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Bible Ethics



CHRISTIAN LIFE SERIES

Bible Ethics

5th edition

by John and Sara Miles

Christian Life Series

Your New Life

Your Bible

Who Jesus Is

The Church

Personal Evangelism

Bible Ethics

When You Pray

How to Study the Bible

Your Helpful Friend

Christian Worship

Christian Workers

Marriage and the Home

God's Design—Your Choice

John's Gospel

We Believe

What Churches Do

The Teaching Ministry

The Christian in His Community

Bible Ethics

5th edition

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Address of the Global University office in your area:

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Center for Evangelism and Discipleship
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PREFACE

Far too often we think about the things we cannot do because we are Christians. But the purpose of right living should be as Jesus said, “Be holy, because I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16).

The idea of positive living means to show the right actions in your lifestyle as a Christian following the example in the life and teaching of Jesus. Positive commands and promises rather than mere demands bring fulfillment and joyful living instead of frustration.

Jesus is our example. We are personally responsible for cooperating with Christ to bring about positive living, which results from our love for Him.

This course will help you see the rules that were made to help you be holy as He is holy. It will help you see that these rules for right living are made for your own good. God is interested in what you *are* rather than in what you do not do as a Christian.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE SERIES

Bible Ethics is one of 18 courses in this practical discipleship program for new believers. The Christian Life Series is a study to help students grow in their relationship with Christ, interact with the Word of God, and better understand God's purposes for their life.

Students will study basic Christian topics under six reoccurring themes. The courses are conversational in style and easy to read. The following chart illustrates how the units of study are organized for the Christian Life Series.

| | Unit 1 | Unit 2 | Unit 3 |
|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Spiritual Life | Your New Life | When You Pray | God's Design, Your Choice |
| The Bible | Your Bible | How to Study the Bible | John's Gospel |
| Theology | Who Jesus Is | Your Helpful Friend | We Believe |
| The Church | The Church | Christian Worship | What Churches Do |
| Service | Personal Evangelism | Christian Workers | The Teaching Ministry |
| Christian Ethics | Bible Ethics | Marriage and the Home | The Christian in His Community |

Before You Begin

How to Use this Book

If you have studied other Christian Life courses, you may have noticed that this book is slightly larger and has a new look. This introduction will explain new features that have been added to make the course easier to study. Carefully read the introduction.

This book is divided into lessons instead of chapters. Each lesson begins with two important pages. After the lesson number are the title and a short introduction to the lesson. On the next page is **The Plan**. This is the outline or plan for the lesson. It is a list of what you can expect to study in the lesson.

Next are **The Goals**. The goals are guidelines for what you should be able to do after studying the lesson. Read the goals carefully; they will help you focus on the most important points in the lesson.

To help you reach your goals, each lesson has questions and activities. The subheading **Application** signals you to answer questions on the material learned. Do not skip over this part. Writing out the answers will help you apply what you have learned. Most of the questions can be answered right in your book. If there is not enough room to write your answers in the book, write them in a notebook or journal that you can use to review the lessons later.

After answering a question, check the answer at the end of the lesson in the section marked **Check Your Answers**. Do not look ahead at the answers until you have written your own answer. This will help you remember what you study much better. Compare your answers to those given at the end of the lesson; then correct those you did not answer correctly. The answers are in a jumbled order so that you will not easily see the answer to the next question.

How to Answer Study Questions

This course uses many different kinds of questions. Below are samples of the three most common types and how to answer them.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE

A multiple-choice question asks you to choose an answer from the ones that are given.

Example

- 1 The Bible has a total of
- a) 100 books.
 - b) 66 books.
 - c) 27 books.

The correct answer is b) 66 books.

In your study guide, make a circle around b) as shown here:

- 1 The Bible has a total of
- a) 100 books.
 - b) 66 books.
 - c) 27 books.
 - d) 2 books.

TRUE-FALSE

A true-false question or item asks you to choose which of several statements are TRUE.

Example

- 2 Which statements below are TRUE?
- a) The Bible has a total of 120 books.
 - b) The Bible is a message for believers today.
 - c) All of the Bible authors wrote in the Hebrew language.
 - d) The Holy Spirit inspired the writers of the Bible.

Statements b) and d) are true. You would make a circle around these two letters to show your choices, as you see above.

MATCHING

A Matching question or item asks you to match things that go together, such as names with descriptions, or Bible books with their authors.

Example

3 Write the number for the leader's name in front of each phrase that describes something he did.

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| ..1... a) Received the Law at Mt. Sinai | 1. Moses |
| 2... b) Led the Israelites across the Jordan | 2. Joshua |
| 2... c) Marched around Jericho | |
| ..1... d) Lived in Pharaoh's court | |

Phrases **a)** and **d)** refer to Moses, and phrases **b)** and **c)** refer to Joshua. You would write 1 beside **a)** and **d)**, and 2 beside **b)** and **c)**, as you see above.

Suggestions for Studying

1. Set aside quiet and regular times for your study. It will be easier to concentrate if study is part of your daily habits.
2. Pray as you begin each study session. With an open Bible, the Holy Spirit, and this course, you are in the classroom of the Holy Spirit. Ask the Lord to help you understand the lesson and apply it to your life.
3. Carefully read the lesson introduction, the lesson plan, and the goals.
4. Begin to carefully read the lesson. Look up Bible references and take any notes that may be helpful. The Bible verses reinforce important points in the lesson.
5. Answer the study questions in the spaces provided. Use your notebook or journal when necessary.

6. Think about what you have learned and look for ways to apply it in discussion with family and friends, in a Bible study, etc.
7. Take your time. No bell will ring to force you to move on to new material.

Unit Evaluations

At the end of this course, you will find the Unit Evaluations. Questions and Answer Sheets are clearly marked for each unit. Carefully follow the directions given. You should complete and send your answer sheets to your instructor for corrections. If you are not studying with a Global University office you will still benefit by completing the Unit Evaluations.

Ways to Study this Course

This course has been written so that you can study it by yourself. We like to say that the teacher is in the book. However, you may also study this course in various group settings such as mid-week Bible studies, learning centers, home groups, and youth programs. This course can be used as a correspondence or resource tool for prison ministries as well as special ethnic or other community outreach programs. You will find both the content and study methods excellent for these purposes.

If you study this course by yourself, all of your work can be completed by mail. Be sure to use the address of your Global University office. If you are studying in a group or through a Discipleship Training Center, be sure to follow any additional instructions that your instructor may give.

In addition, your church may partner with Global University to open a Discipleship Training Center. Visit us online at www.globaluniversity.edu for more information and start up helps.

Certificate

Unit or individual certificates are available to students upon successful completion of our courses. For instance, if

you are studying through a National Office or Discipleship Training Center, you may receive a certificate from your Global University instructor. If you are studying on your own, you may mail your completed Unit Evaluation Answer Sheets to your local office. National Offices and Discipleship Training Centers may order certificates through the International Office or through GPH in the USA.

Additional Helps

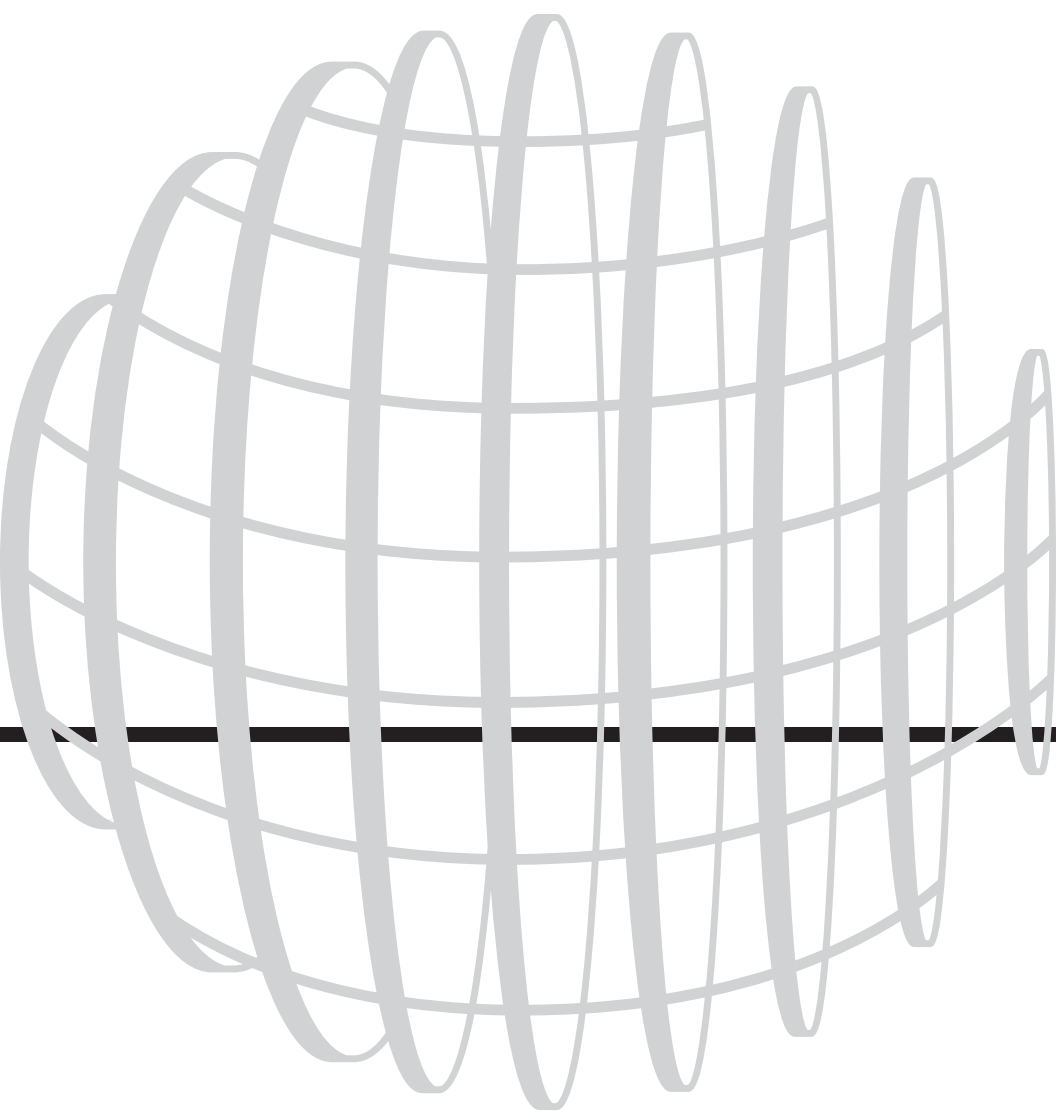
The Center for Evangelism and Discipleship (CED) Catalog, How to Become a Learning Center Manual, the Learning Center Agreement Form, and the CED Order Form are available online for print downloads. Other materials available for this course include supplemental audiocassettes.

Visit us at www.globaluniversity.edu
and www.globalreach.org for additional resources.

About the Author

John and Sara Miles are a husband-and-wife team who have drawn from their rich background in missionary and teaching experience to give us this course. John Miles has a Ph.D. in the French language and has served as director of the department of French at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, U.S.A. Sara Miles holds master of religious education and master of science (biology) degrees and has been an instructor and career counselor at Wheaton College. They served as missionary teachers in Zaire, Africa, from 1965 to 1968.

God bless you as you study *Bible Ethics*.



Unit

Lessons

- 1 God Made You What You Are
- 2 God Is the Pattern for Our Lives
- 3 What God Wants You to Be and Do
- 4 God Gives You Rules for Living

LESSON

1 God Made You What You Are

The Bible tells us about a man named Gideon who thought he was not important. He was hiding from the enemy that had invaded his country. When Gideon had given up all hope for his people, God sent an angel to encourage him. The angel had this message, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior” (Judges 6:12).

God did not evaluate Gideon by his fear or insecurity. Instead, God saw Gideon’s potential in helping His people. God saw him as a warrior, not a coward (Read Judges 6–8.) People soon knew that the Lord was with Gideon, for he behaved differently.

Think of Gideon and take courage. You may not feel important, but you are—in God’s eyes. Because you are somebody to Him, He wants you to behave differently.

The Plan

- A. You Are Somebody: A Child of God
- B. You Are Somebody: A Member of Christ's Body
- C. You Are Somebody: An Ambassador of the Kingdom

The Goals

1. Explain how important you are as a child of God and how this affects your life.
2. Describe your personal responsibility for living as God's child according to God's Word.
3. Explain why God has placed you in the body of Christ.
4. Give an example of your responsibilities as a believer.
5. Describe God's purpose for you in the world as an ambassador for Christ

A. YOU ARE SOMEBODY: A CHILD OF GOD

Goal 1. Explain how important you are as a child of God and how this affects your life.

What happened to you when you became a Christian? You repented of your sin, and God forgave you. You were saved because you asked Jesus Christ to become the Savior and Lord of your life. You believed in Him as the Son of God and received Him into your heart, to rule over your life.

God Has Done a Work in You

The Gospel of John tells us what a wonderful thing takes place when people receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Read these verses carefully:

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not

of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. (John 1:12–13)

Was this only for those who lived at the time of Jesus? No, of course not! To be born again is the right and experience of all who have ever believed and received Jesus. We are made new through the Holy Spirit.

In a special way God has given life to you. It is not a new physical life—no one can go back to being a baby. It is a new spiritual life, which God himself brings into being. He is the Father of all who are born again. We are His children.

So, if you are a Christian believer, you are a child of God. Can you imagine how important that makes you? You really are somebody! You are a child of the Almighty God. The Creator of the universe is *your* Father.

Application

For these two exercises, choose the best answer to each question. Circle the letter in front of your choice.

- 1 What does John 1:12 tell us we need to do to become God's children?
 - a) Forgive and forget others
 - b) Receive and believe Jesus
 - c) Become a baby and grow again

- 2 When you became a Christian, what work did God do in you?
 - a) He made you His child and helped you behave in a better way.
 - b) He made you feel more important than other people.



Check your answers at the end of this lesson.

Purpose for You as His Child

Goal 2. Describe your personal responsibility for living as God's child according to God's Word.

When you read that God is your heavenly Father, perhaps you think of your own father. What was your father like when you were a child? Certainly, he was not perfect, for only God is perfect. However, a good father loves his children. He wants them to have the best he can provide. He wants them to have a happy and complete life, and be the best they can be.

God, our heavenly Father, wants the same for us. He wants the best for His children. He has a purpose for our new lives as Christians. God wants us to be happy as we fulfill His purpose for our lives.

In Ephesians 2, we learn about the great things God has done for us. We were spiritually dead, following our own desires. But God has made us alive in Jesus Christ. This new life is the gift of God received by faith in Jesus. The apostle Paul writes about what it means to become a child of God:

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians 2:10).

The purpose of God for His children includes a life of good deeds. *Good deeds* means doing what is good and right in all things. We should use all our time and talents to be the best we can become. This will please our heavenly Father and will give us a happy and complete life.

