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Welcome to Life! Knowing God and the Truths of his Word

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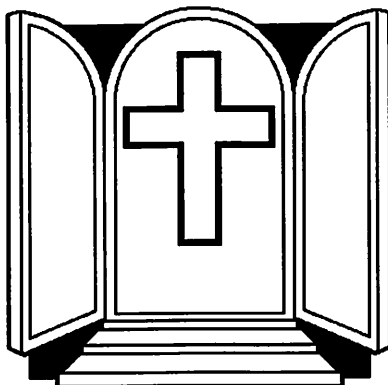
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WELCOME TO LIFE!

Knowing God And The Truths Of His Word



by Pastor James G. Witt III

March 17, 1995

Concordia Seminary
St. Louis, Missouri

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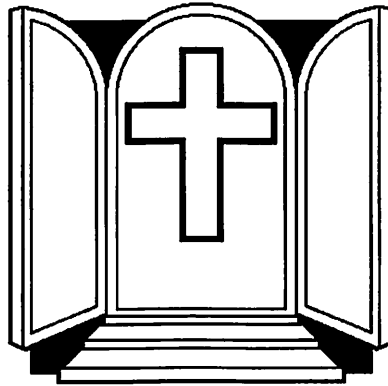
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WELCOME TO LIFE!

Introduction

Welcome To Life is a Bible Information class intended to be used as a Christian instruction course for those seeking to join or reenter the church and as a refresher course in Christian doctrine for members who wish to be renewed and strengthened in faith. The course was developed over a 15-year period to address a need for a clear, comprehensive, orthodox and practical study of the biblical Christian faith. **Welcome To Life** aims to present the major truths of God's Word in an informative and engaging manner so that learners will readily understand the Bible's life-giving teachings and apply these teachings to their lives.

Special Features and Emphases Of Welcome To Life

Welcome To Life has a number of features and emphases that make it an effective course in Christian doctrine and life. Among them are:

- 1) A strong focus on the Gospel message of salvation by grace through faith in Christ and the personal assurance of eternal life which this Good News provides.
- 2) A careful distinction between the Law and the Gospel which allows both chief doctrines of Holy Scripture to do their proper work and avoids such errors as work righteousness, moralism, placing conditions on the Gospel and turning the Gospel into a license for immorality.
- 3) A faithful commitment to uphold the full inspiration of the Bible as God's Word and the Bible's sole authority for all matters of spiritual faith and life.
- 4) A high regard for spiritual truth and the need for people to discern carefully between truth and error.
- 5) Direct, sensitive and sound answers to the personal, spiritual questions and issues that people are concerned about and/or need to know about (e.g., loved ones in the afterlife, suffering, the roles of men and women)

Course Design

Welcome To Life is designed to cover the Bible's main teachings in a logical, orderly manner. The course begins with a brief treatment of humanity's sin and God's saving grace and proceeds to a study of the natural and revealed knowledge of God (Lesson 1). The doctrines of God and His creative work (Lesson 2), sin and its consequences (Lesson 3) and the person and redeeming work of Jesus Christ (Lessons 4-5) follow. The Holy Spirit and His work of sanctification (Lesson 6) and the Sacraments of Baptism (Lesson 7) and Holy Communion (Lesson 8) come next to round out the treatment of God's salvation of sinners.

Important matters of Christian living and discipleship are the subjects of the remaining lessons. The course explores suffering, death and the last things (Lesson 9), God's holy will for us in the Commandments and prayer (Lessons 10-12), the Christian Church and its ministry (Lessons 13-14) and the roles of men and women and several key aspects to a disciple's life (Lesson 15).

Welcome To Life is written to be a one semester course with 15 weekly lessons that last 2 1/2 hours each. This results in a healthy 35 hours of instruction. This format provides enough time to ground people fairly well in the basics of Christianity. At the same time, the 15-lesson limit keeps the course short enough so that students are encouraged to complete the study.

Lesson Design

Each lesson has a similar format. An outline of the lesson appears at the start of each lesson. A reminder to review assignments from the previous lesson follows. The teaching notes with key points, Scripture passages and brief commentary come next and comprise the major portion of the lesson. The last part of the lesson is the Home Study section with a 15-statement, Agree-Disagree segment to review the truths of the lesson; a three-question personal reflection segment to help the members personally apply important lesson truths to their lives; a two-passage Bible memory segment to encourage the memorization of key Scripture verses; and a 7-chapter Bible reading segment to help class members become familiar with portions of the Bible that relate to each lesson or are important books of the Bible.

The lessons are designed to give class members both a sound, Scriptural foundation for their faith and a clear, concise understanding of the main teachings of God's Word. The lesson layout also allows for active member participation in reading, responding to and reviewing the lesson material. This helps the class members to integrate the truths of the Bible into their thoughts and lives.

Teaching The Course

While **Welcome To Life** can be taught in a variety of ways or even used as a self-study, I have found that a reading-lecture-guided discussion approach works extremely well with most of the classes I have taught. This approach works as follows.

After beginning the class with a prayer, the teacher uses the first part of the session to review the Home Study Agree-Disagree and Personal Reflection questions. The teacher presents the question and lets the class members answer. The teacher affirms, modifies or corrects the answer as needed and then may add a brief comment to reinforce the truth or truths reflected in the question. The teacher then asks for questions or comments on the Bible readings for the week. The teacher may also wish to lead the class in recitation of the memory passages. For the first session of **Welcome To Life**, the teacher can use the beginning of the lesson to have the class members introduce themselves and get acquainted with each other.

Following the opening review of the previous lesson, the teacher introduces the new lesson by referring to the outline. The teacher then presents the first half of the new lesson. Members who are willing are asked to read the Bible verses and the teacher uses the notes as a guide for a lecture on each part of the class. The teacher takes time after each section to invite comments and questions on the materials. Class members may also offer comments and ask questions as the material is being presented as long as they don't disrupt the flow of the presentation.

After the first 1 1/2 hours, the class takes a break. Class members may use restrooms and have a drink and snack. The break is a good time for informal visiting and building relationship ties.

When break is over, the teacher leads the class through the second half of the material. At the close of the class, the teacher assigns the Home Study material and ends the session with prayer. After the prayer, the teacher may wish to spend time with class members who have special needs or who have raised issues that need extra attention.

Analysis Of Others WELS Bible Information Classes

Welcome To Life has been used by a number of Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) pastors for a decade or more, although the course has not officially been published. The Wisconsin Synod has published a number of Bible information courses which are offered through the WELS publishing arm, Northwestern Publishing House. These courses are all orthodox and cover similar material. However, they have different approaches and features. A brief of analysis of each follows.

1) **By Grace Alone**

By Grace Alone was written by Rolfe Westendorf, a parish pastor at Siloah Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In this 1979 publication, Westendorf used Oswald Riess' popular **What Does The Bible Say?** course as the model for **By Grace Alone**. Westendorf's primary focus is on God's plan of salvation and the assurance of eternal life. In the first 10 of the 20 lessons, Westendorf addresses the subject of personal salvation (Do you know you have eternal life?) In the next 9 lessons, he treats the subject of personal sanctification (How do you live as one who has eternal life?) The closing lesson is a historical overview of the Old and New Testaments and church history. The True-False Review of each lesson is a strong and helpful feature of this course.

2) **The Wonders Of God**

The Wonders Of God was written by Paul Eickmann, professor of Hebrew at Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin. This 1983 publication is a revised edition of Eickmann's 1970 work entitled, **The Wonderful Works Of God**. Eickmann uses a concise, narrative style as he relates God's plan to save and sanctify sinful people. His strategy of letting God's Word present salvation history and communicate the major truths of the Christian faith is particularly effective. He generally follows the Apostles' Creed as the outline for Lessons 1-14 and treats the other five chief parts of the Catechism in the last six lessons. Eickmann's Appendixes on church history, the Small Catechism and Christian Questions are helpful additions. Eickmann's discussion questions for lesson review are limited in number, but generally useful. An appropriate hymn stanza as a closing prayer is a nice feature.

3) **New Life In Christ**

New Life In Christ was written by Forrest Bivens and David Vallesky. Both are professors at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin who developed much of the material for their course while serving as parish pastors. Their 1986 work addresses both the matters of instruction in basic Christian doctrine (Lessons 1-12) and Christian discipleship (Lessons 13-20). Special

lessons on Bible study and outreach make this class different from others, as do the 11 special appendices on subjects such as Bible translations, church history, church fellowship, the church year and spiritual gifts. The authors use a set of scripture references and a fill-in-the-blank outline to present the main material of each lesson. The approach involves class members in study of the Bible, but limits the amount of material that can be covered. The great strength of **New Life In Christ** is its extensive review exercises. Multiple choice questions, true-false questions, matching words with definitions study, fill-in-the-blank statements and fill-in-the-blank memory verses provide a multifaceted approach to reviewing and applying the truths of each lesson.

4) The Basics Of Christianity

The Basics Of Christianity was written by Robert Diener, the WELS campus pastor at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. Diener's 1987 work is the most recent of the Bible information courses published by Northwestern Publishing House. He uses an outline-Scripture passage-commentary format similar to **Welcome To Life**. Some interesting features of the 16-lesson class are several lessons on Old Testament places, people, priests and prophets; a lesson on the history of the church; and a one-line synopsis of each book of the Bible. Pastor Diener offers three practical review questions at the conclusion of each lesson.

The Rationale For Welcome To Life

Welcome To Life is another Bible information class intended for use in WELS ministries. In light of the quality offerings already available, what contribution can it make? When compared with the other courses, I believe that **Welcome To Life** offers these advantages:

- 1) **Welcome To Life** makes more extensive use of God's Word. It uses many more Bible passages than the other courses and strives to let God's Word instruct and influence the minds and hearts of the class members.
- 2) **Welcome To Life** goes into greater depth on many of the subjects than some of the other courses. This fuller treatment of doctrine helps the learners understand and appreciate God's truth and assists them in making personal application of that truth.
- 3) **Welcome To Life** addresses important subjects that other courses may not treat or only mention in passing. Subjects such as suffering, the roles of men and women, election to eternal life and church discipline are things God's people need to know to be strong in faith and service to their Lord.
- 4) **Welcome To Life** offers a more thorough review of the lessons than some of the other courses. The challenging reviews help the class members retain the message of God's Word and reflect on how to apply it to their lives. The review accomplishes important affective as well as cognitive goals for the learners.
- 5) **Welcome To Life** provides a wide variety of usages. The course can be used to acquaint people with the Christian faith, to renew people who have fallen away from it, to further strengthen and equip for service those who already are active Christian church members. It can effectively be used with large and small groups and as a guided self-study. Not all the other WELS courses have this flexibility.

CLOSING REMARKS

After completing the Welcome To Life! project and consulting with the Concordia Seminary professors who conducted my oral examination, I wish to comment on a number of matters regarding this work.

Welcome To Life!, with over 230 pages of text, is a lengthy work for a Bible information class. There are several important reasons for the extensive nature of the class. The complete printing of all the Bible passages is a great time saver for a class. The detailed notes allow for a more thorough treatment of the Bible doctrines and help students gain a deeper understanding of them. The notes also go beyond a basic presentation of truth in order address many of the personal concerns and questions people have about certain teachings. In addition the notes serve as a valuable reference for students to review lessons and to consult for help once the class is completed.

I have found that such a high content course has some definite strengths. It helps people develop a clearer understanding of Christian teaching than they otherwise might in a shorter course with sketchier notes. It also provides some interesting, meaty material for experienced Christians who take the class. The 37 1/2 hours of class time provide plenty of opportunities for wholesome relationship building and for thoughtful consideration of issues important to the class members.

The approach I've chosen does have its shortcomings. One weakness is that it appeals primarily to people who enjoy academic settings with its requirements for discipline, attentiveness, thoughtful reflection and literacy. While the course is intended to instruct people new to the Christian faith, it does delve into some topics that may be rather challenging for those inexperienced in Bible study.

I have been offering a version of Welcome To Life! in the congregation I serve for over eight years. I believe that I should continue to offer it twice as year as I presently do. Since I have revised the course extensively from its predecessors, I think that I can and should encourage past attendees to take the "new and improved" version for their spiritual maintenance and development. I can envision offering the course as a Sunday morning offering by teaching it in one-hour segments. A Sunday morning offering would allow me to reach people who could not commit to a weekday or weeknight class.

I have learned much by working on this project. While I have written a number of manuscripts for publication, this is by far the longest work I have produced. I learned how much patience, persistence and perspiration goes into a work of this scope. The writing, consultation and editing process has taught me to pay more

careful attention to the essential matters of brevity, clarity, simplicity and precision in communicating the truths of God's Word in written form. Most importantly, the work led me deeper into God's Word to think through the great matters of Christianity again with a special concern for the significant spiritual issues which people need to consider and receive God's answers. This was a most helpful exercise.

If I were to revise the work, I would likely add a brief section on applying the Bible's principles on fellowship in life situations. I would also consider adding a fill-in-the-blank paragraph summary review of each lesson. I would also consider including a section on post-Pentecost church history and on Lutheranism. In addition, I would consider deleting the appendix on the Antichrist.

Students who have taken the class in its pre-revision form have generally expressed appreciation for its content. Some have told me that it helped them gain a Christ-based certainty of eternal life. Others have said that it answered many of their personal questions about God and the Bible. Still others found it a valuable adult review of Christian doctrine which prepared them to communicate their faith better to those around them. I have relatively few drop-outs of the 300+ people who have enrolled for the class.

I intend to use Welcome To Life! in the congregation. I am also investigating publishing it and/or having it published for wider use. I believe that Welcome To Life! may well serve a useful purpose in developing Christians who are better grounded in the saving, sanctifying truths of God's Word.

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Welcome To Life!

Knowing God And The Truths Of His Word

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Welcome To Life!

Lesson 1

- Contents:
- I. Introduction
 - II. A Matter of Life and Death
 - III. The Sources of our Knowledge about God
 - IV. The Bible

I.. **Introduction:** Guidelines for this course.

- A. Come comfortable.
- B. Use your resources: The Bible, the notes, and other helps.
- C. Look to God's Word for spiritual truth. It is the only reliable guide and authority for faith and life in spiritual matters.
- D. Ask questions. It is impossible to ask a "dumb" question in this course. Your questions will help us all learn and grow.

John 8:31-32 - Jesus said, "If you hold to My teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

John 5:24 - "I tell you the truth, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."

- E. Come to be blessed. That's God's personal promise to you. Expect that God will lead you to know His soul freeing truth and have eternal life.

II. **A Matter of Life and Death**

- A. God tells us that our relationship with Him is an urgent and important matter of life and death.

Deuteronomy 30:19-20 - This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

John 17:3 - Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.

- 1. God tells us that true life is more than physical existence. He insists that life is being in a relationship with Him, knowing Him in a personal, intimate way through Jesus Christ.

2. This definition of life prompts us to ask some intriguing questions:
 - a. What is my relationship with God? Am I dead or alive?
 - b. Does it matter whether I'm dead or alive to God?
 - c. If I'm spiritually dead, what can be done about it? How can I become spiritually alive?

B. Sin has ruined our relationship with God.

Job 14:1-2, 14a - *"Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. He springs up like a flower and withers away; like a fleeting shadow, he does not endure. If a man dies, will he live again?"*

1. The troubles of life, the reality of death and the uncertainties of eternity lead us to recognize that things have gone wrong in the world and to wonder why.

Leviticus 19:2b - *'Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.*

Leviticus 18:4-5 - *You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the Lord your God. Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the Lord.*

2. God requires that people live a perfect life in order to have life with Him.

Ezekiel 18:4 - *For every living soul belongs to me, the father as well as the son--both alike belong to me. The soul who sins is the one who will die.*

Romans 3:10, 23 - *As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*

Isaiah 59:2a - *But your iniquities have separated you from your God.*

Romans 6:23a - *For the wages of sin is death.*

3. All people (including us) have failed to live a perfect life of loving obedience to God. Our sins have separated us from God and destroyed us spiritually. Because of our sins, we have lost life with God and must face His fierce wrath and eternal punishment.

C. In amazing love, God worked to restore us to life with Him.

Ephesians 3:4-5a - *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions.*

John 3:16 - *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

1. Out of His great love for undeserving, helpless sinners, God sent His Son, Jesus, to save us from eternal death and to regain eternal life for us.

2 Corinthians 5:21 - *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

2. Jesus came to be our Substitute before God. He came to give us His perfect keeping of God's commands. He came to take our sin and its punishment on Himself.

Romans 5:18b, 19b - *The result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. . . . Through the obedience of the one man (Jesus) the many will be made righteous.*

3. Jesus lived a holy life in our place.

Hebrews 7:27b - *He (Jesus) sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.*

1 John 2:2 - *He (Jesus) is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

1 John 1:7b - *The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

4. Jesus suffered and died in our place to pay the full penalty of our sins.

1 Corinthians 15:20a - *But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead.*

John 11:25 - *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;"*

5. Jesus rose from the dead and assured us that He has won eternal life for us.

D. God gives eternal life for us.

Acts 16:30-31a - *He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."*

Ephesians 2:8-9 - *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast.*

1. God gives eternal life to us as a free gift through believing in Jesus as our Savior from our sins.

Ezekiel 18:23, 32b - *Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live? . . . Repent and live!*

John 3:36 - *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."*

2. God lovingly invites us to receive His precious gift of eternal life in Christ. This is a gift we cannot afford to refuse.

III. The Two Sources of Our Knowledge About God

A. The two sources:

1. From ourselves; from our world.
2. From God Himself

B. Our natural knowledge of God

Psalm 19:1 - *The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands.*

Hebrews 3:4 - *For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.*

Romans 2:15 - *Since they (people with no contact with the Bible) show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.*

1. The miraculous way nature, the world, and the universe run show us a supreme being is in control.
2. Our reason and sense of right and wrong tell us there is a God and give us some information as to what God is like (e.g., that he is wise, powerful, good).

Psalm 14:1 - *The fool says in his heart: "There is no God."*

3. Only fools (atheists - who insist there is no God, and agnostics - who question whether God can be known) dare defy and deny the testimony of nature and their own reason and conscience.

Acts 17:24-27 - *"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And He is not served by human hands, as if He needed anything, because He Himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.*

4. God gives us a natural knowledge of Himself to lead us to seek Him in order to gain a right relationship with Him.
5. While our natural knowledge of God is a helpful witness to God's existence, it is not able to give us a saving knowledge of God. Sin has corrupted human thinking, distorted our view of God and bars the way to being saved. Without God's deliverance from this corruption, people ruin themselves under the power of sin.

Romans 1:18-32 *The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, {19} since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. {20} For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--His eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has*

been made, so that men are without excuse. {21} For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. {22} Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools {23} and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. {24} Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. {25} They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen. {26} Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. {27} In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. {28} Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, He gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. {29} They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, {30} slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; {31} they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. {32} Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

- a. People deny the truth about God they know from nature and are under God's wrath (Romans 1:18-20 above).
- b. People reject God's self-revelation in nature and tangle themselves in idolatry (Romans 1:21-23 above). Everyone really has a god, but ends up worshipping this self-made god rather than the true God (e.g., idols, money, self, power).
- c. God responds to rejection with judgment. He gives people up to what they are without the creator (Romans 1:24-32 above).

C. The revealed knowledge of God

1. God must give us a more complete knowledge of Himself if we are to truly know Him and gain eternal life.

Psalm 119:105 - Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

John 6:68 - Simon Peter answered Him: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

2 Timothy 3:15 - And how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

2. God has given us a fuller revelation of Himself in the Bible. The Bible, God's Word, is our reliable guide to a saving relationship with God.

IV. The Bible

A. The Bible is God's Word to people.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 - *And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.*

2 Peter 1:21 - *For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

2 Timothy 3:16a - *All Scripture is God-breathed.*

1. Although the Bible had human writers, it has a divine Author. It is a God-given, not a human-made book. God gave the writers every thought and word He wanted them to record. We call the process by which the Holy Spirit gave each word of the Bible to its writers "verbal inspiration."

John 10:35 - *The Scripture cannot be broken.*

John 17:17 - *Sanctify them by the truth, Your word is truth.*

Luke 24:44 - *Everything must be fulfilled that is written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.*

2. Every word of the Bible is absolutely true. The Scriptures are without error in any way. To find "mistakes" and "contradictions" in the Scriptures is not to allow the Bible to speak for itself.

2 Timothy 3:14-17 - *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

3. The Bible is also sufficient to teach us all we need to know to be saved, to grow in faith, and to be prepared to live our life in service to God.

John 7:17 - *If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether My teachings come from God or whether I speak on My own.*

Hebrews 4:12 - *For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

4. Some object and say: "Prove to me that the Bible is God's Word." While no one can do this, the Bible itself has the power to convince people that it is the true word of God. As people expose themselves to the Bible's

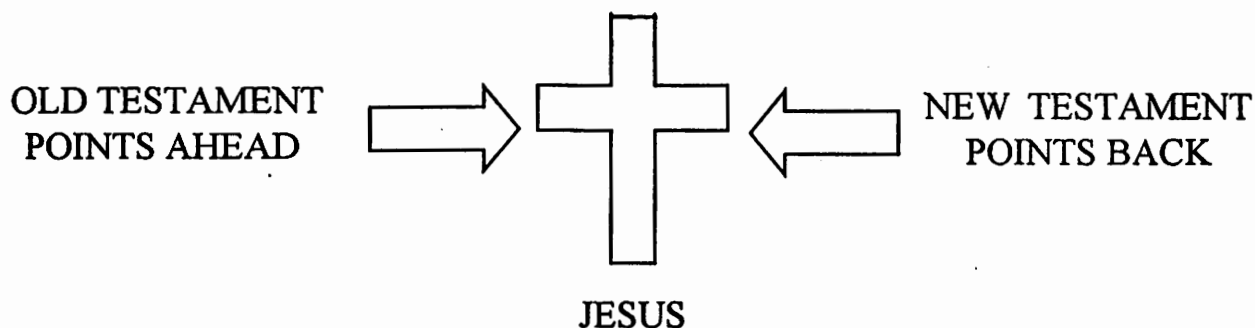
message, God works through that message to persuade them of its truth. God invites us to try the Bible for ourselves.

B. The contents of the Bible.

1. The Bible is made up of 66 books. It was written by about 40 men over a 1,500-year time period.
2. The Old Testament is made up of the first 39 books. It was written in Hebrew and Aramaic by Moses and the prophets from about 1,400 to 400 B.C.
3. The New Testament includes the final 27 books of the Bible. It was written in Greek by the evangelists (gospel writers) and the apostles from about 50 to 100 A.D.

John 20:31 - These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.

4. The central theme of the Bible is Jesus Christ and what He has done for us. Its purpose is to introduce us to Christ as the Savior and to give us eternal life. Martin Luther once said: "The entire Scripture is throughout nothing but Christ, God's and Mary's son, all has to do with this Son, that we might know Him."



C. Understanding the Bible

1. Two questions highlight the challenge:
 - a. If all Christian churches use the same Bible, why are there so many denominations with such different teachings?
 - b. How does a person really know what the Bible says? Who is to say that one person's understanding is better than another's?
2. Misusing the Bible

Revelation 22:18-19 - I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues

described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

- a. Some people sinfully tamper with the Scriptures, either adding to or subtracting from the Word of God.
 - 2 Peter 3:16 - *He (Paul) writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.*
 - 2 Corinthians 10:5 - *(We demolish arguments) and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*
- b. Some people incorrectly use their reason to distort Scripture. You must use your reason to understand the Bible, but you dare not let human reason sit in judgment over the Bible (e.g., historical-critical methodology).
 - 2. Peter 2:1-3 - *But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them - bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.*
- c. People who misuse Scripture do so for selfish reasons that bring great spiritual harm to themselves and those they influence.

- 3. Understanding the Bible properly. Basic principle: The Bible helps explain itself.
 - a. There are two "handles" the Bible gives for understanding God's Word properly: **LAW** and **GOSPEL**
 - b. These two major teachings of the Bible differ in five important ways:

<u>LAW</u>		<u>GOSPEL</u>
We	(Subject)	God
S(hows) O(ur) S(sin)	(Power)	S(hows) O(ur) S(avior)
Demands, Threats	(Form)	Promises, Assurances
Warns, Condemns, Kills	(Effects)	Saves, Gives life, Strengthens
Secure in Sin	(Application)	Alarmed by Sin

C. The Bible explains itself.

1. Take the Bible on its own terms. Accept the claims it makes for itself until it proves otherwise. Don't approach the Bible with a bias to distort its meaning.
2. Read it as you would any other piece of literature: respect the meaning of its words, its grammar and style.
3. Use clear, easily understood passages to help explain the unclear passages.
4. Note how the passages from Colossians and Ephesians below help us understand the term "image of God" from Genesis.

Genesis 1:27 - *So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

Colossians 3:10 - *and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

Ephesians 4:24 - *and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

D. Bible translations

1. We read a translated Bible. Some translations are: King James Version (KJV), New King James Version (NKJV), New International Version (NIV), God's Word.
2. We need translations because of limitations in learning Greek and Hebrew and because language changes.
 - a. Translation is difficult work. CHEZED, a Hebrew word is translated "loving kindness" by several English versions, but it really takes several sentences to explain its meaning.
 - b. Language changes constantly. Words are always changing in meaning (e.g., "printer," "gay"). Notice the word "prevent" and "precede" in the following passages.

1 Thessalonians 4:15 - *For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. (KJV)*

1 Thessalonians 4:15 - *According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. (NIV)*

3. We have a very accurate Hebrew and Greek text. It has been well preserved through the ages. Most translations are reliable, unless the text has been deliberately altered (e.g., Jehovah Witness's Bible, New World Translation).

V. **Conclusion**: To get the greatest benefit from these studies there are two things we strongly urge you to do:

1. WORSHIP God every week at a church service.
2. Take all 15 lessons of the class. The lessons build on each other. If you miss a lesson you can borrow a tape of the session. As you invest time to hear and study God's Word, God will develop and strengthen your relationship with Him. Don't let yourself be denied this blessing.

VI. **Home Study**

A. **LESSON REVIEW**: Mark each statement either A (Agree) or D (Disagree)

- _____ 1. According to the words of Jesus, I can be dead in my relationship with God, even though I am physically alive.
- _____ 2. The basic reason for all of the evils of life is sin.
- _____ 3. With their sins forgiven, Christians can expect to have a fairly trouble-free life on earth.
- _____ 4. God assures eternal life to all who admit their sins and trust in Christ for forgiveness.
- _____ 5. An intelligent person can reach eternal life with God just by relying on what he/she knows about God from inborn knowledge.
- _____ 6. A person who claims there is no God or that God cannot be known is lying to himself/herself.
- _____ 7. The Bible has no mistakes in it even though it was written by imperfect people.
- _____ 8. The main reason the Bible was written is to show us how to have eternal life with God.
- _____ 9. By logical reasoning we can convince most people that the Bible is true.

- _____ 10. Many people dismiss the Bible without ever reading it honestly or understanding its primary message.
- _____ 11. People who deliberately twist or misrepresent what the Bible really says are a great danger to themselves and to others.
- _____ 12. The two major teachings of the Bible are the Law and the Gospel.
- _____ 13. We can't be exactly sure what the Bible says because one person's understanding of the Bible might be different from another.
- _____ 14. A person may know the contents of the Bible well, but not truly know God.
- _____ 15. Even though we read translations of the original Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic texts, we can be confident that we are reading the actual Word of God.

B. PERSONAL REFLECTION (Answer the following questions)

- 1. What is your answer to the question: 'Are you spiritually dead or alive?'

- 2. What has been your greatest challenge in gaining a true, clear understanding of God and how He wants to relate with you?

- 3. What do you think are two important points to keep in mind as you read the Bible and reflect on its message?

C. MEMORY TREASURES (Memorize the following Bible verses to build up your knowledge of God's Word)

John 3:36 - *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."*

John 20:31 - *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.*

D. READING DURING THE WEEK

___ Day 1 - Psalm 1	___ Day 5 - Luke 2
___ Day 2 - Romans 1	___ Day 6 - Luke 3
___ Day 3 - Romans 2	___ Day 7 - Luke 4
___ Day 4 - Luke 1	

E. HYMN / PRAYER

Hymn 283: 1, 3 in Christian Worship; "Speak, O Savior; I Am Listening"

Speak, O Savior; I am list'ning, As a servant to his lord.
 Let me show respect and honor To your holy, precious Word,
 That each day, my whole life through, I may serve and follow you.
 Let your Word e'er be my pleasure And my heart's most precious treasure.

Lord, your words are waters living Where I quench my thirsty needs.
 Lord, your words are bread life-giving; On your words my spirit feeds.
 Lord, your words will be my light Through death's cold and dreary night;
 Yes, they are my sword prevailing And my cup of joy unfailing.

Welcome To Life!

Lesson 2

- Contents:
- I. Creeds
 - II. The Triune God
 - III. The Characteristics of God
 - IV. Confessing Our Faith In God
 - V. God's Work of Creation
 - VI. Creation And The Theory of Evolution
 - VII. The Creation Of Human Beings
 - VIII. God Preserves the Creation
 - IX. The Holy Angels

* Review the Home Study questions from Unit One.

I. Creeds - Statements of Faith

A. Throughout their history Christians have used statements of faith, we call "creeds." The word "creed" comes from the Latin word credo which means "I believe."

B. Early Bible Creeds

Deuteronomy 6:4 - *Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.*

1 Corinthians 12:3 - *"Jesus is Lord."*

C. Creeds serve a number of important purposes

1. Christians use creeds to identify themselves as believers and to confess the faith of their hearts.
2. Christians use creeds to instruct people in the teaching of the Bible and to defend people against error.
3. Christians use creeds to glorify God.

D. The Three Main Christian Creeds (see appendix A)

1. The Apostles' Creed
 - a. This creed was developed in Western Europe between A.D. 300-730.
 - b. It gives an excellent summary of the living facts and saving truths of Christianity as taught by the Apostles in the Bible.
2. The Nicene Creed

- a. This creed was produced by the Eastern Church at the Council of Nicea held in 325 A.D. with revisions to its final form at the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D.
 - b. It was used to defend the Church against Arianism (the false teaching that Jesus is not truly God, who is eternal and equal to God the Father).
3. The Athanasian Creed
- a. This creed was written in present day France during the 600s A.D., and gradually came to be used throughout the Christian Church.
 - b. It was not written by Athanasius (293-373 A.D.) but was named in his memory because he was a brave champion of the true faith.
 - c. It explains the Bible's teaching on the Trinity and the Person of Christ and stresses their essential-to-salvation nature.

II. The Triune God

Isaiah 45:5 - *I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from Me there is no God.*

1 Corinthians 8:4 - *So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one.*

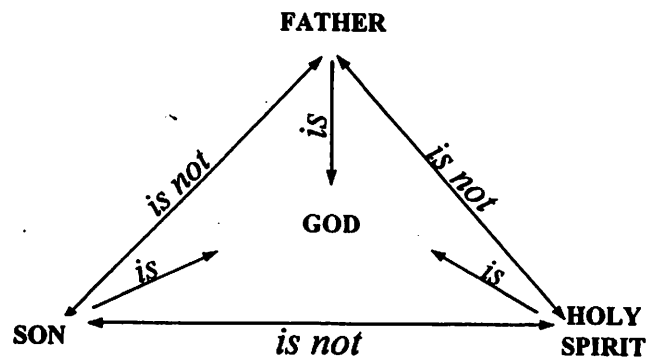
A. There is only one true God

Genesis 1:26 - *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea, . . ."*

Matthew 28:19 - *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*

2 Corinthians 13:14 - *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

B. The one true God reveals Himself as three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is the Triune ("Three in One") God or the Holy Trinity.



1. The triune nature of God is a mystery that we can't understand because of the limitations of our imperfect human minds. God must reveal this if we are to know it.

C. The persons of the Holy Trinity

Matthew 3:16-17 - *As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on Him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased."*

1. The three persons of the Trinity are distinct and can act separately from each other. (e.g. The Trinity at Jesus' anointing, also the incarnation of the Son, the Holy Spirit on Pentecost).
2. The persons of the Trinity cannot be divided, and they work in harmony with each other.
3. The Bible attributes special activities to each person. The three articles of the Apostles' Creed express this:
 - a. Article One: God the Father - Creator
 - b. Article Two: God the Son - Redeemer
 - c. Article Three: God the Holy Spirit - Sanctifier

III. The Characteristics Of God

- A. God has certain characteristics or attributes He reveals in the Bible to let us know what He is like.

John 4:24 - *God is spirit, and His worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.*

1. God is a spirit (a personal being without a body) and exists independently from anything else. He is invisible to the human eye.

Psalms 90:1-2 - *Lord, You have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or You brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting You are God.*

2. God is eternal. He always existed and always will exist. He is not bound by time.

Malachi 3:6 - *I the Lord do not change.*

3. God is unchanging. He is always the same.

Genesis 17:1 - *The Lord appeared to him (Abram) and said: "I am God Almighty."*

4. God is all-powerful. He can and will do whatever He pleases. Whether He makes a threat or a loving promise, He can and will fulfill it.

Jeremiah 23:24 - *"Can anyone hide in secret places so that I can not see him?" declares the Lord. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the Lord.*

5. God is present everywhere at the same time. This is a warning to those who sin and a comfort to those who seek Him.

Psalm 139:1-4 - *O Lord, You have searched me and You know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; You perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; You are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue You know it completely, O Lord.*

6. God knows everything. Our lives are an open book to Him. Nothing is hidden. He knows our secret sins and our sorrows, too.

Isaiah 45:19b - *"I, the Lord, speak the truth; I declare what is right."*

7. God is truthful. He always tells what is right. He never lies.

Isaiah 45:15a - *Truly You are a God who hides Himself.*

Isaiah 55:8 - *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the Lord.*

Romans 11:33 - *Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out!*

8. God is mysterious. He acts in ways that are often beyond our ability to discover, understand, or explain.

Isaiah 6:3 - *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory.*

9. God is holy, righteous, absolutely pure, without sin. Nothing evil can come before Him. A person must have his/her sins removed in order to be acceptable to Him.

Deuteronomy 32:4 - *He is the Rock, His works are perfect, and all His ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is He.*

10. God is fair and just. He is impartial, free of prejudice, always doing what is right.

2 Timothy 2:13 - *If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.*

11. God is also faithful. He is true to His perfect nature and word.

Exodus 34:14 - *Do not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.*

12. God is jealous. He is serious about His claim on our heart's love and allegiance. He will not put up with rivals or unfaithfulness.

Psalm 5:4-5 - *You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with You the wicked cannot dwell. The arrogant cannot stand in Your presence; You hate all who do wrong.*

Isaiah 13:11 - *I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless.*

13. God can be righteously angry. He hates sinners and will surely punish them for their sins unless they repent.

Nehemiah 9:31 - *But in Your great mercy You did not put an end to them or abandon them, for You are a gracious and merciful God.*

Exodus 34:6-7 - *The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin.*

14. God is gracious, merciful, and forgiving. God is loving and has great compassion for sinners. He is gracious, showing love to people who have forfeited every right to be loved. He is merciful, showing love to people who are helplessly and hopelessly trapped under the power and condemnation of sin. He is forgiving, fully and freely pardoning sinners for their offenses against His infinite majesty for Jesus' sake.

1 John 4:8-9 - *Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him.*

15. God is love. He doesn't just love, He is love. He loves us in spite of what we are (sinners, rebels) We best see His love in Jesus, His Son, whom He gave to deliver us from sin by taking our punishment.

IV. Confessing Our Faith In God

- A. "I believe" - The first words of the Apostles' Creed raise the matter of personal faith. These words remind us that a person cannot believe for someone else.

- B. "I believe"

James 2:19 - *You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that - and shudder.*

1. People can have a false belief in God. Such a faith is useless and will not save them.

John 6:40, 47 - *For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life.*

2. True or saving faith is depending entirely on God through Jesus to give eternal life.

C. "I believe in God the Father"

Malachi 2:10 - *Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our fathers by breaking faith with one another?*

1. God is "Father" to all people since He creates all life.

Galatians 3:26 - *You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus*

2. In the Creed we confess that God is the merciful Father of Christians (a result of His love for us in Jesus Christ).
3. Knowing God as our merciful Father by faith in Jesus, we enjoy His comforting love. If we claim God as our Father apart from faith in Christ we will find Him only a "consuming fire of wrath."
4. Most people in the world are still living as God's natural children who have severed the ties of a loving relationship and need to be reconciled to Him.

