

Heart Adornment



For Godly Women

By Benny B. Bristow

This week I will
Look for good and I will
praise others.

Heart Adornment
For
Godly Women

By Benny B. Bristow

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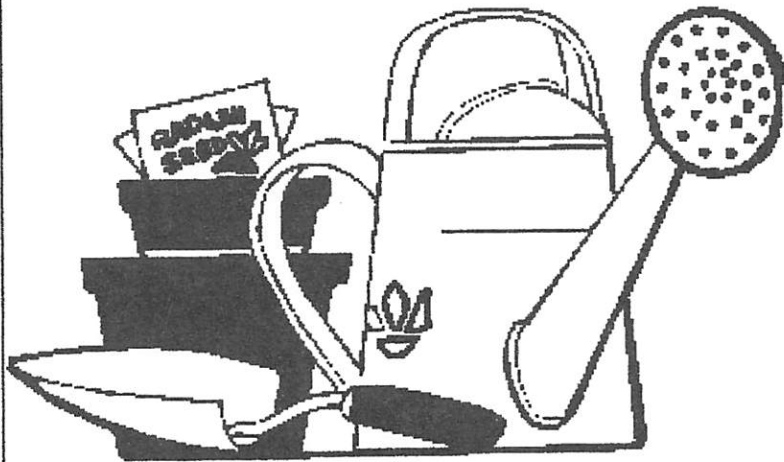
Dedication

This book is lovingly dedicated to my Mamma, Coy Bristow, who has adorned herself in godliness all the years of her life. She spiritually guided my daddy, Pelham, my sister, Barbara, my brother, Burrell, and me, in the ways of righteousness.

Even now, in her sunset years, she continues to reflect the light of Jesus in her life.

It can be said of her life over the years:

“Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her” (Proverbs 31:28).



Introduction

Welcome to this Ladies' Class study, "**Heart Adornment For Godly Women.**" This is a study designed to stimulate your thinking toward God's word and the characteristics needed in your life to please Him.

The expository Scriptures are taken from my **Self-Teaching New Testament**, published by Quality Publications, Abilene, Texas. You will notice that these verses have many references, and in your preparation for your class, you are encouraged to read and study these.

The illustrations and quotes from famous authors are included to help you think deeper into the subjects. Appreciation is expressed to all of these writers.

The crossword puzzles are designed to help you spend more time with your Bible. The majority of the answers can be found in the **King James Version (KJV)**, and the others are indicated (NKJV) when found in the **New King James Version**. As you search for the words to the puzzle, please take a few moments and study the context. In class, when the puzzles are graded, the teacher should ask each student to give the answer, and also be prepared to make a comment on each answer.

It will always be my sincere prayer that this study will be a special blessing to your life. Remember, God always blesses those who love Him, and those who study and live by His word.

The Author

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A Faithful Friend

Lesson 1

Memory Verse: “A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother” (Prov. 18:24).

Expository Verses

John 15:13 Greater love [Greek *agape*] has no man than this, [Rom. 5:7,8] than to lay down his life [He chose to die for the lost, John 10:11,15,17] for his friends [our Lord passed the ultimate test of love at the cross].

A. How much do we love Jesus?

This is the question of all questions, because our love for Him will determine our service to Him. Jesus recognized this when He said, “*If you love Me, keep My commandments*” (John 14:15). Remember, the love that Jesus seeks in our hearts is an unconditional love. This is the kind of love that suffers long and never fails (1 Cor. 13:4,8). Jesus seeks the same kind of love that He gave on the cross.

Therefore, the only way that we can determine how much we love Jesus is by looking at our lives. Is He first in our lives? Do we allow our lives to reflect His light daily? Do we help others to the point of believing that we are helping Jesus? When others see our good works, do they see Jesus?

B. Name some ways you can sacrifice as a Godly woman.

As a general rule, you will not be asked to physically die for Jesus, but as godly women, you are asked to live for Him. Most of the time, your service will be enjoyable and pleasant. However, there will also be those times of sacrifice. This is where the real test of love begins. Paul called upon the Roman Christians to “*Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service*” (Rom. 12:1). Peter wrote that Christians are called to suffer. “*For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should walk in His steps*” (1 Pet. 2:21).

Therefore, your sacrifices will involve such things as giving of your time, energy, and money to serve Jesus. The busy life in today’s world is very

demanding, and voices are calling on every hand. However, those who seek to put Jesus first, will set everything aside that hinders so that they can attend Bible classes, visit the sick at home, in hospitals and in nursing homes, teach others, and give their best to their children and grandchildren.

This may feel like too much sacrifice and a heavy burden at times, but remember. The crown of all crowns was made of thorns, and our suffering can never equal the Master of all suffering.

C. How does your love for friends compare to Jesus?

From a human standpoint, it is so easy to love our friends. They are here on earth, and we can be with them and enjoy their company. We feel that they are there for us when we need them. This is as it should be, and there is certainly nothing wrong in having good friends. Jesus loved the world enough to die for it, but He also had personal friends while on earth. It is obvious from the word that Jesus felt a close friendship to Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. When Lazarus died, Jesus said to His apostles: "*Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up*" (John 11:11).

But an important question for us to ask, "Do we consider Jesus a greater friend than all other friends?" Jesus passed the ultimate test when it was said of Him, "*Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends*" (John 15:13). How true are the words of the song: "What a friend we have in Jesus!"

Do we really believe this? Are we guilty of taking the friendship of Jesus for granted?

Example: A little brother agreed (after hesitation) to give his dying brother a kidney. While waiting in the operating room, he asked, "How long will it be now before I die?"

Luke 15:6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.'

A. Review this parable (Lk. 15:3-7).

Jesus tells of a man who owned one hundred sheep, and one became lost. He was so concerned that he left behind the ninety-nine in the wilderness and searched until he found it. He was so happy to find this lost one that he returned home and called all his friends and neighbors together to rejoice with him. He

wanted to rejoice because he had found the lost sheep.

Jesus told this little story to illustrate the rejoicing that is in heaven when one sinner who is lost repents. There is more rejoicing over the lost one than over the ninety-nine who were never lost.

B. Why do we wish to share good news with friends?

Friends are concerned about our disappointments and successes, our pain and good health, our happiness and unhappiness. Therefore, our happiness is multiplied when shared with friends. Have you ever told a friend about something good that happened to you, and then felt their embrace of joy? If so, this added to your happiness.

An example of sharing good news with friends is at a baptism service. When someone very dear to you is born into Christ, the occasion is made even more joyful by the hugs and tears of joy of close friends. Or it may be the occasion of the birth of your precious baby or grand baby! These occasions, and many other happy ones, need to be shared with friends.

C. Do we share Jesus with unsaved friends?

This can be a very difficult question, because some of your friends will not allow you into this part of their lives. Due to their religious background, they may close the door for you to sit down and share the purity of the gospel with them. However, there are still ways for you to share Jesus with your unsaved friends.

You must begin with a Christian example before them. Let them know that you value their friendship highly, but not as much as you value your friendship with Jesus. Let them know that there can never be a compromise on this subject. Then let them see Jesus living in you daily even through the difficult times in your life.

Take every opportunity to mention something about the purity of God's word and its value in your life, and use its principles in your daily conversations with friends. When questions come up, share with them a good tract on the subject. Make every effort to invite them to attend special classes and other services in the church. Sometimes a fellowship is a good place to begin to introduce them to other Christians. This may break the ice for them to attend other services of the church.

No two friends are exactly alike, and you should seek the best approach for each one. Just remember that when you make a prayerful effort by doing your best, God will be there to help you.

D. What is the greatest gift one can give a friend?

We like to give gifts to close friends, and you may even spend hours searching for just the right gift. In your search, you want to find something that will be treasured over the years. It may be a valuable antique or something for her collection, but finding the right gift is very important.

Please understand, such gifts as just described are important to friendships, but they are not the greatest gift for a friend. The greatest gift for a friend is the saving gospel. This is the one gift that will make all other gives have greater value. Why is the gospel the greatest gift of all? Because it is a gift from God! It is God's gift of salvation (*Rom. 1:16*). It is the only gift for your friends that will last forever. "...but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord" (*Rom. 6:23*).

E. How can we rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep (*Rom. 12:15*)?

The ideal friendship is found between brothers and sisters in Christ, and this principle from Paul involves family oneness as well as personal friendships. When Paul commanded this kind of rejoicing and weeping, he was writing to Christians who were one in Christ—those who were members of the same spiritual body. Therefore, when one member of a body is affected, so are the others (*Rom. 12:5*). Love is the motivating force that causes us to rejoice and weep with others. Friendship with as many other Christians as possible, makes this command easier to obey. This should be another incentive to lead our unsaved friends to Jesus.

We rejoice and weep with others when we make every effort to feel what they are feeling. This is not always easy to do and requires training and spiritual growth. However, this should be the goal of every faithful Christian. Jesus set the example while on earth of feeling for others. The closer we walk with Him, the more we can rejoice and weep with others.

Example: We want to share good things that happen to us with close friends. Also, we want the same friends to know when we are in pain. Why? Because of love and the close bond of friendship.

Quoting: "A friend is one to whom we may pour out the contents of our hearts, chaff and grain together, knowing that the gentlest of hands will sift it, keep what is worth keeping, and with a breath of kindness blow the rest away!" —Knight

A. Discuss the meaning of Knight's quote.

One of the blessings of true friend is to be able to share our hearts knowing that it is safe with them. We may even share things that are not complimentary, but we can know that this will not be held against us. A true friend will always look for the good in us, and will make every effort to help us deal with the bad. When we have shared the good and the bad, they will keep the good, but in kindness blow the rest away.

A friend is someone who knows both our good and bad points, but still loves us. Someone who believes in us when there is doubt, and stands by us with forgiveness when we repent of our wrongs.

John 15:14 You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you [the test of friendship with Jesus is to obey Him].

A. We sing, "I'll be a friend to Jesus," but why do we at times fail to show Him friendship?

It is a fact that Christians do not always live as they sing. This is not the way it should be, nevertheless, this is still a fact. One of the things that often severs our friendship with Jesus is failing to obey Him. Each time that we go places where Jesus would not go, do things that Jesus would not do, and say things that Jesus would not say, we fail Him as a friend. Disobeying God brings hurt to Jesus, and it is not right to hurt the One who is our best friend.

We can also fail to show friendship to Jesus by choosing friends who are engaged in things of the world. These can draw our attention away from Jesus and will harm our friendship with Him. James must have had this thought in mind when he wrote these words. "*Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God*" (James 4:4).

It is often very disturbing to read about the mob that hated Jesus, and would not be content until He was put to death. But if we ever reach the point where we refuse to be His friend, there is a danger of falling away to the point that we join His enemies. The Hebrew writer mentions those who leave Him and reach the point of no return—no repentance. His explanation: "*Since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame*" (Heb. 6:6).

Therefore, our greatest need as Christians is to be able to sing, "I'll be a friend to Jesus," and mean it from our hearts.

B. Do we show friendship by obeying Him daily?

Obedying Jesus daily is the only way to keep our friendship with Him alive. Some have thought that it is enough to obey Him only on Sunday, then the other days of the week are filled with disobedience. This will never please God. Living for Jesus is a daily life to be lived. When Jesus told His disciples, "*You are the light of the world*" (Mt. 5:14), He did not specify Sunday only. He inferred to shine at all times. We cannot turn off the light of Jesus without being in the darkness of Satan! This evil one has exclusive rights to the power of darkness (Col. 1:13).

Let each of us examine our obedience to Jesus, and make sure that it is a daily experience in our lives.

C. Discuss the friendship of Judas Iscariot (Mt. 26:49,50).

Among the many sad Old Testament prophecies that would be fulfilled by Jesus were the words, "*Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me*" (Ps. 41:9). Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve apostles, fulfilled this when he sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. When Judas walked up to Jesus to identify Him to the enemy, Jesus said to him, "*Friend, why have you come?*" (Mt. 26:50).

How could Judas do such a terrible thing? Was it a temptation that caught him off guard during a weaker moment? No, Judas had been living as a hypocrite as one of the apostles. He had pretended to be trustworthy and deeply concerned about the needy, but all of this was a lie.

One day while Jesus was visiting in the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, Mary used a pound of very costly oil of spikenard to anoint the feet of Jesus. Judas was present, and objected to this by asking, "*Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?*" (John 12:5). How noble this must have seemed to ask such a caring question, but it was the question of a hypocrite. The next verse reveals the truth about the one who asked the question. "*This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it*" (John 12:6).

Judas is not the kind of friend we want in our lives. True friends will never sell us out or betray us. Jesus is an example of a true friend. "*He laid down His life for His friends*" (John 15:13).

D. What is the difference between Jesus being our friend, and us being a friend to Him?

Always keep in mind that friendship must flow in two directions. It is an

arm of love that reaches out TO us and FROM us. True friendship is consistent and is not affected by the storm clouds of adversity and the passing of time. "A friend loves at all times" (Prov. 17:17).

Jesus reached out in love as far as anyone can possibly reach when He gave His all for us at Calvary. The question then is how do we reach back to Him? We do have a responsibility in this friendship. "A man who has friends must himself be friendly" (Prov. 18:24). Jesus tells us how to be His friend in (John 15:14), "You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you."

Therefore, when we choose not to live our lives for Him, we are refusing to be His friend. But when we deny ourselves, and take up our cross daily, and follow Him (Lk. 9:23), we become close friends with Jesus. The more we walk in the footsteps of Jesus, the more we become His friend.

John 15:15 No longer do I call you servants; [as He had previously done before they were fully instructed] for the servant does not know what his lord [master] is doing: [Jesus has told them of His plans of death, etc.] but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard of My Father I have made known [explained] to you [they had been taken into His confidence as friends].

A. Why does sharing, bond friendships?

Jesus is quoted as saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Thus, one of the blessings from a friendship is giving. When we share with a friend, we invest some of ourselves with them, and we experience the joy of love at work in our lives. Love does not prosper when lying dormant, because it is an action word. For example, instead of Paul defining love to the Corinthian Christians, he tells them what love does (1 Cor. 13:4-8).

Sharing has a way of bonding parents and children together into a deeper friendship. Also, one of the things that bonds husbands and wives together as friends is all the things that they share together over the years. They share their lives, their friends, their children, and their many goals in life. But most important of all, if they are both Christians, they share their Lord. Therefore, many couples have developed a bond of friendship that will last throughout their lives.

B. Name some ways that you can share with Jesus.

Sharing with Jesus begins when one decides to surrender all to Him by obeying the gospel. Salvation has two parts. The first part is of God. Jesus is the central figure in providing a way of escape from the wages of sin (Rom. 6:23). God the Father chose to give His only begotten Son in sacrifice, so that those who

“believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). The believing in Jesus mentioned here is not a passive belief, but one that responds to His commands.

The second part of salvation involves our sharing our all with Jesus. If we do not obey Him, we do not share this salvation that He has provided. Therefore, this is our most important sharing in all human existence.

Once we have come to Jesus in obedience for salvation, we are then ready to share with Him a special way of life. He has left us a perfect example from His life on earth. He faced every temptation that we face, and overcame each one. Therefore, we can share His attitude, love, concern for others, and obedience to His Father (*Heb. 5:8*).

Quoting: “But friendship is precious, not only in the shade, but in the sunshine of life; and thanks to a benevolent arrangement of things, the greater part of life is sunshine.” —Thomas Jefferson

James 2:23 “**And the Scripture [Gen. 15:6] was fulfilled [fully completed] which says, ‘Abraham believed God, [to the point of making an effort to offer his son, Gen. 22:1-19] and it was imputed to him [reckoned or accounted] for righteousness,’ [right-doing, 1 John 3:7,10] and he was called the Friend of God [God’s friend, 2 Chronicles 20:7:—when we obey the Lord’s commandments, we are friends of Jesus, John 15:14].**

A. Was this title honorable to Abraham?

Everything about Abraham’s life infers that he longed daily to be close to God. In fact, he believed in God and walked so close to Him that he is recognized throughout the Bible as a man of great faith (*Heb. 11:8-10, 17,18*). When he was called to leave his home in the Er of the Chaldeans, he obeyed. God eventually sent him to a land promised to his descendants, and Abraham obeyed. To be a close friend of God, Abraham was willing to spend the rest of his life living in a tent on this special “Land of Canaan.”

Abraham honored his friendship with God to the point that when God commanded him to offer his only begotten son Isaac on an altar, Abraham obeyed (*Heb. 11:17*). Even if God had allowed Abraham to carry the sacrifice through to death, he believed that God could raise him from the dead (*Heb. 11:19*).

Do we honor our friendship with God and His Son? Does our daily life, like Abraham, show our faith in such friendship? It is good to honor and enjoy our earthly friendships, but these are nothing compared to our friendship with God.

B. How was Enoch God's friend? (*Gen. 5:22*).

The simplest way to answer this question is to say that he walked with God three hundred years. This is one of the most beautiful figures found in God's word to describe one's close relationship with God. We enjoy walking with the ones we love, and Enoch must have loved God.

There are several things involved when these two walked together. First of all it suggests compatibility between Enoch and God. There is no way that Enoch could not have been a friend with God if he had been evil, because God hates evil. Therefore, Enoch must have been a righteous person. To walk with God also involves both going in the same direction. Since God always chooses the way of righteousness, Enoch must have done the same.

Finally, friends enjoy being together. As Enoch and God walked together, we are told that "*Enoch was not, for God took him*" (*Gen. 5:24*). Only two men are recorded in the Bible who were taken without death. One was Elijah and the other was this man Enoch. Truly Enoch was God's friend.

In our daily lives, do we make an effort to be a friend with God and His precious Son? Do we walk within our lives in a way that we can walk with Him. We cannot find a greater friendship than being a close friend with God and His Son who took our place on the cross.

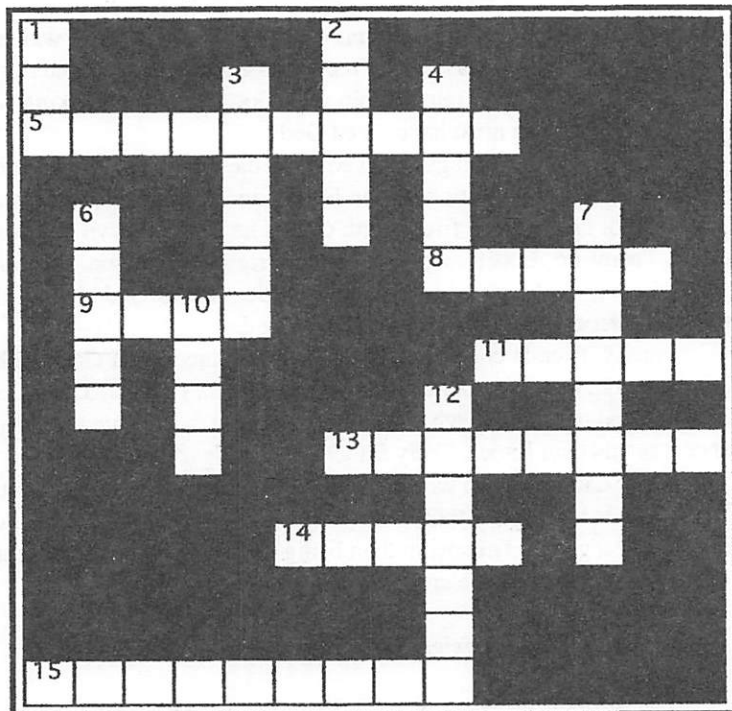
C. Is making friends a sound investment today?

It is difficult for most of us to imagine anyone being happy without friends. God has made us so that we enjoy the closeness of a friend. We need someone in which to share our happiness and disappointments. We need someone to cheer us up when we are lonely. Then on those occasions when we are ill or unable to meet our daily responsibilities, it is comforting to have a friend to help.

There is another side to the blessings of friendships. Not only do we need the help and comfort of a friend, but it is important for us to experience being a friend to others. When we become friends with others, we invest ourselves, and this is needed to live a balanced life. True friendship involves both giving and receiving, and this is one of the truly sound investments that we can make in our lives.

Quoting: "The happiest business in all the world is that of making friends, and no investment on the street pays larger dividends. For life is more than stocks and bonds, and love than rate percent. And he who gives in friendship's name shall reap what he has spent."

As A Friend - Puzzle One



ACROSS

- 5 A friend to one getting married (John 3:29)
- 8 Something sent to elders and friends (1 Sam. 30:26 KJV)
- 9 Those who have many friends (Prov. 14:20)
- 11 To whom was it said, "Friend, why do you come?" (Mt. 26:47,50)
- 13 Something spoken to friends (Job 17:5)
- 14 A man who told something to wife and friends (Esther 6:13)
- 15 Another name for tax collectors (Lk. 7:34 KJV).

DOWN

- 1 A man with three friends (Job 2:11)
- 2 A friend to Pilate (Lk. 23:12)
- 3 That which makes many friends (Prov. 19:4)
- 4 A characteristic of a friend (Prov. 17:17)
- 6 Something done with friends (Lk. 15:29)
- 7 A characteristic of being brotherly (2 Pet. 1:7)
- 10 An item that caused rejoicing with friends (Lk. 15:8,9 NKJV)
- 12 A special friend to Jesus (John 11:11).

A Godly Walk

Lesson 2

Memory Verse: *“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light” (Eph. 5:8).*

Expository Verses

Eph. 2:1 And you [specifically the Christians at Ephesus, but applies to all Christians] has He made alive, [Jesus was raised from the dead, Eph. 1:20;—now He is able to make sinners alive from sin] who were dead in trespasses [Greek: *paraptoma*—to slip or fall to the point of losing one’s way] and sins, [Greek: *hamartia*—to miss a mark or target].

A. Do most unsaved sinners consider themselves dead?

The simplest answer for this question would be “No!” For even though they are told that the Bible declares all lost without Jesus, they seem to think that an exception will be made in their case. Some may reason that their parents and grandparents have been religious, and that they are from a Christian family. Others may reason that, “I plan to be saved before I die, and if something should happen to me, it will be all right.” Or, some believe that since God is a loving and just God, He will not allow them to be lost.

Even though there are those who say that they know that they are lost and need some day to be saved, down deeply in their hearts, they are not fully convinced that they are lost. When sinners are fully convinced that they are lost in sin, they will want to seek the Savior immediately.

We cannot sit in judgment as to who are saved and who are lost, but the Bible can. The Bible is the word of God, and tells us the undisputed facts! It was Jesus who said, *“For if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins” (John 8:24)*. And, *“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mk. 16:16)*. The same Bible tells us that Jesus *“became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him” (Heb. 5:9)*, and that when He returns from heaven, He will come *“in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thes. 1:8)*.

Therefore, in our teaching, preaching, and daily lives, we need to take

every opportunity to convince the lost that the Bible teaches that they are lost, and that the wages of sin is death (*Rom. 6:23*).

B. What did Jesus do to assure us life?

The answer to this question is the theme of the whole Bible. Both the Old and New Testaments reveal how God made all necessary preparation to send His Son to bring life. When the "Tree of death" was chosen in the Garden of Eden, the "Tree of Life" was lost. Only someone special coming through the seed of woman could restore life. Therefore, the theme of the Old Testament is, "Someone is coming," and the theme of the New Testament is, "Someone is here."

The New Testament reveals the someone to be Jesus Christ, God's Son. What was His mission to earth? To bring life! "*In Him was life, and the life was the light of men*" (*John 1:3*). In His own words, "*I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly*" (*John 10:10*). Jesus also spoke of this life to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, "*But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life*" (*John 4:14*).

But the question is, what did Jesus do to assure us life? He allowed Himself to be sacrificed at the cross. He never sinned, but He took upon Himself our sins and died for them. John sums it up in these words. "*By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us*" (*1 John 3:16*). Therefore, Jesus used His own blood in sacrifice for our sins. "*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace*" (*Eph. 1:7*). "*With His own blood, He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption*" (*Heb. 9:12*). This assures salvation to all who will obey and serve Him.

C. Discuss the figure of missing God's mark.

From the very beginning of the human race, God has determined what is right and what is wrong. In fact, the two trees representing right and wrong and life and death were placed in the center of the Garden of Eden. God actually set before them a choice. First of all, He gave His will: "*Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat*" (*Gen. 2:16*). This represented His will. Then God told them what was NOT His will: "*But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die*" (*Gen. 2:16*).

Therefore, the idea of the target is this. The bull's eye of the target represents God's will. The rest of the target, outside the bull's eye is sin. As long as Adam and Eve refrained from eating from the tree of death, they were walking

within God's will. However, when they chose the forbidden tree, they missed God's mark or bull's eye on the target and sinned.

Today, the Bible informs us what is right in God's sight. This is the bull's eye of the target. But the same Bible tells us what is contrary to God's will. This is outside the bull's eye and is sin. Let us ask, "How important is it to always seek to hit the bull's eye of the target?" Jesus answers, "*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven*" (Mt. 7:21).

Since all commit sin (Rom. 3:23), our only hope is found in Jesus forgiving us through His blood. Only then, can we keep our lives within the bull's eye and God's will.

Eph. 2:2 in which in time past [now shows how they trespassed and sinned] you walked according to the course of this world, [of that which gives fleshly council, opposite to the council of God, Ps. 1:1 Rom. 12:2: Jas. 4:4:1 John 2:15] according to the prince of the power of the air, [the devil and his evil spirits. John 12:31: Eph. 6:12] the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience, [Col. 1:21; 3:6].

A. Why must Christians be careful where they walk?

The way we walk determines where we are in our relationship with God. Before the conversion of the Ephesian Christians, they walked just like the world. They followed the devil as their leader. Their walk was in the pathway of disobedience. Now as Christians, they are involved walking like Jesus because they have answered the call of the gospel to come out of the world (Eph. 2:1).

The walk of a Christian is a dangerous one because the devil is out to win each one back. Every way that we turn, the devil is there, as he "*walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour*" (1 Pet. 5:8). He has a two fold plan: (1) To keep the lost, lost. (2) To reclaim the saved. He knows that a fallen Christian is more secure for him than anyone else. The apostle Peter writes: "*for it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them*" (2 Pet. 2:21).

Therefore, his traps of lust and sin are set all along our pathway. He is out to win with sin! However, with the help of our Savior, we can keep our feet walking in the right way, and can feel secure on the blood stained way that leads to eternal life (Mt. 7:14; John 14:6).

B. Christians must follow in Jesus' steps (1 Pet. 2:21).

Christianity is both a SHOW and TELL religion. For not only did Jesus speak forth the way of life, but He lived it daily. He did not ask His followers to do anything that He was not doing. He showed faithfulness and obedience to His Father, He shared the truth with others, He lived the perfect moral life, and even walked the difficult road of pain, suffering, and sacrifice.

With all these examples before us, we are asked to follow in His steps, even to the point of suffering. Peter reminds his readers that when they were called to follow Jesus, they were called to suffer with Him. *“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps” (1 Pet. 2:21).*

What is your goal as a Christian? Is it to partially follow Jesus? To follow only when the pathway is smooth? Or is your goal to follow His steps even when there are thorns to prick your feet? There is not a pain that you can feel that has not already been felt by Jesus. There is not a disappointment or heart ache that can attack your heart that has not been felt in the heart of Jesus. Therefore, we must commit ourselves as Christians to follow His steps wherever they lead us.

Footprints of Jesus, that make the pathway glow;
We will follow the steps of Jesus,
Where e're they go.” (Mary B.C. Slade/A.B. Everett)

C. Name some ways to follow Jesus' steps.

As we have already observed, Jesus has shown by His daily life the way He wants us to walk. Thus, the guideline for our lives should be to imitate Him. Our walk with Him must begin with FAITH and OBEDIENCE toward God. This motivated every step of Jesus. *“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me” (John 6:38).* Jesus' faith and obedience was so powerful in His life, that *“He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:8).*

To follow in the steps of Jesus, we must also be motivated by LOVE. He daily displayed love for His Father, and love to all who were lost in sin. This love moved Him to reach out with compassion toward those who were in need both physically and spiritually. This led Jesus to stop along the way and heal many who were born with infirmities. His heart was touched by the blind, the lame, the deaf, the diseased, and those possessed with demons. In His limited time on earth, He applied His healing touch to many of these.

No, we can't touch the needy in the same miraculous way that Jesus touched them, but we can follow His steps by showing the same concern. In our

limited ways, we CAN show compassion! To those in need, we can visit—we can call and serve.

But as you know, the love of Jesus was not limited to their physical needs. This truly concerned Him, but His greatest concern was for their eternal souls. Therefore, as He prepared Himself for the supreme sacrifice of the cross, He labored daily to turn the sinful to God. He showed them His coming kingdom and the eternal security that they could find in being citizens in it. Even the gates of Hades would not be victorious against it (*Mt. 16:18*).

When we walk in His steps, we will also show deep concern for those lost in sin. We will utilize every opportunity to be led to some soul today. We will use every opportunity to show and tell the way of salvation with all of its security and beauty.

D. When walking in His steps, we avoid dangers.

As we have already observed, the devil is out to get us. He has set many traps and land mines to destroy eternal souls. The only way to avoid these dangers is to walk in the steps of Jesus. As the Son of God, Jesus has shown us where to walk to avoid these.

To illustrate, imagine a company of soldiers commanded to march through a mine field. Without any knowledge of the location of the deadly mines, many would lose their lives. However, suppose a map is provided them that locates every mine. With this information, each mine could be located and avoided.

Jesus has left those who follow Him a special map, the word of God. His footsteps are graphfully displayed so that we can know where to walk to avoid death. We need to remember at all times, that the only way to avoid dangers in this life and the life to come, is to always walk in His steps.

Example: There is a story told of a man who was once walking through a dangerous swamp in the night time and was startled to find that his little boy had followed him. Turning about, he said, "My son, don't you know that a mis-step anywhere here might cost you your life?" To which the little fellow replied, "Father, I am stepping right in your foot-prints, then I know I will be all right."

A. How important is example to our children?

It is a fact that our children from birth, learn about life through their five senses. However, it seems that what they see has the greatest influence in their learning. Yes, what they hear, what they smell, what they touch, and what they taste are very important. But all of these are backed up by what they see.

Parents and grandparents show them LIFE by their LIVES. The genuine faith that Paul saw in Timothy, had been seen by Timothy dwelling first in his grandmother Lois and in his mother Eunice (2 Tim. 1:5). Children are imitators of either good or evil. Therefore, we must make every effort to walk in a way that when they follow, they will walk with God.

B. Discuss: "training and admonition" (Eph. 6:4).

Even though training involves showing our children the right example, there is more. Training, as it is used by Paul, entails letting them experience as they learn. It is "on the job training." This is the way that children enjoy learning. How many times have we been teaching by showing them, and then have them ask, "Can I try it?" This is their cry to be trained.

The word "training" that Paul uses here can be illustrated by a father teaching his son to shoot the bow and arrow. Not only does the father instruct and show him how it is done, but he also places his hands and arms beside his child's and they pull the arrow back together. Yes, children must be instructed, encouraged, and sometimes rebuked, but they must also be trained by doing.

The second assignment that Paul gives fathers as they guide their children in the Lord is to admonish them. Admonition, in this context, means to instruct them in the Lord. As we have already observed, children need both instruction and training. Remember, God's word is the perfect text book for life. It is certainly God's training guide for children as well as adults. Fathers who train and instruct their children in the Lord will do so with the right attitude. They will avoid provoking them to wrath, but will rather stir them up to live God's will in their lives. When a father or mother is walking in the steps of Jesus, there will be the right example, training, and instruction for their children. Their children may not always agree, and may even vent their displeasure, but time will prove such successful in the Lord.

Eph. 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of [for] the Lord, [Paul was in prison because he was a servant of the Lord, Eph. 3:1; Philemon 1,9] beseech [urge or entreat] you that you walk worthy [following Jesus is a daily walk with Him in light, 1 Thes. 2:12; 1 John 1:7: cf. Mt. 5:14,16] of the vocation [calling] with which you were called, [all Christians are called by the gospel to walk a new life in Christ Jesus, 1 Thes. 2:12; 2 Thes. 2:14: cf. Rom. 6:4; 1 Pet. 2:9].

A. How is one called by the gospel?

The calling of God is very confusing to many who pursue religion. They

read on various occasions in the Bible where God miraculously called special workers, leaders, and prophets, and conclude that God has called them in the same way. However, we must make a distinction between those who were called for a special mission, and those who are called for salvation.

The New Testament reveals that the lost are called by the gospel to obey God to be saved. The call of the gospel is for the sinner to respond to the good news of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. For this is the only place where salvation from sins can be found. Why? Because only the way of the cross leads home! Therefore, the call of the gospel is made when this saving message is preached. Then the call is answered when one responds as a penitent believer who confesses Jesus and puts Him on in baptism.

