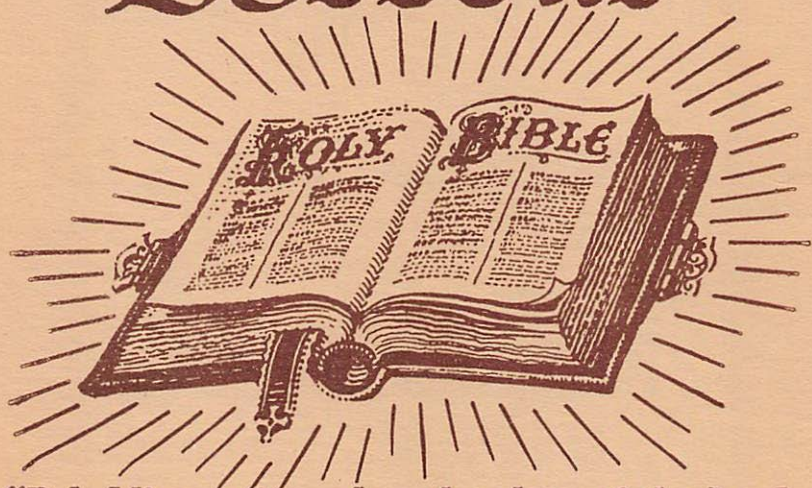


1974

Bible Lessons



**"Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,
we are CHANGED" II Cor. 3:18**

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

**Vol. 13, No. 3
July, Aug., Sept.
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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

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Volume 13

July, Aug., Sept., 1981

No. 3

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Jesus Christ and His Church**

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Theme for Third Quarter, 1981

The lessons for this series of Bible studies are subjects of great importance. They are vital Bible doctrines set forth in clear Scriptural expressions, and yet they are so often erroneously taught and misconstrued. We should remember that if the Bible clearly teaches a thing, we should walk in obedience to that truth regardless of who teaches it or who does not teach it. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for our spiritual well-being. Many times the teachings of the Bible cross the human nature, what we have been taught, or our own thoughts. We should be wary in these matters and take heed that we submit to the judgment of the Scriptures. This is what the Bible is for—to instruct and correct us in the way of righteousness and to bring us to more perfect understanding. The first two quarters have dealt with foundation truths of the Christian faith, while this quarter will branch out into more doctrinal and moral themes associated with practical and earthly living, and this with our future state in mind. Man lives by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. If the Bible teaches it, it is for us.

—Publishers

July 5, 1981

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts, will perform this.

Daniel 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

Luke 1:30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Luke 17:20 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:

21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

John 18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Hebrews 12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

Memory Verse: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Romans 14:17.

Central Thought: Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the King of Glory, set up the Kingdom of God which is a spiritual Kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, established in the hearts and lives of men and women.

Word Definitions: *"The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."* The Greek sentence can be more clearly rendered: "The Royal Majesty of the Heavens has approached."

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have massed several choice passages of Scripture for a lesson about the Kingdom of God. We have two from prophecy. The first is Isaiah's vivid foretelling of the coming of Jesus Christ. It speaks of the government, the throne, and the kingdom. There is no questioning that He who was to be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Then we have the prophecy from Daniel. This was given on the occasion of Daniel's interpreting the king's dream that revealed the four universal kingdoms. There was the first one, the

Babylonian. It was to be followed by the Medes and Persians; then came the Greek, and finally the Roman Empire took over. It was in the days of these kings and during the Roman Empire that Jesus came and set up His glorious kingdom of Peace.

The angel's message to the Virgin Mary reveals truth of the Kingdom. While many yet look for Christ to literally sit on David's throne over in Palestine, the saints of this Evening Light rejoice to know that He is seated upon David's throne now at the right hand of God, ruling His people in the Spirit. Jesus and John both said that the Kingdom of God was at hand, or near. Then we have two of Jesus' own declarations concerning His kingdom, showing that it was not a literal kingdom of outward show, but rather a kingdom of the souls of men within. The writer in Hebrews labels it a "kingdom which cannot be moved." We receive it when we are saved from all sin. We have used Romans 14:17 as our memory verse that every Christian should know by heart, but it really is the key verse to our whole lesson. Paul spoke these words in an effort to get the Christians of his day not to be so overly concerned about meat and drink with regards to the grace of God. "For," he said, "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." —Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is the salvation of God revealed as a kingdom?
2. Will Christ redeem anyone He cannot rule? What does the term *kingdom* imply?
3. Name some of the differences between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world.
4. Where is the throne of David, and when is Christ to sit on it?
5. What kind of effect does the kingdom of God have upon the heart of man?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

What a glorious theme is the Kingdom of God! What a treasure and a reality it is to the child of God! When we survey the kingdoms of the world in history and in current times, we behold much evil and vanity mixed therewith. We see kings and monarchs filled with pride and evil ruling their subjects without the love and fear of God. We see kingdom rise against kingdom, strife and bloodshed as subjects rise against their leaders. But we turn our eyes from these fleeting earthly dominions to behold in the Spirit a realm of conquering peace and love. How

can a man be truly ruled and governed? Only when the affections are won and the nature subdued with love can a man be controlled. This is the Kingdom of God. The love of Christ conquers all rebellion and pride, bringing man into the realm of humility and peace. What good is a throne of ivory or a throne of gold whereon one might sit in pomp and worldly honor when the hearts of his subjects are not really submitted to him? The kingdom of God cometh not with observation or outward show. Many people glory in appearance and not in heart. II Cor. 5:12. They love to parade in superfluity and pretence for the admiration of people's persons. The kingdom of God does not go that route. Instead, it by-passes the sight of the eyes and the outward display, reaching into the very soul of man, his innermost being. There it transforms vain desires into godliness, faith, and meekness. Christ is truly King in this sense. He is the King of Glory. He desires not the kingdoms of this world and all the riches and honor of them. He was offered these things once by Satan, but the glitter and gleam of earthly dominion did not allure nor attract His mind. He was building an eternal kingdom, one not of this world. His wisdom was not of this world. The princes of this world understood it not. For this they rejected Him and crucified Him. But in His resurrected power He has taken the kingdom and shares it with all that believe and obey Him. When we are born again of the Spirit, we come under the rule and authority of His eternal Kingship. We are in the Kingdom of God now. Many speculate on the future "coming King" and what will happen in what they call "the millennium." But such theories fade to nothingness before the reality of the spiritual Kingdom of God now.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In Eph. 1:18, Paul says, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." How important it is that the children of God have their eyes opened to the beauties and riches of the Kingdom of God. Unless we understand what is rightfully ours, how can we prosper and flourish spiritually? Solomon said, "Where there is no vision the people perish."

It is very difficult for someone who is carnally minded, to understand the things which are spiritual. How can it be explained to someone who is not interested in the things of God, the manner in which the Holy Spirit leads and works in the

Church today? A person cannot simply attend a church, or put one's name on some church book and thereby fully understand the Kingdom of God, for "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." There must first come a change of heart and an infilling of the kingdom within, before the Spirit of God can open the eyes of our understanding.

In Christ's brief testimony before Pilate, in John 18:36, of our lesson, we notice that instead of informing Pilate of what the Kingdom of God *was*, He told him what God's Kingdom *was not*! There are many seemingly intelligent theological people of today who have concocted what they think the Kingdom of God is. If Christ were to have a short time to testify to them in their big, fancy churches, I believe that instead of trying to inform them of what His kingdom is, He would destroy their notions of what they *think* it is.

In the earthly kingdoms of our world, a small percentage of the people are the rulers, and the vast majority are servants of the government, working to support it. In the Kingdom of God, we can all be kings and priests unto God. What a blessed hope we have in this heavenly kingdom! —Wayne Murphey

—o—

July 12, 1981

HAVE FAITH IN GOD

Hebrews 10:35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.

36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

Mark 11:22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be cast into the sea; and

shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

John 20:24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them, then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

Memory Verse: But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Heb. 11:6.

Central Thought: There is no substitute for believing in God and taking Him at His Word. It is a tendency of the flesh to doubt and harbor unbelief. This negative tendency must be overcome through determined and unwavering confidence in God and His faithfulness. Faith is believing without sight or sense, simply accepting God's word and promise as the basis for what we desire.

Word Definitions: *Faith:* The Greek word is *pistis* which means persuasion, credence, belief, trust, and reliance. "*By it [faith] the elders obtained a good report.*" The Greek term for "obtained a good report" is the word *martyr* which means a witness or testimony. By faith the elders (ancients, Greek) gave forth and left a good testimony, being proven in their lives of the realities of what they believed in.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From two of the original twelve disciples and from one who afterward believed, we have taken our lesson on faith today. There is great opinion that the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews was Paul. If it was Paul, he had great qualifications to say what he did about the difference between the law system under Moses and that which is through the faith of Jesus Christ. We see it expressed many times in his other epistles. Faith had been overlooked by Paul and by many of his day. They had clung tenaciously to the righteousness of the law. So his testimony of faith in Jesus Christ is of great value to us, because it is coming from one who really tried to quench the light of faith. John and Mark were eyewitnesses of Christ. Mark was a young man in Jesus' day who later became a worker for Him. John leaned on the bosom of Christ. All three of these brethren are united in the exhortation to have faith. The writer in Hebrews centralizes his argument in behalf of faith by quoting from Habakkuk 2:4, which declares that "the just shall live by his faith." It is a responsibility that every soul has before God, to believe in Him and count Him faithful. There is no way around it. We must enter the realm of faith if we are to succeed in the Christian life. There are many aspects of faith which cannot all be mentioned in this lesson. But let us study and give it great thought and prayer. It is not a preference. There is no alternative. We *must* have faith in God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Can you think of various points along life's journey where one would be tempted to cast away his confidence? Name some.
2. How does patience connect with faith?
3. What causes one to draw back? To what do they draw back?
4. Is there any limit placed on the exercise of faith?
5. Why is it more blessed to believe without seeing?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

"Faith is believing, simply receiving what in His promise God has revealed." No better way could it be said than in the words of this song. The downfall of Israel was that they failed to believe God. They drew back in unbelief from the commandment to go forward in faith. Unbelief is generated by the flesh. We must rise above sight, circumstances, conditions, and situa-

tions if we would fulfill the Heavenly plan for our lives. People may place the blame for their spiritual lack or failure on other people, but this is a mistake. The failure lies in our failure to believe and trust God. Faith finds great success in the attitude and disposition of a little child. Jesus said that we must become like little children if we would enter the kingdom of Heaven. A little child accepts easily the responsibility of faith, because he has not yet acquired knowledge of any ability in himself. Herein is the difficulty of having faith. It is too easy to look around and find answers for our needs in our own strength or in logical explanations of nature. The world today is motivated and lorded by unbelief. Lack of faith is at the bottom of many spiritual difficulties and frustrations. Faith cannot germinate and prosper in the pride of man. Faith is the breath of humility, dependence on God. "Since I'm dependent, Lord, on thee, why should I doubt thy saving grace?" Oh, that we all would be determined to hold fast our confidence! We should resist and overcome any tendency to doubt and fear. When Jesus cursed the fig tree, the disciples heard it. On the morrow as they passed by the fig tree again, they marvelled to see it dried up. It was then that Jesus uttered those important words: Have faith in God. He puts it to us as an opportunity to take God at His word, and what we desire when we pray to believe and count it done. Thomas was determined not to believe in Christ's being resurrected until he had seen and touched Him and His wounds. "Be not faithless but believing" was the Lord's admonition to Thomas, making it clear that it is God's will for us to believe on the strength of the testimony of His witnesses. He has promised to come again. Faith has declined in this promise, and as Peter forewarned, many have lost hope and cast away their confidence of the second coming of Christ. It is a challenge that the Scriptures have set before us, and Jesus in one place asked the question: "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The primary step toward being saved is hinged upon faith. First of all, as the memory verse says, we must "believe that he is." As a general rule in today's society, people believe that there is a God. This nation was founded on godly principles and it has pretty well been an accepted fact that God exists. This constitutes a type of faith. We can't see God or discern Him with our physical faculties, yet we know He is there.