D. "I believe in God the Father almighty"

1. We wouldn't want to face an all-powerful God who is not our loving Father. His consuming wrath would crush us.
2. Christians confess God as almighty without terror because they know that because of Jesus Christ God puts away His anger and uses His power to help us.
3. Knowing God is almighty without trusting Jesus Christ leads to the fear-motivated religious philosophy that we must do something to appease God (worship, good works, sacrifice).

V. **God's Work Of Creation**

Genesis 1:1 - 2:3 - *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. {2} Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. {3} And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. {4} God saw that the light was good, and He separated the light from the darkness. {5} God called the light "day," and the darkness He called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning--the first day. {6} And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." {7} So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse*

from the water above it. And it was so. {8} God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning--the second day. {9} And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. {10} God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters He called "seas." And God saw that it was good. {11} Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. {12} The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. {13} And there was evening, and there was morning--the third day. {14} And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, {15} and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. {16} God made two great lights--the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. {17} God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, {18} to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. {19} And there was evening, and there was morning--the fourth day. {20} And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." {21} So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. {22} God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." {23} And there was evening, and there was morning--the fifth day. {24} And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. {25} God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. {26} Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." {27} So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. {28} God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." {29} Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. {30} And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground--everything that has the breath of life in it--I give every green plant for food." And it was so. {31} God saw all that He had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day. {2:1} Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. {2} By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all His work. {3} And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work of creating that He had done.

- A. God is the Creator. In the Creed we call Him the "Maker of Heaven and Earth." He is the source and origin of all that is. The opening chapters of the Bible record His creative work.
- B. God created everything: the world, the universe and all that is in them. He made all things out of nothing.
- C. God created by calling into existence all things out of nothing by His powerful Word.
- D. God created in a wise, orderly fashion.
 - 1. Day One: Matter, light, time
 - 2. Day Two: Sky (Atmosphere)
 - 3. Day Three: Separated land and waters, plants
 - 4. Day Four: Planets, stars, and other heavenly bodies
 - 5. Day Five: Fish, birds, and sea animals
 - 6. Day Six: Land animals, man and woman

Exodus 20:11 - *In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*

- E. God finished His work of creation in six normal 24-hour days.
 - 1. The days of creation were each bound by an "evening and morning."
 - 2. Moses' words in Exodus 20:11 (above) confirm the normal 24-hour length of these days.
- F. The age of the world and universe
 - 1. The world is more than the 6,000 years old some arrive at by adding up the incomplete genealogical records of the Bible.
 - 2. The world is far less than the millions and billions of years some advocate in support of the theory of evolution.
 - 3. We don't know the exact age of the world but the Bible and other reliable records of early civilizations and events indicate that about 10,000 - 12,000 years is a sufficient time frame to account for the history of the world.
- G. Does God create today?
 - 1. As far as we know, God does not specially create out of nothing as He did at the creation of the world.

2. God does create in a limited way through the development of already existing species according to the ability He gave the plants, animals and people to reproduce at creation.
3. The thoughts that God has created other worlds and may be creating them today is mere speculation. God has not chosen to reveal His other activities to us and we need not let speculation of other people and life outside our world disturb us. If God had thought it important, He would have told us.

Mark 13:19 - *Because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now - and never to be equaled again.*

John 17:24 - *"Father, I want those You have given Me to be with Me where I am, and to see My glory, the glory You have given Me because You loved Me before the creation of the world."*

- H. Jesus' acceptance of the creation accounts as true should leave us with no doubts about its truthfulness.

Hebrews 11:3 - *By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.*

- I. Although God gives us a natural knowledge of His creative work, acceptance of the Bible teachings of creation is a matter of faith. (As it is with all the Bible's teachings) God works faith in our hearts through the reliable testimony of His Word and the work of His Holy Spirit.

Psalm 95:2, 5, 6 - *2) Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song. 5) The sea is His, for He made it, and His hands formed the dry land. 6) Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.*

- J. God's creative work is a cause for us to worship Him as our great and gracious Maker.

God Tells Us Of The Creation So That We Know The Truth Of How Human Beings And All Other Things Were Brought Into Being And To Show Us Our Relationship With Him As His Special Creatures

VI. Creation And The Theory Of Evolution

- A. The popular theory of evolution conflicts with the Bible's teaching of God's creative work. In this section we examine this theory.

1. Evolution defined: "Evolution is the theory that all things have evolved from simple to higher forms in the course of billions of years, usually in accordance with natural laws now existing, from some primitive mass."
 - a. Atheistic evolution claims that the universe came about without the power of a supernatural being.
 - b. Theistic evolution claims that a supreme being aided in the process of the universe's evolution.

2. Evolution is a scientific theory (an "educated" guess) - not a law
 - a. Charles Darwin first postulated the modern theory of evolution in his book, Origin of Species, in 1859.
 - b. Evolutionists have no conclusive proof from science for their position.

3. The religious reason behind the promotion and acceptance of evolution
 - a. In their naturally sinful state, people are pleased with evolution because they have a need and desire to explain the origins of life, but do not want to be morally accountable to God as their Creator and Judge.

2 Peter 3:5-6 - But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and with water. By water also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed.

Romans 1:18-20 - The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - His eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.
 - b. By accepting evolution, a person deliberately denies the natural knowledge of creation and God that God has given.

4. Evolution is a troubled theory based on a number of highly improbable, scientifically questionable, debatable assumptions.
 - a. Evolution fails to explain the "ultimate cause" of everything, insisting that matter is eternal.
 - b. Evolution fails to explain how life and order could arise from non-life and chaos (Impersonal matter + Time + Chance = Personal Structured Universe)
 - c. Evolution fails to account for the fixity of species, the limits of procreation.
 - d. Evolution fails to explain how human reasoning, self-awareness, moral responsibility, and desire for immortality occur in man.
 - e. Evolution contradicts the scientific Second Law of Thermodynamics.

Evolution assumes progress and development. The Second Law of Thermodynamics demonstrates that things are moving toward less order.

5. Evolution like creation is also a matter of faith. What a tremendous faith it requires - insisting that a person reject God's testimony in nature and in His Word and accept a terribly flawed guess at how this world came to be.
6. The problem with theistic evolution: It is an unsatisfactory compromise. It disregards God's clear record of creation in Genesis 1 and 2. It is really unbelief masquerading with a religious front.
7. Evolutionary belief has produced destructive results in our world.
 - a. Its view that there is no divine creator who speaks absolute truth and requires a moral accountability has led many to ignore God and live immoral, lawless, selfish lives.
 - b. Its view that human beings are just soulless animals has led many to casually degrade, abuse and destroy themselves and others.

VII. The Creation Of Human Beings

Psalm 139:14, 17 - *I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well. 17) How precious to me are Your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!*

- A. The Bible teaches that human beings are the unique, special crown of God's creation. Humans are not animals or "fortunate accidents" of evolutionary process. They are marvelous, precious masterpieces of God's creative work.

Genesis 1:26-28 - *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them and said to them "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*

Genesis 2:7 - *And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.*

Genesis 2:20-22 - *So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, He took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man.*

1. God created humans after special consultation among the persons of the Godhead and through personal, deliberate effort on His part.
2. God made humans physically perfect and gave them a reasoning mind and immortal soul.
3. God gave humans the favored and responsible position as rulers and caretakers of the rest of creation.
4. God also made humans in His image. This was not a physical likeness, but a spiritual one.

Colossians 3:10 - (You) have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

- a. Humans had a perfect knowledge of God and intimacy with Him.

Ephesians 4:24 - "Put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

- b. Humans were righteous and holy (morally perfect).

5. People were created for immortality - an eternity of living in a joyful, intimate, harmonious relationship with God.

Acts 17:26 - From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

- B. All people on earth are descendants of Adam and Eve. We are all members of one human family.

VIII. God Preserves His Creation

Hebrews 1:3a - The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word.

- A. God preserves all things by the Word of His power. He takes an active interest in His creation.

Psalms 36:6b, 7a - O Lord, You preserve both man and beast. How priceless is Your unfailing love!

Psalms 145:15-16 - The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food at the proper time. You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

- B. God lovingly and unfailingly provides His creatures with all we need to live. He usually does this through natural means such as work.

Psalm 121:7 - *The Lord will keep you from all harm - He will watch over your life;*

Psalm 46:1 - *God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble.*

- C. God guards and protects His creatures from all evil.

Psalm 104:14 - *He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate - bringing forth food from the earth.*

Proverbs 12:11 - *He who works his land will have abundant food, but he who chases fantasies lacks judgment.*

Luke 13:10-13 - *On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, {11} and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. 12} When Jesus saw her, He called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." {13} Then He put His hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.*

- D. God usually preserves us by blessing the natural means of the operation of the created world and of human effort. However, God can make use of miracles to preserve us if He wishes.

Matthew 5:45 - *He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.*

Romans 9:16 - *It (God's blessing) does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy.*

Psalm 127:1 - *Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.*

- E. The reason God preserves us is entirely because of His mercy, not because of human effort or deserving. Without His gracious blessing, human effort is futile.

Psalm 103:1-5 - *Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases; He redeems my life from the pit and crowns me with love and compassion. He satisfies my desires with good things, so that my youth is renewed like the eagles.*

Deuteronomy 10:12 - *And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.*

- F. For all of God's goodness to us in preserving our lives, He wants us to remember His blessings, thank and praise Him, and to serve and obey Him with all our hearts for all our lives. We owe Him no less.

IX. The Holy Angels

Psalm 148:2, 5-6 - *Praise Him, all His angels, praise Him, all His heavenly hosts. 5) Let them praise the name of the Lord, for He commanded and they were created.*

6) *He set them in place for ever and ever; He gave a decree that will never pass away.*

Genesis 1:31 - *God saw all that He made, and it was very good.*

- A. God created the angels sometime during the six days of creation. He created them all holy and perfect to live to His praise.
- B. The Greek word for "angel" (angelos) means "messenger." The holy angels appear often in the Scriptures as God's messengers. They explain to people what God does to work out His plan of rescuing sinners. (e.g. The angels at Jesus' birth, resurrection, ascension.)

Revelation 5:11 - *Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand.*

Psalms 103:20 - *Praise the Lord, you His angels, you mighty ones who do His bidding, who obey His word.*

Hebrews 1:14 - *Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?*

Psalms 91:10-11 - *then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.*

Luke 16:22 - *The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side.*

- C. The holy angels are a large number of powerful, personal, invisible spirits in God's service. God uses them to carry out His will and to help believers. Angels protect God's people from dangers and carry their souls to heaven.

X. Home Study

- A. LESSON REVIEW: Mark each statement either A (Agree) or D (Disagree)

- _____ 1. Creeds are statements of belief which help Christians confess and defend their faith.
- _____ 2. The Athanasian Creed is probably the most well known of the three main Christian Creeds.
- _____ 3. The concept of a Triune God is relatively easy for us to understand.
- _____ 4. A person must believe the Bible's teaching on the Triune nature of God in order to be saved.
- _____ 5. A study of God's characteristics reveals that God is very much like us and other human beings.
- _____ 6. What God tells us about Himself is good to know, but is not very relevant for our everyday living.

- _____ 7. It is possible for a person to believe in God and still not go to heaven.
- _____ 8. The world is thousands, not billions, of years old.
- _____ 9. The Bible's teaching of creation and the theory of evolution are both things which require faith to be accepted.
- _____ 10. The theory of evolution is irrefutable since it is based on highly probable assumptions and clearly demonstrated scientific evidence.
- _____ 11. God may still create things in the way He did at the creation of our world, but we just don't know for sure.
- _____ 12. Human beings are the highest order of animal life on earth.
- _____ 13. I can ask God for a miracle to help me or someone else, but I can't demand one.
- _____ 14. I must praise and thank, serve and obey, sufficiently, so that He will keep providing for and protecting me and my loved ones.
- _____ 15. All Christians have guardian angels.

B. PERSONAL REFLECTION (Answer the following questions)

- 1. What thoughts come to your mind when you compare your characteristics with those of God?

- 2. What are some of the things you especially enjoy about the creation which God gave us to use and care for?

3. What difference does it make to you if you believe that you are the special "masterpiece" of God's creation or if you believe that you are the "accidental result" of impersonal, evolutionary forces?

C. MEMORY TREASURES (Memorize the following Bible verses to build up your knowledge of God's Word)

Isaiah 45:5a - *I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from Me there is no God.*

Psalm 139:14 - *I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*

D. READING DURING THE WEEK

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| ___ Day 1 - Genesis 1 | ___ Day 5 - Luke 6 |
| ___ Day 2 - Genesis 2 | ___ Day 6 - Luke 7 |
| ___ Day 3 - Psalm 104 | ___ Day 7 - Luke 8 |
| ___ Day 4 - Luke 5 | |

E. HYMN / PRAYER

Hymn 195: 1, 4 in Christian Worship; "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty"

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea.
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Welcome To Life!

Lesson 3

- Contents:
- I. The Evil Angels and Satan
 - II. Humanity's Fall into Sin
 - III. God's Grace for People
 - IV. God's Helpful Curses
 - V. What Sin Is
 - VI. The Consequences of Sin
 - VII. God's Loving Solution And Sincere Invitation
 - VIII. What To Do About Sin

* Review the Home Study questions from Lesson Two

I. The Evil Angels And Satan

2 Peter 2:4 - *For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment . . .*

A. Some of God's holy angels rebelled against Him and were condemned to hell. It is here that sin against God first appears in God's creation.

B. The Origin of Evil

1. The Bible does not fully explain how and why sin and evil began and entered God's perfect creation.

2. Human reason's attempts to explain the origin of evil beyond and apart from what God says in His Word lead to two very incorrect answers:

Job 34:10 - *"So listen to Me, you men of understanding. Far be it from God to do evil, from the Almighty to do wrong."*

a. Either God created and is responsible for evil. . .

Ephesians 5:16 - *. . . making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.*

b. Or evil doesn't really exist

3. We must deal with evil as a bitter present reality. However, God provides us with help and hope.

Revelation 12:9 - *The great dragon was hurled down - that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, who leads the whole world astray . He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.*

C. The leader of the evil angels is the devil or Satan.

1. The devil is a real, not an imaginary being. Although he has fallen from perfection and is thoroughly wicked, he is still a wise and powerful angel.
2. His names describe his nature.

Revelation 12:10b - *"The accuser of our brothers who accuses them before our God day and night has been hurled down."*

- a. The name "devil" means "slanderer, accuser."

1 Peter 5:8 - *Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

- b. The name "Satan" means "adversary, enemy."

John 8:44 - *You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

3. Satan is the deceiving, deadly enemy of all people who is constantly seeking to lead them to defy God, despair over their sins and join him in suffering the eternal torments of hell.

II. Humanity's Fall Into Sin

Genesis 2:16-17 - *And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."*

- A. God gave Adam and Eve one important command to keep. They were not to eat from the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. This was the line God drew between Himself as their Lord and Creator and man and woman as God's faithful, loving creatures.
- B. By obeying God's rule Adam and Eve could freely express their trust in and love for God. God did not make them robots. They had free will, the ability to choose to obey or disobey God in spiritual matters. (They would lose that ability after the fall into sin). By creating Adam and Eve this way, God showed His genuine love for people.

Genesis 3:1-7 - *Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'" {2} The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, {3} but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will*

die." {4} "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. {5} "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." {6} When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. {7} Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

C. Satan uses a masterful strategy to tempt people to sin

1. To begin, he casts doubt on God's Word (Genesis 3:1 - "Did God really say...?")
2. Then he contradicts God's Word (Genesis 3:4 - "God is a liar.")
3. Finally, Satan makes his own false promises (Genesis 3:5 - "God is withholding something from you. You can be like God.")
4. Notice his use of partial truths. The devil will tell the truth in so far as it suits his purposes.
5. Satan successfully uses this same strategy today on us.

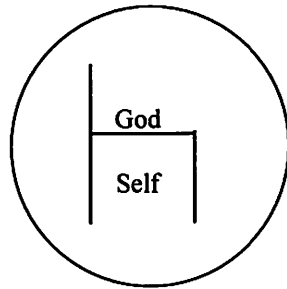
Ephesians 6:10-18 - *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. {11} Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. {12} For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. {13} Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. {14} Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, {15} and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. {16} In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. {17} Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. {18} And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*

6. The only way to resist Satan successfully is to depend on God and to hold to the saving truth of His Word.

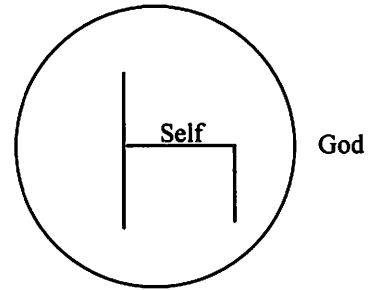
D. The knowledge of good and evil

1. Eve and Adam both ate of the fruit of the tree and immediately they died spiritually. (They also began to die physically.)

2. They gained the knowledge of good and evil as Satan promised, only their knowledge differed from God's. They actually committed sin and became evil. God knows evil without sinning and being corrupted.
- a. Their sin made them self-centered, rather than God-Centered in their thinking.



The human heart's natural condition before the fall into sin.



The human heart's natural condition since the fall into sin

- b. They now selfishly began to behave in ways they believe will serve selfish interests.
- E. Adam and Eve now experience shame over nakedness. God caused this so they could now reflect on themselves living apart from God. Their embarrassment is a reminder of human sin and guilt which separates from the Creator.
- F. The two major relationships of life collapse under the burden of sin.

Genesis 3:8-12 - *Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as He was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. {9} But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" {10} He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." {11} And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"*

1. A person's relationship to God collapses. Sinners think that God is bad for them and try to hide from and avoid God.

Genesis 3:12 - *The man said, "The woman you put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."*

2. A person's relationship to other people collapses. People now try to escape responsibility for their sin. They selfishly blame and burden others.

III. God's Grace For People - The First Gospel Promise

Genesis 3:14-15 - *So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, 'Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head and you will strike his heel.'"*

- A. God curses the snake, the creature Satan used in his deception.
- B. God curses Satan with the assurance that the woman's Seed would come to crush his power.
- C. God gives Adam and Eve the loving promise that an Offspring of the woman would come and defeat sin for them. This is the first announcement of the Gospel in the Bible. God speaks it just when people most need it and least deserve it.

Galatians 3:16 - *The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scriptures does not say, "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ.*

1 John 3:8 - *The devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.*

- D. That "seed" is Jesus Christ the Savior. God sent Him thousands of years later. Jesus did defeat and destroy the wicked plans of Satan to frustrate God's desire to have a living, loving relationship with people.

IV. **God's Helpful Curses**

- A. God pronounces painful curses on sinful humans, not to destroy them, but to help them.

Romans 8:20-22 - *For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.*

- B. God curses the created world. It suffers death and decay because of sin.

Genesis 3:16 - *To the woman He said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."*

- C. God curses woman.
 1. Bearing and rearing children is now painful, difficult work.
 2. A woman's relationship with her husband is marred with trouble and hurt.

Genesis 3:17-19 - *To Adam He said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plant of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."*

D. God curses man.

1. His work is burdened with strain, fatigue and frustration
2. His inescapable destiny is physical death.

Job 33:29-30 - *"God does all these things to a man - twice, even three times - to turn back his soul from the pit, that the light of life may shine on him.*

E. God places these curses on human life so that people will be led to look to God for help and pardon and to avoid the eternal tragedy of hell.

Genesis 3:22-24 - *And the Lord God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After He drove the man out, He placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.*

F. In an act of both love and judgement, God cast Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. He would not allow them to extend their lives indefinitely under the burden of sin in a tragedy-filled world.

V. What Sin Is

A. There are a number of popular, but wrong ideas about sin:

1. "People make mistakes. They make bad choices. They have weaknesses. But let's not call it 'sin'. That's for religious people who want to burden others with unnecessary guilt."
2. "Each person has his/her own moral code. I decide what's right or wrong for me. You do the same for yourself. Sin is when you go against what you think or feel is right for you."
3. "So what's the problem with a little sin? Nobody's perfect. God won't punish people for doing what's so natural and common."
4. "Sin is a matter of degrees. Doing 'little things' wrong isn't so bad, but 'big things' like murder, rape, child abuse are unacceptable."

Proverbs 14:12 - *There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.*

5. People can and do hold mistaken, dangerous views about sin.

B. God's holy demands

Leviticus 19:2 - *"Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.'"*

Leviticus 22:31 - *"Keep my commands and follow them. I am the Lord."*

1. God rightfully demands that all people live a perfect moral life according to the standards of His holy nature and will.

James 2:10 - *For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.*

Galatians 3:10 - *All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."*

2. God insists on 100% obedience to His will. Anything less than perfection is unacceptable to Him. Just one sin makes us guilty sinners and places us under His terrible curse.

C. God's definition of sin

1 John 5:17a - *All sin is wrongdoing.*

1. God defines sin as "doing what is wrong and contrary to His will." Every departure from God's will is a sin.

1 John 3:4 - *Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.*

2. Sin is also "breaking God's law." It is a criminal violation of the boundaries God rightfully sets for His creatures. It incurs severe penalties.

Psalm 78:37, 56 - *Their hearts were not loyal to Him, they were not faithful to His covenant. {56} But they put God to the test and rebelled against the Most High; they did not keep His statutes.*

3. Sin is also a "rebellious betrayal of God's love." It is inexcusable treachery and heartless defiance against the God who loves us freely, fully and faithfully.

Romans 3:10-12, 23 - *As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; {11} there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. {12} All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." {23} For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

- D. All people are sinners. We are all guilty of breaking God's laws and offending His holiness and love.

E. The root problem of sin

Genesis 6:5 - *The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.*

John 8:34 - *Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.*

Romans 8:7 - *The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.*

1. At its root, sin is not thinking, saying or doing wrong things. It is being in a wrong condition in the heart. We not only commit sins. We are sinners. At its primary level, sin is the condition that has totally corrupted our hearts so that they are now thoroughly evil and hostile to God from birth. It is a powerful slavery that controls us and makes us spiritual rebels against God and His will.

Romans 5:12 - *Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.*

Psalms 51:5 - *Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*

John 3:6a - *Flesh gives birth to flesh.*

Ephesians 2:3 - *All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts.*

2. This sinful condition of the heart is one which began when Adam and Eve sinned. It has been passed on from generation to generation. We inherited this condition from our parents and gave it to our children. We call this inherited or original sin.

Ezekiel 18:20a - *"The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son."*

- F. Although we inherit a sinful condition, our sins are our personal choice and responsibility. God doesn't punish a person for someone else's sins. He does punish people for their own.

James 1:14-15 - *But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

Matthew 15:19 - *For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.*

- G. A sin-corrupted heart produces actual sins in life. Inner evil desires lead to outward sins.

Matthew 5:28 - *But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

1 John 3:15 - *Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.*

H. Our evil thoughts are just as much sin as our evil deeds are.

Psalm 19:12 - *Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.*

I. Our sins can be unconscious and unintentional. Many of our sins are like that, yet they are still sins.

James 4:17 - *Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.*

J. Our sins can be neglect or failure to do the things God commands of us (sins of omission). These are just as wrong as doing things God forbids (sins of commission).

VI. The Consequences Of Sin

A. Sin is no small matter. Disobedience to God has severe, devastating consequences attached to it - some that are experienced during life on earth, others that are realized after this life.

Colossians 3:25 - *Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.*

Proverbs 12:21b - *"The wicked have their fill of trouble."*

Proverbs 13:15b - *"The way of the unfaithful is hard."*

Jeremiah 5:25 - *Your wrongdoings have kept these away; your sins have deprived you of good.*

B. Sin afflicts sinners with disturbing troubles and hardships during their lives and deprives them of the enjoyment of God's blessings.

Leviticus 26:16 - *"Then I will do this to you - I will bring upon you sudden terror, wasting diseases and fever that will destroy your sight and drain away your life. You will plant seed in vain, because your enemies will eat it."*

1. Sin results in fear and worry, sickness and loss.

James 4:1 - *What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?*

2. Sin damages and destroys our relationships with other people.

Isaiah 59:2 - *But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.*

- C. Sin destroys our relationship with God and cuts us off from His mercy and blessing.

Ezekiel 18:4 - *For every living soul belongs to me, the father as well as the son - both alike belong to me. The soul who sins is the one who will die.*

- D. Sin results in physical death.

Matthew 23:33b - *"How will you escape being condemned to hell?"*

Matthew 25:41 - *"Then He will say to those on His left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"*

- E. Ultimately, sin results in the after-death consequences of hell, the place where God unleashes the full force of His punishing wrath on the sinner forever.

1. Hell is the tragic choice people make when they do not forsake their sins and seek forgiveness for them.
2. A person's persistent rejection of God leads to God's permanent rejection of that person.

VII. God's Loving Solution And Sincere Invitation

Galatians 4:4-5 - *But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.*

1 Peter 3:18 - *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.*

1 John 2:2 - *He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

- A. God kept His promise to Adam and Eve and all their descendants. He sent His Son to take the place of guilty sinners and to offer His life as the full payment for their sins. His sacrifice pays for the sins of all and allows us to have a restored, forgiven relationship with God.

Acts 10:43 - *All the prophets testify about Him that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name."*

1 John 5:11-12 - *And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

- B. God assures us that all who believe in Jesus as their Savior receive the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Ezekiel 18:23, 30b-31 - *Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live? {30b} Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your*

downfall. {31} Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die?

Acts 3:19 - *Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.*

Isaiah 1:18 - *"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.*

- C. God earnestly calls sinners to honestly admit and renounce their wickedness and He also tenderly invites them to trust in Him for forgiveness.

VII. What To Do About Sin

- A. Learning what God tells us about sin leads us to consider the important question: "What should I do about my sin?"

1 John 1:8, 10 - *{8} If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. {10} If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.*

2 Corinthians 7:10b - *Worldly sorrow brings death.*

- B. Some do the wrong thing about their sin and its consequences.

1. They may ignore their sin.
2. They may deny their sin.
3. They may defend and excuse their sin.
4. They may blame others for their sin.
5. They may express only selfish sorrow over sin's painful consequences for them.

Jeremiah 17:9 - *The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?*

Romans 2:5 - *But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when His righteous judgment will be revealed.*

- C. People who do these things with their sin deceive themselves, add to their guilt, and prevent God's pardoning love from rescuing them from punishment. They shut the door to God's delivering help.

1 John 1:9 - *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

2 Corinthians 7:10 - *Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and has no regret.*

Psalms 51:1-4 - *Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love; according to Your great compassion blot out my transgressions. {2} Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. {3} For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. {4} Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are proved right when You speak and justified when You judge.*

- D. The right thing to do about sin is to confess it sincerely: recognizing it as wickedness, offensive to God, agreeing that God is right to condemn and punish us for it; and to appeal to God's grace and mercy in Christ to pardon us.

1 Kings 8:58 - *May He turn our hearts to Him, to walk in all His ways and to keep the commands, decrees and regulations He gave our fathers.*

- E. God Himself works true repentance in our hearts. May He lead us to genuinely repent of our sins.

VIII. Home Study

- A. LESSON REVIEW: Mark each statement either A (Agree) or D (Disagree)

- _____ 1. God created the devil and all the evil angels.
- _____ 2. As the Creator, God is ultimately responsible for evil coming into the world.
- _____ 3. Adam and Eve died spiritually the moment they sinned.
- _____ 4. We can blame the devil for making Adam and Eve sin.
- _____ 5. God places curses on life to torment and destroy us.
- _____ 6. Most people in the world are sinners.
- _____ 7. At its primary level sin is a matter of "being" rather than of "doing."
- _____ 8. Children are not sinful at birth, but become sinful as they grow up in a sinful world.
- _____ 9. God does not hold "unintentional" sins against a person.
- _____ 10. A person can sin by not doing things.

- _____ 11. Sin has only a few consequences for people during their earthly life.
- _____ 12. Only the most hardened and depraved sinners deserve to be damned eternally.
- _____ 13. People go to hell because they choose to.
- _____ 14. Jesus is God's strongest statement that He doesn't want us to go to hell.
- _____ 15. A person can be sorry he/she sinned and still not receive forgiveness.

B. PERSONAL REFLECTION (Answer the following questions)

- 1. Some Bible scholars have called Genesis 3 "the saddest chapter in the Bible." Why would they say that?

- 2. How is a proper understanding of sin related to a healthy appreciation of God?

- 3. What has God done to help us and all sinners?

C. MEMORY TREASURES (Memorize the following Bible verses to build up your knowledge of God's Word)

Romans 3:23 - *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

1 Peter 3:18 - *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.*

D. READING DURING THE WEEK

___ Day 1 - Genesis 3

___ Day 5 - Luke 10

___ Day 2 - Psalm 51

___ Day 6 - Luke 11

___ Day 3 - Romans 3

___ Day 7 - Luke 12

___ Day 4 - Luke 9

E. HYMN / PRAYER

Hymn 304: 5, 6 in Christian Worship; "Jesus Sinners Does Receive"

I, a sinner, come to you With a penitent confession.
 Savior, show me mercy, too; Grant for all my sins remission.
 Let these words my soul relieve - Jesus sinners does receive.

Oh, how blest it is to know, Were as scarlet my transgression,
 It shall be as white as snow By your blood and bitter passion,
 For these words I do believe - Jesus sinners does receive.

Welcome To Life!

Lesson 4

- Contents:
- I. God's Display of Love for Us in Jesus
 - II. The Person and Natures of Jesus
 - III. Jesus' Names and Titles
 - IV. God Promised A Savior
 - V. Jesus Lived and Served
 - VI. Jesus Suffered and Died
 - VII. What Jesus' Life and Death Mean for Us

* Review the Home Study questions from Lesson Three

I. God's Display Of Love For Us In Jesus

1 John 4:9-10 - *This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

- A. God showed His great love for us most powerfully and personally by sending Jesus, His Son, to make a sacrificial payment for our sins to gain eternal life for us.

Galatians 3:13 - *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."*

Ephesians 1:7 - *In Him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.*

- B. We call this work of Jesus: redemption. "To redeem" is to "ransom" or "to pay the price to set free from slavery." Jesus "redeemed" us from our self-chosen slavery to sin by offering His life and death to God as the payment.

II. The Person And Natures Of Jesus

- A. Jesus is the most amazing person who ever lived or ever will live. He is both God and Man in one person!

John 1:1, 14 - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. {14} The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

- B. In Jesus, the eternal Son of the Godhead took on a human nature and integrated it perfectly and inseparably with His divine person and nature.

Hebrews 1:3a - *The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being.*"

Colossians 2:9 - *For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.*

- C. Jesus is truly and fully God. He is 100% divine. All that God is is in Jesus. He has the qualities and honor of God and does the things God alone does.

1 Timothy 2:5 - *For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

Hebrews 2:14a - *Since the children have flesh and blood, He (Jesus) too shared in their humanity.*

- D. Jesus is truly and fully man. He is 100% human. He has the essential qualities of a human and does the things humans do.

- E. However, Jesus' human nature had some distinctive features:

2 Corinthians 5:21 - *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

1 Peter 2:22 - *"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."*

1. Jesus was sinless. He did not have inherited or original sin passed on to Him, and He never committed any sin.

Romans 8:3 - *For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so He condemned sin in sinful man.*

Hebrews 4:15 - *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin.*

2. Although Jesus was without sin, His human nature experienced the evil effects of sin which sinful humans are subject to. (e.g., Jesus could and did experience fatigue, grief, agony, injury and death.)

- F. The personal union of Jesus' two natures.

Romans 9:5 - *Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.*

1. The divine and human natures of Jesus are intimately united with each other in the one divine personality and operate in a profoundly wonderful way.
2. Each nature retains its own essential qualities and abilities, yet each nature can "credit" its qualities and abilities to the entire person of Jesus (e.g., Only the human nature can experience death, yet the person Jesus, who also has a divine nature, died.)

Daniel 7:13-14 - *"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence. He was given authority, glory*

and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

3. The divine nature of Jesus imparts and shares its glory and qualities with the human nature. Jesus' human nature is endowed with all that is divine. However, His human nature does not impart anything to the divine nature since the divine nature is perfect and can't be added to.

2 Corinthians 5:19 - *That God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.*

4. Both natures work in perfect harmony to accomplish the redeeming mission of Jesus.

G. Jesus had to be both God and man.

1. Jesus had to be truly human so He would be qualified to ransom sinful humanity.

Galatians 4:4-5 - *But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.*

- a. Jesus' humanity made it possible for Him to be under God's law. The law requires that a human fulfill its every demand.

Hebrews 2:14, 15, 17 - *Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil-- {15} and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. {17} For this reason He had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people.*

- b. Jesus' humanity made it possible for Him to pay the penalty of sin by suffering and dying as our substitute.

2. Jesus had to be truly God so that He would be able to pay a sufficient ransom for all people.

Psalms 49:7-8 - *No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him-- the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough.*

1 Peter 3:18-19 - *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, through whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison.*

1 John 1:7b - *The blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.*

- a. It was necessary for Jesus to be God so He could fully pay the price of our salvation. As God, Jesus could and did pay the infinite sacrifice our sins demanded.
 - b. Jesus' divinity made it possible for Him to overcome death and the devil for us.
3. If Jesus were not the God-Man, we would have no Savior.

III. Jesus' Names And Titles

- A. Jesus has a number of names and titles which describe who He is and what He does:

Matthew 1:21 - *She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.*

1. "Jesus" is the personal name of the Redeemer. It means "Savior" or "Helper."

Matthew 16:16 - *Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

2. "Christ" (Greek) or "Messiah" (Hebrew) is the official name of Jesus. It means "the Anointed" or "Chosen One" and is the title of Jesus' position as the God-chosen Redeemer. As the Christ, Jesus served in three special ways:

Luke 24:19 - *"About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people.*

Luke 4:18 - *"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed."*

- a. He is the Prophet who proclaimed the life-giving Word of God to people.

Hebrews 4:14 - *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.*

- b. He is the High Priest who made a sufficient sacrifice for people's sins and prays for them.

John 18:37a, 36a - *Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king... My kingdom is not of this world."*

- c. Jesus is the King who rules all things so that people may be saved and reach heaven.

- d. To declare faith in Jesus as "the Christ" is a confession of powerful truths, an admission that He is the One God sent to deliver us from sin.

John 5:25 - *I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.*

3. "Son of God" is a title which describes Jesus as true God.

Mark 8:31 - *He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and after three days rise again.*

4. "Son of Man" is a title Jesus frequently used for Himself. It is a term, taken from Daniel 7:13-14, which describes Jesus as true Man and as the Messiah.

John 1:38 - *Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are You staying?"*

5. "Rabbi" is the title which means "teacher" or "master" and describes Jesus as One qualified to explain God's Word.

IV. God Planned And Promised A Savior

GOD'S PLAN TO SAVE IN ETERNITY

Adam & Eve

Eden

|

Abraham

2000 BC

|

Judah

1800 BC

|

Moses

1450 BC

|

David

1000 BC

|

Isaiah

750 BC

|

Jeremiah - Malachi

600 - 400 BC



JESUS CHRIST

2 Timothy 1:9 - *God who has saved us and called us to a holy life--not because of anything we have done but because of His own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.*

- A. Already from eternity, God devised a plan to save a rebellious humanity from the destructive, damning consequences of their sin. Acting in pure love, God resolved to send Jesus to be the world's Savior.

Genesis 3:15 - *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."*

- B. God first revealed His plan to save sinners after Adam and Eve sinned. He promised to send an Offspring of the woman to win victory for people by crushing the devil's power.

Genesis 12:1-3 - *The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

Genesis 17:5-7 - *No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish My covenant as an everlasting covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.*

- C. God chose to pass the promise of the Savior on to Abraham and his descendants. He established a covenant of grace in which He freely obligated Himself to bless the people of the world.

Genesis 49:10 - *The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his.*

- D. God selected Judah to carry the promise and revealed that the Savior would rule as the mighty king.

Deuteronomy 18:15,18-19 - *{15} The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him. {18} I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put My words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. {19} If anyone does not listen to My words that the prophet speaks in My name, I Myself will call him to account.*

- E. God promised through Moses that the coming Savior would be the mighty prophet who would speak God's Word faithfully and with authority.