The call of the gospel is to obey Jesus and to come out of the world into Jesus. When one does this, he or she becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:17). Paul reminded the Thessalonian Christians about their call. *"To which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thes. 2:14).*

B. Discuss the definition of saint: "Holy ones set apart for God."

Although the word saint has been abused over the years by certain ones in the religious world, it is an important word in New Testament Christianity. In fact, it appears approximately sixty times. Without a doubt, the word saint should be applied to all Christians. For when one answers the call of the gospel, he or she becomes forgiven—holy ones set apart for God.

The word saint coincides with the word church. Since the word church means the called out, therefore, it consists of saints or those set apart for God. Even though the church at Corinth had many major spiritual problems, Paul still addressed his epistle to *"those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints..." (1 Cor. 1:2).*

C. How should saints walk?

Since saints or Christians are holy ones who have been set apart for God, then they should walk with God. They should daily walk in the footsteps of Jesus. The invitation from the devil to walk with him should be declined, because his evil steps will lead only to spiritual death.

Where do the footsteps of Jesus lead? They lead to worship, to showing compassion for others, to sharing the saving gospel, and to all kinds of beautiful service. Even though saints must live in the world, they are not of the world. They strive daily to fulfill the prayer that Jesus prayed for His disciples. *"I do not*

pray that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one" (John 17:15).

This is the way that Christians or saints should follow Jesus on earth, and then His footsteps will eventually lead them to heaven (*John 14:1-4*).

D. Consider: "Newness of life," and "new creation" (Rom. 6:4; 2 Cor. 5:17).

Both of these statements describe what one receives who comes to Jesus for forgiveness. Before Jesus, life is motivated by the old way of sin. The aim is to follow the flesh with its distorted lusts. This kind of life, if not changed, is destined to experience the second death, and being cut off from God forever. Without the newness of life that Jesus offers, one will be among those described by John as he observed, *"Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (Rev. 20:14).*

However, this can be avoided by allowing God through His Son to perform on us a new creation. Before this new creation can take place, one must put to death the old man of sin. *"Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin" (Rom. 6:6). "Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds" (Col. 3:9).*

Where does this newness of life and new creation take place? Only in Christ. *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).*

Eph. 4:2 with all lowliness [humility, Acts 20:19;—Jesus taught humility when He washed the disciples feet, John 13:5-9: cf. 1 Pet. 5:5: Phil. 2:3] **and meekness,** [gentleness] **with longsuffering,** [patience] **forbearing** [with] **one another in love,** [Greek: *agape*—this is the way love will act, 1 Cor. 13:4].

A. Explain how Paul describes what love will do instead of defining it (1 Cor. 13:4-7).

The kind of love mentioned by Paul is *agape* love. It is the most powerful love possible in the human heart because it rises above selfishness and reaches out to places emphasis on the one loved. This is the only kind of love that would motivate God to give His only begotten Son, and for Jesus to lay down His life for us (*John 3:16; 1 John 3:16*). Therefore, any attempted definition will fall short. Knowing this truth, Paul relates what this kind of love will do.

"Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade

itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love will never fail" (1 Cor. 13:4-8).

This kind of love is present even when the one loved is not loveable!

B. When we mistreat someone, is *agape* love absent?

Yes, love is absent, because mistreating someone is not a characteristic of love. Mistreating someone brings pain, and love does not want to bring this kind of pain. Should any type of pain come from love, it is present only for the good of the one loved. You see, love always has the right motive. Even when love must bring pain through discipline, it is done to help and not to harm. Even when one is harmed, love says, "I'll still be kind and forgive." *"And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you" (Eph. 4:32).*

One of my favorite illustrations tells of a young girl at a Children's Home who was somewhat different from the other children. Because of this, the others, even the leaders, did not trust her. They were suspicious of her—even her motives. Therefore, they continually looked for an opportunity to catch her doing something wrong.

One day she went down into the meadow to a large oak tree, and someone saw her place something in the fork of the tree. They rushed to the leaders and told them what they saw this girl do. They immediately, along with several of the youth, rushed to the tree. The note that had been hidden there was retrieved, and read to the group. "To anyone who finds this note, I love you." This changed the attitude of all in the home toward this young lady.

C. When there is haughtiness, rudeness, and impatience, is love absent?

Again, the answer is yes. We may try to justify our improper actions by saying, "Oh, I'm just having a bad day," or "The way I'm acting does not mean that I don't love you," or "I don't mean anything by the way I act toward you." Now, as human beings, we will occasionally have wrong attitudes toward even those we love. However, this comes only in a moment of human weakness. But the truth is, love is absent when there is continual haughtiness, rudeness, and impatience. Love will not allow these sinful attitudes to remain. Love runs them away as quickly as possible.

Quoting: "Everything in creation obeys the law of love. There is no tree that bears fruit for its own use: the sun does not shine for itself. It is only man and the devil who in everything seeks their own." — Anders Nygren.

A. What is meant by walking in love? (*Eph. 5:1,2*).

Sometimes we make the mistake of thinking that love is only a feeling in our hearts, but to believe this is to sell love short. Yes, love is a beautiful feeling and must be present, but there is more. As Paul suggests, love is a walk. Real love involves following God as dear children.

Thus, walking in love means to willingly follow Jesus wherever He leads us. It means to rejoice in Him even when the pathway is filled with thorns. It means to be willing to sacrifice even to the point of dying for Him. Walking in love does not allow anything to halt our steps, but by faith places each step, knowing that God will provide the right path on which to walk. To walk in love also means that we believe the words that we often sing in worship, "Each step I take will lead me closer home."

B. Why did Paul mention "as dear children" in (*Eph. 5:1*)?

This was Paul's way of wanting them to be faithful Christians. The words, "dear children" suggest the right way to follow God. Dear children are children who are under control. Such children illustrate obedience, forgiveness, faithfulness, and love. These are the beautiful characteristics of children that Paul wants these brethren to possess.

How do we measure up to this standard today? As Christians, are we **CHILDLIKE** or **CHILDISH**? The apostle Peter also calls upon his readers to be "*as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct*" (1 Pet. 1:14,15).

Therefore, we are as dear children only when we listen to and are obedient to our heavenly Father.

Eph. 5:8 For you were sometimes [formerly] darkness, [the devil and the power of darkness, *Col. 1:13*] but now you are light in the Lord [they had been called out of darkness into His marvelous light. cf. 1 Pet. 2:9]. **Walk as children of light:** [Christ is the light of the world, John 8:12; to turn again to darkness would mean that they would leave Christ, the way to the Father, John 14:6: cf. Eph. 5:15,16].

A. What does it mean to let your light shine? (*Mt. 5:16*).

Most all of us know the Scriptures that reveal Jesus as the light of the world, we have been told often the importance of letting our lights shine. But do we understand fully what it means to let our lights shine? In short, it is to live for Jesus to the point that our lives glorify the Father in heaven. It is not enough to go around claiming that we have a great lamp capable of producing a powerful light. It is not enough to make the claim that we have plenty of oil. The real test is do we shine before others? Is our light bright enough from reflecting the light of Jesus to glorify God?

It may be surprising to some, but the kind of light that Jesus demands requires that we are faithful in Bible study, in worship, in teaching others, in visitation, and in all our daily walk of life. Yes, it involves denying ourselves and taking up our cross daily for Him (Lk. 9:23). Also, it involves avoiding those things that dim or cover our lights. Sin is fully associated with darkness. Therefore, sin in our lives, regardless of how small we consider such, has a way of dimming our lights.

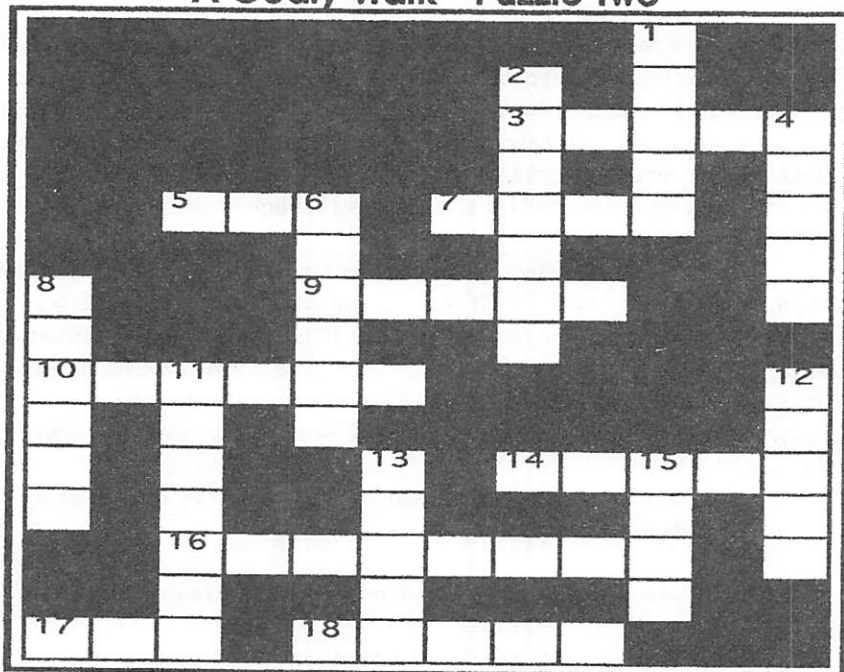
We keep our lamps trimmed and burning brightly by daily walking with Jesus in the light.

B. How do Christians walk in the light? (1 John 1:7).

Well first of all, it is a walk! John did not mention sitting in the light, but walking in the light. In the parable of the ten virgins (*Mt. 25:1-13*), each virgin had a lamp and was responsible to provide a light at the coming of the bridegroom. Jesus considered five of them foolish, and said, *"I do not know you"* because they allowed their lamps to go out. When they needed oil for their lamps, even the wise virgins could not help them. Each was responsible for her own oil and light.

Thus, we walk in the light as He is in the light by being active for Jesus. Yes, it involves refusing things of darkness, but it goes deeper than this. Those who truly let their lights shine daily by living and serving Him, will dispel the darkness. John goes on and says that there will be fellowship with other Christians, *"and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son will cleanse us from all sin."* Therefore, walking in the light is very important and essential if we please Jesus.

A Godly Walk - Puzzle Two



ACROSS

- 3 Where one should walk (*Isa. 2:3*)
 5 A word associated with liberty (*Jas. 1:25*)
 7 What the prophets of Jerusalem walked in (*Jer. 23:14*)
 9 A walk that illuminates (*1 John 1:7*)
 10 A lower place to walk (*Ps. 23:4*)
 14 Where to walk to stumble (*John 11:10*)
 16 Those who walk in God's special road (*Isa. 35:9*)
 17 Associated with goodness (*Prov. 2:20*)
 18 How the worthy will walk with Jesus (*Rev. 3:4*).

DOWN

- 1 A cause of darkness (*1 John 2:11*)
 2 A position of walking (*Ps. 84:11*)
 4 The way to walk close to Jesus (*Rom. 4:12*)
 6 Enoch's relationship to God (*Gen. 5:22*)
 8 The aim of the devil as he walks about (*1 Pet. 5:8*)
 11 A walk of freedom (*Ps. 119:45*)
 12 An unusual place to walk (*Mt. 14:29*)
 13 Where Christians should not walk (*Rom. 8:1*)
 15 Something that one should not walk after (*Jer. 7:6*).

A Trusted Worker

Lesson 3

Memory Verse: *“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going” (Eccl. 9:10).*

Expository Verses

Mark 14:3 **And being in Bethany** [a city two miles southeast of Jerusalem—six days before the Passover, John 12:11] **at the house of Simon** [along with Mary, Martha and Lazarus, John 12:1,21 **the leper**, [probably had been healed of his leprosy by Jesus, but continued to be identified as Simon the leper] **as He sat at meat** [the table] **there came a woman** [Mary, John 11:2; 12:3;—Martha, as usual, was serving, John 12:21] **having an alabaster box** [vase or jar; a pound, about a pint, John 12:3] **of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she broke the box, and poured it on His head** [also His feet, and dried them with her hair, John 12:3].

A. Why is it a beautiful thing to show love for Jesus?

Because love is complete when it is answered. Without a doubt, love is always present through Jesus. Paul reminded the Roman Christians that *“God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8)*. How beautiful it is to express our gratitude to God and to Jesus by loving Him.

In the text above, Mary must have been thrilled for the opportunity to recipitate love. Jesus not only loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus as He loved the whole world, but He also loved them as close friends. *“Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus” (John 11:5)*. Therefore, the anointment of His head and feet was especially beautiful to those who love Jesus.

Today, we cannot have the same opportunity of anointing the physical body of Jesus as Mary experienced, but this does not mean that we cannot show love to Jesus. Remember, the New Testament is a guidebook of love, because God is love. *“He who does not love does not know God, for God is love” (1 John 4:8)*. It is a beautiful thing to show love to God and His Son Jesus by following His example in our lives.

As we live the Christian life, we become the eyes, the hands, and the

feet of Jesus. Thus, as we see opportunities to serve and use our bodies to carry out service to Him, we are showing love to Jesus. In fact, Jesus taught His followers that when they had ministered to the *"least of these My brethren, you did it to Me"* (Mt. 25:40).

B. How do we show that we love Him today?

We begin by recognizing that the teaching of Jesus was not limited to His audience while He was on earth, but the same principles were intended for His kingdom in all ages to come. In His ministry, He was not only instructing those present, but He was preparing for His church or kingdom that would come with power (Mark 9:1). Therefore, He wants love shown to Him today just as much as He did while on earth. So we show that we love Him today by doing what He taught and by keeping His commandments. *"If you love Me, keep My commandments"* (John 14:15).

There is no service that we render for Jesus that is too small for Him to observe, and He will reward such. *"For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward"* (Mk. 9:41).

Every dish of food that you prepare for the needy, every visit that you make, every phone call of concern, and all the other deeds that you do to bring glory to Jesus, He promises to know about it, and to give you a reward. What an incentive to show daily our love for Jesus!

C. Why is there none greater than Jesus?

Because He came to earth as God in the flesh, and showed the world by His glory, *"the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14). Thus, there is none greater because of who He was, and who He represented.

But there is also none greater than Jesus because of how He lived. His character was tested every moment of His ministry on earth. The critics rushed upon Him as a white capped rapid laps its angry billows upon a boulder. But Jesus, like the boulder, stood firmly after all attacks were over. Every effort was made to find only one flaw in Him, but only righteousness was present. Therefore, we can say that never a man lived, spoke, and died like this One called Jesus.

Quoting: "I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever were built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this

earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life—the life of Christ.” —Phillips Brooks.

Mark 14:4 And there were some [His disciples, Mt. 26:8] who had indignation [specifically Judas who would betray Him, John 12:4] within themselves, and said, “why was the ointment thus wasted?” [why this waste?].

Mark 14:5 For it [the ointment] might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, [considered one year’s wages, John 12:5] and given to the poor” [Judas had no concern for the poor, he was a thief, had the money bag, and had used it for himself, John 12:6:13:29]. And they murmured against her.”

A. Do many today still criticize good works?

It is reasonable to assume that the answer to this question is yes? This conclusion is based on the fact that even Jesus was criticized for all the good works that He did. When He performed miracles that could not be denied, there were those who still found fault. Even when Jesus healed a demon-possessed, blind and mute man, the Pharisees said, “*This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons*” (Mt. 12:24). It is also said about Jesus that He “*went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him,*” but they still criticized.

Yes, criticism is still done today. Now, why do many criticize good works? It may be because they did not begin the work, because they are not involved in it, jealousy, and a host of other things. But for whatever reason the good works are criticized, it can be very painful to those who are receiving it.

B. Discuss the best ways to deal with critics.

It is first important to weigh what the critic is saying to determine if the criticism is constructive or destructive. When we find that we are wrong, then learn from the criticism and make every effort to change. However, when it is decided that the criticism is destructive in nature and coming from one who has the wrong motives, we should try to ignore it and continue doing what is right.

Sometimes we feel the need to practice the “eye for an eye” principle on such critics. So we come down to their level and get involved in saying things that are wrong and sinful. This is not the Lord’s way. Jesus is our perfect example of dealing with unjust criticism. He first listened to the critic, responded sincerely with the truth, and then continued His good works. On various occasions, Jesus spent the night in prayer. We are not told what he prayed during these all

night prayer sessions, but He must have talked to His Father about the unjust critics who made their attacks on Him daily.

Mark 14:6 And Jesus said, [He knew what they were saying] **“Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has done a good work on Me.”**

A. Name some good works today for Jesus.

Getting involved in good works for Jesus is not optional if we want to show our love for Him and do the Father’s will. As a general rule, the good works of Jesus involve three major things: (1) Showing Jesus to others by the life we live, (2) Sharing His saving message, and (3) Showing concern for the needy. Let’s consider briefly the importance of each of these.

(1) Showing Jesus to others by the life we live.

Showing Jesus to others by the life we live may at first seem like the easiest one. However, this involves everything we do in life. Showing Jesus in our lives is not an occasional incident, but it is our whole life. It reaches out to the way we think, the way we talk, the way we walk, and the way we serve. It involves the way we act with our families behind closed doors, as well as when the whole world is seeing us. Our lights for Jesus must never go out! Remember, all the other good works that we do for others are predicated by the way we show Jesus in our lives.

(2) Sharing His saving message.

At this point, some say, “This one does not apply to me. I’m not qualified to be a preacher or teacher.” For some reason, when we think of sharing the message of the gospel, we think only of preachers and teachers. It is true that these must be out front with the message, but there is something that all can do. We need to program our minds to seek EVERY opportunity to share Jesus. It may be in a simple conversation, a phone call, the giving and sending of a gospel tract, the writing of a note, or ministering in the name of Jesus when someone is in need. Our daily aim as a Christian should be to show Jesus in some way to others.

(3) Showing concern for the needy.

What comes to your mind when you think of the needy? Do you think of

someone who is extremely poor and needs assistance? Do you think of someone who needs food and clothing from the Benevolent Room? Well, these are often legitimate needs. But if this is the only ones who come to your mind, then your concept for the needy is limited. There are those who have all their physical needs amply supplied, but are still in need. For you see, this life is filled with so much pain, disappointments, rejections, and loneliness. Therefore, there are those in need on every hand. As a Christian, reach out and touch those who have special needs.

Give some time to those who are lonely in a Nursing Home, confined to a hospital room, or perhaps sick and lonely at home. There are always those who have lost their mates either by death or divorce. They need the concern of those in Christ who really care. Sometimes, a short visit and a dish of food will make all the difference. Remember, when you are involved in good works for others, you are doing these works for Jesus.

B. Are most Christians like Mary, or like these complainers?

If we answer this question in all honesty, we must admit that the complainers outnumber the ones like Mary. However, Mary did not stop her good works just because some objected. Jesus let Mary, these complainers, and all generations to come, know that she had not wasted this oil of spikenard.

What was the secret of Mary's success? Jesus said, "*She has done what she could*" (Mk. 14:8). The love that she had for Jesus led her to do the best she could. Jesus announced the power of her act of love and service. "*She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the whole world, what this woman did will also be spoken of as a memorial to her*" (Mk. 14:8,9).

When we do what we can to help those in need, it is like dropping a pebble in a stream of water. There is produced small circles of waves that move far out into the water. Many of our deeds of service will continue to circle from our lives even after we are gone from this earth.

We need to get on the team with Mary, and do what we can rather than complain!

C. After good works are studied, should they be done?

Certainly, we know the answer to this question. For we have been taught many times the importance of putting into practice what we hear and what we study. James wrote, "*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving*

yourselves. "If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?" (James 1:22; 2:15,16).

Jesus taught that only those who DO the will of the Father will enter the kingdom of heaven, and to fail to DO what He taught is compared to a foolish man who lost his house because he built it upon the sand (*Mt. 7:21,24-27*).

John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, [defends His healing a man and doing good works on the Sabbath] "My Father has been working until now, and I too am working" [the work that Jesus did represented the work of His Father].

A. How long should Christians work? (*1 Cor. 15:58*).

The Bible teaches as long as we live upon this earth, but so many seem to think otherwise. There are those who are faithful for a while in their service, and then become tired of working. At this point, they seem to say, "I've done my part, now let someone else take over." This false conclusion cannot be found in God's word.

Others seem to think that one can retire from working as a Christian just as they retire from secular work. Thus, at a certain age, they refuse to teach, keep the nursery, prepare food for the sick and bereaved, or any other good work for Jesus. The attitude seems to be, "I have earned the right to just coast on into heaven." This false premise is denied in the Bible.

Now it is true that due to age and health we are not able to accomplish as much for the Lord as we did when younger. But this does not mean that we cannot accomplish something. The time comes that we cannot accomplish as much at home in keeping things going inside and out. But do we just quit? No, we continue on at the pace our bodies will allow. It may require a certain amount of sacrifice, but we continue on.

Doesn't the Lord deserve this, and much more? Since He gave His all for us, is it asking too much to serve Him as long as there is breath and life? Paul encouraged: "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." "But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good" (*Gal. 6:9; 2 Thes. 3:13*).

Even though there are many difficulties to face in service to Jesus as we get older, there are also some advantages. It should be a time in our lives when our children are adults and have their own families. We may not be required to punch a time clock daily as we did before retirement. Although our lives may be filled with many things, if we really want to, we can make time for the Lord.

Always keep in mind, remaining as faithful servants to Jesus to end of your life is your greatest investment. And there is nothing that you can do that is more profitable. Paul sums up this point in this way: *"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord"* (1 Cor. 15:58).

B. What is meant by "work out your own salvation?" (Phil. 2:12).

Because salvation is by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8), some have concluded that works have nothing to do with salvation. However, this is not the teaching of God's truth. No, we can't work and earn salvation, but we can work to please God and show our love toward Him.

Even though the "water of life is free," those who receive its benefits must drink! *"And let him who thirsts come. And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely"* (Rev. 22:17). Jesus taught, *"But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life"* (John 4:14).

Therefore, the good works that we do please God, and He is always ready to extend the free gift of salvation to the faithful. It was Jesus who had John to write to a local church, *"Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life"* (Rev. 2:10). There is an eternal blessing associated with Christians who work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. The work is personal as well as the reward. John writes, *"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them"* (Rev. 14:13).

C. Should working for Jesus be a drudgery or a pleasure?

This is a very important question, and the answer on the surface is easy. Working for Jesus should be a pleasure. However, there are those who have turned it into a drudgery. Why does this happen? Perhaps there are many reasons for this, but may we consider some of the most obvious reasons. Some do not find any pleasure in serving Jesus because they have never genuinely repented. Jesus taught, *"Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me"* (Mk. 8:34). Before we can fully come to Jesus, we must change our hearts and lives. Once we have died to sin, we are then ready to be buried and raised with Him in baptism (Rom. 6:1-4).

Others do not find pleasure in working for Jesus because they are too involved in physical things. Jesus and His church are secondary in their lives. When this is true, all pleasure to be found in working for Him becomes a drudg-

ery. Then we often see those who refuse to get involved, and do only what they are pressured to do. Therefore, the work they do is done without having their hearts in it. This kind of situation almost always takes all pleasure out of serving Jesus.

So, whether working for Jesus is a drudgery or pleasure depends on how much we love Him, and on how much we are willing to invest our lives for Him. The rich young ruler did not follow Jesus, because he would not place Jesus above his riches (*Mt. 19:22*).

Example: There is a story of a small boy who was seen going along the road with his shoulders bent under the weight of a younger child. Somebody commiserated with him, and the small boy replied, "He's not a heavy load; he's my little brother."
—Willie W. White.

Titus 3:1 Remind them [those who are at Crete, Titus 1:5] to be subject to principalities [rulers, Rom. 13:1] and powers, [authorities] to obey magistrates, [governments, cf. 1 Pet. 2:13] to be ready for every good work, [fruitful in every work, Col. 1:10; complete in every good work, Heb. 13:21].

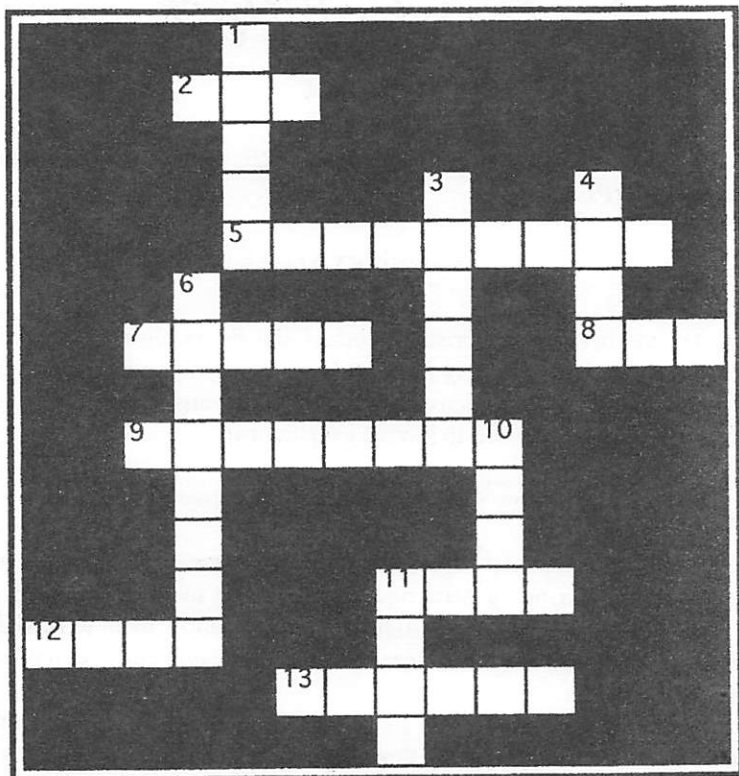
A. How does one prepare for every good work? In what ways can Jesus use us?

Once we have decided to give Jesus first place in our lives, we begin looking daily for ways to serve Him. We must begin by studying the word of God to learn about the works that please God. The New Testament rings out with many examples of teaching, helping the needy, living like Jesus, and following in the footsteps of Jesus. Once we have learned about the many good works that need to be done, then we must plan our lives to get involved.

Begin by determining the things that you can do best. Although we can do some of many of the things taught, there is usually at least one good work that we are more capable of doing. This is where we should place the greatest emphasis. Remember Paul taught that the spiritual body of Christ is made up of many members, "*but all the members do not have the same function*" (*Rom. 12:4*).

Therefore, be a part of all the good works that you can, but especially get involved in the areas where you can serve at your best. When we serve according to God's will, we are allowing Jesus to use us as workers in His church.

A Trusted Worker - Puzzle Three


DOWN
ACROSS

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 Instruments for work (1 Thes. 4:11)</p> <p>3 The one who joined Jesus in work (John 5:17)</p> <p>4 The result of all things working together (Rom. 8:28)</p> <p>6 What seeks a perfect work (Jas. 1:4)</p> <p>10 How one responds to the work (Jas. 1:25)</p> <p>11 Something to do during the day (John 9:4).</p> | <p>2 A bonus from working (2 Thes. 3:10)</p> <p>5 Should work for this with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12)</p> <p>7 A special kind of work (2 Thes. 1:11)</p> <p>8 A time to finish work (John 9:4)</p> <p>9 A place of work (Mt. 21:28)</p> <p>11 Something associated with good work (2 Thes. 2:17)</p> <p>12 What will reveal one's work (1 Cor. 3:13)</p> <p>13 One who was associated with work (Phil. 2:30).</p> |
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A Model of Patience

Lesson 4

Memory Verse: *"I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry" (Ps. 40:1).*

Expository Verses

James 1:2 My brethren, [Christian brothers and sisters regardless of race, Gal. 3:28] count [consider] it all joy [nothing but joy] when you fall into [meet suddenly, Lk. 10:30] various [many types; manifold] temptations, [outward trials and distresses which can lead to inward temptations].

A. How do we feel about trials in our lives?

Although we may admit that trials will come, and that they can even serve to test our faith, as a general rule, we don't want such in our lives. Now it is true that trials can bring one of two results. We can allow them to MAKE us or BREAK us. For James says that these trials that come into our lives represent the testing of one's faith.

If we fail this test of our faith, we will be led to evil temptations from within the heart. This is when the devil takes over and tempts us to do evil. God does not have any part in this kind of temptation. Yes, God allows trials to come into our lives to test our faith, but when we fail this test, and turn our hearts to lust, He has no part of this.

James writes further: *"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God,' for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed" (James 1:13,14).*

But what is the good that comes from trials that test our faith? James says that these trials produce patience. As each trial passes, we are made stronger to endure the next one. Our perseverance is made strong for the Lord. This is why James wrote, *"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various temptations" (Jas. 1:2).*

B. Do we allow such trials to tempt us to do evil?

This is the real test in our lives. All can be assured that trials will come.

They even came into the life of Jesus. But we must ask, how will I handle these trials? Will they weaken my faith and cause me to be tempted to do evil?

The attack of sin in our lives is often a gradual process. We begin to give in to our desires and this becomes an enticement. James carries this further, "*Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death*" (James 1:15).

Thus, it is so very important that we keep our faith strong when trials come into our lives. And it is also essential that we stay strong enough in faith to say no when the devil tempts us with evil desires. We must never allow our trials to tempt us to do evil, but allow them to produce patience in our lives.

C. Can we meet temptations like Jesus (Mt. 4:1-11)?

We can never reach the same perfection that Jesus had when He was tempted, for He was "*in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin*" (Heb. 4:15). But we can seek to follow His example, and to use the same weapon that He used against Satan.

Jesus faced the devil with the right attitude toward God. He came to earth, not to do His own will, but the will of His Father (John 6:38). Even at the age of twelve, Jesus was about His Father's business (Lk. 2:49). Therefore, Jesus did not allow Satan to get Him off course. Jesus faced each temptation with the word of God. Each time the devil tempted, Jesus said, "*It is written.*" He quoted (Deut. 8:3; 6:16; 10:20).

As we go through life as Christians, we must never face the temptations of the devil without the "*sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*" (Eph. 6:17). If we lay down this sword, we will fail! When we follow Jesus' example with the devil, God will help us escape his temptations. Paul promised this: "*But God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it*" (1 Cor. 10:13).

Quoting: "The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials". — Chinese Proverb.

"I thank God for my handicaps, for through them, I have found myself, my work and my God." — Helen Keller.

"As threshing separates the wheat from the chaff, so does affliction purify virtue." — Richard E. Burton.

James 1:3 knowing this, that the trying [testing or proving] of your faith [conviction or belief in God] works [produces] patience [endurance or perseverance,

Rom. 5:3-5].

A. Are we running with endurance? (Heb. 12:1).

The inspired writer in this reference describes the Christian life as an important race. The goal of every runner is to win the race, and this can be done only if certain rules are followed. The first one is to run with endurance. This is not easy, because there are so many things to resist. We must successfully face the opposition of the devil. Be assured that he will do all in his power to tempt us not to endure to the end.

All of us know both men and women in congregations who have stopped running. They would not handle the trials and tribulations that come when running for Jesus. They ran out of patience and quit.

We can imagine tears running down Paul's cheeks as he wrote, "*For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world...*" (2 Tim. 4:10). Paul is saying that he has not endured the race. Do you know a friend or loved one who brings tears to your eyes because they have not endured?

Yes, all runners have times when the running gets so rough that we are tempted to quit. But we must never! We must always run with endurance the race that is set before us, and God will see to it that we win.

B. What are the weights that must be laid aside?

In short, the weights are those sins which so easily ensnare us. These hold us back and keep us from running the race successfully for the Lord.

As a boy, I can recall having races with other boys. We would be walking along, and someone would say, "I'll race you to that tree" or to some other designated place. This was always a challenge that had to be met. However, there were times when I was not prepared to run. For example, I would lose when both of my front pockets were full of marbles. The weight of these marbles, plus concern in trying to keep from losing them, would hold me back. This is the way that sin works in our lives, and these weights of sin must be laid aside.

What are some of these sins?

(1) The cares of the world.

The world has all kinds of things to offer us. Some of the things offered may not be sinful, but most of them are. However, when all of these are placed together, they can fill our lives with fleshly and sinful things. These can fill our lives and hold us back from running in this eternal race. Have you ever placed the

activities of your life on the balancing scales? Try this! On one side, place all the physical things that you are involved in daily in your life. On the other side, place the spiritual. Now, which side of the scales goes down?

In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus compared the cares of the world to thorns that choked out the plant from producing fruit (*Mk. 4:19*). This will do the same to our lives, and will keep us from winning in God's race.

(2) Procrastination.