The next step is believing "that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." This is a problem that many people encounter—accepting their salvation after they have confessed and believed on Christ. The devil will contest your experience of salvation from the very beginning. He will assail you with accusations and bad feelings. He will endeavor to destroy the faith and belief that God has rewarded you with salvation and forgiveness of sins.

When we take this step of faith and receive our salvation, it is just the beginning. "Now the just shall live by faith." We will have to continually live by the same faith which we exercised to receive salvation.

Why is it that without faith it is impossible to please Him? It is because God wants us to feel a total dependency upon Him. As Christians, we are still going to face problems and difficulties in our lives. God wants us to have faith and depend upon Him to work out these perplexities. We are now the children of God. How would it affect parents if their children were to inform them that they had found another way of living; that they no longer desired parental guidance and support?

A minister brother has been quoted as saying, "Do you know what it means when you see a man wearing both suspenders and a belt? It means he doesn't really trust either one." We must depend solely upon God and not ourselves or human wisdom, in order to have His approval upon our lives.

—Wayne Murphey

TELL THE LORD

Uncle Philip was in debt. He was a good, honest man, but at this time he owed the sum of fifty dollars. His creditor was a merchant who had often trusted him, and always been faithfully paid. But it was a time of political excitement, and the creditor was interested in the party against which the debtor voted. An abrupt demand was made for a settlement. Uncle was very willing to settle, but was not quite able. It was a season when money was scarce. Those who owed him had nothing wherewith to pay, and those who would gladly lend him were also without funds. He hoped the merchant, who knew his integrity, would deal leniently with him; but not so. A suit was brought, judgment obtained, and an execution laid upon his furniture.

It was a sad day when the sheriff entered Uncle Philip's house. Such a thing had never occurred in the family before. Respectable and respected they had ever lived, and the disgrace

and inconvenience of a sale, at a time when money was so scarce in the neighborhood, that the furniture would not bring ten per cent of its value, was a cruelty and injustice that wrung the good man's heart.

The family sat grief-stricken for some time in a room to which they had retired when the blow came. At last Uncle rose: "Come, Wife, come, children," he said, "let us tell the Lord." Kneeling down, he laid the case before his heavenly Father, committing the affair to Him.

When the little group rose from their knees, the load had passed from each heart, and the tears they wiped from their eyes were tears of trustful submission.

Uncle Philip's house had long afforded lodging to the circuit preacher, and that day the guest was expected. Aunt went to prepare the dinner, glad that the servant of God could once more be entertained before their table and bed should be sold.

The family was cheerful as usual when the preacher came. Why trouble him with distress that he could not alleviate? But as Uncle and Aunt sat talking with him after dinner, somehow the story came out. They felt that the good man's prayers would be a comfort; besides, he would soon learn it from the public, so they told him all. How strange did it seem, however, when the preacher, instead of expressing sympathy, abruptly rose, exclaiming, "Now I know what that letter came for." He left the room, while Uncle and Aunt looked at each other in astonishment.

In a few minutes he returned with a letter in his hand. "I should have explained, dear friends," he said, "but the joy of being chosen as the instrument to deliver you from this perplexity caused me to forget good manners. Today I received this letter, and wondered why it was sent to me. It is from a benevolent old lady in New York, and contains a fifty-dollar check, which she requests me to present to the first good man I find in difficulty, only requiring that, if ever he is able, he shall repay it to the Lord. It is the exact sum you need, my brother. Take it, and give God thanks."

Uncle Philip afterwards repaid that fifty dollars into the Lord's treasury with double interest. To this day, every trial or difficulty that visits his house, whether great or small, is told to the Lord.

—From *Sketches From Life*

July 19, 1981

HUMILITY

Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Luke 18:9 And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

I Peter 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

Memory Verse: He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God. Micah 6:8.

Central Thought: The rightful, honorable course for a man to take is the way of humility. Before God and before man, one

should have a lowly mind and attitude, following the example that Jesus left us.

Word Definitions: *Think soberly:* Think with a sound mind, moderate. *Despise others:* Make utterly nothing of others. *Humility:* From the French word *humus* which means the earth or ground. The real meaning for humility and humbleness is *lowliness*. A humble person is a lowly person. *Abased:* Brought low. It is better to humble one's self than to be humbled.

LESSON BACKGROUND

One of the allurements that Satan presented to Eve in the temptation was the desire to be made wise. It was a drawing away from the lowly state or position into a higher realm of esteem and thought. Since that time, we see that pride has been the downfall of the human race. One has made the statement that pride is not a sin, but rather it is the taproot of all sin. Man's inclination to be proud and haughty, self-confident and self-exalting, has led him on a downward course away from his God. In the plan of salvation Jesus sets a pattern for us to follow in lowliness and humility. He humbled Himself and became obedient to the cross after condescending to the human level from the heights of the Godhead. He was willing to die for the sins of mankind rather than to hold Himself in exaltation. Pride puts everything in distortion and out of context. Man cannot survey life in its true focus and clearness without humility. The Scriptural command is: Humble Thyself! One may say, "How humble?" The answer: Down to where you really are. Pride puts things out of proportion, and exalts the mind into a realm of unreal existence. Humility brings us down to what we really are and helps us to see ourselves just as is true. Humility helps one to be truly conscious of his needs. A proud man is proud that he knows so much; a humble man is humble that he knows no more. King Nebuchadnezzar felt that he was so great and attributed all his accomplishments to himself. But after spending seven years as a beast of the field, he was ready to humble himself and confess the truth. It is a dire lesson for us today to learn the way of humility.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the damage and harm sustained through pride?
2. Can you think of some of the reasons why a man would think more highly of himself than he ought to?
3. What was the matter with the Pharisee?

4. What should the attitude of the younger toward the elder be?
5. What was Christ's act of humility and how can we follow that same example?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Humility is the door of entrance into grace. God resists the proud. The proud in heart who seek to approach unto God and divine things will not be welcomed or blessed of Him. Many people seek to accord with the display of religion for the praise of men. They shun the lowly side of religion. They want people to think and speak well of them, but visualize very little of what it takes for God to commend them. Pride is a deep-seated thing, but can be corrected very simply by one's humbling himself. It is an act of the will to take down all the strain and upward effort of pride. It is to relax and condescend in the mind and attitude to a right and sober aspect of one's self. A person who cannot be entreated or admonished is a proud person who knows not the great secret of humility. A humble person can be entreated and approached without fear. A humble person will not take offense at anything. No injury, misuse, abuse, misunderstanding, or hurt of any kind will arouse retaliation in the heart of a humble man. Jesus set this example when he was wrongfully accused, tried, and executed on a Roman cross without fighting for his escape. Humility will not allow a person to become involved in strife and contention. One would rather suffer wrong than do a wrong. Humility does not contend for his or her own pleasure or way. Let this mind be in you. Permit the principles of humility to become reality in your life. View Christ's splendid example of humility and lowliness shining before your eyes. Seek to be inoffensive and harmless. Tame your human nature with rightful understandings of the divine nature. God's grace will help you, but you must put forth an earnest effort in this direction. Patience and forbearance, gentleness and compassion, kindness and longsuffering are all the fruits of humility. Seek humility and strive to walk in Christ's steps, and you will be exalted in God's favor and grace.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Humility has a peculiar aspect about it. When one thinks he has reached the depths of it, it is likely he fails to possess it. When it becomes necessary to point out your humility for others to take note of, there is obviously an absence of this grace in

your life. Humility is something that we all must strive for. We must continually endeavor to keep the grace of God in our lives, and put others first.

As a child of God, we have been called to a high position. The position of being a saint is not for the purpose of reigning over others, but for the purpose of reigning over sin. This is where the Pharisee ran into trouble. He esteemed himself holier than other individuals, instead of thanking God for the availability of grace to live above sin.

There are many examples of humble people in the Bible. I recall an instance in the Old Testament when the children of Israel were being oppressed by the Midianites. The people were longing for freedom and crying out to God for deliverance. An angel appeared before Gideon and said, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." This was quite a salutation to be addressed to a mortal. If that statement were made to some folks today, one can imagine the look of pleased agreement on their countenances.

The Lord had an important task for Gideon. He needed someone who was humble and fully realized how necessary it was to depend upon God to deliver the children of Israel from the enemy. Instead of dwelling upon the statement of the angel, Gideon beseeched him for assistance. It is needful to realize our dependency upon God, even when we are placed in a position of leadership.

There is a good deal of truth to the words of the song, "Humble Thyself to Walk With God." I especially enjoy the thought in the third verse, "Just as a stream finds a bed that is lowly, so Jesus walks with the pure and the holy. Cast out thy pride, and in heartfelt contrition, humble thyself to walk with God."

—Wayne Murphey

THE PIOUS WASHERWOMAN

Among the flock to which it was once my joy to minister in one of our southern states, there was a poor woman, who, at the age of fifty, in spite of every obstacle in her earthly lot, sought and found the Savior. Few cases in my charge touched my heart more than hers.

Though homely in speech and ungainly in person, she is yet, I believe, one of the "pure in heart," who "shall see God." Probably she never knew much joy until she found it at the foot of the cross, for her husband was a drunkard, and she lived in the midst of poverty and ignorance. Through the abounding mercy of God, some word from my lips was made the arrow that

pierced her heart, and she sought the Lord with strong crying, until he heard her prayers, and gave her peace. And now with what a beaming face, hearty voice, and eager grasp of the hand did she always meet me!

Her gratitude to the Lord who had bought her did not end in protestations of love to me, one of His ambassadors. Like the woman of Samaria, she could not keep the glad news to herself, but went about telling to others what a Savior she had found. When there was sickness, sorrow, or death among her neighbors, there by the bedside or the coffin was I sure to meet her face of honest sympathy. There, too, was her hand outstretched in such aid as even the poor can give each other.

Once I was called to visit the sick-chamber of a young girl. I had been there often, for her decline was slow, had expounded to her the way of salvation, and she had listened with sorrowful, meek attention, but had not expressed a decided hope. Now her young life was wasting rapidly away. The time had come when she required the constant aid of those around her, for her strength was gone, and she lay as helpless as an infant.

As my wife and I entered the house one beautiful afternoon, we were met at the door by the hushed and tender greetings of our friend Mrs. G—. "Are you here?" I said with some surprise. "Can you leave your work, and come so far at this time of day?" "Oh, yes," she said, "I did up my washing early this morning, and have been here all day. The poor thing can do no more than a babe for herself now, and her mother is worn out with nursing."

Ah, thought I, we call it benevolence when a wealthy lady selects from her ample stores a few delicacies, and riding in her easy carriage to some humble abode, spends half an hour beside some bed of languishing, and then, having made the inmates glad with her bounty, takes her leave. It is benevolence, and when offered from the heart, is a sacrifice well pleasing to God. How much greater is the self-denial which the poor must practice when they would do a charity! "Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all; for all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God, but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had." Luke 21:3, 4. In like manner did our humble friend, for she lived by the labor of her hands.

She then led us up to the chamber of suffering. How neat and pleasant had the hand of watchful kindness made the poor little room! There was a clean white counterpane on the bed, and

a window open beside it, through which the genial beams of the spring sunshine came in, and fondly strove to warm the slender frame upon which the chill dews of death were beginning to fall. Before the little mirror was a bouquet of simple flowers.

