit. At these times we should wait on God, inviting Him to search our lives to reveal any pockets of sin, or areas in our lives that are not fully surrendered to Him.

Then the moment will come when God's grace enables us to “open up” to His love and enabling power. And at that moment He will fill us anew.

Here are a few guidelines to answer the question, “How can I be filled anew with the Spirit?”

1. CONFESS: Let the Lord go deep into your heart to search you and to show you any sins or failures in your life. Then confess them to God. (1 John 1:9; James 4:8)

Confession will bring cleansing and will restore you to fellowship with God. But unless you followup with these next four steps, you will soon be "empty" again.

2. RENOUNCE: Renounce anything of darkness; any sins or bad habits or false loves, selfish ambitions, and evil desires. (Romans 6:11-13; Col. 3:5, 8)

3. MAKE RESTITUTION: If you have done wrong, put it right if at all possible. Mend broken relationships. Repay what you owe. Apologize if you have offended. (Matthew 5:23-24). Forgive those who have done wrong to you. (Matthew 6:12)

4. SURRENDER: Surrender everything you have and are, to the Saviour. Give every part of your body to Him. Give Him control over every area of your life. Become a living sacrifice. (Romans 12:1-2)

5. WALK IN FAITH: Go ahead, trusting the Father to enable you to live for His purpose and glory. (2 Cor. 5:7. Gal. 5:16. Eph. 5:8)

When we are refilled, the work of the Spirit will go deeper in our lives, taking us forward in the life of God.

It must be emphasized that the filling is not given for experience's sake. The Spirit fills us so that our lives might be in fellowship with God, and effective for Him.

When we are filled, we may or may not have strong feelings. Sometimes there may be little **feeling** at all - only a sense of **trusting** the Lord. But there may be a great sense of relief, release and joy. Some believers have felt an indescribable experience of the Spirit overpowering and flooding them, which has lasted for some minutes or hours.

The filling of the Spirit usually produces a deep sense of cleansing, followed by a spirit of praise. It also rekindles our love for God, and gives us a deep compulsion to tell people we meet, of our Saviour's love.

We should not rely on our feelings; we need to just trust in the Master to live out His life in us. And as we walk in the Spirit, evidence of the Spirit's work will be seen in our lives.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

The **continuous filling** of the Spirit will normally be a quiet flowing of His power, love, grace and joy through us, bringing blessing to others. At times we may be aware of His power at work in us; but at other times we may not be conscious at all

of how He is using us. He often speaks to others through our words, or actions, or even through our smile, without us realizing it. But when the Holy Spirit fills us, He produces much fruit in our lives. What type of fruit?

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” (Galatians 5:22-23)

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts or talents to His people, to be used for the building up of the Body of the Messiah. Believers are not all given the same gift. (Check out these Bible verses: Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Cor. 12:7-11, 28; Romans 12:6-8)

We are not told to ask or demand certain gifts from God. And we should not seek to imitate another believer's experience. God gives talents to each one according to His purpose. So let the Holy Spirit work in you, and manifest the life of Christ through you, in whichever way He chooses.

CAN WE LOSE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

If we are born again, the Holy Spirit will never leave us, for He is God's seal upon us, and we are sealed until the day of redemption; the Return of the Master. But it is very possible that we can grieve and quench the Holy Spirit. That's why we are commanded:

“**Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” (Ephesians 4:30)

“**Do not quench the Spirit.**” (1 Thessalonians 5:19)

Any sin, selfish living, or uncontrolled action, even a hasty, nasty word, will grieve Him, as will also our withdrawal of what we have already surrendered to God. Grieving the Spirit blocks His power flowing through us. So if we grieve Him, or are not quite right with Him, we must confess our condition, our faults, and receive His cleansing, restoration and refilling.

Finally, always remember, the Holy Spirit is your ever-present Companion and Helper.

TEST YOURSELF QUESTIONS

1. What are some other names for the Holy Spirit?
 - a. (John 14:16)
 - b. (John 15: 26)

2. Does the Holy Spirit live in all believers?
 Yes / No (2 Corinthians 1:21-22)

3. Is the Holy Spirit inferior to God the Father?
 Yes / No (See page 38-40)

4. Where is the Holy Spirit?
 (Psalm 139:7-12)

5. To be filled with, and to walk in the Holy Spirit, what must we do?
 - a. (1 John 1:9)
 - b. (Colossians 3:5)
 - c. (Matthew 5:23-34)
 - d. (Romans 12:1-2)
 - e. (2 Cor. 5:7. Gal. 5:16. Eph. 5:8)

6. Can you name nine types of fruit that the Holy Spirit produces in our lives? (Galatians 5:22-23)

(1)	(2)	(3)
(4)	(5)	(6)
(7)	(8)	(9)

7. Does the Holy Spirit give gifts to special leaders only, or to every born-again believer?
 (1 Corinthians 12:7, 11)

LESSON SIX

DISCIPLINED TO CLIMB THE WAY

In our earlier lessons we have seen the provision God has made for us to grow and to walk in His Way. We have seen some of the blessings He has given to us. Now we will look at discipline, for along with the blessings there must be discipline in the believer’s life.