However, good deeds alone cannot make anyone a Christian. In Ephesians 2:8–9, we learn that salvation is not earned. It is a gift of God. But once a person becomes a child of God, he or she must live according to God's standards. A child of God is different and acts differently from people who are not Christians. Christians show their faith by doing new things for God. This is the message of James 1:22–25—faith has to show itself in action.

Application

Circle the letter of the phrase that best completes each sentence.

- 3** God's purpose for your life as a believer is to have you
a) earn your salvation.
b) do good and right in all things.
- 4** James 1:22–26 tells us to not only listen to God's words but also to
a) read them often.
b) wonder what they mean.
c) put them into practice.



We have talked about God's purpose for the Christian in terms of good deeds. It is important for you to understand, however, that what you do is an outward sign of what you *are*. You *are* somebody—you *are* God's child! But what will God's child be like? God chose us "before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight" (Ephesians 1:4).

God wants His children to be holy and without fault. You know that the believer is a new creation. You can also know from your Bible reading and from experience that a Christian is not instantly perfect. Even the disciples had faults. But God wants all His children to become holy. This takes time, like a child growing up. In fact, our growth will not be complete until we are in heaven.

GOD'S CHILD

- | | | |
|--------------|---|--------------------|
| Is | ➔ | A new creation |
| Is not | ➔ | Instantly perfect |
| Is to become | ➔ | Holy and faultless |

A carpenter may hope that his son will be a skillful carpenter. A singer may want her daughter to become a great musician. But

does being born into a certain family give a child the skill of his or her parent? No. It takes time, teaching, and practice to develop any skill. The child has to want to learn from the parent and do as the parent instructs.

God can help believers change their attitudes. *Attitudes* are the ways we feel about people and things. Our attitudes will show what we are like. So, when God saves us, He changes our inner life. Then our new life produces godly attitudes and actions. That is one definition of Bible ethics: putting your new life into practice through your attitude and actions.

Application

5 List in your notebook how God has changed your feelings and your actions. Are you encouraged by what God has done in your life?

6 Match the words which indicate God's purpose for your life (right column) with the three areas of your life they affect (left column). Write the number on the blank provided.

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| ... a Actions | 1) Be saved |
| ... b New life | 2) Be holy and faultless |
| ... c Attitudes | 3) Do good |



B. YOU ARE SOMEBODY: A MEMBER OF CHRIST'S BODY

Goal 3. Explain why God has placed you in the body of Christ.

You may have heard someone say "If you were the only sinner in the world, Jesus would have died for you!" But you were not the only one, were you? It was part of God's plan of salvation that many should be saved. You were included, of course. The suffering of Jesus was to bring many sons to share

His glory (Hebrews 2:10). God intended his Son, Jesus, to be “the firstborn among many brothers” (Romans 8:29).

Do you think the words *sons* and *brothers* do not include you if you are a woman? No, you have an equal right to be called a “son of God.” Those who believed and received had the right to become God’s children.

God Has Placed You in a Family

God has many sons and daughters: the Christians who form the family of God. Our Father wants His family to be a united group. The Bible expresses this by calling God’s family “the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12).

A body is a unit formed of many parts, all working for one purpose. Though different, each part needs the other! Christ’s body is like that. It is formed of Christians from different countries, races, and ages. Yet it is unified—made into one body, and one family. Paul writes to the believers in Ephesus, “You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household” (Ephesians 2:19).

Unity is wonderful! But God did not make Christians one body just to have a unit. A soccer coach does not collect players just to say that he has a team. He unifies them to play! God has a purpose for the body of Christ, and you have a part to play in it.

Purpose for You in the Family

Why did God place people in families? Think of an orphan or a widow in your town. It is easy to see that people need people. The family is God’s way of meeting needs, both physical and emotional. Together a family can provide the food and housing needed by the members. Together it can meet the need of each person.

God placed each of His children in His family for the same reason—because we need each other. Perhaps you do not feel the need for other Christians to help you with your physical or

emotional needs. Perhaps you have a family in which you are loved and cared for. But your brothers in Christ may need your help in these ways. Without a doubt, you have an important part in the ministry to these other members of the family.

We all need to take part in the spiritual life of God's family. The writer to the Hebrews puts the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs together.

Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24–25)


By coming together with other Christians, you can meet needs and have needs met. This is biblical ethics. You put this new life into practice by helping the family of God. Paul gives us an example of his attitude and deeds when he says, “Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you” (Ephesians 3:2). God wants us to live for the good of others in the body of Christ.

Application

7 Circle the letter before each TRUE statement about God and His family.

- a)** God wants His children to minister to each other.
- b)** All men are God's children.
- c)** We should not despise other Christians: God has made them our brothers and sisters, too.
- d)** Christ's body exists to meet members' needs.

8 Think about the Christians in your community. What needs do they have? Are you part of God's answer to those needs?



C. YOU ARE SOMEBODY: AN AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM

Goal 4. Give an example of your responsibilities as a believer.

What would happen to a family that did not grow? Families are meant to increase in number. When God created the first human beings, He told them to increase the family (Genesis 1:28). God wants the same for His spiritual family. He wants more and more people to be born again into His family. Jesus said to His disciples, “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19).

Christ’s body of believers must grow, and each member has a share in this process. You are commanded to help by doing your best to bring more believers into God’s family.

God Has Left You in the World

When you became a Christian, you did *not* suddenly leave this world and go to heaven. Yet being with the Lord in heaven is far better than life here on earth (Philippians 1:23). God could have taken you to be with Him, but He chose not to.

Probably another thing did *not* happen when you became a child of God. All the problems of money and work did not suddenly disappear. Your neighbors and fellow workers did not suddenly become more friendly and helpful. Why not? You were still left in this world. And here, things are not always easy. Problems are mixed with joys. You may have harder decisions to make than before you were a Christian. Your family and friends may not understand you. And the devil (who is an evil angel opposed to all God’s good work) is against you now.

But consider Jesus’ prayer to God for His disciples:

My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil

one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. . . . As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. (John 17:15–16, 18)

If God wants His children in the world, you can be sure that there is a good reason.

Application

Choose the correct answer from those given and write them on the space provided.

- 9 As a believer, we have a responsibility to
 (tell/argue with)
- all people everywhere about
 (Adam and Eve/God's family)
-

Purpose for You in the World

Goal 5. Describe God's purpose for you in the world as an ambassador for Christ.

Some Christians would like to separate themselves from other people. They leave their homes, families, and villages to live away from the world. That is not what God intended. His plan for you, and for all His children, is to do His work in the world. Jesus told His disciples, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21). You are sent to the world just as much as Peter, James, John, and all of Jesus' disciples were. You are to represent the Lord to those around you.

Listen to what Paul says about Christians living as God's representatives:

Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like

stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life—in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing.

(Philippians 2:14–16)

Therefore, your job involves *being, feeling, and doing*. You are to be God’s child, innocent and pure. You are to feel like God’s child, happy and obedient, not grumbling. You are to act as His child, doing everything you can for others and telling them about Christ.

A person who represents his country in a foreign land is called an ambassador. He or she is important. Others recognize what the ambassador is and where he or she comes from. In the foreign land, the ambassador speaks with authority when his or her own country’s interests are involved.

You are an ambassador; you represent the kingdom of God. The apostle Paul expresses this idea: “We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20).

God’s purpose is for you to speak for Christ. God sends you to show and tell people that He loves them and wants to give them new life. What privilege could be greater? What responsibility could be more challenging? What activity places a greater demand on you in terms of practicing your new life?

God’s purpose for you is a high one. No one by his or her own power could fulfill it. But you are born again by the Spirit of God, and He lives in you to help you do what you could not do before. The Holy Spirit helps you live out your new nature in attitudes and actions worthy of a child of God. But you have to let Him help you, by doing what He tells you. You are responsible for the way you live out what God has entrusted to you. Paul’s encouragement to Timothy is a good reminder that you must make an effort. “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to

be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth”
(2 Timothy 2:15).

Application

10 Write Philippians 2:14–16 in your notebook. Then, underline the words that can help you live a better life. Study this passage until you know it.

11 As an ambassador for Christ, whom do you represent?

12 Circle the letter before each TRUE statement below.

- a)** As a believer you are to complain about others who are not living right.
 - b)** God’s purpose for you in the world is to be His light and speak for Him.
 - c)** You are responsible for the way you live your new life as a child of God.
-



Check Your Answers

The answers to your study exercises are not given in the usual order, so that you will not easily see the answer to your next question ahead of time. Try not to look ahead.

- 7 Statements **a)**, **c)**, and **d)** are true.
- 1 **b)** Receive and believe Jesus
- 8 Your answer
- 2 **a)** He made you His child and helped you behave in a better way.
- 9 tell; God's family.
- 3 **b)** do good and right in all things.
- 10 Your answer
- 4 **c)** put them into practice.
- 11 Christ here on earth
- 5 Your answer
- 12 Statements **b)** and **c)** are true.
- 6 **a)** 3) Do good
b) 1) Be saved
c) 2) Be holy and faultless

LESSON 2 God Is the Pattern for Our Lives

An interesting thing about families is the likenesses between members. For example, we have two children—a girl and a boy. Both have big brown eyes like their father. The boy has curly hair like his father; the girl has straight hair like her mother. People usually say that they look alike, and are just like their dad.

Of course, family likenesses can be seen in our attitudes and actions too. We were upset with our little boy just recently because, instead of dressing, he was reading. Then we remembered how many times our parents were angry with both of us for that same love for books. We also loved to read and did not always choose the right times.

There is also family likeness that is spiritual. Jesus told the Pharisees who thought they were so good: “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire” (John 8:44). If Christians are indeed God’s children, they will show family likeness in their nature, attitudes, and actions.

The Plan

- A. God Has Character
- B. God Is Love
- C. God Is Righteous

The Goals

1. Describe God's character.
2. Describe how Jesus demonstrated God's character.
3. Discuss how God's love differs from human love by explaining the meaning of grace and mercy.
4. State how God's righteousness is shown in His attitudes and actions.

A. GOD HAS CHARACTER

The Meaning of God's Character

Goal 1. Describe God's character.

God is a person. However, He does not have a human form, for He is not a human being. God is also not just a power at work in the universe. Certainly it was by His power that the universe was created. But God is more than a power. He has ideas, purpose, intelligence, and emotions. He thinks, responds, and is far beyond the human beings He created in His image. It seems almost insulting to say that God is a person. Yet that is the best description we can give. All those qualities that give Him personality are His character. God is wonderful—His character is beyond our understanding. But He has chosen to show His character to us, so that we can be like Him and imitate His ways.

The universe, which God created, shows us something about His unlimited power and intelligence. Paul writes,

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and

divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. (Romans 1:20)

But men twisted God’s truth (Romans 1:21–25). Many religions teach that there is a Creator—God—but they do not have a true understanding of God’s character. God himself has had to make that clear in special ways.

First, God revealed himself in history to men that He chose. People like Abraham, Moses, Samuel, and Isaiah received special insights into God’s nature. The nation of Israel was chosen to demonstrate the ways of God. The Old Testament records the knowledge about God that was given to the world in this way. Even though the Old Testament fully describes the character of God, most of humankind remains ignorant of Him.

Also, God revealed His character by sending His son, Jesus Christ, to live among men.

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. (Hebrews 1:1–3)

Application

- 1** Which qualities of God’s character does creation show you? Circle the letters of the correct answers.
- a)** God is just a force in nature.
 - b)** God is wise and intelligent.
 - c)** God is cruel.
 - d)** God is all-powerful.

2 Give three sources from which you can discover God’s character. The words that you use may not be just like ours, but the ideas should be the same.

a)

b)

c)



The Showing of God’s Character

Goal 2. Describe how Jesus demonstrated God’s character.

The revelation of God in Jesus recorded in the New Testament Gospels in no way contradicts the revelation of God in the Old Testament. Jesus made God’s nature, feelings, and actions easier to understand by living them out in a way people could best understand. The Gospel of John calls Jesus “the Word,” or revelation, and it says this about Him:

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

Because Jesus is the son of God, He was able to tell about God and show God’s character in attitudes and actions. John writes, “No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known” (John 1:18).

Jesus completed the revelation of God. He made God’s character known to all. What is more, by His death and resurrection, He made available to all people the right to become children of God. By the power of His Spirit, God’s children are in the process of being changed into the likeness of God. Read what Paul says:

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into

his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
(2 Corinthians 3:18)

Glory is the word used in the Bible to describe the wonderful presence of God. Jesus, God's Son, reflected this glory. (See John 1:14.) He shone in this dark world. And as you become more like God, you, too, will reflect His glory.

Glory includes all the characteristics of God. The ones that John noticed most in Jesus' glory were grace and truth. Grace reminds us of the goodness of God, in that He is loving. Truth reminds us of God's holiness and righteousness. These two parts of God's character affect ethics. God's attitudes and deeds come from His love and from His righteousness.

Application

- 3** Memorize 2 Corinthians 3:18. Does this verse encourage you?
- 4** Pray about how you can cooperate with the Lord as He changes you. You might begin by asking Him to show you, as you study the rest of this lesson, where you are not reflecting His character, His glory.



B. GOD IS LOVE

Goal 3. Discuss how God's love differs from human love by explaining the meaning of grace and mercy.

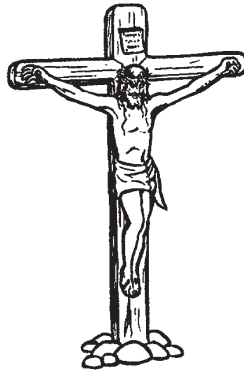
One of the most difficult things for us to understand when we become Christians is how God could have loved us so much that He allowed His only Son die for us. We are not used to this kind of love. Most of the time the love we see in the world is selfish. God's love is so much higher than human love. He is always concerned about what is best for us. He is full of love, even when we do not love Him in return. He loves the world even when it rejects Him. This kind of love is active. It shows itself in attitude

and action, as 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 tells us. In the Bible, God’s loving attitude is called grace and mercy.

Grace is love which shows that it wants the best for another person. Grace does not wait for that person to be good enough to be loved, or to love in return. Grace is an unselfish attitude of pity or compassion. Peter writes of “the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ” (1 Peter 5:10). God’s grace is seen because He wants our best even when we are sinful. But His love had to become action to rescue us from our sin.

A person shows mercy when he or she does something for another who does not deserve it. Do you remember the story of the good Samaritan in Luke 10:30–37? He saw the need of his enemy, had pity on him, and helped him.

God has shown grace and mercy to us. He loves without conditions. He wants our best and provides a way of salvation though we do not deserve it.



You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:6–8)

God’s love is not selfish, neither must it be earned. He wants us to reflect His glory and goodness. That means He wants us to love the way He loves and to show grace and mercy.

Application

5 Read what Jesus said about loving in Luke 6:27–36. Write the following portions of this passage in your notebook. Beside each verse, write one way you can do what the verse says.

Verse 27—Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.

Verse 36—Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.



C. GOD IS RIGHTEOUS

Goal 4. State how God’s righteousness is shown in His attitudes and actions.