2 Samuel 7:11b-16 - {11b} *"The Lord declares to you that the Lord Himself will establish a house for you: {12} When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. {13} He is the one who will build a house for My Name, and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever. {14} I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. {15} But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. {16} Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before Me; your throne will be established forever."*

F. God repeated the promise of a Savior-King to David and his family.

Psalm 2:2-9 - {2} *The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against His Anointed One. {3} "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters." {4} The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. {5} Then He rebukes them in His anger and terrifies them in His wrath, saying, {6} "I have installed my King on Zion, My holy hill." {7} I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become Your Father. {8} Ask of Me, and I will make the nations Your inheritance, the ends of the earth Your possession. {9} You will rule them with an iron scepter; You will dash them to pieces like pottery."*

G. God inspired the psalmists to prophesy the coming of the Savior as the Messiah-King and Son of God.

Isaiah 7:14 - *Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a Son, and will call Him Immanuel.*

Isaiah 9:6-7 - *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over His kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.*

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 - *See, my servant will act wisely ; He will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. {14} Just as there were many who were appalled at Him -- His appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and His form marred beyond human likeness-- {15} so will He sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of Him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand. {53:1} Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? {2} He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him, nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him. {3} He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. {4} Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him, and afflicted. {5} But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the*

punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed. {6} We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to His own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. {7} He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth. {8} By oppression and judgment He was taken away. And who can speak of His descendants? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people He was stricken. {9} He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death, though He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth. {10} Yet it was the Lord's will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer, and though the Lord makes His life a guilt offering, He will see His offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in His hand. {11} After the suffering of His soul, He will see the light of life and be satisfied; by His knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and He will bear their iniquities. {12} Therefore I will give Him a portion among the great, and He will divide the spoils with the strong, because He poured out His life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

- H. God inspired Isaiah the prophet to reveal more fully the nature and work of the coming Savior. He revealed the Messiah as a virgin-born Son who is also the eternal God. He portrayed the Messiah as the special Servant of God who would suffer and die bitterly and successfully to pay for the sins of others.

Jeremiah 23:5-6 - "The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which He will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness.

Ezekiel 34:23-24 - I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the Lord have spoken.

Micah 5:2 - "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."

Zechariah 9:9 - Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Malachi 3:1 - "See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the Lord Almighty.

- I. God inspired the other prophets of the Old Testament to repeat and to reveal even more information about the Savior He would send, including His divine nature and His work as i) the earner of a righteous standing with God; ii) the loving, watchful shepherd; iii) the eternal ruler from Bethlehem; iv) the humble, delivering king; and v) the messenger of God's new covenant in which God agreed to deal with sinners in terms of pardoning grace.

Hebrews 1:1 - *In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways.*

Acts 10:43 - *All the prophets testify about Him that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name."*

- J. God spoke hundreds of prophecies about the coming Savior. He clearly and regularly repeated His promise to save people through faith in His Messiah.

VI. Jesus' Life And Ministry

1 John 4:14 - *And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world.*

- A. After thousands of years, God kept His promises and sent His Son to live on earth and be the Savior of sinners.

Philippians 2:5-8 - *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!*

- B. During His life on earth (from His conception to His burial), Jesus lived in the state of humiliation or humbleness. In this state, Jesus refrained from making constant use of the divine powers and majesty that He possessed also in His human nature. Although He always had these powers and glory, He used them only on occasion. He did this so that He could take the place of sinners under God's law and suffer and die for their sins.

Luke 1:26-35 - {26} *In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, {27} to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. {28} The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." {29} Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. {30} But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. {31} You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. {32} He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, {33} and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His kingdom will never end." {34} "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" {35} The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."*

Matthew 1:18-20 - *This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord*

appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit."

C. Jesus was conceived as a true human being by Mary, a virgin, through the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit.

1. Jesus had no "natural" human father. Joseph was His God-chosen "guardian" father.

Luke 1:46-47 - And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."

2. Jesus had a "sinless, holy" human nature, even though His mother was sinful. The Holy Spirit prevented Mary's sinfulness from corrupting Jesus' nature.

Luke 2:1-7 - {1} In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. {2} (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) {3} And everyone went to his own town to register. {4} So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. {5} He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. {6} While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, {7} and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped Him in cloths and placed Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

D. Jesus was born a human baby in lowliness and poverty in Bethlehem of Judea between 6 - 4 B.C.

1. We know the approximate year Jesus was born because of the historical references to governmental rulers and the census. We do not know the exact date of Jesus birth, but have chosen a day in Christian freedom to celebrate Jesus' birth (Christmas).

Hebrews 2:11 - Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.

Titus 2:11 - For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

2. At Christmas, we celebrate the Good News that Jesus became "like us to save us." He came into the world, sharing our humanity and bearing sin's curse, so that He might free us and take us to heaven's glory.

Luke 2:42, 46, 47, 52 - {42} When He was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. {46} After three days they found Him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. {47} Everyone who heard Him was amazed at His understanding and

His answers. {52} And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

- E. Jesus grew into manhood and prepared for His life's mission during quiet years in Nazareth. Other than His journey to the temple in Jerusalem at age twelve, we are told nothing about Jesus from His infancy until He was thirty.

Matthew 3:13-17 - Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. {14} But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" {15} Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. {16} As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on Him. {17} And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased."

- F. At the age of thirty, Jesus was baptized. By being baptized, He expressed His full identity with those He came to save and His willingness to be God's Servant-Savior. God the Father spoke His approval of Jesus and the Holy Spirit strengthened His human nature for His redeeming work at the start of His public ministry.

Matthew 4:1-11 {1} Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. {2} After fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry. {3} The tempter came to Him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." {4} Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" {5} Then the devil took Him to the holy city and had Him stand on the highest point of the temple. {6} "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "'He will command His angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" {7} Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" {8} Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. {9} "All this I will give You," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." {10} Jesus said to him, "Away from Me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'" {11} Then the devil left Him, and angels came and attended Him.

- G. Jesus was tempted by the devil in the wilderness. He battled the great enemy of God and people and won a great victory for us. He resisted the temptation to avoid the cross and remained obedient to the Father by relying on God's Word to sustain Him.

Mark 1:14-15 - After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

- H. Jesus began to preach God's Word. He announced the coming of God's gracious rule (the kingdom) and called people to receive it by repenting of their sins and believing the Good News of His saving work.

Mark 3:13-15 - *Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to Him those He wanted, and they came to Him. He appointed twelve--designating them apostles --that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons.*

- I. Jesus chose and taught twelve disciples. He trained them so they could proclaim the Good News and make disciples of others.

Acts 2:22 - *"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.*

Matthew 11:2-6 - *When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples to ask him, "Are You the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of Me."*

- J. Jesus performed many miracles during His ministry. The 36 recorded in the Bible reveal His power over the forces of nature, disease, demons and death. They demonstrated the divine truth of His message and identified Him as the Messiah.
- K. The three years of Jesus' public ministry can be generally described as a first year of quiet beginning, a second year of growing popularity when many followed Him, and a third year of mounting opposition when many refused His call to repent, believe and follow Him.

Matthew 17:1-5 - *{1} After six days Jesus took with Him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. {2} There He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. {3} Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. {4} Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters--one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." {5} While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!"*

- L. At the close of His ministry, Jesus was transfigured, or changed, into a brilliant appearance. His glory as the majestic Son of God, hidden under His humanity, was clearly revealed.

VII. Jesus' Suffering And Death

Matthew 16:21 - *From that time on Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief*

priests and teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

- A. Jesus announced that He would have to suffer, die and rise again to accomplish His mission to save sinners.

John 10:11 - "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

Matthew 26:39 - Going a little farther, He fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will."

- B. Jesus willingly chose to suffer and die.

Matthew 26:3-4 - Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and they plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill Him.

Acts 13:27-29 - The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning Him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have Him executed. When they had carried out all that was written about Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb.

Acts 2:23 - This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put Him to death by nailing Him to the cross.

- C. God used the wickedness and hatred of the Jewish leaders to serve His purposes. Jesus was arrested, falsely tried, unjustly condemned to death, crucified, and buried.

Mark 15:25, 33-34 - {25} It was the third hour when they crucified Him. {33} At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. {34} And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"--which means, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

John 19:28-30 - Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." {29} A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. {30} When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Hebrews 7:27b - He sacrificed for their sins once for all when He offered Himself.

- D. On the cross Jesus endured God-forsaken agony as He suffered the punishment of hell for everyone and made full payment for their sins.

Matthew 27:57-60 - As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away.

- E. Jesus' body was buried in a tomb near Golgatha by Joseph of Arimathea

VIII. What Jesus' Life And Death Mean For Us

Luke 19:10 - *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."*

- A. The whole purpose of Jesus' life and death was to save people, lost to God and His blessing because of their sin.

Matthew 3:15 - *Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness."*

Matthew 5:17 - *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.*

Hebrews 7:26 - *Such a high priest meets our need--one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.*

- B. Jesus' holy life of perfect obedience to God's law met God's demand that we keep His law perfectly. (We call this Jesus "active obedience" as He obeyed in our place.)

1 John 1:7 - *The blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.*

1 John 2:2 - *He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

- C. Jesus' sacrificial death satisfied God's just requirement that the penalty of our sin be fully paid. (We call this Jesus' "passive obedience" for us as He suffered in our place.)

John 3:16-18 - *"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because He has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.*

- D. Jesus is the Savior God lovingly sent to spare us from His condemnation and to save us for eternal life. God help us always trust and never despise this precious truth!

IX. Home Study

- A. LESSON REVIEW: Mark each statement either A (Agree) or D (Disagree)

_____ 1. God's greatest display of love for us was His creation of a beautiful world.

- _____ 2. "Redemption" is the name of Jesus' saving work.
- _____ 3. Jesus is fully God and fully human in one unique person.
- _____ 4. Since Jesus is God, He really couldn't be hurt or killed.
- _____ 5. "Jesus" is a fitting name for our Lord because it means "Savior."
- _____ 6. Jesus' title of "Christ" indicates that He is the One God chose to be the Savior.
- _____ 7. Before Jesus was born God gave little indication that He planned to save the world.
- _____ 8. When Jesus lived in the state of humiliation, He made no use of His divine powers.
- _____ 9. Jesus was conceived by a virgin without a human father.
- _____ 10. Jesus was born into a prominent Jewish family and was able to enjoy many of the luxuries of His time.
- _____ 11. Proclaiming God's kingdom and opposing the devil are activities that Jesus concentrated on during His public ministry.
- _____ 12. Jesus' many miracles identified Him as the Messiah and His message as God's true Word.
- _____ 13. Jesus had no choice but to suffer and die for us.
- _____ 14. "Love for our souls" is perhaps the best way to explain why Jesus lived and died.
- _____ 15. Jesus "active obedience" is His perfect keeping of God's commands for us.

B. PERSONAL REFLECTION (Answer the following questions)

1. What makes Jesus the most remarkable person who ever lived?

2. In your opinion, what aspect of or event from Jesus' life best shows His compassion for people?

3. What is your response to the truth that Jesus lived and died to redeem you?

C. MEMORY TREASURES (Memorize the following Bible verses to build up your knowledge of God's Word)

1 John 4:9 - *This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him.*

1 John 2:2 - *He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

D. READING DURING THE WEEK

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| ___ Day 1 - Isaiah 53 | ___ Day 5 - Luke 16 |
| ___ Day 2 - Luke 13 | ___ Day 6 - Luke 17 |
| ___ Day 3 - Luke 14 | ___ Day 7 - Luke 18 |
| ___ Day 4 - Luke 15 | |

E. HYMN / PRAYER

Hymn 393: 1, 2 in Christian Worship: "If Your Beloved Son, O God"

If your beloved Son, O God, Had not to earth descended
And in our mortal flesh and blood Had not sin's power ended,
Then this poor, wretched soul of mine In hell eternally would pine
Because of my transgressions.

But now I find sweet peace and rest; Despair no more reigns o'er me.
No more am I by sin oppressed, For Christ has borne sin for me.
Upon the cross for me he died, That, reconciled, I might abide
With you, my God, forever.

Welcome To Life!

Lesson 5

- Contents:
- I. Jesus Entered Into Glory
 - II. Jesus Rose From The Dead
 - III. Jesus Ascended To God's Right Hand
 - IV. Jesus' Work As The Glorified Christ
 - V. Words That Explain What Jesus Gained For Us
 - VI. The Blessings Of Jesus' Redeeming Work
 - VII. The Certainty Of Our Salvation

* Review the Home Study questions from Lesson 4

I. Jesus Entered Into Glory

Luke 24:26 - *Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?"*

1 Peter 3:18 - *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body, but made alive in the spirit.*

- A. Following His death and burial, Jesus entered the state of exaltation or glory. In this state, Jesus makes full and continual use of the divine powers and majesty that He possesses, also in His human nature. Jesus' exaltation began with His coming to life again and descent into hell and will continue forever.

1 Peter 3:18b-19 - *{18b} He (Christ) was put to death in the body, but made alive in the spirit, {19} in which also He went and preached to the spirits in prison.*

Colossians 2:15 - *And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*

- B. Sometime between His burial and appearances to people, Jesus came to life and descended into hell.
- 1. Jesus descended to announce openly His victory over Satan to the inhabitants of hell.
 - 2. Jesus did not descend to hell to suffer more punishment for the world's sins. Nor did He descend to preach the Gospel.

II. Jesus Rose From The Dead

1 Corinthians 15:4b - *He (Christ) was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

Acts 2:24,32 - {23} *But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. {32} God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.*

Matthew 28:1-10 - {1} *After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. {2} There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. {3} His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. {4} The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. {5} The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. {6} He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. {7} Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." {8} So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. {9} Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. {10} Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."*

- A. On the Sunday after His death and burial, Jesus rose from the dead and showed Himself alive to His followers.
- B. Jesus' resurrection from the dead is a great work of God and has great significance for our lives.

Romans 1:4 - *And who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.*

2 Corinthians 1:19-20 - *For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.*

1. Jesus' resurrection shows that He truly is the Son of God whose every word is true and deserving of our complete trust and acceptance.

Romans 4:25 - *He was delivered over to death because of our sins and was raised to life because of our justification.*

1 Corinthians 15:17 - *And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.*

2. Jesus' resurrection assures us that He has fully paid for our sins. By raising Jesus to life, God the Father demonstrated that He had accepted His Son's life and death as the complete ransom payment for all people.

Because of Jesus, God now declares us "innocent" of our sins against Him.

2 Timothy 1:10 - *But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

1 Corinthians 15:20-23 - *But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.*

John 14:19 - *Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.*

Job 19:25-27 - *I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes--I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*

3. Jesus' resurrection is our assurance that Jesus has defeated death's power and will raise to eternal life all who believe in Him as their Savior.

1 Corinthians 15:14 - *And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.*

- C. Jesus' resurrection is the heart of the Christian faith.

Acts 26:8 - *Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?*

Acts 17:32a - *When they heard about the resurrection from the dead, some of them sneered.*

- D. Sadly, many ignore and/or reject the reality and the significance of Jesus' resurrection. Such denials show how unbelief resists and refuses God's love and help for sinners destined for death and hell.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, 18 - *Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. {14} We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. {18} Therefore encourage each other with these words.*

- E. Jesus' resurrection and its guarantees of a resurrection to eternal life for believer gives great comfort and confidence during life and at death. Without the endless hope of the resurrection, life comes to a hopeless, bitter, empty end for people.

III. Jesus Ascended To God's Right Hand

Acts 1:3 - *After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.*

1 Corinthians 15:5-7 - *And that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,*

Luke 24:45-48 - *{45} Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. {46} He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, {47} and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. {48} You are witnesses of these things.*

Matthew 28:16 - 20 - *{16} Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. {17} When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. {18} Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. {19} Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, {20} and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Acts 1:8 - *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

- A. For a period of forty days after His resurrection, Jesus remained on earth to do several things.
1. He appeared numerous times (11 are recorded in the Bible) to His disciples to convince them that He had risen from the dead.
 2. He further instructed the disciples in God's Word so that they would more fully understand its blessed message and how He fulfilled its prophecies.
 3. He commissioned His believers to be witnesses of the Gospel and so make disciples for Christ throughout the world. It is each Christian's privilege to carry out this soul-saving mission.

Luke 24:50 - *When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them.*

Acts 1:9-11 - *After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same*

Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

- B. After finishing His work on earth, Jesus ascended into heaven. Angels explained this event to the watching disciples and assured them that Jesus would return on the Last Day.

Ephesians 1:20-21 - He (the Father) raised him (Christ) from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

Philippians 2:9 - Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

Ephesians 4:10 - He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.

Matthew 28:20b - And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

- C. Jesus now sits at the right hand of God the Father. This means that Jesus is the exalted Lord who has supreme honor and majesty and exercises absolute authority over all things everywhere. Although invisible to our eyes, Jesus is present with us to help us at all times.

IV. Jesus' Work As The Glorified Christ

- A. As the exalted Lord, Jesus carries out His work as the Christ for the blessing of His believers.

Ephesians 4:8, 11-12 - This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." {11} It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, {12} to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

- B. As our prophet, Jesus has His Word proclaimed through His believers. He commissions, equips and blesses them for the work of building and strengthening His Church.
1. We know that Jesus continues to make the life-giving Gospel available and that God's Church continues to grow.
 2. We also willingly serve our Lord to spread the Gospel.

Hebrews 7:24-25 - But because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

Hebrews 4:14-16 - *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

- C. As our high priest, Jesus prays ("intercedes") for us, especially asking that we be forgiven and accepted by God on the basis of Jesus' redeeming work. Jesus also hears our prayers and meets our needs.
1. We are confident that our sins are forgiven at all times.
 2. We rest assured that Jesus understands our needs, is willing to help us and will keep His promises to do so.

Ephesians 1:22-23 - *And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

John 14:2-3 - *In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.*

- D. As our king, Jesus rules with almighty power over all things for the benefit of His believers. He also prepares heaven for His believers and waits to come and take them to be with Him there forever.
1. We know that God guides every aspect of this world's history for our good.
 2. We look forward to a wonderful home in heaven with our Lord and our fellow believers.
- E. On the Last Day of this world's existence Jesus will return to judge all people. We will discuss this return to judge in greater detail in a special lesson (Lesson 9) later in this course.

V. Words That Explain What Jesus Gained For Us

- A. God uses a rich variety of words to explain the blessed significance of Jesus' life, death and resurrection for us. Some of these key Gospel words and their meanings follow.

2 Corinthians 5:21 - *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Jeremiah 23:6 - *In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness.*

B. Jesus gained righteousness for us.

1. "Righteousness" is the holy standing before God which Jesus earned by His perfect obedience to God's Law in our place.
2. Jesus provides for us the holiness, or perfect keeping, of God's Law which God requires of us, but which we cannot give Him ourselves.

Psalm 118:14 - *The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.*

Acts 4:12 - *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."*

C. Jesus gained salvation for us.

1. "Salvation" is rescue or deliverance from the power of our spiritual enemies and the divine punishment our sins deserve.
2. Jesus saves us from the spiritual disaster we deserve to have strike us and could not escape on our own.

Romans 3:25a - *God presented Him (Jesus) as a sacrifice of atonement through faith in His blood.*

1 John 2:2 - *He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

D. Jesus gained atonement for us.

1. "Atonement" is the satisfying of God's holy wrath over sin by means of Jesus' acceptable pleasing sacrifice of Himself.
2. Jesus stills God's anger over our sins and gains God's favor toward us.

2 Corinthians 5:19 - *That God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.*

Romans 5:10-11 - *For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

E. Jesus gained reconciliation for us.

1. "Reconciliation" is putting an end to hostilities and restoring the wicked enemies of God back to a friendly, loving relationship with Him.
2. Jesus makes us, God's bitter, resistant enemies, into His dear, privileged friends, all on His own apart from our deserving.

Acts 13:38 - *"Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.*

1 John 1:7 - *The blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin."*

F. Jesus gained forgiveness for us.

1. "Forgiveness" is freedom for the sinner from the guilt and penalty of his/her sins as a gift of God's love.
2. Jesus fully and freely releases us from the punishment our sins deserve.

Romans 8:33 - *Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.*

G. Jesus gained justification for us.

1. "Justification" is a legal term which means that God, like a judge, pronounces people to be "innocent" of their sins. It is the opposite of "condemnation."

Romans 3:23-24 - *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

Romans 5:18 - *Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.*

2. Because of Jesus, God declared all people in the world to be "not guilty" of sin.
3. This verdict of God is true and applies to everyone, whether he/she believes it or not.
4. Justification does not mean "to make just." It is a declaration of God for us because of Christ, not a work of God in us.

Romans 3:28 - *For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.*

5. A person receives the benefits of God's declaration as his/her own by God-given, Spirit-worked faith in Jesus.
 - a. Faith does not earn these benefits. It merely receives them as a gift.
 - b. If a person refuses to believe God's justification, he/she will not enjoy its blessings.

VI. The Blessings Of Christ's Redeeming Work

Colossians 1:14 - *In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

1 Peter 1:18-19 - *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

A. Jesus has also given us redemption.

1. "Redemption" is setting a captive person free from spiritual slavery by paying a ransom.
2. Jesus redeemed us by paying the tremendous price of His holy, precious blood.
3. Jesus' redeeming work gives us a number of blessed freedoms.

B. Jesus has redeemed us from sin.

Isaiah 53:5 - *But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.*

1 Peter 2:24 - *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

Romans 8:1 - *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

1. Jesus frees from the guilt and punishment of sin. Because He has already suffered our guilt and punishment, our sins can no longer condemn us.

John 8:34, 36 - *{34} Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. {36} So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*

Romans 6:12,14 - *{12} Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. {14} For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.*

2. Jesus frees from the dominating power of sin. Jesus gives us strength to resist sin and no longer let it rule us. Although we still sin daily because of our sinful nature, our sins no longer control us in helpless fear.

C. Jesus has redeemed us from death.

John 10:28a - *I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.*

John 5:24 - *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.*

1. Jesus frees us from the horror of having to die eternally in hell.

Hebrews 2:9b, 15 - *{9b} Jesus suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. {15} and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

2. Jesus frees us from the fear of physical death. He changes death for the believer into a doorway that leads to heaven.

D. Jesus has redeemed us from the devil.

Revelation 12:10-11a - *Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.*

Hebrews 9:14 - *How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*

1. Jesus sets us free from the accusing power of Satan. Since Jesus has paid for all our sins, the devil can no longer succeed in finding us guilty of sin.

James 4:7 - *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

2. Jesus frees us from the tempting power of Satan. He gives us strength through His Word to say "no" to the devil's efforts to lead us to sin.

E. Jesus has redeemed us for a life in Him.

2 Corinthians 5:15 - *And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

1. Jesus set us free to live life to His honor and praise.

Titus 2:14 - *(Jesus) gave himself to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people who are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

2. Jesus set us free to live a life of joyful, devoted service as His people.

VII. The Certainty Of Our Salvation

Acts 16:30b - *What must I do to be saved?*

- A. Life's most important issue is the salvation of our soul. We need to know how to be saved from our sins and how to be certain of it.

1 John 5:13 - *I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.*

- B. God wants us to be sure of being saved and having eternal life.

John 14:6 - *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

1 John 5:11-12 - *And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

Acts 16:31a - *Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.*

- C. God tells us that there is only one way to be saved. That way is by believing God's testimony that Jesus is our Savior from sin and the One who gives us eternal life.

John 6:44a - *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.*

Ephesians 2:4, 5, 8 - *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, {5} made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. {8} For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--*

- D. God Himself works faith in Jesus in our hearts. By nature all of us are spiritually dead and unable to believe in our own power.

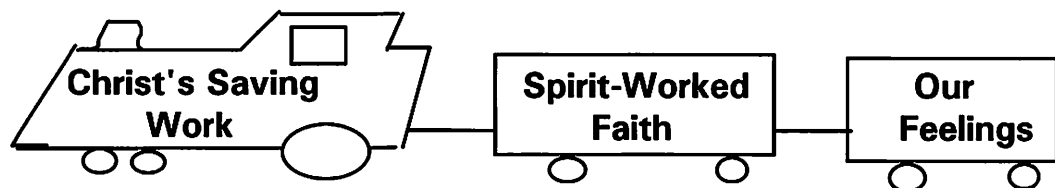
John 6:47 - *I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life.*

Titus 1:2 - *A faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time.*

- E. We can be certain of salvation because it rests on God's sure, unbreakable promise.

1 John 3:19-20 - *This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.*

- F. God warns us against basing our assurance of salvation on our subjective feelings, instead of on His true Word. Our feelings are not always a true indication of faith in Jesus.



THE TRAIN OF CERTAINTY OF ETERNAL LIFE

1 Peter 1:5 - *Who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.*

- G. God not only gives us faith. He also keeps us in faith. From beginning to end, our salvation depends entirely on our God.

VIII. Home Study

- A. LESSON REVIEW: Mark each statement either A (Agree) or D (Disagree)

- _____ 1. The reason Jesus descended to hell was to suffer for our sins.
- _____ 2. If Jesus had not risen from the dead, we could not be sure that our sins were paid for.
- _____ 3. The assurance of our resurrection to eternal life rests entirely on Jesus' resurrection.
- _____ 4. Without the promise of a Risen Savior, people face a hopeless eternity.
- _____ 5. Jesus expects only a few of His believers to be active witnesses of the Gospel.
- _____ 6. Jesus must wait until the end of the world before He receives His glory as the victorious Lord.
- _____ 7. Since Jesus finished His redeeming work and sits at the Father's right hand, He is not very interested in what happens to us on earth.
- _____ 8. Since Jesus is in heaven, He is rather limited in the help He can give us right now.
- _____ 9. The word "salvation" refers to God's delivering us from the spiritual danger our sins put us in.
- _____ 10. "Reconciliation" means that we are no longer God's enemies, but His friends.
- _____ 11. Jesus died to win forgiveness for most of our sins.

- _____ 12. The reason people go to hell is because God has not pardoned them for their sins.
- _____ 13. Faith in Jesus is the only way a person can be saved.
- _____ 14. One really can't be sure of going to heaven when he/she dies.
- _____ 15. Our feelings are the reliable foundation on which God wants us to base our assurance of salvation.

B. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS (Answer the following questions)

- 1. Since Jesus, your loving Savior, is now the exalted Lord, what can you count on Him to do for you each day you live?

- 2. How would you answer your accusing conscience when it tries to lead you to despair over being saved because of your sins?

- 3. What would you tell a person who wants to know how he/she can be sure of going to heaven?

C. MEMORY TREASURES (Memorize the following Bible verses to build up your knowledge of God's Word)

Romans 3:23-24 - *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

1 John 5:12 - *He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

D. READING DURING THE WEEK

___ Day 1 - 1 Corinthians 15	___ Day 5 - Luke 22
___ Day 2 - Luke 19	___ Day 6 - Luke 23
___ Day 3 - Luke 20	___ Day 7 - Luke 24
___ Day 4 - Luke 21	

E. HYMN/PRAAYER

Hymn 376: 1, 6 in Christian Worship: "Jesus, Your Blood and Righteousness"

Jesus your blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Mid flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

Jesus, be worshipped endlessly!
Your boundless mercy has for me,
For me and all your hands have made,
An everlasting ransom paid.

Welcome To Life!

Lesson 6

- Contents:
- I. The Holy Spirit's Person And Work, And The Means Of Grace
 - II. The Holy Spirit Works Saving Faith
 - III. Why Some Are Saved While Others Are Lost
 - IV. God's Election Or Predestination To Eternal Life
 - V. Those Who Do Not Hear The Gospel
 - VI. The Holy Spirit Lives In The Christian And Creates A New Life
 - VII. The Holy Spirit Produces Godly Qualities And God-Pleasing Works
 - VIII. The Holy Spirit Strengthens For The Struggle Against Sin And Unbelief

* Review the Home Study questions from Lesson 5

I. The Holy Spirit's Person And Work, And The Means Of Grace

Matthew 28:19 - *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

Acts 5:3a, 4b - *Then Peter said, "Ananias, How is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit . . . You have not lied to men, but to God.*

- A. The Holy Spirit is true God, a distinct person of the Trinity. He is not a mere impersonal force or feeling.

1 Peter 1:2 - *(God's elect) have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by His blood.*

John 14:26 - *But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*

John 16:13a, 14 - *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. {14} He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.*

- B. The Holy Spirit's work is called sanctification. "To sanctify" is "to make holy" or "to set apart from sin for God."
1. Sanctification includes all the Holy Spirit does to bring people out of the unbelieving world to saving faith in Christ, to empower them to live to God's glory and to preserve them in faith until they enter heaven.
 2. As the Sanctifier, the Spirit uses the Word of God to lead people to trust in and honor Jesus as the Savior and Lord.

- C. The Bible gives other names to the Holy Spirit, such as: Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, Spirit of Truth, Comforter, Counselor.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 - *But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Romans 1:16 - *I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.*

- D. The Holy Spirit works through the means of the Gospel (Good News) to accomplish His sanctifying work.
1. We call the Gospel in its forms of the Word and the two Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion the means of grace.
 2. The Gospel is the means by which the Spirit offers and gives to us the undeserved love of God for us in Christ, so that we are brought to and kept in saving faith.

II. The Holy Spirit Works Saving Faith

Romans 4:5 - *However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.*

Romans 5:1-2a - *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.*

- A. We receive the blessings of Jesus' redeeming work as our own through God's gift of faith in Jesus as our Savior, apart from our works.

Romans 10:9-10 - *That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*

- B. The nature of saving faith.
1. Saving faith is the heart's trust and confidence in Jesus Christ and His finished work of redemption for the forgiveness of our sins and eternal life.
 2. Saving faith is not situational faith, a faith which trusts God only for physical blessings in certain situations of this life (e.g., safety, health, income). Saving faith trusts Jesus for spiritual and eternal blessings in Christ as well as for physical ones.

3. Saving faith is not a mere intellectual knowledge of facts about God. Saving faith knows the facts and believes in the benefit of those facts. Head knowledge says: "Jesus died." Saving faith says: "Jesus died for me."
4. Saving faith is not faith in the God of possibilities, a faith which believes that God can do things. Saving faith knows that God does do things. God not only can save; He does save us in Jesus.
5. Saving faith is not merely a good feeling or general optimism about life.
6. Saving faith is not self-confidence.

C. People can't bring themselves to saving faith.

2 Corinthians 4:4 - *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

1. We are by nature spiritually blind. We can't see the truth of God.

Ephesians 2:1 - *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.*

2. We are by nature spiritually dead to God and can't resurrect ourselves.

Romans 8:7 - *The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law nor can it do so.*

3. We are by nature God's enemies and refuse Him. We would rather depend on ourselves.

1 Corinthians 2:14 - *The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

4. By nature, we do not accept God's truth and consider it foolishness.

D. The Holy Spirit persuades and creates faith through the Gospel.

1 Thessalonians 1:5a, 6b - *{5a} Because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. {6b} You welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.*

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 - *My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.*

Romans 4:20-21 - *Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.*

1. The Holy Spirit works powerfully through the Gospel to work faith in Christ in people's hearts.
2. The Spirit uses the Good News of Jesus to convince them of its truth and to persuade them to willingly and joyfully trust in God's grace for them.

E. God alone brings people to faith.

Ephesians 2:8-9 - For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.

1 Corinthians 12:3b - No one can say, "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.

1. Saving faith in Jesus is God's gracious gift to us.
2. Although it is people who have faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit creates that faith in their hearts.
3. It is wrong for people to believe that they can do something to come to faith in Jesus.
4. This belief is based on the false idea that a person, by nature, has freedom of the will in spiritual matters.
5. The Bible teaches that since the fall into sin, people, by nature, are dead and hostile to God and have free will only in earthly matters, not in spiritual matters.
6. Our salvation from beginning to end is God's work and gift.

F. The Holy Spirit works great changes in bringing people to faith.

1. The Holy Spirit works radical changes in people's hearts by bringing them to faith in Christ. In the Bible, God uses a variety of ways to describe those changes:

Acts 10:18b - So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life.

2. The Spirit gives us repentance.
 - a. "Repentance" in the original Greek means "a change of mind and heart."
 - b. Repentance has two parts: contrition and faith.
 1. Contrition is heartfelt sorrow over sin and fear of God's punishment worked by the Law.
 2. Faith is the heart's trust and comfort in God's forgiveness of sin for Christ's sake worked through the Gospel.

- c. A repentant person has his/her mind and heart changed in two important ways by the Spirit.
1. The Spirit leads us to hate sin and to seek to avoid it instead of liking it and following it.
 2. The Spirit leads us to love God and to seek to do His will instead of hating Him and rebelling against Him.

2 Corinthians 4:6 - *For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

3. The Spirit cures our spiritual blindness and enables us to see Christ as our Savior and to view everything else in a new light (Enlightenment).

Ephesians 2:4-5 - *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.*

4. The Spirit ends our spiritual death by raising us to new life in Christ (Spiritual resurrection).

1 Peter 2:25 - *For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

Jeremiah 31:18b - *Restore me, and I will return, because you are the Lord my God.*

5. The Spirit turns us, enemies of God, back toward Him so that instead of hating God we love Him (Conversion).

1 Peter 1:23 - *For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.*

6. The Spirit gives us a second birth, a spiritual one in which we are alive in God (Rebirth).

III. Why Some Are Saved While Others Are Lost

Romans 5:18 - *Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.*

Matthew 7:13-14 - *"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.*

- A. Although God has declared all people forgiven of their sins because of Jesus' redeeming work, only some will actually be saved and have eternal life.

- B. Why some are saved while others are lost is a great mystery that should cause us to listen carefully to what God says about it in His Word.

Romans 3:9a, 22b-23 - *{9a} What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! . . . {22b} There is no difference, {23} for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

- C. All people are equally unworthy of God's grace, unable to convert themselves and unwilling to be converted. There is no difference in people.

2 Peter 3:9 - *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

1 Timothy 2:4 - *(God our Savior) wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*

Romans 2:11 - *For God does not show favoritism.*

- D. God equally desires that everyone be saved and none be lost. He works through the same powerful Gospel to accomplish this. There is no difference in God.

- E. Yet there are different outcomes. Some who hear the Gospel believe, while others who hear it do not.

Ephesians 2:8-9 - *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God -- not by works, so that no one can boast.*

- F. God tells us that those who are saved are saved by His grace alone. God is fully responsible for their salvation.

Matthew 23:37 - *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.*

Acts 7:51 - *"You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!"*

- G. God tells us that those who are lost are lost by their own fault. They refused to let the Spirit work faith in their hearts and rejected God's grace in unbelief.

- H. The Bible's teaching on these matters presents a difficulty for human reason.

1. It is tempting to set aside what God says and search for an answer that will be more pleasing to human reason. But if we do so, we will fall into errors as others have.

2. Some have concluded that some believe while others don't because there is a difference in people.
 - a. They insist that some people are naturally more able and willing than others to cooperate with God in coming to faith and/or deserving His favor.
 - b. This teaching denies God's teaching that people are equally powerless and hostile to God by nature.
 - c. It also denies salvation by God's undeserved love and requires people to look to themselves as the cause (at least in part) for their being saved.
 - d. In doing this it undercuts any proper assurance of salvation because it forces a sinful person to hopelessly ask: "Have I done enough so I can be saved?"

3. Others have concluded that some believe while others don't because there is a difference in God.
 - a. They insist that from eternity God chose some to be saved while He destined all others to be damned.
 - b. This teaching contradicts God's teaching that He sincerely wants all to be saved and makes Him out to be depraved and malicious.
 - c. It also causes a person to be in doubt whether God has chosen him/her for heaven or hell.

2 Corinthians 10:5 - *We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

Romans 11:33 - *Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!*

I. God's teaching on why some are saved while others are lost is a call for us to make our human reason subject to God's Word and to humbly adore His superior wisdom.

IV. **God's Election Or Predestination To Eternal Life**

2 Timothy 1:9 - *God who has saved us and called us to a holy life--not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.*

Ephesians 1:3-6 - {3} *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. {4} For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love {5} he predestined us to be adopted as his*

sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- {6} to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

Romans 8:29-30 - For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

- A. God has not destined people from eternity to be damned.
- B. However, the Bible does teach that from eternity God in grace has elected or chosen people to be brought to faith in Christ and preserved in it to eternal life.
- C. God intends that His choosing or predestining of believers will be a great comfort and encouragement to them.
- D. He wants Christians to know that their salvation is not a matter of mere chance or of their own choice or deserving.
- E. God reveals to His believers that their salvation is the result of His eternal plan and loving purpose for them, which He works out during their life as He brings them and keeps them in faith in Jesus and completes when He takes them to eternal glory.
- F. This teaching gives believers great assurance of God's eternal love for them and of their salvation. It also encourages them to bear life's trials patiently and to live their lives to God's glory faithfully.

V. Those Who Do Not Hear The Gospel

John 14:6 - Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Romans 10:14b - And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?

- A. Some people accuse God of being unfair by claiming that He has no right to condemn unbelievers to hell if they have not had the opportunity to believe in Jesus by hearing the Gospel.

Job 41:11a - "Who has a claim against me that I must pay?"