Another weight that needs to be laid aside is procrastination. It is wondered, how many have been stopped from running successfully in the Christian race because of "putting off" serving God. We would not dare announce that we have quit serving, but rather, we just say that we have things on hold. When we are not so busy, we will resume the race.

When we fail to put off procrastination, the devil has us where he wants us. For he knows that putting off becomes a habit that in most cases is never broken. Therefore, it becomes easy to travel the road to hell that is paved with good intentions. When we have a "tomorrow" religion, we will soon learn that tomorrow never comes. Thus, procrastination is a weight that should be laid aside.

(3) An evil tongue.

This is a weight that holds many back from successfully running the Christian race. The tongue, in and of itself, is not evil. It is when the tongue is allowed to speak evil that it becomes destructive. When this happens, "*It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison*" (*James 3:8*).

The tongue can keep us from running successfully in the race because it is capable of speaking both a blessing and a curse. "*With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God*" (*James 3:9*). Therefore, it important to keep a bridle on our tongues at all times if we hope to win the race.

(4) Selfishness.

It is wondered just how many people are kept from running the race for Jesus because of selfishness. Those who begin the Christian race, do so by laying aside selfishness and denying self (*Mk. 8:34*). It is also true that those who run in this race must continue to lay aside the weight of selfishness.

Jesus gave the perfect example of unselfishness, and one of our greatest challenges is to follow His example. This is not easy to do, but it is essential to

running a successful race. Remember, the Lord will help us when we study His word, and daily seek His help in prayer.

(5) Hatred and Jealousy.

Many are having difficulties with running in God's race because they are carrying in their hearts hatred and jealousy. As we go through life, there are often those who do us wrong, and it becomes easy to hate them. Without any effort made to correct such sins, these sins continue to grow and to hold us back. We must lay these aside to properly run in the race for Jesus.

When Paul gave a list of the works of the flesh to the Galatians that would keep one from entering the kingdom of God, he included these two. "...*idolatry, sorcery, HATRED, contentions, JEALOUSIES...*" (*Gal. 5:20*).

These five things (along with others) are weights that will hold us back, and must be laid aside if we are going to be successful in running the race to win the crown of life (*Rev. 2:10*).

C. Discuss how Timothy was asked to pursue patience (*1 Tim. 6:11*).

After Paul showed Timothy the dangers and pitfalls of loving money, he called upon him to flee such things. As he ran from the evils that come from loving money, he was commanded to pursue certain things that are right before God. They were: "*Righteousness, godliness, faith, love, PATIENCE, gentleness.*"

Paul knew that living the Christian life can have its difficulties and temptations. Therefore, Christians were called upon to bear persecutions and rejections on every hand. There was truly a need to develop patience even to the point of suffering long. God rewards those who learn to persevere to the end. The quitter is in danger of reaching the point of no return, and thus of being lost (*Heb. 6:4-6*).

Just as Timothy needed to pursue patience, we need to do the same in our lives today. When we keep our eyes and hearts on the goal of eternal life, we can learn to patiently deal with all the things that come into our lives to try our patience. When Peter gave the various graces that need to be added to one's faith, he included patience or perseverance (*2 Pet. 1:6*). We must also add patience, along with all the others, to our lives today.

D. How patient are we with others who try us?

This needs to be a soul searching question for each of us. Therefore, take a moment and ponder in your heart just how patient you are with others. Probably

each of you will find two factors that are present: (1) It depends on who they are. (2) And how they trouble us.

(1) It depends on who they are.

Yes, how patient we are with others begins with who they are. Sometimes we are less patient with the ones we love most. When we live around a mate or children daily, our patience may easily wear thin. Some people seem to be more patient and kind to strangers than to their own loved ones. This is something that we must work at daily.

Sometimes we are more patient with friends than with others. Love for a friend can cause us to bear with them and even suffer long. However, when others try us in the same way, we may run out of patience.

(2) And how they trouble us.

Difficulties with others has a way of building up. As they try our patience, they may even reach the point of stirring up envy, jealousy, and even hatred. When this happens, we will likely lose all patience with them.

Now, Christianity endeavors to overcome all such difficulties that attack our patience. The more we learn about Jesus and follow His example, the more patient we will become toward others.

James 1:4 But let patience [steadfast endurance or perseverance, 1 Cor. 15:58] have its perfect work, [full effect or results] that you may be perfect and complete, [mature] lacking nothing [2 Tim. 3:16,17].

A. Can we with patience suffer long?

The answer to this question is yes. In fact, most of the time in the New Testament, patience is associated with longsuffering. Being patient means more than just to wait, but it means to wait even if one is called upon to suffer. This is the strongest test of all. When one learns patience with longsuffering, he or she has matured as a Christian.

For example, if you meet a Doctor's ^{hard to do} appointment and wait one hour without pain, it is easier to do than if you wait the same hour in pain. So, our patience is fully tried when we face suffering.

Obviously, to be able to have patience and to suffer long is a daily challenge, because God is longsuffering with us (Rom. 2:4). And this should be one of our goals as we strive for Christian maturity. In fact, one of the things men-

fortunate
 we can share heartache *with our*
~~system~~ *Christ*

tioned by Paul as being the fruit of the Spirit is longsuffering (Gal. 5:22). When we answered the call of the gospel, we were, among other things, called to be longsuffering. Paul beseeched the brethren at Ephesus "to have a walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with LONGSUFFERING, bearing with one another in love" (Eph. 4:1,2).

Yes, we can have the kind of patience that suffers long if we will make every effort to follow God's will for our lives daily.

B. Does prayer help us persevere? (Rom. 12:12).

The apostle Paul taught that prayer is a part of perseverance. "Rejoicing in hope, patient [persevering] in tribulation, continuing steadfastly IN PRAYER" (Rom. 12:12). The following of God's will that is mentioned above certainly includes prayer.

To hold on faithfully when there is suffering, is beyond our own strength, and the only way we can do it is with the help of God. No, God does not respond with a direct miracle, but He knows how to help. When we seek His Help, we can say, "He knows just what I need." This is why Paul commanded, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Phil. 4:6).

All other sources of help is fleshly and will let us down, but God is spiritual and all powerful, and is able to help. Do you want to keep going when the going gets rough? Then call upon God through prayer to help! The word of God promises: "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace TO HELP IN TIME OF NEED" (Heb. 4:16).

Therefore, when we feel that we cannot persevere any longer, call upon God in prayer. Remember, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear, what can man do to me?" (Heb. 13:6).

C. In the Christian graces, why did Peter say to add, "to self-control perseverance?" (2 Pet. 1:6)

The Christian graces represent the spiritual characteristics that must be present for one to have a strong faith. Doesn't it seem reasonable that before we can persevere we must have ourselves under control. Those who cannot practice self-control will lose their tempers, speak evil words, and commit sinful acts against others. This in turn will destroy their patience and perseverance.

These various Christian traits bond together to form spiritual character and strength for the Lord. And in Peter's words, we must give "all diligence" to add them to our faith.

D. Are most Christians complete or mature?

The answer to this question may at first seem like judging others. However, the answer should be based on the actions that we see in others. For maturity is something that can be seen when it is present in others. Thus, honesty leads us to say that many have not matured as they should.

Who is to blame when maturity is not present? Well, it must begin with each individual seeking it. For example, the Christian graces just considered were to be added by each Christian. The admonition of Peter is, “*giving all diligence, add to your faith...*” (2 Pet. 1:6). Peter concludes this list by writing, “*For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins*” (vs. 9). So maturity begins with each individual.

However, don’t forget that others can help in our maturity. We can encourage each other, allow others to teach us, and seek to associate with those who can help us mature for the Lord. As Christians, we should never stop seeking spiritual maturity in our lives.

James 5:11 Behold, [look or take notice] **we count them** [the prophets and others] **happy** [blessed] **who endure** [persecutions. Mt. 5:11,12]. **You have heard of the patience** [endurance] **of Job** [he suffered every aspect of human suffering, but remained steadfast, Job 1:21; 2:10; 13:15] **and have seen the end** [outcome] **of the Lord** [His dealings—after Job was tried, God gave him more than before his trials, Job 42:12] **that the Lord is very compassionate, and [full] of tender mercy** [He is full of compassion and merciful, Mt. 5:7].

A. In regard to patience, how do you compare to Job?

Most of us have studied Job and the things that happened to him to try his patience. We know that one by one he lost everything except his life, but he still patiently persevered. He said, “*Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord*” (Job 1:21). It was said of Job, “*In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong*” (Job 1:22).

Therefore, the book of Job sets forth a man who became an example of patience, and God rewarded him. James wrote: “*Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful*” (James 5:11).

Job had lost so much, but by patience and perseverance, “*the Lord blessed*

the latter days of Job more than his beginning" (Job 42:12). Job was given large herds along with seven sons and three daughters, and he saw his children and grandchildren for four generations (Job 42:13,16).

Therefore, we need to compare our patience to Job, and work daily to improve as we faithfully serve God.

B. How does one develop patience?

The first thing to observe from this question is that patience and perseverance do not come easy. There must be effort on our part if such is developed. In fact, developing patience is one of the things needed to reach our goals for happiness. For we know that the quitter never wins, and the winner never quits. So the development of patience begins with recognizing that it is something of importance that we must do. The next step is to deal properly with each time we are tested.

Job's trials came to him one by one. His loss of wealth, children, and respect from wife and friends, did not happen all at once. However, as each tragedy came, Job faced it. He won the war by facing and winning the daily battles.

Then it is important to keep in mind that the Lord wants us to add patience and perseverance to our lives (2 Pet. 1:6), and to do so has an effect on all other areas of life. Thus, our efforts to develop patience and endurance can be summed up by prayer, Bible study, setting goals, and doing our best as we face each trial.

C. Discuss how the lack of patience can be harmful.

It is true that God does not give all blessings at the moment, because some of His blessings come after endurance. We have learned how bountifully Job was blessed, but this came after he had patiently endured his suffering. Isn't this the theme of the New Testament, that those who faithfully endure will receive the crown of life? (1 Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:9; Rev. 2:10). The eternal blessings are promised after the storms of life stop raging!

The book of Revelation presents the full attack of the devil on Christians, and how they are subjected to the cruel persecutions of Rome. But the same book speaks of victory in Jesus the Lamb, to those who endure.

Therefore, we can see that a lack of patience and endurance can take away our hope of eternal life. Those who do not have patience, may even turn back into the world to be lost forever. Demas is an example of one who lost because he did not endure. At first he is spoken of as one who was with Paul (Col. 4:14), but Demas quit. "*For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world...*" (2

Tim. 4:10). He allowed the love of the world to keep him from faithfully enduring, and we have no record that he ever repented.

We can conclude, then, that failing to develop patience is very harmful, even to the losing of our souls.

Example: The fable is told of a man who wanted the beans in his garden to grow faster than his neighbor's. Therefore, each day he stretched the leaves. To his surprise, all of his beans died!

1 Thes. 5:14 Now we exhort [encourage] you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, [insubordinate or idle, 2 Thes. 3:6,7,11] comfort the fainthearted, [those who are timid and discouraged, cf. Heb. 12:12] help [uphold] the weak, be patient toward [with] all men [everybody, Gal. 5:22,23].

A. With whom is it easiest to be patient?

As a general rule, it is easier to be patient with the people we love, because Paul writes that, "*Love suffers long and is kind*" (1 Cor. 13:4). Now, it is true, that within our closest family members, there may be a lack of patience with the ones we love so dearly. This often happens because we are together so often, and there are daily conflicts. However, this may be only a surface response. For when the time comes, in many important ways, we can be patient and persevere even to the point of forgiving our family members of serious wrongs.

It is also easier to forgive those who are patient with us. Why? Because we can see in their patience such things as, love, kindness, and forgiveness, and this can produce a patient attitude in our hearts.

As Christians, we are to work daily at being patient with our brothers and sisters in Christ. In fact, this is one of the ways that we express brotherly love. Paul called upon the Ephesian Christians to walk "*with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love*" (Eph. 4:2). This can be a part of our lives only if we love Jesus enough to make this a part of our surrendered life as a Christian.

B. With whom is it hardest to be patient?

Probably it is hardest to be patient with the ones we do not love. We often determine our likes and dislikes by observing personalities. Once we form an opinion about someone based on their attitude and the way they act, this can determine our patience toward them. Have you ever said about someone, "I love them as a Christian, but I can't stand the way they act?" It would no doubt be

more difficult to be patient with such a person.

Then it is very hard to persevere with one who thinks that he or she knows it all, and refuses to see another side of the issue. The haughty spirit may turn us off to the point that we do not want to be patient with them.

But, may we consider how that those with whom it is hardest to be patient, may need our patience more than any other. Their rebellion may be a cry for attention, to be loved and accepted, and a need for Christian growth.

How many times in the ministry of Jesus do we see Him being patient with those who did not deserve it? Day after day He made an effort to answer the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees, who had no intentions of following Jesus. Our Lord patiently worked His way through His ministry to Calvary where He gave His life a ransom for all (*Mk. 10:45*). Shouldn't we try harder to be patient with the difficult ones we encounter in life?

C. Discuss how we are made stronger by developing patience?

We are made stronger than any of us can imagine, because persevering under difficult circumstances can give us strength. When Peter gave the Christian graces for spiritual growth and fruit bearing, he included perseverance. After listing all of these important traits for Christians, he concluded, *"For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (*2 Pet. 1:8*).

All of us know that there are times when we need others to be patient with us. This need begins with God and includes our physical and spiritual family. Now, how can we expect others to be patient with us if we are not patient with them? The Golden Rule of Jesus expects us to be as patient with others as we want them to be to us (*Mt. 7:12*). Therefore, we must develop patience even toward those who are not loveable. Paul taught: *"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ"* (*Gal. 6:2*).

Thus, being patient under trying situations will make us stronger as servants of Jesus. For as we offer the gift of patience toward others, we receive the greatest gift of all.

D. How will those with faith and patience inherit the promises? (*Heb. 6:12*).

This is the message of the Hebrew writer in Hebrews 6! He reminds them that God is not unjust to forget their work and labor of love shown toward His name as they continue to minister to the saints. Then he warned them, *"that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the*

promise" (*Heb. 6:12*).

In both the Old and New Testaments, the message is clear that only those who patiently remain faithful to the end are winners with God. Whether we are thinking about enduring and being patient with others, or patiently enduring as Christians, we are promised a reward.

Paul makes this future promise to the churches of Galatia: "*And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart*" (*Gal. 6:9*).

Quoting: "Strength is born in the deep silence of long-suffering hearts; not amid joy." — Felicia Hemans

"The two powers which in my opinion constitute a wise man are those of bearing and forbearing." — Epictetus

A. What is the message of (*Romans 2:6,7*)?

Paul wanted his readers to know about the righteous judgment of God. It seems that His judgment will be twofold. The unrighteous will be punished (*vss. 8,9*), but to the righteous, He "*will render to each one according to his deeds, eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality*" (*vss. 6,7*).

The key mentioned by Paul to receive the eternal reward is PATIENT CONTINUANCE. To be a winner with God, we must with faith and patience finish the race. When Paul came to the end of his life, he could say, "*There is a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day.*" Why? Because he had fought a good fight, he had kept the faith, and he had finished the race, (*2 Tim. 4:7*).

Therefore, each of us should resolve from this moment until the end of our lives that we will patiently continue faithfully to the God of eternal life!

B. Can we gain eternal life without patient continuance?

There are those who believe that since God is a just God that they will be saved even if they are not faithful to him. Some religions go so far as to teach that "once in grace, always in grace," and that "it is impossible to fall from grace." This is taught in the face of many Scriptures that teach that this is not true. Christians are warned throughout the New Testament of the dangers of falling and being lost (*Heb. 12:5; 1 Cor. 9:27; 10:12; Gal. 5:4; 14:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:10; 2 Pet. 1:10; 2:4,20,22*).

But before we get too hard on those who teach this false doctrine, we should be reminded that among those who teach that one can fall away and be eternally lost, there are those who live as though they can't fall. Even though they are not patiently continuing in faithfulness, they seem to think that when they die, all will be well with them.

No, we are not to sit in judgment on anyone. However, we would be less than honest to say that they will be saved in their impenitent, fallen condition when the Bible declares that they are lost. Yes, God is a just God, and that is one of the reasons why He will reward the faithful and reject the unfaithful. Thus, those who gain eternal life through Jesus will do so by patient continuance until death (*Rev. 2:10*).

C. To what point did Jesus continue faithfully? (*Phil. 2:8*).

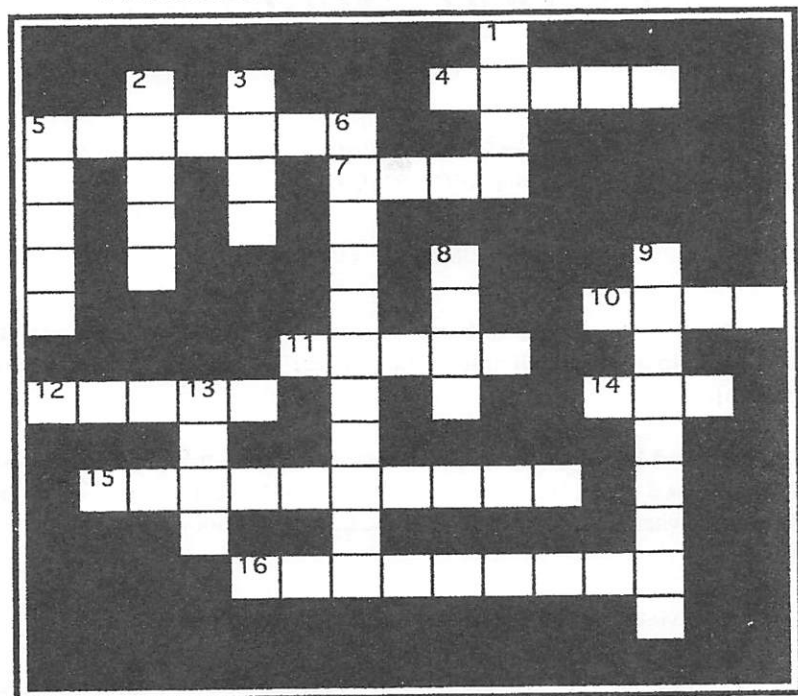
From the moment that Jesus left His Father to be clothed in human flesh, He was faithful. He never allowed anyone or anything to affect His faithfulness to God His Father. He loved his mother, but she, or anyone else, could not stop Him from being about His Father's business (*Lk. 2:49*).

The ultimate test of the faithfulness of Jesus came when the shadow of the cross laid in darkness across the Garden of Gethsemane. It was here that Jesus needed to win the battle. At this hour, human flesh failed Him. Even His close friends, Peter, James, and John would not watch with Him one hour (*Mt. 26:40*). But in pain, agony, loneliness, and sweat like great drops of blood falling down to the ground, He won the battle through prayer (*Lk. 22:44*).

Once the battle in the garden had been won, Jesus faced His enemy with confidence and faithfulness. The crowd was frightened when Jesus was arrested "*Then—when He said to them, 'I am He,'—they drew back and fell to the ground*" (*John 18:6*). But Jesus faced everything it seems with calmness.

The talk that Jesus had with His Father seemed to help Him continue on the road of obedience and faithfulness. Paul told the Philippian Christians to what point Jesus was faithful. "*And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross*" (*Phil. 2:8*).

A Model of Patience - Puzzle Four



ACROSS

- 4 The right kind of faith (**Titus 2:2**)
 5 One who asked for patience (**Mt. 18:26**)
 7 Something to run with patience (**Heb. 12:1**)
 10 One waited patiently on (**Ps. 40:1**)
 11 A word associated with joy (**1 Thes. 2:20**)
 12 "Strengthened with all—" (**Col. 1:11**)
 14 The ones with whom to be patient (**1 Thes. 5:14**)
 15 What patience brings (**Rom. 5:4 KJV**)
 16 How Paul identified himself (**2 Cor. 6:4**).

DOWN

- 1 What to pursue following faith (**1 Tim. 6:11**)
 2 Something born with patience (**Lk. 8:15**)
 3 What those with hope eagerly do (**Rom. 8:25**)
 5 What to possess with patience (**Lk. 21:19**)
 6 What Paul gloried in (**Rom. 5:3**)
 8 Something perfect sought by patience (**Jas. 1:4**)
 9 Something added to patience (**2 Pet. 1:6**)
 13 What patience and Scriptures bring (**Rom. 15:4**).

A Good Neighbor

Lesson 5

Memory Verse: "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Gal. 5:14).

Expository Verses

Luke 10:36 Now which of these three, [priest, Levite, Samaritan] do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" [the answer should be obvious to him].

Luke 10:37 And he said, "He who showed mercy on him" [he answered correctly, but refused to say, 'the Samaritan']. Then Jesus said to him, "You go and do likewise" [when truth from Jesus is learned, it must be obeyed to be pleasing to Him].

A. Review the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37).

A certain lawyer or expert in the law asked Jesus a very important question. "And who is my neighbor?" (vs. 29). Instead of giving a dry and dull definition, Jesus told him a story, the story of the Good Samaritan. Jesus spoke of a certain man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and was suddenly attacked by thieves who robbed him and left him half dead. After a priest and Levite saw him and passed him by, a Samaritan came along and showed compassion to him. He bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine, set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day when he left him, he told the inn-keeper to take care of him, and if he owed him more, he would repay it when he returned.

This was Jesus' idea of one who was a good neighbor, and even the lawyer agreed with Jesus. It was the one who showed concern and compassion for others. The principle is true if the person lives next door or is a stranger many miles away.

B. Which character in the Good Samaritan parable would you consider yourself?

This is an important question because Jesus wants the lessons from this

parable applied to those who study it. It is so easy to be like the priest and Levite who saw the man in need, but passed by on the other side. If these two men had been interviewed, they would have probably made an effort to justify their actions. Perhaps they were late for an appointment, they were already involved in doing God's work, they could not be defiled by touching such a person, or they were not physicians.

As Christians, we should daily seek ways to help others who are in need. This is not only one of the ways to please Jesus, but it also opens doors to teach the gospel to many who are lost in sin. Remember, Christianity is a CARING and SHARING religion. We cannot faithfully follow Jesus and walk in His steps without showing concern for our neighbors.

Quoting: "In this world it is not what we take up, but what we give up, that makes us rich." —H. W. Beecher.

"Do not wait for extraordinary circumstances to do good actions: try to use ordinary situations." —Richter.

Rom. 13:10 Love [Greek: *agape*] works [does] no ill to a neighbor; [love applies what is often called the golden rule, Mt. 7:12; Lk. 6:31] therefore love [Greek: *agape*] is the fulfillment of the law [all the commandments mentioned in vs. 9, when broken, are against another person—therefore love will motivate one to avoid such harm to others—love is the fulfilling of the law in respecting one's neighbor].

A. Discuss how the sins forbidden in (Rom. 13:9) can harm one's neighbor.

The sins mentioned in this verse are adultery, murder, stealing, bearing false witness, coveting, and any other related sin. Obviously these are sins against others. When one analyzes the ten commandments given to Moses and the people of Israel, it becomes obvious that they are divided into two major categories. The first four instructed Israel how to please God, and the other six how to act toward others.

Thus, they were to honor their father and mother, they were not to commit murder or adultery, they were not to steal, bear false witness against their neighbors, nor to covet their neighbor's house (*Ex. 20:1-17*). These last six commandments are harmful to others and were forbidden. Under the law of Christ, these same sins are forbidden. However, they are forbidden, not just by refusing to do them, but by loving our neighbors as we love ourselves.

As a general rule, we do not wish to harm ourselves, and those who do

are considered mentally ill. *"For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church" (Eph. 5:29)*. What is the key then to treating our neighbors right? Paul gives it in the above verse. Also, *"Love works no ill to a neighbor" (Rom. 13:10)*.

B. How are all commandments summed up in loving your neighbor as yourself?

The kind of love mentioned here is *agape* love, a love that considers the needs of the one loved. When such love is present, we avoid sinning against our neighbors for two reasons. First, because it is forbidden, but even more importantly, because we do not want to harm them. We WANT to do good to them! Anything other than showing kindness and compassion is contrary to love.

But what if our neighbors are not loveable, unfriendly, and unkind? Does this relieve us of the responsibility to show love toward them? Please notice, that we are not commanded to love their sinful or unkind ways. Even God hates the sins committed by the ones He loves. But it means that we love them as a neighbor by being kind to them and by helping them in their time of need.

Paul does not quote, "You shall love your GOOD neighbor as yourself," but simply says, "neighbor." This would include a neighbor who is either good or bad. But you might ask, "How can this be done?" The only way it can be done is by doing what Paul commanded the Colossians. *"But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection" (Col. 3:14)*.

C. Is it possible to love our neighbor this way?

There is a standing rule in the Bible that God will not command His children to do anything that is impossible for them to do. Not only are we commanded to love our neighbor as ourself, but Jesus showed by His life that it can be done. This is not to say that we can begin obeying this in perfection like Jesus, but it does mean that we make this our goal. That we strive daily to improve our love and compassion toward a neighbor in need.

Showing this kind of concern doesn't seem to come easy or even natural for many. However, we can develop these special feelings because God commands them. Then in time, they will become a part of our daily lives. We must learn to put those who are in need, in our minds and in our actions. There can be a personal satisfaction in knowing that we have helped someone in need, and have pleased God.

It is not hard to imagine the Good Samaritan falling to sleep easily that night, because he had shown compassion toward someone in need.

D. Give some examples of how we can love our neighbors as ourselves as Jesus commanded.

Keep in mind that the context of this love is loving to the point of being concerned about the needs or successes of our neighbors. We do not feel the same way toward them as we do our families, our friends, or our brothers and sisters in Christ. But we feel a deep desire to help and share with them.

Jesus was the only one who could meet the needs of the lost world, therefore, His love reached out to help. It cost Him His life on the cross, but He still reached out to serve and gave Himself a ransom (*Mt. 20:28*).

The way we show love for our neighbors is to teach the lost at every opportunity, to help feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, and help in any kind of need. This is the way that we show Jesus living in us.

Illustration: “The great violinist, Paganini, willed his marvelous violin to the city of Genoa, on condition that it must never be played upon.

Wood, while used and handled, wears but slightly. Discarded, it begins to decay. The lovely-toned violin has become worm-eaten and useless except as a relic. It is only a reminder that a life withdrawn from service to others becomes quite useless.” —Church Newsletter.

A. How does this illustration apply to Christians?

As we have often heard, Christianity is a religion that is active. It is a way of life that serves because Jesus served. In the words of a song, “Make me a servant, do what You must do. To make me a servant, make me like You.” Now, what happens when we do not serve, when we selfishly live only for ourselves? We become like the unused violin. The unused instrument was still called a violin, but it didn’t play. We may refer to ourselves as Christians, but we don’t serve.

When we set ourselves up as relics, we are like branches without fruit (*John 15:1-8*), sheep that do not follow (*John 10:4*), a farmer who does not plant and eat of his crops (*2 Tim. 2:6*), a priest who does not offer up spiritual sacrifices (*1 Pet. 2:5*), and a father’s son who will not work in the vineyard (*Mt. 21:30*).

B. What is meant by the saying: “We lose what we don’t use?”

God has made our minds capable of learning, and this is done by studying and practicing. Through this process, we can learn an unlimited number of skills in our lives. However, once these skills are learned, there is a need to use them or they will disappear.

To illustrate: When I was in school, basketball was number one in my life. Almost every day I practiced, and reached the point where it seemed like nothing to hit the basket from all angles on the court. But for many years now, I have had a basketball in my hands only a few times. What has happened? I feel somewhat lucky to even hit the backboard. All that skill that I worked for is gone. It was lost because it was not used.

Some of you may remember when you gave much of your time to serve others, and as you did this day by day, you became skilled at it. But what about today? Did you get involved in other things that caused you to stop serving? If so, do you feel inadequate to serve? This is why Christians are not to grow weary while doing good (*Gal. 6:9*), and why we are commanded to be patient until the coming of the Lord (*Jas. 5:7*). For what we don't use, we will lose.

Rom. 15:2 Let every one of us please his neighbor [seek what is best for others even when we must deny ourselves as did Jesus, *Phil. 2:4,5*] for his good to his edification [cf. *1 Thes. 5:14*; *1 Cor. 9:19*].

A. How does following Jesus make us please our neighbor?

First of all, Jesus lived an example of showing concern for others. It is true that many were not pleased, but this was because they were filled with envy, jealousy, and hatred. Jesus still made a faithful effort to please them, and to turn them to God. Therefore, the principles taught and lived do not harm others. The way of Jesus is to teach them God's way of righteousness, to help them with their burdens, and to show them a better life here and forever.

Even though there are some who resent this, those who respond will be pleased and will recognize us as being good neighbors. As followers of Jesus, we will always make an effort to be like Him. Thus, our thinking, our attitudes, and way of life, in most instances, will be pleasing to our neighbors.

B. What does James say is the royal law? (*Jas. 2:8*).

James refers to the royal law as loving your neighbor as yourself, and promises that those who fulfill it will do well. Why is this law so important? Because those who follow it will always do what is right toward their neighbors. If we are considered normal and healthy, we will always seek what is best for ourselves. We will make every effort to feed, clothe, and care for ourselves in every possible way. Now, won't we do the same for our neighbors if we are following the royal law? We will follow the golden rule of Jesus. We will do unto others as we would have others to do to us.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan (*Lk. 10:25-37*), there are three rules of life represented. The first one followed by the thief: "What is yours should be mine, and I'll take it." The second one followed by the Priest and Levite: "What is mine should be mine, and I'll keep it." The third rule is followed by the Good Samaritan: "What is mine should be yours, and I'll share it."

Therefore, the attitude of the Good Samaritan is to love your neighbor as yourself.

C. Discuss some ways to edify a neighbor.

Before we can edify anyone, we must lay aside selfishness, and there is no better way to do this than to let the light of Jesus shine in our lives. James wrote: "*For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing will be there*" (*Jas. 3:16*). When we take all the focus off of self, we then open the way to edify our neighbor.

There must be the kind of love for our neighbor that the Bible commands. Only then can we have a part in building up a neighbor. Also, keep in mind that a neighbor can be anyone who is in need of our help.

If the neighbor is someone who sees our lives day by day, we can edify them by the way we live and the example that they see. We can be a daily sermon before them. This can also include conversations that take place from time to time. This might involve a discussion or sentence sermons spoken from time to time.

Remember, the way of Jesus is a positive influence, and whether we are dealing with a stranger or friend, His influence through our lives will edify a neighbor. We have an obligation to edify a neighbor. "*He who despises his neighbor sins; but he who has mercy on the poor, happy is he*" (*Prov. 14:21*).

Quoting: "Borrow trouble for yourself, if that's your nature, but don't lend it to your neighbors." —Rudyard Kipling

"Not he who has much is rich, but he who gives much." —Erick Fromm.

A. Discuss to what extent we are our neighbor's keeper.

There are many who live by the rule that the only thing that matters in life is to look out for self. Therefore, they give all their time, money, and energy to serving and pleasing self. We cannot deny that God has given all of us personal responsibilities, and we must always be concerned about ourselves and our families.

For example, we have a personal responsibility to keep ourselves spiri-

tually right with God. Paul commanded Timothy, "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you" (1 Tim. 4:16). Paul asked the Christians at Corinth to, "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Prove yourselves..." (2 Cor. 13:5).

Likewise, we have a personal responsibility toward the spiritual needs of our children. Fathers are given the responsibility of bringing their children up in the "training and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). Also, the physical needs of one's own family are to be met, and to fail to do so is condemned. "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim. 5:8).

But the same God who has given us personal responsibilities, has asked us to be concerned about our neighbors. We cannot be like Cain in the early dawn of history who asked God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4:9). Christianity centers around Jesus, and He gave His all for others. How can we claim to follow Him and not be our neighbor's keeper?

Rom. 13:2 For this, [he illustrates] "You shall not commit adultery," [unlawful sexual intercourse with the spouse of another, Heb. 13:4; Ex. 20:14] "You shall not kill," [murder—the taking of a human life motivated by malice and hatred] "You shall not steal," [taking that which belongs to another without their consent] "You shall not bear false witness," [giving testimony contrary to truth] "You shall not covet;" [to lust after in an evil way—money or other material things] and if there is any other commandment, [summed up, cf. Ex. 20:13-17: Deut. 5:17-21] it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, "You shall love [Greek: *agapao*, Col. 3:14] your neighbor as yourself" [Mt. 22:37-40: Jas. 2:8].