A child who is showered with material benefits, but who is not disciplined, will soon be spoiled. And a follower of Jesus Christ will be unprofitable if he is not disciplined to climb the way.

I must emphasize that the way leads upward, and there is much climbing to be done. The way of the Messiah is not a luxury coach in which you simply relax and enjoy the scenery. No. At times we have much walking, marching, climbing and fighting to do along the way.

While the Christian life is a life of rest, joy, divine energy and blessing, it also has difficulties, troubles, sighs and exertions. We must have the both sides, in our spiritual life.

Take as an example, the life of our Master. He was filled with the peace, joy and power of the Holy Spirit, yet He often became tired from long walks, hard work, persecution, and the spiritual warfare which led Him all the way to the cross.

TAKE UP THE CROSS

The Lord Jesus says to all who would follow Him . . .

“If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me’.” (Luke 9:23)

“Whoever does not carry his *own* cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple.” (Luke 14:27)

"To carry your cross," does not simply mean to endure the difficulties. It means much more; the cross represents “death,”

and we are called to die to our own selfish desires, and to live for God's will.

The apostle Paul said: "**I die daily.**" (1 Corinthians 15:31). He also explains it like this:

"I have been crucified with the Messiah; and I no longer live, but *it is* the Messiah *who* lives in me; and *the life* which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

"For me, to live is the Messiah, and to die is gain."

(Philippians 1:21)

This should be our daily motto, attitude and goal;

"Not I, but the Messiah in me."

Is it reasonable that the Master should ask so much of His disciples? Definitely, for He bought us with His precious blood, and He has absolute good in store for us. So He must receive our total compliance to His sovereignty in our lives.

"Do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit** who lives inside you, whom you have received from God? You do not belong to yourself; you have been bought at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

"You were redeemed with precious blood ... the blood of Messiah." (1 Peter 1:18-19)

If we own Jesus as our Master, then we must discipline ourselves, and accept His discipline, as we follow in His ways.

Paul, one of the greatest Christians said:

"I beat my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified."

(1 Corinthians 9:27)

Physical discipline is very much a part of discipleship, but "discipline for godliness" is even more important.

"Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and *also* for the *life* to come."

(1 Timothy 4:7-8)

Again Paul says; "Suffer hardship, therefore, as a good soldier of Y'shua the Messiah. No soldier in active service entangles himself with the everyday affairs of life, because he wants to please the one who enlisted him." (2 Timothy 2:3-4)

We all agree that soldiers must be disciplined if they are going to be of any use to the country. So must the believer. Correct habits must be maintained, and wrong habits eliminated.

We need to discipline **our mind**, and feed our mind on the Word of God. We need to get into the habit of rejecting all the unprofitable and ungodly things that beckon for our attention.

We need to discipline **our eyes**, so they are not running after evil; **our ears**, so they are not attuned to wickedness; and, **our tongue**, so that it does not become "a fire full of iniquity and deadly poison." (See James, chapter 3)

Our hearts need to be disciplined so that the Lord Jesus is Master of our affections and desires, and so that we are not filled with greed, lust and selfishness. We need to be disciplined in the use of our **time, talents, and possessions**, for these all belong to God.

Time is so precious and can be so easily wasted. We should make our time count for God, and also for the spiritual development of both ourselves, and others.

Talents are gifts and abilities that God has given to us. They are to be used as He directs for the extension of His Kingdom.

If we belong to God, our **possessions** also belong to God. But He has entrusted us with certain possessions, including our finances, and He regards us as stewards in handling these possessions wisely and for good. We should never use a single coin for anything wrong.

Consider everything you have as belonging to the Master. The Bible says:

"It is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy."

(1 Corinthians 4:2)

If we are faithful to the Lord in the use of the talents He gives us, we will receive His commendation with joy when we stand before Him. (See Matthew 25:21)

THE BODY IS A TEMPLE OF GOD

If we realize this fact, it will make a tremendous difference in our attitude to, and our treatment of, our bodies. The Bible says:

“Do you not know that you are a Dwelling Place (temple) of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?”