The young girl was only sixteen. Her auburn hair was neatly combed back from her delicate brow, and rested softly on her cheek, where the tender bloom of youth still lingered, as feeling loath to fade so soon. Her mournful blue eyes were cast down. It was a sad sight, and at first we hardly knew what to say. But soon, taking the little transparent hand in mine, I talked to her of the tender mercies that are in Christ Jesus. I then opened the Bible and read to her from its precious promises. Mrs. G—— sat weeping, partly concealed by the bedpost. Presently she exclaimed, "Oh, how true, how sweet that is! I have been trying to tell Julia about that in my poor way. I am so glad you have come."

Some days before her departure, the young girl expressed a timid trust in Christ; but when the hour of darkest trial came, the glory that had been veiled with clouds suddenly flashed out,

"And lit her raptured spirit up

With joys unspeakable."

Her faithful friend, Mrs. G——, assisted in the last kind duties, and we stood together beside her early grave, hoping one day to behold her rise, clad in garments of light.

At length I was called to part with my beloved people, and in my farewell rounds I could not forget this faithful servant of Christ, and loving friend of my own. It was moving to see her unspoken agony as she came out to meet me for the last time as her pastor. As I was closing a brief visit, she broke off a large branch from a beautiful oleander in full bloom, and said: "Give this to your wife, [then sick in bed,] with love and good-by from me." I remonstrated with her for thus mutilating her only bush. "It doesn't matter now," said she. "I don't mind. I was only growing it for her." She then wrung my hand, with tears, sobs, and blessings on us all, and we parted.

Some years after, I had the opportunity of visiting that still cherished congregation. Among those who called to greet me was Mrs. G——, as hearty and loving, as ready with smiles and tears as ever. My heart overflowed into my eyes as I listened to her graphic account of the obstacles that had threatened to interfere with her joy in hearing me preach on the Sunday just past. "I would not let anything trouble me," she said. "I was determined that should be a happy day. My poor husband got drunk, and railed against Christianity. But I said to myself, 'It

shan't trouble me today. I am determined this shall be a happy day.' This thing went wrong, and that thing went wrong, but I said to myself, 'I won't let it disturb me today.' It was a happy day, oh, such a happy day! It made me think of the time when you found me in our alley at the wash-tub, and spoke those words I can never forget to my dying day. I had gone to church for a while, and then dropped off. You looked so solemn at me, and said, 'No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.' Those words still ring in my ears."

I parted from her with the assured hope that if I see her honest face no more on earth, I shall one day behold it beaming with the reflected glories of the Lamb, before the Father's throne.

—From *Sketches From Life*

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July 26, 1981

GOD'S COMMAND FOR HOLY LIVING

I Peter 1:13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

I Cor. 3:16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

II Cor. 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

II Peter 3:11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.

Memory Verse: Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Hebrews 12:14.

Central Thought: Holiness of heart and life is taught in the Bible; commanded by God; provided for in the plan of salvation by Jesus Christ; exemplified by Christ Jesus Himself, and is the only pathway that leads to eternal life.

Word Definitions: *Holy*: Sacred; morally pure and blameless. The words *holiness* and *sanctification* in the Greek are from the same word. *Defile*: Spoil, ruin, pollute, filthiness; a soil or stain.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In the beginning God created man in His own image. This was not only an outward likeness of the physical body, but it was a likeness of character, disposition, attitude, desire, purpose, and principle. In other words, it was a spiritual likeness. This kind of nature is termed by the Scriptures as a holy nature, a state of sacredness or purity. It was this inward principle that was defiled and polluted by man's transgressing the commandment of God and sinning against Him. Through sin man became unholy and unfit for God's presence and fellowship. But Jesus took on Himself the sins of mankind and bore their just punishment on Calvary's tree. He died for sin and arose in triumph from the grave to give man power and blessing to be holy and pure before God again. Thus we see all the Scriptures in our lesson taken from the New Testament writers impressing upon us the law of holiness that God gives to us in Christ. Not only does Christ justify the ungodly, but He purifies the heart and life so that man can live holy and righteous before Him. It is a blind and erring soul that can deny the truth of holiness in the Bible. The Bible not only commands and provides holiness as a state of mind and heart, but we are taught practical holiness as well. There is to be holiness in all manner of conversation and godliness. The very tenor and

sense of the Scriptures is calling man from the ways of the world to a holy standard in God and Christ.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Holiness is misunderstood and hated by the world. Can you think of a reason why this is so?
2. What are some of the benefits of being holy as seen in our lesson?
3. How can being holy mean freedom from impurity and sin?
4. Why should we be holy?
5. What has God in Christ done to make us to be holy? What are we to do to perfect holiness?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

That holiness is commanded of the Lord and provisions for such holiness are found in the New Testament plan of salvation cannot be justly or reasonably denied according to the Scriptures. There is just no doubt about it. God wants us to be holy. It is not a preference with Him, nor does he give us any option. He commands us to be holy. But there are certain factors involved to assist man in his pursuit of holiness found in the Scriptures of our lesson. Let us notice some of them. "Gird up the loins of your mind." The thoughts of man are not God's thoughts. There must be a willingness and a determination on our part to be teachable and instructable, actually warring against the powers of Satan to bring every thought into subjection to Christ. This is one reason why many people are not holy. Their thoughts are not established. Their minds are blinded by wrong thoughts. "Be sober." Soberness, as we learned in our previous lesson, is the quality of having a sound mind. "Hope to the end." I John 3:3 states that every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. We should have an insight to the hope of Christ's calling. This will help inspire and move us to a holy way of living. "As obedient children." Obedience is the framework of holiness. Submission to God and His perfect will is the foundation of Christianity. In submitting to the will of the Father and allowing Himself to be hung on the cross, Christ sanctified Himself. John 17:19. Vile and corrupt affections and desires are the greatest enemies to Christ and His perfect holiness. We must subject our mortal desires to God and conform our habits of life to the pattern of His holiness. "He hath chosen us in Him . . . that we should be holy . . ." Here is a factor from God's standpoint. He wants us to

be holy. He wanted man from the beginning to be holy. "Ye are bought with a price." Christ suffered that we might be holy. "Be ye separate . . . and I will receive you, and will be a Father to you saith the Lord." See the benefits of holiness. "Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved . . ." Being aware of the impending destruction of this material realm supports the cause of holiness in the soul. May there be in each of you the fervent desire and earnest resolve to be holy by the grace of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A large percentage of the church world fails to believe in holiness as it is taught in the Bible. Many declare that one can't help but sin more or less every day. This is a sad delusion to live under. How useless for Christ to have left the splendors of heaven and suffered the agonies and shame of the cross, and yet leave us in a sinful condition! I am reminded of the Scripture which says, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." God possesses the power and the grace for us to live holy lives in this sinful world. If we intend to take the Christian name upon us, we must be holy even as he is.

I spoke with a man who believed that it is impossible for a person to live above sin. He read to me from the seventh chapter of Romans where Paul said, "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." I endeavored to explain to him that Paul was speaking of his former life. He failed to accept this explanation and read on down to where Paul said, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" I questioned the man as to whether he was wretched because of sin, and he replied that he was. I told him that I pitied him and was thankful for the knowledge that we can testify of a more victorious Christian life than one which is daily corrupted by sin.

In the Old Testament, God was very particular about the temple that He was to dwell in. Moses was given a detailed plan of how to construct the tabernacle. God's Spirit did not fill the place until everything was in order and just as He required. Today, this principle remains. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" If we expect God to dwell in us, we must "be holy as he is holy."

—Wayne Murphey

August 2, 1981
BIBLE MODESTY

I Timothy 2:8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;

10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

1 Peter 3:1 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.

Memory Verse: Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. Proverbs 31:10.

Central Thought: God wills that we adorn our souls with spiritual graces of faith, love, meekness, kindness, holiness, and

truth while we modestly dress and clothe our physical bodies with neat and clean garments that will cover our nakedness.

Word Definitions: *Modest:* Orderly and decent. *Shame-facedness:* Bashfulness, having downcast eyes (toward men) and awe (toward God). *Plaiting the hair:* Elaborate braiding of the hair. *Amazement:* Fear and alarm.

LESSON BACKGROUND

When Adam and Eve disobeyed the command of the Creator and partook of the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden, the first sense that they felt was their nakedness. The feeling of nakedness because of their guilty conscience caused them to desire to be clothed, so they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. But this did not please God. Afterward the Lord God made coats of skins and clothed them.

When Noah unsuspectingly drank too much wine, he lay uncovered in his tent. His youngest son, Ham, went in and looked at the nakedness of his father. He was cursed because of this.

In the law God manifested His displeasure for looking on the nakedness of the human body outside the sanctity of marriage. An open mind and a willing obedient heart will have to acknowledge that the holiness of the Lord will not allow the exposition of the physical human body as it is today. God's will is that we be clothed, and that the form and surface of the body be covered. In the Old Testament times women even covered their faces in the presence of men other than their husbands. Up to within the last 100 years society as a general rule respected this law of modesty. We find that now the standard has been so lowered, and decency has been so cast aside, that it is appalling! The body must be clothed sufficiently and must not be attired with unnecessary adornments. The Lord wants us to be adorned with spiritual graces of the heart.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why would God look with displeasure on adorning the outward man?
2. What is His purpose in requiring the physical body to be properly clothed?
3. What is the attitude that a woman should have with respect to her body?
4. What is the adorning that God wants us to have?

5. What effect does outward adorning have upon the inner man? Is it dangerous or harmful?
6. What is the attitude that a woman should have for her husband? What is the attitude a man should have to his wife?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The loss of modesty in the hearts of men and women has helped to bring our world into such a low degree of immorality and sin that it is helping to fast fill up the cup of iniquity in God's eye of wrath. The souls of God's people are vexed from day to day with sight of all the undress and immodesty being demonstrated to public view. There is no real standard in the lives of many people. Women brazenly come out into the public with their arms, legs, and midriff bared and exposed in such a shameful manner. The human body was created to be beautiful and lovely, but because of sin and moral corruption God has placed very strict bounds upon humanity in this respect. It is sin to allow one's body to be indecently exposed. This goes for men and women alike. It is just as sinful for a man to dress immodestly as it is a woman. Adultery, fornication, and abuse is widespread and common today. It would be much less so if men and women would properly clothe and conduct themselves. Pride fills the heart as the spirit of the world fastens upon people, causing them to adorn their bodies with ear rings, finger rings, eye paint, rouge, lip stick, painted finger nails, etc. These are no little matters. There is a current of this artificial beauty flowing even in religious people. It is error for a woman to profess Christ and at the same time adorn the body with ornaments of an artificial nature. It is just not consistent with the Christian profession. The Christian standard is to adorn the souls of men for the love and fellowship of their Lord and Saviour. Gold, pearls, and costly array upon the person is strictly forbidden by the Bible. How can you do it, my friend, when the Scriptures are so plain? It is amazing how close this lies to the human heart. How inclined the carnal mind is to adorn the outer man for the praise of his or her fellow! This is a subject that it would be wise to look into. Wouldn't it be sad for a person to come to the judgment thinking he or she is all right, only to be turned away because he has ignored these Scriptures?

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A walk down a public street today, will convince us that the devil has succeeded in getting people to adorn themselves in the

extreme. We observe that many actually appear ridiculous in their pursuit of being fashionable. What is the object of fixing one's self up to the point that another individual would scarcely recognize you without the artificial trimmings? It is somewhat of an admission that one is dissatisfied with the original way she was created. True beauty inspires admiration, but an unnatural attractiveness is recognized for the fake that it is.

I believe there is truth to the saying that beauty is skin deep. Some have to fix up the outside because the inside is very unattractive. Observe a person who is lacking in external beauty, yet who possesses a benevolent spirit and attitude. You will discover that this individual is appealing and attractive to people, despite the lack of artificial adornment. Their beauty lies in the "hidden man of the heart."

When a woman is equipped with a meek and quiet spirit, it is much less difficult for the husband to dwell with her, "according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel." Basically, the woman who adorns the outside and makes her way into the working world, placing herself on the level of men, incites heartaches and marital difficulties.