At the International Bureau of Weights and Measures in Sèvres, France, is a bar of special metal. This bar is exactly one meter long. It is the perfect standard by which all other lengths are judged. Most countries have a copy of this bar.

While this bar is the perfect standard for mathematical measurement, God is the standard of all perfection. All He says or does is true. That is what we mean by saying that God is righteous. He does not change, and He does not do wrong because those things would be against His nature. God will not be happy with anything less than complete righteousness in those who are to be like Him. Because He is just and true, He has to judge His creation.

When God had finished His creative work, He was very pleased with it (Genesis 1:31). But humanity sinned. Paul tells us clearly, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). In His righteousness, God could not tolerate humanity’s sin, so he provided a means through whom humans can become righteous again. That means is His Son, Jesus.

The story is told of a judge who demanded truth and justice. One day his son was brought before him for a crime that he had committed. The son admitted his guilt, so with tears of love the judge sentenced him to prison—justice demanded punishment. Then the judge rose, took off his robe, stepped down to where his son stood, and said to the guards, “I will serve the prison sentence for my son.”

As God’s child, you are not condemned along with the world. Jesus has taken your place and met God’s justice. Now God’s justice has set you free. For this reason you should be true and righteous, with the power of the Holy Spirit.

When we understand that God’s love and righteousness are both parts of His nature, then we can begin to see how these attitudes affect what He does for us. We can also see how God expects us to think, to feel, and to act, so we can become more like Him.

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)

Application

- 6** Write Micah 6:8 in your notebook and memorize it.
- 7** Read Ephesians 5:8–10. Then list in your notebook things God expects you to do now that you are His child.
- 8** When we say God is righteous we mean
 - a)** He can be measured.
 - b)** He does not do wrong.
 - c)** He is too good to listen to us.
- 9** How can God’s righteousness affect your attitudes and actions?



Check Your Answers

5 Your answer

1 Statements **b)** and **d)** are correct.

6 Your answer

2 **a)** God can be known through His creation.

b) God can be known through the men to whom He spoke as recorded in the Old Testament.

c) God can be known through Jesus Christ.

7 Your answer

3 Your answer

8 **b)** He does not do wrong.

4 Your answer

9 Your answer may be different than ours, but here are a few examples: He can help you not to do wrong, to have a better attitude, to show constant love, and to have humble fellowship with Him.

LESSON 3 What God Wants You to Be and Do

Have you learned to ride a bicycle? If so, you know that as a learner you had to remember to do many things at the same time. You had to push the pedals and guide the handlebars, while keeping your balance and obeying the rules of the road. These are things that the expert rider does without thinking, but you could not do them easily.

How, then, did you learn to ride? Most likely you had an expert rider helping you. Probably he or she explained what you had to do and how to obey the rules of the road. Perhaps he got on the bicycle and showed you what to do. When you tried for yourself, did you fall down? Because the trainer understood, he or she probably helped you by holding on to the bicycle until you could balance.

God desires that we all become like Him, but we cannot just start living that way on our own when we become Christians. This lesson shows how God, the expert, can help you become more like Him.

The Plan

- A. A Conscience to Help You
- B. The Bible to Guide You
- C. A Savior to Show You
- D. The Holy Spirit to Lead You

The Goals

- 1. Explain how your conscience helps you become a better Christian.
- 2. Describe how the Bible is your guide in living a Christian life.
- 3. Discuss how Jesus is your example as well as your Lord and Savior.
- 4. State the work of the Holy Spirit in leading you into a Christlike life.

A. A CONSCIENCE TO HELP YOU

Goal 1. Explain how your conscience helps you become a better Christian.

Every person has a conscience, an inner awareness about what is good and right. Even before you became a Christian, your conscience gave you some guidance about what was right and wrong. You had a feeling inside, and you knew that you should or should not do a certain act. If you took notice of your conscience, you avoided many sinful deeds and perhaps did many right deeds. The apostle Paul explains this when he speaks of the Gentiles, who did not know God's laws but were doing good because of those inner feelings. He says,

Their conduct shows that what the Law commands is written in their hearts. Their consciences also show that this is true, since their thoughts sometimes accuse them and sometimes defend them. (Romans 2:15)

Conscience is a gift from God to help us. We might say that it is a spiritual sense of balance. But like our natural sense of balance, our conscience is limited and imperfect. The best acrobat or rider sometimes falls because his sense of balance fails. Just so, the best of people fall into sin because their conscience is not sufficient to hold them. Some even make their conscience useless by repeatedly refusing to listen to it. The Bible talks of people “whose consciences are dead, as if burnt with a hot iron” (1 Timothy 4:2).

But the conscience of true Christians is not like that, for being born again means to have a new mind and conscience. The writer to the Hebrews encourages us by showing that Christ’s death makes our consciences right. “His blood will purify our consciences from useless rituals, so that we may serve the living God” (Hebrews 9:14).

Because Christ purifies our hearts and forgives us, our consciences do not make us feel guilty about past sins any more. Instead, our consciences become a tool of the Holy Spirit to assure us that we are acting right. Therefore, the writer to the Hebrews urges, “Keep on praying for us. We are sure we have a clear conscience, because we want to do the right thing at all times” (Hebrews 13:18).

A quiet conscience is a clear conscience (1 Peter 3:16). Paul’s advice to Timothy is great encouragement and a strong warning: “Keep your faith and a clear conscience. Some men have not listened to their conscience and have made a ruin of their faith” (1 Timothy 1:19).

Application

- 1 Circle the letter for the TRUE statements about conscience.
 - a) Only non-Christians have consciences.
 - b) Christ renews the Christian’s conscience.
 - c) A renewed conscience is a tool of the Holy Spirit.
 - d) Conscience can never be wrong.
 - e) A Christian should keep a clear conscience.

2 Write the following verse in your notebook, memorize it, and use it as a guide. “I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man” (Acts 24:16).

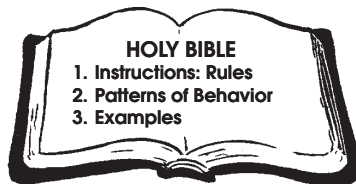
B. THE BIBLE TO GUIDE YOU

Goal 2. Describe how the Bible is your guide in living a Christian life.

In the last lesson you learned about the Bible as part of the way God revealed himself. You remember that the Old Testament records God’s dealings with individuals and with the nation of Israel. God chose to show His character and His way in that manner. The New Testament contains an account of the way God revealed himself most fully—in Jesus Christ. The Gospels tell the story of Jesus and give His teaching. Acts continues the story. The Epistles explain the teaching, and Revelation speaks of the victorious end of the story.

When the Bible has so many important things to tell us, it is easy to see why we need the whole Scripture. Yet many people, even Christians, do not understand why God has made His Word available to us today. The apostle Paul answers, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).

God gave us the Scriptures to teach us the truth, the right things about the true God and our new life in Christ. This way, we will not be ignorant of His expectations. The teaching of the Bible will guide us. All the knowledge of the Bible is of little use if we do not let it change our attitudes and actions to be like God’s.



King David had great respect for the Word of God. He wrote, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws” (Psalm 119:105–106). The Bible is the all-sufficient guide for the Christian. It contains instructions, rules to be obeyed, and patterns of behavior that help us behave ethically.

Finally, the Bible gives us examples of real people obeying or rebelling against God’s rules. There is never any doubt which biblical examples God wants us to copy. The good inspire us to please God; the bad warn us against feelings and actions which would displease God.

The Word of God is very practical and real. If we are to live God’s way, we have to be practical and know God’s Word. Knowing God’s Word requires a desire to obey and discipline to study. The psalmist writes,

I rejoice in following your statutes as one
rejoices in great riches. I meditate on your
precepts and consider your ways. I delight in
your decrees; I will not neglect your word.
(Psalm 119:14–16)

Application

- 3** Circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement.
- a)** The Bible is inspired by God for your good.
 - b)** The Bible is useful for teaching the truth.
 - c)** The Bible is given to equip the Christian to deal with life.
 - d)** The Bible is only a list of things you must not do.
 - e)** The Bible is full of good instructions and patterns for living.
- 4** Memorize and study one of the three Scripture passages given in this section. Be prepared to explain this verse to anyone who asks about why the Bible is important to you.



C. A SAVIOR TO SHOW YOU

Goal 3. Discuss how Jesus is your example as well as your Lord and Savior.

The most valuable example that the Bible offers us is our Lord Jesus Christ. Probably you tell others that Jesus is your Savior. Perhaps you think of Him constantly as your Lord. This is right and good. How could you have experienced new life without salvation? How could you go on living without the Lord in control? Only Jesus is able to save and keep, when we ask Him into our hearts. Jesus is Christ, and you are a Christian—a follower of Christ, one of His disciples. A disciple is one who learns to think and act like his or her master.

Did you ever play a game called “Follow the Leader”? One person does a series of actions—jumping, bending, walking—and the others have to do their best to copy the leader’s movements. If you cannot copy him or her, or are the slowest to do so, then you lose. That game is built on imitation.

The idea of imitation is throughout the Bible. Paul writes, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). He also advises,

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: . . . he humbled himself and became obedient. (Philippians 2:5, 8)

Jesus showed His character by His obedience. Peter summed this up when he preached that Jesus “went around doing good and healing . . . because God was with him” (Acts 10:38). Peter knew Jesus’ character because he had been with Him.

Recall, also, how the members of the Council were amazed to see the boldness of Peter and John, especially since these disciples were ordinary men of no education. The Council realized then that Peter and John had been companions of Jesus (Acts 4:13).

This shows the importance of studying biblical examples. It is not enough to know the stories of Jesus in the Gospels. You need to copy the godly examples of Jesus and others in Scripture. This will not be easy. But Peter notes, “To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps” (1 Peter 2:21).

God certainly wants us to become more like Him every day, but we are not up to His standard yet (Philippians 3:12). Here is a marvelous promise:

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. (1 John 3:2–3)

Application

5 Circle the letters of the statements which describe things we should do to imitate Jesus.

- a)** We must love God with all our heart.
- b)** We must tell the good news to the poor.
- c)** We must help those who are in trouble.
- d)** We must let the Spirit of God work in us.
- e)** We must all become carpenters.

6 Read 1 Corinthians 11:1 again. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you ways in which you are not imitating Christ. Ask God to forgive you and to help you change. List these in your notebook and pray each day that you may become more like Jesus. When the Holy Spirit has helped you change something on your list, draw a line through it and write what you have learned.



D. THE HOLY SPIRIT TO LEAD YOU

Goal 4. State the work of the Holy Spirit in leading you into a Christlike life.

Many of God's children have not made progress in becoming Christlike as they have not overcome their old sins and bad habits. They confess their sin sincerely but continue to fall. However, our expert teacher, the Holy Spirit, is available to help us. We must ask Him for help each day and proceed with confidence in becoming more like Jesus.

The disciples of Jesus were His followers for three years. Jesus taught them many things and showed them His example. But He knew that when He went away, they would need help. So He promised, "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me" (John 15:26). Earlier, Jesus said, "The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26).

The Holy Spirit teaches and reminds us of what we have learned. He brings the Scriptures to our mind when we need them (See Mark 13:11.). His job is to lead us into all the truth (John 16:13), and that includes the way we are to live. As we let the Spirit help us, we can overcome the desires of our human nature. God's nature can be shown in us, but only as we follow the Holy Spirit's leading. Read what the apostle Paul wrote about this:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. . . . Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22–23, 25)

The Holy Spirit must control our lives. Does that mean we do not have to make any effort? Of course not! It means that we must not keep trying to avoid God's way. We must think about

our attitudes and actions, and ask the Spirit to change them to be like Christ's. That is His leading into all truth.

Does this seem hard? Consider for a moment what God has already done in you. It was the Holy Spirit who helped you become a Christian. The Spirit gave you life. By His power you became a child of God. You experienced that God is real, and He forgave your sins. Your conscience was renewed. You were given a purpose for living, and every day God your Father answers your prayers. All this happens because the Holy Spirit is working in you, as He is in your Christian brothers and sisters.

We have no cause to fear that we will fail. What the Bible tells us, we can also know by personal experience:

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. (Romans 8:14-16)

Application

7 After each statement below, write the scripture reference for where the statement is found.

- a)** The Spirit leads us.
.....
- b)** The Spirit has given us life.
.....
- c)** The Spirit reveals the truth about God.
.....
- d)** The Spirit helps us remember Christ's words.
.....
- e)** The Spirit produces a Christlike character in us.
.....

8 Paul prayed this prayer and we pray it for you also. Write your name on the blank spaces, and pray it yourself.

I,, ask the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, to give the Spirit, who will make wise and reveal God to
. so that. 's mind may be opened to see the light . . . and how very great is His power at work in us who believe (Ephesians 1:17–19).



Check Your Answers

- 5 Statements **a)**, **b)**, **c)**, and **d)** are correct.
- 1 Statements **b)**, **c)**, and **e)** are true.
- 6 Your answer
- 2 Your answer
- 7 **a)** Romans 8:14
b) Galatians 5:25
c) John 15:26
d) John 14:26
e) Galatians 5:22–23
- 3 Statements **a)**, **b)**, **c)**, and **e)** are true.
- 8 Your name goes in the blanks.
- 4 Your answer

LESSON 4 God Gives You Rules for Living

To get a driver's license, you must first pass a test on the signs and rules which car drivers need to know. If we follow the rules of the road, we will not have as many accidents. We also may not have problems with the policemen who make sure that the laws of the country are obeyed. Sometimes we might wish to drive faster than the speed limit, but the rules on speeding are made to discourage us from doing what could be dangerous.

We also have rules that govern our family. For instance, children need rules. They will feel more secure if they know what is expected of them. And if they disobey a rule, they can expect to be punished. Discipline is good if it is done in love.

God, the Creator of all people, has rules too. He desires that His children follow all of His rules. That is why He revealed His rules through Moses and through His Son Jesus Christ.

The Plan

- A. Rules of Men
- B. Commandments of God by Moses
- C. Teachings of Jesus
- D. Apostles' Directions

The Goals

1. State the Christian's responsibility to the rules of his or her country.
2. Show the importance of God's commandments.
3. Tell why the law of Christ is called the law of love.
4. List ways in which Christ's law of love can be applied in practical daily living, as presented in the apostles' teaching.

A. RULES OF MEN

Goal 1. State the Christian's responsibility to the rules of his or her country.

God's rules have to do with order in society. God desires that people and families live together in peace and harmony. He has allowed humanity to develop political systems. We may live in a tribe with a chief, a monarchy with a king, or a republic with a president. There are leaders who make the rules, or laws, which govern our society. Not all leaders or laws are good in God's sight, but He wants us to respect them.

The apostle Paul tells us this in Romans 13:1–3:

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the

authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you.

Authorities exist to control evil and to punish those who break the laws. Paul says that because laws punish evil, they act as God's servants. We must obey them not only out of fear but "because of conscience" (Romans 13:5).

Paul then talks about paying taxes as a matter of conscience:

This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. (Romans 13:6–7)

Christians owe their first duty to the kingdom of God. However, as free citizens of the heavenly kingdom, we must be good examples to unbelievers in our obedience to the authorities by paying our taxes. Peter encourages us, "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men" (1 Peter 2:13).

