



Christian Maturity

Christian Maturity

by Rick C. Howard

AN INDEPENDENT-STUDY TEXTBOOK

Developed in Cooperation with
the Global University Staff

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THE GU CHRISTIAN SERVICE PROGRAM



This independent study textbook is one of 18 courses (subjects) that make up the GU Christian Service Program. The symbol at the Left is a guide for sequenced study. The Christian Service Program is divided into three units of six courses each. *Christian Maturity* is Course One in Unit One.

You may study this course by itself or study the entire series in proper sequence.

Study materials in the Christian Service Program are designed in a self-teaching format for Christian workers. This program will provide a student with the necessary Bible knowledge and skills for practical Christian service. These courses have been especially prepared for Christian workers in all nations and cultures.

ATTENTION

Please read the preliminary instructions for this course very carefully. By following the instructions you should be able to achieve your goals for the course, and you should not have difficulty preparing for your unit student reports.

Course Introduction

Christian maturity is an ever-present goal for believers in Christ. This goal is to reach “the very height of Christ’s full stature” (Ephesians 4:13). Although no believer can reach total Christlikeness during earthly life, the Bible places it as the goal for every Christian. It is better to reach for a goal that is too high and gain much than to actually reach a goal that is too low and gain little. The very nature of the subject demands that this course be solidly based on the Bible. Constant reference to Scripture is made throughout the course.

The first part of the course presents *illustrations* of growth, emphasizing the growth of Jesus. Included also are descriptions of natural growth to illustrate spiritual growth. There is comment on hindrances and helps to spiritual advancement. Then, the course centers on *progress* in spiritual growth. Since maturing in Christ is a lengthy process, an effort is made to separate present goals for the believer from the more difficult goals for his future. It is emphasized that our progress includes cooperation with the Holy Spirit and sharing faith with others. Finally, *proofs* of Christian maturity are stressed. Increasing Christlikeness of the believer’s character and ministry are presented as evidences of spiritual growth, and the course ends with an emphasis on the transformation of the believer by the Holy Spirit.

The main purpose of the course is to help the student become more like Christ, and to encourage him or her to help others do the same. May the Lord bless you and help you to make progress toward maturity in Christ through the study of this course.

Course Description

Christian Maturity is an introductory study to the subject of the Christian's growth. The study gives attention to the role of Christian service in the believer's growth.

A biblical approach to the subject makes the course acceptable for use in an international audience. The course leads the student to constantly interact with the Word of God, which is the foundation for the study.

The course is practical in nature, pointing out how the student may progress toward Christlikeness in daily Christian living and service. Biblical illustrations of Christian growth and the Bible-centered lessons provide the student with material for use in his own Christian service.

Course Objectives

When you finish this course you should be able to:

1. Explain the tendency toward growth inherent in spiritual life, and allow it to help you grow in Christ.
2. Relate spiritual maturity to daily life in such matters as discrimination between good and evil, and application of biblical messages.
3. Explain why a Christian cannot mature without fellowship with God.
4. Explain spiritual maturity in terms of completion and finishing as opposed to flawless perfection.
5. Describe the Holy Spirit's role in our Christian maturity.
6. Explain personal experiences to analyze progress in the use of your will to improve yourself spiritually.
7. Experience greater Christian maturity through increased general usefulness in ministry in the church and in helping others.

Textbooks

You will use *Christian Maturity: An Independent-Study Textbook* by Rick Howard as both the textbook and study guide for the course. The Bible is the only other requirement.

Study Time

How much time you actually need to study each lesson depends in part on your knowledge of the subject and the strength of your study skills before you begin the course. The time you spend also depends on the extent to which you follow directions and develop skills necessary for independent study. Plan your study schedule so that you spend enough time to reach the objectives stated by the author of the course and your personal objectives as well.

Lesson Organization and Study Pattern

Each lesson includes: 1) lesson title, 2) opening statement, 3) lesson outline, 4) lesson objectives, 5) learning activities, 6) key words, 7) lesson development including study questions, 8) self-test (at the end of the lesson development), 9) answers to the study questions. Answers to each self-test are at the back of your textbook before the unit student reports.