Society has drifted so far in the matter of undress, that it is easy many times to discern at a glance, who is a child of God. We are living in a darkened age in which the life of a saint will shine brightly. There was a time when even those who did not profess to be saved had enough shame to dress modestly. Now many so-called "Christians" have gone the ways of the world.

—Wayne Murphey

HIGH PRICED WORLDLINESS

Miss Wilson hesitated before closing the Girls' Meeting. As she waited, a visitor arose. "May I speak?" she asked modestly. "Surely," permitted Miss Wilson, wondering.

"I was expecting your leader to mention modesty in dress as an outward evidence of the inner purity that she stressed in her evening lesson," Miss Browne began. "Maybe this point is more real to me than to most girls, because I learned it in the expensive school of experience. You girls here this evening need not learn it that way if you'll take it from me. Pardon my frank, blunt expression, but I am more interested in saving girls than in making flowery speeches. Here is my life story:

"When I was a small girl my father died. Mother struggled to keep her family of four girls together, but it was a losing

fight. One by one we children were parceled out to neighbors and relatives. Some were good homes and some were not. The influence soon began to tell on us, and I for one responded to the full. By the time I reached my middle teens, I was—well—low. You've heard the expression, 'wine and women,' in accounting for the downfall of many men. Well, in my case it was 'wine and men,' and far too much of both. Then strange to say, I became aware of my miserable condition. But I didn't know what to do about it. I didn't know God, and none of my friends did. I went to drinking harder than ever and grew more miserable. Then one day I was picked up out of the gutter and nursed back to consciousness by a kind Christian woman who also led me to God. How I love that saint!

"When I got converted inside I did outside, too. My past life of sin—and I'm not commending it when I say this—did one thing for me that innocent girls like you usually don't like to believe, it convinced me of the danger of looking like the world while trying to live for Christ.

"I knew you would resent this, but I know it from experience. You don't—yet. And may God spare you the awful—" She swallowed, and wiped her eyes.

"You'll want an illustration to prove the danger I just spoke about," she said, regaining her composure. "And again I'll give it from my own life. As I said, I was converted inside and out, and in a few days I made a raid on my wardrobe. Dancing gowns, sleeveless dresses, cosmetics, and similar things had to go, and as fast as I could, I replenished with clothes that suggested only the inner adornment, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.

"Well, this worked fine, and I was happy for months. Then one evening, by invitation, I visited one of my old friends on the other side of the city. She had not known of my conversion.

" 'Why, Edith,' she exclaimed, looking me over critically, 'how—how—antiquated you look! Has Paris gone back to Noah's ark for ideas?' she giggled, patting my long sleeves. 'And don't you trip over the length of the skirt? Edith, Edith!' She shook her head, backed up, and took in the full effect once more.

"She kept this up all evening, and by the time I started for home she had persuaded me to slip into one of her modern outfits and to arrange my hair in the worldly way that I had used before my conversion. The effect in the mirror both pleased and frightened me.

" 'There, now!' she flattered. 'That takes ten years away from you.'

" 'And also my peace,' I thought, afraid to tell her, coward that I was. I soon left for home. It was a lonely three-block walk to the street car and my thoughts troubled me. I found I couldn't pray. I felt helpless as a lost child. As I hurried across the first intersection, a perfect stranger stepped up to me and said, 'Hello.' Without even answering him, I went on, faster and faster. I was afraid and prayed for God to help me.

" 'I'm sure God heard that prayer. I don't know why He should have, after my evening of folly, but I know He did; otherwise I couldn't be here to tell you so. For as I stood on the corner looking through the magazine assortment of the corner drug store, I suddenly felt a hand on my shoulder.

" 'Fast traveler, aren't you?' asked the same voice I had just run away from. 'But I caught up.'

" 'My heart began to pound again. I looked in the window to see if there was anyone to help near. What could I do? 'God,' I begged again, 'You must help me!' But why should He help me? How could I expect Him to? It was cheap of me even to ask Him, I thought. I wanted to run inside, but my trolley was due any second. If I missed it I'd have to wait for another.

" 'I tried to conceal my fright by ignoring him and leafing faster through a magazine.

" 'Do you like that one? I'll buy it for you,' was his next attempt.

" 'No, thanks,' I refused.

" 'You're waiting for the next Lake Court car, I presume?'

" 'Yes,' I said, hoping to dismiss him. Poor me! I was only giving him information.

" 'Well, why wait?' he suggested. 'My car's just around the corner. Let's go.'

" 'Say!' I suddenly turned on him, my fear gone. 'You think I'm a greenhorn, and good bait for you, don't you? Listen! I know your tactics. I've been a victim to such as you too often, sometimes because I wanted to be and sometimes because I had to be. Tonight, thank God, it shall be neither. My life isn't a prey to your kind since—' I looked myself over, and knew I had no visible proof for what I was saying, but I finished it anyway. 'Since I became a Christian.'

" 'A what? A Christian? Are *you* a Christian?' And he looked me over from head to foot. 'Well, who'd have guessed it from your looks?'

"What do you know about Christians?" I asked, hurt by his rebuke.

"Not much. Mother was one. I just know that she didn't believe in looking like—like—worldly women."

"I wanted to say, 'Neither do I,' but I knew it would do no good."

"Well," he said, backing off a step or two—he had been familiarly close—"my hat's off to you, anyway. Sorry to have troubled you. And now may I give you a bit of advice? Men like me find the kind of women we're after at just such places as this at such an hour as this, and in such attire as yours. You are one of the few in whom my judgment has been misplaced. Is the mistake mine or yours?"

"I've learned my lesson," I admitted to him. "You had a right to judge me as you did. In the future I shall try harder to show what kind of woman I am."

"Better had," he agreed seriously, "if you want the respect of us men." He started to go. "And whatever you do, hold fast to your religion. It's the real stuff—the only stuff that can keep a person on the right track. I had it once—a short time—and lost it, so I know what I'm talking about. And you are on the losing side, too, unless you quit—"

"I know what you're thinking, and I'm quitting it this very night. If you ever meet me again I'll look—well, different from this."

"I hope so. We'd be better men if all women felt that way. Here's your trolley. Safe trip home. Good night."

"Good night, and thanks for the advice," I called. "And thank You, God," I panted from the seat I settled into, "for the advice You've given me through this experience tonight. I promise to profit by it."

"And, girls, I've kept my promise, much to my safety and spiritual growth. I pass on this experience to you to help you live more wisely than I did. Take it from one who knows, and save yourselves many of the regrets that will always be mine."

After dismissal Miss Wilson hurried to Miss Browne and clasped her hand. "Thank you, Miss Browne. You got across to my girls just what I had the burden to say. Again, I thank you."

"I need no thanks. I'm just glad if I've helped, Miss Wilson. If I can spare one of these dear girls the misery I've gone through I'll be happy. Some believe in letting girls learn by experience, but I can say from experience that the price is too high."

—Ida Bontrager

August 9, 1981
MORAL PURITY

I Tim. 5:22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

II Tim. 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Titus 1:15 Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

Col. 3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

Eph. 5:3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

I Cor. 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Memory Verse: For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. I Thess. 4:7.

Central Thought: The grace of God in Jesus Christ teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly,

righteously, and godly, conforming our lives in this world to the holy standard and purity of God's law.

Word Definitions: *Mortify*: To deaden or subdue. *Evil concupiscence*: Evil desire. *Effeminate*: This word, along with "abusers of themselves with mankind," has to do with male sex corruption and deviation from purity. This will include homosexuality and lesbianism. *Extortioner*: One who robs or unlawfully acquires gain.

LESSON BACKGROUND

It is evident all through the New Testament writings that God is calling His saints to pure and holy standards of life and character. Paul's instructions to Timothy, along with his teachings to the various congregations of the saints, show plainly that the Christian profession is worthy of the noblest, purest, holiest, and most reverent manner of living. This was to mean a separation from all wrong and evil, and an abhorrence for the same. There were many evils back in those days just as there are today. In our time the great current of evil and sin is intensified and many precious young people are swept away with the tide of vice and immorality. At the first these offer attractions, promising pleasure deluxe and offering what seems to be advantages for happiness. This is what allures the unsuspecting soul. But, oh, the end! The end of these things is corruption, disease, and death. It means much for a person to take heed to the words of the Holy Scriptures and to the warnings of the saints. Many a young beautiful girl is ruined and many a fine young gentleman is marred for life because of participation in these evils. God is calling for moral purity. He wants the lives of his saints to be above reproach and dishonor.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the danger of laying hands suddenly on a man?
2. What are the advantages and benefits of being morally pure?
3. What realm of the natural life of man has Satan defiled the most?
4. What springs from natural appetites unrestrained and uncontrolled?
5. In the light of the Scriptures is there any hope for a person who willfully becomes stained with these things?
6. Is there any way of deliverance?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

We are living in a world where fornication, adultery, lustful living, homosexuality, and every other kind of base evil is rampant. The so-called "Gay" movement is reaching for recognized status among society. In time they will probably get what they are calling for if the Lord tarries His coming long enough. They are even getting into some churches. It was reported in a newspaper of a church that allowed a young woman to strip naked before the congregation. They said, "This is her expression, and she has a right to be noticed." But it matters not how low the standard gets among professors of religion. God Almighty is still against all the errors of mankind. He still has a strait and narrow way, a pure and a holy way for His children to follow. What is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. God sent total destruction upon the cities of The Plain, Sodom and Gomorrah, because of these very evils. How much longer He is going to allow His earth to be stained with this rotten corruption we do not know. We do know that we must be ready for His coming and be free from all the defilements of the world. Fornication is wrong. I Cor. 6:18 says that he that commits fornication sins against his own body. Only within the bounds of sacred holy matrimony can a man and woman come together in physical embrace. Living together without being married is wrong. It is an abomination in God's sight. Oh, that the blind would wake up to what they are doing! Oh, that young people would take warning and not be caught in the trap of these things! "Keep yourself pure!" What a challenging command! It is for one's own good that he strive for morally pure living. Filthy language, obscene jokes and jests, slandering, and impure conversation between the sexes is all condemned by the Holy Word of God. Unclean habits like tobacco, liquor, drugs, and such like must be abhorred by the Christian. God is calling us to a high and holy standard. His grace is sufficient if we are willing to obey.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The lesson today is applicable for us as saints. We view the world and witness these revolting sins prevalent in the daily lives of many: "fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." As children of God, we have an abhorrence for such violations of righteousness. One may question then, why these warnings were issued to the saints. Do we really need the admonition?

The devil is wily enough to realize the he will not succeed in causing a saint to suddenly let down and commit sin. Notice how he works. "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James 1:14, 15)

The first step toward sin is a breaking down of the abhorrence of it. When sin becomes a temptation, we are treading on perilous ground. We may not have committed the sin, but the commission of it is the next step.

There are times when people unnecessarily place themselves in positions of temptation. Consider the story of Lot. In the thirteenth chapter of Genesis we read, "Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordon: and Lot journeyed East: and they separated themselves the one from the other. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." In 2 Peter we read, "And [God] delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." What was Lot doing in Sodom in the first place? How much better if he had never entered there at all.

We need to exercise caution in placing ourselves in tight situations. Care should be given as to what types of entertainment we attend. Those who are saved should give no place to the devil. It is important for our soul's welfare, to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. —Wayne Murphey

August 16, 1981

THE SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE AND THE HOME

Genesis 2:18 And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

21 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

22 And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Matthew 19:3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

I Cor. 7:10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:

11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

Memory Verse: Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. Heb. 13:4.