Jesus is a wonderful example of obeying authority. Though He was King of kings, He paid taxes so as not to offend people (see Matthew 17:24–27). When enemies tried to trap Him with a question about taxes, Jesus advised, "'Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's'" (Matthew 22:21).

Application

1 Circle the letters before all the TRUE statements about the Christian's attitude toward government.

- a) The Christian should not pay taxes because he is God's child.
 - b) She desires to obey the laws of the country.
 - c) He pays taxes out of conscience.
 - d) He respects human authorities.
 - e) She puts the law of God above human laws.
-

B. COMMANDMENTS OF GOD BY MOSES

Goal 2. Show the importance of God's commandments.

Human laws may be good or bad. They serve the society for which they were made. But God's law is perfectly good and suited for all people everywhere. The psalmist exclaimed, "Righteous are you, O LORD, and your laws are right. The statutes you have laid down are righteous; they are fully trustworthy" (Psalm 119:137–138).

God gave laws to His people through His servant Moses. God then revealed His perfect law to the Hebrew nation whom He had chosen when He gave the commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai. Read Exodus 19–31. Some of the most important rules of God are in the Ten Commandments.

In Deuteronomy 5, Moses told these rules to the people so that they would learn and obey them (verse 1). He wanted the Hebrew nation to know that these commandments were the basis of God's covenant with them. God would continue to bless them if they did not disobey the laws (verses 32–33).

Even though we are God's people of the new covenant through Jesus' death, we should still keep the Ten Commandments. They are for all people. Without them we cannot have healthy, prosperous, and good societies. Let us review these commandments briefly:

1. Worship no god but the Lord.
2. Make no images to worship.
3. Do not use God's name for evil purposes.
4. Observe God's day of rest.
5. Respect your father and mother.
6. Do not commit murder.
7. Do not commit adultery.
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not accuse anyone falsely.
10. Do not desire another man's wife or what he owns.

God gave these rules to help us live in peace and prosperity. He gave them because He is a kind and loving Father.

Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you. Observe the commands of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and revering him. (Deuteronomy 8:5–6)

The nation of Israel did not always follow these laws, and they were punished. But they were no worse than other people. Every man and woman has sinned against God by breaking one or more of the Ten Commandments. Even the most religious people have failed at some point.

The book of Mark records that a religious young man came to Jesus one day and wanted to know what he must do to receive eternal life. Jesus questioned him about the last five commandments and this man proudly said he had kept them all. Then Jesus challenged him to give away all his wealth and to follow Him. The young man went away sad because he was very rich. (Read Mark 10:17–22.) We imagine that he loved riches more than obedience to God's Son. Without realizing it, he was breaking the first commandment.



Indeed, God has high standards of conduct for His people. None of us can fulfill all the laws of God by ourselves. The apostle Paul expresses our problem in Romans 7:21–25. Though we know God’s laws to be right and desire to do good, we find it difficult to overcome our human nature. Happily, God has the answer!

For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:3–4)

Jesus, Son of Man and Son of God, fulfilled all God’s commandments (Matthew 5:17). Through His death we are forgiven for our failures, and through His Spirit we learn to obey God’s laws.

Application

2 Write out Psalm 119:35–37 in your notebook. Learn it and make it your personal prayer.

Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight. Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word. (Psalm 119:35–37)

3 Circle the letters before the statements which describe the laws of God.

- a) God's rules are perfect.
- b) All the laws given to Moses were only for the Hebrews.
- c) People can easily obey all the Ten Commandments.
- d) God gave His rules to help us live right.
- e) The Ten Commandments are out-of-date.
- f) Jesus obeyed all God's laws.
- g) We need the Holy Spirit to help us obey these rules.

4 If you have not already learned the Ten Commandments, write them in your notebook and memorize them. As you are learning them, ask the Holy Spirit to help you obey them.



C. TEACHINGS OF JESUS

Goal 3. Tell why the law of Christ is called the law of love.

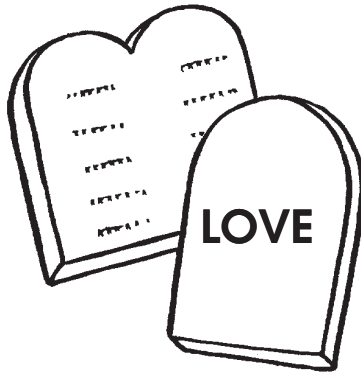
A teacher once came to Jesus and asked Him a difficult question about God's laws: "Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" (Matthew 22:36). Jesus did not choose one of the Ten Commandments. Instead He chose from the Old Testament a command of God which includes the first four commandments: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5).

If you love God, you will worship Him only, you will not misuse His name, and you will please Him. Love will be the motive behind your obedience to all the laws. Jesus, in His answer to the teacher, added a second great command found in the Old Testament. This command includes the last five commandments: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18). Loving your neighbor involves wanting the best for him or her. This is the love of the Spirit.

As Jesus prepared to leave His disciples, He instructed them, "If you love me, you will obey what I command" (John 14:15).

He promised to send a Helper, the Holy Spirit, to teach them how to obey (John 14:16–17, 26). Then He said,

“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:12–13)



The love of Jesus is practical: He gave His life to save us. Now He demands that we do something too. The apostle Paul understood that when he wrote, “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2).

We are to show love for our Lord by doing good deeds for others. You remember in Lesson 1 that the intention of God for His children was that they do good deeds? Now we see that it is the commandment of Jesus.

Love that works is a central rule of the kingdom of God. But we saw that the character of God is more than love. He is also righteous. Love that works must be directed in the right way. Jesus taught much on love and righteousness. The Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew 5–7, tells about some of this teaching.

In this sermon, Jesus told His disciples about the high standards of righteousness at which they were to aim. They were not just to refrain from evil actions but also from evil thoughts. For example, refraining from adultery is not enough. We are not even to have adulterous thoughts (Matthew 5:27–28). Also, Jesus is not

satisfied if we do good things for our friends. He commands us to love, also, our enemies and pray for them so that we may be true children of our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:43–45).

The commandments of Jesus are positive and produce a new way of life. Our giving and praying must be done privately, not to show off. We are to do everything for God’s sake, not for the praise of people. We must not be hypocritical, that is, good only in appearance. Jesus tells His disciples repeatedly that God is interested in motives and attitudes as well as deeds.

Application

5 What Jesus tells us to do is sometimes different from what our human nature wants. Circle the letter before each commandment given in the Sermon on the Mount for which you need the help of the Holy Spirit.

- a)** Be glad when you are persecuted.
- b)** Avoid taking revenge when someone wrongs you.
- c)** Love your enemies.
- d)** Make your gifts of charity a private matter.
- e)** Forgive others when they offend you.
- f)** Refrain from judging other people.

6 Which of these commands do you have the most problem with? Write it in your notebook and pray for God’s help to obey Jesus’ command. Leave a space to write how the Holy Spirit helps you to obey the command this week.



D. APOSTLES’ DIRECTIONS

Goal 4. List ways in which Christ’s law of love can be applied in practical daily living, as presented in the apostles’ teaching.

After Jesus went to be with the Father, His apostles went out to preach the good news of salvation everywhere. Some of the

people they met were Jews who understood that God was holy and had given the laws to help them avoid sins. These learned easily the law of love that Jesus gave. But other people did not understand the character of God. The apostles gave them more basic teaching. These people had their own religions and needed to learn a new way of life. Their old ways did not please God, so the apostles taught them the commands of Jesus.

The teachings of the apostles are in the Bible. They taught as Jesus taught and told the people how the commands of the Lord could help them with their problems. For example, John the apostle taught the command to believe in Jesus and love one another. He wrote, “Let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth” (1 John 3:18).

James had the same concern. He encouraged everyone to do the right thing by obeying “the royal law found in Scripture” (James 2:8), which is the command to love our neighbors. He advised, “But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as law-breakers” (James 2:9). Discrimination—liking or hating a person because of race, gender, or social status—is against the law of love. Christianity changes our attitudes toward people. The book of James says:

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. (James 1:27)

The apostle Paul had been a slave to the rules of men before he became a Christian. He realized that they could not save him, for salvation is not the result of human efforts. (Read Ephesians 2:8–9.) Yet when we have accepted the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, we are responsible for living a new kind of life. Paul warns us:

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are

darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. . . . to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:17–18, 23–24)

Paul gives many words of advice in Ephesians. Here are a few of his directions for living the Christian life by the power of the Spirit. You can find them in Ephesians 4, 5, and 6.

1. Be always humble, gentle, and patient.
2. Show your love by being tolerant with each other.
3. No more lying! Tell the truth.
4. Stop stealing and start working.
5. Help the poor.
6. Do not use harmful words but only helpful words.
7. No bitterness or anger; be kind and tender-hearted.
8. Forgive one another.
9. No sexual immorality or indecency or greed
10. Learn what pleases the Lord.
11. Do not get drunk with wine but be filled with the Spirit.
12. Always give thanks for everything to God.
13. Submit yourselves to one another.
14. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.
15. Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church.
16. Children, obey your parents.
17. Parents, do not treat your children in such a way as to make them angry; raise them with Christian discipline and instruction.
18. Put on the armor of God.
19. Pray on every occasion, as the Spirit leads.

What wonderful directions! This is not a list of what not to do. It is a positive and active list of good deeds. Doing better things will not only make us happier, it will make us more like our heavenly Father. That, as Paul reminds us, is the purpose of living by the law of love:

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Ephesians 5:1–2)

Application

7 Circle the letter before each action that obeys the law of love.

- a) Beating your child because he walks slowly
- b) Feeding the hungry
- c) Helping a man find a job
- d) Cursing a driver whose car almost struck you
- e) Praying for your pastors
- f) Respecting the elders of your community

8 All of us have areas in our lives where we do not obey the law of love. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you have not obeyed the law of love. Allow Him to help you change.

9 In your notebook, draw the chart below and fill in the columns as shown. For two weeks, write the ways in which you obey the law of love. The second week should be easier than the first.

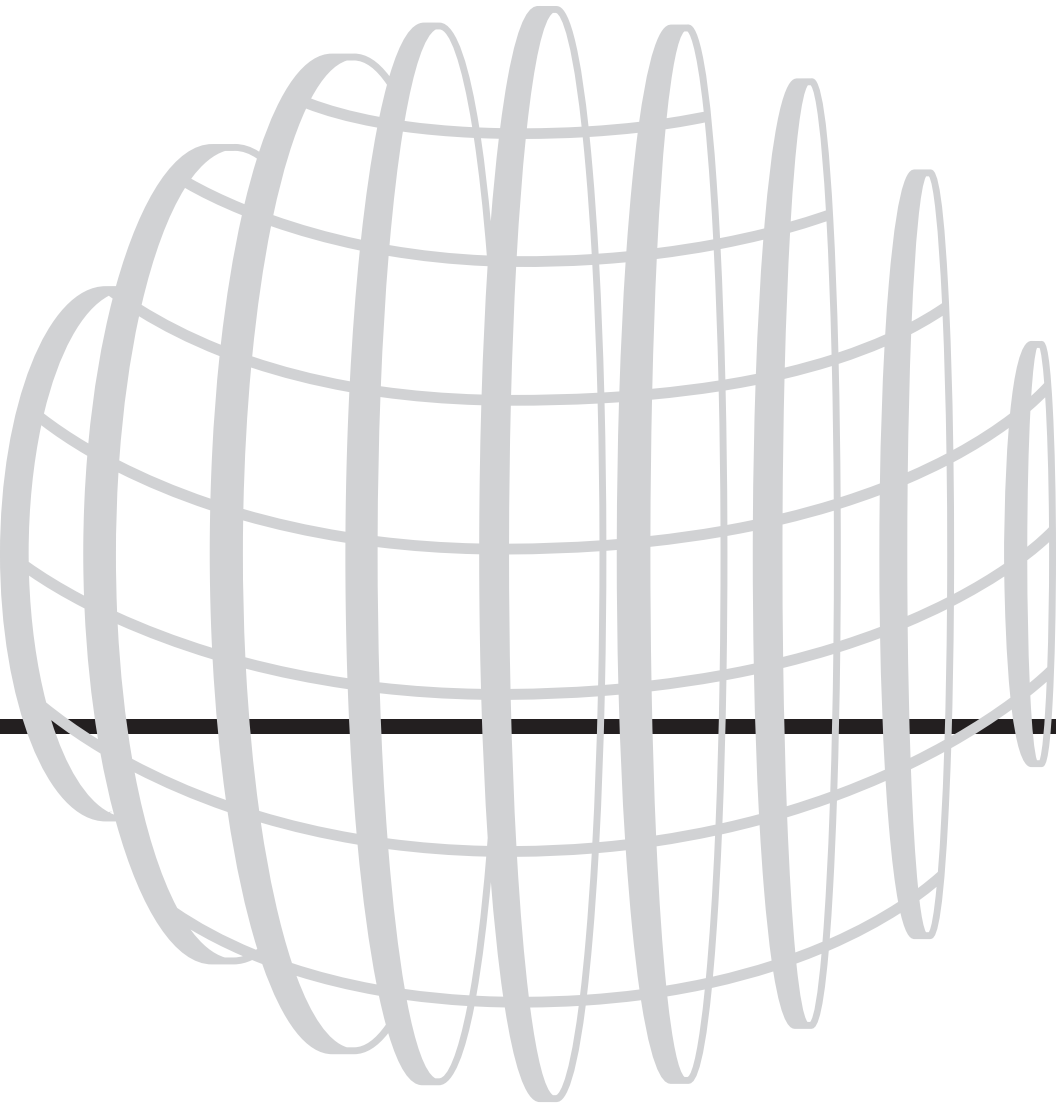
| Living with Myself | Living with My Family | Living in My Community | Living in My Church |
|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| | | | |



Now that you have completed the first unit, you are ready to answer the questions in Unit One Evaluation. Review the previous lessons, then follow the directions on the Unit One Answer Sheet. Complete and send your answer sheets to your instructor for corrections.

Check Your Answers

- 5** All are beyond our natural ability, and so all require the help of the Holy Spirit.
- 1** Statements **b)**, **c)**, **d)**, and **e)** are true.
- 6** Your answer
- 7** Phrases **b)**, **c)**, **e)**, and **f)** are correct.
- 2** Your answer
- 8** Your answer
- 3** Statements **a)**, **d)**, **f)**, and **g)** are correct.
- 9** Your answer. As you continue to obey the law of love, God will make you happier.
- 4** Your answer





Lessons

- 5 God Gives You Standards for Living**
- 6 God Wants You to Care for Yourself**
- 7 God Wants You to Care for the Church**
- 8 God Sent You to Care for the World**

LESSON 5 God Gives You Standards for Living

Imagine that you are considering buying a bicycle. In the shop you see a beautiful bicycle, just the kind you have always wanted. Of course you want it! But because you are a child of God, you do not act impulsively. You do not take your family's money or borrow from your friends to buy it. You know you should make a wise decision. So what do you do?