(1 Corinthians 3:16, 17)

This indicates that any abuse of our bodies is wrong, and that we should renounce all bad habits.

SMOKING, most people admit, is a bad habit. Doctors warn that it is dangerous to health. Lungs are effected and so often “smoking cough” sets in. Smoking is unnatural and is an abuse of the body for anyone. How much more for the believer, whose body is a holy temple of God.

ALCOHOL. While there is no Biblical command, “You shall not drink,” we all know that alcohol can be very dangerous. And habitual drinking can be an abuse of the body that robs a person of his self-control. Self-control is a “fruit of the Holy Spirit” (Gal. 5:23), but **drunkenness** is a “work of the flesh,” and leads to all sorts of evil.

“Let us behave properly as in the daytime, not in carousing (revelry) and drunkenness, not in immorality - sexual promiscuity, sensuality and debauchery, not in strife and jealousy. But clothe yourselves with Y’shua the Messiah (the Lord Jesus) and make no provision for the flesh (the sinful nature) to gratify its desires (lusts).” (Romans 13:13-14)

NARCOTIC DRUGS are similar to alcohol in that they rob a person of self-control and so they abuse the body.

These three common bad habits are not only harmful, but for

the believer they are unnecessary money consumers. And this is a misuse of the possessions that the Lord has entrusted to us. Let the Master show you the right use of money!

Remembering that our bodies are temples of God, we need to be careful to honour our Master in every way. For example, the in way we **dress** and **make up** - we are to be humble and moderate in appearance. We are to watch our **speech** so that what we say is not crude, frivolous or careless, but speech that honours the Master

We need to maintain our personal **physical cleanliness** as well as a clean **mind** and **soul**, for our bodies are sanctified, set-apart “temples of God,” and the glory of Christ indwells us.

“For *it is* God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ who has shone in our hearts for the enlightening of the knowledge of **the glory of God** in the face of Y’shua the Messiah. But **we have this treasure** in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves.”

(2 Corinthians 4:6-7)

“**Messiah in you the Hope of Glory.**” (Colossians 1:27)

Whenever you are in doubt about what you should do, or how you should behave, or what you should say, remember, you are a disciple of Jesus. And then ask yourself, “What would Jesus, my Master do, or say, in this situation?” Aim always to “glorify God in your body,” as 1 Corinthians 6: 20 exhorts us.

THE RIGHT AND WRONG OF SEX

Is sex wrong? This is one of the most vital questions, as sex is one of the strongest instincts in the human makeup, as well as in all nature.

Sex itself is not wrong. In the right place - in the marriage bond - sex is very right. It is the abuse or misuse of sexual functions that is wrong.

Always remember that God intends only good - the very best - for His people. His intention is that the marriage relation-

ship between man and wife should be a loving and satisfying one. The sexual desire and capacity should be satisfied in that relationship - not merely for sexual gratification, but as a physical expression of true love. True love is more than the physical; it is the uniting of two hearts or souls, and should also include the spiritual dimension.

Outside of marriage, sexual union is forbidden by the Word of God, and it is called immorality. Why? Because it is a deviation from God's will and plan, and because the sexual drive is so strong, that if unrestrained, it will lead not to satisfaction, but to guilt, incompleteness, insecurity, fear, misery and despair. Most of all, **immorality will lead one away from God.**

Immorality produces the opposite result to what is hoped for, and to what God intended. If a believer commits immorality, it is worse, because he defiles a temple of God. Our bodies belong to Christ and we are to keep them as pure vessels for Him.

"Therefore put to death the members of your earthly body - your physical parts and all that is carnal in you which causes you to sin: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry." (Colossians 3:5)

How to do this? By presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice to God. (see below.) Also, read carefully, 1 Corinthians 6: 9-20.

A LIVING SACRIFICE

Not only should we keep our bodies from bad habits, uncleanness and immorality, but we are to continually and positively present our bodies to God.

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

The Master calls us, each one, to a life of service, and He wants

to use our bodies as instruments to fulfil His will. We must be willing instruments, responsive to His directions. If we truly love the Master, then our chief desire will be, to be a vessel which God can fill and use. We cannot become such a vessel by accident, but only by a deliberate surrender of every part of our body, soul and spirit to God.

This is the way to fullness, to usefulness, to pure joy and satisfaction - to give our bodies and all that we have and are, to the Master, so that He can use us however He decides. So let's make the Lord Jesus the absolute sovereign of every part of our lives. Let's be His disciples indeed.