The lesson outline and objectives will give you an overview of the subject, help you to focus your attention on the most important points as you study, and tell you what you should learn.

Most of the study questions in the lesson development can be answered in spaces provided in this study guide. Longer answers should be written in a notebook. As you write the answers in your notebook, be sure to record the number and title of the lesson. This will help you in your review for the unit student report.

Do not look ahead at the answers until you have given your answer. If you give your own answers, you will remember what you study much better. After you have answered the study questions, check your answers with those given at the end of the lesson. Then correct those you did not answer correctly. The answers are not given in the usual numerical order so that you will not accidentally see the answer to the next question.

These study questions are very important. They will help you to remember the main ideas presented in the lesson and to apply the principles you have learned.

How to Answer Questions

There are different kinds of study questions and self-test questions in this study guide. Below are samples of several types and how to answer them. Specific instructions will be given for other types of questions that may occur.

A *MULTIPLE-CHOICE* question or item asks you to choose an answer from the ones that are given.

- 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.

(For some multiple-choice items, more than one answer will be correct. In that case, you would circle the letter in front of each correct answer.)

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.

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 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.

Ways to Study This Course

If you study this GU course by yourself, all of your work can be completed by mail. Although GU has designed this course for you to study on your own, you may also study it in a group or class. If you do this, the instructor may give you added instructions besides those in the course. If so, be sure to follow his instructions.

Possibly you are interested in using the course in a home Bible study group, in a class at church, or in a Bible school. You will find both the subject content and study methods excellent for these purposes

Unit Student Reports

In the back of your study guide are located the unit student reports and answer sheets. These are to be completed according

to the instructions included in the course and in the unit student reports. You should complete and send each unit answer sheet to your instructor for his grading and suggestions regarding your work. Send one when you complete each unit.

Certificate

Upon the successful completion of the course and the final grading of the unit answer sheets by your GU instructor, you will receive your Certificate of Award.

About the Author

Rick C. Howard pastored at Peninsula Christian Center in Redwood City, California. He was ordained by the Assemblies of God in 1961. He served on the faculty of Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts, Evangel College, Springfield, Missouri, and Bethany College of the Assemblies of God in Scotts Valley, California. He also served as National College Youth Representative for the General Council of the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri.

In addition to his teaching and preaching experience, Mr. Howard authored several books, such as: *The Judgment Seat of Christ*, *Strategy For Triumph*, *The Lost Formula of the Early Church*, and *Songs From Life*.

Mr. Howard earned his B.A. degree at Grove City College in Pennsylvania and his M.A. degree in history at Memphis State University, Memphis, Tennessee.

Your GU instructor

Your instructor will be happy to help you in any way possible. If you have any questions about the course or the unit student reports, please feel free to ask him. If several people want to study this course together, ask about special arrangements for group study.

God bless you as you study *Christian Maturity*. May it enrich your life and Christian service and help you fulfill more effectively your part in the body of Christ.





Pictures of Christian Maturity

Lessons

- 1 Godly Desires for Growth
- 2 Jesus Christ: An Illustration of Growth
- 3 Further Illustrations of Growth
- 4 Hindrance and Help to Christian Growth

LESSON 1 Godly Desires for Growth

Most fathers and mothers watch eagerly as their children grow. They point with pride to each new sign of growth. Children also long for the day when they will be grown up. Then they are mature enough to accept full rights and duties in the family. From the viewpoints of both parents and children, nothing is more sad than a lack of normal growth.

All of this is true when applied to our spiritual life as well. God desires a growing fellowship with humans. Humans also desire this relationship and feel lost without it. Even when man does not understand what he needs, he is searching for this fellowship with God. But he cannot find it until he accepts Jesus Christ as Savior. Then, as a believer man cannot experience the level of fellowship which God desires until he accepts God's purpose for him. That purpose is to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. We can say, therefore, that Christian maturity fulfills the desires of both God and man.