Central Thought: God instituted the sacred plan for the union of man and woman in holy wedded life together. This marriage is for life and is dissolved at the death of one of the persons involved. It is to be a sacred matter and handled with prayer and reverence before God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In this day of moral deterioration and the breakdown of the sacredness of marriage and the family life to the level of animal lust, we need to keep a vision of God's initial and holy plan for men and women in the realm of wedded relations. Many of our society today have taken a wrong approach to the matter of men and women living together and have lost sight of the sacredness of marriage and holy matrimony. Marriage was instituted by God at the dawn of creation. The Genesis account

as we have in our lesson has valuable truth to which we need to give serious attention. In Deut. 24:1-3, Moses did provide for a separation and a divorce, but Jesus plainly declared that this was not the real pleasure of God. Note the expressions: "Because of the hardness of your heart," and "From the beginning it was not so." God has in times allowed certain things because of certain existing conditions. But since He sent His only begotten Son into the world to perfect a plan of redemption for mankind, He calls for man to correct any deviation from His original plan. The Mosaic law system did not bring about a perfect cure for the soul of man. Jesus comes to restore man to his original state. He wills to have man and woman united once more in a bond so holy, pure, and precious that it will abide through all the years of their life. When God's will is fully carried out, this is the way that it will be. A man is better off not married, than he would be in a marriage mix-up. Marriage is a sacred thing, and it should not be entered into with lightness or shallowness of perception.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the reasons why it is not good for man to be alone?
2. What is to take place before a marriage is even considered being dissolved?
3. How did Jesus look on divorce?
4. What is the foundation of a happy marriage?
5. Is there any danger of getting a companion for marriage that is not suitable?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

In the light of the Scriptures of our lesson, we can draw sound conclusions concerning the sacred rite of marriage. In the first place, since it was instituted at the beginning by God, we can firmly assure ourselves that God would be pleased to have a hand in the arrangement of every marriage between man and woman. This would help to solve a great part of the problems connected with marriage today. There will be less chance of error and mistake if God is given the pre-eminence in marriage plans. Thus marriage should be approached with prayer and patient waiting on the Lord. When a man or a woman chooses or accepts someone to be their life-time companion, they need to know what they are doing. Then let us consider the manner in which they should take up living together. Many today just move into a house and begin living

together without being united in holy matrimony. Of course, many such people are not Biblically eligible for marriage. But it is getting to be a prevalent thing to just "live together." This is error and a great wickedness. God brought Eve to the man. It is good for a marriage to be performed in a sacred and reverent manner. Prayer, Bible reading and counsel, sacred singing, and a godly atmosphere of worship should surround the wedding scene. Let us keep marriage sacred. Jesus made it clear that marriage was to last for life, with no danger or threat of separation or divorce. Vows are in order for the marriage ceremony. Each should in honor and sanctity vow and promise to each other faithfulness and true love for all of their days. These vows are made before God, and He expects man to keep them. In the pressures and upheavals of mortal life, they are to stand fast. Man has sought for loopholes in the Scriptures to justify separation and divorce. They have even zeroed in on a phrase that Jesus used: "except it be for fornication." But open consideration and due study will reveal that Jesus never meant that to be an excuse for divorce and remarriage as it is being done today. Keep in mind God's initial plan. Hold the marriage institution as a sacred ordinance. According to the Scriptures and the grace of God we can assuredly say that a happy successful marriage is possible for us to have.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In today's society, when a young couple marries, the odds are against them that they will fulfill their vows of "till death do us part." Some regions of our country hold a record of as many as two out of three marriages landing in the divorce court. It is of the utmost importance that God lead and direct us in choosing a companion with whom to live. It has been said that the only thing worse than being single is being married to the wrong individual.

"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." This could apply to several situations. First, I find it difficult to believe that God ever intended for there to be courts of law for the purpose of granting divorces. Today, one may obtain a divorce on the flimsy excuse of being incompatible. The courts have arranged it so that if you marry a person and fail to co-exist peaceably, it's a simple matter to obtain a divorce and try again. Let me illustrate with what liberty this type of spirit is working. I heard of an instance in which a preacher held a formal divorce ceremony in his church! He

publicly announced that a certain couple had made a decision to terminate their marriage.

The previously quoted Scripture could also apply to the relatives and friends of a married couple. When a marriage problem is made public, people naturally are prone to take sides. Especially is this true of the parents. This is why it is vital for married couples to resolve their differences between themselves, as much as possible. If there is a failure in dissolving their difficulties, the perplexities should be discussed with a minister or someone trustworthy, who will not disclose the issues to the public.

Divorce has a far-reaching effect. Its influence touches more than just the couple involved. Often the children who are the products of a broken home must pass through a traumatic experience. Many times the families on both sides retain very definite and disagreeable feelings for years. There is no hate equal to that which stems from wounded love.

—Wayne Murphey

BEGIN RIGHT

A few months ago I accidentally met my friend Frank, of Baltimore, whom I had not seen for several years. We were delighted to see each other, and enjoyed a social chat.

"I am so glad to see you, Frank," I said in the course of our conversation, "and you do not look a day older for being a married man seven years."

"I am afraid I should have looked more than seven years older if I had remained single, Charlie," he answered. "My little wife has, under God, been the means of making a better man of me, than I should have been if I had eschewed matrimony. *She began right*, Charlie. That's the secret of it—she began right."

"Began right; how was that, Frank?" I answered.

"Well, Charlie, shall I begin at the beginning, as children say? You remember my little Emily, do you not? Every one who knew her loved her. She was the idol of a wealthy family and an only child, elegant and accomplished in every way. Yet she was a humble and pious Christian. I have since wondered why she fell for me. In my heart I was not a very religious man, Charlie. I attended church regularly, to be sure, but I fear that my thoughts were oftener upon my promised wife than on my Maker. I was a good business fellow and I loved books and the fine arts.

"Well, we were to be married very quietly; it was Emily's wish—no reception or wedding party, much to the disappointment of many of her friends. Emily said marriage was too solemn an event with her to be entered upon lightly. On a beautiful evening in October, our small bridal party accompanied us to the church, and Emily and I were made man and wife. Instead of the usual wedding tour, we went directly to our own house, which Emily's father had given to her already furnished with all she could desire. The few friends of the family visited with us for about an hour, then Emily and I were left alone in our beautiful drawing room. We were very happy.

"In a few moments Emily stepped into the library, and came back with two books in her hand—a Bible and a book of devotional exercises. Placing them upon the table, she came towards me, and putting her little hand upon my arm, she said gently, 'Shall we not *begin right*, Frank?' She then opened the Bible at the fourth chapter of the first epistle of John. She said, 'Please read, Frank.' I could not refuse, but sincerely and slowly I read aloud that beautiful portion of God's holy Word. Then Emily kneeled beside me, and I knelt also. With fluttering heart and trembling voice my young wife prayed to the Lord. It was a short, but sincere prayer, commending us to God's care, and praying that we might so live together in this life that finally we might inherit the life everlasting. I never was so impressed with any religious service in my life, Charlie; my little Emily, in her beautiful bridal robes, surrounded by elegance and wealth, in the true humble spirit of a child of God, *determining to begin right*, to live in His fear and love.

"Emily began right, and she has never swerved from her plain path of duty. We have been married almost eight years, and we have never once omitted this offering up of the evening sacrifice. We had trials—sickness, sorrow, and death have entered our happy home—but even when lying upon the sick bed, Emily would have me bring her 'blessed Bible,' and sit by her and read and pray each evening.

"I soon saw the need of God in my heart. I humbled myself before the Lord and accepted Him as my Lord and Savior. I then became the leader of the exercises of our family altar. If you get a wife, which I trust may be very soon, I hope she will *begin right*."

If women knew their power, if they openly as well as secretly confessed Christ in their home circle, no one can tell what influence they might have on the souls of those dearest to them on earth. You have been enrolled under the banner of

Christ crucified; do not be ashamed of your master. Many an unbelieving husband might by your example become a disciple of the Lord. It is absolutely necessary in the marriage relation that religious duties be not broken in upon, but that regularly as the blessings of God are showered upon us, so regularly we should earnestly acknowledge Him who sendeth us every good and perfect gift.

—From *Sketches From Life*

Aug. 23, 1981

THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH AND SOUL REST

Exo. 20:8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work.

10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.

11 For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Mark 2:23 And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.

24 And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?

27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.

28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

Col. 2:16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

Heb. 4:1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

Memory Verse: Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Matt. 11:28, 29.

Central Thought: The seventh day sabbath rest that was commanded in the law is fulfilled in the spiritual soul rest that Jesus Christ brought in the New Testament.

Word Definitions: *Sabbath:* A Hebrew word meaning to desist from exertion or labor. It means to rest or relax from effort or toil.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson is dealing with the Old Testament sabbath rest in comparison with the New Testament sabbath rest. Many teach that the seventh day sabbath is still binding on us today. It was very plain in the law of Moses just how the sabbath was to be kept. It was to do no work on the sabbath. A man on one occasion was stoned because he was caught gathering sticks on the sabbath. Numbers 15:36. In the New Testament we find that God institutes a sabbath that is more than just a one day a week affair. The law spirit in the Jews was quick to condemn the disciples for gathering corn on the sabbath day. But Jesus refuted their unreasonable contentions with a statement that we should really consider: "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." To endeavor to bind the literal sabbath day commandment upon the New Testament born-again Christian is to unreasonably make that man was created for the sabbath. The seventh day sabbath is no longer sufficient for the spiritual need of man. Man needs a soul rest. He could keep the seventh day as a sabbath and cease from work on that day all his life, and yet will perish in eternal night if he comes short of the true rest. Let us ask ourselves this question: The rest that Paul in Hebrews 4:1 tells us to fear lest we come short of, is what rest? Is it the old seventh day rest, or is it the spiritual soul rest in the Lord Jesus Christ? Careful consideration and weighing all the accompanying discussion will surely reveal that the sabbath we are to keep as New Testament Christians is a soul rest in ceasing from our own works.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did God institute the Seventh Day Sabbath in the beginning?
2. What was the conflict between Jesus and the Jews on this question?
3. What do you get from what Jesus said in answer to the Jews' critical remarks about His disciples gathering corn on the sabbath?
4. What did Paul say that sabbath days were?
5. What is the Christian sabbath that we are to keep in Christ?
6. What does soul rest involve, and what does it take to actually experience soul rest?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There is no question but that God commanded Israel under Moses to keep the literal seventh day sabbath. However, it is also to be considered that the works were finished from the foundation of the world, and that God blessed the seventh day because He rested and ceased from His work of creation on that day. In Psalm 95, the writer warns Israel (and the warning is to us repeated in Hebrews 3 and 4) to not harden their hearts as Israel did in the provocation and temptation in the wilderness. That was the time when they were faced with the command to go on over into the land of rest (Canaan). At that time their faith failed and they grieved God with their hardened hearts of unbelief. It was at that time that God swore in His wrath that "they shall not enter into my rest." Notice the term "my rest." Paul links the sabbath day rest with this Canaan rest. They were both pointing to the same fulfillment. His rest to Israel was the Canaan land occupation. That was the rest He promised to the Israelites for all their sorrow in Egypt and all their wandering in the wilderness. There remaineth yet a rest for the people of God. It is not the Canaan rest. It is not the seventh day rest. What is it then? It is a soul rest. This soul rest consists of our ceasing from the works of self, the flesh, and sin, and allowing God's blessed love and Spirit to work in our lives the great works of righteousness and peace. It is a ceasing from the works and strivings of keeping the law (which was not of faith) and resting in the faith of Jesus Christ. This is what it is all about. It is another point in the great argument of the book of Hebrews. Paul was endeavoring to wean the minds of the Jews away from the old law system. It is a soul rest that God

wants us to enter into: No worry, no doubt, no fear, no anxiety, no sin, no strife, no complaining, no condemnation. Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." This rest, this soul rest, is by far more needful, necessary, and important than ten thousand literal seventh day sabbaths.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Entering into God's rest is a very definite experience. When we see someone who is laboring under the load of sin come to an altar of prayer, confess, and believe, there is often a change even of their countenance. This is the experience of entering into that rest. Just as the children of Israel came out of Egypt's bondage and passed into a land flowing with milk and honey, so may the sinner pass from the bondage of Satan into the "kingdom of his dear Son."