Young believer, if you have failed anywhere in your Christian life, (or whenever you do), or if you have been regarding your possessions, your time, or your body, as your own, I beseech you, as the Word of God does, to confess your failure to the Master right now, and then present yourself completely to Him as a living sacrifice.

The following verses will help you do this. And this should be our constant prayer:

*Take my life, and let it be, consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise.
Take my hands, and let them move, at the impulse of Thy love;
Take my feet, and let them be, swift and beautiful for Thee.
Take my voice, and let me sing; always, only for my King;
Take my lips, and let them be, filled with messages from Thee.
Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect, and use, every power as Thou shalt choose.
Take my will, and make it Thine; it shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is Thine own; it shall be Thy royal throne.
Take my love; my Lord, I pour, at Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself, and I will be, ever, only, all for Thee.*

TEST YOURSELF QUESTIONS

1. What is one of the most important commands of Christ for His disciples?
..... (John 13:34-35)
2. Why is it so important to give the tongue to the Lord?
..... (James 3:1-8)
3. What does it mean to “take up the cross”?
..... (See page 46-47)
4. What is the requirement of a steward?
..... (1 Cor. 4:2)
5. What is a "temple of God"?
..... (1 Cor. 3:16)
6. What are some bad habits a believer must avoid?
 - a. (Gal. 5:21)
 - b. (Col. 3:5)
 - c. (Col. 3:5)
 - d. (James 3:5-6)
7. What is the worst part about sexual sins?
..... (See page 51)
8. If a believer commits immorality, can he be forgiven?
..... (1 John 1:9)
9. What is the way to fullness, and a truly satisfying and useful life?
..... (Romans 12:1-2)

LESSON SEVEN

DANGERS LURKING ALONG THE WAY

The way of following the Master is not always easy and smooth. There are dangers and discouragements, and there are enemies and battles. We need not be afraid, however, as the Master is always with us, and He will never ever leave us. But we do need to be wary of the dangers along the way. Every believer will encounter three main enemies . . .

ENEMY ONE: THE WORLD

By “world” we do not mean “the earth,” nature, or the planet itself, but rather, the worldly systems that are often so contrary to the ways of God. The Bible warns:

“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and *also* its desires; but the one who does the will of God remains forever.”

(1 John 2:15-17)

Worldliness is the way of a God-rejecting society. It is the behavior of people influenced by Satan. As another verse in the first epistle of John says,

“The whole world lies in the power of the evil one.” (1 John 5:19)

Three things are mentioned in 1 John 2:16 to summarize “the world.” 1. The lust of **the flesh** (self-gratification and immorality); 2. The lust of **the eyes** (selfishness and envy); 3. The boastful **pride of life** (self-centredness and arrogance).

The world system is thoroughly man-centred. It always places man first and caters for man’s selfish desires. It is opposite to the spiritual and heavenly realm, where God is in the Center.

I do not say that everything non-believers do, is evil. People and

organizations in the world often do good, as in medical, educational and charity programs. But, even with all its “good works,” the world is still basically man-centred, and God, if He is considered at all, is kept on the outside.

Believers are in the world, and to some extent we are compelled to be part of the world system. We are compelled to ride in trains, to use telephones, to pay our taxes, to have vaccinations, to have our children educated, to register our births, marriages and deaths, etc.

These things are not bad, but we need to be wary of what the world offers. Many of its offers are extremely evil, especially in the areas of entertainment, advertising, the news media, business, commerce and intoxicating products.

Certainly the world is not in the business of promoting godliness. We don't even expect it to do so, because it is “the world.” It is a separate system, and is often opposed to the principles of Christ. It is essential for us as believers, then, to remember that we belong to Heaven and are pilgrims passing through this world. And we can expect opposition and enmity from the world, as the Lord Jesus said:

“If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, and because I chose you out of the world, the world hates you.” (John 15:19)

ENEMY TWO: THE FLESH

In the letters to the Romans, Galatians and Ephesians, we read about this enemy that we all have, living inside us.

The “flesh” is not referring to our physical bodies, as such, but to the fleshly, or **carnal nature** that we possess. It is this **inward nature** that uses the parts of our body to fulfil its sinful desires, and that is evil.

The fleshly nature is also called “**the old man,**” and it is opposed to the “**new man,**” the new spiritual life that God has

put within all believers. The “old man” is very much opposed to the Spirit of God who lives within us.