Romans 9:14-15 - What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

- B. At the heart of this charge is an assumption that God is obligated to give people an opportunity to hear the Gospel. He is not.
 1. No one has a "right" to hear the Gospel. In fact, people's sins disqualify them from any claim on God or His favor.

2. The fact that God does give opportunities is an act of His undeserved love.

Romans 10:18 - *But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world."*

Acts 14:17a - *Yet God has not left himself without testimony.*

- C. God has given people enough in-born knowledge and other testimony to know He exists and that they should seek to know more of His will. People who do not seek out God have only themselves to blame.

Matthew 10:7,8b - *As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' Freely you have received, freely give.*

1 Corinthians 9:16b - *Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel.*

2 Corinthians 5:11a - *Since then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men.*

- D. God has also charged those who have heard the Gospel to share it with others.
 1. Those who fail to do this also bear responsibility if some do not have an opportunity to hear the Gospel.
 2. This truth stirs us to be diligent in sharing the Gospel personally and through our church's mission efforts with all the people we can.

VI. The Holy Spirit Lives In The Christian And Creates A New Life

Ephesians 1:13b-14 - *Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory.*

2 Corinthians 1:21b-22 - *He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*

Romans 8:15-17 - *For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

- A. When the Holy Spirit brings people to faith in Christ, He also comes to live in their hearts.
 1. By His dwelling in believers, the Spirit is God's seal of ownership, testifying to believers that they belong to God as His children.
 2. By His living in believers, the Spirit is also God's deposit, guaranteeing by His testimony that believers are God's heirs who will receive the glorious inheritance of heaven.

2 Corinthians 5:17 - *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

Galatians 5:16-17 - *So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.*

Ephesians 4:22-24 - *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

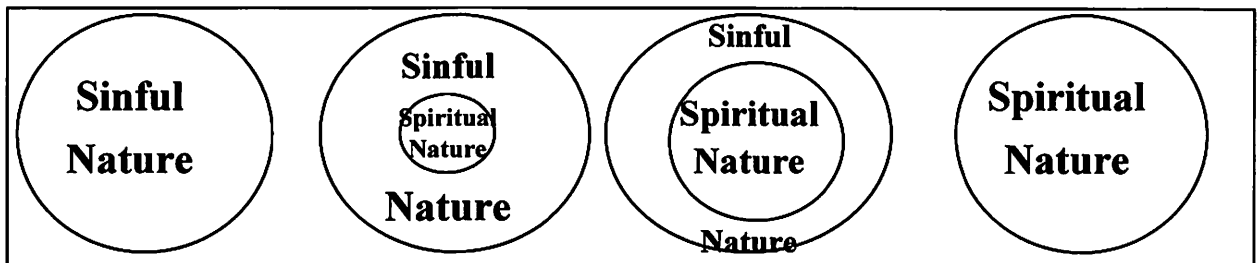
Romans 8:8-9 - *Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.*

- B. When the Holy Spirit brings people to faith in Christ, He also makes them new creatures by creating in them a new nature.
1. This spiritual nature or new self trusts in God, loves Him, delights in what is true and good and leads the Christian to do God's will.
 2. This new nature is in constant conflict with the sinful nature or old self which everyone has from birth. The sinful nature rebels against God, hates Him, delights in evil and leads the Christian to disobey God's will.
 3. The Holy Spirit strengthens the spiritual nature through the Gospel so that this nature can stay in control of the Christian's life and struggle successfully against the defiant sinful nature throughout life.
 4. God will destroy the sinful nature of believers when they enter heaven.
 5. The two natures of a Christian:

BEFORE JESUS

HERE ON EARTH IN JESUS

IN HEAVEN



6. Insight into the two natures helps us understand our inner spiritual conflicts and outward behavior.

Romans 13:11a, 14 - *{11a} And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber. {14} Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

7. It also keeps us spiritually alert and challenges us not to indulge the evil drives of the sinful nature, but to keep our spiritual nature strong by feeding it well with God's Word.

VII. The Holy Spirit Produces Godly Qualities And God-Pleasing Works

Galatians 5:22-23a - *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*

- A. The Holy Spirit produces in believers godly virtues that show themselves and aid Christians in their lives.

Philippians 2:13 - *For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.*

Ephesians 2:10 - *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

- B. The Holy Spirit also gives Christians the desire and the strength to do good works which He wants from His believers.

John 15:5 - *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*

Galatians 5:6b - *The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.*

John 14:15 - *"If you love me, you will obey what I command."*

1 Corinthians 10:31 - *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*

Galatians 5:13b - *rather, serve one another in love.*

1. Good works pleasing to God are the things a Christian does out of faith in Christ and love for God according to God's will in order to glorify God and serve others.

Galatians 2:16 - *We know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ . . . by observing the law no one will be justified.*

2. Our good works do not save us or make us righteous before God.

Colossians 3:17 - *And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

3. Our good works are the way we show our thankfulness to God for already saving us.

James 2:17, 18b - *In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. I will show you my faith by what I do.*

4. Our good works are also the way we show others that our faith in Jesus is true and living.

1 Samuel 16:7b - *The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."*

Hebrews 11:6a - *Without faith it is impossible to please God.*

Isaiah 64:6 - *All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.*

- C. Good works pleasing to God are not the same as works that people may regard as "good."
 1. Sometimes people confuse good works that please God with works that people may commend and praise as good.
 2. God looks at more than the outward action. He also looks at the motivation behind it.
 3. Works that are not prompted by faith in Christ and love for God proceed from a sinful, selfish motivation (such as fear of punishment or desire for reward) that God cannot accept as spiritually pleasing to Him.
 4. Beware of equating mere morality and outward decency and kindness with good works that please God.

VII. The Holy Spirit Strengthens For The Struggle Against Sin And Unbelief

Romans 6:11-12, 18 - {11} *In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. {12} Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. {18} You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.*

1 Timothy 6:12 - *Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*

- A. During their earthly lives, Christians are involved in a bitter struggle to continue in faith and live for God against the powerful forces of sin and unbelief.

Ephesians 3:16 - *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,*

Ephesians 6:10, 17 - *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

- B. God the Holy Spirit strengthens Christians through God's powerful Word to carry on that battle.

Philippians 1:25b - *I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith.*

2 Thessalonians 1:3b - *Your faith is growing more and more and love is increasing.*

2 Corinthians 7:1 - *Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.*

- C. The Holy Spirit helps Christians make progress in their struggle against sin and unbelief. He helps them resist sin and strive to live holy lives.

1 John 1:8 - *If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.*

Philippians 3:12a - *Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect.*

- D. No matter how hard believers try to live a perfect life, they still sin while living in this world. Believers must wait until heaven to become perfect.

Romans 7:21-23, 18-19, 24-25 - {21} *So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. {22} For in my inner being I delight in God's law; {23} but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. {18} I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. {19} For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing. {24} What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? {25} Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.*

- E. Christians sin in weakness. Their sinful natures still afflict them and lead them into sins against God. As this goes on, the believing natures of Christians are objecting to and opposing these sins, are sorry for them and trusting in Christ for forgiveness for them.

Romans 8:1 - *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

- F. God does not ignore or excuse sins of weakness, but He does forgive

them. Christians are continually pardoned for their sins of weakness since they remain trusting in Jesus as their Savior. Jesus grants forgiveness as part of the relationship He has with believers. Christians are at one and the same time both sinners and those who have the forgiveness of sins (saints).

IX. **Home Study**

A. **LESSON REVIEW:** Mark each statement either A (Agree) or D (Disagree)

- _____ 1. The Holy Spirit is really an impersonal force of good in the world.
- _____ 2. When the Holy Spirit sanctifies people, He actually makes them perfect people who no longer sin.
- _____ 3. Saving faith is trust and confidence in Jesus Christ alone to deliver a person from sin and hell.
- _____ 4. A person does not have the natural ability to accept God's invitation of life in Christ, but he/she does have the ability to refuse it.
- _____ 5. The Holy Spirit accomplishes His work by means of the Gospel.
- _____ 6. The Holy Spirit works radical changes in people by bringing them to faith in Jesus.
- _____ 7. The reason some who hear the Gospel are saved while others who hear it are lost is because some are naturally less resistant to the Holy Spirit's call to faith.
- _____ 8. God's gracious election of believers from eternity is a most comforting and inspiring teaching of Scripture.
- _____ 9. God owes everyone in the world an opportunity to hear the Gospel and is at fault if someone does not.

- _____ 10. According to the Bible, the Holy Spirit actually lives in believers.
- _____ 11. Christians have two conflicting natures living in their hearts.
- _____ 12. A Christian does good works in order to gain God's favor and blessing.
- _____ 13. All people do good works (pleasing to God) at some time in their life.
- _____ 14. Since Christians are forgiven, they have a rather easy time in battling sin in their lives.
- _____ 15. A Christian who dies while committing a sin goes to hell because he or she hasn't repented of that sin.

B. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS (Answer the following questions)

1. In what way is God's undeserved love evident in bringing people to saving faith?

2. What things are you personally willing to do to make sure that more people hear the Good News of Jesus?

3. Briefly describe your own personal struggle to live a life that consistently pleases and honors God.

C. MEMORY TREASURES: (Memorize the following Bible verses to build up your knowledge of God's Word)

2 Thessalonians 2:13b-14 - *From the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Ephesians 2:8-9 - *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God -- not by works, so that no one can boast.*

D. READING DURING THE WEEK

___ Day 1 - Acts 2

___ Day 5 - Galatians 4

___ Day 2 - Galatians 1

___ Day 6 - Galatians 5

___ Day 3 - Galatians 2

___ Day 7 - Galatians 6

___ Day 4 - Galatians 3

E. HYMN/PRAYER

Hymn 184: 1, 3 in Christian Worship: "O Holy Spirit, Enter In"

O Holy Spirit, enter in And in our hearts your work begin,
Your dwelling place now make us. Sun of the soul, O Light divine,
Around and in us brightly shine, To joy and gladness wake us
That we May be Truly living, To you giving Prayer unceasing
And in love be still increasing.

O mighty Rock, O Source of life, Let your dear Word, in doubt and strife,
In us be strongly burning That we be faithful unto death
And live in love and holy faith, From you true wisdom learning.
Your grace and peace On us shower; By your power Christ confessing,
Let us see our Savior's blessing.

Welcome To Life!

Lesson 7

- Contents:
- I. God Warns Against Subverting The Holy Spirit's Work
 - II. The Holy Spirit Preserves People In Saving Faith
 - III. Sacraments
 - IV. What Baptism Is
 - V. The Blessings Of Baptism
 - VI. The Power In Baptism
 - VII. Who Is To Be Baptized
 - VIII. Who Is To Baptize
 - IX. The Need For Baptism And The Unbaptized
 - X. Baptism's Importance For Our Daily Lives

* Review the Home Study questions from Lesson 6

I. God Warns Against Subverting The Holy Spirit's Work

Acts 7:51 - *"You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!"*

1 Thessalonians 5:19 - *Do not put out the Spirit's fire;*

- A. People can resist and undermine the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work in the Gospel. God warns us to be on guard against this and not refuse the Spirit's converting and strengthening influence in our hearts.

2 Corinthians 6:1-2 - *As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.*

Hebrews 3:18-19, 4:2, 7b - *{18} And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? {19} So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief. {4:2} For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. {7b} "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."*

John 12:37 - *Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him.*

- B. God urgently pleads with people in their time of opportunity to believe the Gospel and not resist the Spirit's work to bring them to faith in Jesus.

1. The Holy Spirit's call to faith in the Gospel is free, sincere, powerful, and intended for all.
2. Sadly, people can prevent their coming to faith and forget Christ's blessings by allowing influences such as self-righteousness, a love of sin, pride and despair to dominate their hearts and so spurn the Spirit's converting influence.
3. God does not want anyone to despise or deny the opportunity He presents to come to faith. God gives a limited number of opportunities to come to faith and no one can be sure if he/she will receive another chance (e.g., The rich fool; Luke 12:15-21).

Ephesians 4:30 - *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

Hebrews 3:12-15 - *{12} See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. {13} But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. {14} We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. {15} As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion."*

Luke 8:13b - *They believe for awhile, but in the time of testing fall away.*

- C. God warns Christians not to damage or destroy their faith in Christ.
1. Believers can weaken and even destroy their faith in Jesus. The Bible does not teach an "eternal security" which claims that once a person is saved, he/she can never fall away and lose their faith.
 2. Among the influences that can lead to a loss of faith are: neglect of the Gospel, accepting a work-righteous view of salvation, a love of the pleasures of the sinful world, willful sins and unrepentance.

Psalm 19:13 - *Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression.*

1 John 5:16b - *There is a sin that leads to death.*

1 Tim 1:19 - *Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith.*

3. Willful sins are sins which a person commits when he/she clearly knows what God's Word says on a matter, and is convinced the Word is true, but then purposely rejects the warning of his/her conscience and commits that sin without repenting. Such sins destroy saving faith.

Matthew 26:41 - *"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."*

2 Peter 3:17-18 - *Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless*

men and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

4. The way to avoid weakness or loss of faith is to be watchful at all times against temptation and to be growing continually in the Gospel of Christ.

Ephesians 4:18 - They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

Romans 11:7b-8 - The others were hardened, as it is written: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day."

- D. People who persist in unbelief and resistance to the Gospel harden their hearts against the Holy Spirit's influence. God may, as an act of judgment, harden their hearts further so that it is no longer possible for them to come to faith.

Mark 3:28-29 - I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin."

Hebrews 6:4-6 - It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.

Hebrews 10:26-29 - {26} If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, {27} but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. {28} Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. {29} How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?

- E. People who persist in unbelief may also commit the sin against the Holy Spirit.
 1. The sin against the Holy Spirit is a malicious, spiteful rejection and open, callous contempt for the Gospel truths which the Holy Spirit works to convince people of.
 2. This sin is unforgivable, not because Jesus didn't pay for it, but because its direct assault against the Spirit's efforts to convert people makes repentance impossible.

Jeremiah 31:18b - Restore me, and I will return, because you are the Lord my God.

Job 33:26-28 - *He prays to God and finds favor with him, he sees God's face and shouts for joy; he is restored by God to his righteous state. Then he comes to men and says, 'I sinned, and perverted what was right, but I did not get what I deserved. He redeemed my soul from going down to the pit, and I will live to enjoy the light.'*

- F. God can and does bring back to faith people who have previously fallen away.
1. In great mercy God does reconvert people who have carelessly fallen from faith (e.g., King David).
 2. We rejoice in such a great love that reclaims the fallen, but we dare not abuse it by presuming that God must and will do it for us.

Acts 20:28a, 31a - *Keep watch over yourselves. Be on your guard.*

- G. God charges us to be vigilant against temptations to resist or reject the Spirit's work in our lives.

II. The Holy Spirit Preserves Believers In Saving Faith

Acts 20:32 - *"Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."*

- A. God the Holy Spirit strengthens and preserves us in saving faith through our use of the Word of God. We are to use that Word regularly and not neglect it.

Hebrews 6:19a - *We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.*

- B. We use God's Word so that our faith will grow stronger and not become weaker. A strong faith is a great blessing for it allows us to have greater confidence of salvation and increased strength for a fruitful life of good works.
- C. In order to preserve us in faith, the Holy Spirit uses both the Law and Gospel:

1 Corinthians 10:12 - *So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!*

Hebrews 2:1 - *We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.*

1. The Spirit speaks sharp warnings of the Law to our sinful nature so that we do not become proud and careless and fall from faith.

John 10:28-29 - *I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.*

Philippians 1:6 - *Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

2. The Spirit speaks comforting promises of the Gospel to our believing nature so that we do not despair over our sinful weakness, but cling to Christ for our assurance of salvation.

III. **Sacraments**

- A. God has not only accomplished our redemption through Christ. He has also provided the Gospel as the means by which the Holy Spirit can and does bring the benefits of Jesus' redeeming work into our hearts and lives.
- B. The Gospel comes in the form of the Word (as it is heard, read, or remembered by people) and of the Sacraments. These means of grace are God's precious "Gospel delivery system" for us.
- C. We will now consider the two Sacraments God gives us to bring us Christ's blessings.
- D. What a sacrament is:
 1. The word "sacrament" originally comes from the Latin "sacramentum" which means "a solemn, sacred pledge." In the Sacraments, God makes a solemn, sacred pledge to bless people because of Christ.
 2. We define a Sacrament as:
 - a. A sacred act - in which God is at work, imparting something to us.
 - b. Instituted by Christ - established and commanded by Jesus for us to do.
 - c. In which through visible elements - physical substances (water, bread, wine) which affect our senses.
 - d. Connected with God's Word - which give the Sacraments their power.
 - e. God offers, gives and assures to us forgiveness of sins, eternal life and saving grace.
- E. The two Sacraments are the Sacrament Of Holy Baptism and the Sacrament of Holy Communion.
- F. Sacraments are not just marks that identify people as Christians. Nor are they merely signs which only symbolize spiritual blessings. Sacraments are means by which God actually gives spiritual blessings to people.

- G. Sacraments are not sacrifices in which people offer something to God. In Sacraments God is the one who offers and gives His blessings to people.
- H. Sacraments are also not like other rites and ceremonies of the Church (e.g., confirmation, marriage, funeral). Although these are fine practices, God has not attached His promise of Gospel blessings to them.

IV. What Baptism Is

Matthew 28:18-20 - *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

- A. Jesus instituted Baptism as part of His "Great Commission" to the Church.
 1. Baptism is the application of water connected with God's Word to a person.
 2. A person is baptized "in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit," that is, into an intimate, blessed relationship with the Triune God. In Baptism God lovingly lays claim to a person's life, makes that person His own dear child and gives him/her all His spiritual blessings (including His mercy, pardon and protection).

Matthew 3:11 - *"I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."*

- B. The earthly element in baptism is water.
 1. God uses a common element, often used for physical cleansing, to accomplish spiritual cleansing.
 2. The word baptized originally comes from the Greek "baptizo" which means "to wash with or apply water."
 3. We must use water, not another substance, for a proper baptism.
 4. God does not specify the amount of water we are to use or the method of applying the water.
 - a. Some insist that total immersion is the only valid way to be baptized.
 - b. While immersion is a valid way to baptize, it is not the only way. Sprinkling, pouring or touching with water are equally valid ways.

Luke 11:38 - *But the Pharisee, noticing that Jesus did not wash (baptize) before the meal was surprised.*

c. Limiting the meaning of "baptize" to "immerse" is not proper and makes nonsense of some Scripture passages where it is used.

C. A valid baptism requires the application of water with God's Word of promise, the name of the Triune God. Where these things are not present, there is no valid baptism.

V. The Blessings Of Baptism

A. Baptism is more than just an empty ceremony. It is a true means of grace by which God's blessings come to us.

Galatians 3:26-27 - You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

B. Through baptism, the Holy Spirit brings spiritually separated people into personal union with Christ and makes them God's children.

Acts 2:38 - Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 3:21 - And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

C. Through baptism, the Holy Spirit gives sinful people the forgiveness of sins and saves them.

John 3:5 - Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

D. Through baptism the Holy Spirit gives spiritually dead people new spiritual life and a place in God's kingdom.

VI. The Power In Baptism

Ephesians 5:25b-26 - Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word.

A. The water used in baptism has no power of, or in, itself. Baptism receives its great power to give blessings through the Word of God connected with the water.

Titus 3:5-7 - *He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.*

John 1:12-13 - *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*

- B. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God in baptism to work faith in the hearts of the baptized so that they receive the blessings of Christ.
1. Faith is entirely God's creation in a person's heart. It is not, in any way, the result of a person's own decision, powers or effort.
 2. Faith is always a gracious work of God whenever and in whomever it is worked.

VII. Who Is To Be Baptized

Matthew 28:19a - *Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them . . ."*

- A. Christ commands us to baptize all people everywhere. He sets no limits (such as age, gender, nationality) on eligibility for baptism. Our Savior's love is so great that He wants all to receive its blessings.
- B. Christ intends infants and children to be included in those baptized. We baptize them for the following reasons:
1. They are part of "all nations."

Psalm 51:5 - *Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*

Ezekiel 18:4 - *For every living soul belongs to me, the father as well as the son--both alike belong to me. The soul who sins is the one who will die.*

2. They are sinful by nature, are accountable for their sin, and need God's forgiveness.

Acts 2:38-39 - *Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call."*

3. God promises to give them forgiveness and the Holy Spirit through baptism.

Luke 18:15-16 - *People were also bringing babies to Jesus to have him touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.*

Matthew 18:6a - *One of these little ones who believe in me.*

4. They can believe in Jesus as their Savior.

Acts 2:41a - *Those who had accepted his message were baptized.*

Acts 8:35-38 - *Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.*

- C. Older children and adults are baptized after they come to faith through and are instructed in God's Word. In situations like this, the Holy Spirit works in baptism to give added assurance to believers that they are God's children and heirs of His blessings.
- D. We do not rebaptize people.
 1. God's promise in baptism is always valid and does not need to be repeated.
 2. In fact, to rebaptize a person denies the truth and power of God's Word.
 3. People who fall away from faith and are reconverted are not to be rebaptized, but are to claim the blessing God already has extended to them in their baptism.
 4. We will baptize a person who does not know if he/she ever was baptized. Although it may be a "rebaptism," it will offer the certainty and comfort God wants him/her to have.

VIII. Who Is To Baptize

- A. Christ's command to baptize is given to all Christians. Every believer has the authority to baptize others.

1 Corinthians 14:40 - *But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.*

- B. Pastors generally perform the baptisms in our congregations. We call them to do this on behalf of the members so that the ministry of the Gospel is carried out efficiently and orderly.

- C. In cases of emergency, when a pastor is not available, any believer can perform a baptism. To perform baptism:
 1. Apply water to the person.
 2. Say, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

- D. Can an unbeliever perform a valid baptism?
 1. Yes. The power of baptism is dependent on the Holy Spirit working through the Gospel, not on the faith of the baptizer.
 2. A baptism which uses the Gospel is valid even if the baptizer does not personally believe it.

- E. Sponsors and witnesses
 1. Many people follow the fine Christian custom of having godparents for their baptized children.
 2. Some parents choose sponsors who witness the baptism and later strive to encourage and assist their godchild in his/her spiritual life with their counsel, prayers and example.
 3. Because of the nature of their responsibilities, sponsors should be strong, mature Christians who embrace the teachings of the church and are members of its fellowship.
 4. Some parents choose witnesses who witness the baptism but do not assume the duties of a sponsor. Witnesses do not have to be members of the church or its fellowship.

IX. The Need For Baptism And The Unbaptized

- A. Do people need to be baptized in order to be saved?

Mark 16:16 - *Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*

- B. God clearly states that He wants everyone to be baptized and that baptism is a way through which He saves people.

- C. However, God does not say that all who die without being baptized are lost eternally.
 1. It is faith in Jesus that saves and unbelief that condemns.
 2. Saving faith can exist without baptism. A person may come to faith through the Word apart from baptism.

Luke 7:30 - *But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.*

3. While baptism is not absolutely necessary for salvation, it is not optional. A person cannot despise baptism and still be saved.
4. One who truly believes will want baptism.

D. What about the children who die before they have an opportunity to be baptized or learn the Gospel?

1. God has bound us to the Gospel in the Word and Sacraments as the means of salvation. God has told us of no other way by which people may come to faith in Christ.

Luke 1:41 - *When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.*

2. However, God does not limit Himself to save by those means only. He gives the extraordinary example of John the Baptist who was given the Holy Spirit even before birth.
3. God does not specifically say anything about the destiny of those who die without the opportunity for baptism. We cannot speculate and deliver ultimate judgments about them.
4. We do know that all are in need of a Savior to forgive their sins. We also know that God is merciful and gracious and desires their salvation.

Psalm 25:6 - *Remember, O Lord, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old.*

5. We commit those who die without the opportunity for baptism to the wisdom, justice and mercy of God. We can be sure that the God of grace will handle their destiny in exactly the right way.
6. Christian parents of such children have the added comfort that their children had some contact with the Gospel through their mother and were committed to God in their prayers.

Matthew 19:14 - *Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."*

- E. Parents are to make sure that they have their children baptized as soon as possible. Parents will place the urgency of their children becoming God's children ahead of other concerns in conducting baptisms.

Ephesians 6:4 - *Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.*

- F. Parents who refuse to baptize their children and train them in God's Word severely damage and can destroy them spiritually.
1. Parents have a tremendous influence on and obligation toward the spiritual welfare of their children.
 2. Parents can influence their children for a life of unbelief and an eternity in hell by failing in their duty to baptize them and instruct them in God's Word.
 3. One cannot bring up children apart from the Gospel and expect them to be Christians. Even parents who have their children baptized can "starve" them spiritually by not continuing to feed their faith with God's Word. Regular worship, Sunday School and Bible class, family devotions, prayers and informal discussions of God's Word are all indispensable practices of every believer's life.
 4. Parents who choose to let their children grow up to make their own spiritual decisions are gambling with their children's salvation. To choose not to influence children for God is to choose to influence them against Him.
 5. We must do what we can to reach the unbaptized with the Gospel in baptism and God's Word.

X. Baptism's Importance For Our Daily Lives

- A. God's blessings in baptism have enduring value and benefit for our lives.

Galatians 3:26-27, 29 - {26} You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, {27} for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. {29} If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

- B. God's grace in baptism gives us the confidence of knowing at all times that Christ is our Savior and that we are God's heaven-bound children.

1 Corinthians 12:13 - For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

- C. God's grace in baptism gives us the comfort of knowing that we are members together with other Christians in the Spirit-created fellowship of the Church.

Romans 6:4, 6, 13 - {4} We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. {6} For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that

we should no longer be slaves to sin-- {13} Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.

- D. God's grace in baptism gives us a new life in Christ in which we share in the blessings of His saving work and receive strength and encouragement to set aside the control of sin and live in obedient service to God.
- E. The faith worked by baptism must be nourished and fed through continual feeding on the Gospel in the Word and in the Sacrament of Holy Communion throughout life.

XI. Home Study

- A. LESSON REVIEW: Mark each statement either A (Agree) or D (Disagree)
 - _____ 1. People who ignore God at present can count on the fact that He will give them opportunities to come to faith later in life.
 - _____ 2. Once a person comes to faith in Jesus, it is impossible for him/her to ever fall away from Him.
 - _____ 3. The most damaging sin of all is the refusal to believe God's Word.
 - _____ 4. There are important things we can and must do to preserve our faith in Christ throughout life.
 - _____ 5. In the Sacraments God provides two powerful ways to bring the Gospel and its blessings into our lives.
 - _____ 6. The two things essential for a valid baptism are water and the Word of God.
 - _____ 7. Totally immersing a person in water is the only proper way to perform a baptism.
 - _____ 8. In Holy Baptism, God uses the Gospel to claim people for His own and make them His blessed children.

- _____ 9. **Baptism can and does save us.**
- _____ 10. **Only those able to consciously understand the Gospel should be baptized.**
- _____ 11. **A person should not be rebaptized.**
- _____ 12. **Any Christian may baptize a person.**
- _____ 13. **We must believe that all people who die without baptism are doomed to hell.**
- _____ 14. **Christ expects nothing more of parents than that they have their children baptized and brought to faith in Him.**
- _____ 15. **Our baptism has little ongoing importance for our lives as believers.**

B. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS (Answer the following questions)

- 1. **What is your greatest concern about yourself as you consider the challenge of continuing to believe in Jesus throughout your life?**

- 2. **When, where and by whom were you baptized?**

3. What points would you want to be sure to emphasize as you discuss baptism with a person who has neglected to have their child baptized?

- C. MEMORY TREASURES: (Memorize the following Bible verses to build up your knowledge of God's Word)

Matthew 28:19 - *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

Galatians 3:26-27 - *You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*

- D. READING DURING THE WEEK

____ Day 1 - Hebrews 3

____ Day 5 - 1 John 3

____ Day 2 - Hebrews 6

____ Day 6 - 1 John 4

____ Day 3 - 1 John 1

____ Day 7 - 1 John 5

____ Day 4 - 1 John 2

- E. HYMN/PRAYER

Hymn 294: 1, 2 in Christian Worship: "Baptized into Your Name Most Holy"

Baptized into your name most holy, O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
I claim a place, though weak and lowly, Among your saints, your chosen host,
Buried with Christ and dead to sin. Your Spirit now shall live within.

My loving Father, there you took me To be henceforth your child and heir.
My faithful Savior, there you let me The fruit of all your sorrows share.
O Holy Spirit, comfort me When threat'ning clouds around I see.

Welcome To Life!

Lesson 8

- Contents:
- I. The Institution Of Holy Communion
 - II. What Holy Communion Is
 - III. The Benefits And Purposes Of Holy Communion
 - IV. Who Is To Partake Of Holy Communion
 - V. Close Communion
 - VI. Proper Preparation For Holy Communion
 - VII. Faithful Reception Of Holy Communion
 - VIII. Practical Matters Concerning Holy Communion

* Review the Home Study questions from Lesson 7

I. The Institution Of Holy Communion

Mark 14:22-24 - *While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them.*

Luke 22:15-20 - *And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.*

1 Corinthians 11:23-25 - *For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."*

- A. Jesus instituted the Sacrament of Holy Communion on the night He was betrayed by Judas Iscariot, only hours before His death on the cross. This day is known as Maundy Thursday (the word "maundy" is from the Latin and means "to give a command" referring very likely to the statement "A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you.").

- B. Jesus instituted Holy Communion at a Passover meal, eaten with His disciples in an upper room in Jerusalem.
1. Passover was the annual celebration of God's dramatic rescue of His people from slavery in Egypt.
 2. In the Passover meal, the celebrants reviewed the events of God's deliverance of His Old Testament people and praised God for His saving love.
- C. This Sacrament is known by several different names:
1. Holy Communion stresses the holiness of the things joined together - Christ's Word and command. The communion is a "union with" or "sharing" of three things.
 - a. A union of the bread and wine with the body and blood of Jesus.
 - b. A union of the believing communicant with Christ.
 - c. A union of all the believing communicants with each other through Jesus.
 2. The Lord's Supper emphasizes that it is not just any meal.
 - a. It was instituted and commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.
 - b. Jesus is our host at this heavenly meal and gives us His full, accepting fellowship and blessing.
 3. The Sacrament of the Altar is a name given by the Church to Holy Communion.
 - a. It stresses the location. Baptism is not done "at the altar."
 - b. The name conveys the insight that Holy Communion is intended only for Christians (people who can properly approach the Lord's altar).
 - c. Holy Communion is not intended to initiate faith, but to strengthen already existing faith.

II. What Holy Communion Is

Matthew 26:26-29 - While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

- A. Holy Communion is Jesus' gift of His body and blood along with bread and wine for the forgiveness of sins, accomplished by the power of His Word.

1. According to Jesus' clear words, the person who eats the bread also receives Christ's body. And the person who drinks the wine also receives Christ's blood.
2. We call the presence of Jesus' body and blood in the sacrament the "real presence."
3. Communicants receive the bread and wine in a natural way. They receive Christ's body and blood in a supernatural way beyond our comprehension.
4. Jesus used unleavened bread (bread without yeast) and grape wine in instituting Holy Communion. While it is permissible to use leavened bread or grape juice in emergencies, we regularly use the same elements Jesus used.

B. The Biblical view compared with others.

1. The following chart compares the Bible's teaching of the real presence with two erring views that arose from distorting God's Word.

Nature	A Sacrament	A Sacrifice	A Symbol
Name	Real Presence	Transubstantiation	Representation
Key Words	"is my body, is my blood"	"changes into"	"represents"
Elements Present	Bread & Body Wine & Blood	No Bread & Wine Christ's entire being	Bread & Wine No Body & Blood
God's Action	Christ is present to give blessings	Christ is crucified again	None
Christ's Command	Eat & Drink for blessing	Re-enact & offer Jesus' sacrifice to God	Remember Jesus suffering & death
Blessings/ Benefits	Forgiveness of sins, Assurance of salvation	Power to live a more deserving life	Strengthens appreciation for Jesus

2. The Sacramental view is the teaching of the Bible.
3. Some regard Holy Communion primarily as a "Sacrifice" in which the bread and wine are changed into Christ's body and blood and in which Jesus' sacrifice is re-enacted in an unbloody manner and offered to God as a payment for sins of the living and the dead.

1 Corinthians 11:26-29 - *For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.*

- a. The Bible counters this view by pointing out that communicants actually eat and drink the physical elements of bread and wine.

Hebrews 9:25-26 - *Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

- b. The Bible also opposes this view by teaching that Jesus made a complete once-for-all-people and for-all-sins sacrifice that does not need to be repeated.

- c. The "sacrificial" view treats Jesus' redeeming work with great contempt and makes Holy Communion a meriting work of people rather than a precious gift of God.

- 4. Some regard Holy Communion primarily as a "Symbol" in which Jesus' body and blood are represented, but not really present, and in which people can remember Jesus' sacrifice for their sins on Calvary but receive no forgiveness.

1 Corinthians 10:16 - *Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?*

- a. The Bible counters this view by teaching that communicants actually take part or participate in Christ's body and blood which are present.

Matthew 26:28 - *This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*

- b. The Bible also opposes this view by indicating that God actually gives forgiveness of sins in Holy Communion.
- c. The "symbolical" view denies the true essence of Holy Communion and leaves it a powerless, empty ceremony.

III. The Benefits And Purposes Of Holy Communion

Hebrews 8:8b, 10a-12 - *{8b} "The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. {10a} This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. {11} No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. {12} For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."*

Hebrews 9:15 - *For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance--now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.*

Matthew 26:27-28 - *Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."*

- A. By redeeming us, Jesus established the new covenant (a covenant is a solemn, binding agreement between people) God had promised.
1. At the heart of this covenant of grace, God grants forgiveness of sins to people and has intimate fellowship with them.
 2. In Holy Communion, Jesus gives the blessings of that covenant: full forgiveness and intimate fellowship with God to His believing people.

Hebrews 9:14 - *How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*

3. Jesus uses these blessings to increase our faith in God so we are sure of His pardon and strengthened to serve Him.

Luke 22:19-20 - *And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."*

- B. In Holy Communion, Jesus gives us the forgiveness of sins in a most personal, convincing way.
1. He gives individually to believers His body and blood by which He won our forgiveness.
 2. He gives this gift in a way that involves all our senses.

1 Corinthians 11:26 - *For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

- C. By celebrating Holy Communion, we personally remember and publicly confess that Jesus died to give us forgiveness and eternal life.

1 Corinthians 10:17 - *Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.*

- D. By celebrating Holy Communion, we also express our united fellowship with God and other believers in Christ, a precious result of our Spirit-created faith.

IV. Who Is To Partake Of Holy Communion

1 Corinthians 11:23-29 - {23} *For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, {24} and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." {25} In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." {26} For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. {27} Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. {28} A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. {29} For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.*

- A. Jesus intends that His properly prepared Christians partake of Holy Communion.
1. They are the ones who in faith know and confess ("remember and proclaim") the meaning of Jesus' death and its blessings.
 2. They are the ones who spiritually examine themselves and believe:
 - a. that they are sinful and need God's forgiveness.
 - b. that God forgives them because of Jesus' redeeming work.
 - c. that Jesus' body and blood are truly present in the Sacrament to give them the forgiveness of sins.
- B. In accord with Jesus' will, we carefully instruct people in the Bible's teachings prior to receiving Holy Communion. After this strengthening instruction, they publicly confess their faith in Jesus and their unity in faith with other believers and so indicate their readiness to receive Holy Communion (confirmation).

- C. Christ's Words "given for you" and "poured out for you," place God's blessing into the Sacrament. Communicants receive these blessings by faith in Christ's promise.
- D. God warns against taking Holy Communion unworthily.
1. Unworthy reception consists of a failure to recognize the real presence of Jesus' body and blood and unbelief (the rejection of God's Word of Law and/or Gospel).

1 John 1:8 - If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.
 2. Sin by itself does not make a person unworthy, but a lack of repentance does. Unrepentance is refusing to believe God's Law.
 3. Unworthy reception results in God's judgment on the unworthy communicant. Such a person receives Christ's body and blood not to his/her benefit, but to his/her harm.
 4. A person can repent of the sins of unworthy reception and be forgiven for it.
- E. Because of God's warning and judgment on improper reception of Holy Communion, we lovingly exclude from Communion those who cannot or will not repent of their sins and believe in Jesus and His promises in the Sacrament.
1. The unbelievers or ungodly who openly confess their unbelief.
 2. The openly unrepentant who by words or actions refuse to admit their sinfulness.
 3. The insane or severely retarded or those in a coma who are not capable of examining themselves properly.
 4. The uninstructed, children and adults, who are not properly instructed in the teachings of the Bible and so can not properly examine themselves.
 5. Those who teach or follow false doctrine and are not part of the fellowship of the true Christian faith. (This is explained more fully in the next section.)