A. How will following these rules help us be a good neighbor?

All of the things mentioned in this passage of Scripture represent sins against one's neighbor. This is true whether a neighbor lives close by, or far away. These sin cannot be committed without harming others. Let us consider briefly each of these.

"You shall not commit adultery."

As you can see, adultery is defined as unlawful sexual intercourse with the spouse of another. This is a sin that is capable of breaking apart the marriage of a neighbor and bringing much grief and pain (Mt. 5:31,32; 19:9). God intended that all marriages be pure and that the sexual relationship be kept within a mar-

riage. *“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4).* Those who get involved in this sin bring harm to their neighbor.

“You shall not kill.”

The word kill entails more than taking a human life. It involves murder that is motivated by malice and hatred. Jesus taught that the same danger of judgment that comes from murder can also come to the one who is angry with his brother without a cause (*Mt. 5:21,22*).

Therefore, anything that relates to hatred, anger, and murder destroys a neighbor.

“You shall not steal.”

Perhaps this is the most prevalent sin of all against one’s neighbor, and especially when the word neighbor is considered in its broadest sense. There are those who are willing to take anything that they can get by taking from others. But not all stealing involves taking physical things from others. We can be guilty of stealing from a neighbor by depriving them of anything that they possess. It may be their name, reputation, and their God given rights. Some people are involved in stealing by using the law to get what they want.

When we break God’s law of stealing from our neighbor in any possible way, we have truly harmed them.

“You shall not bear false witness.”

As we live together on this earth, we owe each other truth. The laws of the land are designed to seek truth for all, but when one bears false witness against another, the law can fail. For example, the laws that were used to try Jesus failed, because they brought in false witnesses who made up lies against Jesus (*Mt. 26:60*).

Stephen was a faithful gospel preacher, speaking the truth about Jesus, but the Jews did not want to accept his message. So they set up false witnesses who said, *“This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us” (Acts 6:13,14).* This led them to eventually stone him to death (*vs. 59*).

It is so destructive to bear false witness against a neighbor. We don’t want others to bear false witness against us, therefore, we should never harm others in this sinful way.

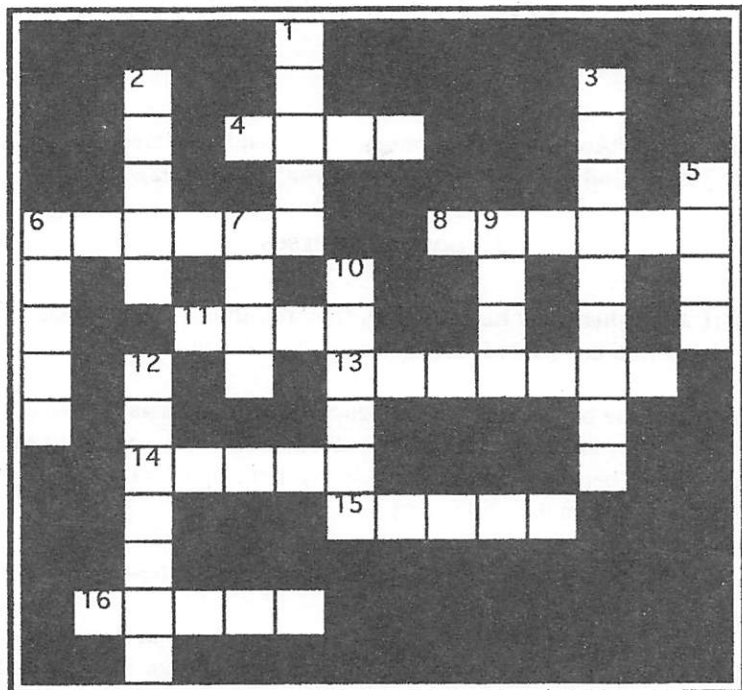
"You shall not covet."

Paul says that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil (*1 Tim. 6:10*), and this has led many to sin against their neighbor. Those who get caught up in the sin of covetousness, sin against their neighbors. When Jesus numerated the sins that come from within to defile a man, He included covetousness (*Mk. 7:22*). This is a sin that will take over our lives to the point of harming our neighbor. It distorts the true value and purpose of life, and leads us to feel that nothing matters except the abundance of the things we possess. This is why Jesus gave a strong warning against this sin *"Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses"* (*Luke 12:15*).

We can conclude, then, that this is a sin that causes us to harm our neighbors. And in the words of Paul, *"But fornication and all uncleanness or COVETOUSNESS, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints"* (*Eph. 5:3*).

Therefore, we should avoid these and all other sins that will harm our neighbor, and the only way to avoid them is to, *"love your neighbor as your self."*

A Good Neighbor - Puzzle Four



ACROSS

- 4 Something belonging to a neighbor (**Job 31:9**)
- 6 What Job's friends did to him (**Job 12:4**)
- 8 A good goal toward a neighbor (**Rom. 15:2**)
- 11 Off limits—belonging to a neighbor (**Prov. 6:29**)
- 13 Something proclaimed to a neighbor (**Jer. 34:15**)
- 14 An evil witness (**Ex. 20:16**)
- 15 Something evil given to neighbor (**Habakkuk 2:15**)
- 16 Can do this in righteousness to neighbor (**Lev. 19:15**).

DOWN

- 1 Shall not stand against your neighbor (**Lev. 19:16 KJV**)
- 2 Something spoken to neighbor (**Ps. 28:3**)
- 3 A good neighbor (**Lk. 10:33**)
- 5 Standard of love (**Jas. 2:8**)
- 6 What used to destroy neighbor (**Prov. 11:9**)
- 7 Should never do this to neighbor (**Ps. 15:3**)
- 9 Feeling toward neighbor (**Mk. 12:33**)
- 10 What everyone did for neighbors (**Isa. 41:6**)
- 12 One should not-----neighbor (**Lev. 19:13**).

A Life of Kindness

Lesson 6

Memory Verse: "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you" (*Eph. 4:32*).

Expository Verses

Acts 28:1 And when they had escaped, they found out that the island was called Melita [Malta—located sixty miles south of Sicily].

Acts 28:2 And the barbarian [native] people showed unusual [extraordinary] kindness; for they kindled a fire, and received us all, because of the rain that was falling, and because of the cold [still experiencing effects from the storm and having to escape in the cold water].

A. Discuss how Paul found kindness among these native people.

Evidently these natives had compassion on Paul and those aboard the ship that was destroyed in the storm. By the time they all made it safely to shore, they were wet and cold. There was no way that they were able to be comfortable with the cold wind that must have been blowing, and the falling rain. Since Luke mentions both the rain and cold, it is logical to believe that the rain was cold, and would chill them through and through.

These natives showed kindness by kindling a fire and receiving all. The text says that they showed "*unusual kindness*" by such actions. They did not know these men, and could have imagined them evil and dangerous. But instead, they chose to receive them with kindness.

Each day we as Christians are challenged with opportunities to kindle fires of kindness. It may be to those whom we love, or it may be to strangers. This is not to say that we should place ourselves in danger in our showing kindness. For there are those who will take advantage of our kindness. However, we can usually determine when kindness is a sound spiritual investment.

We admire the native people on the Island of Melita or Malta for the warmth and kindness that they showed to this man of God (and others) who was on his way to Rome as a prisoner because of the gospel of Christ. This kindness must have been a blessing to this great apostle, because kindness is a precious gift that we can give to others.

B. What is the difference between SPEAKING kindness and SHOWING kindness?

To be like Jesus and follow in His steps, it is imperative that we both speak and show kindness. Jesus backed up His kind words with kind actions, and we must learn to do the same.

The priest and the Levite whom Jesus mentions in the Parable of the Good Samaritan, may have had a reputation for speaking kindness in their daily lives, but when they were given an opportunity to show compassion and kindness, they passed by on the other side (*Lk. 10:31,32*).

Do we go out of our way to keep from showing kindness? Do we daily speak kind words, but refuse to show such to others? In the memory verse of this lesson, Paul writes, "*And BE kind to one another, tenderhearted forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you*" (*Eph. 4:32*).

Yes, it is very important to daily speak words of kindness, but as Christians, we must also show it if we are to walk in the steps of the Master. For DEMONSTRATING kindness goes farther than SPEAKING words.

Quoting: "Kindness is a language the dumb can speak and the deaf can hear and understand." —Christian Nestell Bovee.

"It is one of the beautiful compensations of life that no man can sincerely try to help another, without helping himself. Both man and womankind belie their nature when they are not kind." —Bailey.

A. Is it our nature to be kind, or is it cultivated and learned?

It is true that being kind comes easier to some than to others, but kindness, as God's word teaches, must be developed and cultivated by all. From the moment we are spiritually born into God's family, we have the need to grow. "*As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby*" (*1 Pet. 2:2*). "*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*" (*2 Pet. 3:18*). This all important growth involves growing in kindness.

The word of God provides us with the necessary teaching on the importance of kindness, but we must make it a part of our lives. Each day that we live, we need to resolve to show more kindness to others. When this is done over a long period of time, kindness becomes an important part of our lives. Therefore, plant, water, and cultivate kindness in your heart!

Col. 3:12 Therefore, as the elect of God, [God's chosen people, 1 Pet. 1:2] holy and beloved, put on [gives some of the principles mentioned in the fruit of the

Spirit, Gal. 5:22,23] **tender mercies**, [a heart of compassion, 1 John 3:17] **kindness**, [gentleness, Eph. 4:32] **humbleness of mind**, [Jesus taught His disciples to have humility, John 13:4-10; 1 Pet. 5:6] **meekness**, [gentleness, Mt. 5:5] **longsuffering**; [patience, Jas. 1:3,4].

A. Who are the elect of God mentioned in the above verse?

The chosen of God are those who have answered the call of the gospel to be saved through Jesus Christ. They are those who have been born again of water and the Spirit (*John 3:5*). Under the Law of Moses, they became God's chosen people by physical birth, but with Christ, one must be born again.

There are those who teach that God has chosen who He wants to be saved, and who He wants to be lost. They say that the ones whom He has chosen for salvation are the elect. But this is not the teaching of the Bible. We become the elect of God by electing to obey Him and His Son Jesus. It is true that God knew beforehand about the elect, and made such salvation possible by giving His Son to die on the cross (*John 3:16*). However, He has allowed in all ages sinners to accept His salvation or reject it. Those who accept and obey the gospel become a part of God's elect.

B. Does being the elect of God suggest that God demands kindness?

Paul suggests in the above verse that God demands kindness. Since they are the elect of God, holy and beloved, they are asked to put on tender mercies and kindness. Failing to show kindness is not compatible with Christ and Christianity. How can we receive kindness from God, and then refuse to be kind? In fact, all the other attributes of Christianity such as love, gentleness, peacemakers, and being a servant suggest the attitude of kindness.

Thus we can see, that kindness is as essential to living for Jesus as breathing is to life. Being kind should be one of our daily goals as we show the light of Jesus in our lives.

C. In the above verse, how does humbleness of mind and longsuffering relate?

The mind controls the way we act. Solomon summed up this thought about a man in these words, "*For as he thinks in his heart, so is he*" (*Prov. 23:7*). When we have this humbleness of mind, we can be more patient with others. Without these various principles in our lives, we cannot bear the fruit of the Spirit. Paul

identifies such fruit as, “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” Then he adds, “Against such there is no law” (Gal. 5:22,23).

We cannot choose some of these and reject the others, but all become a part of our lives as we bear fruit for the Lord. By living these principles daily, we show others that we have God in our lives, and each one of these compliment the others. Therefore, when there is humility, we can suffer long with others.

Example: “The naturalist W. H. Hudson tells in one of his books about a thrush and a blackbird that always came together to the place where food was put for birds. The blackbird would pick up the crumbs and put them in the thrush’s mouth. Then it was noticed that some trap had cut off the thrush’s beak close to its head, so that it could not pick up food, and the blackbird was coming to the rescue.

Can men afford to let a bird be kinder than they are?”

—Dr. Amos R. Wells.

1 Cor. 13:4 Love [Greek: *agape*] suffers long, [is patient even when suffering, cf. 1 Pet. 4:8] and is kind; [Paul commanded kindness to the Ephesian brethren, Eph. 4:32] love [Greek: *agape*] does not envy; [is not jealous, Gal. 5:26] love [Greek: *agape*] does not parade itself, [does not brag] is not puffed up, [is not arrogant].

A. Why is kindness a part of *agape* love?

One of the most difficult words to define in the New Testament is *agape* love. In fact, it is so powerful and full of meaning that it is difficult to encompass it with a single definition. Perhaps this is why Paul chose to tell what this kind of love will do rather than give a definition. However, there is one thing for sure, when *agape* love is present, it will manifest itself through kindness. And when kindness is present, this becomes a strong foundation on which the other beautiful colors are displayed.

An unkind person comes across as one who has hate in his or her heart, but kindness shows love. This *agape* love that displays kindness is an unconditional love. It always seeks what is best for the one loved. Since an unkind attitude is harmful and destroys others, love reaches out in kindness to help the one loved.

It was *agape* love that motivated Jesus to die for the sins of the world, and to be kind even to those at His crucifixion who were cruel. His kindness reached DOWN to their actions of hate and anger, and it reached UP to the Father as He prayed for their forgiveness (Lk. 23:34).

Remember, it is impossible to have this special kind of love from God without kindness.

B. Does it cost longsuffering to be kind?

As human beings we often get on each other's nerves. We have likes and dislikes that are different, and because of this we may fail to understand the actions of each other. These differences and frustrations can lead to unkindness. Before there can be true kindness, we must first learn to suffer long with each other, and this can be done only if the agape love described by Paul is present. Many are not willing to have this kind of love, and therefore are not willing to pay the price of longsuffering. Those who can suffer long with kindness, can also forgive. Be assured that the human race would have been lost forever without the longsuffering of God. What motivated God's longsuffering and kindness? It was love!

Peter wrote: *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Pet. 3:9).

When God gave the precious gift of His Son, the human race did not deserve the gift. *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"* (Rom. 5:8). God had suffered from the sin, violence, and rebellion of mankind many centuries before His love led Him to give His only begotten Son in death (John 3:16), and His Son willingly laid down His life for us (1 John 3:16).

Thus, it cost God the price of longsuffering to show love and kindness toward us, and the same price applies in our own lives.

C. Does kindness reward the one being kind?

There is a rule that runs through all the Bible—it always pays to do what is right. Even when the reward is not seen here on earth, there is still a reward for God's children who do what is right. Since kindness is God approved, there is a reward associated with it.

First of all, there is a reward for being kind here on earth. Even though some may not respond favorably, this is the exception and not the rule. Some of the hardest hearts have been melted down by acts of kindness. One cannot deny that it is difficult to be kind to an enemy, but Jesus taught that it should be done. *"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven"* (Mt. 5:44,45).

Paul wrote to the Christians at Rome, *"Therefore if your enemy hungers,*

feed him; if he thirsts, give him a drink, for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head" (Rom. 12:20). Some enemies have been turned into friends by kindness.

Beyond any reward received from kindness here on earth, there is the reward from God in heaven. Even though God has brought His wrath against those who have rebelled in sin, He is also a God who has shown loving kindness. David sings in *Psalms 117*, "Oh, praise the Lord, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples! For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever. Praise the Lord!"

Since God Himself shows kindness, we can know that He is pleased when His children show kindness. Showing kindness to others is one of the ways that we show love, and show that God is dwelling in us. Unkindness describes those who follow the ways of the devil, but kindness reflects the glory of God. Surely God will reward those who show kindness.

D. Why is kindness listed with the Christian graces? (2 Pet. 1:7).

The Christian graces represent the spiritual characteristics that are necessary for growth in the faith. The faith of a Christian must have these added before there can be fruit bearing. After Peter numerates these, he concludes with these words: "For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" (vs. 8,9).

Kindness does not stand alone, but must be an integral part of the other graces. Those who have added virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, and godliness, display these in their daily lives by showing brotherly kindness. Can you imagine any of these graces being effective in showing Jesus to others, without being associated with kindness?

For you see, an unkind person graphically shows others that none of these Christian graces are present. Therefore, there was a need for Peter to list brotherly kindness with the other graces.

Quoting: "The best portion of a good man's life is his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love." —William Wordsworth.
"Kindness is loving people more than they deserve." —Joseph Joubert.

Ps. 117:2,3 "For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever."

A. Since we want God's kindness, shouldn't we be kind?

This little Psalm declares that God's merciful kindness is great toward us. This statement has more truth that we can fathom. The human race over the centuries has not deserved God's merciful kindness, but He has shown it. God is still so kind and merciful toward all of us today.

There is a rule in the Bible that suggests that we should reflect in our lives the things that we need. For example, we need forgiveness, and we must forgive (*Mt. 6:14*). In our memory verse, Paul wrote, "*forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you*" (*Eph. 4:32*). Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "*And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*" (*Mt. 6:12*). We need God to love us, therefore we must show love to others. "*Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another*" (*1 John 4:11*).

We cannot make it without the merciful kindness of God, and we should make every effort possible to show kindness!

A. Give examples of unkindness in the church today.

Perhaps the strongest example of unkindness is when we use our tongues in a sinful way against others. When we gossip and reflect against their reputation, our tongues become "*an unruly evil, full of deadly poison*" (*James 3:8*). With our tongues burning out of control, we can suggest doubts and suspicions against others. We can become guilty of judging their thoughts, actions, and motives. This is an unkindness that is almost impossible to reverse. Even when an effort is made to apologize, scars are left behind.

When we use our tongues in an unkind way, we are, in one sense, saying that we hate that person. "*A lying tongue hates those who are crushed by it*" (*Prov. 26:28*). But when there is love, it is different, for we do not want to harm the ones we love with our tongues. Therefore, don't ever be unkind to others.

We also are unkind toward others in the church when we do not respect them and undermine the work they are doing. Sometimes even leaders will assign someone a work project, and even though they are doing a good job, they may decide to undermine them with no respect for their feelings.

Unkindness can be present when someone wants their own way regardless of the feelings of others. There must be consideration for the feelings of our brothers and sisters in Christ, or there will be unkindness. Therefore, anything that we do to harm others or to bring unhappiness into their lives can be an example of failing to be kind.

Quoting: "You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how

soon it will be too late.” —Ralph Waldo Emerson

A. Have you ever waited too late to show kindness?

This is a question that every individual Christian must answer, but far too often the answer is yes. We live in a fast and busy society, and it becomes easy to neglect others. Most of us have had the experience of waiting too late to show kindness. We may hear about someone who is ill, and we promise ourselves that we are going to see them and show them every kindness possible. We may even plan in our minds to take them some flowers or give them a book or gift. But time has a way of moving on, and one day the phone rings with the message that the person has died.

Since we do not have a guarantee of our own life or the lives of others, we should make every effort to be kind as soon as possible. Neglect has no place in our lives when it is time to show kindness. Solomon gives us some good advice in these words: *“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going”* (Eccl. 9:10).

B. Can we really be happy without giving and receiving kindness?

There is no doubt that giving and receiving kindness are associated with happiness. When we set out to make others happy by showing kindness, we are usually made happy by having kindness returned. There are those who will tell you that they enjoy fighting and being rude to others, but one must question such enjoyment. As human beings, there will be times when heated arguments occur, and unkind words are spoken. However, this must be avoided as much as possible. When this happens, we should make every effort to get it corrected, and then return to kindness.

Even in moments of anger, we must strive to be angry without sinning. *“Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath”* (Eph. 4:26). There is no other way to find the true happiness that God intended.

C. Discuss this statement about the Worthy woman: *“She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness”* (Prov. 31:26).

The Worthy woman is set forth as the perfect model of a godly woman. It was important how she worked with her hands and accomplished so much for

God and her family. But all of these good works were backed up by the way she used her tongue. What was it that guided the actions of her tongue? It was guided by the law of kindness!

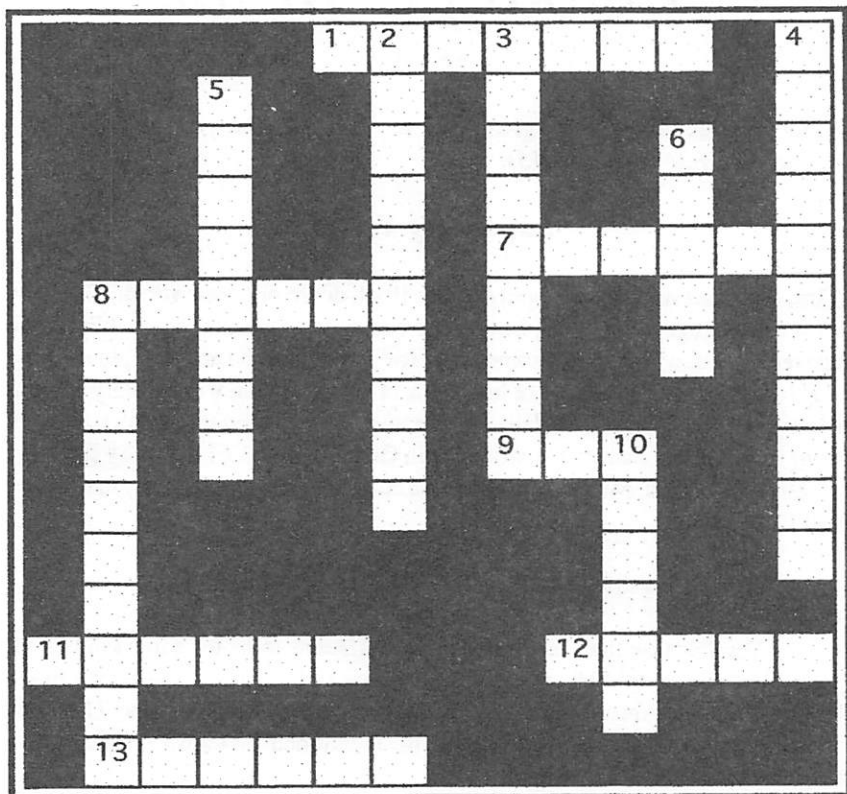
This caused her husband to safely trust her, because she brought him gain, and did him good all the days of her life. She used kindness as she went out seeking wool and flack, and worked with her hands. This law of kindness was in force early each day as she, like merchant ships, brought food to her family and household from a far distance. She was guided by kindness as she bought a field for a vineyard, and used the strength of her arms. The law of kindness guided her as she made sure her merchandise was good, as she worked into the night with her hands on the spindle and made clothes and tapestry for herself and family. How kind she must have been as she reached out to the poor and made a good impression for her husband. No wonder her children rise up and call her blessed, and her husband praises her.

This Worthy woman could not reach the heights of such beauty and success without kindness. The law of kindness still makes beautiful women with hearts adorned for God.

D. Will you set your goal for more kindness?

This is a question that each of you must answer for yourself. Even though we may know that kindness is God's way and the best way, such must be made a part of our lives. It is important to plan kindness. Sometimes we make the mistake of believing that kindness will just come naturally. Yes, it is easier for some than others, but it is still best for all to set a specific goal for kindness.

A Life of Kindness - Puzzle Six



ACROSS

- 1 What love does a long time (1 Cor. 13:4)
- 7 Ones receiving kindness (1 Sam. 15:6)
- 8 One who pleased the king (Esther 2:8,9)
- 9 One abundant in kindness (Neh. 9:17)
- 11 Where kindness is located (Prov. 31:26)
- 12 God's kindness (Joel 2:13 KJV)
- 13 God our-----" (Titus 3:4 NKJV).

DOWN

- 2 God is kind to these (Lk. 6:35)
- 3 A word associated with being kind and tenderhearted (Eph. 4:32)
- 4 A kindness that lasts long (Isa. 54:8)
- 5 God's great kindness (Ps. 117:2)
- 6 A king who forgot kindness (2 Chro. 24:22)
- 8 How the Lord's kindness is described (Ps. 31:21 KJV)
- 10 What God's kindness will never do (Isa. 54:10).

A Godly Example

Lesson 7

Memory Verse: "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you" (*John 13:15*).

Expository Verses

1 Tim. 4:12 Let no man [no one] despise [look down on] your youth, [Timothy was much younger than Paul] but be an example [a pattern. Titus 2:7] to the believers, [Paul will now list some ways for Timothy to be an example to avoid being looked down on because of his youth, cf. Phil. 3:17] in word, [daily speech] in conversation, [conduct in daily life] in love, [Greek: *agape*] in spirit, [disposition] in faith, [an unshaken confidence in God, Heb. 11:1,6] in purity [the pure in heart will see God, Mt. 5:8;—these same attributes are needed today in the lives of all Christians].

A. Can this command to Timothy apply to everyone?

Yes, because the Lord wants us as Christians to be the same kind of example. When Jesus told His disciples to let their light shine for the world to see (*Mt. 5:16*), He was referring to the way that they should live to reflect Him. Did Jesus live these same principles in His life mentioned by Paul? Yes, without a doubt.

Therefore, the godly woman whose heart is adorned for God will also live these in her life.

Her daily speech will be truthful and pure, as she talks with others. There will be every effort made to avoid lies and filthy words. She will speak as Paul suggested, "*Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each other*" (*Col. 4:6*).

Then, the godly woman will make every effort to conduct her daily life for the Lord. The golden rule of doing to others as she would have others do to her will always be her goal. She will follow the example of Jesus as much as possible to live each day in such a way that others can see God in her life. With this goal before her, she will "*walk in the light as He is in the light*" (*1 John 1:7*).

Just as Timothy was commanded to be an example of love, the woman whose heart is godly adorned will do the same. This will not be a love that is merely spoken, but a love that shows true concern for those loved. Therefore, this

kind of love will be translated into sharing and caring. It will involve rejoicing with those who rejoice, and weeping with those who weep (*Rom. 12:15*).

The woman devoted to God in her heart will also have the right kind of disposition. Each day there are things to be faced that tempt her to be BITTER, but the godly woman allows these same things to make her BETTER. She knows that her family and others are watching her attitudes and she wants them to see in her ways, only those things that are positive. She makes every effort to carry out what Paul commanded the Ephesians to do. "*Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice*" (*Eph. 4:31*).

Finally, as a godly woman whose heart is adorned for God, she lives an example of purity. The world lives to be worldly, to be lustful, and to promote evil and darkness. Purity is not a concern for the world (*1 John 2:16*), but it is different with the godly woman. She makes every effort to think and live purity (*Phil. 4:8*), for she knows that, "*blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*" (*Mt. 5:8*).

Thus, we can say that the same example that Timothy needed to show in his life, should be displayed by all Christians.

B. How can godly women be a pattern (*Titus 2:7*)?

We are all familiar with a pattern. It is something that has been worked out to be followed for accomplishing a desired result. The pattern that Paul wanted Titus to be was of good works in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, and incorruptibility. Won't you agree that this is also a good pattern for godly women to show?

There is always a need to keep the doctrine of Christ pure. There is purity in the word, but there is always a danger of contaminating its purity. One of the ways to help avoid this is by showing a pattern of it in our lives. John wrote of the essentiality of the pure doctrine of Christ in these words, "*whoever transgresses [goes ahead] and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son* (*2 John 9*).

There is another way in which godly women can show a pattern like Titus. This can be done by showing reverence. God is our Creator and He holds our eternal destiny in His hands. How could we ever be guilty of not showing reverence or fail to please Him? "*Happy is the man who is always reverent, but he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity*" (*Prov. 28:14*).

When your heart is adorned with godly adornment, there will be a pattern of reverence toward God. The Psalmist writes concerning the Creator: "*God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by*

all those who are around Him" (Ps. 89:7).

The final way that Paul mentions for Titus to show a pattern of good works is incorruptibility. This is also another important way for godly women to show a pattern of good works. The devil is in the business of evil and corruption. The world demonstrates this corruption at all times, but Christians must show the purity of God. The song and prayer on our hearts should be, "Purer in heart, O God, help me to be." —Mrs. A.L. Davidson, J.H. Fillmore. This is a pattern that the lost needs to see and obey.

Therefore, if your hearts are fully adorned as godly women, you will show by your life a pattern of good works.

C. In what way is purity by example important?

We should take every opportunity to teach others about purity, and especially the younger generation. If they are not taught purity in their younger years, they may not ever learn of its importance. However, we must not stop with teaching, but we must SHOW and TELL. Purity is one of the ways that a separation is made from the world.

If we don't live purity in our lives, we become like the world, while becoming an enemy to God. James addressed this problem by writing, "*Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (Jas. 4:4).*

Surely none of us want to be a friend of the world. The only way to avoid this is to show the example of purity in our lives.

If we want our children, grandchildren, and friends to be pure, they must see purity in our lives.

1 Pet. 2:21 For to this you were called, [the call of the gospel, 2 Thes. 2:14, is a call to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, 1 Cor. 15:1-4, to deny self, and follow Jesus, Mk. 8:34: cf. Rom. 12:1] because Christ also suffered for us, [this should be an incentive to suffer for Him] leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: [if one is a Christian, he will follow Jesus even when such requires suffering—the only way to walk in the steps of Jesus is to go where He leads].

A. Discuss Jesus as the perfect example.

Since Jesus was the Son of God who came from heaven to earth, how could we expect less than perfection? It is wonderful to know that Christ fulfilled

all expectations. Jesus was the perfect example by the way He lived, and He had the deepest respect for His Father and continually did His will. His Father's will also included the perfect relationship toward the human race. He taught them, prayed for them (even His enemies), and died for them. He showed no favoritism as He died to save all from their sins who would obey Him (Heb. 5:9).

Jesus showed His concern also for the immediate needs of others. The Samaritan woman with six husbands needed the water of life, and Jesus offered it to her (*John 4:10*). Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue, needed his daughter restored to life, and Jesus raised her from the dead (*Mk. 5:41,42*).

He left behind the perfect example for all to follow, and those who have their hearts adorned for God will emulate His example.

B. What is required to walk in Jesus' steps?

Before anyone can walk in the steps of Jesus, they must personally commit themselves to Him. Before anyone can walk in His steps, they must be willing to go where He goes. This commitment involves giving service to others. This means that we will be asked to do things that we may not want to do, but this is the way we walk in His steps. The ultimate test as to whether or not we will walk in His steps will be, are we willing to suffer for Him. He died for us, are we willing to die to sin and to live in a sacrificial way for Him? (*Rom. 12:1*). To do this, your hearts must be adorned fully as godly women.

C. How much do we suffer as Christians?

Here

Although the principle of suffering is the same, the way we suffer is usually different from the time that Jesus lived on this earth. The Roman Empire represented a period in history when human life was cheap. Even the Jews had incorporated a certain amount of physical punishment into their way of life. Therefore, Jesus lived a life that was threatened often by those who hated Him (*Lk. 4:29*). This physical persecution eventually led to His death on the cross (*John 19:15*).

But this kind of pain and suffering that Jesus experienced was only the beginning, because the first century was a time when many Christians suffered and died for the faith (*Acts 7:60; 8:1*). Before Paul was converted, he led a heavy persecution against the church. He later wrote, "For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" (*1 Cor. 15:9; cf. Acts 8:3*).

However, today the persecution is often different. Yes, there are still some who suffer physically for Jesus, but most of the time we are attacked in

other ways. It may be in the form of giving up things or going against friends and relatives, only to receive words of disapproval, but this produces pain in our lives.

Our persecution today is often verbal in nature rather than prison and physical blows. However, we should not be deceived in thinking that this is without pain. Most all persecution has a way of trying our faith, and the verbal kind is difficult to withstand.

Therefore, those who live for Jesus will suffer some form of persecution. *"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12).*

The real question should be, are we willing to suffer for Jesus? Are we willing to walk in the steps of Jesus even when we must suffer? If we truly love Him, we will gladly suffer!

Quoting: "Not the cry, but the flight of the wild duck, leads the flock to fly and follow" — Chinese Proverb.

"The first great gift we can bestow on others is a good example."

A. Discuss the difference between TELLING and LIVING an example

It is so easy to tell someone about a good example. In our teaching, we read and teach about many examples recorded in God's word. To illustrate, when Jesus girded a towel around Himself and began washing His disciple's feet, it is easy to refer others to this as an example. But please learn that Jesus wanted this example to be both TOLD and LIVED. Therefore, He said to His disciples, *"For I have given you an example, that you should DO as I have DONE to you" (John 13:15).*

As we rear our children, we are often tempted to just tell them what is right and wrong. This is good as far as it goes, but it must not stop with just telling. They must also see what we teach by the examples lived in our lives. If your heart is adorned as a godly woman, you will want to TELL and LIVE good examples before others. You will strive daily to put your words to work.

B. How does your example effect your children?

Once you decide to live as you teach, you will see a difference in the lives of your children. The question is often asked, "Why do we as Christians lose so many of our children to the world?" Perhaps there are many reasons that could be given. However, their failing to see a good example from their parents and grandparents will help push them away.