Growing up is fun but difficult. I am sure you remember exciting things about becoming an adult. But you have not forgotten the hard things either. This course, as the Holy Spirit uses it to teach you, will challenge you and help you grow. As you grow, you will become aware of new rights and more important duties in God's family. Apostle Paul writes in the Bible, "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me" (1 Corinthians 13:11). Such growth is necessary for you also.

lesson outline

God's Desire for Man's Growth

 In Creation

 From the Fall to Redemption

 From Redemption to Maturity

Direction of Humanity's Growth

 Through Jesus' Life

 Through Assurance of Salvation

 Through Understanding Natural Growth

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson, you should be able to:

- Explain why God created humans.
- State the goal that God has planned for man to attain through redemption and growth in Jesus Christ.
- Use Ephesians 4:13 to point out the goal of Christian maturity.
- Explain why no man can find complete satisfaction for his need for growth unless he looks to God.
- Exercise faith in Christ to fulfill the true purpose of your desire for growth.
- Tell why the basis for your spiritual growth is supernatural.
- Compare spiritual growth with natural growth.

learning activities

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your study. Remember that He desires to guide you into all truth (See John 16:13).
2. Before starting this lesson, get a notebook. In it, write the answers to exercises that are too long to include in this independent study textbook, and any other notes you desire to make as you study this course.
3. Read carefully the introductory material in this independent study textbook.
4. Read the inspirational section, outline, objectives, and learning activities of Lesson 1.
5. Look up in the glossary at the end of the textbook the definitions to any key words that you do not understand.
6. Carefully read the lesson development, answering each question as you come to it. After answering each one check your answer with the answer given at the end of the lesson, then correct your answer if necessary.
7. Look up each Scripture reference in the lesson development as soon as you come to it.
8. Take the self-test at the end of the lesson. Check your answers carefully. Review any items answered incorrectly.

key words

Understanding the key words we have listed at the beginning of each lesson will help you as you study. You will find key words listed in alphabetical order and defined in the glossary at the back of this independent-study textbook. If you are in doubt about the meaning of any of the words on the list, you may look them up now or when you come across them in your reading. Please take time to learn the definitions of any new words, since they are important to a complete understanding of this course.

destiny
dynamic
evaluation
fellowship

grow up
growth
maturity
perfect

purpose
relationship
stature

lesson development

GOD'S DESIRE FOR MAN'S GROWTH

We will begin our course in Christian maturity by considering God's reason for creating man. Have you ever asked, "Why did God make man in the first place?" Maybe you have wondered, "Just what does God expect from man?"

In Creation

Objective 1. Explain why God created humans.

Several times God stopped the process of creating the world to view His own work. Each time He saw that it was good. On the sixth day, God created man according to His plan. Man was made in the image or likeness of God (Genesis 1:27). Without man, the creation had been incomplete. The creation of man fulfilled the plan of God. Through fellowship between God and man, man would grow in God, glorifying Him, and fulfilling the purpose of his creation.

Application

1 Look up Ecclesiastes 12:13. According to this verse what two things must man do to fulfill God's reason for creating him?

.....

.....



To "fear God" means to respect and reverence Him. Certainly that includes respect for His purpose for man.

From the Fall to Redemption

Objective 2. State the goal that God has planned for man to attain through redemption and growth in Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, the story of creation does not end with man's fulfillment of God's glorious purpose for him. Because of man's sin, he fell and became unable to fellowship with God and

glorify Him. The thoughts of fallen man were far from God. His desires led him away from God. His actions were often offensive to God. Sin ruined man by keeping him from the fellowship with God that was God's purpose for him.

But God loved man so much and desired his fellowship so greatly that He provided the plan of salvation. God's plan was to restore the broken fellowship through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ. God sent His own Son to die for man so that he could be redeemed and again have fellowship with Him.

Application

2 What is the goal for humanity in God's plan of salvation?

.....

The likeness of God in man was damaged by the fall. But through Jesus Christ, God brings man back into His own likeness. This is a major theme of the New Testament. We become like God as we grow into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

From Redemption to Maturity

Objective 3. Use Ephesians 4:13 to point out the goal of Christian maturity.