The Bible does not have any verse telling you whether or not to buy a bicycle. There were no bicycles in Bible days. Besides, buying a bicycle is neither a good nor a bad action. So God does not have a rule about bicycles. The Bible is not a magical object that tells us "yes" or "no" for every decision. However, the Bible does offer guiding principles in our daily decisions. This lesson will teach us about these principles found in Scripture.

The Plan

- A. Standards to Live By
- B. Finding Biblical Principles
- C. Applying Biblical Principles

The Goals

1. Explain the difference between biblical principles and worldly principles.
2. Explain how to find biblical principles.
3. State the principle of stewardship by following the guidelines for developing biblical principles.
4. Show how the biblical principle of service affects the Christian's lifestyle.
5. Show the practical nature of the principles studied

A. STANDARDS TO LIVE BY

Goal 1. Explain the difference between biblical principles and worldly principles.

While rules tell you what you may or may not do, principles are more like measurements that help you to know whether one action is better, as good as, or worse than another. We all act by principles, although most people do not realize it. The most common principle is that of selfish pleasure, which means, "If something pleases me, then I will do it." Self-pleasure is not a standard by which Jesus lived and died. In Philippians 2, read about Christ's humility and greatness.

Another standard by which people decide what to do is popularity. Popularity means being liked by most people and includes wanting people's praise. The Bible tells us to desire the praise of God rather than that of people (Romans 2:29). Seeking popularity is not a Christian principle.

Application

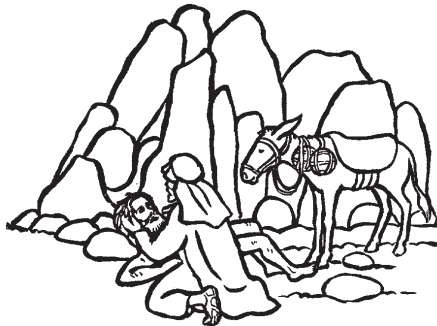
- 1 When making a decision about buying something special, think first about what
 - a) would make you popular with the people you know.
 - b) reason you have for needing it and then pray before making your decision.
 - c) you want to have and buy it right away.
 - 2 Think about a recent decision you made. Can you tell what principle or principles you were using? Would your decision have been different if you had used another principle?
-

B. FINDING BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

Goal 2. Explain how to find biblical principles.

Biblical principles all come from the great law of love. This law of love means Christians are to show love to God, to others, and to themselves because God loves them. The biblical principle of love includes many other principles. Here are three ways of finding these love principles in the Bible:

1. Look at the biblical examples of behavior that God wants us to have. For example, read the story of the Good Samaritan who showed kindness to his neighbor and about whom Jesus said, “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10:37). Showing kindness is a good standard to live by.



2. Study the explanations and suggestions about Christian living given in the Bible. The Bible gives many stories and commands that help us live Christian lives. For example, the Scripture says of God, “‘He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor’” (2 Corinthians 9:9). This principle and others like it explain what we are to do to live right.

3. Examine Jesus’s behavior. If we are to become more like Him we must know how He lived. Paul wrote, “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5).

Using the above methods, you should be able to find the principles that can help you with all of life’s problems. Remember that these biblical principles are God’s. They help us develop wisdom, which God gives to His children through His Word and prayer. Finding God’s wisdom is a biblical principle in itself. The epistle of James says,

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God,
who gives generously to all without finding
fault, and it will be given to him. (James 1:5)

This verse teaches first that we must be humble and admit that we do not know all the answers. At the same time, we must believe that God does have the answers. Therefore, we “approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

Finally, we should expect to receive the answer and wait until we are sure about God’s will in each situation. As we search the Scriptures and allow the Holy Spirit to lead us, He will help us make the right decisions.

Application

3 One way of finding the biblical principle that will help you make a decision is by

- a)** studying your Bible.
- b)** trying new ideas of your own.
- c)** waiting for friends to tell you what to do.

4 There are many examples and suggestions in the Bible that give you principles to live by. As you study this course, pray that the Lord will give His wisdom and show you how to find and use these principles.

THE PRINCIPLE OF STEWARDSHIP

Goal 3. State the principle of stewardship by following the guidelines for developing biblical principles.

All that we have is from God. He created the world we live in. He upholds all things by His power. He sends seasons and harvests. So all the physical things that we have—houses, money, food—are His.

God created us, too, with our talents and intelligence. And, through Jesus, He gives us eternal life. We are His children because He gave us that gift. All that we are is from God and belongs to God. Our possessions, our physical and mental abilities, and our time are loaned to us. God, who is the true owner, expects us to be wise. He will judge how we care and manage what He has loaned to us.

In Matthew 25:14–30, Jesus told a parable about three servants, whose master went away and left them with large sums of money. He had given them money to manage according to their ability. The master expected the servants to use the money to buy and sell goods. Indeed, two of the servants worked hard and earned a good profit for their master. But the third servant did nothing. He was not dishonest, but was afraid to use, and perhaps lose, what his master had given him. So he dug a hole and hid the money. When the master returned, he praised and rewarded the servants who had worked hard. But he was angry with the servant who had done nothing. He called him a bad and lazy servant, took away the money the servant had saved, and sent him away.

This story illustrates the principle of stewardship: the right use of what God has given us to care for. The Bible has much to say about stewardship. The Old Testament encourages tithing—giving one-tenth of all income and crops for God’s work. It talks of giving the firstfruits and the firstborn to God’s service. The New Testament advises believers to share food and money with needy people, for the gospel’s sake. But joyfully giving back to God is only a sign of stewardship. By our giving we show we are aware that all we have is really the Lord’s. It shows our attitude of willingness to do anything God wants.

Jesus stressed the importance of giving: “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked” (Luke 12:48).

Another illustration that Jesus used was fruitfulness. It was of great concern to Him that God’s children be fruitful. He knew that Christians who used their abilities and resources for God would be fruitful and that this would bring glory to God. Jesus said, “‘This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples’” (John 15:8).

Fruitfulness comes from good stewardship. It is taking advantage of the special things God gives us. Being fruitful means using God’s gifts for the good of others and for His glory. The apostle Peter urges us to be good managers or stewards:

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:10–11)

The principle of stewardship in the life of the Christian is to be aware that God has given all things to be used wisely. Therefore, we must use all of God's gifts to be fruitful and responsible managers.

Application

5 To which of the following areas can you apply the biblical principle of stewardship? Circle the letters of the appropriate answers.

- a)** What you do with your spare time
- b)** How you perform your job each day
- c)** What color of clothes you wear
- d)** How you spend the money you earn
- e)** What and how you study

6 Think again about the decision you made in question 2. Was this something to which the principle of stewardship could apply? If not, can you think of a recent decision to which it could apply? Do you think you decided wisely?

The Principle of Service

Goal 4. Show how the biblical principle of service affects the Christian's lifestyle.

Stewards are servants whose job is to manage what their master trusts them with. Servants are employed to follow orders, so they must know who gives the orders: they must know their lord.

The Bible teaches that people have many kinds of masters. Humans are slaves to sin (Romans 6:20), to their fleshly desires (Ephesians 2:3; Romans 16:18), and to the love of money (Matthew 6:24). But the child of God must have only one Lord and cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). Our whole life must be given to the service of God.

This is a choice Christians must make, not once, but every day. Perhaps you remember the story of Joshua. He led the people of Israel into the Promised Land. With God's help, he drove out many nations. When Joshua was old he called his people together. He wanted to be sure they continued to serve God. He knew how easy it was for them to worship false gods, and reminded them about the goodness of God. Then Joshua challenged them:

Fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped . . . if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, . . . But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD. (Joshua 24:14–15)

Joshua made his decision known: he would serve God until the day he died. He was a leader, but he was also a servant.



This was also the attitude of our Lord Jesus. Though He had the nature of God, He humbled himself because He loved us and wanted to save us. Jesus took the nature of a servant and became a man (Philippians 2:7). “He humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!” (Philippians 2:8).

Jesus was a servant of God. He also served the people He came to save. In His life, He helped and healed and delivered. In His death, He set humankind free from sin and hell. Jesus

expected the same spirit of service in His disciples. One day the mother of two of the disciples asked Jesus to give her two sons lofty places in His kingdom. Jesus replied that it was only unbelievers who wanted to have power and give orders. Then He gave the disciples this principle of service:

“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
(Matthew 20:26–28)

The biblical principle of service is the opposite of selfishness. Service involves humility and willingness to honor God and people. Listen to the apostle Paul’s instructions:

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. (Romans 12:10–11)

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Ephesians 5:21)

Serve one another in love. (Galatians 5:13)

Applying the principle of service is difficult, but we have help from God’s Holy Spirit. Through Him we are able to serve God and other people. Through Him we can obey, work, and even suffer for Christ’s sake. In writing to men who were slaves, Paul offers encouragement to serve:

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. (Colossians 3:23–24)

Application

7 Circle the letters of the actions below that illustrate service. Rewrite the ones which are not circled so that they will show the principle of service. Your answers may not have the exact words as ours, but the idea should be the same.

- a) Taking a meal to someone who is sick
 - b) Being too busy to help repair a friend's house
 - c) Doing just enough work not to get dismissed
 - d) Offering to help the pastor call on new Christians
 - e) Insisting on being in charge at work
 - f) Doing any job in the family that needs to be done
 - g) Working even if no one gives you credit for the job
-

C. APPLYING BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

Goal 5. Show the practical nature of the principles studied.

Stewardship and service are only two of the many principles in the Bible. But notice that the law of love suggests many principles that we do not have time to study here: forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32), peace (1 Thessalonians 5:13), and joy (1 Thessalonians 5:16).

These principles are difficult to practice if you rely on your own strength. But you are not alone; you have the Holy Spirit of God to strengthen you. Remember Paul's words:

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." (Romans 8:14–15)

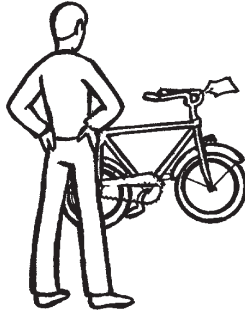
Through the power of God's Spirit, you can apply God's principles to your daily problems. Making right decisions glorifies God and makes you a victorious Christian. This is

God's will and command for you. Take John's words as an encouragement:

This is love for God: to obey his commands.
 And his commands are not burdensome, for
 everyone born of God overcomes the world.
 This is the victory that has overcome the world,
 even our faith. (1 John 5:3–4)

You can overcome your problems. No problem needs to be too hard for you to face. You are able to have victory through the love and power of God (Romans 8:37–39). God will give you wisdom to understand and apply His guidelines for action, using the principles in His Word. Each person must look at these principles and apply them: "Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:21–22).

Again, let us use the idea of the new bicycle and the principle of stewardship. (We assume that riding a bicycle is possible where you live and that you know how to ride.)



1. Do you have the money to pay for it? Or, do you sincerely believe that God will provide the money? (Stewardship involves faith that God will provide, as well as the responsible handling of finances.) Is this the best use for your money at this time? If you answered "yes," then maybe you may buy it.

2. If you use your money for this bicycle, will you be robbing God or others for whom you are responsible? If your answer is "no," then maybe you may buy it. Remember that not

taking care of your family is the same as denying the faith (See 1 Timothy 5:8.).

3. Do you need a bicycle? Can you find a good used bicycle for less money? With another bicycle, are you sure there would not be repairs which cost time and money? If your answer to the first question is “yes” and a secondhand bicycle is not a possible or wise choice, then maybe you may buy it.

4. Do you spend much time walking or repairing an old bicycle? Could your time be better spent if you had the convenience of a new bicycle? If yes, then maybe you may buy it.

5. After prayer (and answering all these questions), are you convinced that God approves of your buying this new bicycle? If so, then you should buy it.

Notice we have stressed the positive side. God wants you to have the things that are best for you. Remember the command and promise of Jesus about our physical needs:

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness,
and all these things will be given to you as well.
(Matthew 6:33)

The condition is that we should be concerned with the things of God. Too often the desire or the possession of earthly goods leads to a lack of love for spiritual things. People with riches forget to depend on God’s help. That was why God gave warnings to the people of Israel when they entered the Promised Land. If you have a Bible, read about this in Deuteronomy 8:11–20.

This leads us to think about the principle we studied—service. We can apply this principle to the bicycle also.

1. Do you want a new bicycle in order to serve God better? Will it help you expand your work for Him? Are you sure it will not take time and energy away from God’s work? “Yes” to these questions means that maybe you may buy it.

2. Are you sure that your desire for a new bicycle is not selfish? Are you sure it is not because you want praise or prestige or position? If the answer is still “yes,” then maybe you may buy it.

3. Will having this new bicycle help you serve your family and church better? Are you sure it will not cause any division or quarreling? Will your family approve of your actions? “Yes” again? Then maybe you may buy it.

4. After prayer (and answering all these questions) are you convinced that it is God’s will that you, His servant, have this bicycle? If so, then you should buy it.

Applying principles may sound like hard work, and sometimes it is. But when you arrive at a conclusion, you will have peace. You will know that you have followed the standards God has given in His Word.

Application

8 Smoking cigarettes is not mentioned in the Bible, but most Christians do not smoke. Can you think of some reasons why this is true?

- a)** Apply the principle of stewardship to this question and write your answer.
- b)** Now apply the principle of service and answer the question again.



Check Your Answers

- 5** Statements **a)**, **b)**, **d)**, and **e)** are correct.
- 1** **b)** reason you have for needing it and then pray before making your decision.
- 6** Your answer
- 2** Your answer
- 7** Statements **a)**, **d)**, **f)**, and **g)** show the principle of service. Statements **b)**, **c)**, and **e)** should read something like this:
b) Being willing to help repair a friend's house
c) Doing your best at work
e) Taking whatever job and authority is given you
- 3** **a)** studying your Bible.
- 8** Your answer may not be the same as ours, but you should have at least several of the same ideas:
- a)** Stewardship
- 1.** This is not the best use of money.
 - 2.** This is not a good way to use the body God has made. (Smoking is known to cause disease and to shorten life.)
 - 3.** This is an activity that will continue to demand money. (Smoking is habit-forming.)
- b)** Service
- 1.** You may influence someone else to smoke. This would not help them.
 - 2.** Since smoking is habit-forming, you will become a slave (servant) to it, and not to God.
- 4** Your answer

LESSON 6 God Wants You to Care for Yourself

A car is a complicated piece of machinery. We understand more or less how it works—the motor, transmission, steering, for example. We can wash, polish it, and even change a flat tire. But we may have never learned much about the mechanics of a car. What would we do if we had to make a major repair on our car? We would get the maker’s repair manual. The manual explains how the car was put together and tells us what to do to make the car run properly. Sometimes the instructions might seem strange, but we can trust the advice of the auto maker. After all, the maker who designed and built the car ought to know what is best for it.

Human beings are much more complicated than cars. But the One who created all people understands us. He has given instructions and advice on how to live. Sometimes people think that the Creator is unfair or strange in what He says. They find His instructions unreasonable and old-fashioned. Yet is He not the One who ought to know what is best?