V. Close Communion

- A. In our church body we practice "close" or "fellowship" communion in which we admit to Holy Communion those who are instructed in the teachings of God's Word, publicly confess their faith in them and who are willing and able to examine themselves.

- B. This practice is sometimes misunderstood and misinterpreted as an unloving, snobbish practice. A biblical look at this practice will help us understand it correctly.

1 Corinthians 11:29 - *For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.*

- C. To invite people who were not taught to recognize Jesus' body and blood to commune is to invite them to receive God's judgment on themselves.

1. This is a cruel, unloving thing to do.
2. Christian love refuses to let this harm come to them and strives to warn of the danger and help that person gain a proper understanding first so they can properly commune later.

1 Corinthians 10:17 - *Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.*

Matthew 28:20a - *and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*

Romans 16:17 - *I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.*

- D. Holy Communion is an expression of unity of faith among people.
1. Jesus wants us to be united on all that He tells us in His Word.
 2. If a person by his/her public confession (which includes membership in a congregation and church body) disagrees with what the Bible teaches (and we believe) as true, he/she is not truly united with us in faith.
 3. To commune a person who confesses contrary to God's Word is both dishonest and misleading.
 4. Excluding from Communion those who have a confession contrary to the Word is a concerned call to them to accept the true teaching of the Bible and be united with us in faith.
- E. Confirmed members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) may take Holy Communion in any of its congregations and in those of our sister synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS). It is proper to introduce yourself to the pastor before the service and indicate your desire to commune.
- F. Since we are not united with other denominations in all that God's Word teaches, it is not proper to commune in churches of other denominations, even those affiliated with other Lutheran church bodies.

VI. Proper Preparation For Holy Communion

A. Good participation in Holy Communion requires good preparation.

2 Corinthians 13:5 - Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you--unless, of course, you fail the test?

B. Before we attend Holy Communion, God wants us to examine ourselves to see if we are sorry for our sins, trust in Jesus' forgiveness for us and recognize what Holy Communion is and gives.

C. A good method of preparation is to ask ourselves these questions:

1. Do I believe that I am a sinner? (Yes)
2. Am I sorry for my sins? (Yes)
3. Do I believe that Jesus is my Savior from sin and that He has earned forgiveness for me by His life, death, and resurrection? (Yes)
4. Do I believe that in the Lord's Supper I actually receive with the bread and wine the true body and blood of Jesus for the assurance of the forgiveness of my sins? (Yes)
5. Do I desire to improve my sinful life and, with God helping me, dedicate my life ever more to Christ and to His service? (Yes)

D. Our self examination may reveal we have committed many sins and/or that we have a weak faith. This discovery should be an encouragement rather than a discouragement to take Holy Communion.

Romans 5:6 - You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

Mark 9:24 - Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

John 6:37b - "Whoever comes to me I will never drive away."

1. Proper reception of Holy Communion requires a sincere sorrow for sins and faith in Christ to forgive.
2. As long as we are sorry for our sins and believe that Jesus forgives our sins, we may receive Holy Communion. Jesus will not refuse a repentant believer even though his/her sins are many and his/her faith is weak.
3. In fact, Jesus will use Holy Communion to assure us that He has forgiven our sins to strengthen our faith in Him.

Psalms 32:3,5 - When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not

*cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"-
- and you forgave the guilt of my sin.*

4. If a particular sin is troubling a person, he/she should speak with the pastor about it prior to communing.
 - a. In this way, the matter can be resolved through personal confession and absolution.
 - b. After this, the person may commune with an untroubled conscience.

VII. Regular Reception Of Holy Communion

Luke 22:19-20 - And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

1 Corinthians 11:26 - For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

- A. Jesus invites and commands us to receive Holy Communion again and again.

Romans 4:7 - "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

Matthew 11:28 - "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

- B. We have a deep need for the forgiveness, peace, joy and strength which Jesus gives us in Holy Communion.

Hebrews 10:25 - Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

- C. Christians give and receive important spiritual encouragement to each other by communing frequently.

Acts 2:42 - They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

- D. Through the example of the early Christians, God teaches us to receive Holy Communion regularly - unless there is some serious reason not to.

- E. Taking Holy Communion frequently does not mean that we may or will take it for granted. If we prepare well and remember this Sacrament's worth, we can take it frequently without despising it.

VIII. Practical Matters Concerning Holy Communion

- A. Who can administer Holy Communion
1. The administration of Holy Communion is part of the Gospel ministry which God has given to all His believers.
 2. Since Holy Communion is celebrated among Christians gathered around the Gospel, its administration is properly carried out by those the congregation calls or chooses to perform this duty.
 - a. The pastor's call includes this duty.
 - b. A congregation may also call one or more of its qualified men (often elders or officers) to assist in this work.
 3. The validity of Holy Communion does not depend on the faith or position of the person who administers it, but on the powerful Word of God.
- B. Communion registration.
1. Many congregations have some method of registering people to receive Holy Communion.
 2. Registration gives people the opportunity to give extra thought to their preparation and readiness for communing.
 3. Registration also helps the congregation fulfill its responsibility to care for the souls of its members.
- C. Distribution practices.
1. In matters concerning Holy Communion which God has not addressed in His Word, God gives Christians great freedom to choose their own practices.
 2. A congregation may use either or both common or individual cups.
 3. Communicants may kneel, stand or sit to receive Holy Communion.
 4. Members generally sing congregational hymns and offer personal prayers while they are in the pews during the distribution.
- D. Receiving Holy Communion
1. Suggestions on receiving the elements.
 2. Suggestions for our thoughts: Remembering, Expecting, Request, Thanksgiving.
- E. Private or personal communion.
1. If a communicant member is hospitalized, shut-in, working on Communion Sundays, or otherwise unable to receive Holy Communion regularly, he/she may request private or personal communion.

2. The pastor or another called member will arrange to give that person Holy Communion so he/she can receive its blessings.
3. The pastor and elders are concerned about your spiritual welfare. Do not hesitate to make your need known.

IX. Home Study

A. LESSON REVIEW: Mark each statement either A (Agree) or D (Disagree)

- _____ 1. Jesus instituted Holy Communion on the occasion of the Jewish Day of Atonement.
- _____ 2. In Holy Communion, Christ's body and blood are present along with the bread and the wine.
- _____ 3. Christ's Word gives Holy Communion its great power.
- _____ 4. At its essence, Holy Communion is a wonderful sacrifice God allows us to offer Him.
- _____ 5. At the heart of God's new covenant is His gracious agreement to forgive all our sins.
- _____ 6. As long as a person believes in Jesus he may take the Lord's Supper.
- _____ 7. Sinning by itself does not disqualify us from receiving Holy Communion.
- _____ 8. Whoever takes Holy Communion unworthily will be damned.
- _____ 9. Not everyone who goes to communion receives the forgiveness of sins.
- _____ 10. We can feel free to commune in any Christian congregation.
- _____ 11. Before going to the Lord's Supper we must show God that we deserve its blessings.

- _____ 12. A person can have a weak faith and still go to Holy Communion.
- _____ 13. It is important for us to go to Communion on a regular basis.
- _____ 14. Holy Communion doesn't become meaningless to people who prepare carefully to receive it.
- _____ 15. Only pastors may administer Holy Communion.

B. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS (Answer the following questions)

- 1. What truths about Holy Communion encourage a Christian to receive it regularly?

- 2. What loving scriptural reasons can you see behind the practice of "close" communion?

- 3. What are some helpful ways to prepare yourself for receiving Holy Communion?

C. MEMORY TREASURES: (Memorize the following Bible verses to build up your knowledge of God's Word)

1 Corinthians 11:23 - *For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."*

Matthew 26:28 - *This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*

D. READING DURING THE WEEK

___ Day 1 - Gospel of John 1	___ Day 5 - John 5
___ Day 2 - John 2	___ Day 6 - John 6
___ Day 3 - John 3	___ Day 7 - John 7
___ Day 4 - John 4	

E. HYMN/PRAAYER

Hymn 312: 1, 8 in Christian Worship: "Lord Jesus Christ, You Have Prepared"

Lord Jesus Christ, you have prepared This feast for our salvation;
It is your body and your blood, And at your invitation
As weary souls, with sin oppressed, We come to you for needed rest,
For comfort, and for pardon.

For your consoling supper, Lord Be praised throughout all ages!
Preserve it, for in ev'ry place The world against it rages.
Grant that this sacrament may be A blessed comfort unto me
When living and when dying.

Welcome To Life!

Lesson 9

- Contents:
- I. Suffering
 - II. Death
 - III. The State Of The Soul After Death
 - IV. The Second Coming Of Christ
 - V. The Resurrection Of The Dead
 - VI. The Final Judgment
 - VII. Hell
 - VIII. Heaven

* Review the Home Study questions from Lesson 8

I. Suffering

Job 5:7 - *Yet man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward.*

Job 14:1 - *"Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.*

- A. All people experience troubles and suffering of various kinds during their life on earth.
- B. These sufferings come for a variety of reasons.

Romans 2:9a - *There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil.*

- 1. Suffering is the unpleasant result of sin.

Job 4:8 - *As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it.*

Lamentations 1:5b - *The Lord has brought her grief because of her many sins.*

- 2. Sometimes people suffer as a direct result of their own sin.

Psalm 55:2b-3 - *My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught at the voice of the enemy, at the stares of the wicked; for they bring down suffering upon me and revile me in their anger.*

- 3. Sometimes people suffer as a result of other people's sins.

John 9:1-3 - *As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born*

blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.

4. Sometimes people suffer, not as the result of a specific sin, but as a consequence and reminder of humanity's sin in general.

Acts 14:22b - *We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.*

John 15:18, 20b, 21a - *"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. . . No servant is greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. . . They will treat you this way because of my name."*

5. Sometimes Christians suffer because they belong to Jesus Christ and face the attacks of God's enemies.

Job 1:8-12 - {8} *Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." {9}"Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. {10}"Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. {11}But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face." {12}The Lord said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.*

6. Sometimes God permits suffering to afflict people.

Psalms 71:19b-20a - *Who, O God, is like you? Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter.*

Lamentations 1:12b - *Is any suffering like my suffering that was inflicted on me, that the Lord brought on me in the day of his fierce anger?*

7. Sometimes God Himself afflicts people with suffering.

C. Our suffering raises a number of important issues for us to consider.

1. Why do bad things have to happen to us and others?
2. Who is responsible (or to blame) for our sufferings?
3. Is our suffering a punishment for our sins?
4. If God loves us, why does He allow us to suffer, sometimes more than wicked people?
5. How will I react to the sufferings I face?

D. God's purposes in the suffering of non-Christians.

1. God has several purposes for permitting or placing afflictions on unbelievers:

Psalm 39:11a - *"You rebuke and discipline men for their sin."*

Hosea 5:10b, 14b, 15a - *"I will pour out my wrath on them like a flood of water. . . . I will tear to pieces and go away. . . . Then I will go back to my place until they admit their guilt."*

2. God uses afflictions in order to lead unbelievers to admit and repent of their sins.

Leviticus 26:18-19 - *"If after all this you will not listen to me, I will punish you for your sins seven times over. "If you remain hostile toward me and refuse to listen to me, I will multiply your afflictions seven times over, as your sins deserve."*

3. God uses afflictions in order to punish unbelievers for their refusal to repent.

Psalm 73:3-5, 7-9, 14, 16-19 - *{3} For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. {4} They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. {5} They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills. {7} From their callous hearts comes iniquity ; the evil conceits of their minds know no limits. {8} They scoff, and speak with malice; in their arrogance they threaten oppression. {9} Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth. {14} All day long I have been plagued; I have been punished every morning. {16} When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me {17} till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. {18} Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. {19} How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors!*

Psalm 37:38 - *But all sinners will be destroyed; the future of the wicked will be cut off.*

4. The fact that God allows some wicked people to have relatively comfortable lives on earth does not mean that He will let them go unpunished.

E. God's purposes in the suffering of Christians.

1. God has dramatically different purposes for permitting or placing afflictions on His believers.

Hebrews 12:2-3 - *Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him*

who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

2. God directs believers to look at their suffering in the light of Jesus Christ and His suffering and death for our salvation. Jesus reveals God's loving eternal purposes for them and helps them make proper sense of their suffering.

Psalm 119:67, 71 - {67} Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word. {71} It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.

3. God uses afflictions, not to punish believers, but to correct them when they sin so that they remain in faith and to teach them to obey Him and His Word more faithfully.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 - To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Corinthians 1:9 - Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

4. God uses afflictions to protect believers from their sinful pride and to teach them to rely on God's power for their blessing.

1 Peter 1:6-7 - In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Isaiah 48:10 - See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.

5. God uses afflictions to test believers and to purify their faith of imperfections (e.g. Refining gold in fire).

Hebrews 12:7-11 - Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who

disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Proverbs 3:11-12 - *My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.*

6. God uses afflictions to discipline believers for their benefit now and forever.

Romans 8:18, 23 - *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.*

7. God uses afflictions to help believers recognize the greater value of His spiritual and eternal blessings and to help Christians long for the joy and perfection of heaven.

Psalms 88:1, 3, 15-18 - *{1} O Lord, the God who saves me, day and night I cry out before you. {3} For my soul is full of trouble and my life draws near the grave. {15} From my youth I have been afflicted and close to death; I have suffered your terrors and am in despair. {16} Your wrath has swept over me; your terrors have destroyed me. {17} All day long they surround me like a flood; they have completely engulfed me. {18} You have taken my companions and loved ones from me; the darkness is my closest friend.*

8. In His wisdom God permits especially heavy afflictions on some of His believers.

Lamentations 3:22 - *Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.*

1 Corinthians 10:13-14 - *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.*

9. In His mercy God will not permit more affliction on a believer than the believer with God's help can bear.

Psalms 34:19 - *A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all;*

Lamentations 3:31-33 - *For men are not cast off by the Lord forever.*

Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love. For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men.

10. In His unfailing love, God delivers His believers from their afflictions when those afflictions have served their purpose in their lives.

F. Responding to sufferings

Proverbs 3:11 - *My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent his rebuke.*

Lamentations 3:38-40 - *Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both calamities and good things come? Why should any living man complain when punished for his sins? Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.*

1. God does not want us to resent our suffering or complain about God's dealing with us.
2. Instead He wants us to search ourselves, learn from our sufferings and turn to Him.

1 Peter 4:12, 19 - *{12} Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. {19} So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.*

1 Peter 2:21, 23 - *{21} To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. {23} When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.*

3. God doesn't want us to be shocked or surprised by our sufferings.
4. Instead He wants us to commit ourselves to His grace, endure our sufferings with Christ-like patience and wait for His deliverance.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5 - *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.*

5. God also wants us to receive His comfort in Christ when we suffer and then share that comfort with others who are troubled.

II. Death

A. God tells us about three kinds of death in His Word:

1. Physical death which is separation from the physical blessings of God.
2. Spiritual death which is separation from the spiritual blessings of God (unbelief).
3. Eternal death which is separation from the eternal blessings of God (damnation).

Psalm 89:48 - *What man can live and not see death, or save himself from the power of the grave ?*

Psalm 90:10 - *The length of our days is seventy years-- or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.*

Ecclesiastes 7:2b - *Death is the destiny of every man; the living should take this to heart.*

B. All people will die physically at the end of their earthly life.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 - *And the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.*

C. At the time of physical death, a person's body and soul are separated.

1. The body decays and returns to dust.
2. The soul passes on to God in eternity.

Hebrews 9:27 - *Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.*

D. At death a person's eternal destiny is sealed as his/her soul faces God for judgment.

Romans 5:12 - *Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.*

E. Although death comes to all, it is not a natural event for people. Death came only as a result of sin and was not part of God's original plans for us.

Ecclesiastes 4:11b - *He has also set eternity in the hearts of men.*

F. God has given people an awareness of and longing for an eternal life beyond this earthly life.

Hebrews 2:15 - *And free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

G. By nature all people as sinners are afraid of death.

John 11:25 - *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;*

Psalm 49:15 - *But God will redeem my life from the grave; he will surely take me to himself.*

- H. Believers in Jesus are confident that God will raise them from the dead and being brought safely to heaven. Believers still battle the fears of the sinful nature about death.

Proverbs 11:7 - *When a wicked man dies, his hope perishes; all he expected from his power comes to nothing.*

Proverbs 24:19-20 - *Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of the wicked, for the evil man has no future hope, and the lamp of the wicked will be snuffed out.*

- I. Unbelievers die with no prospect of a blessed eternity. Christless hopes they hold to (such as reincarnation, getting to heaven because of their own goodness, ceasing to exist after death) will prove to be false and empty.

Psalm 31:15a - *My times are in Your hands.*

Job 14:5 - *Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.*

- J. God determines the length of our life and the time of our death.

Isaiah 57:1-2 - *The righteous perish, and no one ponders it in his heart; devout men are taken away, and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil. Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death.*

- K. God may take the life of a believer at a young age to spare them from future evil.
1. Death for a believer is a blessing whenever it comes. For him/her the best is yet to come.
 2. On the other hand, death for the unbeliever is a terrible evil. All he/she has is this life and for him/her the worst is yet to come.

Ecclesiastes 8:7, 8b - *Since no man knows the future, who can tell him what is to come? No one has power over the day of his death.*

Psalm 39:4 - *"Show me, O Lord, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life.*

Psalm 90:5a, 12 - *You sweep men away in the sleep of death. Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*

- L. Since our time of death is uncertain and fast approaching, let us wisely prepare ourselves for that time.

III. The State Of The Soul After Death

- A. The Bible speaks of two places where people will spend eternity: Heaven and Hell.

John 3:36 - *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.*"

- B. Where a person spends eternity depends on his/her response to Jesus Christ in this lifetime.
1. Those who believe in Jesus as their Savior will go to heaven.
 2. Those who don't believe in Jesus as their Savior will go to hell.

- C. The departed souls of believers.

Luke 23:43 - *Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."*

2 Corinthians 5:8 - *We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.*

Revelation 14:13 - *Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."*

1. The soul of the believer goes to heaven to be with God.
2. The soul actively enjoys the blessedness of heaven.

- D. The departed souls of unbelievers.

1 Peter 3:19-20a - *Through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison who disobeyed long ago.*

Luke 16:22 - *"The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.*

- * The soul of the unbeliever goes directly to hell and suffers.

- E. The souls of the dead do not return to the world.

1. There is no transmigration of souls or reincarnation.

Isaiah 63:16 - *But you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us; you, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name.*

2. The dead are ignorant of the living and cannot communicate with them.

3. "Spirits" that appear or speak to people are either fake or the work of evil angels.

F. There is no purgatory where souls go to suffer before they can enter heaven.

IV. The Second Coming Of Christ

Acts 1:11 - *"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."*

Titus 2:13 - *While we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.*

A. At the end of time Jesus Christ will come back to this earth.

Revelations 1:7 - *Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him.*

B. Christ will return visibly.

Matthew 25:31 - *"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.*

C. Christ will return in glory and power.

Jude 14b-15a - *See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of His holy ones to judge everyone.*

D. Christ will return to judge all people.

Hebrews 9:28 - *So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

E. Christ will return to fulfill His promises to deliver and bless His believers.

Mark 13:32-33 - *"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.*

2 Peter 3:10-11, 12b - *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire and the elements will melt in the heat.*

1 Peter 4:7a - *The end of all things is near.*

F. Christ will return suddenly and unexpectedly on a day known only to God to end the world and universe.

1. Christians are warned to be ready for that day.
2. St. Augustine: "This one day God has concealed from us that we might keep a better and closer watch over all the other days of our life."
3. Many people have made false predictions about the time of Christ's return.

Matthew 24:3-14 - {3} As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" {4} Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. {5} For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ, ' and will deceive many. {6} You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. {7} Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. {8} All these are the beginning of birth pains. {9} "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. {10} At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, {11} and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. {12} Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, {13} but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. {14} And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

G. Jesus gives signs that point to His return. They can be grouped in three basic categories.

1. Signs in nature: earthquakes, floods, eclipses of the sun and moon.
2. Signs in the lives of people and nations: wars, famines, plagues, wickedness.
3. Signs in the realm of religion: false teachers, persecutions, many falling away from the true faith, Christian love growing cold, the growing influence of the anti-christ, the preaching of the gospel throughout the world.
4. The signs of Christ's return are being fulfilled throughout history.

Matthew 24:21-25 - {21} For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equaled again. {22} If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. {23} At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. {24} For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible. {25} See, I have told you ahead of time.

- H. A relatively brief time of great distress will immediately precede Jesus' return.
- I. God does not teach that there will be a special 1,000 year rule of Christ on earth or time of prosperity for the Church prior to Christ's final coming.

2 Peter 3:3-4 - *First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."*

Revelation 6:15-17 - *Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"*

- J. Some unbelievers scoff at the idea of Jesus' Second Coming. However, Jesus will return to the eternal regret of all unbelievers who must face His fierce anger over their sin and unbelief.

Luke 21:28 - *When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."*

2 Peter 3:11-12a - *Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.*

Revelation 22:20b - *Come, Lord Jesus.*

- K. Christians live in eager expectation of the Second Coming.
 1. The Day of Christ's return is the day of complete release and blessing for the Christian.
 2. Christians live purposeful lives which they thankfully dedicate to God. They live as though Jesus will return at any time.

V. The Resurrection of The Dead

Daniel 12:2 - *Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.*

John 5:28-29 - *"Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out--those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.*

- A. On the last day God will raise the dead and will reunite their bodies with their souls.

Job 19:25-27 - *I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes--I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*

Philippians 3:20-21 - *But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.*

- B. God will change the bodies of the believers into glorified ones so they are no longer subject to sin, sickness or death.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 - *Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.*

- C. God will immediately transform the bodies of believers who are alive when Christ returns into a glorified condition without making them die.

Isaiah 66:24 - *"And they will go out and look upon the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind."*

- D. The bodies of all unbelievers will bear all the terrible effects of sin.

VI. The Final Judgment

2 Corinthians 5:10a - *We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.*

Romans 14:12 - *So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.*

Acts 17:31a - *For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed.*

- A. God has appointed Jesus Christ to judge all people on the last day. On that day we will give an account of our life to God.

- B. Christ will judge with divine justice.

John 5:24 - *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.*

John 12:48 - *There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.*

John 3:17-18 - *For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.*

1. The basis for judgment is faith in Jesus Christ.
2. All the believers in Christ receive forgiveness for their sins and eternal life, and avoid God's condemnation for their sins.
3. All unbelievers stand condemned in God's judgment because they rejected the Savior and must pay the penalty for their sins themselves.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 - {13} *Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. {14} We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. {15} According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. {16} For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. {17} After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. {18} Therefore encourage each other with these words.*

Matthew 25:31-46 - {31} *"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. {32} All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. {33} He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. {34} "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. {35} For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, {36} I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' {37} "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? {38} When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? {39} When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' {40} "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' {41} "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. {42} For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, {43} I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' {44} "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty*

or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' {45} "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' {46} "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

- C. The scene of Judgment Day
1. The heavens suddenly open, the world-wide announcement of Jesus' return is broadcast, and Jesus can be seen coming in the clouds.
 2. All the dead are resurrected. The believing dead begin to ascend into the sky to meet and greet the returning Savior.
 3. The believers who are left on earth are given "glorified bodies" and they, too, begin their ascent into the heavens.
 4. The separation between believers and unbelievers is made.
 5. Jesus blesses the believers, recalling how their faith in Him was active in doing good works.
 6. Jesus curses the unbelievers. They had rejected God by rejecting Jesus. Now God rejects them.
 7. Jesus points out their unworthiness of blessing when He shows how their unbelief made them neglectful of their fellow human beings.
 8. The unbelievers go to eternal punishment in hell.
 9. The believers, body and soul, go to eternal life in heaven.
- D. The difference between the final judgment and judgment on the day of one's death.
1. The question arises: Are there two judgments?
 2. The day a person dies, his/her eternal destiny is decided forever. His/Her soul goes either to heaven or to hell.
 3. In the final judgment after the resurrection of the body, the judgment made at the time of death is not changed, but merely made public knowledge.
 4. In the final judgment, those who are still living are judged without having to die.
 5. The final judgment also deals with the destiny of the body, not just the soul as in the case of the judgment at death.

VII. **Hell**

- A. The Bible's teaching of an eternal hell is a tragically real, yet highly unpopular subject.

Luke 16:23-24 - *In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'*

Matthew 22:13 - *"Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

- B. Hell is a place of endless torment full of pain, despair, and helpless fury.

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 - *He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.*

Psalms 38:4, 8 - *My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear. I am feeble and utterly crushed; I groan in anguish of heart.*

- C. Hell is eternal exclusion from God's merciful presence. The worst part of hell is having an eternally tormenting conscience which must live without any hope of God's love and mercy coming to the rescue.

Luke 12:4-5 - *"I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.*

- D. Jesus calls people to revere God who can put them into hell and to trust in Him so they do not go there.

VIII. Heaven

Philippians 1:23 - *I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far;*

1 Corinthians 13:12 - *Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

1 John 3:2 - *Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*

Psalms 17:15 - *And I--in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.*

- A. In heaven believers will be with Jesus Christ
1. They will see Him face to face.
 2. They will know Him intimately.
 3. They will experience His love in full.

B. In heaven believers will be like Christ - sinless and holy.

Revelation 21:4 - *He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.*

Revelation 7:16 - *Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat.*

C. In heaven, believers will be free from all evils.

Psalm 16:11 - *You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*

Revelation 7:15 - *Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.*

Revelation 5:9 - *And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.*

Colossians 3:4 - *When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

D. In heaven believers will have perfect joy.

1. They will enjoy heaven always. It will never get dull or boring.
2. They will find their highest delight in praising God for His saving love and serving Him with willing hearts.
3. They will have glory as God's blessed people.

E. Former relationships in heaven.

1. We may wonder: Will we know our believing friends and relatives in heaven and will things be the same between us?
2. People may also wonder: Will we miss unbelieving friends and relatives who went to hell?

Luke 20:34-36 - *Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection.*

3. Heaven will not be the same kind of existence we have now.
4. There is no marriage, having children or death in heaven.
5. The great relationship that unites people in heaven is their faith in Christ.

Luke 7:11-15 - *Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out--the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry." Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.*

6. From Jesus' practice of reuniting people when He raised people on earth, it seems that He will reunite believing family members and friends in heaven.
7. Since heaven is a place of perfect joy, we will not have painful memories.

IX. Home Study

A. LESSON REVIEW: Mark each statement either A (Agree) or D (Disagree)

- _____ 1. All human suffering is a direct or indirect result of sin.
- _____ 2. The amount of suffering we undergo is a reliable measure of how much or how little God loves us.
- _____ 3. God sends suffering to His believers because He intends to improve and strengthen them spiritually.
- _____ 4. We have a right to challenge God's compassion and justice when we see or experience great suffering.
- _____ 5. Losing one's physical life is the worst thing that can possibly happen to a person.
- _____ 6. A believer in Christ no longer has any fears of death.
- _____ 7. When a person dies, his/her soul goes to either heaven or hell.
- _____ 8. We are now living in the "last times."
- _____ 9. Since we don't really know when Jesus will return, it really isn't worth being too concerned about.

- _____ 10. God will transform and glorify the bodies of believers on the Last Day so they are free from sin and fit to live with Him forever.
- _____ 11. Jesus' basis for judging where people will spend eternity is whether they believe in Him as their Savior or not.
- _____ 12. People who died as unbelievers will get a second chance to get to heaven on Judgment Day.
- _____ 13. Hell is the place where unbelievers will face God's punishing wrath on their sins eternally.
- _____ 14. Heaven will be almost perfect in every way.
- _____ 15. One of the great delights of heaven is to be reunited with believing relatives and friends.

B. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS: (Answer the following questions)

1. What is the most helpful spiritual lesson you have learned from your suffering?

2. How are you preparing for the time of your death and Christ's return?

3. What earthly sorrows have you experienced that will make heaven especially satisfying for you?

- C. MEMORY TREASURES: (Memorize the following Bible verses to build up your knowledge of God's Word)

Psalm 34:19 - *A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all;*

Hebrews 9:28 - *So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

- D. READING DURING THE WEEK

___ Day 1 - Psalm 73	___ Day 5 - Matthew 25
___ Day 2 - Romans 8	___ Day 6 - Revelation 21
___ Day 3 - Psalm 90	___ Day 7 - Revelation 22
___ Day 4 - Matthew 24	

- E. HYMN/PRAYER

Hymn 426: 1, 3 in Christian Worship: "Yours Forever, God of Love"

Yours forever, God of love!
Hear us from your throne above;
Yours forever may we be
Here and in eternity!

Yours forever, Lord of life!
Shield us through our earthly strife.
You, the life, the truth, the way,
Guide us to the realms of day.

Welcome To Life!

Lesson 10

- Contents:
- I. God Gives The Law
 - II. The Purposes Of The Law
 - III. Our Relationship To The Law
 - IV. The Ten Commandments
 - V. The First Commandment
 - VI. The Second Commandment
 - VII. The Third Commandment
 - VIII. Our Public Worship Of God

* Review the Home Study questions from Lesson 9

I. God Gives The Law

Isaiah 33:22 - *For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; it is he who will save us.*

Psalms 19:7-10 - *The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.*

- A. God gives His Law to people as a precious, helpful gift of His love.

Romans 2:14-15 - *(Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.)*

- B. God gives people a natural knowledge of His Law when He creates them (Natural Law). Since humanity's fall into sin, this once perfect knowledge has been weakened and flawed so that it is incomplete and even misguided in some points.

**AT CREATION****AFTER THE FALL**

Exodus 24:12 - *The Lord said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and commands I have written for their instruction."*

Deuteronomy 10:4 - *The Lord wrote on these tablets what he had written before, the Ten Commandments he had proclaimed to you on the mountain, out of the fire, on the day of the assembly. And the Lord gave them to me.*

Romans 2:18 - *if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law;*

- C. God also gives us His Law by having it written in His Word (Written Law). By following the written Law we can know exactly what His moral will for us is.

Leviticus 19:2b, 3a, 11, 37 - *"Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy. Each of you must respect his mother and father. "Do not steal. "Do not lie. "Do not deceive one another. "Keep all my decrees and all my laws and follow them. I am the Lord."*

- D. In the Law, God expresses His holy will for our lives.
1. He tells us how He wants us to be and what He wants us to do and not do.
 2. He demands that we obey His will completely.

Matthew 22:37-39 - *Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'*

Romans 13:10b - *Love is the fulfillment of the law.*

- E. In all the Law, God's great requirement is to love.
1. He wants us to love Him, above all, and also all other people.
 2. He wants us to love with wholehearted, self-giving devotion.

II. The Purposes Of The Law

Matthew 19:16 - *Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"*

- A. Some think they can get to heaven by keeping the Law.

Matthew 19:17b - *If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.*

Romans 3:12 - *All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."*

Galatians 3:10 - *All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."*

B. A person could get to heaven if he/she kept the Law perfectly. No one, except Jesus, can and has done this. Our failure puts us under God's curse. The Law is not a means by which people can save themselves.

C. God has given His Law for three special purposes.

1 Timothy 1:9-10a - *We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers.*

1. The Law serves as a curb to hold the sin of all people in check and so preserve some order in the world.

Romans 3:19-20 - *Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.*

Romans 7:7b, 13b - *"I would not have known what sin was except through the law. . . . In order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful."*

2. The Law serves as a mirror to show all people their sin, its consequences and their inability to save themselves.

Psalms 119:35 - *Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight.*

John 14:15 - *"If you love me, you will obey what I command.*

3. The Law serves as a guide for Christians to show them how to express their love for God in ways that please the Lord.

III. Our Relationship To The Law

Romans 8:7 - *The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.*

- A. By nature all people hate the Law and rebel against it.

Galatians 3:10 - *All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."*

- B. By nature all people are condemned and cursed by the Law for their sins.

Romans 7:12, 13b - *So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good. In order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.*

Galatians 3:23-24 - *Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.*

- C. With convicting power the Law reveals our sins, their spiritually deadly consequences and our need for a Savior.

Galatians 3:13 - *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."*

Romans 10:4 - *Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.*

Romans 7:4 - *So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.*

- D. By bringing people to faith in Jesus, God releases them from the punishing consequences and controlling power of the Law.

Psalms 119:70b, 72, 97 - *{70b} but I delight in your law. {72} The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold. {97} Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.*

- E. God leads believers to love and cherish the Law and take it to heart.

1 John 4:19 - *We love because he first loved us.*

1 John 5:3 - *This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,*

Psalms 119:32 - *I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free.*

- F. God leads His believers to want to obey the Law for the right reason, out of thankfulness for His saving love in Christ.

Ezekiel 36:27 - *And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.*

Philippians 2:13 - *For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.*

- G. God gives His believers the Holy Spirit so that they are able to keep the Law with a willing, God-pleasing spirit.

IV. The Ten Commandments

Exodus 20:1-17 - {1} *And God spoke all these words: {2} "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. {3} "You shall have no other gods before me. {4} "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. {5} You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, {6} but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. {7} "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. {8} "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. {9} Six days you shall labor and do all your work, {10} but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. {11} For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. {12} "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. {13} "You shall not murder. {14} "You shall not commit adultery. {15} "You shall not steal. {16} "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. {17} "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."*

Deuteronomy 10:4 - *The Lord wrote on these tablets what he had written before, the Ten Commandments he had proclaimed to you on the mountain, out of the fire, on the day of the assembly. And the Lord gave them to me.*

- A. One form in which God revealed His moral Law to people is the Ten Commandments.
1. The Ten Commandments express God's holy will for us in a brief, simple way.
 2. Commandments 1 through 3 deal with our duty to love God.
 3. Commandments 4 through 10 deal with our duty to love other people.
- B. We will use the Ten Commandments as a basis for our study of the content of the Law.

- C. The Ten Commandments with a brief explanation of their meaning appear in Appendix B.

V. The First Commandment

Exodus 20:2a, 3 - *"I am the Lord your God. . . You shall have no other gods before me."*

- A. In the First Commandment, God teaches us that He is to have the supreme position in our lives and that nothing must come before Him in our hearts and lives.

Isaiah 45:21b - *"And there is no God apart from Me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but Me."*

Isaiah 43:12b-13 - *"Before Me no god was formed, nor will there be one after Me. I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from me there is no savior. I have revealed and saved and proclaimed-- I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses," declares the Lord, "that I am God. Yes, and from ancient days I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?"*

- B. The Triune God, the God revealed in the Bible is the only true God.
1. People have invented other gods which they rely on and look to as the source of greatest good for their lives.
 2. But only the Triune God is real and powerful.
 3. Only He can truly save and help people.
 4. Only He is deserving of our devotion and allegiance.

Psalm 33:8 - *Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the people of the world revere him.*

Deuteronomy 6:5 - *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.*

Proverbs 3:5 - *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.*

- C. God requires that we revere and stand in awe of Him, love Him and trust in Him above all other people or things.
- D. God forbids us to put anyone or anything ahead of Him in our hearts and lives.

Isaiah 42:8 - *"I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.*

John 5:23 - *That all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.*

1. He will not tolerate the worship of false gods, a god who is not the Triune God. He condemns all religions which do not regard Jesus as the divine Savior and Lord as false.

Matthew 10:37 - *"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me;*

Jeremiah 17:5 - *This is what the Lord says: "Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord.*

Matthew 6:24 - *"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.*

2. He does not allow us to place any person or thing before Him or beside Him as a rival, including ourselves.

E. We put God first in our lives when we:

1. Fear and respect Him and His will above anyone else's.
2. Desire and delight in God more than in anyone or anything else.
3. Do anything or give anything that He wants without hesitation.
4. Look to God for our ultimate security in life.
5. Have complete confidence that everything God tells us is true.

1 Samuel 12:24 - *But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you.*

Psalms 86:11 - *Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.*

- F. May God help us remember the wonderful things He has done for us and give us loving, devoted hearts so that we honor Him above all at all times.

VI. **The Second Commandment**

Exodus 20:7 - *"You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.*

- A. In the Second Commandment, God teaches us that we must properly regard and faithfully use His name.

Hosea 12:5 - *The Lord God Almighty, the Lord is his name of renown!*

Exodus 33:19 - *And the Lord said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have*

mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

Exodus 34:6 - *And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."*

- B. God's name is everything which God reveals to us about Himself, including His titles (God, Lord, Savior, Jesus) and His Word.