Maturity may be defined as a “state of having been brought by natural processes to completeness of growth and development” or “pertaining to a condition of full development as a man of mature years.” As we will see, the natural processes which lead to maturity can be hindered or helped. The ministry of the church of Jesus Christ is to help each believer become a mature person like Jesus Christ. Ephesians 4:11–16, to which we will later devote almost a full chapter, gives this basic truth.

Application

3 According to Ephesians 4:11, who are the ministering persons that Christ has given to help us attain spiritual maturity?

.....

.....

4 According to Ephesians 4:13, what is the goal of Christian maturity?

.....



There are words in this passage listed in the *Key Words*. Make sure you look them up in the glossary.

The word translated “mature” in Ephesians 4:13 is often translated “perfect” (compare Matthew 19:21 and Philippians 3:12 with Colossians 1:28). The word “perfect” generally means “complete” or “whole.” It can also mean “finished” or “accomplished” (see John 19:30).

5 Read Colossians 1:28. Which of the following items best defines the word *mature* in this verse?

- a) Flawless
- b) Sinless
- c) Whole or complete

The closer we come to being like Christ, the more we fulfill the purpose which God has for our lives, and the more we glorify Him. Can you see why God has such a great desire for each Christian to mature, to become complete and Christlike? Spiritual maturity is the highest goal which God has for each believer’s life. Our heavenly Father eagerly looks for each development toward maturity in our lives.

DIRECTION OF HUMANITY'S GROWTH

Objective 4. Explain why no man can find complete satisfaction for his need for growth unless he looks to God.

There is within every man a hunger to find his reason and purpose for being. Much of the restlessness among all people is caused by a search for life's meaning. Man needs a goal. Even when unsaved, a man feels linked with destiny and eternity. He is searching and longing for a satisfaction which can only be fully found in fellowship with God. Human personality can be fully developed only in a God-man relationship that pleases God. As long as man remains apart from God, his desire for spiritual growth cannot be fulfilled.

There is an emptiness inside every unsaved person which is like an alarm or signal placed there by the Creator. When man does not fulfill God's purpose for him, he experiences spiritual distress which may be likened to the physical pain of losing an arm or leg. People often find a temporary escape from such spiritual distress through sin. The temporary nature of this escape may be compared to the relief that certain medicines give to physical pain. Man's denial of his need to know and serve the Creator is an act of sin that prevents spiritual maturity.

Our human spirit is, in a sense, a borrowed godlike nature. Only in our spirit are we truly like God. It is our most precious gift. It is our spirit which demands purpose.

Application

6 The godlikeness or *image of God* in man is man's spirit. (This spirit includes such things as will, mind, choice, etc.) Read 1 Corinthians 2:10–11. What part of a person relates him to God?

7 According to Romans 8:16, how does God's Spirit declare to us that we are children of God?



We can say that every person is born with a pressing need to be growing toward a goal. Often a person feels this need in terms of schooling, wealth, or status and promotion. In truth, this need can be satisfied only by a proper relationship to the Creator. It is met as we become more and more like Him. We are then able to have true fellowship with God. The need or desire in every man for growth is a quality that becomes a godly desire only when man focuses his desire on Christian maturity.

Have you ever watched someone trying to dam a rapidly flowing river? Sometimes it is almost impossible because there is a great power surging forward which is extremely difficult to stop. That movement is called the *dynamic*. Dynamic is an inner force that demands movement.

God has placed this force within man yet allows man to choose the direction for this force. You might say the river of desire within a person moves in various directions seeking its course. People without God are referred to in the Scripture as *forceful moving waters* (Jude 13). Unsaved people use this dynamic for self-goals. These are ultimately unsatisfying. We believers, on the other hand, must learn to use this dynamic to move toward maturity in God.

Application

8 How did the Samaritan in Luke 10:30–35 allow his dynamic of pity to move him forward in God?



Through Jesus' Life

Objective 5. Exercise faith in Christ to fulfill the true purpose of your desire for growth.