“For the flesh desires *what is* contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit *what is* contrary to the flesh; and these are opposed to one another, so that you are prevented from doing what you desire *to do.*” (Galatians 5:17)

“In regard to your former way of life, put off the old man - your old self, which is corrupt because of deceitful desires, and *that you* be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man - the new self, which has been created by God in true righteousness and holiness.” (Ephesians 4:22-24)

In Romans, Paul explains this in-built “natural” enemy that we all have:

“For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold into bondage under sin; and *why and* what I'm doing, I don't understand, for I am not practicing what I *would* like to *do*, but I'm doing the very thing I hate.

“Now if I do the very thing I don't want *to do*, I agree with the Law, *confessing* that it is good. So now, it is no longer I *myself* doing it, but the sin dwelling in me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the desire *and* willingness *to do good* is present in me, but *how* to do right I don't know. For the good that I want *to do*, I do not *do*; but I practice the evil that I don't want *to do*.

“Now if I am doing the very thing I don't want *to do*, I am no longer the one doing it, but it's the sin dwelling in me. I find then the principle that when I want to do good, evil is present with me.” (Romans 7:14-21)

The flesh, then, is that nature within us that loves wrong, or that just can't help doing wrong. We cannot, however, simply excuse this enemy by saying, “I can't help it.” God has given us new life and a new nature - a spiritual nature, a “new man” that loves to do right; a nature that yearns to obey Him. It is this new nature that we are to feed and to develop through communion with the Master.

It is essential to recognize the old nature as an enemy, and to “black list” it as such. We cannot compromise with it, for if we do, it will subtly gain victory over us and bring us into bondage again. The old nature belongs to the world system and is always evident by its emphasis on “I.” It is self-centred and opposed to the Sovereignty of Christ.

The Word of God gives us guidance and commands us to conquer this enemy. Turn up these verses in your Bible and read carefully: Romans 6:6-7, 11-13, 19-22, 8:1-14.

Paul sums it up like this:

“Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”
(Galatians 5:16)

Remember, the Holy Spirit has been given to us to guide us, to keep us, to deepen our lives, to bring us to maturity, and to fill us with God Himself. Look back to lesson No.5, and refresh yourself on the importance of being filled with the Spirit.

ENEMY THREE: THE DEVIL

The devil is no myth. He is a very real enemy and the Scripture says:

“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert, for your adversary, **the devil**, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, *standing* firm in the faith.”

(1 Peter 5:8-9)

“**Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**” (James 4:7)

Satan is our spiritual enemy and if we are faithful to our Master and are pressing on the upward way, we will encounter his attacks. In lesson eight, we will talk about the spiritual warfare more fully.

The following are some dangers which you must guard against:

1. COMPANIONS

As followers of Christ we have to be careful regarding forming close friendships with unbelievers. James gives a very emphatic warning:

“Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever decides to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.”
(James 4:4)

This does **NOT** mean that we must not show friendship to unbelievers, for then, how could we help others come to the Lord? We need to love unbelievers, and we have to help them, and be ready to comfort them in times of need. But Scripture is warning against the joining into alliance with worldly people.

We cannot afford to enter into deep friendship with unbelievers, because we are of the **LIGHT**, they are of the **DARKNESS**. What fellowship, or friendship, can darkness have with light? (2 Corinthians 6: 14).

We can talk with unbelievers, we can pray for them and we seek to lead them to Christ, but we cannot enter into **ALLIANCE**, because we have different masters. Many believers have fallen back because of wrong companions. Be very careful.

“Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals.”
(1 Corinthians 15:33)

2. MARRIAGE

What has been said of companionships is doubly true of marriage; we cannot enter into alliance with an unbeliever. The Scripture warns very strongly:

“Do not be yoked *or* bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14)

Marriage is intended to be the closest of relationships and a deep sharing of two lives. How can an unbeliever satisfactorily share the life of a believer?

Many marriages have been wrecked because of this unequal yoke. Often a believer marries an unbeliever, hoping that the

unsaved partner will soon come to the Lord. But, instead of turning to Christ, the unbeliever will resent religion being "forced" upon him. He will harden his heart and gradually bring the believer down to his own level. **Never, under any circumstances, marry an unbeliever.** It can lead to your spiritual ruin.

If you are already married to an unbeliever, then stay with your partner, and pray, and seek to bring him or her to the Saviour. But don't try to "force it." Take it gently and lovingly, trusting the Holy Spirit to move in your situation.

3. BUSINESS OR WORK

The Master gives us a clear exhortation and a wonderful promise:

"In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."
(Proverbs 3:6)

If we acknowledge Him, the Lord will direct our way in regard to our work, our business and every other area of our lives.