The question may be asked: "How can this rest be reconciled with the fact that we are told to take up our cross; work out our own salvation; and watch and pray? Do we just pass from one type of bondage into another?" The answer is *no*! We serve God only because we desire to. We served Satan because we were unable to help ourselves. To illustrate the point, consider the story of the boy who was carrying his brother on his back. When asked if his brother was heavy, he replied, "No, he's my brother." The boy was doing exactly what he wanted to do, although it appeared work to some. When we take up our cross and follow Christ, it is because we wish to do so, and His commandments are not grievous to us.

We must continually be on our guard that we do not leave our rest and return into bondage. Have you ever considered the fact that at any time the children of Israel could have turned back toward Egypt and its bondage? In Egypt, they were provided with food and the necessities of life. At one point they were tempted to turn back when they recalled the fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic which they had enjoyed. The devil also offers glittering amusements and entertainments to attract souls back into bondage. How much more fulfilling it is to dwell in the soul rest which God provides for His saints.

—Wayne Murphey

NOTICE: If you have not placed your order for the fourth quarter, please do so by September 1, 1981.

August 30, 1981

FALSE RELIGION

James 1:26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of anti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

II Peter 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

I Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

2 John 9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:

11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

Col. 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Memory Verse: Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Matt. 7:15.

Central Thought: It is possible for one to possess a false religion. The Holy Bible reveals definite guidelines to follow in identifying false religion. The condition of a man's inner life reveals what he is. True religion is that which follows the plain teachings of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

Word Definitions: *Religion:* The Greek word means ceremonial observance, that is, the outward demonstration of what you believe. *Profess:* To assent or acknowledge. The true Spirit of God manifests Jesus Christ in the heart and life of a Christian. This profession is not just with the lips, but with the spirit, actions, and ways. *Pernicious ways:* Impure practices. *Philosophy:* Love of wisdom. *Rudiments:* Elements.

LESSON BACKGROUND

II Peter 1 had finished up with Peter's speaking of the prophecy coming in the old time not by the will of man, but by the Holy Ghost. Then he stated that there were also false prophets among the people, and warned that even now there would be false teachers among the Church of Jesus Christ. One of the perils that Paul spoke of being in was that peril among false brethren. II Cor. 11:26. False religion has been the deceptive work of Satan in the lives of men even from the beginning. His temptation to Eve had a religious note. "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." The idea that many people have that any religious way is all right is error. It is peril to the soul to be unaware of the existence of false religion. The early fathers were very severe in their denunciation of false prophets. It is reported that John the beloved of Christ stopped at a bath house with some of his associates once. When it was reported that a certain false prophet had been seen in the building, John at once summoned a withdrawal of his group, fearing that the house might fall in because of the wrath of God upon that individual. False religion is an abomination in the sight of God. It deceives and deprives man of the truth and robs God of the privilege to bless and help souls.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the mark of true religion?
2. Name one thing that will make a man's religion vain.

3. How can we know the real Spirit of God?
4. Is it possible for one to be deceived?
5. Who is back of false religion?
6. How can we safeguard ourselves against false religion?
7. Did Jesus warn us about false prophets?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It means so much to have the true Bible salvation that Jesus Christ brought to this world. There are hundreds of religions, but only one salvation. Satan has many substitutes for real Bible salvation. The Jews had a religion based on keeping the law, the ceremonial part of the law chiefly. Their religion was vain. It was false. It did not stand up to the burning of the Spirit of God. Jesus brought and taught the true religion that will stand the great judgment shock. To become a true Christian, one must first feel, or sense, his need of God and the vileness of his sins. He must realize his need of a Savior. There have been people who were convicted of their sins and who tried to just start doing right. This will not work actually. Penance or just turning over a new leaf will not do. One must reform in the fear of God, but it must be accompanied by faith in what Christ alone can do. One must confess his sins, and believe in Christ and His shed blood for forgiveness and peace. To leave out faith or to leave out repentance will cause one to miss the mark. One must be born again; that is, receive a new life from above. This means being made a new creature where the old things of sin and the world pass out of our life and we embrace the new ways of Christ. It is a real experience and it is the true religion. Following this, one must walk in the light of the Word, and obey the teachings of Christ and His apostles. True religion means love and concern for all mankind. Hatred and bitterness do not belong to true religion. All the teachings of Christ must be revered and followed faithfully. There are many doctrines and commandments of men. People conceive many ideas and convictions. These must be weighed against the Scriptures. One must allow the Spirit of the Lord to come into their heart to teach and lead them into all the truth. The tongue must be controlled and all the life in the flesh brought into strict discipline of holiness and purity. Separation from the evils of the world and faithfulness to Christ will prevail. The true religion will satisfy the soul and manifest itself to those around us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." James 1:27. This is quite a reliable test in evaluating whether one possesses the true Spirit of God. A genuine Christian will have a concern for other people. He will desire to help the poor and needy.

Christ's instruction to the Jewish society was to honor their father and mother. However, the scribes and Pharisees, who had only a form of religion, introduced the unscrupulous policy that one could give to the temple instead, and thus justifiably neglect his parents. Their concern was for material gain, not for the needs of others.

There are many false teachers of like nature today. The main concern of many is to raise money to fund some big project. I recall hearing a radio preacher who was requesting offerings. I was curious as to how long he would continue his monetary plea. Fifteen minutes passed and he was still pressuring folks for donations. During this time there was one song sung, and it was appropriately titled, "Jesus Paid it All."

Some false prophets go so far as to try to sell religion. For a sizable offering, they will fast and pray over your request, or perhaps travel to the Holy Land and bury it in "sacred soil." All of this is a farce, as is the religion which assures you eternal peace and security if enough money is given to the church.

The true saint will have a genuine burden and concern for others' needs. Real salvation cannot be bought or sold with literal money. The Bible tells of a man named Simon who sought to purchase the power of God through the apostles. Peter's answer to him was, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou has thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God." Acts 8:20, 21.

In the fifteenth chapter of John, Jesus tells us that He is the true vine, and that we should attach ourselves unto Him only, for a multitude of false vines are laboring hard to attract souls unto their man-made organizations. If we are connected to the true vine, we will bear the fruits of the Spirit, and thus reveal that we are of God.

—Wayne Murphey

THE PAWNED BOOK

W. P. Mackay left home to attend college at the age of seventeen. His mother gave him a Bible, writing her name, his name, and a verse of Scripture on the fly leaf. He graduated

with very high honors in the field of medicine and became the head of an infidel club where they practiced everything that was wicked and vile. He was open in his ridicule of God and the Bible. The only thing that gave him any thrill was when an ambulance would unload some patient in a critical condition.

One day they brought in a man on a cot, the lower part of whose body had been horribly crushed. On his face, however, was a look of calm and peace so pronounced that it amazed Dr. Mackay who was accustomed to seeing people suffer. With a smile the patient asked what the verdict was.

"Oh, I guess we will pull you through and fix you up," replied the doctor.

"No, Doctor I don't want any guess," the man said. "I want to know if it is life or death. Just lay me down easy, anywhere, Doctor. I am ready. I am saved and am not afraid to die." With a face fairly shining with radiance, he continued: "I know I am going to be with the Lord Jesus Christ.

"He says, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out,' (John 6:37), and I have accepted Him as my own personal Savior. But I want the truth. Just what is my condition?" Whereupon the doctor replied,

"You have at the most three hours to live."

The doctor was touched, and thinking there might be relatives to notify, asked: "Is there anything you would like to have us do for you?"

Thanking him, the injured man said, "In one of my pockets is a two weeks' pay check. If you can get to it, I wish you would send it at once to my landlady, and ask her to send me the Book."

"What book?" inquired the doctor.

"Oh, just the Book," the man answered. "She will know."

Dr. Mackay arranged for the man's request to be cared for, and then started on his rounds through the hospital. Those words kept ringing through his ears, "I am ready, Doctor." "Just lay me down easy, anywhere, Doctor." "I am ready."

Dr. Mackay had never been known to inquire about a patient from any personal interest, but for the first time in his life he wanted to know how this one was getting along. He returned to the ward where the man had been placed, and seeing the nurse whom he had assigned to the case, he inquired as to his condition.

"He died just a few minutes ago," the nurse informed him.

"Did the book get here?" asked the doctor.

"Yes, it arrived shortly before he died," the nurse answered.

"What was it? His bank book?" inquired the doctor.

"No, it wasn't his bank book," replied the nurse. "He died with it under his pillow."

"What was it?" asked Dr. Mackay.

"It is still there. Go and look at it," said the nurse.

Dr. Mackay went to the bedside, reached under the sheet and drew a Bible from under the pillow. As he did so the Bible opened and the pages turned over to the fly leaf. There in his mother's handwriting, was Dr. Mackay's name, his mother's name and a verse of Scripture. It was the Bible given him by his mother when he left home to attend college. In a drunken brawl he had pawned it years before in order to get whiskey.

Dr. Mackay slipped the book under his coat and rushed upstairs to his private office. He begged God to have mercy upon him, and in repentance accepted Christ as his Savior. He came into the realization that, "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. 5:8. And, "The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb. 4:12.

—A Tract

September 6, 1981

CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

Acts 1:9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

II Thess. 1:6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

I Thess. 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

II Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.

Memory Verse: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Heb. 9:28.

Central Thought: Jesus Christ came to this earth the first time to be Savior of all mankind who would believe in and obey Him. He is coming the second time to destroy this world, raise the dead, punish the wicked, reward the righteous, and to take His people to their everlasting dwelling in the new heaven and new earth.

Word Definitions: *The elements shall melt:* the word "melt" and the word "dissolved," also used in the text, is the word translated for the Greek word "luo" from which we get our word "loosen." The elements of our natural world are composed of atoms, tiny particles that are either negatively or positively charged. Scientists are baffled as to the mysterious power that holds them together, as positive charged particles repel each other. They recognize that there is a mysterious power holding things together, and that if this power were withdrawn, all the elements would be "loosened" and all creation would just disintegrate into oblivion. *Holy conversation:* Holy conduct.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The coming of the Lord is a big topic in the religious world. Many theories and ideas are set forth as to just what will take place at that great event. The Scriptures that we have chosen for our lesson today pretty well speak for themselves. They need very little discussion to make them any clearer. We just need to

accept the truth that is stated therein. Jesus is coming again in the clouds of heaven just as He ascended. At His coming He will punish the wicked, who will be given their due reward for their evil ways. He will be glorified and admired by all who have loved and obeyed Him in this life. He will destroy the world and all the elements. He will gather His people together and take them to that heavenly Home that has been prepared for them. All that will take place will be in His control. Our responsibility is to BE PREPARED AT ALL TIMES.

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the plain statements in our lesson that tell us that Christ will come again? Do you know why His coming has been delayed through the years?
2. Can you name the five things that Christ will do at His second coming?
3. How suddenly will His coming take place?
4. How does the born-again soul feel about the coming of Christ?
5. What must we do about this matter?
6. What will happen to all creation?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

To those who are forgiven and washed in the blood of Jesus and being led by the Spirit of God, the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ will be the great and glorious climax of their godly lives to recompense and vindicate their faithfulness into everlasting life and joy. He shall be admired in all them that believe. The testimony of the Lord and His ministers was believed and acted upon. And when they see Him coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, their hearts will be filled with rapture and exultation. This will be a blessed attraction from Christ to all who have trusted and obeyed Him. It will cause the powers of nature to fall back, and the saints shall rise up to meet the Lord in the air. The long dark night of earth will be ended. What a great reunion day that will be when the saints who have been long passed away come forth clothed in immortality to join those who have tarried in this world to that time! See the mighty host ascending in adulation and praises to their Heavenly King! What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness!