Jesus Christ came into our world as a revelation of God's concern that we find our true purpose. Jesus is a model of the correct "God-man" relationship. His wholeness was the result of a life lived in correct relationship with its source. His life,

death, and resurrection opened the way for man to truly *fulfill his purpose*. What sin had robbed from man, Christ restored to him. Through faith in Christ we are born into the family of God and discover the right direction for the *dynamic* of our spirit.

Application

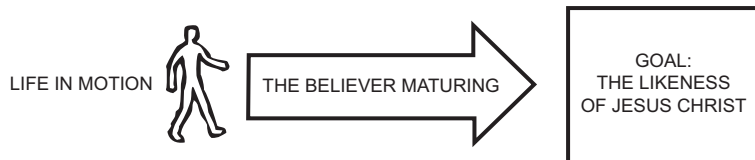
9 In John 10:10, Jesus expressed our true purpose by saying He had come in order that

- a) we might escape hell.
- b) the Scripture might be fulfilled.
- c) we might have life in all its fullness.

Through Assurance of Salvation

Objective 6. Tell why the basis for your spiritual growth is supernatural.

Some people think that to be born again is the ultimate Christian goal. But the mere knowledge that we are Christians does not guarantee us a dynamic Christian life! Dynamic living implies being in motion and growing. Just as a newborn baby grows because he has life, so must the new Christian. He now has the possibility of moving in the direction God wants him to. But growth is not automatic—the believer must want to grow toward Christian maturity.



Your first step toward Christian maturity must be to believe that Jesus' death and resurrection was for the forgiveness of your sins. Your next step is to recognize and confess Jesus Christ as the Lord of your life. The person who believes and confesses receives the Spirit of Christ upon his human spirit as Master and Lord. Then the Holy Spirit gives to him a dynamic drive toward man's true purpose. In this drive, man will encounter

many obstacles. But through all these obstacles, man can make progress with the Spirit's help toward maturity in Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 3:23, "You are of Christ" implies that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Master.

Application

10 According to the following texts, why do we belong to Christ?

- a) 1 Corinthians 6:20
- b) 1 Peter 1:18–19
- c) Ephesians 1:4

11 The Bible explains in John 3:19–20 why all the world does not recognize the claims of God through Christ on their lives. Why is this?

.....

12 The following three Scriptures tell us what a person must do in order to belong to Christ. By studying these verses you can understand and explain to others how to become a Christian. Read each passage and write down what is necessary to have the new life in Jesus. The first answer is provided.

- a) John 3:16–18 *Requires a person to believe in God's only Son.*
- b) Romans 10:9–10
- c) John 1:12

.....

The answers to the preceding exercise tell us that *a man can know that he is saved*, that he is born as a child in God's family. Take a moment to read 1 John 4:14–16 to make this truth especially real to you.

Application

13 Now, write in two sentences, using your own words, the truth in 1 John 4:14–16. Write these sentences in your notebook, wording them as if you were explaining this wonderful truth to a friend.

.....

Through Understanding Natural Growth

Objective 7. Compare spiritual growth with natural growth.

Christian maturity may be defined as a process, similar to natural growth, whereby we are brought to spiritual completeness.

Our life in Christ is compared to a seed. In the Bible, growth and maturity are often illustrated by farming. When we are born anew, it is through an incorruptible seed. The Bible describes this special seed in 1 Peter 1:23.

Application

14 According to 1 Peter 1:23, through what have we been born again?

.....



First John 3:9 refers to God's seed which remains in us as believers. You know that in all life the potential for full growth is in the tiny seed. For example, the potential for the full grown corn plant is in the corn seed. It is hard to believe that a great tree can come from a small seed. Yet it does. The nature of the plant contained in the seed can only be seen through the growth process.

In the newborn believer, potential for his *likeness of God* is the seed of the Word of God. His new life is a dynamic, which can through spiritual growth move onward toward Christian maturity.