Even though there are many exceptions, as a general rule, so much of what our children become depends on the example they see. One time a little boy went to the zoo with his parents, and they were watching the wildcats. The little fellow asked his dad, "Why are those baby cats so wild?" His dad replied, "They have wildcats for parents."

1 Cor. 10:5 But with most of them God was not well pleased, [because they murmured and did not fully believe in God's power to lead and deliver them, Num. 14:29,35] for they were overthrown [laid low—their bodies were scattered] in the wilderness [Num 14:16,23,30].

1 Cor. 10:6 Now these things were [happened as] our examples, [warnings to us, cf. vs. 11] to the intent that we [Christians] should not lust after evil things [the church at Corinth had gone after many evil things as this letter suggests] as they also lusted [cf. Num 11:4,34].

A. How does God feel about the sins of His people in all ages?

It almost goes without saying that God has hated the sins of His people in all ages. How sad God must have felt when Eve and her husband, ate of the tree of death (*Gen. 3:6*). They had chosen obedience to Satan over obedience to God, and this began a long road of sin and rebellion among God's people.

By the time of Noah's day, God looked down on a human race that was filled with sinful thoughts and violence (*Gen. 6:5,13*). How did He feel about this? "And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart" (*Gen. 3:6*). It was right for God to destroy them because of sin, but He had no pleasure in doing this (*Gen. 8:21,22*).

The history of God's people, Israel, is a sad story. God loved and blessed them so much, but they continually made Him sad because of sin. He sent prophet after prophet to warn them while expressing God's love, but they refused to turn from sin. Therefore, it can be truthfully said that God has hated the sins of His people in all ages.

In view of this, the godly woman whose heart is adorned for God, will want to refrain from sin. Her love for God will lead her to seek Him and His righteousness.

B. Are we learning from Israel's sinful example?

Unfortunately, this question must be answered, no. One of the purposes of the Old Testament is to be an example for us today (*1 Cor. 10:11*), but we too

often fail to learn.

One of the weighty responsibilities of the elders (assisted by the preacher) is to keep the church pure. Every member is being pursued by the devil to get them involved with sin. To keep the flock pure, the elders must patiently feed, protect, and oversee the flock (*Acts 20:28*). Just as Israel was continually tempted to turn to evil, the same is true in the church. The elders need to make sure that both the pulpit and classrooms are ringing out with God's way of purity and truth.

Be assured that the godly woman will want to do her part in helping to avoid the pitfalls of sin that were experienced by Israel.

Example: Two young people were involved in an automobile accident. The young girl, a high school student, was badly injured and her companion was killed. Their parents found from the hospital attendants that the young couple had been drinking at the time of the accident. The girl's father flew into a rage and said, "Just let me get my hands on the person who sold them the liquor: I'll kill him!" After returning home, he went to get a drink to "quiet his nerves" but he found that his bottle was missing. —Selected

A. Discuss how our children follow our examples.

It is an iron clad rule that whatever our children see, they will learn and do. This is good because this is the way they develop and mature. However, this concept also has a negative side that is very frightening. Our children also follow our sinful examples.

It is safe to say that whatever we want our children to become, we can have an effect on them by our example. It is wondered just how many boys will grow up to physically abuse their wives because they saw their dads abuse their mothers. Just think of the children who will grow up to curse, lie, cheat, and drink liquor because they saw the same in their parents. Or how many will never become Christians because their parents were not Christians.

However, the godly woman recognizes that the examples for their children to follow can also be good. Therefore, they pray daily that they may show their children the example of Jesus in their lives. Their goal is to leave behind them godly footprints so that their children can walk in them.

B. A father had a cigarette in his mouth and whipped his son for smoking. Was he successful?

It is obvious that the father failed in teaching his son that it is wrong and unhealthy to smoke. When discipline contradicts one's personal example, there

will always be failure. Parents are leaders for their children to follow. This certainly involves teaching them about what is right and wrong. But this is not enough! Children must see the teaching of parents lived.

An important part of heart adornment is to live before our children and grandchildren what they are taught. When God seeks a specific virtue in His people, He sets before them the same example. The apostle Peter confirms this, *"But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy' "* (1 Pet. 1:15,16).

Remember, no one can teach above their own personal example!

Matt. 1:19 Then Joseph her husband, [betrothal in Jewish law was considered marriage and binding] being a just man, [upright, Job 1:1] and not willing to make her a public example, [by bringing her before the magistrates] was minded to put her away [give her a divorce, Deut. 24:1] privily [secretly].

A. Was Joseph right in guarding Mary's example?

Yes, what Joseph did represents an example of love. Since he did not know that Mary had conceived by the Holy Spirit, he thought that she had sinned. But he still loved her enough to guard her example. To expose her as a public example would have scared her reputation for life. Therefore, he was willing to put her away secretly.

How thrilled Joseph must have been to learn that Mary was pure, and that God was involved in what had happened to her. When we seek to do what is right, there are blessings to be received in this life as well as after death.

B. How concerned are we about our example and others?

Our examples before others should be among the priorities of our lives, because we cannot reflect the light of Jesus through an evil example. Whatever we do, we should never be afraid or ashamed for others to see us.

Jesus' life was an open book for all to see, and those who found fault, did so by false accusations. In fact, one of the most effective tools of Jesus' teaching was His daily example. It was impossible to successfully dispute His words, when He was living them in His own life.

The godly woman works daily to make sure that her example is God approved. She does not want anyone to ever be led astray by her example, but rather to be led to Jesus by it. Is this easy to do? No, but it is worth all the effort and thought that can be put into it.

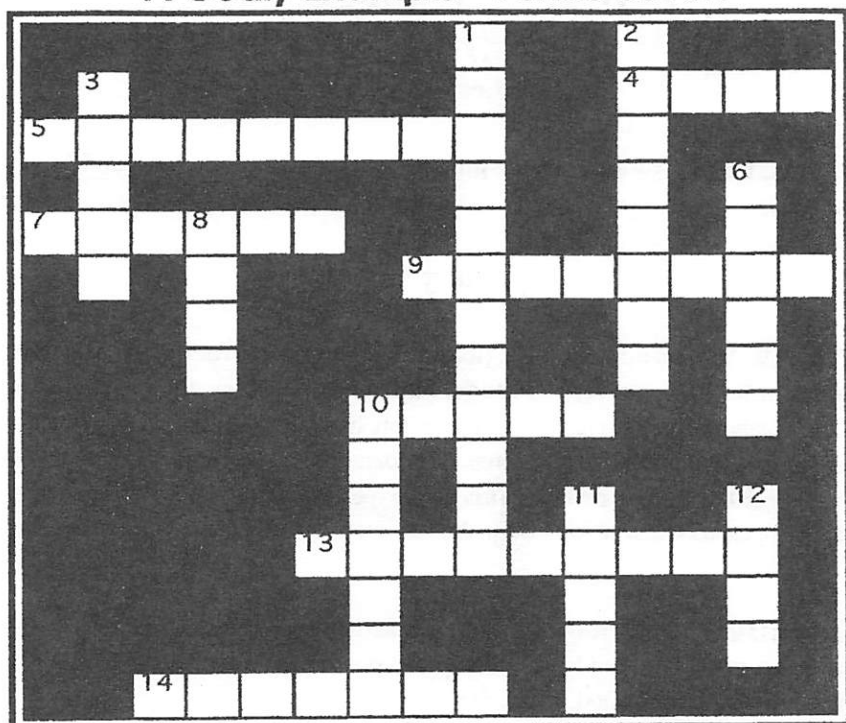
God will use the examples of godly women whose hearts are adorned

for Him as an example to show others His way of righteousness.

Quoting: “I am satisfied that we are less convinced by what we hear **than** by what we see.” —Herodotus

“Live with wolves, and you will learn to howl.” —Sp. Proverb

A Godly Example - Puzzle Seven



ACROSS

- 4 An example of one who is loyal (Ruth 1:16)
- 5 Timothy was to be an example to these (1 Tim. 4:12)
- 7 A kind of example considered by Joseph (Mt. 1:19 NKJV)
- 9 Example or copy of special things (Heb. 8:5)
- 10 How to follow Jesus' example (1 Pet. 2:21)
- 13 Where the word of God sounded forth (1 Thes. 1:7,8)
- 14 What the Philippians had from Paul (Phil. 3:17 NKJV).

DOWN

- 1 An example that displeased God (Heb. 4:11 NKJV)
- 2 God's spokesmen (Jas. 5:10)
- 3 One who gave an example to follow (John 13:14,15)
- 6 "Example of how you should--us" (2 Thes. 3:9 NKJV)
- 8 Something to avoid when considering evil (1 Cor. 10:6)
- 10 Unnatural sexual immorality and flesh (Jude 7)
- 11 A pattern of something good (Titus 2:7)
- 12 An example of one with the right priorities (Lk. 10:42).

A Life of Morality

Lesson 8

Memory Verse: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Mt. 5:8).

Expository Verses

1 Tim. 2:9 "in like manner also, [turns now to instruction for women] that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, [that they dress modestly in public worship while the men are lifting up holy hands, vs. 8] with shamefacedness [propriety] and sobriety, [discretion, moderation] not with braided [plated] hair, or gold or pearls or costly array; [expensive clothing or garments—the kind of appearance that would be for show or would take from their inner beauty, 1 Pet. 3:4].

1 Tim. 2:10 but, which becomes [is proper for] women professing godliness with good works [dress in a way that does not hide the hidden heart; the quiet spirit that pleases God, 1 Pet. 3:3].

A. How does the way one dresses affect morality?

The way that one dresses can suggest either purity or lust. Those who are in the business of lust know how to dress to cause others to lust. Clothing has a message, and is a language that is read and understood by millions. The godly woman who dresses in a way that is modest, is speaking a language of purity. Paul gave women these instructions, "*that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation...*" (1 Tim. 2:9).

It is true that there are those who lust regardless of the kind of clothing that is worn by a woman. However, when a godly woman wears clothing that is modest, she is not the guilty one. This is true because her motives are pure and godly, even though the one lusting is sinful.

But there are those who dress in a way that is designed to cause lust. Therefore, when a man has a lustful desire for her in his heart, they are both guilty of sin. Yes, the same rule for modest clothing also applies to men.

B. Can a woman dress in a way to cause a man to lust in his heart?

As we have just found, a simple answer to this question is yes. In fact, there seems to be many women who are dressing to cause men to lust for them. They may have no desire to engage in a sexual relationship, they just want to promote lust. However, you can be assured that such women are still involved in adultery. How? They are causing men to commit adultery in their hearts. Jesus taught that the man who looks at a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her in his heart (*Mt. 5:28*).

Therefore, the woman who sets a trap of lust on purpose, can be guilty of causing a man to commit adultery in his heart. Some women have the attitude that men should keep their minds clean. But the truth of the matter is that the majority will not do so. Thus, the godly woman whose heart is adorned for God will make every effort to profess godliness by the clothing that she wears.

Example: In 1964 when women's mini skirts were introduced, crimes against women also increased. The following year, forcible rapes increased more than any other crime. Is there a correlation? Law officers say there is. Law enforcement officials in 50 states were asked, "Does the short skirt invite sex crimes?" Ninety-two per cent said yes. Mary Quant, London designer and mother of the mini, said in 1967, "Mini clothes are symbolic of those girls who want to seduce a man..."

—Paul Harvey.

1 Pet. 3:3 And let not your adorning [your beauty] be that outward adorning of plating [braiding] the hair, and of wearing gold, [jewelry or ornaments] or of putting on [fine] apparel; [dresses in moderation; these can add to the beauty of a woman if such is modest apparel, 1 Tim. 2:9, but this is not her true beauty].

1 Pet. 3:4 but let it be the hidden person of the heart, [this is the only beauty that will win her husband to obey the gospel without a word, vss. 1,2] in that which is not corruptible, [imperishable] even the ornament of a meek [gentle] and quiet spirit, [this inward beauty is permanent, but the outward beauty will not last, 2 Cor. 4:16] which is in the sight of God of great price [very precious or of great value].

A. In this evil generation, do men still appreciate hidden beauty?

At first thought, you might answer no! If so, this would be based on the

actions of millions as they live their lives in the flesh. Paul wrote, "*For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh...*" (Rom. 8:5). However, even among so many who are following the flesh, there is still a certain kind of respect for the hidden beauty of a woman.

In counseling with men who are worldly and involved with women of the world, they have often made it clear that they would not want any of these worldly women to be their wives. They would not want them to be the mother of their children. As a general rule, they long for a woman with hidden beauty to be their wife.

Another principle that should not be overlooked, these same men want their sisters and any daughters they might have, to possess this inner beauty.

Therefore, let me ask you, what could be more beautiful than the inner characteristics of a godly woman? Now, if ungodly men can appreciate hidden beauty in Christian women, just think of how much more respect is felt by godly men!

B. When is apparel right? When is it wrong?

It is sometimes difficult to decide the difference between apparel that is right and apparel that is wrong. In fact, there have been different standards in various generations of time. Even in some cultures today, it would be considered immodest for a woman to show her face in public. Only a few generations ago in our nation, dresses worn by women came down to their shoes.

Does the Bible give a set of measurements for women's clothing? No, it does not. However, the Bible still sets forth principles to determine what is right and wrong. The apparel of a woman is right in principle when it covers to the point of being modest, and lust is not produced. It is true that there are differences of opinions as to what is modest and what is lustful. However, the godly woman will dress in a way where there is no doubt.

Most people know in their hearts when clothing is modest or immodest! Please let me give you a simple rule that should help each godly woman decide what is immodest. Clothing is immodest when it is: **TOO LOW, TOO SHORT, TOO TIGHT, OR TOO THIN.**

Any of these factors in clothing can cause the body to be exposed in such a way that lust is encouraged. Thus, the godly woman whose heart is adorned for God will make every effort to avoid these extremes, and to keep her apparel right before others and God.

C. Define a meek and quiet spirit.

Perhaps the best way to fully see a meek and quiet spirit is to look at a spirit that is not. It is not difficult to picture in our minds those who are haughty,

rough, loud, and angry. These are those who have chosen a life of sin, and are continually involved in the things of the world (1 John 2:15,16).

But those with a meek and quiet spirit are opposite in nature. Even though they stand up for what is right, and may even be leaders who are out front leading others, they do so with an attitude of humility, gentleness, calmness, and quietness. Those who think that you must curse, swear, lie, cheat, and run over others to be successful in life, are sadly mistaken.

Jesus taught, "*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth*" (Mt. 5:5). He referred to Himself as being "*gentle and lowly in heart*" (Mt. 11:29), and wanted all who follow Him to be the same. Paul wrote the Thessalonian Christians, "*that you aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you*" (1 Thes. 4:11). This is the kind of life that a godly woman will seek today!

Quoting: "Morality does not make a Christian, yet no man can be a Christian without it." —Bp. Wilson.

"Morality is religion in practice; religion is morality in principle."—Wardlaw.

A. Have church members today lowered God's standard of morality?

We would like to answer no to this question, but we know that this would not be true. Those of you who have lived many years in the church have watched the standards change. Things that were considered wrong in the past are now considered right by many.

There is nothing wrong in change unless such changes God's standard. For you see, God and His word for the Christian age never change. All the sins recorded there are not open to be changed or shaded to fit any modern age. Israel made the same mistakes that we often make today. Israel lowered God's standards, and even disobeyed His commandments. God was displeased then, and He is displeased today when this happens.

There is a danger of becoming so familiar with sin that it doesn't seem wrong. This is how the devil wants it. When it comes to sin and deception, the devil has great wisdom. He knows that if we lower our standards, that in a matter of time we will sin. Yes, it seems that the majority in the church today have lowered God's standards, and this has caused a tidal wave of sin to sweep over the church.

However, the godly woman who is continually adorning her heart for God will make every effort not to change God's standards for true morality. She will live His will in her life, and will teach and encourage others to do the same.

B. How is morality, “religion in practice?”

Pure religion represents a way of life. When James defined pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father, he said that it is visiting orphans and widows in their trouble, and keeping oneself unspotted from the world (*Jas. 1:27*). Just a quick glance of his definition reveals that religion is something practiced. Thus, God’s moral laws tell us how to put religion into practice.

Far too many claim to be religious, but do not practice God’s morality in their lives. They don’t seem to realize that their religion can be useless (*Jas. 1:26*). The religion that God accepts is based completely on His word that leads one to act the way that God has approved.

The woman whose heart is adorned for God will seek the pure religion that pleases God as her life reflects His way of true morality.

Titus 2:4 that they [older women] may teach [admonish] the young women to be sober, [sound mind, self-controlled] to love [Greek: *phaqndros*] their husbands, [husbands are also to love their wives, Eph. 5:25,28] to love [Greek: *philoteknos*] their children,

Titus 2:5 to be discreet, [sober minded and self-controlled] chaste, [pure] keepers at home, [homemakers, 1 Tim. 5:14] good, [in moral character] obedient to their own husbands, [submit to your own husband, Eph. 5:22: submit as is fitting to the Lord, Col. 3:18: cf. 1 Cor. 11:3] that the word of God be not blasphemed [reviled or spoken against, compare 1 Tim. 5:13].

A. Do older women teach the younger women as they should?

Like many questions, this one can be answered yes and no. For you see, there are many older women in the church who make every effort to teach the younger. However, to be fair, we must say that far too many are neglecting this important work. There may be many reasons why this happens. Perhaps some of the blame can be placed on the younger women. They may not seek the teaching and wisdom of the older women. Some blame may be attributed to our fast, busy society where younger women are caught up in a lifestyle that discourages this.

Unfortunately, some of the blame must be placed on older women, because some do not see this as an important work. Therefore, they refuse to get involved. But regardless of where the blame is placed, when older women do not teach the younger women, something very special and important is missing.

Therefore, for the older to teach the younger should become a goal for

every godly woman to seek. For in view of the theme of this study, older women can resolve to teach more younger women to adorn their hearts for God. Then younger women can resolve to make every effort to seek their instructions. The subjects that Paul mentions in the above Scripture should be considered vital subjects for study. This will help strengthen the lives of both the older and younger women.

B. What is meant by “discreet” and “good” in verse 5?

The word discreet suggests a woman who is sober minded with the actions of her life under full control. The influence of the world continually pulls against her, but she refuses to respond. She has her true priorities invested with God, and makes every effort to keep herself living by His spiritual laws. This is not to say that she cannot laugh and enjoy life to its fullest. But it is to say that all of her joy and happiness are derived from things that are right with God. She is a “woman of God” rather than a “woman of the world.”

The godly woman who is identified as good is one who has a good moral character that reflects God’s divine will. She does not look to the world to determine what is good or bad, right or wrong, but she seeks a higher standard. Her lifestyle toward God, her family, and others can be described in the same words said of the virtuous wife of Proverbs toward her husband: “*She does him good and not evil all the days of her life (Prov. 31:12).*”

We can conclude that the discreet, chaste, and good godly woman truly has her heart inwardly adorned for the service of God and others.

Quoting: “To give a man a full knowledge of true morality, I would send him to no other book than the New Testament.” —Locke

“The health of a community, is an almost unfailing index of its morals.”
—Martineau.

A. What about the spiritual health of the church?

In all generations since the church began, there has been concern about keeping the morals of her members pure. Ananias and Sapphira got caught lying to the Holy Spirit (*Acts 5:3,9*), and the church at Corinth got involved in all kinds of immoral practices (*1 Cor. 5:1; 11:18-22*). Unfortunately, the battle continues to rage today.

Each year that passes finds many in the church practicing things that are condemned in the Bible. It is often true that many are following the standard of the world instead of the standard of God. In fact, “situation ethics” has become a

part of the church more than we like to admit. The philosophy goes something like this: "If the situation is right, it is acceptable with God to violate His teaching." This kind of thinking is a lie and originated with the devil.

When God's word teaches that it is wrong to lust, lie, cheat, curse, kill, steal, and commit adultery, there are no mitigating circumstances mentioned. It is never right to sin! Each time a member of the church, God's spiritual body, sins, he or she brings harm to the health of the church.

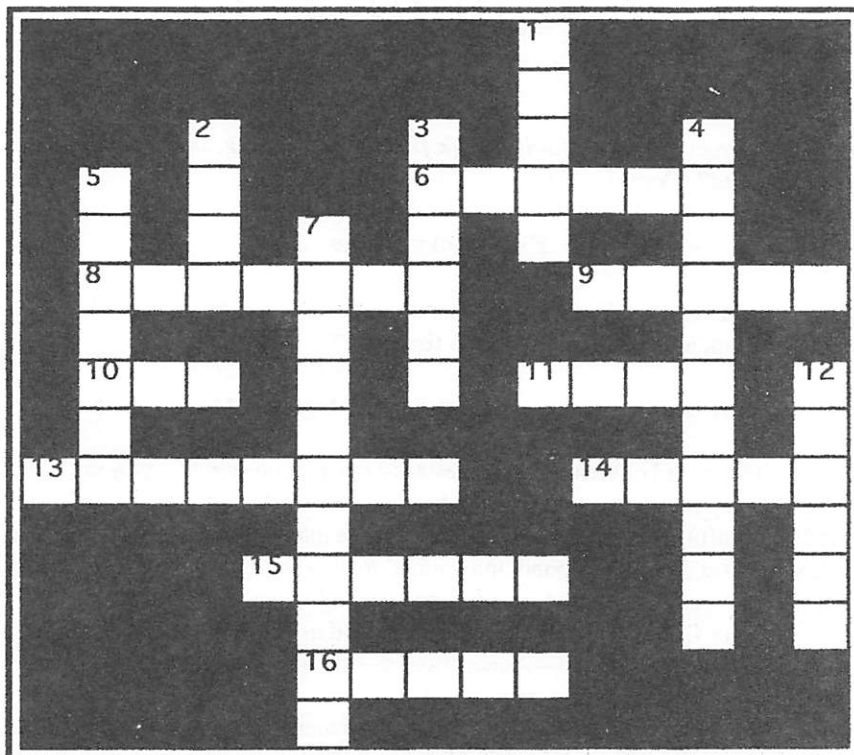
B. Discuss how each member by his or her life can help keep the church pure.

The question might be asked, "What can I, as one person, do about this?" The answer to this question is for each Christian to contribute one godly life to the church. Be assured that one godly heart, adorned for God, can help. The church is made up of individual members, and each one has some kind of influence on the church. We often say that it takes only one rotten apple to spoil the others. But if the rotten apple is removed and the others remain good, the apples will remain solid and good.

When members love the church, each will feel an individual responsibility to keep the church pure. It all comes down to an individual commitment, but when all of these commitments are brought together, a strong impact for good will be felt for the church.

Therefore, adorn your heart for God and encourage others to do the same. Feel within your heart a deep need to help keep the church spiritually healthy and pure for God. This will bring to your lives more blessings from God than can be imagined.

A Life of Morality- Puzzle Eight



ACROSS

- 6** A special person (1 Pet. 3:4)
8 Ones to love (Mt. 5:44)
9 From what Paul was innocent (Acts 20:26)
10 Something from which one must be pure (Prov. 20:9)
11 Something associated with purity (Dan. 7:9)
13 A destructive sin of the heart (Mt. 5:28)
14 Peter sought to stir up something pure (2 Pet. 3:1)
15 by---, by knowledge," (2 Cor. 6:6)
16 Material for pure clothing for angels (Rev. 15:6).

DOWN

- 1** Something pure about the Lord (Ps. 12:6)
2 How God shows Himself (2 Sam. 22:27)
3 One thing to teach younger women (Titus 2:5)
4 What Christians must deny (Titus 2:12)
5 Something pronounced on the pure in heart (Mt. 5:8)
7 One of three things to be lived by Christians (Titus 3:12)
12 Something from above (Jas. 3:17).

A Faithful Wife

Lesson 9

Memory Verse: *"He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord" (Prov. 18:22).*

Expository Verses

Gen. 2:22 *"Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and he brought her to the man."*

A. How is woman one step farther from dust than man?

The record of creation in Genesis is a fascinating story. Day by day, God made all components that make up the heavens, the earth, and all things in them. But the beautiful work of God becomes even more interesting when on day six He took some dust from the ground and formed man. Then God *"breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being"* (Gen. 2:7).

After God planted a beautiful garden and assigned Adam to cultivate it, there arose the first problem—Adam was lonely! God made an effort to correct this by first forming from the ground *"every beast of the field and every bird of the air. These were brought to Adam, and he gave them their names, but there was not found a helper comparable to him"* (Gen. 2:19,20).

It was at this point that the first major surgery was performed, and God was the surgeon. He put Adam into a deep sleep, took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then God made woman from this rib (Gen. 2:22). What was Adam's response when he saw her? He said, *"This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man"* (Gen. 2:23). One cannot speak the word woman without referring to man (woMAN).

Therefore, we can see that man was made of the dust, but woman was made from man. In this sense she was made indirectly from the dust—she was made from man.

B. Discuss the question, "How was woman different from the animals that Adam named?" (Gen. 2:20).

The true answer to this question is found in *Genesis 1:26,27*. Moses quotes

God as saying, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;....So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

So God gave man and woman a soul or spirit that was not given to the beasts of the field. The Bible speaks of this soul or spirit in both the Old and New Testaments. Perhaps Solomon sums it up best when he wrote about what happens at death. "Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7).

Matt. 19:4 And He answered and said to them, [what did Moses command you? Mk. 10:3] "Have you not read, [Gen. 2:24] that He [God] who made them [man and woman] at the beginning [at creation] made them male and female,

Matt. 19:5 and said, for this cause [reason] a man shall leave father and mother, [to be joined together] and shall cleave [be joined, united] to his wife, and the two shall be [or become] one flesh?" [be as one body].

A. How does vs. 4 condemn homosexuality?

Someone has said, "If God had wanted homosexuality, He would have made for Adam a Steve instead of an Eve." That just about summarizes it, because God didn't make them male and male, but male and female. There are those who argue that with some, homosexuality is natural. No, it is NEVER natural because God did not make it to be natural. Paul defines homosexuality as women who "exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the women, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due" (Rom. 1:26,27).

If homosexuality is natural, why did God destroy the people living in Sodom and Gomorrah because of this sinful lifestyle? (Gen. 19:24). Our modern society often speaks of "Gay rights," but the only rights that God gives them is to repent and be forgiven of such evil ways. Before conversion, some of the Corinthians were fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and revilers, but they gave up these to become Christians. Paul says, "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

B. Show how both men and women can leave their God-given roles.

God intended that man and women become one in marriage, but each still has been given a special role in life. Before these individual responsibilities can be carried out, there must be respect. The man must not try to make his wife into a man, and the wife must not try to make her husband into a woman. In the marital oneness, God wants two who are different. Paul gives the husband the role of headship, and the wife is to submit as to the Lord (*Eph. 5:22,23*). We are not asked whether or not we like our God-given role. The godly woman whose heart is adorned for God will believe that God knows best, and the Christian husband will agree.

Remember, God did not give permission to change His laws for marriage, and to do so is to disobey Him. Be assured, that those who have changed His will for marriage will suffer.

C. Give examples of how a wife does not leave parents.

Getting married requires a major transition in the life of a couple, and some are not willing to change. The lady who marries may find things completely different from her former life. When growing up, she may have had special treatment even to the point of being spoiled. Mom and dad may have made every effort to sacrifice for her, but now in her new marriage, things are different.

Therefore, it may be that she is not willing to make the sacrifice, and when things go wrong, she runs back home. Now, she may not choose to physically return to parents, but she still returns. When decisions are to be made, she seeks their advice instead of that of her husband. This may cause jealousy and bitter arguments that can weaken or break up a marriage.

Some couples may even choose to live in the house with one of their parents. This may have been done successfully in rare cases, but this is very dangerous, and can destroy a marriage. Even if a couple is forced to live in poor circumstances, at least this is their home. God knew what was best when He commanded that one leave father and mother and be joined together.

Please understand that God is not suggesting disrespect for parents in any form. A man and woman who marry, still love and respect their parents. There are even those times when they seek their help and advice. However, it must never be done if such takes away from their being able to leave father and mother and to cleave to each other.

A godly woman will deeply love and respect her parents, but will make every effort to join her husband in building their own home. This will bring a true blessing to their lives and any future children.

Matt. 19:6 Wherefore [so then] they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, [in marriage] let not man put asunder”

[separate].

Quoting: “A good wife is heaven’s last, best gift to man,—his gem of many virtues, his casket of jewels: her voice is sweet music, her smiles his brightest day, her kiss the guardian of his innocence, her arms the pale of his safety, her industry his surest wealth, her economy his safest steward, her lips his faithful counsellors, her bosom the softest pillow of his cares.” — Jeremy Taylor.

“Of all the home remedies, a good wife is best.” —Ken Hubbard.

Prov. 19:14 Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, [parents] but a prudent [one with understanding, practical wisdom] wife is from the Lord.

A. How can men seek prudent wives from the Lord?

In the first place, they should not allow passion or fleshly lusts to rule their hearts. Sin is a faulty foundation on which to build anything. This is not to say that physical attraction, that is kept in its God-given place, is wrong. In fact, it is very important because God designed it this way. However, there are other important things when seeking a wife.

The man who is seeking a prudent wife, should choose one in the Lord. If she is truly godly, she will possess characteristics needed to help build a beautiful marriage. Her desire will be to build her marriage on the many spiritual principles of the Bible, and these will bring a blessing to her husband. If he seeks a wife of the world, he will marry worldly ways.

The man seeking a prudent wife will also look at her family. At first, this may not seem that important. Have you not heard someone say, “I’m marrying her, not her family?” But don’t you believe this, because there is a sense in which a husband or wife marries the family. He should remember that so much of what she is has come from years of training in her family. If they have led her into godly ways, he has a better chance of marrying a godly woman. If they have taught her by example to be worldly, he can expect the same.

As he seeks a prudent wife, he should look at her characteristics to become a good mother. At first, this may not seem important, but in time it probably will. Thus, their future happiness or unhappiness hangs in the balance.

The final one for our consideration of a man seeking a prudent wife is money. Money can represent a beautiful servant for a marriage and add to the happiness of a couple. But if money is loved and not handled properly, it can become a destructive force in a marriage. Therefore, he needs to be concerned whether or not she will be happy living within their means. Has she been raised

with an abundance of money and taught that one cannot be happy without being rich. The question should be, "Will money be a master or servant to her?"

The godly woman whose heart is adorned for God will consider money important, but never the most important part of her life. The prudent wife will place God, her husband, and family first in her life.

B. How can women train themselves to be prudent wives?

There is no way to do so successfully without the help of God. She must have within her heart a deep desire to please Him. She must keep the two way communication open between herself and God. First, she will use the Bible as her daily training Book. Here she will find not only instructions about how to be a good wife, but she will also find principles that will help make her more pure and understanding before her husband and others. She will find God's Book perfect *"for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.....thoroughly equipped for every good work"* (2 Tim. 3:16,17).

The second communication that she will keep open twenty-four hours a day will be prayer. Her training to be a prudent wife requires the help of God, and she continually calls upon His help. She makes every effort to put into practice Paul's admonition, *"in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God"* (Phil. 4:6).

Therefore, with God's instruction through His word and His guidance through prayer, the godly wife will grow daily in understanding and practical wisdom as she adorns her heart for the Lord and her husband.

Example: "Their boat was drifting idly, the sun shone above, and the sea was serene; while she was sitting snugly. Then he proposed. From the opposite end of the craft she gazed at him calmly. Then she said: "As a matter of common sense, realizing that we are in this boat, on water more than fifty feet deep, and if you were going to act as you should act if I accepted you, we would be capsized. I will decline your proposal at this moment—but, George, row as fast as you can to the shore and ask me again." That girl will make a good wife." —Hallock.

A. Why is it important to really want marriage?

May we first be reminded that marriage is a lifetime commitment from God. It is not a passing fad that man discovered or invented. For when God brought the first man and woman together, He intended that they become one flesh with each other without separation (*Mt. 19:6*). Those who do not fully feel the importance of marriage and really want it in their lives will not be committed to God's

purpose.

It is true, that in all endeavors of life that we are truly successful, only when we have our hearts involved. Yes, we can force ourselves to go through assigned actions, but this will never represent our best. In marriage, the lives of two are joined, and for there to be true happiness, it is very important for both to want such marriage. When this happens, both will do their best to make each other happy.

B. Discuss the results of those who do not consider the full seriousness of marriage.

Very obviously the results will not be good. For when one does not accept marriage with his or her whole heart, there will not be the necessary effort to keep it pure. Marriage, to this kind of person, will not likely be a lifetime commitment. Those who are not committed to marriage, do not feel the need to deal with the daily problems that arise in marriage.