But to those who are not saved it will be a day of weeping. There will be no chance to repent or amend their condition. There will be no tribulation time on earth, nor a thousand year

reign! The earth will be dissolved, burned up, and destroyed. Now what is left after this is accomplished? It will not be burned over and renewed. It will be completely destroyed. The wicked will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. Note the expression: *everlasting destruction*. The second death in the lake of fire will be their doom. They will not be annihilated, as many believe. They will suffer forever for their failure to serve the Lord Christ. It is a fearful thing to face. Thus the words of the Lord Jesus and His apostles entreat us to accept Him, and His wonderful salvation, and walk in the light of His Holy Word. This will enable us to face His second coming with joy and victory. —Leslie Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Many have speculated as to the time of Christ's second appearing. Some have been known to quit their jobs, take their children out of school, and hole up to await the coming of Christ. They blindly overlook the Scripture that states that no man knoweth the day nor the hour of the coming of the Son of man.

One particular sect of people believe that Christ returned in 1914. They claim that His return was recognized only by them, through their spiritual eyes. The Bible states that "Every eye shall see him"—not a selected few.

God's timing is perfect; much more so than ours. God alone knows the time when this sin-laden earth will be ripe for the plucking.

God sent His Son in the "fulness of time;" when all was fulfilled and perfected for His coming. Christ came when there was opportunity for Him to reveal the plan of salvation to a few honest-hearted souls. God will also know the proper hour in which to have Jesus return for the harvest of souls.

Many have heard all their lives that Jesus is coming to take vengeance on the wicked. They think that because He has delayed His coming, it will never occur. These people are like those in Jeremiah's day. Jeremiah had prophesied unto them that unless they turned from their idols and served God, destruction would fall and they would be carried away into captivity. Notice the attitude of the people. "Behold they say unto me, Where is the word of the Lord? let it come now." Did their unbelief alter the truthfulness of the prophecy? Nay! The destruction of Jerusalem was imminent and severe. Neither will the scoffers of today prevent the second coming of Christ.

—Wayne Murphey

September 13, 1981

THE FINAL JUDGMENT

Revelation 20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

Jude 14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,

15 To execute judgment upon all, and convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

II Cor. 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent:

31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Matthew 12:42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

Romans 14:10b For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Memory Verse: For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Eccl. 12:14.

Central Thought: All mankind from all ages of time will stand before their Maker to be judged at the last day. They will receive the due recompense for their deeds done while in this life. God will be the judge, and He will judge in righteousness the secrets of men's hearts.

Word Definitions: *The times of this ignorance God winked at:* God overlooked and bore with men in their ignorance.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Among the many visions given from God to John on the Isle of Patmos was the scene of the final judgment. It is a scene that will be a reality some day. It will be the fulfillment of the prophecy that Jude quoted from Enoch, the seventh from Adam. It seems that sinful man becomes so hardened that he fails to realize that his ways and deeds are going to be judged by the Almighty God. He forgets that the all-seeing eye of the Lord weighs not only his deeds, but his motives as well. Along with many other Scriptures that we have not space to employ we are aware that the judgment of God is going to be according to truth and what is really in the hearts of people. Man is prone to judge, but his judgment is treacherous and many times unqualified. But God cannot be mocked. His judgment is true and unbiased. Things are going to end just as they should be as far as God is concerned. Some men's sins are open before hand, going before unto the judgment. They can be opened up now, and we can be judged and set aright by the Gospel. Jesus mentions the Queen of Sheba being in the judgment condemning the people of Jesus' day. He also mentioned the men of Nineveh rising up to condemn His generation because they did repent at the preaching of Jonah. He spoke about the judgment being more tolerable for Sodom than for some of the cities of His day. All these are going to be in the judgment. We will all be there to give account for each one's individual self.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Who all will be at the last judgment?
2. Why will there be a last judgment?
3. Who will be the Judge?
4. What will the judgment be based upon?
5. What kind of judgment will it be?
6. How will we relate to this judgment?
7. Will there be individual responsibility at the judgment?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Most every believer in the Bible and the Christian faith will acknowledge the truth of judgment to come. The Scriptures are too plain. There are diversified opinions of how it will be carried out, but it is not for us to enter into arguments about, for the real issue is not *what* will take place, but *how we* will fare at this judgment day. The dead will be judged, the saved and the lost. Each will receive for what he has done while in this body. "The books were opened." Some look at this as the Old and the New Testament. It does no violence to the Scriptures to use this thought. But I am more disposed to see that the books that will be opened at the judgment will be the record of men's lives. "The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." We each one daily are writing a life's book. Some day that book will be opened. It will be the final judgment. Judgment must now begin at the house of God. We are being judged now by the eternal Word of God found in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must face up to this judgment. We might be able to hide under a profession now and evade the judgment of the truth, but we are only hurting ourselves when we do this. At the judgment bar of God there will be no hiding place. Our only hiding place is in the Lord Jesus Christ who has borne the judgment for us. He died on the cross that we might pass through the judgments of God. His mercy rejoices against the judgment of God and gives us freedom from condemnation. Now is the accepted time to prepare to meet the judgment. We should judge ourselves, and let God also judge us so that we will not be condemned with the world.

I will have to give account for myself. No one else can plead my cause in that day. It will be every man for himself. May our hearts be stirred with the determination to live so that we can meet this judgment.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is awe-inspiring to think of the last great judgment day! Picture the people of all ages standing before an omnipotent God. It will not be a time of frivolity or light-heartedness. "Every knee shall bow." What will cause the knees to bow? Will it be the anger of God? I am more inclined to believe that it will be the awesomeness of His all-knowing authority.

There is a definite difference between anger and authority. I heard it explained in this manner: Suppose someone operating an automobile goes speeding past a policeman who is standing

on a street corner. The lawman becomes very angry. He jumps up and down in his wrath and yells for the citizen to slow down and stop. The driver of the car is unaffected by such behavior and has no intention of pulling over. He may even have an inclination to wave saucily as he goes by. The policeman has accomplished nothing, and has shown only *anger*. Alter the circumstances. Imagine the same driver being pulled over by a patrolman in a police cruiser. The lights are flashing and the policeman calmly walks up to the car with a revolver protruding from his hip. He quietly demands to see the automobile operator's license. This same individual will undoubtedly reply with a meek, "Yes, sir," and quickly accommodate the officer, who has shown *authority*.

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them." This is almost beyond the capacity of the human mind to comprehend. Think of the billions of people who have dwelt on the face of the earth from the beginning of time. A large percentage of these, we know nothing of. We have no knowledge of where they were buried. Cemeteries indicate where some are, but this acknowledges only a few. Many are just ashes or fragments in the sea. The power of God will bring the particles back together and each soul will stand before a just God, to give account for the deeds done in the flesh. It will certainly pay to be prepared for that great day.

—Wayne Murphey

September 20, 1981

HELL—EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT FOR THE WICKED

Mark 9:43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:

48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Matthew 25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous unto life eternal.

Revelation 20:14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Hebrews 10:26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Memory Verse: The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all nations that forget God. Psalm 9:17.

Central Thought: Those who refuse God's offered grace and salvation will be deemed fit for everlasting punishment in a burning lake of fire that was prepared for the devil and his angels. God does not really send a man to this place, but rather man chooses the road that leads to this.

Word Definitions: *Hell:* The Greek word is Gehenna which means a place of refuse for burning, something on the order of a city dump. *Worm:* a grub or maggot. This is a term that refers to the torment that will eat at the conscience forever.

LESSON BACKGROUND

For many years Satan has been at the game of persuading people to give up the idea of a burning hell, a place of everlasting punishment. He has many false prophets in the land telling the people that hell is merely the grave or the realm of disembodied spirits. But we are persuaded in the light of these Scriptures that there is a burning place of torment that will be the doom of all who reject God's mercy and persistently go on in their sins. The phrase "where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched" is a direct quotation from Isaiah 66:24. The association of these two Scriptures together (the one in Isaiah and the one in our lesson) confirms the truth of eternal

punishment. People who deliberately and willfully transgress and go against the will of God are asking for trouble. God is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but there does come a time when judgment and punishment is meted out. No, we do not employ effort to scare people into seeking the Lord. But there is a severe side to the question. God is love, but He is also to be feared and held with respect. False prophets are going to be held accountable for the erroneous teachings that have lulled people into a careless approach to this matter. Hell is real. Be assured of this. Christ wills not that any go there, but if souls stubbornly refuse His grace, there is no other course to take.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the three things that might offend one? Is he talking about the literal body members here?
2. What does the phrase “where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched” imply?
3. For whom was the everlasting fire prepared?
4. What is the second death?
5. Are the Scriptures of our lesson sufficient to prove the doctrine of eternal punishment? Can you think of other Scriptures that support this?

ADULTS’ AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S COMMENTS

The three things that Jesus mentioned that can cause us to offend could be better labeled as figurative of the three areas of temptation in our lives. They correspond with the three elements of the world mentioned in I John 2:15 and 16. These are also relative to the three points of Eve’s temptations and the three points of Christ’s temptation. The “foot” that Jesus said we should cut off is the element of pride that seems bent on taking over the soul. We must work against this and offset its downward pull with humility. The hand would have to do with the desires of the flesh—the appetites of the body. Unrestrained and undisciplined, these currents of mortal desire will contaminate the soul and lead one astray. Then the “eye” corresponds with the lust of the eyes. For this is a realm that we all have to guard against. We should keep our eye on the Lord and not on the pleasures of this world. The Lord loves us and does not desire the loss of any. But it is in our hands as to what course we will take and where we will end up. Life or death is before us. It is ours to make the choice of where we will spend eternity. In the 25th chapter of Matthew, we see the judgment

scene where the sheep will be divided from the goats. It was said of those who were condemned: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous unto life eternal." Oh, how plain these words are! They are the words of our Saviour! How we should fear and tremble rather than trifle with their sacred and holy meaning! Of course, no one relishes the thought of going to hell, but many people are going to be there simply because they have refused to give up their ways to live for Jesus. Let us be persuaded that there is a place of everlasting punishment and have grace to live for Jesus that we might escape that awful place and save someone else from going there, also.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I recall hearing recently of an erroneous theory on hell. It stated that Biblical references to fire meant a "refining." According to the theory, hell will simply be a refining of the soul, and another chance will be offered for souls to accept God, who have previously rejected Him. The fact that there is a gulf fixed around hell, which no man can pass over, was excluded from the false teaching. Once a soul enters hell, it becomes an eternal home. All opportunity to accept Christ and His salvation is past.

In the first part of our lesson, Jesus exhorts us to exercise caution concerning anything in our lives that may affect our salvation. If a hand, foot, or eye would cause us to be lost, we should relinquish that particular part. Think of the extent to which humans will go in order to preserve their lives. If a member of the body becomes infected to the point that it cannot be cured, it has a deteriorating effect on the rest of the body. That part must be quickly and unceremoniously severed or amputated. There would be no desire to retain that which was life-threatening. How much more should we exercise care with our eternity-bound souls! Many are holding to sinful habits and petty pleasures and are unwilling to accept the realization of what the consequences will be. If souls could comprehend that such things are infected areas in their spiritual lives, causing death and decay, they would find it much simpler to cast away the shallow satisfaction the world offers. —Wayne Murphey

A VISION OF PARENTS MEETING THEIR SONS AND DAUGHTERS IN ETERNITY

I had been saved about six weeks and was much troubled over a neighbor's young daughter who had been converted

recently. This girl's father had been very wroth over her experience of salvation, telling her she would have to give it up or leave home. She visited me a few minutes before I left for work. I was much troubled over the situation and burdened for others lost. As I stood before my window it seemed as if the side of the building were vanishing out of existence. I looked down at my feet to see if I were still on earth, and a voice said, "Look ahead."