Application

15 In 2 Corinthians 9:10, what are the two things that God promises us in the realm of our need for natural sustenance and growth?


.....



Remember that just as God can cause the natural seed to grow, so also He can cause spiritual seed within us to grow. And, just as God requires the farmer's labor in the growth of natural seed, so also He requires that the believer's own effort be a part of the process of growth of the spiritual seed within him.

Application

16 Without looking in the text, write out in your notebook your own definition of *Christian maturity*. Then review the definition of this term at the beginning of this section of the lesson and compare your definition with it.




Notice particularly from the definition of Christian maturity in this text that we are brought to spiritual completeness by a process that is similar to natural processes. The image of God in man—man's spirit—is a dynamic force which was meant to flow within the banks of a proper and wonderful fellowship between creature and Creator.

Although broken by sin, that purpose can now be restored through Jesus Christ.

The Bible tells us clearly that there is a measuring rod for our maturity as Christians.

Application

17 According to Ephesians 4:13, what is the measuring rod for Christian maturity? Circle the letter in front of your answer.

- a) Ability to quote Scriptures
 - b) Living without mistakes
 - c) Christ's full stature
 - d) Educational advancement
-
- 

Perhaps you are asking yourself, "Why isn't Christian growth an easier process?" Again, the answer can be seen in nature. Seed has many natural enemies. It can be buried too deeply or not deeply enough in the soil. Wind can blow it away. The soil can be stony or filled with thistle seed. Many farmers face what

seems an impossible task to produce a harvest. The fact remains that good seed will always produce if it is given right conditions.



The greatest enemy of the seed of godlikeness in man is Satan. He is the enemy of any likeness or reflection of God in the world. He designed the temptation which caused man to fall from his original purpose. He directs a world strategy which attempts to keep unsaved men from the gospel. He plans further to keep the Christian from growing in the likeness of Jesus Christ—the goal of Christian maturity.

Application

18 Jesus told a story in Luke 8:4–15 which relates to seed and growth. Please see how many things you can find in this passage which prevented seed from growing.

.....

.....



Do you think any of the things mentioned in our answer to the preceding question are symbols of things or situations that are keeping you from spiritual growth?

Application

19 God has provided us with a number of resources that will help make our lives dynamic. These resources may be described as gifts, talents, opportunities, etc. Please evaluate yourself as to how well you are using the following resources to help you grow spiritually (see illustration):

RESOURCE	MUCH	SOME	NONE
STUDY OF GOD'S WORD			
PRAYER			
ATTENDING WORSHIP SERVICES			
FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER BELIEVERS			
YOUR INBORN DESIRE FOR GROWTH			
YOUR OBEDIENCE TO GOD			

Do not read further until you have completed the above personal evaluation exercise. Now, pray that the Holy Spirit will help you to mature through diligent use of these resources for spiritual growth.

To truly glorify the Father in our spiritual life, we must accept the goal of true Christian maturity in our lives. We must decide to reach this goal with the strength and determination of a team attempting to score against their opponent. We cannot accept second best.

Application

20 An important verse for us is 2 Peter 3:18. Read this Scripture then fill in the missing words. But grow in the and of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be both now and forever! Amen.

Let us desire the full Christian maturity which can be ours through the grace of God. And may this Christian service course enable us to help others grow in the likeness of Christ.

self-test

After you have reviewed this lesson, take the self-test. Then check your answers with those given in the back of the textbook. Review any questions answered incorrectly.

TRUE-FALSE. Write **T** in the blank space before each true statement. Write **F** if the statement is false.

- **1** Creation was complete even without the creation of man.
- **2** Man can never be restored to Godlikeness.
- **3** Man's purpose cannot be truly fulfilled without a proper relationship with God.
- **4** The Christian experience is a guarantee that life will be dynamic.
- **5** A requirement for being born again is to confess Jesus Christ as Lord in a person's life.

MULTIPLE CHOICE. Circle the letter of the correct answer or answers.