Then finally, there will be a breakdown in the proper respect for his or her mate. When one fails to show respect, it usually causes the other one to feel the same way, and this brings destruction to a marriage.

The woman whose heart is adorned with godliness, will make every effort to seek a man who considers marriage of major importance in his life. By both of them being committed to marriage and each other, they will work to make their marriage the best that it can possibly be.

1 Cor. 7:10 And to the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord: [quotes what Jesus taught on this subject, Mt. 19:3-9; 5:32; Mk. 10:6-9] **Let not the wife depart from [leave] her husband.**

1 Cor. 7:11 **But even if she does depart, [leave] let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband, and let not the husband put away [divorce] his wife [cf. Mk. 10:11,12].**

A. Has modern society outgrown the teaching of these verses?

Unfortunately many believe that they have outgrown this teaching, but what has really happened is that they have grown like the world. Time does not change the powerful and moral principles of God. It is correct to say that millions have suffered because they have ignored the teaching of the Lord in these two verses.

To avoid breaking up marriages, it is very important for married couples

to set their goals toward making every effort to work out their problems. This can be done only if each person in a marriage has full respect for God and His laws for marriage. This will certainly be the goal of the godly woman whose heart is adorned for God.

B. How does Paul's teaching on marriage and divorce compare to what Jesus taught?

To compare the teaching of Jesus to Paul on this subject, please read what Jesus taught.

"Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery" (Matthew 5:31-32).

"And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery" (Matthew 19:9).

"So He said to them, 'Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery' (Mark 10:11,12).

"Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery" (Luke 16:18).

When placing all these Scriptures together, it is obvious to see that Jesus allows divorce and remarriage only in the event of physical death and sexual immorality. Jesus condemns the putting away or divorcing for ANY cause.

Before comparing Paul's teaching on this subject to what Jesus, please read first what Paul taught.

"For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man" (Romans 7:2-3).

"And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live

with her, let her not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace. For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?" (1 Corinthians 7:13-16).

1 Cor. 7:39 The wife [the remarrying of widows seems to be another question asked in the earlier letter, vs. 1] is bound by the law as long as her husband lives; [compare this to Rom. 7:2] but if her husband is dead, she is at liberty [free] to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord [must marry a Christian or believer, cf. 2 Cor. 6:14;—it is the height of wisdom to marry in the Lord any time].

Thus, when comparing Jesus' teaching to what Paul taught, it is obvious to see that Paul did not choose to include sexual immorality as a cause for divorcing and remarriage. His teaching mentions physical death only. This is not to suggest that Paul disagreed with Jesus, because Paul often referred to the teaching of the Lord. However, it is true that Paul chose not to go beyond physical death in his teaching on this subject.

A. Why is marrying in the Lord wise?

In the first place, it is always wise to follow the teaching of the Bible, because its words are God breathed (2 Tim. 3:16). But there is another reason. It is wise because it has been proven by many success stories. Now, it is true that some who marry those who are not Christians are able to work things out. All of us have known conversions from such relationships. However, it is just as true that the majority do not work out. There are those who suffer all their married lives because they are left alone to lead their children in spiritual paths.

Unfortunately, there are also those who grow weak in faith and even leave the Lord because they marry out of Christ. This does not have to be, but far too often it is so! Add to this the fact that children are often led astray by a marriage where one of the parents is not a Christian, and you can see why it is so wise to marry in the Lord.

There is a general Scripture that Paul gave that certainly applies to marrying out of Christ. In fact, the principle has been proven correct many times. Paul writes, "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light

with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?" (2 Cor. 6:14,15).

The woman whose heart is adorned with godliness will make every effort to find a godly man to marry so that their lives can also be one in Christ.

B. Is one who marries out of the Lord living in adultery?

No, unless one or the other is not free to marry. Even though it is unwise to marry out of the Lord, it is not an adulterous situation. Sometimes a mate who is not a Christian may not be faithful to his or her marriage. This would certainly bring adultery into such a relationship. However, there are many marriages where one is not a Christian, but is just as faithful (as to purity) to the marriage as a Christian.

It is also true that some who marry Christians still have problems and unfaithfulness in their marriage. But it is safe to say that the chances of faithfulness are greater when both are truly faithful to the Lord.

When Paul gives advice to wives who lose their husbands in death and are considering remarriage, he writes, "*A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord*" (1 Cor. 7:39).

C. How does marriages out of the Lord affect one's Christianity?

This is a question that can be more accurately answered by those who have experienced such. Over the years, many women have responded to this question in classes, and almost without exception, they have said that it is more difficult to live the Christian life. It all begins with the wife, and daily tests her faithfulness to Jesus. Many have been strong enough to continue on alone, but there is still a weakening effect upon their commitment to the Lord. For it is difficult to be one with a man in all ways except in the church. Some even have husbands who continually discourage them from being faithful. Unfortunately, most all of us know women who were not strong enough to continue in faithfulness, and followed their husbands into the world.

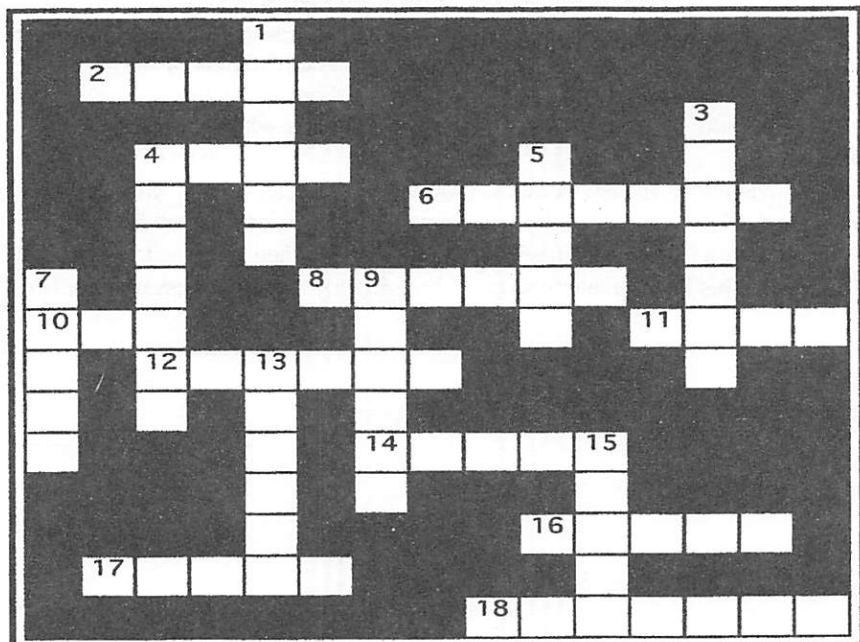
The second effect that is felt from marrying out of the Lord involves the children. It is wondered how many faithful Christian mothers have carried the full load of spiritual matters in the home. Seeing that children are trained for the Lord is far too much for one person to do. God intended that the father take the lead in spiritually training the children. Paul writes, "*And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord*" (Eph. 6:4). In homes where the father is not a Christian, the Christian mother

must shoulder his responsibility, and the burden is extremely heavy.

Yes, we honor those faithful mothers who alone have given their all to influence their children to be faithful Christians. Many times, in spite of the failure of her husband, she has been able to succeed. Yet, just think of the ones who have tried and failed. How heart breaking it must be for a Christian mother to watch her children follow the example of their father who gives his all to the world.

Therefore, in view of all the problems and dangers in marrying someone who is not a Christian, the godly woman who has her heart adorned for God will want to marry a Christian who will encourage her and their children to be faithful Christians. This has a greater chance of bringing joy and happiness into her life.

A Faithful Wife- Puzzle Nine



ACROSS

- 2 That which a wife does not have over her body (1 Cor. 7:4 KJV)
 4 The husband's position over his wife (Eph. 5:23)
 6 What a wife can receive from her husband (Prov. 31:28 NKJV)
 8 A man whose wife wept on him (Judg. 14:16 NKJV)
 10 A number associated with a wife (1 Tim. 3:2)
 11 Ruth was called, 'the wife of the—' (Ruth 4:5)
 12 Something associated with divorce (Mt. 19:3)
 14 "He who—his wife" (Eph. 5:28)
 16 What an excellent wife is to her husband (Prov. 12:4)
 17 Woman is to man (1 Cor. 11:7)
 18 The ones forbidden to take a harlot for wife (Lev. 21:1,7).

DOWN

- 1 Something the wife is not to do (1 Cor. 7:10)
 3 Man was not—for the woman (1 Cor. 11:9)
 4 Standard for loving wife (Eph. 5:28)
 5 Something a husband finds from the Lord (Prov. 18:22 NKJV)
 7 Something forbidden to the wife of a neighbor (Ex. 20:17)
 9 Husband of Priscilla (Acts 18:2)
 13 A word describing the strength of a woman (1 Pet. 3:7)
 15 A famous Old Testament wife (Gen. 11:29).

A Precious Mother

Lesson 10

Memory Verse: "And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living" (Gen. 3:20).

Expository Verses

John 2:3 And when they wanted [ran out of] wine; [there were three kinds in Jesus' day: (1) fermented to a small degree and diluted with two or three parts of water. (2) unfermented juice. (3) an intoxicating drink called new wine, Acts 2:13] the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."

A. Did Jesus make an intoxicating new wine?

We are not told the kind of wine that Jesus made at Canaan of Galilee. However, it is consistent to believe that He would not make a wine that is condemned so severely in the Old Testament. The sin of drunkenness is condemned in both the Old and New Testaments. Solomon writes: "*Wine is a mocker, intoxicating drink arouses brawling, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise*" (Prov. 20:1). Then he asks, "*Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of the eyes?*" His answer, "*Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine.*" Then he advises, "*Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper*" (Prov. 23:29-32). Would Jesus make something this destructive, and capable of keeping one from inheriting the kingdom of God? (Gal. 5:21).

Surely Jesus made a wine that was of good quality without setting a destructive temptation in their pathway. The godly woman who believes this will never use this example to prove that intoxicating wine is acceptable for a Christian.

B. Discuss the confidence that Mary had in her Son.

To understand Mary's feelings, we need to think back to the time that the angel announced that she would have a Son. It was not an ordinary situation since she was found with child by the Holy Spirit (Mt. 1:18). Also, Joseph was

told that He would be called Jesus "for He will save His people from their sins" (Mt. 1:21). Therefore, from the beginning, Mary had known that Jesus was more than her Son, He was the Son of God (Lk. 1:35).

In view of this and the years that she had watched Him grow "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Lk. 2:52), her confidence was no doubt at its highest peak. She did not seem to have any doubts that Jesus could provide the wine at this wedding feast. Whether or not she expected a miracle, we are not told, but she had confidence that Jesus could take care of this situation.

The more we love Jesus and place our trust in Him, the more our faith grows. The godly woman spends her life placing her confidence in Jesus. This is one of the ways by which she shows that her heart is adorned for God.

C. Is there value in mothers going places with children?

The answer to this question is yes, more than most mothers recognize. The influence of a mother is natural and a very forceful thing, but it becomes even more powerful in the life of children when they experience various activities with their mother. Of course, this same principle applies to fathers. God intended that parents become special teachers (about life) for their children.

One of the unfortunate things that has happened in today's modern families is that both parents work away from home and children are often influenced by others. Although this may be a necessity, it is not the best influence for children. Some mothers welcome the many hours away from their children, but this is not true with the godly mother. Even if she is forced to be away, she makes every effort to spend as much time as possible after work with her children. She wants to be their living instructor as they see her daily example lived for Jesus.

As the godly mother goes places with her children, she is afforded opportunities to instruct them. If they visit a park, she can use the beauties of nature to show them their Creator. If they go shopping together, she has the opportunity to teach them about business and getting along with others. When she is with them in Bible classes and worship, she is afforded the opportunity of placing emphasis on spiritual things. Therefore, the mother whose heart is adorned for God places great value on the hours she is allowed to spend with her children.

John 2:4 Jesus said to her, "Woman, [not a rude title for His mother; compare John 19:25,26] **what have I to do with you?** [why involve Me?] **My hour** [time] **has not yet come**" [if applied to the immediate context, His time to do something about the shortage of wine had not come—if applied spiritually, His hour for death and His resurrection had not come, cf. John 7:30: 8:20: 12:23: 13:1:16:32:17:1].

A. Compare Jesus' situation to all other children.

Even though Jesus lived and grew up as a fleshly human being (*John 1:14*), He was different in His spiritual purpose, because He had left heaven to bring His Father's will to earth (*John 6:38*). This explains why at the age of twelve, He was in the temple doing His Father's business (*Lk. 2:49*). When Jesus told His mother that His hour had not yet come, He was probably referring to His spiritual purpose. It seems that He was not ready at this point to show His divine ability to perform miracles.

Jesus was not being rude to His mother, but as important as she was to Him, His true mission to earth was to deliver the word of God, and to die on the cross for the sins of world (*Lk. 19:10*). In this sense, Jesus was different from all other children while growing up, and different when He became an adult.

B. How did Mary's conception by the Holy Spirit affect her thinking about her Son?

From the moment that the angel announced to her that she would conceive by the Holy Spirit and give birth to the Son of God (*Lk. 2:35*), she knew that her Son was different. Not only was this conception a miracle, but it also involved salvation to be offered to the whole human race.

Mary had watched her Son grow up in favor with God and men (*Lk. 2:52*), and must have seen evidence on every hand that her conception by the Holy Spirit had brought forth God's Son. Surely, all the many things that had happened during the years that Jesus grew up, proved, without a doubt, who He was, and that He was God's Son. Therefore, Mary must have understood what Jesus meant when He said, "*My hour has not yet come,*" better than anyone else.

John 2:5 His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it" [she had confidence in Jesus and His power to meet this need].

Example: A native of the Congo prayed thus: "Dear Lord, you be the needle and I will be the thread. You go first, and I will follow wherever you may lead!"
—Christian World Facts

A. How anxious are we to obey Jesus?

This is a question that must be seriously pondered by each person. However, we can be assured that the godly woman whose heart is adorned for God will want to follow Jesus daily. Mary had no doubts about Jesus and what He would

command them to do to provide for the guests. She knew that whatever He commanded would be right!

Do we have this kind of confidence in Jesus? Are we willing to allow the Father and His Son Jesus be the needle and us the thread ready to follow anywhere? It is wondered how many times we fail to do what we are capable of doing. Perhaps it is because we fail to have full confidence in Jesus. How different our lives would be if we would only do whatever He says for us to do.

B. Discuss the importance of humility in obedience.

The only way that we can successfully follow Jesus is to become His servant, and one cannot be a servant without humility. James wrote, *"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up"* (Jas. 4:10). Peter admonishes, *"be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble"* (1 Pet. 5:5).

Therefore, heart adornment for the godly woman involves becoming a humble servant of righteousness. Paul thanked God that the Christians at Rome had become slaves or servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:18). This is important because *"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble"* (Jas. 4:6). Even though it may sound contradictory, we become slaves for Jesus so that we can be set free. In the words of Jesus, *"For My yoke is easy and My burden is light"* (Mt. 11:30). *"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:32).

Quoting: "We are born subjects, and to obey God is perfect liberty. He that does this shall be free, safe, and happy." — Seneca

A. How does one take a personal obedience test?

This is done by looking honestly into our hearts to see if we are faithfully and sincerely following the Lord. But it is not easy to turn our focus inward to self. We are more comfortable examining others to determine whether or not they are obedient to the Lord. However, Paul emphasized the importance of a personal obedience test when he commanded the Corinthian Christians, *"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Prove yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified"* (2 Cor. 13:5).

Why is it so important to take this test? Without looking inward to see if we are right with God, it becomes easy to be satisfied with our lives without any improvement. We can become like the Pharisees who had a plank in their own eyes. They were so concerned about trying to see the speck in their brother's eye that they were unaware of the plank in their own eye (Mt. 7:3). Jesus taught that

before they could clearly see the speck in their brother's eye, they must remove the plank.

Thus, the godly woman will want to look inwardly daily to make sure that she is doing right. Why? Because as a Christian she wants her heart adorned for God. This is especially important when she has chosen the role of a mother. She then feels a responsibility for her own life, and the lives of her children.

2 Tim. 1:5 when I call to remembrance [even apart from him, a flash back in memory of Timothy's life brought joy to Paul] **the unfeigned [sincere] faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that is in you also** [Paul preached to Timothy's home town on his first Journey, Acts 14:6,7;—on his second Journey, he chose Timothy to join him in the ministry of the gospel, Acts 16:1-4].

A. How important are mothers and grandmothers as to imparting faith to children?

God has given to mothers and grandmothers an awesome responsibility because they have so much influence on their children. Yes, the father's role is important too, but each has a God given responsibility. Timothy's father was a Greek (*Acts 16:3*), and evidently did not encourage Timothy's spiritual life. However, his mother and grandmother must have given their all to teach him about faithfully serving God. After Paul spoke of the faith of grandmother Lois and mother Eunice, he said of Timothy, "*and I am persuaded that is in you also*" (*2 Tim. 1:5*). Paul had no doubts about the faith of Timothy, because he knew of the faith of these two women.

As a godly woman, are you passing on your faith in God to your children? Do you continually remember what is important in life, and then do you pass it on to them? Do you take every opportunity (regardless of how small) to point your precious ones to God? Remember, the only way to instill faith in the hearts of your children is to teach them God's word, and then live it before them in your life (*Rom. 10:17*). As they grow and mature throughout their lives, there will be many things offered to turn them to the world, but when they have been grounded in faith and truth, they will have an anchor to hold them securely. When both true faith and hope in God are present, their souls will stand firmly with an anchor "*both sure and steadfast*" (*Heb. 6:19*).

B. Discuss some ways that mothers can develop a stronger faith toward God in their children.

We have already learned that she must teach and live the word of God, but let us now break this down into how she does this. First of all, she will go with her children to all services of the church. As she increases her faith, she will make sure that the same is happening to her children. The devil seems to whisper that it is not important to attend all services of the church. This is done to take from the importance of the services.

Faithfulness to all Bible classes and worship not only instruct and encourage our children, but such sends them an important message. It tells them that God and His way of life is the most important thing of all. This is the only way that they can learn to seek the kingdom first (*Mt. 6:33*).

The godly mother will also teach her children at home the proper attitude of faith. This will be accomplished by reading and studying the Bible together. Even in this rushing modern times, she will look for opportunities to have special devotionals. As they get older, it may not be possible to have one daily, but she will do so as often as possible. This will not only keep them close to God's word, but it will afford opportunities to discuss the problems or potential problems in their lives.

Likewise, the godly mother whose heart is adorned for God will develop a stronger faith in her children by living daily the example of Jesus before them. This will not always be easy, because life can bring many stresses that try us. But every effort will be made to show them Jesus even during the difficult times.

Quoting: "Children are what the mothers are; no fondest father's fondest care can so fashion the infant's heart, or so shape the life." — Landor.

"Of all the rights of women, the greatest is to be a mother."

— Lin Yutang

A. Are mothers more effective with the help of fathers?

Yes, the godly mother needs the support of a Christian father to help her develop faith in the hearts of her children. He needs to be the head of her family, and the spiritual leader (*Eph. 5:23; 6:4*). Even though many godly mothers have led their children alone in spiritual matters, this is not the way that God wants it. Remember, the father who does not carry out his God-given responsibility, discourages his children. When this is done, the mother's work in leading her children to God becomes more difficult. The ideal situation is to have the father and mother working together as a team under the full leadership of God.

B. Discuss the importance of (*Eph. 6:1-4*).

These verses from Paul are very important because they discuss the importance of a Christian father. The first three verses remind children of their responsibility to their parents. They are commanded to obey and honor them in the Lord. Then Paul turns to the father's responsibility to his children.

First of all, he is not to provoke his children to wrath. Paul writes, "*Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged*" (Col. 3:21). This is not to say that the children of a godly father will never become angry over his decisions and demands. But even during those times when he must go against their wishes, he will not provoke them to wrath or exasperation. How does the Christian father avoid exasperation? He does so by bringing them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Children are smarter than we give them credit. They know the difference between a selfish, angry father, and one who is leading them in the pathways of God. Therefore, as the head of his wife, the father needs to discharge his responsibilities as the spiritual leader of the home. The godly woman becomes even more effective as a mother when she has the help of a godly father. It is easier for her to keep her heart adorned for God in her daily life.

John 19:26 When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved [John] standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" [here is John, your son].

John 19:27 Then He said to the disciple, [John] "Behold your mother!" [John, here is your mother]. And from that hour [time] that disciple [John] took her to his own home [Jesus was asking John to look after his mother like a son, and John obeyed Him].

A. To what extent did Jesus respect His mother?

As we have observed earlier in this study, Jesus had a deep respect for His mother even though her role was not as important as His spiritual mission on earth. From a human standpoint, He must have loved and appreciated her. After all, she had submitted to God to bring into flesh His only begotten Son with all His glory (John 1:14).

Sometimes we assume that since Jesus was God's Son, He did not need any help from His parents, but this is not true. Mary and Joseph must have been loving and caring parents as they led Jesus from birth to manhood. We are told very little about the childhood of Jesus, but what we are told suggests that He had caring parents.

Very early in His life when Jesus was threatened by Herod the evil king,

Joseph arose and *"took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt"* (Mt. 2:14). They stayed there until Herod was dead. Then to avoid Herod's evil son, for His protection, and to fulfill a prophecy, they took Jesus to Nazareth (Mt. 2:22,23).

At the age of twelve, they took Him to Jerusalem, and as they returned home, they thought He was among relatives and acquaintances. However, it was discovered that He had been left in Jerusalem. They immediately returned, and His mother said to Him, *"Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously"* (Lk. 2:48). Even though Jesus had a good reason that they did not understand, He was about His Father's business, this incident shows their love and concern for Him.

Now, the verses above where Jesus spoke to John and His mother, show just how much He cared. He did not want to leave her without a son, and he asked John to be a son to Mary, and for her to be a mother to John. Therefore, we can conclude that Jesus, from a human standpoint, had a deep respect and love for His mother. However, all earthly relationships had to take second place in the life of Jesus. On one occasion while Jesus was teaching, it was told Him that His mother and brothers stood outside. Jesus asked, *"Who is My mother and who are My brothers?"* After stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He answered this question. *"Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother"* (Mt. 12:47-50).

Again, Jesus was not putting down His earthly family, but rather showing that everything in His life on earth is secondary to doing His Father's will. On another occasion, Jesus taught, *"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple"* (Lk. 14:26). Certainly, Jesus did not mean hate in an evil sense, because He taught that hating even one's enemy is wrong (Mt. 5:43,44). What is He saying? The answer seems to be found in what Jesus taught later on in His ministry. *"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me"* (Mt. 10:37).

This is why Jesus calls upon all today who follow Him to love parents and all other relatives less than they love Him. He wants your heart adorned with godliness so that Jesus and His kingdom are first in your life, and then all other things will be added (Mt. 6:33).

B. Discuss the difference between RESPECTING and WORSHIPPING Mary.

When one searches all the teaching in the Bible, not one verse even gives

a hint that Mary should be worshiped. In fact, the verses that we have already studied in looking at Jesus' relationship to His mother, show that she should not be worshiped. Jesus made every effort to respect her, but did not include worshipping her as a part of His Father's will.

However, over the years there have been those who exalt Mary by making statues of her, and even praying through her name. This is a direct violation of the word of God. Only Jesus stands between Christians and God! Paul was guided by the Holy Spirit to write, "*For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Jesus Christ*" (1 Tim. 2:5). As you can see, the same verse that declares ONE God, declares ONE Mediator! If one Mediator can be changed to two, then one God can be to two Gods.

Therefore, a godly woman will respect Mary for her role in bringing God's Son to earth, but she will never set her up as an object of worship. She will never allow anyone to take away from the worship of Jesus, God's Son!

Example: A little boy who was told by his mother that it was God who makes people good, replied, "Yes, I know it is God. But mothers help a lot." — Christian Guardian

A. How are mothers co-workers with God?

Biblical history reveals that God has often used mothers to carry out His plans. After sin was committed in the Garden of Eden, God promised that the Seed of Woman would bruise the head of the serpent, the devil (*Gen. 3:15*). From that day forward, women were used to carry out this plan. When God made a promise to Abraham, to bless all nations through his seed, Sarah was chosen to be the mother to give birth to Isaac.

In later years, a woman named Elizabeth was chosen to give birth to John the Baptist who would prepare the way for Jesus. A woman named Mary was chosen to conceive by the Holy Spirit to bring the Son of God into the world. Therefore, mothers have had an important partnership with God.

Mothers today who have their hearts adorned with godliness can still be important co-workers with God. This is done when she lives in such a way that she shows her children that God is in her life. Many children have been influenced to be Christians because they saw the godly example of their mother.

As a general rule, the mother represents the first close acquaintance in their lives. She can have an influence that perhaps no other can ever have. By living and teaching Jesus before her children, she becomes an important co-worker with God.

B. Are many mothers today too busy for their children?

Unfortunately, the answer to this question is yes. This is not the way that it should be, but far too often it is true. Our lifestyle today with often the need for two wage earners in the home, plus those who choose work to run from their responsibilities, has caused millions of children to be neglected. Certainly the demands of each generation are different. However, the godly mother will make every effort to survive without neglecting her children.

For the hours she must be away from her children, she will sacrifice to make up for the sake of her children. It is a fact, that children can handle many difficult situations in life if they have the full love and guidance of their parents. All of us have known families living in deep poverty, but the children grew up to be faithful and dependable leaders in the church. It is not WHAT children have in life, but WHO they have that makes the difference. Therefore, whether parents are forced each day to be separated many hours from their children, or if they are with them at all times, the important thing is not to neglect them. The heart adorned woman for God will make every effort not to be too busy for her children.

C. Discuss how mothers can save or ruin a nation.

It is a true historical fact that women determine the moral standards of a nation. This is certainly no compliment to men, but it is still true that he has often allowed women to set the standards.

In the Old Testament, the first woman Eve, set the standard for her husband to sin. After she ate the forbidden fruit, *"She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate"* (Gen. 3:6). Jezebel, recognized as the leading evil woman of the Bible, influenced her husband Ahab and Israel to turn to Baal worship (1 Kings. 16:31-33).

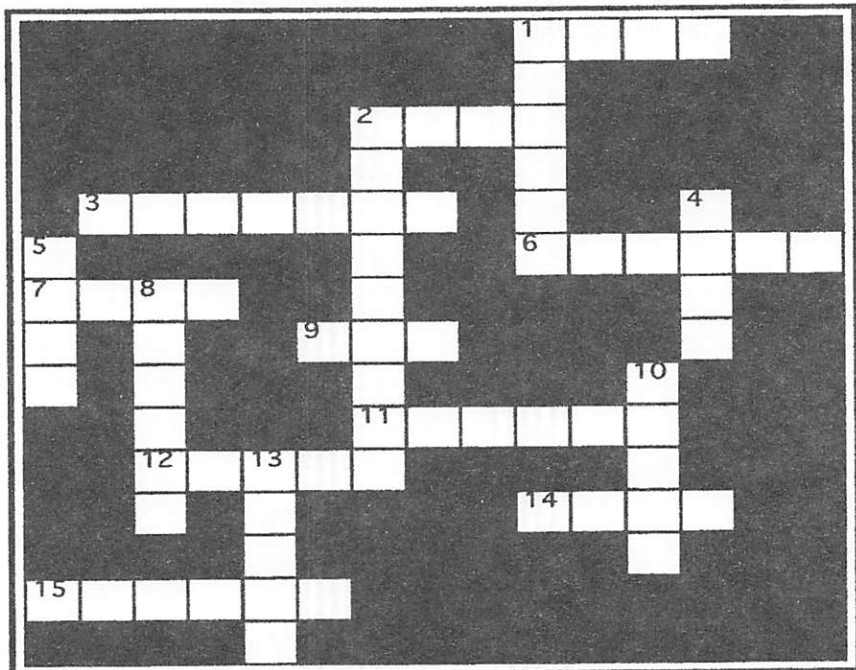
God had promised a son to Abram by Sarai to begin a special nation, but when Sarai became impatient, Abram allowed her to influence him. *"So Sarai said to Abram, 'See now, the Lord has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her.'*" How did Abram respond? *"And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai"* (Gen. 16:2).

Even in the New Testament age, where women as a whole were not given their rights, they were able to have a tremendous influence for good. Consider such women as Elizabeth, the mother of John, Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary and Martha, Mary Magdalene, Priscilla, Phoebe, and many others. They had such an important part in the birth and spread of Christianity.

We can conclude, then, that the godly woman recognizes her influence as a Christian mother on her family and nation. Thus, with God's guidance, she makes

every effort to set forth a positive influence for good. Like the ideal virtuous woman of Proverbs 31, she does her best for God, her family, and others. When she joins together with all other mothers of a nation, she has a part in saving her nation from immorality and ruin.

A Precious Mother - Puzzle Ten



ACROSS

- 1 A mother mentions what her son will be named (**Lk. 1:60**)
- 2 Mother of John Mark (**Acts 12:12**)
- 3 What a son must keep as to his father (**Prov. 6:20 NKJV**)
- 6 Eve was the mother of someone (**Gen. 3:20**)
- 7 An obligation of children to parents (**Col. 3:20**)
- 9 Something a son must not forsake (**Prov. 1:8**)
- 11 A man who made a mother happy (**1 Kings 17:23**)
- 12 Where a faithful mother stood (**John 19:25**)
- 14 A place from which to be born (**John 3:4**)
- 15 One close to Samuel (**1 Sam. 2:19**).

DOWN

- 1 Another word for happy (**Ps. 113:9**)
- 2 Something brought to a mother (**Gen. 30:14**)
- 4 Something used to describe a mother (**Ezk. 19:10**)
- 5 Where parents are to be Eph. 6:1)
- 8 A famous mother (**2 Tim. 1:5**)
- 10 What a child can bring to its mother (**Prov. 29:15**)
- 13 Who are to be exhorted as mothers (**1 Tim. 5:2 NKJV**).

A True Christian

Lesson 11

Memory Verse: *“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God”*
(Col. 3:3).

Expository Verses

Eph. 2:5 even when we were dead in sins, [He loved the unlovable, Rom. 5:8] has made us alive together with Christ, [just as God made Jesus alive after His physical death, so God makes Christians alive from the death of sin, Rom. 5:6; 6:4,5] by grace [by whose grace—an unmerited and unearned favor] **you are saved**, [obedience prepares the heart to receive grace for salvation, vs. 8: Titus 2:11,12].

A. How is one dead in sin before becoming a Christian?

To answer this question, we need to remember that sin means “missing God’s mark.” From the beginning, God told Adam and Eve that if they ate fruit from the forbidden tree, they would die. After they both ate, they fully recognized that they had lost the TREE OF LIFE, and had found the TREE OF DEATH. From that day forward, the wages of sin is death (*Rom. 6:23*).

Therefore, the only hope of life for anyone in all centuries of time is to be made alive together with Christ. Instead of being dead IN sin, one must become dead TO sin! Why is death, the wages of sin, so destructive? Because the word death means separation. *“But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear”* (*Isa. 59:2; cf. Jas. 2:26*). Thus, those who are dead in sin are separated from God and lost before becoming a Christian.

B. How does grace save the one who is lost in sin?

The definition to the word grace answers this question. The one lost in sin does not deserve salvation, nor can he or she do enough good works to earn it. Therefore, the need for salvation is an unmerited and unearned favor from God. This is the meaning of grace!

Grace becomes even more precious when we consider that this needed gift came out of love from God to those who were unlovable. Those who are dead

in sin deserve to remain DEAD forever, but the love of God wants them to be ALIVE forever! We can conclude then, that in every possible way that grace is considered, it is an essential gift from God. *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God"* (Eph. 2:8).

Even though grace is a gift from God that cannot be earned, the gift must be accepted by faith. What kind of faith makes the gift possible? The kind of faith that reaches out in obedience to receive it on God's terms. Will those with a dead, inactive faith receive the gift? No, because God requires a commitment on the part of the sinner. After Paul wrote that *"the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,"* he added, *"teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age"* (Titus 2:11,12). Paul is saying that those who receive this precious gift of salvation must DENY certain things, and must LIVE a certain way. Does this earn salvation? Certain not! But it is the reaching out in obedience to receive it the way that God demands.

Among the most precious treasures of the godly woman, is the gift of grace in her life. This helps her to live a life of appreciation toward God as she serves and makes every effort to lead her family and others to do the same.

Eph. 2:6 and has raised us [Christians] up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, [Paul uses the beautiful figure of the resurrection and ascension to illustrate what God has done for sinful man, Eph. 1:20].