As Christians, we have confidence that God knows what is good for us. We are also sure that, in all the ups and downs of life, He wants the very best for us. His rules and principles are for our benefit as we grow into the image of God.

The Plan

- A. Four Ways God Expects You to Grow
- B. Biblical Guidelines for Growth

The Goals

1. Outline ways God expects you to grow.
2. Identify what helps or prevents the development of a healthy body.
3. Describe ways Christians can develop their minds and talents.
4. List Scriptural methods by which spiritual growth is possible.
5. Explain the importance of behaving wisely and respectfully towards non-Christians.

A. FOUR WAYS GOD EXPECTS YOU TO GROW

Goal 1. Outline ways God expects you to grow.

The Bible tells us little about the youth and young adulthood of Jesus. Yet that period is covered by these significant words: “Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52).

The example of Jesus is important. He became mature by paying attention to four major areas of His life: by exercise and work He grew physically strong (body); by study and thought He cultivated His mind (wisdom); by prayer and studying God’s words He was spiritually alert (favor with God); by showing love and concern He became socially and emotionally acceptable (favor with people).

Had Jesus neglected His physical development, He may not have been able to walk the roads of Palestine or stand the pain at Calvary. If He had not shown interest in others, He would not have been the friend of sinners or the close companion of His disciples. If He had not become intellectually capable, He

would not have amazed people with His understanding. Even His enemies knew that nobody ever talked like He did (John 7:46). If Jesus had neglected communion with His heavenly Father, He would not have known God's perfect word and will. But Jesus did all these things. He was the perfect man. He was whole in all things. He was holy.



The word holiness comes from the word for wholeness or health. Jesus was a healthy, whole, and holy man, and Paul urges us to become like Him.

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11–13, 15)

Application

1 In your notebook write the passage from Ephesians 4 quoted above. Learn it and pray for God's help in making it true in your life.

2 Ask God to show you how you are growing as a Christian. Then write in your notebook two short lists: one for the areas in which you see progress; the other, for things where you have not changed much since becoming a Christian. Pray daily, using these lists, thanking God each time for ways you are becoming more like Jesus.

B. BIBLICAL GUIDELINES FOR GROWTH

Guidelines for Your Body

Goal 2. Identify what helps or prevents the development of a healthy body.

God gave us a marvelous body. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. It is part of the body of Christ, so Paul urges, “Therefore honor God with your body” (1 Corinthians 6:20). We honor God by caring for our bodies. Here are the principles of stewardship and service again. As the apostle Paul said earlier, “The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body” (1 Corinthians 6:13).

God has created our body with needs. But He has provided for those needs. For example, marriage is God’s provision for the sexual needs of the male and female. Paul advises those whom God has not called to a single life to marry and to satisfy their partner’s sexual needs.

Sexual immorality and perversion are equally displeasing to God. They are sins against our body (1 Corinthians 6:18), but God wants our bodies to be holy and useful for His service.

The same principle of respect for our body applies to eating and drinking. The Lord Jesus fasted and prayed, but He also enjoyed good meals with His friends (though His enemies condemned Him for it). Romans 14 tells us that there is no special goodness in eating or not eating particular foods. “The

kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17).

With these important guidelines in mind, mature Christians choose what to eat and drink. They are mindful that excess is sin, for it abuses the body. That is why Paul warned against drunkenness and over-eating: “Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18).

We glorify God by keeping our bodies under control. A body out of control through abuse of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, marijuana, or even food is displeasing to God. Respect for our body as God’s temple is shown in the fruit of the Spirit called self-control. By the Holy Spirit’s help, we can determine to keep our bodies holy and clean for God’s Spirit to live in.

Jesus was always busy about His Father’s work. In John 5:17, He said, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.” Physical work is good for the human body. Perhaps your job does not allow you to be physically active. Then you must take time to exercise your body. “Physical training is of some value” (1 Timothy 4:8) wrote Paul, who sometimes used athletes and boxers as examples of discipline. Running, walking, bicycling, working in a garden, or any other form of physical exercise is good, especially for the person whose job is mostly at a desk.

But while working and exercising are important, God calls us to rest. He even made rest a part of His creation. The seventh day is the day of rest and re-creation. Pastors and Christian workers also need to be reminded that God requires a day of rest. Jesus himself needed quiet and relaxation. And so did His disciples. Once, there were so many people coming to Jesus that the disciples did not even have time to eat. Jesus said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest” (Mark 6:31).

Service to Jesus brings times of refreshing. Jesus calls to all His workers:


Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:28–29)

Application

3 Circle the letter before each statement below that tells you how to have a strong and healthy body.

- a) Do hard physical work.
- b) Keep God’s laws on sexual morality.
- c) Stay in bed all day.
- d) Eat as often and as much as you can.
- e) Have times of exercise and rest.
- f) Use your wages to get drunk.
- g) Eat regularly and wisely.

4 Write this important scriptural direction in your notebook. Learn it and find ways each day to apply it to your life: “You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body” (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).



Guidelines for Your Mind

Goal 3. Describe ways Christians can develop their mind and talents.

It is obvious that all work and service to God is not physical. We serve God and people by using our minds, also. Imagine that you had a child with a lazy mind. He was of normal intelligence, but did not want to learn. Instead of going to school, he did nothing. Would you be happy with that child? Of course not! If the child were mentally ill, then you would be more patient. But if the child was willfully ignorant and inactive, then you would be right to be upset.

Some children of God are mentally lazy. Like the steward who did not use his money, they do nothing with the riches God has given them. They never learn to hear God's voice; never speak to Him in prayer; never study God's Word for themselves; and they believe everything anybody tells them (even wrong teaching about God).

Do you know people like that? If so, you need to help them. You are to build them up in the faith (Romans 15:2). Teach them these lessons on how a Christian grows in wisdom:



1. Help them learn to pray. It is not great words that matter, but needs and thanks simply shared with God our Father (See Philippians 4:6.).
2. Help them with Bible study. First they need to gain knowledge of God's ways—the facts about Jesus and His kingdom. Then they need to know how to apply the knowledge, for this is wisdom.

By studying and practicing God's ways, you will grow wiser. The psalmist asked how to be happy and have a pure life. He answered himself, saying that it was in studying the ways of the Lord.

I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word. (Psalm 119:15–16)

The psalmist was a poet and a thinker. He was able to put God-inspired thoughts into beautiful language. He had a gift from God for using words. He had worked at developing that gift. He understood the art of making poems that his own people would love.

That is one aspect of the creative side of the human mind. God is creative, and He has made us creative like Him. When Moses was making the sacred tent in the wilderness, God gave him skilled craftsmen and artists. About one of them the Bible says,

“See, the LORD has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts.”
(Exodus 35:31)

Ability to tell stories, speak well, create poems, sing, paint pictures, make designs, sculpt wood or stone, write and act out plays, explain Scripture simply and correctly, see work that needs to be done and know how to do it—these are gifts of God’s Spirit. We are given such gifts to use and develop for God’s glory and the good of the church.

What gifts do you have? Do you know the songs and poems of your people? Study more and ask God’s help to create good songs and poems. Can you play a musical instrument? Practice hard. Good playing glorifies God. Perhaps it is time you studied how to create new music in your culture. The church in your country needs songs that speak to your people in the music and poetry they understand. Remember what Peter said about stewardship:

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. (1 Peter 4:10)

Application

5 Circle the letter before the ways you can develop your mind and wisdom.

- a) Always believe everything people tell you.
- b) Study the Word of God.
- c) Read good books.
- d) Never ask questions.
- e) Take Bible courses.
- f) Listen to older Christians.
- g) Refuse to discuss what you believe.

6 Set aside a special time of prayer each day this week to think and pray about the special gift or gifts you have received from God. Write in your notebook any gifts you think you have, and then write briefly how you are going to use them for the good of others.



Guidelines for Your Spirit

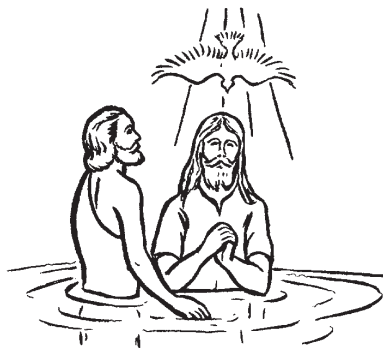
Goal 4. List Scriptural methods by which spiritual growth is possible.

When Jesus was a child, “the grace of God was upon him” (Luke 2:40). God was pleased with Him as He grew to manhood. At His baptism the voice from heaven said, ““You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased”” (Luke 3:22). Not only had Jesus grown in human wisdom and strength, but He had also grown in understanding God’s ways. He knew that He was God’s Son; He had learned what God wanted Him to do and He was ready in all things to do what God told Him. This was pleasing to God.

When His enemies questioned who He was, Jesus told them that they would find out one day. He added,

“When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just

what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.” (John 8:28–29)



Jesus said and did nothing that did not come from God’s command to Him. He was always sure of God’s presence and approval in each word or action. He learned and acted on God’s will even when that was difficult. Remember His prayer in Gethsemane: “‘My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will’” (Matthew 26:39).

Growing in God’s favor comes from learning to say that prayer sincerely. It is finding out God’s ways (those rules and principles) for all His children and putting them into practice. It is discovering God’s special will for your life and acting on it.

In Lesson 3, you studied four methods God uses to help us know what He wants us to become. Do you remember them? They are: a purified conscience, the Word of God, the examples of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit’s guidance. All these work together as we seek God’s will out of our desire to please Him.

The Jews of Berea, to whom Paul preached about Jesus, are a good example to us.

The Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was

true. Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men. (Acts 17:11–12)

Notice how these sincere people handled the Scriptures:

1. Thoughtfully (“examined”)
2. Continually (“every day”)
3. Purposefully (“to see”)
4. Willingly (“believed”)

For spiritual growth, a Christian too must study God’s Word daily, seek God’s will, and prepare to put it into action.

In addition to personal Bible study, the Christian has another gift of God: pastors and teachers. These leaders, from their study and experience, share with other believers the insights given them in God’s Word. They bring God’s message to build up His people. (See Ephesians 4:11–16.)

Those who became Christians on the day of Pentecost learned that they needed instruction from those older in the faith. So “they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42).

These Christians learned from the apostles who had been taught by Jesus and were filled with the Holy Spirit. Christians today need teachers and pastors who know God’s Word and are Spirit-filled. The Bible teaches that we are to obey and submit to such leaders (Hebrews 13:17) and be grateful for their teaching (Galatians 6:6).

But it is not just the pastors who teach in a local church. Because the church is the body of believers, encouragement and witness should come from all the members. By our lives and words, we can teach each other. The apostle Paul gives us this exhortation:

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3:16)

When Christians come together, they can share knowledge about God's ways. A striking biblical example of this concerns the gifted preacher Apollos. Though he knew the Scriptures and the facts about Jesus, it seems that he was not filled with the Spirit. So Aquila and Priscilla "invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately" (Acts 18:26). The ministry of Apollos was transformed by this act of sharing.

It is important to see, too, the humility of Apollos. He had a teachable spirit. He accepted instruction from others, though he was an eloquent preacher. We will not learn from God's Word nor from others if we resist their teaching. We must be prepared to obey.

Remember the illustration of the repair manual with which this lesson began? How foolish if I read what it said and then refused to obey! Just so with God's Word. To please God and to grow in his favor, you have to do everything His way, just as our Lord Jesus did. However much we have grown by living for God, the Bible tells us there is still room for growth:

We instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. (1 Thessalonians 4:1)

Application

7 Circle the letter which corresponds with every activity that helps the Christian grow in favor with God.

- a)** Praying for the Spirit's guidance
- b)** Studying the Scriptures for yourself
- c)** Listening to complaining
- d)** Reading the Bible while thinking about something else
- e)** Learning from other Christians' experience
- f)** Criticizing God's rules and principles
- g)** Reading God's Word daily
- h)** Paying attention to good teaching

8 If you do not already study the Bible regularly and systematically, begin right away. Write in your notebook a time each day you will give some minutes to prayerful reading. Write down the books you intend to read first. Many Christians are helped by reading and thinking about short passages from the New Testament, the Psalms, and the Old Testament every day. Ask a matured Christian or a pastor for advice.

Guidelines for Your Social Relationships

Goal 5. Explain the importance of behaving wisely and respectfully towards non-Christians.

Jesus was a man people liked. Mothers brought their children for Him to place His hands on them (Mark 10:13), and men left their homes and jobs to follow Him during His ministry. Though He had many enemies, it was not because He was harsh, proud, or wicked. It was because they “rejected God’s purpose for themselves” (Luke 7:30) and despised Him as “““a friend of tax collectors and sinners””” (Luke 7:34).

The first Christians were like their Master. They cared about the sick and poor. They ate together “with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people” (Acts 2:46–47).

Can we live in such a way that we please both men and God? The apostle Paul seems to make these opposites:



Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ. (Galatians 1:10)

Paul was talking about not adapting his teaching—the unchanging gospel of Christ—to the desires of sinful men. Similarly, we cannot change our beliefs or our righteous behavior to please other people. We must serve God first. It is for God’s sake that we obey human laws, as the apostle Peter tells us. For God wants us to silence the ignorant talk of foolish people by the good things we do (1 Peter 2:15).

We are witnesses to other people by our good deeds. Paul was happy to commend the Christians of Thessalonica for their brotherly love. He encourages them to do even more:

Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody. (1 Thessalonians 4:11–12)

We grow in favor with others as we work quietly and well, for then we are neither a problem nor a burden. Moreover, we are to show concern by our behavior towards other people. Paul wants Christians to be wise in their conduct towards those who are not believers, and to always be pleasant and interesting in discussions (Colossians 4:5–6). He instructs Titus to remind his people to be submissive and ready to do good:

Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men. (Titus 3:1–2)

Paul contrasts our lives now with our lives before we became God’s children: “We lived in malice and envy, being hated and

hating one another” (Titus 3:3). As we show our love to others by our respect and gentleness, we will not always win them for Christ. But many will recognize our concern and not find in our behavior an excuse to criticize the gospel. The proof of our good actions is not whether all people say good things about us now, but whether they must recognize our goodness before God himself.



Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. (1 Peter 2:12)

Application

9 Write 1 Thessalonians 4:11–12 in your notebook and memorize it. Pray about the specific ways you can apply this verse to your own life.

10 List several reasons why it is important to use wisdom and respect with the people around you who are not Christians.

Check Your Answers

6 Your answer

1 Your answer

7 Phrases **a)**, **b)**, **e)**, **g)**, and **h)** are correct.

2 Your answer

8 Your answer

3 Phrases **a)**, **b)**, **e)**, and **g)** are correct.

9 Your answer

4 Your answer

10 Your answers. Some examples may be:

To be a good witness

To grow in favor with people because of love

To show concern by our behavior

5 Phrases **b)**, **c)**, **e)**, and **f)** are correct.

LESSON 7 God Wants You to Care for the Church

The church is the body of Christ with Jesus himself as the head. We Christians are members or parts of the body. The apostle Paul develops this idea in 1 Corinthians 12. He shows how important each part is to the whole, how each part is concerned for the others, and how all parts suffer or are content together.