Exodus 20:24b - *"wherever I cause my name to be honored, I will come to you and bless you."*

Romans 10:12b-13 - *The same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

- C. God tells us His nature and qualities (His name) in order to bless our lives and save us eternally.

Acts 4:12 - *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."*

Proverbs 18:10 - *The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.*

- D. God's name is the most precious gift God gives us. By His name we are saved and protected from sin, hell and all our spiritual enemies.

- E. God wants us to use His name in ways that honor Him:

Psalm 50:15 - *And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me."*

John 16:23 - *In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.*

1. He wants us to call on Him in prayer.

Psalm 118:1 - *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.*

Ephesians 5:20 - *Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

2. He wants us to give Him thanks for His blessings.

Psalm 145:2 - *Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever.*

Psalm 145:10-12 - *All you have made will praise you, O Lord; your saints will extol you. They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, so that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.*

3. He wants us to praise Him by telling others about His blessings.

Numbers 30:2 - *When a man makes a vow to the Lord or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said.*

4. He wants us to take oaths to have Him witness the truth of what we say or promise when His glory or the welfare of other people requires it.

F. God forbids us to dishonor His name in any way, including:

Leviticus 24:15 - *Say to the Israelites: 'If anyone curses his God, he will be held responsible;*

1. **Blasphemy**, which is speaking evil of God or mocking Him.

James 3:9-10 - *With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.*

2. **Cursing**, which is calling down God's anger and punishment on oneself or any other person or thing.

Leviticus 19:12 - *Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God.*

James 5:12 - *Above all, my brothers, do not swear--not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no, or you will be condemned.*

3. **False and needless swearing**, which is taking oaths falsely, thoughtlessly and in sinful, uncertain and unimportant matters.

Leviticus 19:31 - *"Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God.*

Deuteronomy 18:10-12a - *Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord.*

4. **Satanic or occultic practices**, which is performing supernatural acts with the help of the devil. It includes such things as casting spells, calling up a spirit, fortune-telling, and consulting the dead.

Jeremiah 14:14 - *Then the Lord said to me, "The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I have not sent them or appointed them or spoken to them. They are prophesying to you false visions, divinations, idolatries and the delusions of their own minds.*

Jeremiah 23:32 - *Indeed, I am against those who prophesy false dreams," declares the Lord. "They tell them and lead my people astray with their reckless lies, yet I did not send or appoint them. They do not benefit these people in the least," declares the Lord.*

5. False teaching, which is teaching something that is not true and saying it is God's Word. This is a particularly common and damaging sin.

Matthew 7:21 - *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."*

Matthew 15:8 - *"These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."*

6. Pretending to be a Christian when one doesn't truly believe in Jesus and/or doesn't seek to live according to His Word.

Psalm 103:1-2 - *Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits--*

- G. May God help us remember the great blessings His name gives us and lead us to live to the honor and praise of His name with all our being.

VII. The Third Commandment

Exodus 20:8 - *"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.*

Leviticus 23:3 - *"There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the Lord.*

- A. In the Third Commandment, God teaches us that we must worship Him and find rest in Him.
- B. In the Old Testament, God required His people to set aside Saturday as a special day of rest and worship.
1. The Sabbath (which means "rest") requirement was part of the ceremonial commands God gave Israel for their worship life under His covenant arrangement with them.
 2. One purpose of the Sabbath requirement was to point people to the perfect spiritual rest the coming Savior would bring.

Colossians 2:16-17 - *Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.*

3. With the coming of Christ, God abolished the ceremonial requirements of the old covenant, including the Sabbath Day observance. Jesus had fulfilled its purpose.

Matthew 11:28-29 - *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

- C. Jesus provides the spiritual rest our sin-burdened souls need in the forgiveness He earned for us and freely offers us. "Lord, You have made us for Yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in You."

Matthew 4:10b - *"Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only."*

Psalms 62:5-6 - *Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.*

Colossians 3:16 - *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.*

- D. God commands us to worship Him and enjoy His spiritual rest through the proper use of His Word.
- E. In worship God comes to us and blesses us through His Word and Sacraments.

Isaiah 66:2 - *Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the Lord. "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.*

1. God wants us to respect His Word highly.

Luke 11:28 - *He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."*

2. God wants us to hear, believe and obey His Word

Acts 2:42 - *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

3. God wants us to devote ourselves to make faithful use of His Word and Sacraments.

- F. In worship, we also respond to God by acknowledging His supreme worth.

Psalm 145:3 - *Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.*

Psalm 96:9 - *Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth.*

Psalm 100:1-2 - *Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.*

1. God wants us to recognize His greatness with deep reverence and joy.

Romans 12:1 - *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.*

2. God wants us to offer our entire being to please and serve Him in all aspects of our life.

Psalm 95:1-2 - *Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.*

Psalm 68:19-20 - *Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens. Our God is a God who saves; from the Sovereign Lord comes escape from death.*

3. God wants us to thank and praise Him for His saving work in Jesus.

Psalm 96:8 - *Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts.*

Galatians 6:6 - *Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.*

4. God wants us to bring offerings to Him to honor Him and to support the preaching and teaching of His Word.

Psalm 22:22 - *I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you.*

Hebrews 10:24-25 - *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

5. God wants us to gather regularly with other believers in worship in order to praise God with them and to encourage them in a life of faith and good works.

G. God forbids us to despise Him and His Word:

John 8:47 - *He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."*

1. By refusing to listen to His Word and worship Him.

Hebrews 4:2 - *For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.*

James 1:22 - *Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*

2. By refusing to believe and obey His Word.

Matthew 15:8 - *"These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.*

Ecclesiastes 5:1 - *Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong.*

3. By offering God insincere, empty worship.

VIII. Our Public Worship Of God

Galatians 5:1 - *It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.*

- A. The dates and times for worship.
 1. God does not require us to worship on a specific day as He did in the Old Testament.
 2. In Christian freedom we set aside days and times for our joint worship of God.
 3. The early Christian Church chose Sunday as the main day for worship since it was the first day of creation, the day of Jesus' resurrection and the day the Holy Spirit was specially poured out (Pentecost).
 4. We have chosen to continue that custom although we are not limited to it or bound by it.
 5. We also have chosen to observe a number of seasons (Lent, Advent) and festivals (Christmas, Easter, Ascension, Reformation, New Year's) with special worship services.
- B. The form and content of our worship.
 1. God does not specify particular forms or orders of service for our worship.

1 Corinthians 14:40 - *But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.*

2. He does want us to worship in an orderly way.

Psalm 111:2 - *Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them.*

Psalm 96:2 - *Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day.*

3. We generally follow a "liturgical" form of worship in which we:
 - a. make God the focus of our worship.
 - b. review and proclaim God's saving work for us in Christ.
 - c. involve the congregation actively in the worship of God.

4. Our worship services employ elements that allow us to communicate with God in blessing.
 - a. Confession of sin.....(We speak to God)
 - b. Assurance of forgiveness (Absolution).....(God speaks to us)
 - c. Praise.....(We speak to God)
 - d. God's Word read and proclaimed.....(God speaks to us)
 - e. Offerings.....(We speak to God)
 - f. Prayer.....(We speak to God)
 - g. Sacrament.....(God speaks to us)
 - h. Blessing.....(God speaks to us)

5. The worship leader faces either the altar as a worshipper or the people as the spokesman for God during the service.

C. The Church Year.

1. We follow an annual calendar of special days and seasons called the Church Year. It provides a helpful pattern for proclaiming the great events and central truths of our Christian faith.
2. The Church Year consists of two halves: the festival half of the year is devoted to the life of Christ, the non-festival half focuses on the life of the Christian.
3. The major seasons and festivals of the Church Year along with their liturgical colors are:
 - a. Advent (The four Sundays before Christmas) - We prepare for Jesus' coming: Blue for hope or violet for repentance.
 - b. Christmas (December 25th and the Sundays before January 6th) - We celebrate Jesus' birth: White for joy and holiness.

- c. Epiphany (January 6th until Lent begins) - We recognize Jesus as the God-sent Savior: White for Epiphany, the Baptism of Our Lord and Transfiguration; Green for the other Sundays after the Epiphany.
- d. Lent (46 days before Easter, beginning with Ash Wednesday and including Holy Week with observances for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday) - We solemnly remember Jesus' suffering and death for us: Violet; Black on Good Friday.
- e. Easter (Easter Sunday and the following 6 Sundays) - We celebrate Jesus' resurrection from the dead and its effect on our lives: White.
- f. Ascension (The 40th day after Easter) - We commemorate Jesus' return to heaven as the triumphant Lord of all: White.
- g. Pentecost (The 7th Sunday after Easter) - We mark the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of the New Testament Church: Red.
- h. Trinity Sunday (The Sunday after Pentecost) - We rejoice in the Triune God who saves us: White.
- i. The Pentecost Or Trinity Season (The remaining 21 - 26 Sundays of the Church Year) - We respond to all that God has done for us: Green for life.

Psalm 62:1 - *My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him.*

Psalm 122:1 - *I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord."*

- D. May God lead us to cherish the spiritual rest He gives us through Jesus' saving work and to delight in giving Him our heartfelt worship.

IX. Home Study

- A. LESSON REVIEW: Mark each statement either A (Agree) or D (Disagree)

- _____ 1. Since God has already given us a natural knowledge of His Law, we have little use for the Law He recorded in the Bible.
- _____ 2. The one thing God really requires of us in the Law is to love.
- _____ 3. God expects us to keep His Law perfectly.
- _____ 4. It is still possible for us to get to heaven by personally keeping the Commandments.

- _____ 5. One of the primary purposes of the Law is to convince us that we are hell-deserving sinners, unable to save ourselves.
- _____ 6. In the First Commandment, God insists that He must come first in our lives.
- _____ 7. It is fairly easy for us to desire and respect God above everything.
- _____ 8. If God had not given us His name, we could not be saved.
- _____ 9. It is always wrong for us to swear.
- _____ 10. Consulting a horoscope for guidance for our future is a harmless, innocent practice..
- _____ 11. Teaching false doctrine is a particularly destructive sin.
- _____ 12. God's primary reason for instituting the Sabbath in the Old Testament was to make sure that His people took a day off from work.
- _____ 13. In Christian worship we both receive God's blessings through the Gospel and recognize God's supreme worth in our lives.
- _____ 14. Not believing and obeying God's word when a person hears it is just as bad as not hearing it at all.
- _____ 15. God is satisfied that we attend worship services even if we don't particularly care to worship Him.

B. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS: (Answer the following questions)

1. How does God show His love for us by giving us the Law?

2. Why is God entitled to the supreme position in our lives?

3. What are three strong reasons for worshipping God regularly with fellow believers?

C. MEMORY TREASURES: (Memorize the following Bible verses to build up your knowledge of God's Word)

Matthew 22:37-39 - Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

Psalms 119:32 - I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free.

D. READING DURING THE WEEK

- ___ Day 1 - Deuteronomy 5
- ___ Day 2 - Psalm 119:1-16
- ___ Day 3 - Psalms 95 & 96
- ___ Day 4 - Psalms 98 & 100

- ___ Day 5 - John 8
- ___ Day 6 - John 9
- ___ Day 7 - John 10

E. HYMN/PRAYER

Hymn 459: 1, 2 in Christian Worship: "O God, My Faithful God"

O God, my faithful God, O Fountain ever flowing,
Who good and perfect gifts In mercy are bestowing,
Give me a healthy frame, And may I have within
A conscience free from blame, A soul unhurt by sin.

Grant me the strength to do With ready heart and willing
Whatever you command, My calling here fulfilling,
That I do what I should While trusting you to bless
The outcome for my good, For you must give success.

Welcome To Life!

Lesson 11

- I. Love For Others
- II. The Fourth Commandment
- III. The Fifth Commandment
- IV. The Sixth Commandment

* Review the Home Study questions from Lesson 10

I. Love For Others

John 13:34 - *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.*

Romans 13:8-9 - *Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself."*

- A. In the second part of the Law, God commands us to love other people.
 - 1. God wants us to love others in the same self-giving, unconditional way He loves us.
 - 2. He wants us to love others continually and as naturally as we love ourselves.

1 John 4:19-21 - *We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.*

- B. God considers love for others to be an integral part of our love for Him.
 - 1. We cannot love God while hating the people God places close to us and who need our help.
 - 2. God's love for us moves us to love both God and other people.

II. The Fourth Commandment

Exodus 20:12 - *"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.*

A. In the Fourth Commandment, God teaches us that we must properly use the authority He gives us and genuinely respect the authority of those He places over us.

B. Authority in the family.

1. God gives parents authority and responsibility to raise their children in ways that bring them blessing.

1 Timothy 5:8 - *If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

a. God wants parents to provide for the physical needs of their children

Proverbs 22:6 - *Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.*

Proverbs 29:17 - *Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul.*

Proverbs 13:24 - *He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.*

b. He wants parents to lovingly train and discipline their children to live a wise, God-honoring life.

Ephesians 6:4 - *Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.*

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 - *These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*

c. He wants parents to teach their children to believe God's saving Word and to live as His devoted people.

d. God forbids parents to embitter their children by acting unreasonably or unfairly toward them.

2. God requires children to honor and obey their parents as God's representatives.

Ephesians 6:2 - *"Honor your father and mother"--which is the first commandment with a promise-- "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."*

Leviticus 19:3a - *"Each of you must respect his mother and father"*

a. God wants children to respect their parents highly as His servants.

Proverbs 6:20, 23 - *My son, keep your father's commands and do not forsake your mother's teaching. {23} For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life.*

Proverbs 15:31-32 - *He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise. He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction gains understanding.*

- b. He wants children to listen to and learn from the helpful instruction their parents give them.

Ephesians 6:1 - *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*

Colossians 3:20 - *Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.*

- c. He wants children to obey their parents in all God-pleasing matters.

Leviticus 19:32 - *"Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the Lord.*

- d. God wants children to love and respect their parents and the elderly as part of their reverence for Him.

C. Authority in the church.

Matthew 28:18-20 - *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

- 1. God gives His believers authority and responsibility to preach and teach God's Word and administer the Sacraments to make disciples for Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:18, 20 - *All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: {20} We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

Acts 20:28 - *Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.*

- 2. God calls some of His believers to serve the spiritual welfare of others as public ministers of the Gospel.

Jeremiah 23:28b - *"Let the one who has my word speak it faithfully."*

Titus 2:15 - *These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.*

3. God wants His people to proclaim His Word faithfully and confidently as His servants.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 - *Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.*

Hebrews 13:17 - *Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

4. God wants us to respect and obey the spiritual leaders God has given for our spiritual welfare.

D. Authority in the government.

Romans 13:1-2, 4 - *{1} Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. {2} Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. {4} For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.*

1. God has established governments to have authority and responsibility for the earthly welfare of people.

1 Peter 2:13-14 - *Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.*

Romans 13:5-7 - *Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.*

2. God wants us to respect, obey and support our governing authorities in their work out of love for Him.

E. Authority in society: work, school and other areas.

Titus 3:1-2 - *Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.*

1. God has established other forms of authority for people as they live together in society.
 - a. He wants people to respect all proper authority.
 - b. Some areas where God establishes authority are work, school, organizations and other places in which leadership is required.

Ephesians 6:5-9 - *{5} Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. {6} Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. {7} Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, {8} because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. {9} And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.*

2. God's words on the slave/master relationship of the first century A.D. give us some working principles for the employer/employee and teacher/student relationships of our time.
 - a. God wants those in authority to exercise their authority in humble service to the Savior, treating those under them fairly and lovingly.
 - b. God wants those under authority to respect and obey those over them faithfully in humble service to the Lord.

E. The abuse of authority.

1. Authority is a precious gift God gives us by which we can serve the good of others and honor God.
2. People can abuse the authority God gives them by exercising it in selfish, sinful ways.

Acts 5:29 - *Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!"*

3. When those in authority demand that we sin by acting contrary to God's will, then we may and must disobey them.

Daniel 3:15b-18, 28 - *If you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?" {16} Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to*

the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. {17} If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. {18} But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." {28} Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.

- a. We disobey because of our higher allegiance to God than to any person.
- b. We disobey, trusting in God and willing to make costly sacrifices for our loyalty to Him.

Ephesians 5:20-21 - Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Colossians 3:23-24 - Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

- F. May God lead us to respect His gift of authority and serve Him with all our hearts as we faithfully use the authority He gives us and live under the authority He places over us.

III. **The Fifth Commandment**

Exodus 20:13 - "You shall not murder.

- A. In the Fifth Commandment, God teaches us that we must respect and preserve His precious gift of human life.

Job 33:4 - The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

Isaiah 55:6 - Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near.

- B. God gives us our life as a period of opportunity to come to believe in Him and fulfill His purposes for our lives.

Deuteronomy 32:39 - "See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.

Genesis 9:5b - From each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man.

Romans 13:4 - *For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.*

- C. God reserves for Himself and His appointed representatives in government the right to end a person's life.
1. God allows the government to execute criminals.
 2. God allows the government to take life in defense of its people and allies (just wars).
- D. In the Fifth Commandment, God demands of us the following things:

Ephesians 4:32 - *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

1. He wants us to be kind and compassionate to others and to forgive them when they sin against us.

Galatians 6:10 - *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*

Proverbs 19:17 - *He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done.*

James 1:27a - *Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress.*

2. He wants us to do good to all people, especially to those in need.

Matthew 5:44 - *But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,*

3. God wants us to love and seek the good of even those who hate us.

2 Corinthians 7:1 - *Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.*

4. God wants us to care for our bodies and preserve them from harmful substances and practices.

- E. In the Fifth Commandment, God forbids the following things:

Genesis 9:6 - *"Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.*

Exodus 22:2 - *"If a thief is caught breaking in and is struck so that he dies, the defender is not guilty of bloodshed.*

1. God forbids causing another person's death except in matters of self-defense.

Psalm 31:15 - *My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me.*

Acts 16:27-28 - *The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"*

2. God forbids suicide; killing oneself.
 - a. Many suicides are willful sins of unbelief, the result of sinful self-love and defiance toward God.
 - b. It is possible for a Christian to lose mental control and have their sinful nature lead them to commit suicide as a pardoned sin of weakness.
 - c. We must be careful and charitable when making judgments about the eternal destinies of professing Christians who commit suicide.

Psalm 139:13, 15-17 - *{13} For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. {15} My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, {16} your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. {17} How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!*

Exodus 21:22-23 - *"If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows. But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life,*

3. God forbids taking the life of unborn children (abortion) when the life of the mother is not in danger.
 - a. God gives life to the unborn already at the time of their conception and tells us that it is sacred.
 - b. Intentionally ending that life is a selfish, irresponsible slaughter of an innocent life.
 - c. The abortion of an unborn child who is unwanted or malformed or the product of a rape, incest or one mentally incompetent is based on the faulty idea that a person's life and worth is to be measured, not by its God-given sanctity, but by a subjective human ethic of quality or usefulness.

Proverbs 31:8-9 - *"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."*

- d. God calls on believers to protect the lives of the unborn and others who are weak and not able to defend themselves.
- e. Taking the life of an unborn child if the mother would lose her life by giving birth is another matter. A prayerful choice of which life to save may have to be made and would not violate the Fifth Commandment's principle of not willfully or needlessly taking another person's life.

Proverbs 6:16b, 17b - *The Lord hates . . . hands that shed innocent blood.*

- 4. God forbids mercy killing (euthanasia) or assisted suicide.
 - a. God does not want anyone to cause or help a person to die more quickly than he/she naturally would.
 - b. To induce or hasten a person's death is to put oneself in God's place as the One who determines the end of life.
 - c. Permitting a person to die naturally when further medication and procedures would only prolong life a short time or artificially is another matter. In situations like this, a Christian may choose to let a condition take its natural course without further treatment. Such a choice would not violate the Fifth Commandment.

Romans 13:10a - *Love does no harm to its neighbor.*

- 5. God forbids us to physically or mentally hurt, shorten or add misery to the life of another person or ourselves. Examples of such harm would be:
 - a. Embittering another's life through insults, nagging.
 - b. Reckless, irresponsible driving.
 - c. Harmful, unhealthy habits or practices.
 - d. Worrying or causing others to worry.
 - e. Fighting when it is not to defend yourself or another.
 - f. Polluting the environment.
 - g. Abusing a spouse, child.
 - h. Being involved in or promoting any kind of drug abuse including alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs.
 - i. Overeating.
 - j. Not getting sufficient rest and exercise.

1 John 3:15 - *Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.*

Ephesians 4:26 - *"In your anger do not sin" : Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,*

Romans 12:19 - *Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.*

6. God forbids us to hate, hold a grudge against or seek revenge against anyone.

Psalm 139:14 - *I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*

1 John 3:16-18 - *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.*

- F. May God lead us to cherish the gift of life He gives us and gladly serve the physical needs of others.

IV. **The Sixth Commandment**

Exodus 20:14 - *"You shall not commit adultery.*

- A. In the Sixth Commandment, God teaches us that we must properly honor and use His gift of sexuality.
- B. In the Sixth Commandment, God demands of us the following things:

Philippians 4:8 - *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.*

1. God wants us to be pure in what we think and say.

Titus 2:11-12 - *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,*

2. He wants us to express our sexuality in a God-pleasing way.

1 Corinthians 6:18 - *Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.*

3. He wants us to avoid all temptations to sexual sins.

Hebrews 13:4 - *Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.*

4. He wants us to honor His institution of marriage and to reserve sexual relations only for one's marriage partner.

C. In the Sixth Commandment, God forbids the following things.

Matthew 5:28 - *But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

1. God forbids us to have sexually impure thoughts and desires.

Ephesians 5:3-4 - *But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.*

2. God forbids us to improperly talk or joke about sex or to use pornographic materials.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 - *Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*

Romans 1:26-27 - *Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.*

3. God forbids us to sexually abuse another person or to have sexual relations outside marriage including such practices as:
 - a. Adultery (being sexually unfaithful while married).
 - b. Fornication (consenting intercourse by an unmarried person).
 - c. Rape.
 - d. Incest.
 - e. Homosexual or lesbian activity.
 - f. Prostitution.
 - g. Sexual abuse.
 - h. Bestiality (intercourse with animals).
 - i. Masturbation.

D. In the Sixth Commandment, God also protects His gift of marriage.

Genesis 2:18, 21-24 - *The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." So the Lord God caused the*

man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

1. God established marriage as a sacred union of one man and one woman for their blessing.

Romans 7:2 - For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage.

2. God intends marriage to be a life-long union which He ends with the death of one or both of the spouses.

E. God's purposes in establishing marriage.

Genesis 2:18 - The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

I Corinthians 6:16b - "The two will become one flesh."

1. In marriage God provides a partner to be an intimate companion and supporter for the spouse. This intimacy is most deeply expressed in sexual relations.

Genesis 1:28a - God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.

Psalm 127:3 - Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from him.

2. In marriage God grants the precious gift of children.
 - a. "In married life God gives children and commands us to bring them up and serve Him. To do this is the most precious work on earth because nothing may be done which pleases God more than saving souls" (Martin Luther).
 - b. God usually intends married couples to have children and does not want people to interfere with His plans to give them.
 - c. When contemplating pregnancy prevention, a couple will want to be sure that no faulty beliefs or selfish motivation is guiding them and that they are prayerfully seeking God's will.
 - d. Couples who are not able to have children are not being punished by God.

1 Corinthians 7:2, 9 - {2} *But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. {9} But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.*

3. Since humanity's fall into sin, marriage also helps people resist temptations to have unlawful sexual relationships.

E. Choosing a marriage partner.

Proverbs 31:10, 28-30 - {10} *A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. {28} Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: {29} "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all." {30} Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.*

1. In His Word, God emphasizes the wisdom in and benefit for a believer choosing a fellow Christian for a marriage partner.
 - a. A Christian spouse can be a wholesome spiritual influence on a person and help him/her in his/her relationship with God.
 - b. A Christian spouse is a great help in raising a Christian family.

1 Kings 11:1a, 2, 4 - *King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women. {2} They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. {4} As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been.*

2. In His Word God also points out the great spiritual dangers involved in choosing to marry a non-Christian.
 - a. A non-Christian spouse can exert a harmful spiritual influence that weakens and even ruin a person's relationship with God.
 - b. A non-Christian spouse or one who has an erring faith can make it difficult to raise children to be Christians.
3. While it is not a sin to marry a non-Christian, it is not a good idea.

F. Establishing a marriage.

Mark 10:7-8 - *'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one.*

Amos 3:3 - *Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?*

1. A marriage is established in God's sight when a man and a woman make a willing, unconditional promise to each other to live together as husband and wife.
2. Since a marriage changes a person's primary allegiance and responsibility from his/her existing family to his/her spouse, it is proper to seek the permission of the parents.
3. While a mutual promise binds a man and woman in marriage before God, the couple is not free to live together and have sexual relations until the government's requirements have been met and they receive public recognition of their marriage. This is in keeping with the Fourth Commandment.

G. Living in a marriage.

1. God gives certain responsibilities to married people in their relationship with their spouses.

Ephesians 5:25, 28 - Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

1 Peter 3:7 - Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

2. God requires that husbands love, respect and serve the good of their wives as Christ Himself did for His believers. He wants husbands to cherish their wives as the part of their own self they have become by being united in marriage.

Ephesians 5:22-23 - Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

Proverbs 31:12 - She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.

3. God requires that wives love, and serve the good of their husbands and respect their husband's God-given leadership as believers do for their Lord.

1 Corinthians 7:3-4 - The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.

4. God requires that both spouses respect and satisfy each others needs for sexual relations.

Philippians 2:3-4 - *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

5. God requires that both spouses renounce self-centeredness and humbly strive to do what is best for each other.

1 Corinthians 7:16 - *How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?*

1 Peter 3:1-2 - *Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.*

6. If a Christian has an unbelieving spouse, God wants the believer to live in a godly way in marriage in hopes that the unbeliever will be led to faith in Christ.

H. Divorce.

Malachi 2:15b-16a - *So guard yourself in your spirit and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. "I hate divorce", says the Lord God.*

Matthew 19:6 - *So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."*

1. God strongly states that He does not want people to break the sacred marriage bond and cause a divorce.
2. Divorce, like other sins, begins in the heart when one or both parties decide that they will no longer live in faithful union with their spouse.

Matthew 19:9 - *I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."*

3. A person may decide to get a divorce because of adultery by the spouse.

1 Corinthians 7:15 - *But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.*

4. A person may decide to get a divorce because of malicious desertion by an unbelieving spouse.
 - a. Malicious desertion is evident desertion of the marriage vow through definite and persistent action.
 - b. It includes such things as permanent separation, permanent refusal of sexual intercourse, actions that make life together impossible - threats, violence, refusal to support.

- c. It does not include things such as incompatibility, loss of love for the spouse, irreconcilable differences.

Luke 17:3 - *So watch yourselves. "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.*

- 5. The Scriptures do not give divorce as the first option when adultery or malicious desertion take place. The option the Bible gives first is restoring the relationship through repentance and forgiveness.
- 6. If the guilty partner is not willing to be reconciled, the innocent/repentant partner may get a divorce to testify to the end of the union.

I. Remarriage.

1 Corinthians 7:39 - *A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.*

- 1. Death ends the marriage bond. After the death of a spouse, a person is free to remarry.
- 2. A divorced Christian can remarry.
 - a. An innocent party in a divorce is a single person again and is free to marry again.
 - b. A guilty party who caused a divorce may only properly remarry if he/she is repentant for causing the previous divorce.

Mark 10:11-12 - *He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery."*

- 3. A guilty party in a divorce who remarries without repenting is living in an adulterous union contrary to God's will.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-6a - *It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him.*

1 Corinthians 6:13b, 19-20 - *The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.*

- J. May God lead us to treasure His gift of sexuality and to devote ourselves to living sexually pure, God-honoring lives.

V. **Home Study**

- A. **LESSON REVIEW:** Mark each statement either A (Agree) or D (Disagree)

- _____ 1. We can't love God if we hate other people.
- _____ 2. Authority is a curse God places on the world to restrict and interfere with our happiness.
- _____ 3. God gives parents the primary responsibility for the spiritual training of their children.
- _____ 4. A child's duty toward his/her parents ends when the child leaves home to establish his/her own household.
- _____ 5. The authority God gives the Church is the authority to serve people with His Word.
- _____ 6. We are not obligated to obey laws that we don't happen to like.
- _____ 7. Our life is a period of opportunity God gives us to fulfill His purposes for us.
- _____ 8. All taking of life is wrong and sinful.
- _____ 9. Suicide is an unpardonable sin.
- _____ 10. Taking the life of an unborn child or a terminally ill person is justifiable since their quality of life is relatively low.
- _____ 11. We can break the Fifth Commandment by not getting enough sleep.
- _____ 12. Sexual relations between two consenting adults is okay as long as they care for each other.

- _____ 13. It is wise for a Christian to choose a fellow believer in Christ for a marriage partner.
- _____ 14. The biggest problem couples face in marriage is their own selfishness.
- _____ 15. God insists that married people seek to restore their relationship through repentance and forgiveness when sin threatens to destroy it.

B. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS: (Answer the following questions)

- 1. What are some ways that proper use of and respect for authority bring blessing to our world?

- 2. Who is someone outside my family that I can help by caring for their physical needs?

- 3. At this point in my life, how can I express my sexuality in ways that honor God?

C. MEMORY TREASURES: (Memorize the following Bible verses to build up your knowledge of God's Word)

John 13:34 - *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.*

Romans 13:8 - *Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.*

D. READING DURING THE WEEK

_____ Day 1 - John 11	_____ Day 5 - John 15
_____ Day 2 - John 12	_____ Day 6 - John 16
_____ Day 3 - John 13	_____ Day 7 - John 17
_____ Day 4 - John 14	

E. HYMN/PRAAYER

Hymn 458: 1, 3 in Christian Worship: "May we Your Precepts, Lord, Fulfill"

May we your precepts, Lord fulfill
 And do on earth our Father's will
 As angels do above,
 Still walk in Christ, the living way,
 With all your children, and obey
 The law of Christian love.

Spirit of life, of love, of peace,
 Unite our hearts, our joy increase,
 Your gracious help supply.
 To each of us the blessing give
 In Christian fellowship to live,
 In joyful hope to die.

Welcome To Life!

Lesson 12

- Contents: I. The Seventh Commandment
II. The Eighth Commandment
III. The Ninth and Tenth Commandments
IV. Prayer
V. The Lord's Prayer

* Review the Home Study questions from Lesson 11

I. The Seventh Commandment

Exodus 20:15 - *You shall not steal.*

- A. In the Seventh Commandment, God teaches us to acquire, use and protect His gift of possessions properly.

Psalm 24:1 - *The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.*

James 1:17 - *Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.*

- B. God owns all things and graciously gives us possessions to control and use.

Deuteronomy 8:17-18 - *You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.*

1. God usually gives us possessions by blessing our work.

Proverbs 19:14a - *Houses and wealth are inherited from parents.*

2. God also gives us possessions through gift and inheritance.

- C. In the Seventh Commandment, God demands the following things:

Proverbs 30:8a-9 *"Give me neither poverty or riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God."*

1. God wants us to desire the amount of income and possessions that will serve our spiritual good.

Hebrews 13:5 - *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."*

2. God wants us to be content with the things He gives us and be assured that He will provide for our needs.

2 Thessalonians 3:12 - *Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.*

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 - *Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.*

3. God requires that we work for the things we need to live.

Proverbs 3:9 - *Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops.*

4. He requires that we use our possessions to honor Him and to support His work.

1 Timothy 5:8 - *If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

5. He requires that we use our possessions to provide for our families and dependents.

Romans 13:6 - *This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing.*

6. He requires that we use our possessions to support our government.

Ephesians 4:28b - *Share with those in need.*

Hebrews 13:16 - *And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*

Proverbs 11:25 - *A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.*

7. He requires that we use our possessions to do good to others and to help those in need.

1 Corinthians 10:24 - *Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.*

8. God wants us to help others protect and preserve their possessions.

D. In the Seventh Commandment, God forbids the following things:

John 6:12b - *Let nothing be wasted.*

1. God forbids us to waste our possessions.

Luke 12:15 - *Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."*

2. He forbids us to be greedy and crave possessions for selfish purposes.

Ephesians 4:28a - *He who has been stealing must steal no longer.*

Leviticus 19:35 - *Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight or quantity.*

Psalms 37:21 - *The wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous give generously;*

James 5:4 - *Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.*

3. He forbids us to steal or attempt to obtain improperly what God has given to others. Examples of such stealing would be:
 - a. Robbery (stealing by force)
 - b. Theft (stealing in secret)
 - c. Laziness
 - d. Dishonest dealing
 - e. Overcharging
 - f. Paying unfair wages
 - g. Violating copyright and patent laws
 - h. Vandalism (damaging or destroying another's property)
 - i. Failing to repay or return what is borrowed

Philippians 4:19 - *And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.*

Psalms 103:2, 5a - *Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits - who satisfies your desires with good things.*

Proverbs 28:20a - *A faithful man will be richly blessed.*

- E. May God lead us to trust that He will continually and generously provide all the things that we need, to thank Him for His wonderful gifts and to faithfully use them to carry out His purposes.

II. The Eighth Commandment

Exodus 20:16 - *You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.*

Proverbs 22:1 - *A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.*

- A. In the Eighth Commandment, God teaches us to respect and protect His gift of a good name to us and others.
- B. In the Eighth Commandment, God demands that we say and do things that will uphold the reputation of others. This includes:

Proverbs 10:19 - *When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.*

Proverbs 17:27 - *A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered.*

1. God requires that we think and choose our words carefully before we speak.

Ephesians 4:25 - *Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor.*

Proverbs 14:25a - *A truthful witness saves lives.*

2. God requires that we tell the truth to and about others.

Proverbs 16:21, 24 - *The wise in heart are called discerning, and pleasant words promote instruction. Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.*

3. He requires that we speak kindly to and about others.

Proverbs 31:8-9 - *Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.*

4. He requires that we speak up and defend those who are being falsely accused.

1 Corinthians 13:6-7 - *Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

5. He requires that we take others' words and deeds in the kindest possible way.

Leviticus 19:17b - *Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt.*

1 Peter 4:8 - *Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.*

6. He requires that we admonish others when they sin and that we forgive them for their sins against us.

Proverbs 11:13b - *A trustworthy man keeps a secret.*

7. He requires that we keep secrets that others share with us.

1 Peter 3:10 - *For, Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech.*

Proverbs 11:9a - *With his mouth the godless destroys his neighbor.*

- C. In the Eighth Commandment, God forbids that we say or do anything to damage another's reputation, including the following:

Colossians 3:9 - *Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices*

Proverbs 19:5- *A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will not go free.*

1. God forbids us to lie to or about other people.

Proverbs 16:28 - *A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends.*

Proverbs 11:13a - *A gossip betrays a confidence.*

2. He forbids us to gossip about others, betraying their secrets and spreading rumors about them in order to harm them.

James 4:11 - *Do not slander one another.*

3. He forbids us to slander others, making false and misleading charges against them.

Proverbs 17:4 - *A wicked man listens to evil lips; a liar pays attention to a malicious tongue.*

4. He forbids us to believe and support those who gossip and slander.

Matthew 12:36 - *But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.*

5. He forbids us to speak careless, evil words.

Luke 6:37a - *Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.*

6. He forbids us to unjustly judge and condemn others.

Ecclesiastes 7:1a - *A good name is better than fine perfume.*

Ephesians 4:15a - *Speaking the truth in love.*

Proverbs 15:4a - *The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life.*

- D. May God lead us to respect the gift of a good reputation and to speak words that will bless and help others.

III. The Ninth And Tenth Commandments

Exodus 20:17 - *You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.*

- A. In the Ninth and Tenth Commandments, God teaches us to have hearts that are holy and satisfied with what God gives.
- B. God condemns the sin of coveting. Coveting is the sinful desire or craving for things and experiences we should not want to have, especially when they belong to others.

Proverbs 15:26b - *The thoughts of the pure are pleasing to the Lord.*

- C. In the Ninth And Tenth Commandments, God demands that we desire only things that are pure and pleasing to Him.

1 Chronicles 28:9b - *Acknowledge the God of your father and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts.*

1. God wants us to remember that He searches all our thoughts and motives and that He requires us to serve Him with fully devoted hearts.

Psalms 37:4 - *Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

2. God requires that we find our supreme joy in having Him as our Savior and Lord.

1 Timothy 6:6-8 - *But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.*

Philippians 4:12-13 - *I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

3. He requires that we be content in every situation of life with what God provides for us.

Proverbs 15:26a - *The Lord detests the thoughts of the wicked.*

- D. In the Ninth and Tenth Commandments, God forbids us to desire anything that is evil.