A. What comes to your mind with the word Christian?

The first thing that should come to our minds is Christ. As a penitent believer, just before putting on Jesus in baptism, an all important confession is made. "I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." This is the belief from the heart that guides one's life as a Christian. It is one way of saying that I am now denying myself and taking up my cross daily to follow Jesus (Lk. 9:23). It means that from this day forward I belong to Jesus.

The word Christian should also suggest that one is ready to wear the name of Jesus. This is true whether there is persecution or peace, whether one is in the majority or minority, or whether the name is accepted by others or rejected.

When we think of the word Christian, we should be reminded that we now have an eternal brother in Jesus, because Christians are children of God. What does this mean? It means that, along with Jesus, we are among the heirs who will inherit eternal blessings from God. *"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and*

joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Rom. 8:16,17). This is both love and honor from God. "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!" (1 John 3:1).

**B. Discuss the meaning of the two parts of the word Christian:
(1) Christ (2) ian.**

One cannot say the word Christian without saying Christ. Those who choose to remove the word Christ from this word, destroy its meaning. When (ian) is added to the word Christ, it means belonging to Christ. From the moment that Paul obeyed Jesus to become a Christian, he belonged to Him. To the Philippians he wrote, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21).

There are those who call themselves Christians who do not belong to Christ. The true Christians back up their words by actions. We must not only SAY that we are Christians, but we must LIVE as Christians. Each godly woman who has her heart adorned for God will show by her life that she belongs to Jesus. Those who see her life will have no doubts.

C. What did Paul mean when he said that he had been crucified with Christ? (Gal. 2:20).

To better understand this statement written to the Galatians, please read all of the passage. "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). To Paul, being a Christian meant that Christ had taken over his full life. Every breath that he breathed was for Jesus.

Yes, there were other things in Paul's life, but they were considered as nothing compared to Jesus and His gospel. Paul was fully committed to his Lord. "But indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ" (Phil. 3:8).

Thus, the goal of every godly woman (man) should be total commitment, and we should be able to say with Paul, "I am crucified with Christ."

Quoting: "The only way to realize that we are God's children is to let Christ lead us to our Father." —Phirmps Brooks.

“The Christian life is not merely knowing or hearing, but doing the will of Christ.”
—F.W. Robertson.

“Faith makes, life proves, trials confirm, and death crowns the Christian.” —Hopfner

A. Can one be a Christian without following Jesus?

Those who have studied Christianity know that it is a doing religion. In fact, there is no other way to enter the kingdom without doing God’s will. In the words of Jesus, “*Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who DOES the will of My Father in heaven*” (Mt. 7:21). “*But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not DO the things which I say?*” (Lk. 6:46).

It is not uncommon to meet those today who believe that DOING is not a part of Christianity. For example, they even teach “faith only” in becoming a Christian. The sinner is taught that there is nothing that he or she can do. Then there are those who believe that once you become a Christian, there is still nothing to do.

Please observe, both of these concepts are in direct conflict with the teaching of God’s word. Even though the sinner cannot DO anything to earn salvation (it is a gift from God) he or she must prepare their heart to receive the gift. For God’s precious gift of grace will not be given to a heart that will not believe, that will not repent and turn, that will not confess Jesus to be the Christ, and will not obey Jesus in baptism (Mk. 16:15; Acts 2:38; Mt. 10:32; Acts 22:16).

After becoming a Christian, there is a special life to live. The New Testament describes the Christian life as being filled with many activities. One cannot study the teachings of Jesus and others without learning about the many good works to be carried out in our lives. Jesus was concerned about the sick, the depressed, the deprived, the bereaved, and the lost, and He wants those who follow Him to show the same concern.

Can you imagine a godly woman whose heart is adorned for the Lord not being involved in good works for Jesus? Can you even imagine such a person not wanting to be involved?

B. Discuss Jesus being the ONLY way to the Father (John 14:6).

In *John 14:6*, not only does Jesus declare Himself to be the WAY, the truth, and the life, but He announces that He is the only way to the Father. With this one statement, Jesus shows that all other claims and ways to the Father are false.

The only hope of any person lost in sin, is to reach the forgiving Father. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve represented the whole human race, and they spiritually cut themselves off from God when they sinned. It all comes down to

this, there must be a return to God, or face death forever. The mission of Jesus to earth was to seek and save the lost (*Lk. 19:10*). How was this to be done? The cross, His sacrifice in death, was designed to provide a way for sinners to reach God.

Now, without the forgiving blood of Jesus, there can NEVER be forgiveness, and without forgiveness, one can never return to God. Therefore, it becomes obvious to see that the only hope of salvation is found in Jesus. There is absolutely no other way to reach the Father. This is why the godly woman gives her all to Jesus, and makes every effort to share Him with others.

C. Discuss faith, life, trials, and death in the last quote by Hopfner, page 114.

It is true that all must begin with faith, because faith makes us a hearer and doer. There were those in Jesus' day who heard His powerful words, but turned away without doing them. Jesus taught that these were foolishly building their houses on the sand (*Mt. 7:26,27*). There is absolutely no way that one can please God without faith, and the faith that pleases God is a doing faith.

In *Hebrews 11*, we have God's Hall of Faith of the faithful, reaching back through the Old Testament. Why were they there? They demonstrated their faith to God by DOING what He commanded. There is placed between some of these great ones of faith, these words: "*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him*" (*Heb. 11:6*).

When one considers the thought that life proves, (see the quote) it is another way of saying that faith is being lived. It seems easy for some to speak of their faith, but the real test is when we look at their lives. James taught the importance of life proving faith, when he wrote, "*But someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works*" (*Jas. 2:18*).

The characters of the faith chapter, Hebrews eleven, proved their faith by the way they lived for God. Their lives were full of walking, building, moving, obeying, and living out God's commands.

Then trials confirm just how strong we are spiritually. This represents a test for our faith. It is like gold that is placed in the fire where the impurities are removed and the true gold is revealed. The apostle Peter writes of those who had been distressed by various trials, "*that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ*" (*1 Pet. 1:7*).

Trials also confirm our patience in God and His will. "*My brethren,*

count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing" (Jas. 1:2-4). So many godly women are loaded with health problems, but this does not keep them from faithfully serving the Lord. As they patiently bear their burdens, they help others to dedicate their hearts to God.

Finally, death crowns the Christian. All who are godly and faithful are running in the Christian race to win the crown of life. If you have ever wondered how Paul could fight the good fight of faith, and how he could endure every hardship that life could offer him, it was because he wanted to be found in Jesus and win the crown of life. Near the end of his life, he was able to write to Timothy, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Tim. 4:7,8).

Thus, the godly woman whose heart is adorned for God, is making preparation daily to win this crown. Earthly crowns will become old and finally fade away, but not so with the crown of righteousness. For you see, it is a crown given by Jesus who is eternal. James writes of the faithful, "for when he has been proved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him" (Jas. 1:12). Peter promises the faithful elders and shepherds of the flock that "when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away" (1 Pet. 5:4).

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now [as Christians on earth] we are the sons [children] of God; [vs. 1] and it has not yet appeared [been made known] what we shall be, [in the future life—when with our heavenly Father, 1 Cor. 3:9] but we know that when He shall appear, [Jesus at His second coming, 2 Thes. 1:7] we shall be like Him, [Phil. 3:20,21;—what more should any Christian want!] for we shall see Him as He is [cf. Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18].

A. How are Christians like Jesus now?

In the above Scripture, John refers to those who are Christians are now, and what they shall be at His return. As a general rule, we can conclude that true Christians are like Jesus NOW and THEN! Who is Jesus now? He is God's Son and heir. Doesn't the Bible teach that Christians are those who have been born again of water and the Spirit (John 3:3,5), and have become joint heirs with Christ? (Rom. 8:17). Jesus is described as being the High Priest of the New Testament (Heb. 8:1), and Christians are called priests. In Peter's first book, he reminds some

Christians, "you are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5; cf. Rom. 12:1).

But Christians are also like Jesus by the way they live and die. They live the same principles that He taught which are approved by the Father. Jesus died in faithfulness to His Father, and Christians must do the same. Therefore, the goal of every godly person, man or woman, is to put on Jesus through faith and baptism (Gal. 3:26,27), and to reflect His light in their life and in death. This represents the world's most important goal in life.

B. How does being like Him now compare to being like Him at His return?

The apostle John makes it clear that we cannot specifically know what we shall be when He appears, because it has not yet been made known. However, there is one thing for sure, when He appears, we will be like Him. Certainly we do not know about the characteristics of a spiritual body since we have never seen one. We just know that we will have a spiritual body. Paul was guided to write on this subject, "So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:42-44). Therefore this physical body that is subject to death and decay will be changed (1 Cor. 15:50-54).

Now, please learn that if we are not like Jesus now, we won't be like Him then. If we don't serve Him here, we will be cast from Him there. While on earth, we are either children of God or children of the devil. All eternal blessings and life begin in Jesus here on earth. The apostle of love writes, "And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1 John 5:11).

There is an eternal longing in the heart of every godly woman who has adorned her heart for God, to experience eternal life now, and throughout all eternity.

Example: Over the years, ships that cross the great oceans have been equipped with special compasses that cannot be affected by the metal of the ship or iron ore in various islands. They always point accurately to the north. To be a true Christian, we must always point our lives to Jesus, and we will never go wrong.

A. Discuss how Jesus is the true compass.

Those who are familiar with a compass know that it operates by being drawn to a magnet toward the north. Compasses are able to guide great ships across many oceans because they are always drawn toward this direction. This northern drawing power is so great that all other metals are ignored along the way.

Jesus described Himself as being such a spiritual compass to reach God. The devil tried to distort His drawing power by tempting Him in the wilderness, but he failed. Jesus, as God's Son, never took His vision off of His Father and His will on earth. Since Jesus was able to remain true to His Father under all the contrary winds of life, He can surely guide our lives today.

It is likewise true that the godly woman allows Jesus to draw her life to the Father. Yes, there are many other things along the way that try to draw her from the true course, but her focus remains on Jesus, the true compass. By following Him, she can never go wrong.

B. How does the cross of Jesus draw others to Him?

The cross of Christ has such drawing power because Jesus promised it. In fact, this special drawing power was an important part of the cross. Jesus promised, *"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself"* (John 12:32). When the enemy lifted the body of Jesus up, suspended between heaven and earth in sacrifice, Jesus had the power to draw them to God. Even the shape of the cross can illustrate His important work. The cross beam where they nailed His arms and hands pointed in opposite directions, and can signify that the blood of Jesus reached back to the past, and forward into the future. The vertical beam placed downward into the earth, also reached upward toward heaven. Thus, Jesus' death made it possible for sinful man on earth to become friends with God.

Because of the cross, Jesus can invite sinners to Himself. False religions of the world point people to someone else, but Jesus invites them to come to Him. *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"* (Mt. 11:28). The call of Jesus was *"Follow Me"* (Mt. 16:24). Because of the drawing power of the cross, only Jesus could say, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"* (John 14:6).

When Jesus instructed Nicodemus about the new birth, He used the Old Testament example of Moses lifting up the bronze serpent in the wilderness to heal those who had been bitten by fiery serpents. *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:14,15).

Therefore, the woman whose heart is adorned with godliness recognizes Jesus and His death as her only hope of salvation. Not only does she look back to

the cross to become a Christian, but it is the drawing force in her daily life as she lives for the Lord.

Gal. 2:20 I am [have been] crucified with Christ: [Rom. 6:6] nevertheless I live; [he died to sin, was buried and raised through baptism to walk in a new life, Rom. 6:1-5] yet not I, but Christ lives in me; [Rom. 6:8-11] and the life which I now live in the flesh [his daily physical life] I live by faith in the Son of God, [Rom. 10:10;—his daily steps are motivated and directed by faith in Jesus] who loved [Greek: *agapao*] me, and gave Himself for me [2 Cor. 5:15: cf. John 3:16:1 John 3:16].

Gal. 5:24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh [Rom. 6:6: Col. 3:9:1 Pet. 2:1] with the affections [its passions] and lusts [desires].

A. What is involved in being crucified with Christ?

It is wonderful to learn about the salvation that Jesus purchased when He was lifted on the cross. The scene of the cross becomes even more spectacular when one recognizes that Jesus died for all. However, it is also true that only a few, compared to many, will allow Him to draw them for salvation (*Mt. 7:13,14*). There is a sense in which Jesus calls upon those who are saved to be crucified with Him. The question to be answered is, what does being crucified with Jesus involve.

First of all, it involves dying to sin. Paul asks, "*How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?*" (*Rom. 6:2*). Thus, the ones who are crucified with Jesus, believe in Him to the point of repentance. They change their hearts and minds to the point of turning their walk in the opposite direction from the world.

What does this involve? They put to death the sinful deeds of their bodies, and then use the members of their bodies as instruments of righteousness. "*Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry*" (*Col. 3:5*). "*For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live*" (*Rom. 8:13*).

After confessing their faith that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, they put Him on in baptism for the forgiveness of sin, so that they can arise from baptism to walk in a new life (*Rom. 6:4; Acts 2:38; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:26,27*).

The above obedience is the beginning of Christianity for the godly woman. With full heart adornment, she shows by her daily life that she has been crucified with Christ. Her body is fully dedicated to being a servant of Jesus. She continues to say no to the world with its allurements, and says yes to Jesus.

B. How do those who are crucified with Christ walk?

The figure of walking is used in the Bible to illustrate one's daily life. For example, John calls upon Christians to "*walk in the light a He is in the light*" (1 John 1:7). This is the way that Christians are to walk when they are crucified with Jesus.

The way that Jesus walked was in the pathway of righteousness. He avoided all the evil and darkness of the world, and made every effort to call others out of darkness. Why? Because Jesus knew that sin and darkness belong to the devil. Therefore, after Jesus announced Himself as the light of the world, He said, "*He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life*" (John 8:12).

The apostle Paul reminded the Ephesian Christians, "*For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light*" (Eph. 5:8). Thus, from the moment a godly woman adorns her heart for the Lord, she dedicates her life to following the Light. Her goal in life is to let her light shine before men so she can glorify her Father in heaven (Mt. 5:16).

C. Discuss what it means to crucify the flesh.

The word flesh is often used in the Bible to describe the sinful things practiced by the body. God gave to all certain natural appetites, but when such desires are abused, they become unlawful desires and thus, sins of the flesh. When John summed up all the evil aspects of the world, he wrote, "*For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world*" (1 John 2:16). When Paul defined the works of the flesh, he named such things as murder, adultery, hatred, and drunkenness (Gal. 5:19-21).

When Paul said he was crucified, he must have been teaching, among other things, that he had put to death the fleshly practices in his life. When one repents of sin and becomes a Christian today, he or she puts to death the fleshly practices. For there is no way to live for Jesus while following the lust of the flesh. "*For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you PUT TO DEATH the deeds of the body, you will live*" (Rom. 8:13).

Paul wrote in his letter to the Colossians that when they became Christians, they died, and their life became hidden with Christ in God. "*Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*" Why, Paul? "*Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience*" (Col. 3:5,6). Yes, they had walked in these things before conversion, but now, Paul tells them,

“you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him” (Col. 3:9,10).

Now, the temptation of the flesh may come to godly women, but they say no to them because they have crucified the flesh along with its sinful deeds.

When Paul wrote the Christians at Corinth, he compared their lives BEFORE and AFTER obeying Christ. *“And such were some of you, but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11).* The godly woman knows that she cannot follow the flesh and be faithful to Jesus. Therefore, she puts to death the flesh.

Quoting: *“If a man cannot be a Christian in the place where he is, he cannot be a Christian anywhere” —Henry Ward Beecher.*

“Christianity does not remove you from the world and its problems: it makes you fit to live in it, triumphantly and usefully” —Charles Templeton.

“Christianity is a battle, not a dream” —Wendell Phillips

A. Why can't Christianity be turned “On” and “Off?”

Christianity is a distinct way of life, and it is opposite to the sinful world. When we turn Christianity off in our lives, we begin living for the devil. There is not a middle ground. Jesus described only one of two ways that all humanity is following—either the narrow way leading to life, or the broad way leading to destruction (*Mt. 7:13,14*).

Some who have turned aside from Christ have repented and returned, but unfortunately, the majority never return. They harden their hearts to the point of no return, and it becomes impossible to renew them. These *“crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame” (Heb. 6:4-6).*

The godly woman is aware of this, and makes every effort to keep her heart adorned for God. For she recognizes the truth of Jesus' statement, *“He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad” (Mt. 12:30).* The moment that one turns from God, is the moment that the devil is there to take over. Therefore we must never, in the words of Paul, *“give place to the devil” (Eph. 4:27).*

B. How does Christianity help one live in this sinful world?

There have been those in all generations who have come to the conclusion that it is impossible to be a Christian and live around those who are not

Christians. Some have moved away from society, and made an effort to isolate themselves. However, they seem to forget that Jesus lived in a world steeped with sin, and even sat down to eat with sinners (*Mt. 9:11*). He did not do this to partake of their evil ways, but to be a physician to them. There is a difference in being OF the world, and IN the world. Jesus wrote to one of the seven churches of Asia and praised them for their faithfulness. He said, *"I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name..."* (*Rev. 2:13*).

When Jesus left His disciples behind to return to His Father, He sent them out to a sinful world. *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"* (*Mk. 16:15*). He didn't tell them to stay away from the whole world, but to go to the world with the saving gospel. In Christ's beautiful prayer for His disciples, He prayed, *"As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world....I do not pray that You would take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world"* (*John 17:15,16,18*).

This is the kind of attitude that helps the godly woman live in a sinful world, but still dedicates and adorns her heart to the Lord. Her daily task is to be LESS like the world, and MORE like Jesus, for she realizes that if she loves the world and the things of the world, the love of the Father would not be in her (*1 John 2:15*). She believes the words of James, *"Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God"* (*Jas. 4:4*).

C. Discuss from the last quote, page 121, the difference between a battle and a dream.

Even though we must live in a world that surrounds us with sin, we are not to sit back without a fight. It is so easy to sit back and dream of Satan and all sin being defeated, but this will fail. God's word teaches that there is a battle to be fought! Paul commanded Timothy, *"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses"* (*1 Tim. 6:12*). This young man of faith had no time for dreaming to win battles, because he was too busy fighting.

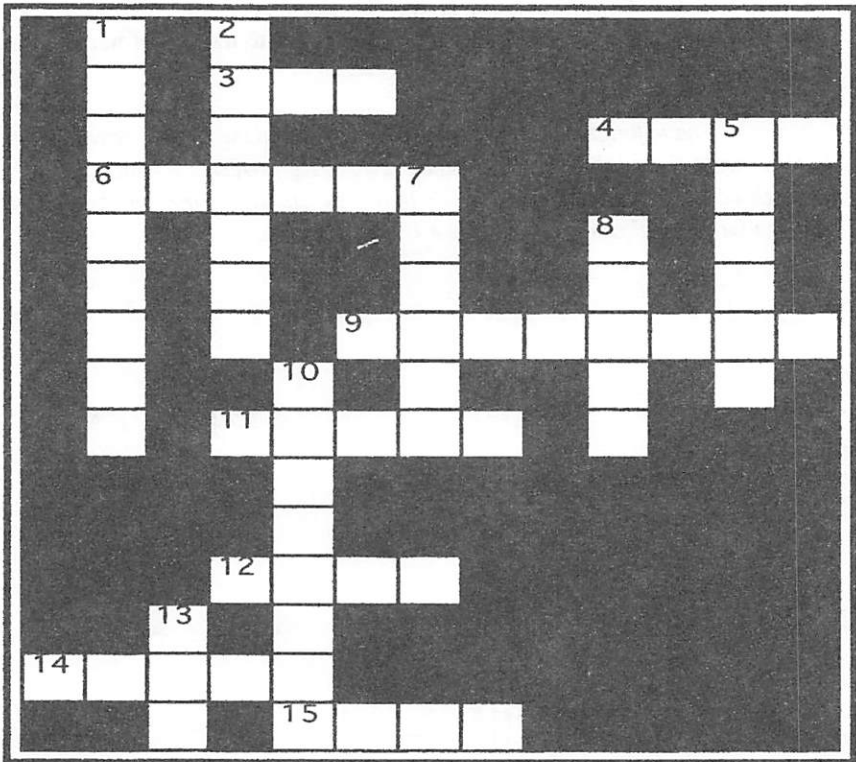
Paul called upon the Ephesian Christians to *"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil"* (*Eph. 6:11*). To win the fight, they needed a breastplate of righteousness, the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With these, along with prayer and being watchful to the end, Paul believed that they would win.

This same armor is used by godly women today. In fact, these same principles are used as she adorns her heart for God. She realizes that she must fight

daily against the devil and sin, and by engaging herself in battle, God will help her win. Yes, it is all right for her to dream of victory, but for her dreams to come true, she must fight the battle. Then when she comes to the end of her life, like Paul, God will give her the victory crown.

“ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing ” (2 Tim. 4:7,8).

A True Christian - Puzzle Eleven



ACROSS

- 3 The kind of man crucified (**Rom. 6:6**)
- 4 What Jesus said He would do (**John 12:32**)
- 6 What one must be willing to do as a Christian (**1 Pet. 4:16**)
- 9 Special places in Christ (**Eph. 2:6**)
- 11 An essential to please God (**Heb. 11:6**)
- 12 Something pure needed for growth (**1 Pet. 2:2**)
- 14 A salvation gift (**Titus 2:11**)
- 15 Something done for sinners (**Rom. 5:8**).

DOWN

- 1 Jesus is this among many brethren (**Rom. 8:29**)
- 2 Something Jesus will do before the Father (**Mt. 10:32**)
- 5 These will accompany Jesus (**2 Thes. 1:7**)
- 7 Essential for being converted (**Acts 3:19**)
- 8 Christians compared to what farmers use (**1 Cor. 3:9 NKJV**)
- 10 The way into Christ (**Gal. 3:27**)
- 13 The first of three things describing Jesus (**John 14:6**).

A Sincere Character

Lesson 12

Memory Verse: “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:7).

Expository Verses

Matt. 15:18 “But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart, [the inner person, emotions, and feelings, capable of love, sincerity, and faithfulness] and they defile [make unclean] a man.

Matt. 15:19 For out of the heart [the inner person, emotions, and feelings, capable of love, sincerity, and faithfulness] proceed [come forth] evil thoughts, [the source of all committed evils, Gen. 6:5; 8:21] murders, [the purposeful taking of human lives with malice] adulteries, [those who have or lust for an unlawful sexual relationship with the spouse of another] fornications, [sexual immorality] thefts, [stealing from others, motivated by covetousness, Mk. 7:22] false witness, [one who lies against another by giving false testimony, by concealing the truth] blasphemies [injurious speech, especially against God].

Matt. 15:20 These are the things which defile [make unclean] a man: [Mark adds: covetousness, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, an evil eye, pride, foolishness, Mk. 7:22] but to eat with unwashed hands [as the Pharisees teach] defiles not a man.”

A. Character “One’s moral strength.” — Webster. What does this definition suggest?

Since we as human beings are made of two parts, the outward and the inward—body and spirit, each has its own strength. The world often admires those with a strong healthy body. This is certainly a blessing, but there is something that is more beautiful to God.

When Samuel was selecting a king from the sons of Jesse, he thought Eliab was the one because of his physical appearance, but God refused this man. “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at the height of

his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart' " (1 Sam. 16:7).

Therefore, one's character represents strength from within, and a heart that is morally strong and pure. How many times have we judged someone by their outward circumstance? Have you ever met someone who was not too physically attractive, and came up with the wrong impression about them? Then later when you got to know them, they became beautiful? What happened? Later on you were able to see the beautiful character of that person.

How do we meet the inner person of a stranger? We do so by observing the way they talk and the way they live. It takes only moments to physically meet someone, but it takes much longer to know them. When we are introduced, we often respond, "It is good to know you." But how can we know them when we have just met them? To know them we must listen to what comes out of their mouth and heart. We must see the reflection of what they think about. They may hide what is inside for a time, but not for long! For what one thinks about will show what she (he) is.

This must be what Peter had in mind for godly women when he wrote, "*Do not let your beauty be that outward adorning of arranging the hair, of wearing gold, or of putting on fine apparel; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God*" (1 Pet. 3:3,4). This is the kind of moral strength that every godly woman seeks.

B. Discuss the inner person as to good and evil.

Unfortunately, the same heart that is capable of thinking good can also think evil, and the majority of the world use their hearts for evil. This has been so since the early years of the human race. Why did God destroy the whole human race, except for eight souls, in Noah's day? The answer is summed up in these words. "*Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually*" (Gen. 6:5). They evidently refused the preaching of righteousness by Noah, because they were too busy thinking and practicing evil things.

One of the things going for the godly woman is that her heart is adorned for God. This means that she makes every effort to keep evil out of her heart. Yes, evil things pop into her mind from time to time, but she runs them out. Her goal is to think on things that are pure and good.

C. Can we determine the kind of character that we have?

What is the source of all our sins? Well, the devil is the father of sin, but on a personal level, our sins begin in our hearts. When Jesus mentioned the evil things that come out of the heart, he began with EVIL THOUGHTS (*Mt. 15:19*). Therefore, we are what we think about each day, and we can determine whether our character is good or evil by controlling our thoughts. Listen to Solomon's summation of man: "*For as he thinks in his heart, so is he*" (*Prov. 23:7*).

When many go wrong and dissipate their lives in sin, they make every effort to blame others. They point to their parents, early home life, and getting in the wrong crowd. Who would deny that these and other negative influence are harmful. However, each individual has a choice! One can respond to evil, and allow such things to invade his or her mind, or the choice can be made to think about good things. Certainly the battle against sin is more difficult in an evil environment, but many have won.

Most of us have known families where all grew up in the same evil influence, and all went wrong except one. What was the difference? The one chose thoughts of doing right while the others chose sin. Even the devil with all his power of darkness cannot force anyone to sin. His power is in tempting and making every effort to see that one is drawn away by his own desires and enticed (*Jas. 1:13,14*). But his success comes ONLY when we yield. Therefore, all have a choice between God and the devil. "*Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded*" (*Jas. 4:8*).

The godly woman has made her choice. She has chosen to keep evil from her heart, and to fill it with the many good and righteous things pertaining to God. For she knows that the fuller her heart is with God's will, the less room there will be for thoughts of evil. This will certainly mould and shape her character for God, as her inward person is adorned with righteousness.

Quoting: "Character is what you are in the dark" —D. Moody

"Let us not say, Every man is the architect of his own fortune: but let us say, Every man is the architect of his own character". —George Boardman

A. Does true character rise above all circumstances?

The answer to this question is yes, because it has been done by many in all generations of time. In the Old Testament, Joseph was different from his brothers, and they did everything imaginable to make him bitter and full of hate. However, after all the pain they had brought into his life, what was his attitude? He said to his brothers, "*do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves be-*

cause you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life" (Gen. 45:5). Joseph could have allowed the evil circumstances to make him BITTER, but he chose rather to become BETTER.

The perfect example of true character rising above all circumstances is found in Jesus. The events of what happened to Him before the cross and while He was on the cross, are more cruel than we can imagine. The evil and depraved side of the human race was culminated in this event. There was hatred, jealousy, unkindness, physical abuse, pain, and mockery. But the more they placed Jesus through persecution, the brighter His character showed itself pure. What was in His heart during all this torture and pain? There was love and forgiveness! Listen to His words on the cross. "*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Lk. 23:34).*

Thus, the godly woman knows that true character can rise above all other circumstances, and this motivates her to make every effort to live daily like Jesus. Her goal for building true character is found in the words of a song, "Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me."

B. Discuss how each person is the architect of her (his) own character.

God has made all of us as human beings, and has given us an eternal soul made in His image (*Gen. 1:26,27*). But God also created us with the ability to choose between right and wrong. Our minds can think and choose evil or they can think and choose good. When one's heart is determined to serve God, there are no circumstances in life that can prevent true character.

As we train our children and grandchildren, we must not just teach them the difference between what is right and wrong, but we must instill in them the desire to build a character that reflects good. They need to know that they are also responsible for the kind of life that they build. How do we teach them this kind of responsibility?

First of all, we must set before them a good role model, by letting them see true Christian character in our lives. This will then provide an opportunity to teach the principles of Jesus that is capable of building their character. Even though we must be stern and guide them, we must always look for opportunities to teach them personal responsibility. When all of these are combined, they will be able to develop their character for God.

Be assured that the godly woman can be very forcible in building true character in others. With her heart adorned for God, she is able to lead the way for others.

Phil. 4:8 Finally, brethren, [will give some final counsel] **whatever things are true**, [things that are true are associated with God and fully acceptable to Him] **whatever things are honest**, [noble, honorable, 2 Cor. 8:21] **whatever things are just**, [right between fellowmen] **whatever things are pure**, [chaste—God is pure and loves a pure heart, Mt. 5:8: Jas. 3:17: cf. 1 Tim. 5:2: 1 John 3:3] **whatever things are lovely**, [Greek: *prospheles*—dear to anyone—love has this characteristic, 1 Cor. 13] **whatever things are of good report**, [admirable by even those outside of Christ—principles as courtesy, kindness, obedience to parents, and purity between brothers and sisters, cf. Col. 4:5: Heb. 11:2] **if there is any virtue**, [anything excellent or virtuous, 2 Pet. 1:3,4] **and if there is any praise**, [anything praiseworthy] **think**: [meditate] **on these things** [meditate to the point of practicing them, Jas. 4:17].

A. Are we what we think about?

Yes, we are what we think about more than we can possibly realize. In fact, our thoughts reflect our daily interests. When Paul was known as Saul of Tarsus the persecutor, he thought Christians were a threat to the religion of his fathers, therefore he persecuted them. The Jews of Jesus' day thought daily about their hatred of Jesus, and they had him crucified. The man or woman who daily thinks about lust, will seek an opportunity to commit adultery. Why did Jesus condemn hatred and lust in one's heart? Because this is the source of all murder and adultery! (*Mt. 5:22,28,43,44*).

But there is a positive side to being what one thinks about, and this is fully shown in the life of a godly woman. Because she thinks about God and spiritual things, her worship and life to Him reflect the beauty of holiness. She follows the command of the Psalmist: "*Give unto the Lord the glory due to His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness*" (*Ps. 29:2*). This can be done ONLY because she thinks about things above.

Paul taught those who had been raised with Christ (Christians) to seek those things which are above. How were they to do this? He instructs, "*Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth*" (*Col. 3:2*). Thus, the godly woman knows that the things of this earth are nothing more than perishing treasures, and she seeks treasures from above that are secure (*Mt. 6:19,20*). Her thoughts are important in keeping her life properly focused on God and eternal rewards.

B. Discuss the six virtues in *Phil. 4:8*, as to building a good character.

Paul begins his list of virtues with, whatever things are TRUE. Life confronts us with two choices, things that are true and things that are false. When we choose to think about things that are true, we have chosen God, and refused the devil. God accepts only the things in life that are true. In fact, all of His promises both now and forever are true. We can place our full faith in Him, because the passing of time does not change them. God and His Son are the same today, yesterday, and forever (*Heb. 13:8*).

The godly woman knows that when she thinks about Jesus, His teachings, and promises, that she is thinking about the One who is true. Jesus spoke often in His ministry of His Father and all the spiritual things brought down from Him, as being true (*John 1:9; 3:33; 4:23; 5:32; 6:32; 8:14; 15:1*). Therefore, it is so important to think on things that are true.

Then Paul expresses the importance of thinking on things that are HONEST. You can be assured that the ones following the world do not think much about honesty, but the rule followed is, be dishonest if you can get by with it. When the Christian thinks about things that are honest, he or she is thinking about things that are noble, honorable, and pleasing to God.

It is at this point that the golden rule should be applied. We do not want others to be dishonest to us, therefore we should not be dishonest to them. Paul's goal for his life was *"providing honorable things not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men"* (*2 Cor. 8:21*). To the Roman Christians he wrote, *"Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men"* (*Rom. 12:17*).

The godly woman who has her heart adorned for God will also think about things that are JUST, and will make every effort to practice justice in her life. She will pay her bills, be fair to others, keep her promises, and live an honorable life for Jesus before others. She has learned from God's Book what is right and wrong, and makes every effort to live these principles in her dealings with others.

In Paul's list of things to think about, he also mentions things that are PURE. It would be impossible to fully think about God without thinking of purity, for God is pure and loves a pure heart. Jesus taught in the Beatitudes, *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"* (*Mt. 5:8*).

In the hope of being like Jesus when He returns, John taught Christians, *"And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure"* (*1 John 3:3*).