Another picture of the church is the family. Members of a family need each other and take care of each other. They work and play together and mourn and rejoice together. They share food, beds, money, problems, even sicknesses. Sometimes, unfortunately, they fight among themselves, although deep down, they really love each other. Most often they are united in love, ready to defend each other against any opposition.

The law of love is of greatest importance in the family of God. In this lesson, we will see how the law of love is applied through the principles of service and stewardship in the church.

The Plan

- A. Unity in the Family of God
- B. Service in the Family of God
- C. Stewardship in the Family of God

The Goals

1. Explain the importance of unity in the family of God.
2. Describe how the law of love can be made practical through service.
3. Identify ways to be a wise steward of your possessions and gifts.

A. UNITY IN THE FAMILY OF GOD

Goal 1. Explain the importance of unity in the family of God.

Before Jesus gave himself on the Cross, He prayed for those who would believe and become part of His church. His prayer was simple, but profound: “I pray . . . that all of them may be one” (John 17:20–21).

Unity is vital to the spiritual and physical development. Sometimes there is disunity in a person’s body. For instance, some cells reject the control of the rest of the body; they grow rapidly and end up killing the person. In a church, disunity can also kill.

This concerned Paul about the church in Corinth. The Corinthians did not recognize the singleness of Christ’s body and were in danger of destroying it. What they needed was love to heal their divisions (1 Corinthians 13).

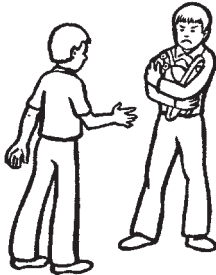
The book of James deals with another problem of disunity: prejudice. James was upset that believers were being treated

differently according to how they looked (James 2:9). He found this kind of distinction evil, foolish, and against the law of love.

If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. (James 2:8–9)

Christians must not discriminate against people based on riches, education, race, or any other factor. Indeed, in God’s family worldly principles are rejected. Paul said that the man who thought he was “wise by the standards of this age, . . . should become a ‘fool’ so that he may become wise” (1 Corinthians 3:18). Earlier, Jesus told His quarreling disciples, “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant” (Matthew 20:26). He also said, “Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” (Matthew 10:39).

Since we enter God’s family by grace, there is no place for boasting (Ephesians 2:9). There is sadness when a child wants everything for himself and will not share or work with the others. The Father does not tolerate selfishness or laziness. Boasting, selfishness, laziness—these are worldly principles. But in the church, the principles of humble service and loving stewardship should be put into action, so that there might be unity.



If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his

love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:1–4)

B. SERVICE IN THE FAMILY OF GOD

Goal 2. Describe how the law of love can be made practical through service.

As members of Christ's body, we are instructed to live, work, and worship in harmony. Since we are not yet perfect, there are sometimes problems in the church. Disunity creeps in all too easily. The Bible does not hide how difficult it is to leave behind the world's standards.

Frequently, believers are urged to love each other, not in theory but in practice. Paul urges the believers in Rome,

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. (Romans 12:9–10)

Respect is one way to show love. Too often young people, who may have more schooling, fail to respect older Christians. This is wrong and foolish (see 1 Timothy 5:1). On the other hand, Paul encouraged Timothy to expect respect from older people, though he was young (1 Timothy 4:12). Respect is an attitude. Love must express itself also in action: doing good to our Christian brothers.

Let us not become weary in doing good, . . .
as we have opportunity, let us do good to all

people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. (Galatians 6:9–10)

How can we do good? First we must keep at heart the interests of our brothers and sisters, not just our own interests (1 Corinthians 10:24). This is particularly necessary when they are new or weak Christians. We must avoid doing things to harm their faith. We must help them even when it is inconvenient or displeasing to us.

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. (Romans 15:1–2)

Paul goes on to tell us in this passage that dealing with other people requires endurance (verse 5) and acceptance or tolerance (verse 7), which Christ showed in His life of service. To do good we must also be aware of people's needs.

Is someone in the church sick, out of work, or in need of food? It is our responsibility to notice and, if we can, help.

Keep on loving one another as Christian brothers. Remember to welcome strangers in your homes. There were some who did that and welcomed angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them. Remember those who are suffering, as though you were suffering as they are. (Hebrews 13:1–3)



Here the general commandment to love is followed by exact directions. Remember to be hospitable; remember to visit the prisoners; remember to help the suffering. Jesus said that at the final judgment people will be judged by whether they did such kindness or not.

Many people, busy with religious activities, sometimes forget that faith must be put into practice. This is the message of James, when he describes genuine religion: “To look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world” (James 1:27).

Loving unity and practical compassion marked the first believers. When they knew of a need, they acted, just as Jesus always did, from compassion and love. This should be our goal as well.


All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. (Acts 4:32)

Application

1 Circle the letter before each TRUE statement that shows an expression of service to the body of Christ.

- a)** Criticize the pastor for his lack of love
- b)** Cultivate the garden of a sick widow
- c)** Help a new Christian learn to read a portion of the Bible
- d)** Help the family of a Christian who is in prison for his faith
- e)** Laugh at a brother with ragged clothes
- f)** Invite a church visitor to your house
- g)** Help a rich Christian in hope of getting a job from him

2 In your notebook list five people in your Christian family whom you can help, and list your plan for helping each one.

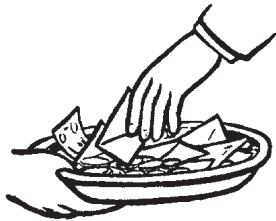


C. STEWARDSHIP IN THE FAMILY OF GOD

Goal 3. Identify ways to be a wise steward of your possessions and gifts.

The first believers, who showed their love and unity by sharing their possessions, were serving each other. They were using their belongings in a way that showed responsible stewardship. This sharing of wealth is found throughout the New Testament. When the Christians at Antioch knew there was to be a famine, they “decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea” (Acts 11:29). Perhaps Paul remembered that incident when he wrote to the church at Rome: “Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality” (Romans 12:13).

Hospitality is both service and stewardship. It helps others, and it is the wise and proper use of the homes that God has allowed us to have. Remember what was said about stewardship in Lesson 5. All our possessions are loaned to us to be used rightly, for the good of others and for God’s glory. That includes giving for the work of the gospel, both locally and in missionary activity. The apostle John commended his friend Gaius for his faithful giving to Christian workers, who were even strangers to him. John gave a good reason for sharing this way: “We ought therefore to show hospitality to such men so that we may work together for the truth” (3 John 8).



By supporting those who work for God, we are taking part in the work they do. Besides, such giving is “a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God” (Philippians 4:18).

We can also be involved in the ministry of the church in a personal way. Perhaps you already give time and energy to spreading the gospel in your area and helping the believers in your church. That is wonderful! God desires us to do our best to work for Him.

But perhaps you need some guidance on how you may best serve the church and be a wise steward of God's gifts to you. This was the case in the Corinthian church in regard to spiritual gifts. These believers were eager, but without knowledge. They thought everyone should show the same spiritual ability or gift. Paul reminded them that they were the body of Christ, and that bodies have different parts for different functions. He listed several gifts of the Spirit, and urged the Corinthians to use spiritual gifts in love (1 Corinthians 14:1, 4).

The purpose of all God's gifts is to build up the church by helping Christians become more like Jesus (1 Corinthians 14:12). Some of these gifts are for use in church services, to worship God and proclaim His message, yet they are always to build up the church (1 Corinthians 14:26). Others are less noticeable, but just as necessary: serving, teaching, sharing, organizing, showing kindness (Romans 12:6–8).

Now, we Christians are parts of Christ's body and each part has a different job (Romans 12:4–5). "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith" (Romans 12:6).

As stewards of God's gracious gifts, we have to do three things. First, we must search our lives, pray to God, and ask mature Christians about the gifts we may have. Second, we must use and develop the gifts we know we have—for the building up of the church—while praying for other gifts and for love (1 Corinthians 12:31). Third, we must encourage other Christians to do the same. That way, we help them to be good stewards too, just as Barnabas helped Saul (later called the apostle Paul) to develop his great gift of teaching (see Acts 11:25–26).

Remember that it is the Lord Jesus himself who gives gifts to us, whether they are natural abilities or spiritual gifts. As Ephesians 4:7–16 teaches us, He gives them to prepare all of His people to serve Him better and to build up the whole church. To function correctly within the church then, and to be good stewards of His gifts, we must aim at becoming mature under His direction.


From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Ephesians 4:16)

Application

3 Circle the letter before each activity below which shows good stewardship toward the body of Christ.

- a)** Sharing a hymn God has given you
- b)** Bringing visiting Christians into your home
- c)** Being ready for God to use you to build up the church
- d)** Trying to be the only one to pray or speak in tongues in church
- e)** Supporting others' ministries by gifts and prayers
- f)** Allowing others to share their insights into Scripture

4 Pray, either alone or with a mature Christian, about what gifts God has given you. In your notebook, write at least one gift you think you have received and ways in which you can help the body by using it. You may want to ask your pastor or another Christian to give you guidance about when and how you can best develop your gift.



Check Your Answers

- 2** Your answer
- 3** Phrases **a), b), c), e),** and **f)** show good stewardship.
- 1** Phrases **b), c), d),** and **f)** are true.
- 4** Your answer

LESSON 8 God Sent You to Care for the World

In the region of Africa where we lived many years ago, salt was a vital commodity and was sufficient to cancel all debts. This custom came from a time when salt was hard to find. Today, salt remains an important part of life. It is used to preserve and flavor foods, clean wounds, heal sore throats, and aid in various other ways.

Jesus said, “Salt is good” (Luke 14:34) and that those who believed in Him were “salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13). Therefore, He warned His disciples against losing their saltiness.

What does this illustration mean? Jesus was saying that His people had to be different. Just as people recognize salt by its taste, so everyone should know Christians by their special way of living and by their positive influence on society.

The world needs our saltiness, our light, and our message. We must be, do, and say all that God commands. Our purpose in life is to represent the grace and justice of God to the world, so that the world will know and be saved.

The Plan

- A. Salt Preserves: Showing the Love of God
- B. Salt Purifies: Showing the Righteousness of God
- C. Salt Flavors: Spreading the Message of God

The Goals

- 1. Demonstrate specific ways to show the love of God to your neighbors.
- 2. Identify ways you can reflect God's righteousness in your community.
- 3. Explain how God wants to use you to tell others about Him.

A. SALT PRESERVES: SHOWING THE LOVE OF GOD

Goal 1. Demonstrate specific ways to show the love of God to your neighbors.

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:7–8)

The first evidence of being God's child is having love. Real Christian love, which is not just talk but action (1 John 3:18), has great impact. Jesus knew this when He commanded His disciples to love one another, just as He loved them: "If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples" (John 13:35).

We know that love is necessary to preserve life, yet our world is deprived of real love. Often, when people see genuine concern, they are surprised. One church leader observed that if Christians today loved as the Bible commands, people would be

crowding around the doors of our churches. A Christian writer has stated that the church should be a life-saving station, which provides the love that the world needs. Indeed, Jesus implied that other people would be convinced by the love they saw between Christians who were united in love. He prayed to the Father that all believers be one, just as He and His Father are one. Jesus prayed, “May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:21).

The love that God has put in our hearts is not just for other Christians. God loves the entire world, and we are called to love the people of the world, too. Our love is salt for them. Paul encourages believers who were known for their brotherly love:



May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. (1 Thessalonians 3:12)

The great commandments of God are for us to love God and to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus teaches that the persons we are to love may be anyone we meet and that our love must be in deed.

So how can we express love to our neighbors? We need to care and share. We do not isolate ourselves, but rather relate honestly and graciously as witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ. For example, we comfort our neighbors in their distress, not criticize or abandon them. The apostle Paul writes,

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. (2 Corinthians 1:3–4)

Because we are forgiven sinners, we should not set ourselves apart from others for reasons of prejudice or self-righteousness. Jesus was called the friend of sinners. On visiting Zacchaeus, He did not condemn him, but soon Zacchaeus was a changed man—because Jesus made himself available to him. John writes,

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:17)

Application

- 1** Write 1 Thessalonians 3:12 in your notebook and memorize it. Make this a daily prayer for yourself.
- 2** After praying the prayer above, look in your community. Does someone need friendship, food, clothes, or some other kind of help? Make a list of these people and see what you can do to be the salt in their situation.



B. SALT PURIFIES: SHOWING THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

Goal 2. Identify ways you can reflect God's righteousness in your community.

The people of the world do not understand the righteousness of God. Therefore, the children of God are in the world to continue the work of Jesus and to make God's goodness known. Thus, we bring a purifying influence into our societies.

We saw earlier that most people's attitudes and actions result from motives of selfishness, pride, laziness, greed, or pleasure. Those were our motives too, before Christ saved us. Now we are to have better motives and more holy actions. This will mean changing our sinful behaviors. Paul writes to the believers in Ephesus,

He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. (Ephesians 4:28–29)

We must demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23). Our conduct should be recognizably different from that of other people (1 Peter 2:12). Moreover we should try to see that honesty, hard work, and justice prevail in our community. When Jesus saw that evil merchants were robbing the worshippers in the temple, he was angry and drove them out (Matthew 21:12–13). Jesus was concerned with what was fair and right; He hated hypocrisy and deceit. For this reason, He opposed the unfairness of the Pharisees. He called these apparently religious men “whitewashed tombs, . . . full of hypocrisy and wickedness” (Matthew 23:27–28).

God acts against cheaters and liars. He did not allow the deception of Ananias and Sapphira to go unpunished (Acts 5:1–11). They lied about how much of their money they were giving to God. But the Holy Spirit told Peter, and God struck them dead. Their lie was a mockery of His power and a dishonor to the church.

God is not slow to judge the enemies of Christ through the words of His servants. Think of Elymas the magician, who opposed Paul and Barnabas (see Acts 13:6–12). Elymas tried to stop the gospel with all kinds of evil, but God punished him with blindness.

While God does not always act directly as He did in those examples, He expects us to do what we can to correct wrong actions. In Scripture, God often corrected His people for their failure to maintain the rights of the poor in their community. Isaiah writes, “Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow” (Isaiah 1:17).

Again and again God spoke to His people about the same social problems which trouble all people. He gave clear instructions:

“These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts; do not plot evil against your neighbor, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this,” declares the LORD.
(Zechariah 8:16–17)

Christians must be examples of goodness. As you will remember from Lesson 2, we are to be holy as the Father is holy. So, we work steadfastly at bringing about justice in our communities. To learn more about how you can do this, inquire about the course *The Christian in His Community*.

Application

- 3** Circle the letter before each statement below that shows Christian action.
- a)** Told a shopkeeper he had given you too much change and returned it.
 - b)** Told your boss that you were late to work and therefore should not receive so much pay.
 - c)** Said that you were not the one who made a mistake when you did.
 - d)** Suggested to your neighbors that you all collect food and clothing to help a poor widow and then kept it.
 - e)** Found good things to say about a person nobody likes.