There are often big dangers in following certain careers. There are many positions or careers that are not right for a believer. Be sure to reject a job that would cause you to dishonour your Master. A believing businessman should not enter into partnership with an unbeliever. This also, is an unequal yoke, and will lead to compromise.

4. MONEY AND POSSESSIONS

Material things can be great snares. They have often robbed believers of their spirituality, making them not only ineffective for God, but also completely dissatisfied with their own lives.

Money and possessions in themselves are not wrong, but when a believer's heart is set on them, he will lose his true love for the Messiah and he will become carnal in his thinking and ways. Take a warning from Timothy:

"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and some, by hankering for it, have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."
(1 Timothy 6:10)

5. TIME AND AMBITION

Our desire and goal should always be to glorify God in our life, and to fulfil His will and plans. If you look at the Christian life from the spiritual point of view - from your Master's point of view, you see that nothing is really important except God's will.

Everything in this world will pass away. All worldly ambitions and successes are but for a moment. Our personal ambitions can rob us of the real plan of God for our lives.

6. SPORT AND RECREATION

There is a time for sport and exercise, and indeed, physical experience is necessary for our bodies. But there's a real danger when we allow sport, a hobby, or some physical activity, to take up our affections and time, so that they gradually rob us of our devotion to the Master.

7. CINEMA, TV AND ENTERTAINMENT

The trouble with these things is that they are so much a part of the world's Godless system. Films and entertainment need not necessarily be evil - but the fact is, today, the arts and media have been greatly perverted and are being used to keep people away from God. They so often produce unwholesome thoughts and behaviour! The Scripture exhorts us:

"For the rest, brethren, whatever is true, whatever *is* honourable, whatever *is* righteous, whatever *is* pure, whatever *is* lovely *and* commendable, whatever is of good report, if *there is* any excellence and anything worthy of praise - meditate on these things."
(Philippians 4:8)

Now, my brother, my sister, try to memorize some of the Scripture verses in this lesson. Treasure up the Word of God in your heart, as they will help you to "**walk in the Spirit.**"

TEST YOURSELF QUESTIONS

1. What does the fleshly nature produce?
..... (Galatians 5:19-21)
2. What characterizes the spiritual nature?
..... (Galatians 5:22-23)
3. Why does the world persecute the followers of Christ?
..... (John 15:18-19)
4. What is the “old man”?
..... (See pages 55-57)
5. What is the “new man”?
..... (See pages 55-57)
6. According to James 4:4, a friend of the world is also an
“..... of God.”
7. Look up the following Bible verses, to see certain other dangers to avoid:
 - a. (1 Timothy 6:20)
 - b. (Colossians 3:8)
 - c. (Philippians 2:14)
 - d. (Romans 12:17- 21)

LESSON EIGHT

BATTLES IN THE WAY

Along the way, the believer will be engaged at times in spiritual warfare. So he must be equipped and disciplined as a good soldier of Christ. Paul said . . .

“Suffer hardship, therefore, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”
(2 Timothy 2:3)

We can be assured of battle, because of our third main enemy . . .

ENEMY NO. 3: THE DEVIL

The devil, Satan, is the enemy of God. Created originally as a beautiful angel, Satan's heart was gripped with pride, and so he wanted to be as God - he wanted to be worshipped. Following this terrible sin, Satan became a devil and led many angels in rebellion against God. They all became demons (evil spirits).

When the human race was created, Satan was soon at work, seeking to sabotage the plans of God. He came to our first foreparents, Adam and Eve, and tempted them to sin. And he has been tempting mankind ever since; and not only Satan, but with him, a host of wicked spiritual beings. It is Satan who has enslaved the human race and bound it to the principles of “the world, the flesh, and the devil.”

After a person has been delivered from the yoke of Satan, by receiving Christ as Saviour, he finds that the devil is now his double enemy; he finds that he is now subjected to new temptations and he has become an object of spiritual attacks such as he had never experienced before. This may puzzle, and discourage him, until he learns about this enemy. It is essential to know your enemy, if you are going to fight victoriously.

The Scripture teaches us:

“Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes *and strategies* of the devil. For

our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against authorities, against the world-rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual *forces* of evil in the heavenly *places*.” (Ephesians 6:11-12)

These spiritual forces of wickedness are the fallen angels, the hosts of demons under Satan’s command. Their aim is to destroy, to frustrate and to hinder. If they cannot destroy, they will seek to gain as much control over humanity as possible.