As I looked before me, to my horror, I stood before a great lake of fire, miles and miles wide it seemed, with no other side in view.

There, just a few feet down below came an object moving. As I watched it I discerned the hands of a man as if swimming along in water. Then his head came up and he swam swiftly within a few feet of where I was standing, and there seemed to be a wall of some kind around this place. He was making his way to this. It looked like a great concrete wall, but we know hell is not hedged with concrete, but an eternal hedge.

This man made his way very close to what seemed to be the last stroke before he could touch the wall. I watched anxiously to see if he could get a hold of that wall, but a great flame of fire rose between this last stroke and the wall, and he was several feet down before he showed his face again.

About this time a voice was heard coming through the flames, a voice well known to this man—the voice of his beloved son. They met face to face in my view. He looked about eighteen years old. Oh! the horror on the face of the father when he met his son in a devil's hell. As he traveled the broad way in life he never dreamed his son, whom he loved so dearly, was walking in his footsteps, and in eternal hell they would finally meet. Then this accusation was made by the son, "Oh! Father, if you had been a Christian, if you only had not drunk, smoked, and cursed, but had been a praying father, I would not be here today." How sad to hear when forever too late to make amends, if he had served God, he could have saved his son (John 15:7).

Then came a beautiful woman swimming along. She made a try for the wall; but was turned back by that great flame. She, too, heard a familiar voice, that of her precious daughter—the voice of the baby that she had held to her breast and heard its laughter, its little cries as a baby. All of a sudden the memories of that baby voice, the sound of those little feet as they pattered to and fro in the home, the different turns of life as she grew into womanhood, the beautiful daughter about the age of 16 or 18, met Mother in hell, face to face. The surprised look as the

two faces met! Oh! I can never describe! Her daughter said, "Oh, Mother, if you had only been a Christian mother and taught me about the Lord instead of going to dances, shows, and ungodly places, and allowing me to go, I would not be here today!" Mother was speechless. Their destiny was sealed; life was ended. Oh! the sight I saw. Then suddenly heads and heads, screams, moans, prayers, and cries! Never, never can words express this terrible sight!

When at last it had vanished, I was myself again, beside my window. I had both hands entangled in my hair and my brows were wet with tears. I cried, "O God, why am I seeing such a place and me trying to serve you?"

He said, "Go forth and warn others not to meet their sons and daughters in a devil's hell."

Mothers! Fathers! Please pray, and if you are not a Christian, turn unto God, then all His promises are yours.

—Della Patrick

September 27, 1981

THE HOPE OF THE RIGHTEOUS

John 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Philippians 1:20 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

3:20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

II Cor. 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

5:1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

II Peter 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

Heb. 13:14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

Memory Verse: For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. Galatians 5:5.

Central Thought: The treasures of those who are saved in Christ are not in this present world. We are looking for eternal life and blessings in the world to come. We will live forever with Christ and all the redeemed of all ages after this present world is destroyed.

Word Definitions: *Mansions:* Abodes, rooms, dwellings. *Earnest expectation:* Eager anticipation. *Conversation:* Translation of the Greek word "polity" which means citizenship. *Vile body:* Body of our humiliation, Greek. *Tabernacle:* Tent. *Dissolved:* Taken down.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have chosen a few Scriptures to make up our lesson from many in the Bible that speak of the hope of the righteous. These Scriptures are very expressive and clear, yet they are veiled in a mystery so holy and charming. It is necessary for us to be aware of the importance that the hope of Christ's calling was to the early day Christians, for it is still that hope that sustains the righteous in their cause today. Take our hope away and we are of all men most miserable. Jesus, Paul, and Peter are uniformly agreed on this issue. Many things are provided now for us in the spirit in the New Testament plan of salvation. Grace, peace, joy, strength, wisdom, understanding, and faith we need and can have now. But there is a great part of the benefits of salvation that we have not reached yet, nor will we reach it until we are called away from this world and ushered into that world beyond the veil. It all sums up to be the great love and affection that the Heavenly Father has for those who really serve Him. He has prepared a home that is beyond the

highest dream or imagination of the human heart. The knowledge of it through the Bible and the glimpses that we gather in Christian experience of that home above is enough to hold our souls like an anchor to our Rock. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Will we have a literal mansion in heaven?
2. Why does God not describe heaven in full detail to us?
3. What does the hope in Christ mean to the Christian in the trials and afflictions that he suffers?
4. What does this hope mean to one whose affections are centered down here in this present world?
5. What is the Christian life without this hope?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

To be a child of God one must face and overcome many obstacles and adversities in this present world. Measure by measure the Christian is called to a life so holy and pure that he is out of fit with the current around him. More and more he develops into holiness and righteousness as he draws nearer to the end of his journey. Sometimes it seems that he is submerged in the din of the battle. What is it that keeps him running the Christian faith and fighting the good fight? The love of Christ, the grace of God, the comfort of the Spirit—all these are vital for his success. But it is the hope that he has in what he will receive in the future that gives ardor to his determination to press on. He is persuaded that the Bible is true. He knows that there is a place in heaven waiting for him. It shines brightly in his eye of faith. Thus he earnestly looks forward to the future and endures the present ills with joy. "Our light affliction" Paul put it. It is not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us. "Were ten thousand worlds around me, all so easy to obtain, they were nought beside the glory of that crown that I shall gain." This was the hope that sustained Paul as he faced the Roman chopping block. It sustained the fifty million martyrs who were dispatched by terrible methods through the dark ages. It is the counter-balance of all that we as children of God meet and bear in this world. It is an ever-bearing seal of patience and endurance, no matter what the world or Satan may heap upon us. Regardless of the depth of the suffering or humiliation, we still lift our eyes with a steadfast hope. Death as it approaches the Christian has no power to chill the heart. Hope looks beyond its dark shadow and sees rest and eternal life on the other shore. Truly the hope of a Christian is the anchor of the soul.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is through Christ that the Christian has hope of eternal life. Christ is the One who was willing to leave the splendors of heaven and enter a sin-cursed world to suffer and die; thus removing the sting of death. While in the Garden of Gethsemane, His flesh naturally drew back from the thought of the ignoble shame and suffering He must shortly undergo. However, Christ's vision penetrated the shadows of the present and He saw beyond, unto the future hope that His death would create for suffering humanity. Through Him, grace is given to us to endure our "light affliction." It was because of this that He was able to say, "Not my will, but thine be done."

We cannot comprehend exactly what heaven will be, but the Bible has given us a glimpse of the glories there. We understand that there will be no sin, sorrow, pain, sickness, suffering, or death. All the mysteries of life will be made plain. There will be no darkness, for the Son will be the light. The streets of heaven are referred to as being paved with pure gold, and included in its construction are every manner of precious stones. It will be a place of rest for the weary, and a release from all strife and toil.

Heaven will know no passing of time (minutes, hours, days, years), such as we are acquainted with. It will be one long eternal day in which we will associate with saints of all ages, and sing praises to the great "I AM."

—Wayne Murphey

MOTHER'S PRAYERS

Gerald Thorne was a young radio announcer. Only lately he had been given the task of announcing for the Gospel Trio which broadcasted over that station each morning.

"Great stuff—a fellow like me announcing for a Gospel trio," he mused to himself when the task was assigned. He thought of his mother. She would like it. She was a wonderful Christian woman and had been praying for years for her son. But religion was not for him, he had often told himself. It was all right for women and softies and perhaps, too, for poor, uneducated men who could not support themselves and their families and had to depend on the Lord to do it for them. But he had greater ambitions and could not handicap himself with religion.

He knew the boys in the trio only slightly. Their programs were a comparatively new feature from that station. But they seemed like fine, manly fellows and he could not help wondering why they should be content to spend their lives just singing Gospel songs and preaching. Often they were in evangelistic work—singing from the station in the morning and holding services in surrounding churches in the evenings. Well, he supposed it was all right if that was what they wanted to do, but he thought he could find other ways to spend his evenings. He would announce their programs, but it would end there.

He found upon closer acquaintance with the young men of the trio that they were indeed fine fellows—nothing soft about them, he had to admit. As their work brought them into more of a fellowship, he found his admiration for them steadily growing; and as he listened to their songs each morning he found himself wondering a little. Maybe—just maybe—there was really something to this Christianity business after all. Maybe that was why his mother always had been so in earnest about it all; why she always had been so anxious for him to become a Christian; why he had heard her praying in her room nights when he had been at home. He had known that those prayers were for him, but somehow he had not really seen the need of it. He was a clean, moral, honest young man. He would not harm anyone. But as he heard the trio day after day singing "The Old Account Was Settled Long Ago," or "Take Up Thy Cross and Follow Me," he became aware of a vague uneasiness.

He tried to pass it off by analyzing it as homesickness. Hearing all the old songs his mother used to sing around the home made him homesick to see her, he reasoned, so he wrote long letters to her; and when that failed to satisfy, he decided that he had not been going about enough. He was getting restive from lack of recreation. So then every evening found him at the movies, the dance, or some other place of amusement. That, too, failed to ease his growing unrest. It was not exactly soothing to come to the studio after a night spent in such places and listen to Gospel songs. At last he came to the conclusion that it must be some physical condition. Some unknown ailment must be affecting his nerves, so he went to see a doctor.

The doctor shrugged after having given him a thorough examination. "Nothing wrong that I can see," he said, "except that it's evident you've been smoking too much and not getting enough rest. Better cut out the smoking and get more sleep."

Gerald left the doctor's office in more of a quandary than before. Get more sleep—if the doctor only knew that every time he closed his eyes he could see his mother, and that even the blare of a jazz orchestra at a dance could not drown out the sound in his ears of her voice lifted in prayer for "Jerry." "Cut out the smoking"—when it was the only thing that steadied his nerves for a moment.

If he could only get away somewhere. But that was impossible. He had his job here and could not go. He thought about asking to be released from announcing for the trio, but if he did the manager would want to know why. He could not tell him that he was getting all nervous and upset from listening to the trio sing their hymns. No, he could not do that, but what could he do?

That evening the boys asked him to go with them to their meeting. They had asked him at other times, but he had always refused. However, this time he consented to go. It could not make him feel any worse he was sure, and it would please his mother if she knew it. She had been so pleased when he had written her that he was announcing on the Gospel program and wrote that she always listened in. Gerald read between the lines and thought it probable that she sat there praying for him as she listened.

He had never heard the boys preach before, but as Tom, the youngest of the trio, brought the message that evening he realized that here was a fellow who knew what he was talking about. Although the Gospel message was simple, it was delivered with a fire and fervor that burned its way into his heart as he sat listening. And, listening, he at last acknowledged what had been the matter with him. It had not been homesickness, though he would like to see his mother. It had not been lack of recreation; it had not been nerves. It had been old-time, Holy Ghost conviction for sin. And when the invitation hymn was sung he made his way to an altar of prayer.

The next morning Gerald's mother sat down before the radio to hear her son's voice as he announced the old hymns. She turned the dial and sat back with a smile of anticipation on her lips and a prayer in her heart for her boy. She heard his voice announcing that that was station KLDR and that it was the program of the Gospel Trio. Then:

"The boys have a number of dedications to make for the first song and along with these I want to dedicate it to my mother who is listening in this morning. The boys are going to

sing 'Mother's Prayers Have Followed Me,' and—well," he hesitated a bit, then continued with a rush, "last night I found the Lord and I know that it was because my mother's prayers have followed me."

No greater joy could come to a Mother than that which came to the heart of this mother as she heard from the lips of her boy, though a few hundred miles lay between, that he had found Christ as his Savior and that God had answered her earnest prayers.

—Audre Pitts