- 4 List some ways you can show your community that you care for them.

C. SALT FLAVORS: SPREADING THE MESSAGE OF GOD

Goal 3. Explain how God wants to use you to tell others about Him.

It is amazing to think that God needs us. Yet that is His plan. He has chosen people to tell the good news of Jesus Christ to the world. We who have become the children of God are the salt of the earth. Remember that salt not only preserves and purifies, but it also flavors. God’s purpose is that His salt—His children—should flavor the whole earth.

The apostle Paul says a similar thing about fragrance. Just as with salt, a little goes a long way. So when fragrance is released, it fills the room or space with sweet smell. Paul writes,

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. (2 Corinthians 2:14–15)

There are many lessons to be learned from this passage. Notice first that it is God’s plan to reach the world, not ours. As servants of God, we are commanded to tell others about Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Remember what Jesus said before He returned to heaven:

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

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19–20)

The order to go and make disciples—to teach them about Christ and about Christian ethics—is followed by a wonderful promise: “I am with you always.” This underlines the idea that we are not alone; we do not have to rely on our own power or wisdom. We have our faithful friend, the Holy Spirit, to help us. Acts 1:8 reminds us,

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”



As we are continually filled with the Spirit, we become sensitive to God’s leading. He uses us to speak to the people we meet. He gives us wisdom to know how best to speak to them, according to their understanding and need. We do not have to be nervous or anxious, for it is the work of the Holy Spirit to convince people that they need Jesus as Savior (John 16:8–11).

Our responsibility simply is to be used by God as witnesses. A witness is a person who knows something by personal experience and tells about it. Jesus’ disciples were witnesses to the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead (Acts 3:15). Everywhere they went, they told people that they had seen Jesus alive again. Then they explained what Jesus’ resurrection meant: He was indeed the Son of God; He had died for humanity’s sins;

if people believed in Jesus, their sins would be forgiven and they would become children of God.

Your just and loving actions are a witness to the world. But they are a silent witness. Salt is good for preserving and purifying, but if it has no taste, it is useless. Even our good lives are useless to God if people do not understand how we have become good. We have to tell people the message of the Gospel.

Peter and John healed a lame man at the gate of the temple (Acts 3). When the people saw what happened they were amazed. But they were not ignorant long about how the miracle had happened. Peter quickly explained that it was the power of Jesus and faith in His Name that made the man well (Acts 3:16). Peter pointed others to Jesus and urges us to do the same.

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.
Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. (1 Peter 3:15–16)

Notice that our witness must be wise, gentle, respectful, and without false superiority. If you have not already studied the course, *Personal Evangelism*, you should do so. It contains valuable lessons that will help you become an effective witness for Jesus Christ.

Finally, when you proclaim the gospel by your witness, there will be results. Paul tells us that our fragrance will be spread “among those who are being saved and those who are perishing” (2 Corinthians 2:15). This is to reassure you that you are not responsible for making people Christians. You cannot force them into God’s kingdom. You can only represent God as His ambassador. You can show and persuade. But it

is each individual's choice to accept or reject the message of reconciliation.

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:20–21)

Praise God! You are already His friend. You are sharing His righteousness and being used by God to spread His gospel. Your new life in Christ is being practiced in your attitudes and actions.

Application

5 Circle the letter before each TRUE statement which describes a good witness.

- a)** I do not have to tell people about Jesus; they can just see I am a Christian by my actions.
- b)** I need to have the Holy Spirit's help when witnessing.
- c)** I should keep on talking to a person about Jesus until he or she finally gives up.
- d)** I can tell people what Jesus has done for me and for other Christians I know.
- e)** Words about Jesus' life and the way I live as a Christian should not conflict.

6 Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you to someone to whom you can witness. Ask His guidance in how you can best share your Savior. Pray for this person for several days before talking to him or her. When the person accepts Jesus as Savior, encourage him or her to learn more by reading the Bible and by taking a course such as Your New Life.



Check Your Answers

- 3** Phrases **a)**, **b)**, and **c)** are Christian actions.
- 1** Your answer
- 4** Your answer may be different but some ways would be:
- Be a friend to your neighbor
 - Help the needy whenever you can
 - Show them respect and love
- 2** Your answer
- 5** Statements **b)**, **d)**, and **e)** are true.

CONGRATULATIONS

You have finished this course. We hope that it has been a great help to you! Remember to complete the second Unit Evaluation and return the answer sheet to your instructor.

.....
 (Please insert course title above)

UNIT ONE ANSWER SHEET

Please fill in the blanks below:

Name

Student Number
 (Leave blank if you don't know your number.)

Mailing Address

.....

Country

Directions

When you have completed your study of each unit, fill out the Unit Evaluation answer sheet for that unit. Read each question carefully. There is one best answer for each question. Blacken the space for the answer you have chosen. *Be sure the number beside the spaces on the answer sheet is the same as the number of the question you are answering.*

Example

- 1** To be born again means to
a) be young in age.
b) accept Jesus as Savior.
c) start a new year.

The correct answer is **b) accept Jesus as Savior**, so you would blacken space **b** like this:

1. (A) (C) (D)

Turn page over when you are ready to begin.

UNIT ONE ANSWER SHEET

Carefully blacken the correct space for each numbered item.

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------|----|-----------------|
| 1 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 11 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 2 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 12 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 3 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 13 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 4 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 14 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 5 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 15 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 6 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 16 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 7 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 17 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 8 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 18 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 9 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 19 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 10 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 20 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |

This is the end of the requirements for Unit One. For grading, return your Unit One Answer Sheet to your instructor or office in your area. Continue your study in Unit Two.

*For GU Office Use
Only*

Date

Score

UNIT ONE EVALUATION

- 1** A person who becomes a Christian is
- a)** given new physical life.
 - b)** made a child of God.
 - c)** perfected instantly.
- 2** A life of good deeds means
- a)** only doing acts of charity.
 - b)** doing what is good in all things.
 - c)** bragging about your talents.
- 3** God places Christians in the family of God so that they will
- a)** meet needs and have needs met.
 - b)** receive the status due them.
 - c)** learn how unimportant they are on their own.
- 4** When a person becomes a Christian, his responsibility regarding the world is to
- a)** sever all connection with it.
 - b)** monitor the lifestyle of others.
 - c)** tell everyone about God's family.
- 5** In order to be an ambassador of Christ, one must
- a)** be, feel, and act like Him.
 - b)** persuade others to change.
 - c)** travel a lot.
- 6** God's character is best equated with the term
- a)** power.
 - b)** man.
 - c)** personality.
- 7** What does reflecting the glory of God mean?
- a)** Seeing the sunshine on a lake
 - b)** Showing others God's attitudes and good deeds
 - c)** Watching to find God in someone else

8 God's love, which is depicted in the death of His Son Jesus for humanity's sins, is an illustration of

- a) pity.
- b) mercy.
- c) martyrdom.

9 To say that God is the standard of perfection

- a) is wrong because no one, including God, is perfect.
- b) means that all He says or does is true.
- c) means that He is righteous but unjust.

10 The Christian's conscience provides

- a) a spiritual sense of balance.
- b) perfect guidance.
- c) feelings of guilt about past sins.

11 The basis of living a new life in Jesus is

- a) practicing good deeds.
- b) using the Bible's instructions.
- c) watching the actions.

12 We should follow Jesus' example by

- a) doing good only to people whom we like.
- b) obeying perfectly every law in the Old Testament.
- c) having a humble and obedient attitude.

13 What did Paul mean when he said, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1)?

- a) He meant that others should watch his actions and attitudes to know how to be perfect.
- b) He meant that his actions and attitudes could be used as examples, because his own example was Jesus.
- c) He had never sinned since becoming a Christian so he should be the best possible example for other Christians to follow.

14 To lead us to a more Christlike life, the Holy Spirit must

- a) give us more liberty.
- b) perform miraculous signs.
- c) control our lives.

15 God desires that people should live

- a)** peacefully, harmoniously, and lawfully.
- b)** according to the laws only, because laws make good ethics.
- c)** as it seems right to them.

16 By ourselves none of us can fulfill all of the laws of God; therefore, we need to

- a)** obey only some, because our human nature is weak.
- b)** trust Christ to help us be obedient.
- c)** feel the guilt of our failures.

17 One of the Ten Commandments given to Moses is

- a)** hunger and thirst for righteousness.
- b)** rejoice when you are persecuted.
- c)** do not accuse anyone falsely.

18 The law of Christ is known as the

- a)** law of love.
- b)** Ten Commandments.
- c)** judgment to come.

19 The apostles' teaching to submit ourselves to one another is a practical application of

- a)** one of the Ten Commandments.
- b)** the law of Christ.
- c)** Jewish religious custom.

20 The law of love includes several principles, such as

- a)** hard work, perfection, and generosity.
- b)** laziness, unhappiness, and fighting.
- c)** forgiveness, peace, and joy.

End of requirements for Unit One. Please stop here and return your Answer Sheet for Unit One to your instructor. Continue your study in Unit Two.

.....
 (Please insert course title above)

UNIT TWO ANSWER SHEET

Please fill in the blanks below:

Name

Student Number
 (Leave blank if you don't know your number.)

Mailing Address

.....

.....

Country

Directions

When you have completed your study of each unit, fill out the Unit Evaluation answer sheet for that unit. Read each question carefully. There is one best answer for each question. Blacken the space for the answer you have chosen. *Be sure the number beside the spaces on the answer sheet is the same as the number of the question you are answering.*

Example

- 1 To be born again means to
a) be young in age.
b) accept Jesus as Savior.
c) start a new year.

The correct answer is **b) accept Jesus as Savior**, so you would blacken space **b** like this:

1. (A) ● (C) (D)

Turn page over when you are ready to begin.

UNIT TWO ANSWER SHEET

Carefully blacken the correct space for each numbered item.

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------|----|-----------------|
| 1 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 11 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 2 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 12 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |
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| 9 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 19 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 10 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 20 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |

This is the end of the requirements for Unit Two. For grading, return your Unit Two Answer Sheet to your instructor or office in your area.

*For GU Office Use
Only*

Date

Score

UNIT TWO EVALUATION

- 1** Unlike worldly principles, biblical principles for decision making focus on pleasing
- a)** God.
 - b)** other people.
 - c)** self.
- 2** Studying biblical examples of behavior that God does or does not want us to have is one way of finding
- a)** the measure of success in Bible times.
 - b)** heroes to worship and imitate.
 - c)** biblical principles for decision making.
- 3** In Matthew 25, the story of the three servants illustrates the principle that
- a)** some people have a more difficult life than others.
 - b)** what God has given to us should be used wisely.
 - c)** stories from the Bible are interesting.
- 4** In “taking the very nature of a servant” (Philippians 2:7), Jesus became
- a)** a servant to the people, not a powerful ruler.
 - b)** God’s helper in making the world.
 - c)** a man who served only rich people.
- 5** When we say that Jesus was whole in all things, the word whole is closely linked with
- a)** holiness.
 - b)** appearance.
 - c)** intelligence.
- 6** Respect for our body as God’s temple is shown by the fruit of the Spirit called
- a)** pride.
 - b)** self-control.
 - c)** selfishness.

7 Biblical guidelines suggest that as Christians develop their minds through Bible study they grow

- a) more literate.
- b) in wisdom.
- c) in influence.

8 Spiritual growth occurs as the Christian

- a) ignores the physical body.
- b) learns more about great heroes.
- c) listens and submits to the teaching of godly leaders.

9 If we want to grow in favor with God we must

- a) listen carefully to what other people tell us to do.
- b) read Bible verses and prayers in special ceremonies.
- c) pay attention to good teaching and daily reading of the Bible.

10 Acting with wisdom and respect toward non-Christians is a means of

- a) gaining popularity among them.
- b) showing our concern for them.
- c) expanding our circle of friends.

11 The importance of unity in the family of God is the focus of

- a) Jesus' prayer in John 17.
- b) the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6.
- c) the Beatitudes in Matthew 5.

12 A key source of disunity in the local church which the book of James deals with is

- a) membership lists.
- b) prejudice.
- c) church growth.

13 An example of the way members of God's family are expected to fulfill the law of love is to

- a) criticize the pastor for his or her lack of love.
- b) invite only important church visitors to their home.
- c) help the family of a Christian who is in prison for his or her faith.

- 14** An expression of service to the body of Christ would be
- a)** telling the problems of many members.
 - b)** telling new visitors in the church about their faults.
 - c)** inviting into your home someone who is lonely.
- 15** Being a good steward of one's spiritual gifts and natural abilities promotes
- a)** maturity.
 - b)** selfishness.
 - c)** jealousy.
- 16** Jesus' reference to believers as salt of the earth suggests that
- a)** Jesus enjoyed salty foods.
 - b)** we are to preserve His presence in our societies.
 - c)** believers must eat salt-free foods.
- 17** Christians show the love of God most effectively by
- a)** quoting many Scripture passages.
 - b)** meeting the needs of others.
 - c)** criticizing non-Christians.
- 18** When we see injustice in our community, we should
- a)** use any means to force the evildoers to change their ways.
 - b)** ignore it, because Christians are not to be of this world.
 - c)** do what we can, using biblical guidelines, to see that it is made right.
- 19** Showing the righteousness of God to the world requires
- a)** demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit.
 - b)** performing a menial task at church.
 - c)** attending a Bible school.
- 20** Spreading the message of God to the world involves
- a)** delivering finely worded testimonies.
 - b)** arguing until they change their minds.
 - c)** responding to the Holy Spirit's leading.

Please return your student report Answer Sheet for Unit Two to your instructor, and ask your instructor to recommend another course of study.

FINAL WORDS

Dear Student,

We hope this study has made you think about your relationship with God. After studying the lessons and answering all the questions, have you wondered, “Am I really a Christian? Do I know God? Is He real in my life?” We want to give you the opportunity now to have a relationship with God.

We have all done wrong things. We have hurt ourselves and others. The Bible calls that sin and we are all guilty: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Our sin keeps us from knowing God as a loving Father. But God loves us in spite of our sin. He loves us so much that He sent His Son to die for us. “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall never perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Jesus took the punishment we deserved for our sins when He died.

Do you want to make sure that Jesus is your Savior? It is really so simple:

- Admit that you are a needy sinner separated from God and ask Him to forgive you.
- Believe in Jesus with all your heart and let Him know that you accept Him as your Savior.

You can talk to God in your own words by saying a prayer like this:

Dear Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner. Please forgive me. I believe you are the eternal Son of God. Thank you for dying on the Cross for my sins. Come into my life. Make yourself real in my life. Be Lord of my life today. Thank you for saving me! Amen.

If you prayed this prayer and meant it with all your heart, your sins are forgiven and you have eternal life. Jesus is Lord of your life. The Bible says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

Welcome to the family of God. We want to rejoice with you, so please write and tell us what God has done in your life. Blessings to you!

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Name

Do you have a friend who needs to know more about Jesus?

Send us your friend's name and address for answers to the great questions of life.

Name

Address

.....