The world, that is influenced by sin, avoids thinking about purity. Their emphasis is on cursing, swearing, gossiping, telling filthy jokes, lying, cheating, and all kinds of lust. In fact, the sins of the flesh rule their lives. But it is different with those who live their lives for God. Their speech is clean, they strive to speak

only good things about others, they are honest, and work daily to keep lust from their thoughts and lives. This can be done only by thinking about pure things.

Paul continues the things worthy for thinking by including things that are LOVELY. While thinking on things lovely, one is allowing things that are acceptable to all. Things that are lovely represent a product of love. When Paul wrote about what love will do in *1 Corinthians 13*, he mentioned only things that are lovely. The opposite of this would be thinking about things that are hateful, ugly, and unacceptable to all.

Thus, the godly woman makes every effort to adorn her heart with things that are lovely. This is a beautiful picture both to God, and to all others who see her daily life.

Next, in Paul's list of things to think about, he mentions things that are of GOOD REPORT. Whether we like to think about it or not, all of us have our lives considered by others. Those who know us can give a report, should they be asked to do so. Their report can be either good or bad. Our goal as Christians should be to live and think only about reports that are good. Not only do we want this in our own lives, but we also seek it in the lives of others.

Always look for the good in others, such as courtesy, kindness, purity, and respect for others. When these are lived daily, they are worthy of a good report.

Paul concludes his list by saying, "*if there is anything praiseworthy, meditate on these things.*" It seems that Paul wants these things to be a part of their innermost thoughts, because he knew that if they thought seriously about these things, their lives would be forever changed. Thus, all godly men and women should daily meditate on things that are good, pleasing to God, and praiseworthy.

Example: The story of one of the great presidents of Harvard College, Charles William Eliot, is worth recalling. Born with a serious facial disfigurement, he discovered as a young man that nothing could be done about it, and he must go through life with this mark. It is related that when his mother brought to him that tragic truth, it was indeed the dark hour of his soul. His mother told him, My son, it is not possible for you to get rid of this handicap. We have consulted the best surgeons, and they say that nothing can be done. But it is possible for you, with God's help, to grow a mind and soul so big that people will forget to look at your face." —The Pulpit

A. Is it easy to accept the things that we cannot change?

We probably all know the answer to this question from our daily lives. Even though it may never be as severe as the above example, the principle is still

the same—it is difficult to accept the things that we cannot change. It is difficult because we want to be normal like others, and it hurts to feel that others are talking about us. We want to change things. As we get older, it is hard to accept that we are not as physically strong, do not have the same physical appearance, and do not feel well. These, and many other things that cannot be changed, represent a real challenge.

But what should be the attitude of the godly woman whose adornment is from within? She will feel the same physical disappointments and regrets as others. However, she can accept them more readily because of her spiritual attitude. Paul had found this right attitude when he wrote from prison, “*for I have learned in whatever state I am to be content*” (Phil. 4:11). How did Paul deal with getting old and losing his health? “*Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day*” (2 Cor. 4:16).

No, it is not easy to accept the things that we cannot change, but it is easier to those who trust God and do not lean on their own understanding (Prov. 3:5). The godly women know that whatever may happen to their earthly tents or fleshly bodies, in the words of Paul, “*we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*” (2 Cor. 5:1).

B. Discuss how true character is the metal of one’s heart.

Since character is defined as one’s moral strength, true character represents who we are. This kind of character will keep us going and strong for God when the dark storms of temptation are raging around us. How could Jesus successfully meet the blows of the devil in the wilderness? How could He continue to say no to these same temptations throughout His ministry? The answer, His heart was true metal because of His godly character.

Certainly, we cannot reach the same perfection of character as Jesus, but this can be our daily goal. How do we develop such character? By training our hearts from the mighty principles of God’s word. When we study and make every effort to imitate the life and teaching of Jesus, we become morally strong, and develop true character.

Thus, the godly woman looks to God and His word for her shield and inward strength. She trains her heart to think right on God’s terms. Like Jesus, she will be put to the test, but with this kind of moral strength and God’s help, she will surely win.

Quoting: “What you are, thunders so that I cannot hear what you say to the contrary” —Ralph Waldo Emerson.

“You must look into people, as well as at them.”—Chesterfield

“Of all the properties which belong to honorable men, not one is so highly prized as that of character” —Henry Clay.

A. Can one fully hide his or her character?

Since character is developed inside the heart, at first thought, one might think that such is easy to hide. But this is not true, because character determines who we are. Some have tried to hide who they are with all kinds of words, but they fail. Even their words are reflections of their character. Another way of saying this is that our bodies put into action who we are in character.

Yes, a certain amount of hiding can be done, but not for long. About the time we are convinced that we are successfully hiding self, our true character is revealed. This is true because our hearts are calling the actions of our lives. This is why that God wants our hearts right with Him! God cannot accept a heart in rebellion that will not repent and turn to Him. James writes, “*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded*” (Jas. 4:8).

Just remember, when one is seeking to adorn himself or herself with godliness, there is not a need to hide one’s character. A Christian character is one of beauty to others, because such reflects the light of Jesus. “*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven*” (Mt. 5:16).

B. How does one seek to improve character?

Character, or moral strength, is the world’s greatest building project. It is a building process that is never finished until we die. All of you have either had a house built or passed one being built in your neighborhood. It begins by cleaning off the lot, leveling the ground, setting the forms with rough-in plumbing for foundation and floor. Then the walls, windows doors, and roof appear. Day by day, the house improves until it becomes a place for a family to live. But there is a sense in which the building of a house never ends. There is always improvements to be made.

Building character is like this! Why? Because we continue to build as long as we live. The question is, as we build, do we seek to improve? Before one can improve character, there must be a desire to do so. We would probably be surprised how many people do not care about improving their character. When such is present, you can be assured that there will be no improvement. However, the godly woman desires daily to improve her character for God.

Once the desire to improve is present, help will be sought from God.

This is done through daily requesting His help through prayer. God sees the heart, and is able to help us improve our character. The other important ingredient for improving character is to study and follow the principles of God's word. The Bible is God's hand book for building Christian character, and should be studied daily. What could build a character more beautifully than the things that Jesus taught in the sermon on the Mount? (*Mt. 5,6,7*). In this heart touching sermon, we find the principles necessary to get along with God in heaven, and our fellowmen on earth.

Thus, one of the goals of a godly woman is to continually build her character for God so that she continues to improve her spiritual life for God. This will make her more like Jesus NOW, so she can be like Him in the resurrection. *"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is"* (1 John 3:2).

C. Discuss the importance of character in marriage.

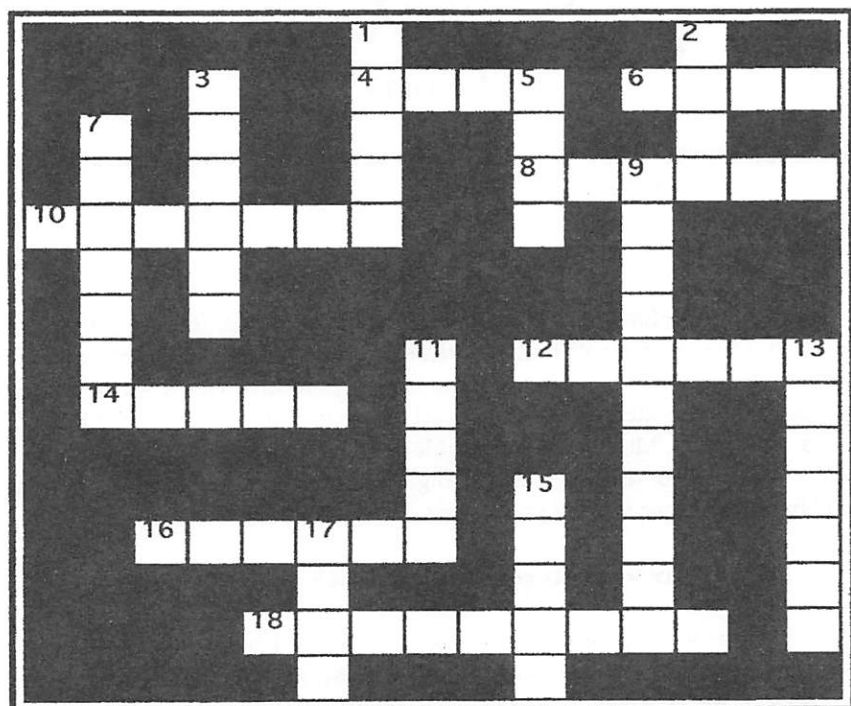
As you know, in marriage, a couple becomes one flesh (*Mt. 19:5*). This kind of arrangement brings two different people into a close relationship. Therefore, the way we think, the way we act, and our character as a whole has a tremendous impact upon each other. Unfortunately, many couples do not consider the importance of each other's character when they contemplate marriage.

It is true that it would be a rare thing to find a man and woman with identical characters, due to different backgrounds. But the goal should be to bring together a man and woman who have built Christian characters. Why? Because when one has a Christian character, built to do right and to please God, and the other one does not, there will be serious moral conflicts. Such difficulties will affect their worship, intimacy, moral conduct, children, and all other choices of their lives.

Surely, two people who are totally opposite in character would be one example of what Paul had in mind when he wrote, *"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?"* (2 Cor. 6:14).

The true godly woman knows that it is important for her to be one in character with her husband so that they are a team for the Lord. She knows also, that if his character is not strong for God that he will hinder her in her effort of daily building a Christian character. With this knowledge, she will make every effort to fall in love with a Christian man, and they will work daily to help each other build a strong, moral character for the Lord.

A Sincere Character- Puzzle Twelve



ACROSS

- 4 What God saw early in man's heart (Gen. 6:5)
- 6 Something that Christians can know to do (Jas. 4:17)
- 8 A way that love does not behave (1 Cor. 13:5 NKJV)
- 10 Something to be honorable (1 Pet. 2:12 NKJV)
- 12 That which God did for mankind (Ps. 139:13 NKJV)
- 14 When to remember God (Eccl. 12:1)
- 16 A special person of the heart (1 Pet. 3:4)
- 18 What is happening to our physical bodies? (2 Cor. 4:16 NKJV).

DOWN

- 1 The kind of purity that pleases God (Mt. 5:8)
- 2 Something important inside Christians (1 John 3:3)
- 3 Something pure from heaven (Jas. 3:17)
- 5 In whose sight honesty is practiced (2 Cor. 8:21)
- 7 Results of good works before God (1 Pet. 2:12)
- 9 How the inward part of the evil is described (Ps. 5:9 NKJV)
- 11 A responsibility to a child (Prov. 22:6)
- 13 How Paul felt toward God's law (Rom. 7:22)
- 15 Something for the world (Mt. 5:16)
- 17 A description of man's inward thought and heart (Ps. 64:6).

A Soul-Winner

Lesson 13

Memory Verse: *"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30)*

Expository Verses

James 1:21 Therefore lay aside [put away as filthy clothes, Isa. 64:6] all filthiness [all moral defilement] and superfluity [overflow] of wickedness, and receive with meekness [the only acceptable way to receive God's word] the engrafted [the implanted word in the heart as seed planted in the soil, Lk. 8:11] word, [God's will, Mt. 7:21] which is able to save your souls [because it is living and powerful, Heb. 4:12; it is the saving gospel, Rom. 1:16; 1 Pet. 1:23; thoroughly furnishes one with all good works, 2 Tim. 3:16,17].

A. Are we really convinced that souls are lost?

The reason for this question is based on the fact that so many who claim to be Christians show very little concern about the lost and dying world. Why is this? Is it because we have buried somewhere deeply in our hearts the false idea that the lost will be saved in their ignorance? Do we secretly promote the idea, just let them alone and they'll be saved?

These are questions that must be answered by each individual, but if such thinking is present, it is opposite to the teaching of God's word. Thus, before we will make the proper effort to seek and save the lost, we must believe that all are lost. Jesus summed up the condition of the whole world when He described two ways, one leading to life, and the other one leading to destruction. The way leading to life had only a few on it, but the broad way was crowded with many (Mt. 7:13,14). Jesus was fully convinced that many souls are lost, and we must believe the same.

B. Are we fully persuaded that the gospel saves?

The Bible reveals plainly that the world is lost without the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that God has no other way to forgive sins except through His Son.

When Jesus sent His apostles to the world to preach the gospel to every creature, He divided the world into two classes. Those who believe and are bap-

tized, and those who refuse to believe. Then He made plain the destiny of each class. The ones believing and being baptized would be saved, but the ones refusing to believe would be lost (*Mk. 16:15,16*). The rule of Jesus was, "for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (*John 8:24*).

Just think for a moment! If one sinner could have been saved without the death of Jesus, then all sinners could have been saved. Would God have suffered in giving His only begotten Son, and would Jesus have drunk the bitter cup of suffering, if doing so had not been absolutely essential? The blood of God's Son was and is the ONLY way to reverse the penalty of death (*Rom. 6:23*).

Therefore, the godly woman who has her heart adorned for God believes His word that all are lost without obeying the gospel of Jesus.

C. Harmonize how both the gospel and Christ save.

It is true that the Bible teaches that both the gospel and Jesus save (*Rom. 1:16; Mt. 1:21*). Is this a contradiction? Certainly not, because the two are entwined together as one. The word gospel means, "good news" or "glad tidings." But when the word is applied to salvation, what is the good news? The good news is that through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, a sinner can be saved. Therefore, should Jesus be removed from the gospel, there would be no gospel or good news.

When Paul wrote, "For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (*1 Cor. 2:2*), he was saying that he was determined to know only the gospel. This was why that wherever Paul traveled and preached, he had only one message—the gospel, and this gospel was always the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (*1 Cor. 15:3,4*). He even made the statement, "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!" (*1 Cor. 9:16*).

Therefore, the woman who is fully adorned inwardly for God, knows that when she shares the gospel, she is sharing Jesus. She also knows that this is the only way that she can lead others from the eternal death of sin to eternal life. Like Paul, she is not ashamed of the gospel, but believes in its power to bring the Savior to the lost. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (*Rom. 1:16*).

Quotes: "The cross is the only ladder high enough to touch Heaven's threshold"
—G.D. Boardman

"One life; a little gleam of time between two eternities—no second chance for us forever more" —Carlyle

"He that lives to live forever, never fears dying" —Penn

A. Discuss ways to convince those who are lost, the importance of the cross.

The above quotes emphasize the importance of the cross because it is the only way to reach and experience eternal life. Life on earth can be a wonderful experience, but only if one is preparing for eternal life. For those who refuse Jesus, the Savior, have chosen eternal death. Therefore, it is so important that we always seek ways to share this salvation with others.

Perhaps the best place to begin in convincing the lost of the importance of the cross is to show them that they are lost without it. There are any number of people who feel that things are right with their souls without a Savior. They conclude that since God is great, good, and all love, that He will take care of them. But what they must understand is that this great, good, and loving God has already made plans to take care of them. But if they refuse Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross, they have refused God's provision for salvation.

God will not provide another way other than His Son, because this is the only way, and represents the supreme sacrifice. "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*" (John 3:16). Therefore, they must be made to realize that when they refuse the cross, they refuse God, and choose to be lost. Only the cross is high enough to reach salvation in heaven. Jesus taught, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*" (John 14:6).

After convincing those who do not have Jesus that they are lost without the cross, it is important to remind them of the brevity and uncertainty of their lives. They need to realize that they are only one heartbeat away from death, and once they die physically, they are also dead spiritually forever. They must be convinced that it is either the cross NOW or punishment FOREVER! The only second chances are here on earth, and after one dies, all second chances are gone forever.

The rich man mentioned by Jesus who neglected Lazarus and lived only for the good things on earth, lifted up his eyes in Hades where he was tormented in flames. This man begged for a second chance for personal comfort, and even the chance to warn his brothers not to be lost, but there were no second chances to offer him (Lk. 16:19-31).

Finally, there is a need to convince those who are without Jesus, that they must live HERE for God before they can THERE with Him. There is no way that they can avoid facing physical death, but they can remove the sting from it through the cross. Paul asks these questions. "*O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?*" He answers, "*The sting of death is sin, and the strength of*

sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:55,56).

As the godly woman lives her life for Jesus, she takes every opportunity to show others by the way that she lives, and by the way that she teaches, that there is only one Savior. Her goal is to convince as many others as possible that the cross is also essential for their eternal salvation.

B. Why is the saving gospel of value, only during this life?

The Bible speaks of two major categories of life—during time, and when time shall be no more. In short, there is time and eternity. Eternity has always been, and will always be, because God is eternal. However, when He decided to create the heavens and the earth (*Gen. 1:1*), He made, as it were, a huge clock to measure a speck of eternity. But when God chooses to destroy the heavens, the earth and the works that are in it (*2 Pet. 3:10*), time will end, but eternity will continue on. Therefore, the only place that God chose to save sinners is during the existence of time. When time shall be no more, salvation will be offered no more!

God's word teaches that there will be no gospel preached after the Lord returns—only punishment to those who have not obeyed it. Observe Paul's description of this... "*when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thes. 1:7,8).* Thus, the saving gospel is accepted and obeyed NOW or NEVER!

Example: "I have now disposed of all my property to my family. There is one thing more I wish I could give them and that is faith in Jesus Christ. If they had that and I had not given them one shilling, they would have been rich; and if they had not that, and I had given them all the world, they would be poor indeed."

—Patrick Hemy's will.

A. Compare the concept mentioned in the above example to Mark 8:36.

The idea of honestly earning money and providing for the livelihood of self and family is certainly acceptable in God's word. However, the abuse of such, and giving it the number one priority of our lives, is condemned. The Bible approves money and material things as SERVANTS and not SLAVES!

Why is it so foolish to seek wealth instead of God? Because wealth limits itself to this life, and at death is left behind forever. Perhaps the best way to

compare earthly and heavenly wealth is to think of them as investments. Money is a temporary investment that is SURE to be lost, while heavenly treasure is a permanent investment that is SURE forever (*Mt. 6:19-21*). Therefore, from a business standpoint, the choice of money over heavenly treasures is a foolish investment, and does not make sense.

But let us learn also, that when money is loved, it not only takes first priority in our lives, but it is also associated with all kinds of things that are evil and sinful. Paul summed this up with these powerful words: *"But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition"* (*1 Tim. 6:9*). Does this sound like a wise investment?

How can money promote such evil and destruction? Paul continues, *"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows"* (*1 Tim. 6:10*).

In view of this, and other teaching from God's word on this subject, the godly woman fully understands Christ's question, *"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"* (*Mk. 8:36*).

B. How will recognizing the value of the soul make us more dedicated soul winners?

Perhaps this can be illustrated best by comparing soul winning to those who seek treasures. There are those who spend their lives seeking buried treasures beneath the ocean. In fact, they may spend many months and millions of dollars to obtain treasures from one buried ship. Why are they willing to do this? Because of the value of its treasure. Thus, the more valuable the treasure, the more time and money they are willing to spend.

The same is true in seeking souls. Because the soul has more value than all the earthly treasures of the world, soul winners are willing to make every effort to save only one. What was the one thing that motivated Jesus to go through rejection, ridicule, punishment, and even a shameful and cruel death? The answer, His love, and the love of His Father for lost souls! John writes, *"By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us..."* (*1 John 3:16*). *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life"* (*John 3:16*).

When Jesus taught the parables of the lost prodigal son, the lost sheep, and the lost coin (*Lk. 15*), He was teaching the importance of finding even one lost soul. Realizing this, the godly woman takes every opportunity, and makes every

effort to reach a soul that is lost in sin. It may be a loved one in her immediate family, a friend, or someone in a far away land whom she will never meet. But all of these have one thing in common to her—they have a precious eternal soul that needs salvation.

C. Discuss physical things that are left to children compared to salvation.

There is certainly nothing wrong in loving and providing for the physical needs of our families. Even though some children become childish and get involved in evil things over inheritances, this does not have to be this way. There are millions of others who are blessed by an inheritance of love from their parents.

But as important as physical inheritances may be, there is really no way to compare them to heavenly treasures. For one is temporary and passing, while the other is forever. One can bring pain and greed, while the other brings eternal happiness and joy. Therefore, even though the majority feel that an earthly inheritance is more profitable, they are sadly mistaken.

Have we not all known parents who seemed to be grieving because they could not leave their children an earthly fortune? And yet these same parents lived and taught Jesus daily in the lives of their family. What they are leaving them is of greater value than all the riches of the world. They are teaching them that it is more blessed to give than to receive (*Acts 20:35*). Winston Churchill is quoted as saying, "You make a LIVING by what you GET, and a LIFE by what you GIVE."

The godly mother gives her children the greatest gift of all when she sets before them a life of godliness. How could a price tag be placed on what Timothy's mother and grandmother, Eunice and Lois, gave him? They gave him a genuine faith (*2 Tim. 1:5*). This is a gift that far exceeds anything that money can buy. Solomon summed it all up in these words, "*A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favor rather than silver and gold*" (*Prov. 22:1*).

Acts 8:35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from the same Scripture, preached to him [the good news of] Jesus [showed that the prophet was speaking of some other man, Jesus, cf. Acts 18:28].

Acts 8:36 And as they went along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders [prevents] me from being baptized?" [one cannot completely preach Jesus without preaching baptism, because

He commanded baptism, Mt. 28:19,20; Mk. 16:15,16; John 3:3,5, and submitted to baptism Himself, Mt. 3:13-17].

Acts 8:37 And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may" [one cannot obey the command of Jesus to be baptized, Mk. 16:16, without believing Him to be the Christ; like this eunuch did, one must confess with his mouth, Rom. 10:9,10]. And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" [the principle of confessing Jesus is taught in other Scriptures, cf. Mt. 10:32,33; 16:13-19; Rom. 10:9,10; 1 John 2:23:4:15].

Acts 8:38 And he commanded [ordered] the chariot to stand still [stop]. And they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch; and he baptized him [since baptism was a burial, Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12, it was essential for both of them to get into the water; the Greek word for baptism means to immerse].

A. Can we teach Jesus today in the same way that Philip taught the eunuch?

The answer to this question is yes. In fact, there is no doubt that the Lord still wants this example imitated. When one teaches Jesus, it is very profitable to first lay a foundation from the Old Testament. Why? Because the Old Testament is Jesus, the Messiah, CONCEALED, and the New Testament is Jesus, the Messiah, REVEALED. When both of these are tied together, you learn of God's plan to send the Savior, and how His plan was fulfilled. Since the eunuch was reading from *Isaiah 53*, a chapter foretelling the coming of the Messiah, it became easy for Philip to teach him that Jesus was the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Even though the Old Testament has been fulfilled in bringing this Savior (*Gal. 3:24,25*), it is still of great value in laying the foundation to teach the lost about Jesus. As Paul moved from city to city preaching the gospel, his sermons first began with a history of Israel from the Old Testament, and how Israel came through this special nation (*Acts 13:15-41*). When Stephen, the first recorded Christian martyr, delivered his famous sermon that brought his death, he gave a beautiful summation of God's dealing with Israel that brought Jesus to earth (*Acts 7*).

Today, when the godly woman shares Jesus, she refers to the Old Testament to show that Jesus is the answer to God's plan for salvation in all ages. She knows that this is still God's method of bringing sinners to the Savior.

B. Why do many religions today reject the way to Jesus, as taught by Philip?

Over the centuries, religion has been divided into various faiths, even though the Bible says that there is "*one faith*," (*Eph. 4:5*). These various faiths have come from religious leaders of the past who taught a way different from the direct teaching of the Bible. As to salvation, the major division came between "faith only," and an "obedient faith." For fear that one might teach that salvation is by one's own works, the "faith only" teaching appeared. Therefore, this led them to teach that baptism is not a part of salvation, and that one is saved before baptism. Even though Jesus taught, "*He who believes and is baptized will be saved*," (*Mk. 16:16*), those teaching "faith only" deny that baptism is involved.

But the woman of God who has her heart fully adorned for God, believes that one can teach God's way of salvation without teaching that the sinner is earning salvation. She believes that when a believing sinner is commanded in the Bible to repent, to confess that Jesus is God's Son, and to be baptized, that they are meeting God's terms to receive the free gift of salvation (*Eph. 2:8*). She recognizes that it is the cleansing blood of Jesus that saves, but baptism is God's chosen way for sinners to get into Christ to receive His blood. Does this obedience keep one from being saved by faith? No! It keeps one from seeking salvation by "faith only."

"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (*Gal. 3:26,27*).

There is a difference between being saved by FAITH and FAITH ONLY! The Bible accepts being saved by FAITH (*Eph. 2:8*), but rejects FAITH ONLY as a dead faith (*Jas. 2:17*). Thus, the faith that pleases God is a "*faith working through love*" (*Gal. 5:6*).

Therefore, because of teaching and defending the doctrine of FAITH ONLY, many religions do not teach the way to Jesus as taught by Philip and the other New Testaments preachers and teachers of God's word.

Example: "I heard of an infidel who said that if he believed as Christians say they believe, that a man's life in the world to come depends upon his life here in this world, then he would give men no rest, urging them and entreating them to lead godly lives and to become men of faith that they might inherit eternal life. If this means much to us, then we must testify unto the world, and both by our lives and by our words persuade men to live godly lives, that they not only may get the most out of this life but also may inherit life eternal" —Macartney

A. Why are we not teaching the gospel more today?

There seems to be a temptation in most generations to back off from teaching the gospel to the lost. It is true that some generations of people are more

receptive than others. This can be due to prosperity, self-reliance, and the corruptive influence of sin. You will recall that God's people, Israel, often rebelled against God when they prospered and no longer felt the need for His guidance. This caused them to turn their lives over to sin.

But in spite of all these difficulties, does this give Christians the right to back away from teaching the gospel to the lost and dying world? Certainly not! On the contrary, this should make us want to try harder to reach those lost in sin. Just remember that God demonstrated His love, through Jesus dying on the cross, "*while we were still sinners*" (Rom. 5:8).

Another reason why many do not teach the gospel more today is because they are not fully convinced that the world is lost. Even though we may know that the Bible declares all to be lost without Jesus, we may be guilty of doubting. Somewhere in the back of our minds, may be the skepticism that maybe God will make an exception to His word. When we think this way, we do not know God. For when God reveals a truth in His word, this is the way it must be. All biblical history bears out this fact.

The final reason why we are not teaching the gospel more is because many leaders are not promoting it. Yes, we can take the initiative on our own, but this is not enough. The Lord also wants His church which is "*the pillar and ground of the truth*" (1 Tim. 3:15), to reach out to the lost with the saving message. When leaders get out front and make every effort to lead, there are both godly men and women who will follow. Be assured, this is what God wants all of us to do.

B. Can women today be like Priscilla? (Acts 18:26).

The above reference refers to the time that a certain Jew named Apollos needed more instruction in the way of the Lord. Therefore, Priscilla joined her husband, Aquila as "*they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.*" Yes, godly women can do (as Priscilla did) today. It is true that God's word does not place women in the same kind of leadership role as men, but He still has an important place for women. In their God-given way, these women, like Priscilla, have led many lost souls to Christ. In fact, some of the conversions attributed to men, really came from the influence and teaching of godly women.

When a man is sharing the gospel with another, who can better stand by his side than his wife to help him accomplish this important work? How thrilled Aquila must have been to have the faithful assistance of his wife. As long as women remain in their role from God, they become powerful workers in His church and kingdom.

C. Discuss some ways that women can help save souls.

It would be impossible to mention all the ways that women can help save souls. Certainly it all comes down to getting the saving gospel to the sinner, but there are so many different ways that this may be done. Perhaps these ways can be divided into two categories—direct and indirect approaches.

In the direct approach, a godly woman seeks opportunity to talk to someone about their soul. Once they find an interest, they set up times to study God's word with them. This personal study may also be incorporated with a correspondence course study. After each lesson, they meet to discuss the things learned in a particular lesson. These types of studies can be fully planned, or when such is not possible, every opportunity is used to teach over a cup of coffee, or during a phone conversations.

Some godly women teach directly by sharing the word with their families at every possible opportunity. With the young children, it may be reading them a Bible story and talking to them daily about Bible principles. As the children get older, she can participate in the family devotionals when it is possible to have them.

Many women can also share the gospel through teaching classes for children, and some are qualified to teach special ladies' classes. The older women are specifically instructed by Paul to *"admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed"* (Titus 2:3,4). So, the teaching of the godly woman can reach out with the gospel to the unsaved, as well as help keep those who are Christians saved. Thus, the direct method includes any "one-on-one" type of sharing the gospel.

The godly woman is also given the opportunity to have an important part of indirectly teaching God's word. The indirect approach involves teaching the gospel by every possible influence. It could be her daily example lived for Jesus, through planting special thoughts in her various conversations, giving, mailing, or leaving a gospel tract, supporting her husband who may be a preacher, teacher, deacon, or elder, inviting others to worship, helping with reach-out benevolent programs, carrying food to new families, the needy, shut-ins, and those who are ill. She can be involved in the correspondence course program of the church, and all other programs of the church designed to influence souls for Jesus.

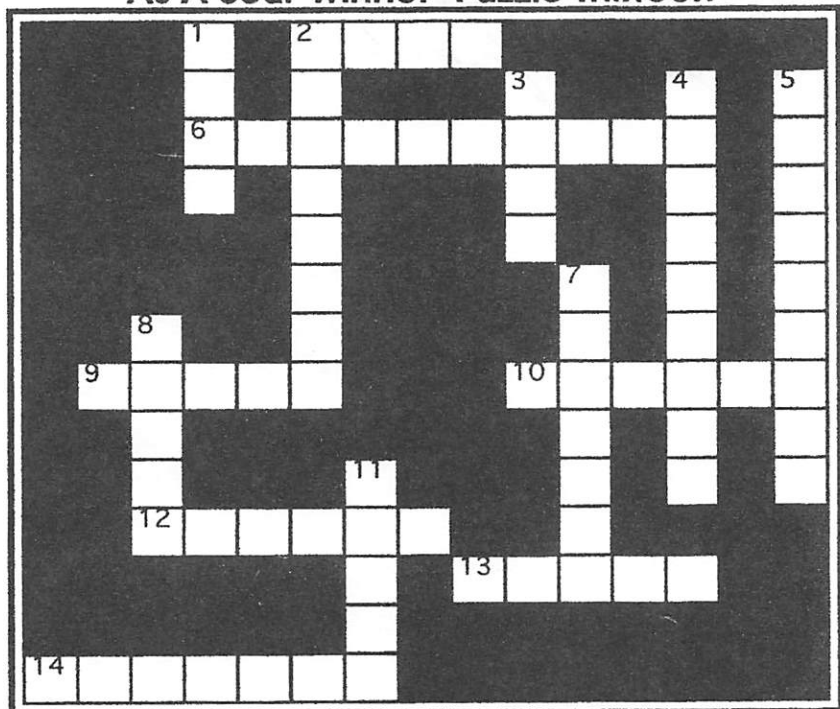
Many times, before someone will respond to teaching, we must attract their attention. The woman is excellent in helping promote various works to help influence the lost to want the gospel.

Only the Lord knows how many souls have been saved over the centuries through the teaching and influence of godly women whose hearts have been

adorned with righteousness. Therefore, the godly woman whose heart is sold on winning souls for Jesus is a great asset for the church.

May God help all women realize how important they are to the Lord, to His church, and to the God-given cause of spreading the gospel to souls throughout the world. And may she also realize that it was a woman who gave birth to the Savior, and that women can also help share Him and His saving gospel in all the world (*Mt. 28:19,20*).

As A Soul-Winner- Puzzle Thirteen



ACROSS

- 2 What one must do to enter the kingdom (**John 3:3**)
- 6 Something associated with remission of sins (**Lk. 24:47**)
- 9 The scope of the gospel (**Mk. 16:15**)
- 10 Into where one is baptized (**Gal. 3:27**)
- 12 What Paul communicated (**Gal. 2:2**)
- 13 A lady who worshiped God (**Acts 16:14**)
- 14 A man born at Alexandria (**Acts 18:24**).

DOWN

- 1 What Timothy was to preach (**2 Tim. 4:2**)
- 2 Linked with salvation (**Mk. 16:16**)
- 3 Something done to affect sin (**Acts 22:16**)
- 4 A word suggesting forgiveness (**Acts 2:38**)
- 5 A change associated with repentance (**Acts 3:19**)
- 7 A feeling not to have toward the gospel (**Rom. 1:16**)
- 8 A specified age group to love their husbands (**Titus 2:4**)
- 11 The person to whom Philip preached (**Acts 8:35**).

Mary Lynn Gorree
(Lynn's friend)

Feb. 27th

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