Ecclesiastes 5:10 - *Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless.*

1. God forbids us to be dissatisfied with what He gives us.

Colossians 3:5-6 - *Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these the wrath of God is coming.*

2. God forbids us to be greedy, having a sinful craving for wealth and power.

James 3:14-15 - *But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil.*

3. God forbids us to be envious of others, selfishly wanting what belongs to another.

1 Corinthians 3:3 - *You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?*

4. He forbids us to be sinfully jealous, unwilling to let someone else possess or enjoy something that God allows them to have.

James 4:1-2 - *What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God.*

1 Timothy 6:9-10 - *People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*

- E. God solemnly warns us that coveting leads to bitter conflict and spiritual grief and ruin.

1 Peter 1:14-15 - *As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;*

Ecclesiastes 5:19 - *Moreover, when God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work--this is a gift of God.*

- F. May God lead us to renounce evil desires and give us hearts that are filled with holy aims and are content with all that He provides.

IV. Prayer

A. What Prayer Is

Matthew 6:7 - *And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.*

Luke 18:11 - *The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector.*

1. Prayer is not merely speaking words, nor is it expressing selfish thoughts.

Daniel 9:3, 19 - *"I turned to the Lord and pleaded with Him in prayer . . . O Lord, listen! . . . O Lord, hear and act!"*

Psalm 19:14 - *May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.*

2. Prayer is personal, heartfelt communication with God.
- a. It may be expressed in words or in unspoken thoughts.
 - b. It is a response people make to God who speaks to us in His Word.

Matthew 15:8-9a - *"These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain."*

3. Prayer is an act of worship which honors God.

Daniel 9:4b - *O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love."*

Psalm 42:8 - *By day the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me-- a prayer to the God of my life.*

4. Prayer is reverent address to the God who loves us and gives us life.

Romans 8:26 - *In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.*

5. Since we do not naturally know how to pray, the Holy Spirit helps believers pray for the things they need.

B. The Elements Of Prayer

Ephesians 6:18a - *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.*

1. In His Word, God teaches us to offer various kinds of prayer:

1 John 1:9 - *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

Daniel 9:5, 18b - *We have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy.*

2. Confession

- a. God wants us to speak with Him about the sins we commit against Him and others.
- b. In confession, we admit our sins to God and plead for His pardoning mercy.
- c. By confessing our sins, we prevent them from disrupting and destroying our relationship with God.

Psalm 107:1 - *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.*

1 Thessalonians 5:18 - *Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

3. Thanksgiving

- a. God wants us to thank Him for all the blessings He gives us.
- b. We have reason to be thankful in all the circumstances of our lives.
- c. We can easily fail to give God prompt and proper thanks (e.g., The Ten Lepers).

1 Timothy 2:1 - *I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone--*

Ephesians 6:18b - *Always keep on praying for all the saints.*

Matthew 5:44 - *But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,*

4. Intercession - Requests For Others

- a. God wants us to bring the needs of others to Him.
- b. We are to pray for all people - our loved ones, fellow believers, non-Christians, even our enemies.
- c. Asking the almighty, all-gracious God to help others is one of the best ways to show your love for them.

Philippians 4:6 - *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*

James 1:5 - *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.*

5. Petition - Requests For Oneself

- a. God wants us to ask Him for the things we need.
- b. By bringing our needs to God, we declare our dependence on Him and our confidence in Him to help us.
- c. God wants us to look to Him as our first and not last resort.

Psalms 103:1 - *Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.*

Psalms 150:2b - *Praise him for his surpassing greatness.*

6. Praise

- a. God wants us to admire and appreciate Him as the magnificent God He is.
- b. By praising God, we proclaim how great and wonderful He is.
- c. Praise is the highest element of prayer since it looks beyond what God does for us to what the Lord is and means to us.

C. Why We Pray

Isaiah 65:24 - *Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.*

1. We do not pray to God because He must be informed of our needs. He is thoroughly familiar with them even before we mention them.

Matthew 7:7 - *Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.*

Psalm 50:15 - *"And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me."*

2. We pray because God commands and invites us to pray.
3. We pray because God promises to hear our prayers.
4. We pray because of our and other people's needs.
5. We pray because we are grateful for the blessings God gives us.

D. How We Pray

Psalm 65:1a, 2 - *O God, you who hear prayer, to you all men will come.*

Isaiah 45:20b - *Ignorant are those who pray to gods that cannot save.*

Isaiah 63:16 - *But you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us; you, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name.*

1. We pray only to the true God, the Triune God.
2. Prayers offered to false gods and to people are offensive to God and useless.

John 16:23b - *I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.*

John 15:7 - *If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.*

1 Timothy 2:5-6 - *For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men--the testimony given in its proper time.*

3. We pray "in the name of Jesus."
 - a. To pray in Jesus' name mean to pray trusting in Him as our Savior.
 - b. Only Jesus, our perfect Savior, makes sinful people acceptable to a holy God.
 - c. Only Jesus, the Father's pleasing Son, moves God to hear and answer our prayers.
4. Trying to get God to answer prayers for some other reason than Jesus is highly insulting to Him.

Mark 11:24 - *Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.*

James 1:6-7 - *But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord;*

5. We pray confidently, trusting that God hears and will grant our request.

Psalm 119:145 - *I call with all my heart; answer me, O Lord, and I will obey your decrees.*

6. We pray sincerely and thoughtfully from our hearts.

1 John 5:14 - *This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.*

7. We pray in obedient agreement with God's will.
- a. Prayer is not getting God to do our selfish bidding.
 - b. It is rather submitting our desires to His, wanting what He wants for us.

Hebrews 8:12 - *For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.*

1 Timothy 2:4 - *Who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*

1 Thessalonians 4:3 - *It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality;*

8. In matters where God makes His will clear to us (such as His desire to forgive our sins, save our souls and sanctify our lives), we pray without any conditions.

Matthew 8:2 - *A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."*

James 4:13-15 - *Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."*

Luke 22:42 - *"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."*

9. In other matters where God has not given us a clear promise (such as for health, earthly wealth and success), we leave it up to God to answer as He thinks best for us.

Romans 8:28 - *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

- a. We know that God will make all things serve our good.
- b. Even though we don't know what God's particular will is in these matters, we offer our prayers confidently.

1 Timothy 2:8 - *I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.*

1 Thessalonians 5:17 - *Pray continually.*

Psalm 88:1 - *O Lord, the God who saves me, day and night I cry out before you.*

10. God wants us to pray in all places and at all times.
 - a. God is always available and never too busy for us.
 - b. God wants us to live with Him at the center of our thinking and to frequently call on Him in prayer.

James 4:2b - *You do not have, because you do not ask.*

Colossians 4:2a - *Devote yourselves to prayer.*

11. God does not want us to neglect prayer.
 - a. A great tragedy of life is unoffered prayer.
 - b. Often we do not have what we need because we have not expressed our trust in and respect for God by asking Him.
 - c. May we be diligent and faithful in our prayers to God.

James 2:15-16 - *Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?*

Ecclesiastes 9:10a - *Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.*

12. God also does not want us to substitute prayers or good intentions for the work He wants us to do.
 - a. Praying for something without working to do what we can to bring that thing about is merely expressing empty wishes and is a failure of our responsibility to God.
 - b. It is well said: "Work without prayer is slavery. Prayer without work is beggary."
 - c. May we be diligent and faithful in carrying out our work for the Lord.

E. Does God Hear And Answer Every Prayer That People Offer?

James 5:16b - *The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*

1 Peter 3:12 - *For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.*

1. God does hear and accepts the prayers of those who believe in Jesus as their Savior.
2. God does not accept the prayers of those who don't believe in Christ.

Psalm 138:3a - *When I called, you answered me.*

3. God does answer every true prayer of His believers in His own way and at His own time.

2 Corinthians 12:8-9a - *Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."*

4. Sometimes God answers "No" to our requests.
 - a. When He does this, it is only because He wants to give us something better than what we asked Him for.
 - b. We do not always know what is good for us and may ask for things that are harmful.
 - c. God knows what is best for us and may lovingly have to deny a request.

John 2:4b - *Jesus replied, "My time has not yet come."*

Luke 18:1 - *Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.*

5. Sometimes God answers "Not Yet" or "Wait" to our requests.
 - a. When God does not reveal His answer to us soon, He has our best interests in mind.
 - b. We may not be ready to handle the answer He gives or we may need to have our faith tested and strengthened by a delay.
 - c. God urges us to not give up in our prayers until God does make known His answer.

V. The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13 - *"This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."*

A. Introduction to the Lord's Prayer

1. Our Lord Jesus taught this prayer as a model to show His disciples how to pray.
2. This excellent prayer teaches us to make spiritual things the priority of our life and to look to God for them.
3. The prayer has three major parts: the Address, the Seven Petitions and the Doxology (words of praise).

4. We regularly use the Lord's Prayer in our worship services as a way to express our important requests to God.
5. We will study a brief explanation of the prayer in order to help us pray it more meaningfully.

B. An Explanation of the Lord's Prayer

1. **Our Father who art in heaven**
 - * "Heavenly Father, we come to You confidently as Your dear children."
2. **Hallowed be Thy name.**
 - * "Help us honor Your revelation by teaching it and living according to it faithfully."
3. **Thy kingdom come.**
 - * "Send the Holy Spirit to strengthen Christ's rule in our hearts, to spread that rule to others and take us to enjoy Your glorious rule in eternity."
4. **Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**
 - * "Let Your plan to save succeed against all Your enemies and strengthen us to serve You."
5. **Give us this day our daily bread.**
 - * "Provide all that we need each day and give us trusting, thankful hearts."
6. **And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.**
 - * "Pardon all our sins for Jesus' sake and help us to pardon others as You pardon us."
7. **And lead us not into temptation.**
 - * "Help us so that we are not overcome by efforts to lead us into sin."
8. **But deliver us from evil.**
 - * "Bring us safely through the hardships of life to our home in heaven."
9. **For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**
 - * "You are the great God and we are convinced that You hear and answer us."

VI. Home Study**A. LESSON REVIEW: Mark each statement either A (Agree) or D (Disagree)**

- _____ 1. I am the true owner of all my possessions.
- _____ 2. I can do whatever I want with the money I earn.
- _____ 3. A person can steal by not doing anything.
- _____ 4. A good reputation is a priceless, but fragile thing.
- _____ 5. Telling harmful things about others is all right as long as what we say is truthful.
- _____ 6. Listening to and supporting gossip is just as bad as telling it.
- _____ 7. The great desire of our hearts should be for God Himself.
- _____ 8. The 9th and 10th Commandments remind us that contentment is an important thing missing in many lives.
- _____ 9. Coveting is a relatively harmless sin since it affects only the inner attitudes of a person's heart.
- _____ 10. Prayer basically is speaking to God from our hearts.
- _____ 11. The primary goal of prayer is to move God to do the things we want done.
- _____ 12. God will answer the prayers of anyone as long as he/she is sincere in praying.
- _____ 13. Most people pray too much.
- _____ 14. God answers all the prayers of His believers.
- _____ 15. The more we pray, the less God expects us to do in life.

Psalm 37:4 - *Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

Ephesians 6:18 - *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*

D. READING DURING THE WEEK

___ Day 1 - John 18

___ Day 2 - John 19

___ Day 3 - John 20

___ Day 4 - John 21

___ Day 5 - Philippians 1

___ Day 6 - Philippians 2

___ Day 7 - Philippians 3

E. HYMN/PRAYER

Hymn 407: 1 - 3 in Christian Worship: "O Lord, You Have in Your Pure Grace"

O Lord, you have in your pure grace
 Made shine on us a Father's face:
 Arise, your holy name make known;
 Take up your pow'r and reign alone;
 On earth, in us, let your pure will
 Be done as angels do it still.

O King and Father, kind and dread,
 Give us this day our daily bread;
 Forgive us, who have learned to bless
 Our enemies, all trespasses;
 Spare us temptation; let us be
 From Satan set forever free.

Yours is the kingdom; unto you
 We bow the knee in homage true.
 And yours the pow'r; no pow'r is there
 That stands against you anywhere.
 The glory yours; by every tongue
 Your praise shall be forever sung!

Welcome To Life!

Lesson 13

- Contents:
- I. The Holy Christian Church
 - II. The Christian Church On Earth
 - III. True Churches, Erring Churches and Non-Christian Religions
 - IV. God-Pleasing Fellowship
 - V. The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
 - VI. Church Membership

* Review the Home Study questions from Lesson 12

I. The Holy Christian Church, The Communion Of Saints

Ephesians 5:23b - *Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.*

James 1:18 - *He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.*

1 Peter 2:9 - *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

A. God creates the Church.

1. He calls people out of the darkness of unbelief into the light of saving faith in Christ through His Word of truth.
2. The Church is God's believing people who trust in Jesus as their Savior from sin and live to His glory.
3. In the Apostles' Creed, we refer to the Church as "The Holy Christian Church, The Communion Of Saints."

Romans 12:5 - *So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.*

Romans 8:9b - *If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.*

B. The Holy Christian Church is made up of all who believe in Jesus as their Savior and Lord and only them.

Ephesians 5:25-27 - *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing*

with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

C. The Church is **holy**.

1. Although believers are sinners, God cleanses them of their sins because of Christ's sin-removing work and considers them holy and blameless in His sight.
2. On the Last Day, Christ will remove all sin from His people and actually make them holy or sinless forever.

1 Corinthians 3:11 - *For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

Ephesians 2:19-21 - *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.*

John 10:27 - *My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.*

D. The Church is **Christian**.

1. It is founded on the person, saving work and life-giving teaching of Jesus Christ.
2. The Church's members all know Jesus Christ by faith in His Word and loyally follow Him.

Luke 17:20-21 - *Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."*

2 Timothy 2:19 - *Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."*

E. The Church's members are known only to God.

1. The saving faith which makes people members of the Church is invisible to humans.
2. God alone knows who truly belong to Him.

Matthew 16:18b - *Jesus says: "I build my church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."*

F. The Church grows and endures.

1. Christ continues to add people to His Church each day.
2. He preserves His Church against the devil's attempts to destroy it. Christ's Church will never perish.

1 John 1:3 - *We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*

Colossians 1:12 - *Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.*

G. The Church is also "The Communion Of Saints."

1. It is the communion or "gathered fellowship" of God's people.
2. Saints are "the holy ones," God's believers, those whom He pronounces holy through the saving work of Christ.
3. God bestows the blessed title of "saint" on each Christian.

II. The Christian Church On Earth

- A. The Holy Christian Church consists both of departed believers who live in heaven's glory and of believers who live on earth.

Mark 16:15 - *He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.*

1 Peter 1:23 - *For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.*

Matthew 18:20 - *For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."*

- B. While the faith of Christians is invisible to our eyes, God has given us some visible signs or marks so we know where His Church on earth will be found.
1. God uses the Gospel in the forms of the Word and Sacraments to create and strengthen believers (His Church).
 2. We will find the Church where people gather around these Means of Grace and use them as God wants.

Revelation 3:13 - *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*

1 Corinthians 1:2 - *To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ--their Lord and ours:*

- C. God calls these visible gatherings of people around the Gospel "churches" since members of the Holy Christian Church are there.
- D. God has given the Christian Church on earth a vital mission.

Matthew 28:18-20 - *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make*

disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Acts 2:42 - They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Hebrews 10:23-25 - Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

1 Peter 4:10 - Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

1. God has commissioned His believers to administer the Gospel in the Word and Sacraments to make disciples for Him.
2. In order to carry out this commission, Christian members of visible churches or congregations will:
 - a. Hear and learn God's Word and receive the Sacraments.
 - b. Share the Gospel to convert unbelievers.
 - c. Strengthen believers through the Gospel.
 - d. Worship God and pray to Him.
 - e. Serve the Lord and the Church with their resources and abilities.
 - f. Encourage others in a life of faith and service.

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 - {24} Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. {25} But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. {26} When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. {27} "The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 13:28 "'An enemy did this,' he replied. "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' {29} "'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. {30} Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'" {36} Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field." {37} He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. {38} The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, {39} and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. {40} "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will

be at the end of the age. {41} The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. {42} They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. {43} Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

- E. God tells us that a number of unbelievers are mixed with His true believers in visible churches on earth.
1. The devil raises up false believers or hypocrites, who pretend to be Christians, but are not.
 2. Although hypocrites may be members of a Christian congregation, they are not members of the Holy Christian Church.
 3. God does not want the existence of hypocrites to keep us from faithfully using the means of grace and serving Him in our congregation (e.g., Jesus' own participation in churches that had hypocrites).
 4. Nor does God want us to try to do His work of identifying and separating false believers from the true.
 - a. We cannot look into a person's heart as God can so we can only make limited determinations about a person's faith or lack of it.
 - b. We can easily do more harm than good by mistaking a weak believer from a false believer.
 - c. We can only deal with false belief when it becomes clearly evident in a person's words and actions.
 5. The best way to deal with hypocrisy is to warn against it and to keep proclaiming the Gospel which is the only thing that can convert a false believer into a true Christian.

III. True Churches, Incorrect Churches And Non-Christian Religions

John 8:31-32 - *To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

Matthew 28:19-20 - *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

1 Corinthians 1:10 - *I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.*

A. God wants the members of visible churches to faithfully believe and teach everything He has taught in His Word.

1. Only those who hold to God's teaching are His disciples who will enjoy the blessings of His sacred truth.
2. God insists that His believers be completely united with Him on all the teachings of His Word.
3. Churches which faithfully hold to and teach God's Word, we call "true" or "orthodox" (correct teaching) churches.

1 Timothy 4:1 - *The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.*

2 Peter 2:1 - *But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them--bringing swift destruction on themselves.*

Matthew 24:24 - *For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible.*

1 John 2:18 - *Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.*

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, 7-9 - *{3} Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. {4} He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. {7} For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. {8} And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. {9} The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders.*

- B. God tells us that false teachers and false Christs arise inside and outside the visible church in order to oppose, deny and distort the truth of God's Word and to deceive many into not trusting and following Jesus as their Savior and Lord.
1. God warns us that their powers will be great and very persuasive.
 2. God indicates that many antichrists exist to harm people's souls. An antichrist is one who opposes Jesus Christ as the Savior and Lord and in some cases tries to take Jesus' place as the Redeemer and Master of people's lives.
 3. God clearly says that one special Antichrist exists. This is the "man of lawlessness" spoken of in 2 Thessalonians 2 whom we identify as the position of the Papacy. (See Appendix D)

Isaiah 30:10b-11 - *They say to the prophets, "Give us no more visions of what is right! Tell us pleasant things, prophecy illusions. Leave this way, get off this path and stop confronting us with the Holy One of Israel!"*

2 Timothy 4:3-4 - *For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.*

- C. God also reveals that many people will sinfully refuse to listen to the truth of God's Word and organize religious groups where their spiritual leaders tell them spiritual lies to please them.
- D. Some of these groups are "incorrect" or "heterodox" (contrary-to-the-Bible teaching) churches which retain the fundamental teachings of Biblical Christianity, but reject a number of Bible teachings and mix spiritual lies in with God's truth.
- E. Some of these groups are "cults" or "pseudo-Christian" religions which claim to be Christian churches, but which reject the fundamental teachings of Biblical Christianity and teach spiritual lies instead of God's truth.
- F. Some of these groups are openly "non-Christian" religions which do not claim to be Christian or to follow the Bible, but promote false religious principles and beliefs.
- G. False teachings are dangerous and deadly.
 - 1. Every false teaching attacks the central truth of the Christian faith, the fact that we are justified before God through faith in Jesus Christ alone.
 - 2. Every false teaching charges God with being a liar.

2 Thessalonians 2:10b - *They perish because they refuse to love the truth and so be saved.*

 - 3. Every false teaching damages true faith and can lead to total unbelief and eternal damnation.
 - 4. False teaching often works gradually and deceptively.

IV. God-Pleasing Fellowship In The Church

1 John 1:3 - *We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*

John 17:11b, 23b - *Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name - the name you gave me - so that they may be one as we are one. . . May they be brought to complete unity.*

- A. Through His Word God works to bring and preserve His believers in a blessed spiritual fellowship, based on believing agreement in all He teaches.

Ephesians 4:3 - *Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*

- B. God wants His believers to express and maintain that unity as active members of true visible churches.
1. God wants us to be part of a church where His Word and Sacraments are used faithfully so that our souls will be properly fed.
 2. God wants us to avoid a divisive attitude which creates dissension in the church over matters not directed by God's Word, such as worship forms, church organizational structures, administrative decisions.

1 John 4:1 - *Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

Isaiah 8:20 - *To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.*

- C. God charges His believers to carefully examine the teachings of visible churches and other religious groups to make sure that they fully agree with all His Word teaches.
1. Not all churches or religious groups faithfully teach God's Word.
 2. God places the responsibility for gaining a good, working understanding of the Bible on each person.
 3. He wants us prepared to evaluate teachings and to determine from the Scriptures whether they are true or false.
 4. The well-being of our soul may depend on it.

2 John 1:10-11 - *If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.*

2 Corinthians 6:14 - *Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?*

Titus 1:9, 3:10 - *He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him.*

- D. God commands His believers to avoid expressing a spiritual fellowship with all who hold to, promote or tolerate false teaching and to warn them about their errors.
1. Expressing a spiritual unity with those who are not faithful to God's word is called unionism.
 2. Uniting without true biblical unity ignores vital issues of truth, harms souls and offends God.
- E. God gives us loving reasons to follow this command:
1. He wants us to show our love for Him by being loyal to His Word.
 2. He wants us to witness to His truth so that those holding to error will be challenged and encouraged to accept His Word.
 3. He wants us to witness to His truth so that those holding to it will not be offended or misled, but strengthened.
 4. He wants us to witness to His truth so that our faith is not compromised, weakened or destroyed by error.

John 3:18 - *Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.*

- F. When evaluating a church or religious group, we pass judgment, not on the personal faith of its individual members, but on its public teachings, confessions and practices.
1. A person may belong to an incorrect church and yet have faith in Jesus and be saved.
 2. As a member of an incorrect church, he/she runs the risk of having his/her faith damaged or destroyed by spiritual error. Continued membership in such a church is not good.
 3. On the other hand, a person may be a member of a true visible church and not have faith in Jesus. He/she will not be saved.
- G. If a person discovers that his/her church is teaching false doctrine,
1. He/she will take steps to win the other members to correct the errors.
 2. If the church persists in teaching errors, he/she will leave for a church which teaches God's true Word.

V. The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

- A. Our congregation is affiliated with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

- B. A synod (taken from two Greek words which mean "walking together") is a group of congregations which are united by a common faith to work together to carry out important work.
1. A synod's chief purposes are:
 - a. Safeguarding and fostering unity in true doctrine.
 - b. Training pastors, teachers and other workers for service in the church.
 - c. Carrying out mission, special ministry and social ministry work.
 - d. Providing resources and services to assist churches with their ministry.
- C. A Brief History
1. The Wisconsin Synod was founded by three German immigrant pastors in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1850.
 2. The Synod soon became a scripturally sound church body because of the influence of orthodox leaders.
 3. The Michigan, Minnesota and Nebraska Synods formed a federation with the Wisconsin Synod in the late 1800s and early 1900s.
 4. The four synods merged into one church body in 1917.
 5. Over the years, the Wisconsin Synod has grown to be an international church body with almost 1,300 congregations in North America and world missions on every continent.
 6. The Synod is the third largest Lutheran church body in the United States.
 7. It has the name Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod because it is an "evangel-" or "gospel-centered" church body.
 8. It is called the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod because it follows the historic, Christian faith which the German Reformer, Dr. Martin Luther, rediscovered and returned to the church in the 1500s.
 - a. The Synod upholds the central teachings of the Bible that a person's salvation is a gift of God's love through faith in Jesus Christ alone and that the Bible is the only authoritative source of true spiritual teaching.
 - b. The Synod holds to all the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church since they agree with the teachings of the Bible. These confessions are The Apostles' Creed, The Nicene Creed, The Athanasian Creed, The Augsburg Confession, The Apology to (Defense of) the Augsburg Confession, The Smalcald Articles, Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, Luther's Small Catechism, Luther's Large Catechism and The Formula of Concord.
 9. The synod is well known for its strong allegiance to the teachings of God's Word.

VI. Church Membership

1 Corinthians 12:27 - *Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

1 Corinthians 1:2 - *To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ--their Lord and ours:*

Psalms 122:1 - *I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord."*

- A. God teaches that Christians, who are members of the body of Christ, the Holy Christian Church, will be members of a visible Christian congregation.
1. Christians seek to preserve their faith through the Word and Sacraments administered in the church.
 2. Christians seek to rejoice in and express their God-created unity with other Christians.
 3. They do not isolate themselves from the community of believers.

John 4:23 - *Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.*

3 John 1:3-4 - *It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.*

- B. The important factor in determining which church to join is the church's faithfulness in teaching God's Word and administering the Sacraments.
1. The Gospel in Word and Sacraments is the sacred truth on which our spiritual life and health depends.
 2. We are to place loyalty to God and His Word above all other factors, such as, the personality of the pastor, the friendliness of the members, the program of activities, or a convenient location.

Romans 12:11 - *Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.*

Galatians 5:13b - *Serve one another in love.*

Matthew 8:8b - *Freely you have received, freely give.*

- C. One of our key concerns as a church member is to serve both God and others as willingly and eagerly as God has served us by saving and blessing us.
1. We are to be more concerned with serving than being served.
 2. We are to recognize that service is the lifestyle of a Christian.

- D. God gives His believers some precious privileges and great responsibilities as members of a church. Among them are the following:
1. Privileges and responsibilities concerning God's Word.
 - a. To hear, believe and obey the Word of God faithfully and diligently.
 - b. To provide and promote opportunities for others to grow in the study of God's Word.
 - c. To bring up one's own children in the truths of God's Word as well as to assist in the spiritual growth of all the church's children.
 - d. To witness to others about Jesus Christ as the Savior from sin.
 2. Privileges and responsibilities concerning the Sacraments.
 - a. To baptize one's children early in life and to be concerned about the prompt baptism of all the unbaptized in the congregation.
 - b. To frequently take Holy Communion and encourage other communicant members to do the same.
 3. Privileges and responsibilities concerning the management of blessings.
 - a. To continually remember that all one's property, time and talents really belong to God.
 - b. To willingly dedicate a generous part of the money, time, and abilities God has given us for His glory through the ministry of the church.
 - c. To give one's counsel on matters concerning the church, and if a voter, to regularly participate in the Voters' meetings.
 - d. To eagerly serve God and others in elected and/or appointed positions in the church.
 4. Privileges and responsibilities concerning one's Christian Living.
 - a. To live a repentant, sin-resisting life in accord with God's commands.
 - b. To allow oneself to be led to repentance and to be corrected when one has sinned.
 - c. To watch over the spiritual welfare of fellow Christians, offering encouragement, comfort, correction, training, etc. as their situations may require.
 - d. To pray for the church and its members.

Ephesians 3:14-21 - {14} For this reason I kneel before the Father, {15} from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. {16} I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, {17} so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, {18} may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, {19} and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. {20} Now to him who is able to do

immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, {21} to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

- E. May God graciously give us a rich measure of His power and love so we can better grasp His saving love for us in Christ, become stronger in faith and live to His glory as members of His church.

VII. **Home Study**

- A. **LESSON REVIEW:** Mark each statement either A (Agree) or D (Disagree)

- _____ 1. All the members of the Holy Christian Church will be in heaven.
- _____ 2. God is the only one who knows the members of the Holy Christian Church
- _____ 3. All believers are saints.
- _____ 4. The altars and crosses used in church buildings are the God-given marks that identify where believers will be found.
- _____ 5. The church's primary mission is to make this world a better place in which to live.
- _____ 6. The existence of hypocrites in the church is a good reason not to be involved in a congregation.
- _____ 7. God wants all Christian congregations to be true to all the teachings in His Word.
- _____ 8. False teaching is a relatively harmless evil in the Christian church on earth.
- _____ 9. As long as a person believes in Jesus, it doesn't make much difference which church he/she joins.
- _____ 10. God's love for people's souls is at the heart of His commands not to join in spiritual fellowship with those who believe and promote false doctrines.

- _____ 11. A Christian whose church teaches error has an important duty to bring the church back to God's truth.

- _____ 12. The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod is a church body devoted to the principle that people can believe whatever they want without it affecting their relationship with God.

- _____ 13. God really doesn't care if we are active members of a church or not.

- _____ 14. The primary factor in choosing a church is the personality of the pastor.

- _____ 15. God intends that we receive great blessings and that we serve in significant ways as church members.

B. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS: (answer the following questions)

- 1. What are some ways to test whether a religious group is Christian or non-Christian?

- 2. What are the blessings of belonging to a true or orthodox Christian congregation?

- 3. What makes church membership meaningful for a person?

C. MEMORY TREASURES: (Memorize the following Bible verses to build up your knowledge of God's Word)

Ephesians 5:25b-26 - *Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,*

John 8:31b - *"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples."*

D. READING DURING THE WEEK

___ Day 1 - Philippians 4

___ Day 2 - Ephesians 1

___ Day 3 - Ephesians 2

___ Day 4 - Ephesians 3

___ Day 5 - Ephesians 4

___ Day 6 - Ephesians 5

___ Day 7 - Ephesians 6

E. HYMN/PRAYER

Hymn 536: 1, 2 in Christian Worship: "Lord Jesus Christ, The Church's Head"

Lord Jesus Christ, the Church's head,
 You are her one foundation.
 In you she trusts, before you bows,
 And waits for your salvation.
 Built on this rock secure,
 Your Church shall endure
 Though all the world decay
 And all things pass away.
 Oh, hear, oh, hear us, Jesus!

O Lord, let this your little flock,
 Your name alone confessing,
 Continue in your loving care,
 True unity possessing.
 Your sacraments, O Lord,
 And your saving Word
 To us e'er pure retain.
 Grant that they may remain
 Our only strength and comfort.

Welcome To Life!

Lesson 14

- Contents:
- I. The Gospel Ministry
 - II. The Priesthood Of All Believers
 - III. The Public Or Representative Ministry
 - IV. The Keys And Their Use
 - V. Confession And Absolution
 - VI. Church Discipline

* Review the Home Study questions from Lesson 13

I. The Gospel Ministry

Mark 16:15 - *He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.*

Matthew 28:18-20 - *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Luke 24:47-48 - *And repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.*

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 - *All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.*

- A. God has given to His Church the vital ministry of the Gospel.
- B. God has given His believers the privilege and responsibility of serving all people with the Gospel in the Word and Sacraments.
- C. God commissions all His Christians with the authority to administer the Means of Grace so that sinners can gain and keep a saving relationship with God through Christ.

- D. This ministry is the great work God gives us to bring eternal blessings to others.

II. The Priesthood Of All Believers

1 Peter 2:4-5, 9a - *As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God.*

Revelation 1:5b-6 - *To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father--to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.*

- A. God makes all His believers His "priests."
1. Believers become priests when God brings them to faith in Christ.
 2. They remain in this priesthood as long as they believe in Christ.

Ephesians 2:18 - *For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.*

- B. As God's priests, they have access to God and may come to God on behalf of others.

Ephesians 1:7 - *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace*

Hebrews 10:10 - *And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

1. They enjoy God's forgiveness and are set apart for His service.

Psalms 141:2 - *May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.*

1 Timothy 2:1 - *I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone--*

2. They worship God and pray for themselves and for others.

Revelations 5:10a - *You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God.*

- C. As God's priests, they serve God by serving the needs of others on His behalf.

Hebrews 13:16 - *And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*

1. They serve God as they do good things for others.

1 Peter 2:9b - *You may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

2. They serve God as they bring the Gospel to others (e.g., Family devotions, witnessing to friends and neighbors, teaching one's children).

- D. God gives each believer an important personal ministry to perform for God in the world.

1 Peter 4:10-11 - *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

Romans 12:4-8 - {4} *Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, {5} so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. {6} We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. {7} If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; {8} if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.*

- E. God also gives each believer one or more spiritual gifts or abilities by which a Christian is to serve God and others in special ways.

- F. He urges us to be faithful in our personal ministry as His priests.

III. The Public Or Representative Ministry

Ephesians 4:11 - *It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,*

1 Corinthians 4:1 - *So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God.*

Acts 20:28 - *Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.*

- A. As part of the gospel ministry, God has established the public or representative ministry.
 1. As God's priests, all believers may exercise the gospel ministry privately in their daily affairs.
 2. The public ministry is the position of exercising the gospel ministry as a representative of God and the church.

Acts 6:1-7 - *{1} In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. {2} So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. {3} Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them {4} and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." {5} This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. {6} They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. {7} So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.*

- B. God has not mandated one specific form of the public ministry, but has given His believers the freedom to create various forms of the public ministry in order to meet whatever needs they face.
 1. Some common forms of the public ministry are: pastors, teachers, professors, missionaries, elders.
 2. The church defines the scope and responsibility of each public ministry position.

- C. God has also given His believing priests the authority and responsibility to choose or call people to serve as public ministers. No one should serve in a position of the public ministry without a proper call.

1 Timothy 3:1-12 - *{1} Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. {2} Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, {3}*

not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. {4} He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. {5} (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) {6} He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. {7} He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. {8} Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. {9} They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. {10} They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. {11} In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. {12} A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well.

Titus 1:6-9 - An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless--not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

- D. God requires that only qualified people serve as public ministers in the church.
1. God insists that public ministers be people of sound Christian character.
 2. He also insists that public ministers be well-grounded in the teachings of God's Word, deeply committed to them and capable of communicating them.

1 Timothy 2:11-13 - A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

- E. God permits women to serve in positions of the public ministry where they are not required to exercise authority over men.

1 Peter 5:2-4 - Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples

to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

2 Timothy 2:15 - *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

2 Timothy 4:1-2, 5 - *In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.*

Ephesians 4:11-13 - *It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

- F. God charges public ministers to eagerly and faithfully carry out all the duties of their position.
1. He commands them to personally care for the souls of those entrusted to them.
 2. He commands them to set a good example for those they serve.
 3. He commands them to thoroughly communicate God's Word to others.
 4. He commands them to equip other believers to carry out their ministries for the spiritual growth and maturity of the church.

IV. The Keys And Their Use

Matthew 16:19a - *I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.*

Matthew 18:18 - *"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."*

John 20:22-23 - *And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."*

- A. God has given His Church the use of the Keys, the authority to forgive or not forgive people for their sins.

- B. This authority is called the Keys because like a key which unlocks and locks, it has both an unlocking ability and a locking ability in regard to a person's enjoyment of God's spiritual blessings.
1. Like a key that unlocks a door, it gives a person release from guilt and punishment for their sins and grants them access to God's grace and blessings.
 2. Like a key that locks a door, it denies a person freedom from guilt and punishment for their sins and excludes them from God's grace and blessings.

Psalm 32:5 - *Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"-- and you forgave the guilt of my sin.*

John 20:23a - *If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven.*

- C. God wants us to use the unlocking key as a special application of the Gospel, pardoning repentant sinners, announcing to them the comforting news that God has forgiven their sins.

1 John 1:8, 10 - *If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.*

John 20:23b - *If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.*

- D. God wants us to use the locking key as a special application of the Law, refusing pardon to unrepentant sinners, announcing to them the alarming message that God does not forgive them as long as they do not repent of their sins.

V. Confession And Absolution

- A. One way in which the Church exercises the authority to forgive sins to the repentant is by the practice of confession and absolution.

Psalm 51:3-4 - *For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.*

- B. In confession people openly admit that they are sinners who deserve God's punishment and are truly sorry for their sins.

Psalm 103:12 - *As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*

Matthew 9:2b - *Your sins are forgiven.*

- C. In absolution a pastor or another Christian openly pardons the repentant, telling them that God has forgiven all their sins for Christ's sake.

Psalm 51:5 - *Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*

Isaiah 59:12 - *For our offenses are many in your sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our iniquities:*

Psalm 19:12 - *Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.*

Isaiah 1:18 - *"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.*

- D. We practice confession and absolution publicly with a group of believers.
1. We do this regularly at our worship services.
 2. We make a general confession in which we confess our natural sinful condition and all our sins, known and unknown, against God.
 3. The pastor, as the called public minister of Christ and the church, speaks God's Word of forgiveness to all the repentant believers.

Psalm 38:4 - *My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear.*

James 5:16a - *Therefore confess your sins to each other.*

- E. We also practice confession and absolution privately in personal, confidential meetings between an individual and the pastor or another Christian.
1. We do this as needed when a person seeks assurance of forgiveness for sin which especially troubles his/her conscience or when a person has done something wrong to someone else.
 2. In private confession, we can confess a specifically bothersome sin with a person who will keep our confession confidential and not reveal it.
 3. In private absolution, the pastor or other Christian will give specific, personalized announcement of God's pardon for the sin that troubles.