After a believer has been delivered by the Saviour, these forces will attack and seek to cripple him, and to bring him back into captivity. We are therefore taught and warned of this enemy.

“For we wanted to come to you – I, Paul, more than once – and yet Satan thwarted us.” (1 Thessalonians 2:18)

SATAN’S SUBTLETIES

“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert, for your adversary, **the devil**, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, *standing* firm in the faith.”

(1 Peter 5:8-9)

We must not be afraid of this enemy, but we should be very careful of his subtleties. Sometimes,

“Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.” (2 Cor. 11:14)

And so he deceives people into believing falsity. Sometimes he tempts very subtly, but at other times he attacks by bringing all sorts of discouragement and doubts to the believer. If he can get a foothold in our lives, he will then seek to influence us and control our lives. The Bible says:

“Do not give the devil an opportunity.” (Ephesians 4:27)

Sometimes Satan’s attacks and temptations are like fiery darts or flaming missiles, which he aims at our most vulnerable parts, with pinpoint accuracy. He studies our weak points very carefully, so that he might attack us there.

If you are lazy, he will exploit that. If you are greedy, he will encourage you in that. If you are fearful, he will attack there. If you have a loose tongue, he will use that to the full. If you

have a temper, he will fan it. If you have an argumentative spirit, he will urge you to make the most of this trait. He will always seek to promote your ego, and encourage you to stand up for your rights, to trample upon others, and to exalt yourself. He will always seek to turn your eyes away from Jesus, and keep you from meditating on the Word of God, and from prayer. He will seek to keep you from witnessing to others, and also from regular fellowship with other believers.

These are his subtleties, his “tricks of the trade.” Remember, he has been in this business for thousands of years and is a master at deception and destruction. As born-again believers, however, we need not be fearful, for the Holy Spirit lives within us.

“You are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because **greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.**” (1 John 4:4)

JESUS THE MESSIAH IS VICTOR

The Lord Jesus “appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” (1 John 3: 8)

The Messiah defeated Satan at Calvary, and then three days later, He rose victoriously from the dead. Now the Master gives the authority of His Name to His followers, so that we might resist Satan and all demonic influences.

“Having called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out.” (Matthew 10:1)

“In My Name they will cast out demons.” (Mark 16:17)

It is because of this authority given to believers, that we are able to . . .

“**Resist the devil so that he will flee from you.**” (James 4:7)

Satan and his forces hate the Name of Y’shua, the Lord Jesus, and they hate the mention of the blood of Jesus, because His shed blood spelt defeat for Satan.

Satan is called “the accuser of the brethren” because he seeks

to make believers feel guilty because of their sinful past. We should resist these attacks because once Jesus forgives our sins, they have been cast out of God's reckoning for ever. Look at this Scripture:

“Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, proclaiming, ‘Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ have come, for **the accuser of our brethren** has been thrown down - the *one who has been* accusing them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love *and cling* to their lives, *right up to their very death*.’” (Revelation 12:10-11)

So, believer, we must resist Satan in the Name of Jesus. And we can do so because the Messiah, won the victory at Calvary.

OUR SPIRITUAL WEAPONS

In fighting the spiritual forces, we have the authority of Jesus, and we have also been provided with a spiritual armour, and with weapons. We cannot fight Satan in our own strength, nor with material or human weapons.

“For though we walk in the flesh *as human beings*, we do not wage war according to the flesh *by using carnal and physical weapons*; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal *and* physical, but mighty in God for overthrowing strongholds.”
(2 Corinthians 10:3-4)

Now let's turn to another passage on spiritual warfare - Ephesians 6:10-18:

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Master, and in the strength of His power. Put on the **whole armour of God**, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes *and strategies* of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against authorities, against the world-rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual *forces* of evil in the heavenly *places*. Therefore take up the **full armour of God**, that you may be able to **resist** in the evil day, and having done everything, to **stand firm**.

“Stand then, having fastened the **Belt of Truth** around your waist, and having put on the **Breastplate of Righteousness**, and having put **shoes on your feet** in preparation *and* readiness *to proclaim* the **Good News of Peace**; above all, having taken up the **Shield of Faith** with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil *one*. Take also the **Helmet of Salvation**, and the **Sword of the Spirit**, which is the Word of God, **praying in the Spirit** at all times, with every prayer and supplication. To this end, keep alert and watch with all perseverance, **interceding** for all the set-apart people of God.”

Here is our armour, and here are our weapons. If we put on the armour and use the weapons, we will be able to stand. If we don't, we will be defeated. Look at the armour:

1. The Belt of Truth: Jesus is the Truth, and we must maintain the Truth. Never depart from it! Lies are the weapons of Satan and his people. We must cling to the Truth of the Word of God. **“Your Word is Truth.”** (Psalms 119:160)

2. The Breastplate of Righteousness: Jesus is our Righteousness (Jeremiah 33:16). We are covered by Him. Never try to stand in your own righteousness, but always remember that those who have been called, have also been justified. (Romans 8:30)

“Therefore having been justified (*declared right*) by faith, we have peace with God through our Master, Jesus the Messiah.”
(Romans 5:1)

“Justified” means that our sins have been taken away, and we stand before God, without condemnation. Now, of course, the believer seeks to live a righteous life, for God says,

“You shall be holy for I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:16)

3. The Shoes of the Gospel of Peace: We need to know the Gospel of Christ, not in theory only, but in experience. We need to be able to share the gospel, and we must be willing **to go with the gospel**. Our attitude and behavior will not be as those who are “swift to shed blood,” but as ambassadors on the go for Christ.

“As it is written, HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS OF PEACE, WHO BRING GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS!” (Romans 10:15)

4. The Shield of Faith: To protect ourselves from the missiles of the enemy, we need faith. All believers have faith in the Lord, but we need to deliberately **exercise** that faith. Faith is not abstract; but it is **trusting** the Lord. As John says:

“For every one who has been born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith.”
(1 John 5:4)

When attacks come, **call** to the Saviour (the Deliverer), and **trust** Him to give the victory.

5. The Helmet of Salvation: It is essential to have our minds renewed through meditation on the Master and His Word. And our minds need to be protected by a daily experience of the saving power of Christ.

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is - His good, acceptable and perfect will.”
(Romans 12:2)

6. The Sword of the Spirit: This weapon is not only for defence, but for attack. It is the Word of God. We must **know** the Bible, and **use** it, just as the Lord did when He was tempted by Satan.

“**Be gone, Satan! For it is written ...**” (Matthew 4:10)

We need to store up the Word in our minds so that we can use it at the right time as a sword. That is why I have asked you to try and memorize the verses in these lessons.

7. Prayer in the Spirit: Prayer is a weapon that we must not neglect. Prayer keeps the supply lines open to us. The prayer of **faith** is a call that God will honour. It is written:

“Do not be anxious about anything - do not worry at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.”
(Philippians 4:6)

“And the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Master will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.”
(James 5:15)

“But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.”
(James 1:6)

TWELVE IMPORTANT RULES TO REMEMBER

To summarize the important rules to overcome Satan and temptation:

1. Surrender your body, and your all, to Yahweh the Lord, as a living sacrifice. (Romans 12:1)
2. Count yourself as dead to sin but alive to God. (Romans 6:11)
3. Present your members (hands, eyes, etc.) as servants of righteousness, and not as servants of sin. (Romans 6:12-19)
4. Don't neglect meditation on the Master, and His Word. (Psalms 119:11)
5. Pray regularly and at all times. (Ephesians 6:18)
6. Learn to TRUST the Lord, in all situations, and do not waver. (James 1:6; Proverbs 3:5-6)
7. Use the Word of God and act in the authority of the Name of Jesus. (Ephesians 6:17)
8. Count upon the Presence of the Holy Spirit within you. (Romans 8:9-15)
9. Do not give opportunities for Satan to get a foothold in your life. Flee lust (2 Timothy 2:22), and keep yourself from the love of money and from worldly ambitions.
10. Always speak the truth.
11. Never use carnal weapons such as lies, self-justification, heated arguments, scandal, revenge, bribery, false accusations and exaggeration. Use the weapons God has provided!
12. Praise the Lord and rejoice always. (Philippians 4:4; Romans 8:28)

TEST YOURSELF QUESTIONS

1. What was the name or title given to Satan before he rebelled?
..... (Isaiah 14:12)
2. What are the “spiritual forces of wickedness”?
..... (See page 63)
3. Who is the “accuser of the brethren”?
..... (See page 65)
4. Should a believer be afraid of Satan? Why?
..... (See page 63)
5. Where did the Lord Jesus defeat Satan?
..... (See page 64)
6. In what Bible passage do you read of the seven-piece armour of God?
7. What is the “Sword of the Spirit”?
..... (Ephesians 6:17)
8. What are some “carnal weapons” that we should never use?
 - a. (Romans 12:9)
 - b. (Exodus 23:8)
 - c. (Exodus 20:16)
 - d. (James 4:2)