Ezra 10:11 - *Now make confession to the Lord, the God of your fathers, and do his will. Separate yourselves from the peoples around you and from your foreign wives."*

Proverbs 28:13 - *He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.*

- F. We follow God's command to confess our sins and not ignore it.
1. God warns of His judgment on those who try to hide and/or deny their sins.
 2. He promises His mercy on those who honestly confess their sins.

Psalm 51:17 - *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*

Hebrews 4:2 - *For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.*

- G. We sincerely confess our sins and believe God's words of forgiveness for us.
1. Merely saying words we do not mean or hearing words we do not trust are of no benefit to us.
 2. Confession and absolution help only those who believe that God's Law is right in condemning us as sinners and that God's Gospel is right in freely pardoning us for Jesus' sake.

John 8:11b - *Go now and leave your life of sin.*

Matthew 3:8 - *Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.*

- H. We forsake sin and live a life of good works as repentant and pardoned sinners.
1. We are not to abuse God's grace by thinking: "Now that I have God's forgiveness, I can live a sinful life and still be assured that I'm pardoned."
 2. A person who is repentant and trusts in God's forgiveness will show his/her thankfulness to God by striving not to sin again. "The truest repentance is to sin no more." (German Proverb)
 3. He/she will also strive to do willingly all the things God wants him/her to do to show Him thank and honor.

VI. Church Discipline

- A. In their use of the keys, believers also carry out church discipline.

Galatians 6:1 - *Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.*

B. Church discipline is the attempt of Christians to lead a fellow believer who is openly unrepentant for a sin back to a repentant, disciplined life as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

1. Christians do commit sins. By being spiritually careless, they can lapse into and get stuck in an unrepentant condition which damages and would ultimately destroy their relationship with God.

Matthew 7:1 - Do not judge, or you too will be judged.

Leviticus 19:15b - Judge your neighbor fairly.

Matthew 7:20 - Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

2. While God forbids His people from unfairly judging others, He does call them to make judgments about other people's behavior on the basis of His Word. He allows us to determine whether people outwardly do good or sin, whether they outwardly are repentant or unrepentant.

Luke 17:3 - So watch yourselves. "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.

3. In carrying out discipline, a Christian will point out the sin of the unrepentant to lead him/her to repent.
4. If the sinner repents, the Christian will assure him/her of God's forgiveness.

1 Corinthians 11:32 - When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

5. The goal of discipline is to keep an unrepentant sinner from losing his/her salvation.

Matthew 18:15-18 - If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

C. God's guidelines for conducting church discipline.

1. Jesus offers important instructions on how to help a fellow believer who falls into an unrepentant state.

2. When a believer sins and is unrepentant, the fellow Christian is to go to him/her privately and try to lead him/her to repent. If the person repents, the Christian assures him/her of forgiveness.
3. If the unrepentant person will not repent after the personal attempts of the Christian, the Christian is to take one or more other believers to call the person to repentance and to assure of forgiveness, if the person does repent.
4. If the person still remains unrepentant, the Christian is to inform the congregation (usually through the pastor and the elders) of the situation. Congregational representatives will go to call the person to repent, and pardon if the person repents.
5. If the person refuses to listen to the church's call to follow God's will, the congregation will declare that person to be a non-Christian because of his/her lack of repentance and exclude him/her the fellowship of the church and deny that person Holy Communion, a Christian funeral and other rights and privileges of the church (excommunication). If the person later repents, then he/she will be forgiven and restored to membership in the church.
6. Christian love and the circumstances will lead believers in how and when to apply these guidelines to reclaim those who resist repenting.
7. At times an unrepentant person will refuse or evade church discipline and withdraw from the congregation.
 - a. This sinful action deprives the sinner the opportunity to be helped by the testimony of God's Word by concerned fellow believers.
 - b. The congregation cannot excommunicate such a person, but can testify to his/her sinful actions and separation from the church.

1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 11-13 - {1} *It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife.* {2} *And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this?* {3} *Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present.* {4} *When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present,* {5} *hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the*

Lord. {11} But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. {12} What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? {13} God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."

- D. A case study of church discipline and excommunication.
1. A member of the Christian church in Corinth was having a sexually immoral relationship with his father's wife (probably not his mother).
 2. St. Paul rebuked the Corinthian believers for tolerating this open sin and not disciplining the unrepentant sinner.
 3. Paul was not issuing his own judgment on this man's behavior, but God's judgment. In His Word God clearly condemns incestuous relationships as sin. The church administers discipline according to God's will, not its own subjective wishes.
 4. Paul directs the Corinthian believers to excommunicate the unrepentant member when they meet together again as a congregation. It is the church that conducts discipline. The pastor, as the called public minister of the Gospel, announces the church's action.
 5. Excommunication is the church's public declaration that a persistently unrepentant sinner is no longer a Christian, but has put himself/herself outside the communion of saints and is under Satan's control and bound for hell.
 6. The purpose of excommunication is to show the unrepentant person the seriousness of his/her sin and refusal to repent and to lead him/her to turn from sin back to faith in Jesus. The goal of excommunication and other forms of discipline is not to harm or destroy souls, but to reclaim and save them.

2 Corinthians 2:6-11 - {6} The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. {7} Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. {8} I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. {9} The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. {10} If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven--if there was anything to forgive--I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, {11} in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

7. In Paul's follow-up letter to the Corinthian congregation, we learn that the members obeyed Paul's instruction and excommunicated the unrepentant sinner.
8. After he was disciplined, the man did repent.
9. Paul commends the Corinthians for their God-pleasing action and now urges them to forgive and restore this now repentant man to their fellowship so that he does not despair over being saved.

1 Timothy 5:20 - *Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning.*

James 5:19-20 - *My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.*

E. The importance of church discipline.

1. Caring Christians will care for the souls of straying and unrepentant members by practicing scriptural church discipline.
 - a. Love is willing to deal with sin and does not idly stand by while people destroy themselves.
 - b. Love is also willing to discipline those who are unrepentant so that God's name is not dishonored and so that others are not discouraged or misled into sin by a failure to follow God's will.
2. Exercising church discipline saves people from eternal death.
 - a. God uses the discipline efforts of Christians to lead people out of sin back to the Savior.
 - b. While not all may heed the loving warning church discipline gives, some will.
 - c. We are to care enough for our fellow believers to practice church discipline if any of them should fall into sin and unrepentance.
 - d. We are also to welcome and be responsive to the discipline efforts of other Christians if we should become unrepentant.

VII. Home Study**A. LESSON REVIEW: Mark each statement either A (Agree) or D (Disagree)**

- _____ 1. All believers in Christ are commissioned to be active in the ministry of the Gospel.
- _____ 2. People enter the priesthood of believers when they become communicant members of the church.
- _____ 3. As God's priests, believers may go to God in service to people and go to people in service to God.
- _____ 4. Qualified people can appoint themselves to serve as public ministers in the church.
- _____ 5. One major reason God established the public ministry was to relieve believers of some of their priestly responsibilities.
- _____ 6. The Keys Jesus gave the Church is the authority to let those people into heaven who have not qualified to get there on the basis of their own good works.
- _____ 7. The use of the two Keys is really making special applications of the Law and the Gospel to people's spiritual conditions.
- _____ 8. To absolve is to pardon someone, to verbally assure a person that God has forgiven his/her sins.
- _____ 9. Confession and absolution will not help a person who will not believe in his/her own sinfulness and/or in God's pardon for sin.
- _____ 10. It is wrong for a person to judge another's words or actions.

- _____ 11. There are times when we must tell a person that God does not forgive their sins.
- _____ 12. Church discipline is the attempt of congregational leaders to rid the church of undesirable members.
- _____ 13. Excommunication is the heartless, outdated practice of labeling and excluding people merely because they choose to believe and live differently than others in the church.
- _____ 14. A congregation which does not exercise church discipline does not have a very strong love for its people.
- _____ 15. The loving discipline of Christians may well save a person from eternal death in hell.

B. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS: (answer the following questions)

- 1. List at least five things God desires and allows you to do in your personal ministry as a Christian.

- 2. Give an example of how we can privately use the keys in our own family.

- 3. Why is disciplining unrepentant church members both difficult and essential in a morally permissive society?

C. MEMORY TREASURES: (Memorize the following Bible verses to build up your knowledge of God's Word)

1 Peter 2:9 - *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

Luke 17:3 - *So watch yourselves. "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.*

D. READING DURING THE WEEK

___ Day 1 - 1 Peter 2

___ Day 2 - 1 Timothy 1

___ Day 3 - 1 Timothy 2

___ Day 4 - 1 Timothy 3

___ Day 5 - 1 Timothy 4

___ Day 6 - 1 Timothy 5

___ Day 7 - 1 Timothy 6

E. HYMN/PRAYER

Hymn 546: 1, 5 in Christian Worship: "Lord Jesus, You Have Come"

Lord Jesus, you have come
 A teacher sent from heaven
 And both by word and deed
 God's truth to us have given.
 You wisely have ordained
 The holy ministry
 That we, your flock, may know
 The truth that sets us free.

Bring those into your fold
 Who still to you are strangers;
 Guard those who are within
 Against offense and dangers.
 Press onward with your Word
 Till pastor and his fold
 Through faith in you, O Christ,
 Your glory shall behold.

Welcome To Life!

Lesson 15

- Contents:
- I. The Roles Of Men And Women
 - II. Living For God
 - III. Learning God's Word
 - IV. Witnessing For Christ
 - V. Managing God's Gifts
 - VI. Serving Others
 - VII. Bearing The Cross
 - VIII. Awaiting Future Glory

* Review the Home Study questions from Lesson 14

I. The Roles Of Men And Women

- A. God addresses an important issue which confronts people in our society today: the roles of men and women.
 - 1. Many are deceived or confused about the matter of divinely established roles and responsibilities for men and women.
 - 2. God, our Creator, has not only made us male or female, but has also given us directions to follow as men and women so that we can gain great blessing for our lives.
 - 3. We will carefully look to God's Word to understand these roles and how to apply them.

Genesis 2:18, 22-23 - *The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."*

1 Corinthians 11:3b, 8-9 - *The head of the woman is man. For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.*

- B. God established roles for the relationship of man and woman at creation.

1. God created man to have a position of headship or authority over woman.
 - a. Man's headship means that God has given him the responsibility to exercise loving leadership for the things God has given man and woman to do.
 - b. This headship does not mean that the man is superior to woman. Nor does it mean that man is permitted to be a self-serving tyrant.
2. God created woman to have a position of submission or willing support of man's headship.
 - a. Woman's submission means that God has given her the responsibility to exercise willing support and help for man in doing the things God wants them both to do.
 - b. This submission does not mean that the woman is inferior to man. Nor does it mean that she is to be a powerless slave with no opportunity to influence or assist in shaping decisions and actions that affect man and woman.

Genesis 3:16 - *To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."*

- C. God affirms the roles for man and woman after the Fall into sin.
 1. Before Adam and Eve sinned they were in perfect harmony concerning their roles and responsibilities toward each other.
 2. After they fell into sin that harmony was destroyed. Sinful men and women now live selfishly and rebel against God's created order and will for their lives.
 3. After the Fall, God repeated His will about the roles He designates for man and woman. He also pointed out that relationships between man and woman would now be harmed by their sin and that they would be hurt because of it.

Galatians 3:26-28 - *You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

- D. God points out that His roles for man and woman apply only to the affairs of earthly life.
 1. God indicates that there is no advantage or disadvantage in being a man or woman when it comes to being saved.

2. Although God assigns different roles for man and woman in life, both are spiritual equals through faith in Jesus Christ.

E. Primary applications of the roles of man and woman in marriage and the home.

1. God gives some clear direction to men and women on how to carry out their respective roles in marriage.

Ephesians 5:25, 28 - Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

Colossians 3:19 - Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

1 Peter 3:7 - Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

2. God insists that husbands love and lead their wives in the same way that Jesus loves and leads His Church.
 - a. Christ loved the Church so much that He willingly sacrificed His life and endured God's fierce wrath on sin for her.
 - b. Christ devotes Himself to guiding, protecting and providing for the needs of His believers.
 - c. Husbands are to imitate Jesus' committed, self-giving love and leadership in the way they think about and treat their wives.
 - d. Jesus' saving love for them is their motivation to be Christ-like husbands.

Ephesians 5:22-24 - Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Colossians 3:18 - Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

1 Peter 3:1a - Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands.

3. God insists that wives respect and submit to their husbands in the same way that the Church respects and submits to Jesus.

- a. The Church respects Christ as the One who gave Himself to bring her God's pardon and spiritual blessing.
 - b. The Church dedicates herself to willingly obeying the will of the Lord Jesus for her.
 - c. Wives are to imitate the Church's loyal, selfless respect and submission in the way they think about and treat their husbands.
 - d. Christ's rescuing work for them is their motivation to be godly wives.
- F. Primary applications of the role of man and woman in the church.
1. God has also given clear direction to men and women on how to carry out their respective roles in the church.
 - 1 Timothy 2:11-14 - *A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.*
 - 1 Corinthians 14:33-35 - *For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.*
 2. God insists that "a woman must not have authority over a man."
 - a. God is here restating His will that the man take the lead in church matters and that the woman respect the principle of her submission to man's headship in the church.
 - b. God requires that a woman be careful not to say or do something which involves her in exercising authority over a man in the church.
 3. God insists that the "woman must be silent in the church."
 - a. God does not forbid all speaking by women in the church. He mentions women who publicly pray and praise Him numerous times in the Bible.
 - b. By commanding the woman "to be silent" God forbids speaking in a way that violates the principle of submission.
 4. God insists that "a woman must not teach a man."
 - a. God does not forbid a woman from all teaching in the church.
 - b. What God does forbid is the formal, public teaching and preaching of God's Word in which men would be instructed.

5. God requires us to follow these directions as part of His will for our lives.
 - a. God's commands are anchored in the primary roles for man and woman He gave at creation and later affirmed after the Fall into sin.
 - b. These directives are God's commands. They are not merely human opinions or cultural customs. We cannot ignore or defy them. We must obey them.
 - c. God's directives flow from His desire to bless His people with order and peace as they carry out their mission. This desire moves us to want to obey them.

G. Specific applications on the service of men and women in the church.

Mark 9:35 - *Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."*

Philippians 2:5-8 - *{5} Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: {6} Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, {7} but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. {8} And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!*

1. God wants all His Christians, both men and women, to be Christ-like servants who willingly, humbly seek the good of others.
2. God gives His believers, both men and women, great freedom and many opportunities to serve Him in the church.
3. The only way He restricts the service of women is when it comes to exercising authority over men.
4. In keeping with this principle, women are not permitted to:
 - a. Be pastors or be public teachers of God's Word or administrators of the Sacraments to men (e.g., the Elders, or teaching Bible classes to men).
 - b. Hold offices which require them to lead or exercise authority over men (e.g., chairing authoritative boards or committees).
 - c. Be a member of the authoritative governing bodies of the church (e.g., the Voters' Assembly and Church Council).
5. In keeping with this principle, men are required to:
 - a. Willingly assume the great responsibility for leadership in the church which God gives them.

- b. Use their authority to represent and serve the interests and needs of the women and all other members of the church.
 - 6. Both men and women will want to support and encourage each other in carrying out their roles in the church.
- H. God has not given special instructions for men and women on how to carry out their roles in society outside the context of marriage and the church. Yet Christian men and women will seek to conduct themselves in ways that will honor God and show proper respect and concern for others.

II. Living For God

- A. One of the crucial questions we must address centers on the purpose of our lives: "Why and for whom am I living?"

Ephesians 2:12-13 - Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ. . . without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

1 Peter 2:10 - Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

- B. Jesus Christ reminds His Christians that He has radically changed formerly guilty, godless, hopeless lives. He has shown them pardoning mercy, restored them to a believing relationship with God, and given them the sure hope of heaven.

Galatians 2:20 - I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 - For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

Joshua 24:24b - We will serve the Lord our God and obey him.

- C. By the transforming power of His saving love, Jesus leads His believers to realize that He is the Source and Owner of their lives and to commit themselves to live, not for themselves, but for Him and His purposes.

Luke 9:59a - *"Follow Me."*

Luke 14:33 - *In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.*

- D. Living life for God is extremely challenging and demanding, since God requires that we give up all claims to own or control our lives and follow Him without condition.

Luke 18:28-30 - *Peter said to him, "We have left all we had to follow you!" "I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life."*

Isaiah 41:10 - *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

- E. Living life for God is immensely satisfying and rewarding since God promises to graciously strengthen and support His believers in doing it.
- F. At the heart of living for God is a willing dedication to conduct our life in ways that God directs. We will examine some of those ways in the following sections.

III. Learning God's Word

2 Timothy 3:14-17 - *{14} But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, {15} and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. {16} All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, {17} so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

James 1:22 - *Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*

Psalms 119:72, 103, 97 - *{72} The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold. {103} How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! {97} Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.*

- A. In living for God we dedicate ourselves to the continual learning and following of God's Word.

1. We cherish the Word as the source of salvation and strength to live a Christian life.
2. We devote time to grow through the study of the Word.
3. We learn to love the Word and refuse to be without it.

Psalm 119:15-16 - *I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.*

- B. We refuse to make the study of God's Word a low priority in our lives.
1. We won't deprive ourselves of the thing that gives us wisdom and strength to avoid spiritual deception, endure trials and be useful in God's service.
 2. We also refuse to gamble that we can neglect or make moderate use of God's Word and still expect to flourish spiritually.

Revelation 1:3 - *Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.*

- C. God's Word gives great blessing to those who read it and take it to heart.
1. "Whoever would know God and have eternal life should read this Book (the Bible) with diligence and search for its testimony of Christ, God's Son" (Martin Luther).
 2. "To do God's work, we must have God's power. To have God's power, we must know God's will. To know God's will, we must study God's Word" (John R. Mott).
- D. Some useful ways to learn and follow God's Word are:
1. To worship regularly.
 2. To have a personal program of Bible study and to conduct personal or family devotions.
 3. To be part of a regular Bible study group at church.

IV. **Sharing The Gospel**

Romans 10:13-14 - *"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?*

Mark 16:15-16 - *He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*

Matthew 28:19-20a - Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

1 Peter 3:15 - But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

2 Corinthians 5:20 - We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

- A. In living for God we dedicate ourselves to sharing the Gospel so that others can be saved and grow in faith.
1. We know that unless people hear and believe the Gospel, they will be lost eternally in hell.
 2. We take seriously God's commission to tell the Gospel and prepare ourselves to do so.
 3. We personally share the Gospel with others so that they can believe and grow in faith.

Romans 1:16a - I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.

Acts 4:18-20 - Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

- B. We refuse to make sharing the Gospel a matter of minor importance.
1. We won't let fears of embarrassment or rejection prevent us from bringing the Gospel to others.
 2. We won't let opposition or other obstacles keep us from telling the good news that will save people's souls.

Daniel 12:3 - Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

- C. We are encouraged by God's approving message that those who strive to win souls for God are wise and blessed.
- D. Some helpful ways to share the good news are:
1. To befriend people and invite them to join you in hearing and learning God's Word.

2. To learn or develop a way to clearly share the Law and Gospel message of salvation.
3. To personally share the way of salvation with others.

V. Managing God's Gifts

- 1 Chronicles 29:14b - *Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.*
- 2 Corinthians 8:7, 5 - *But just as you excel in everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us - see that you also excel in this grace of giving. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.*
- 2 Corinthians 9:7 - *Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*
- 1 Corinthians 16:2 - *On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.*
- 1 Chronicles 29:17a - *I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things have I given willingly and with honest intent.*

- A. In living for God we dedicate ourselves to using our resources to serve God's purposes.
1. We recognize that all our resources come from God.
 2. We devote ourselves and the use of these resources to God's glory.
 3. We make joyful, generous gifts to support God's work.

Malachi 3:8-9 - *"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse--the whole nation of you--because you are robbing me.*

Galatians 6:7 - *Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.*

- B. We refuse to neglect or minimize giving for God's work.
1. We will not let thanklessness or selfishness keep us from faithful support of the Lord's work.
 2. We won't allow God to be robbed or mocked by unfaithful use of God-given resources.

2 Corinthians 9:8 - *And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*

- C. We are encouraged by God's promise to provide everything we need to live for God.
- D. Some helpful ways to manage God's gifts are:
 1. To dedicate prayerfully a generous percentage of your income and other wealth for God's kingdom work.
 2. To look for opportunities in which you can support God's work.
 3. To manage diligently all your resources to serve God's purposes.

V. Serving Others

1 John 4:10-11 - *This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

Matthew 20:26-28 - *Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave--just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

1 Peter 4:10 - *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.*

Galatians 6:2 - *Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

Romans 15:2 - *Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.*

- A. In living for God we dedicate ourselves to serve the needs of others.
 1. We respond to Christ's redeeming love for us by striving to love others.
 2. We realize that God has saved and blessed us so we can use our lives to help and meet the needs of others.
 3. We devote ourselves to serving the needs of others as Jesus did for us.

Galatians 5:13 - *You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.*

Galatians 6:9 - *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

- B. We refuse to neglect the needs of others.

1. We do not turn Gospel freedom into an excuse to live selfishly instead of for others.
2. We resist the temptation to become tired of doing good and to stop serving others.

Ephesians 3:16 - *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,*

- C. We look to God for strength to live this life of service.

Romans 12:9-10, 13-18 - *{9} Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. {10} Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. {13} Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. {14} Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. {15} Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. {16} Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. {17} Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. {18} If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*

- D. Some important ways to show love for others are:
1. To share your blessings with those in need.
 2. To show hospitality to others.
 3. To identify with others in their joys and sorrows.
 4. To strive to live peacefully with others.
 5. To be kind to those who harm us.

VI. Bearing The Cross

Luke 9:23 - *Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.*

2 Timothy 3:12 - *In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*

Philippians 1:29 - *For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him,*

2 Timothy 2:3 - *Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.*

Hebrews 12:2-3 - *Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

- A. In living for God we willingly bear the cross of hardship and affliction out of allegiance to Jesus.
1. We realize that God requires all His believers to endure some form of difficulty because they are followers of Jesus Christ.
 2. We regard this suffering as a privilege God gives us to test, exercise and strengthen our faith in God.
 3. We look to Christ for grace and strength to bear our difficulties to God's glory.

Galatians 6:12b - *The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ.*

2 Timothy 1:8 - *So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.*

- B. We refuse to escape the cross God gives us to bear.
1. We reject cowardly, sinful attempts to avoid difficulties for Christ's sake.
 2. We set aside fears that would prompt us to dishonor Christ and deny His Word.

Romans 8:35, 37-39 - *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

- C. We rely on the powerful love of Christ to sustain us in sufferings and to make those sufferings serve our good.
- D. Some helpful ways to bear our crosses in Christ:
1. View your crosses as a helpful gift God sends you to help you stay spiritually close to Him.
 2. Realize that God gives us each crosses that are designed for our personal condition and need.
 3. Recognize the great blessings God gives us in our crosses: freedom from certain harmful temptations, lessons in the true value of earthly and spiritual things, opportunities to glorify God and strengthen others.

VIII. Awaiting Future Glory

1 Peter 1:3-5 - *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.*

Colossians 3:1, 3-4 - *{1} Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. {3} For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. {4} When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

Philippians 3:20 - *But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,*

1 Peter 5:4 - *And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.*

2 Timothy 4:7-8 - *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

- A. In living for God we eagerly await the glory of heaven at the end of our earthly life.
1. We have a vibrant hope that God will richly bless our future because of Christ.
 2. We look forward to sharing in Jesus' eternal glory in heaven at the end of life.
 3. We live our earthly life with faithful diligence in the certainty of coming glory.

Colossians 3:2 - *Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*

1 Corinthians 9:24-25 - *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.*

- B. We refuse to do things that will jeopardize our participation in heaven's glory.
1. We strive not to focus our life on lesser fleeting earthly matters at the cost of neglecting superior, enduring heavenly concerns.

2. We strive not to lose our salvation by living a spiritually lax and undisciplined life.

2 Timothy 1:12b - *Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.*

- C. We are moved by God's faithfulness and power to keep His promises to hold firm to that hope of future glory throughout life.
- D. Some helpful ways to wait for future glory:
 1. Remember that for Christians true life never ends and will only get better.
 2. Keep your view of future glory clear by regularly studying God's Word and praying to God.
 3. Live each day for God as if it were the last one you lived before going to heaven.

IX. **Home Study**

- A. **LESSON REVIEW:** Mark each statement either A (Agree) or D (Disagree)

- _____ 1. God has determined certain roles for us to fulfill during our life on earth.
- _____ 2. Women have an advantage over men when it comes to being saved.
- _____ 3. God wants married men to be the loving leaders of their families.
- _____ 4. God does not want women to serve in any form of public ministry.
- _____ 5. Since women are not to "have authority over man" in the church, there is very little they can do in the congregation.
- _____ 6. God gives the men of the church a solemn responsibility to serve the interests and needs of the women.

- _____ 7. It is okay for a woman to supervise men in a business or government setting.
- _____ 8. God hasn't answered the question of why He has given us life.
- _____ 9. We cannot expect to be spiritually strong if we neglect the study of God's Word.
- _____ 10. Sharing the Gospel with others is not a critical matter since most people will find it on their own.
- _____ 11. A lack of gratitude is the chief reason behind poor management of God's gifts to people.
- _____ 12. God wants us to be the Christian masters of our passions so that we can be the humble servants of others.
- _____ 13. God does not give His believers any hardships to endure that He doesn't also give to unbelievers.
- _____ 14. Deep sadness and nagging doubts about eternity typify the lives of those who believe in Jesus Christ.
- _____ 15. A person who knows that he/she is going to heaven because of Christ is going to be uninterested in his/her life on earth.

B. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS: (answer the following questions)

1. What good things happen when we accept our roles in life and carry out our responsibilities in life well?

2. Why is the gospel the most precious of all the things God gives us?

3. If someone asked you "What's so great about being a Christian?", what would you tell them?

C. MEMORY TREASURES: (Memorize the following Bible verses to build up your knowledge of God's Word)

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 - *For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

2 Timothy 4:7-8 - *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

D. FUTURE ASSIGNMENTS

1. Take the New Member Class
2. Join one of the regular Bible study groups at church (if you have not already done so).

E. HYMN/PRAYER

Hymn 464: 2 - 4 in Christian Worship: "Jesus Christ, My Pride and
Glory"

Let me live to praise you ever,
Jesus, now my heart's delight;
You are leading me aright.
Let me cling to you forever,
All the fleshly lusts deny,
And the devil's hosts defy.

Grant me, Lord, your Holy Spirit
That in all I follow him
Lest the light of faith grow dim.
Let me ever trust your merit;
Let your blessing me attend;
From all evil me defend.

From all pain and imperfection,
Gracious Lord, deliver me;
Heaven's glory let me see.
Keep me under your direction
That the grace you gave to me
I may praise eternally.

Appendix A

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.

The third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.

From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father.

Through Him all things were made.

II

For us and for our salvation, He came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
and became full human.

For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Athanasian Creed

Whoever wishes to be saved must, above all else, hold to the true Christian faith.
Whoever does not keep this faith pure in all points will certainly perish forever.

Now this is the true Christian faith:

We worship one God in three persons and three persons in one God,
without mixing the persons or dividing the divine being.

For each person - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - is distinct,
but the deity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one,
equal in glory and coeternal in majesty.

What the Father is, so is the Son, and so is the Holy Spirit.

The Father is uncreated, the Son uncreated, the Holy Spirit uncreated;
the Father is infinite, the Son infinite, the Holy Spirit infinite;
the Father is eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Spirit eternal;

yet they are not three who are eternal, but there is one who is eternal,
just as they are not three who are uncreated, not three who are infinite,

III

but there is one who is uncreated and one who is infinite.
In the same way the Father is almighty, the Son is almighty, the Holy Spirit is almighty;
yet they are not three who are almighty, but there is one who is almighty.
So the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God;
yet they are not three Gods, but one God.
So the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Spirit is Lord;
yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord.
For just as Christian truth compels us to confess each person individually to be God and Lord,

so the true Christian faith forbids us to speak of three God's or three Lords.
The Father is neither made nor created nor begotten of anyone.
The Son is neither made nor created, but is begotten of the Father alone.
The Holy Spirit is neither made nor created nor begotten,
but proceeds from the Father and the Son.
so there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three sons;
one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.
And within this Trinity none comes before or after; none is greater or inferior,
but all three persons are coequal and coeternal,
so that in every way, as stated before, all three persons are to be worshiped as one God
and one God worshiped as three persons.
whoever wishes to be saved must have this conviction of the Trinity.

It is furthermore necessary for eternal salvation truly to believe
that our Lord Jesus Christ also took on human flesh.

Now this is the true Christian faith:

We believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son,
is both God and man.

He is God, eternally begotten from the nature of the Father, and He is man, born in time
from the nature of His mother, fully God, fully man, with rational soul and human flesh,
equal to the Father as to His deity, less than the Father as to His humanity;
and though He is both God and man, Christ is not two persons but one,
one, not by changing the deity into flesh, but by taking the humanity into God;
one, indeed, not by mixture of the natures, but by unity in one person;
for just as the rational soul and flesh are one human being,
so God and man are one Christ.

He suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose the third day from the dead.

He ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty,
and from there will come to judge the living and the dead.

At His coming all people will rise with their own bodies
to answer for their personal deeds.

Those who have done good will enter eternal life,

IV

but those who have done evil will go into eternal fire.

This is the true Christian faith.

Whoever does not faithfully and firmly believe this cannot be saved.

Appendix B

The Ten Commandments

with explanations from Martin Luther's Small Catechism

The First Commandment:

You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean?

We should fear, love and trust in God above all things.

The Second Commandment:

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not use His name to curse, swear, lie or deceive, or use it superstitiously, but call upon God's name in every trouble, pray, praise and give thanks.

The Third Commandment:

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not despise preaching and His word, but regard it as holy, and gladly hear and learn it.

The Fourth Commandment:

Honor your father and mother, that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not dishonor or anger our parents and others in authority, but honor, serve and obey them, and give them love and respect.

The Fifth Commandment:

You shall not murder

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and be a friend to him in every bodily need.

The Sixth Commandment:

You shall not commit adultery

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we lead a pure and decent life in words and actions, and that husband and wife love and honor each other.

The Seventh Commandment:

You shall not steal

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not take our neighbor's money or property or get it by dishonest dealing, but help him to improve and protect his property and business.

The Eighth Commandment:

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him or give him a bad name, but defend him, speak well of him and take his words and actions in the kindest possible way.

The Ninth Commandment:

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house or obtain it by false claims, but do all we can to help him keep it.

The Tenth Commandment:

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his workers or his animals or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not force or entice away from our neighbor his wife, workers or animals, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

The Conclusion:

What does God say about all these commandments?

He says, "I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to thousands who love me and keep my commandments."

What does this mean?

God threatens to punish all who transgress these commandments. Therefore we should fear His anger and not disobey what He commands.

But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore we should love and trust in Him, and gladly obey what He commands.

Appendix C

The Lord's Prayer

Version 1

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.

Version 2

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.

Appendix D

The Antichrist

1 John 4:3 - *But every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.*

- A. One of the most intriguing and alarming teachings of the Bible is the doctrine of the Antichrist.
1. God tells us of one specific Antichrist who will arise to be a strong enemy of Jesus and His work to save people.
 2. God gives a more complete description of this Antichrist in Paul's warning about "the man of lawlessness" in 2 Thessalonians 2.
 3. We must carefully look to the Scriptures and faithfully listen to what God says so that we can properly identify and guard against the Antichrist and his work.

- B. The Biblical marks of the Antichrist.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 - *Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.*

1. God tells us that before the world ends, the man of lawlessness will lead a deliberate falling away or rebellion against God and His work to save people by His undeserved love in Christ.
2. Over time, this man will be revealed and will ultimately fail and be condemned to God's destruction.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 - *He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.*

3. This man will oppose God so greatly that he sets himself over all other religious authority.
4. This man will operate in "God's temple," the visible Christian Church.
5. This man will even go so far as to claim to be equal to God.

2 Thessalonians 2:5-7 - *Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.*

6. This man was already in existence in the middle of the first century A.D.
7. This man was being restrained then but would later be free to carry out his lawless work.
8. This man wields a secret power of lawlessness which works deceptively, beyond the notice of most people.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 - *And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.*

9. This man will eventually be exposed and then defeated and destroyed by Christ and His Word at the Second Coming.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 - *The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.*

10. The Antichrist will be in partnership with Satan and his work will be supported by the devil's miraculous works.
11. The Antichrist's actions will deceive many people who will perish in hell because they intentionally reject God's true Word and choose to believe the wicked lies of the man of lawlessness.

C. The identification of the Antichrist.

1. God intended that people would be able to recognize who the Antichrist is as His predictions about this lawless man were fulfilled in the course of history.
2. Powerful historical evidence, viewed in the light of God's Word, points to only one possible identification: the position of the Roman papacy is the Antichrist. To understand this conclusion more clearly consider how the papacy matches the marks God gives us:
3. The papacy (leader or bishop of the church in Rome) already existed in the time of the apostles (the first century A.D.) and continues to this day.
4. The Roman papacy originally upheld the true teaching of God's Word, but later rebelled against critical parts of it and became the chief

opponent of the Gospel, the central truth of Scripture that God saves us out of His undeserved love for us through faith in Jesus Christ apart from our works.

- a. The papacy cunningly leads souls away from trusting only in Jesus as their Savior from sin and from receiving salvation as God's free gift.
 - b. The papacy maintains many Bible teachings, even the truth that Jesus died for us; but then it insists that people must earn or merit God's mercy by their works in order to be saved.
 - c. In its official writings, the papacy maintains that a person's salvation depends on both God's grace and one's own works. It also condemns God's teaching of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone because of Christ and damns all those who believe it
 - i. "Eternal life is to be proposed to those who do good unto the end and hope in God, both as grace mercifully promised to the children of God through Jesus Christ, and as a reward to be faithfully rendered to their good works and merits" (Council of Trent).
 - ii. "If anyone says that people are justified, only by the free crediting of the justifying work of Christ or by the remitting of sins apart from love which is poured out into their hearts by the Holy Spirit and lives in them; or if anyone says that the grace by which we are justified is only God's favor on us, let him be damned" (Council of Trent, Session VI, Canon 11).
 - iii. "If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing but confidence in God's mercy which forgives sins for Christ's sake; or that this confidence alone is the means by which we are justified, let him be damned" (Council of Trent, Session VI, Canon 12).
 - iv. "If anyone says that the Gospel is a mere, absolute promise of eternal life, without the condition of obeying the commandments, let him be damned" (Council of Trent, Session VI, Canon 20).
5. The papacy has falsely assumed great powers for itself in the visible Christian Church and in the world. The papacy has brazenly seized god-like authority over the consciences of people in both earthly and spiritual matters. Consider these anti scriptural claims the papacy has made:
- a. "The Bishop of Rome is the Universal Bishop of all churches" (Boniface III, 607).

- b. "The Pope can be judged by no one on earth...The Pope cannot make a mistake" (Gregory VII, 1073-1085 in Dictatus).
 - c. "The Pope is superior to and the source of all laws without qualification. He stands on an equality with the Son of God" (Gregory, 1140 in Decretus).
 - d. "The Pope is the Vicar of Christ, the Foundation of all Christianity, the Ruler of the World...Every member of the clergy must obey the Pope, even if what he commands is evil; for no one may judge the Pope" (Innocent III, 1198-1216).
 - e. "The Pope is lord and master of the universe" (Gregory IX, 1227-1241).
 - f. "The Pope is the bodily presence of Christ" (Innocent IV, 1243-54).
 - g. "The breast of the Roman pontiff is the repository and fount of all law. Every human being must do as the Pope tells him....It is altogether essential to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman pontiff" (Boniface VIII, 1294-1303 in Unam Sanctam).
6. As the official spiritual leader of the Roman Catholic Church, the papacy projects a godly, respectable image and commands the allegiance of the majority of professing Christians in the world. His identity as the Antichrist goes largely unnoticed.
 7. Many regard the papacy as a trustworthy teaching authority and accept its doctrines as true and saving, even though these teachings deny and defy the true Gospel of Christ and will cause them to go to hell.

1 John 2:26, 22, 24-25 - *I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. {22} Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist--he denies the Father and the Son. {24} See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. {25}*

Galatians 1:7b-8 - *Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!*

8. Christians, who know the precious truths that the Bible is our only source and guide for spiritual life and that we are saved only by God's undeserved love through faith in Christ, will recognize and avoid the spiritually deadly influence of the papacy.