- 6** Indicate the proper understanding of the word *perfect* or *mature* in the Scriptures. (More than one may be correct.)
 - a)** Full grown
 - b)** Sinless
 - c)** Complete
 - d)** Whole
 - e)** Finished
 - f)** Childish
- 7** The area of man's nature which demands a purpose or reason for being is his
 - a)** soul.
 - b)** body.
 - c)** spirit.
- 8** The purpose of Jesus Christ's coming into our world can best be stated by which two of the following expressions?
 - a)** That man might be condemned
 - b)** As a model of a correct God-man relationship
 - c)** That man might be brought into abundant life
 - d)** To form an important new religion

SHORT ANSWER. Fill in the blank, providing the proper answer to each question.

9 The greatest enemy of the seed of Godlikeness in man is:

.....

10 Name at least two of the types of soil that Jesus described in Luke 8 which represent how men receive the gospel.

.....

.....

answers to study questions

- 1 Fear God and obey His commandments.
- 11 Because men in darkness reject the light
- 2 To restore fellowship between God and man
- 12 a) See example.
b) Confess Jesus as Lord and believe in His resurrection.
c) Receive Christ and believe in Him.
- 3 Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers
- 13 The truth in 1 John 4:14–16 in your own words.
- 4 Christlikeness
- 14 The living and eternal Word of God
- 5 c) Whole or complete
- 15 Plenty of seed and a rich harvest
- 6 That person's own spirit
- 16 A definition of Christian maturity in your own words
- 7 By joining himself to our spirit
- 17 c) Christ's full stature
- 8 By using his pity in an unselfish manner to help someone in need
- 18 The seed fell along the path, was stepped on, was eaten by birds, fell on rocky ground with no moisture, and among choking thorns.
- 9 c) we might have life in all its fullness.
- 19 Your own evaluation of yourself
- 10 a) Because Christ bought us for a price
b) Because the price Christ paid for us was the costly sacrifice of His own life
c) Because God chose us to be His through Christ
- 20 grace, knowledge, glory

Jesus Christ: An Illustration of Growth

LESSON 2

Do you remember a time when you really pleased a parent or a teacher with some evidence of growth? Have you ever seen a little boy trying to stand tall beside his father? I remember visiting one home where the two boys had marked the father's height on the wall. Below it were a variety of dates and measurements to compare the boys' progress. We have seen that our heavenly Father desires our maturity so we may fellowship with Him. We need to grow and fulfill God's purpose for creating us in His image.

Perhaps maturing as a believer seems hard to understand. "What does Christian maturity look like?" you may ask. The little boys I just mentioned had a visual goal. They knew their father. They could measure his height. It was not hard for them to picture their own progress toward his likeness.

That's our purpose in this lesson. We want to clearly define Christian maturity in terms of goals we can visualize. The Bible is an open book. Jesus often taught in parables which were word pictures taken from the people's common experiences. We will discover that the Bible's standards for growth are clear and relate to each one of us.

lesson outline

Getting a Goal to Grow Toward

Seeing How Jesus Grew

Physical Maturity

Mental Maturity

Social Maturity

Spiritual Maturity

Learning About Jesus' Image

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson, you should be able to:

- State the Bible goal for which every Christian must work.
- List four specific ways Jesus grew.
- Form habits that will help you to attain Christian physical maturity.
- Develop Christian mental maturity by filling your mind with good thoughts.
- Make progress toward Christian social maturity.
- Choose habits, thoughts, and relationships that will help you on your way toward spiritual maturity.
- Describe the servanthood of Jesus and identify yourself as His servant.

learning activities

1. Read the lesson.
2. Look up in the glossary the definitions to key words you do not understand.
3. Do the exercises in the lesson development, referring as needed to the textbook. Check your answers periodically with those given in the textbook.
4. In your notebook, divide two pages (one across from the other) into four columns. Head each column with one of the following words: 1) physical, 2) mental, 3) social, and 4) spiritual. When directed in the lesson development, write out passages of Scripture in these columns.
5. Take the self-test at the end of this lesson, and check your answers carefully. Review those items answered incorrectly.

key words

Understanding the key words we have listed at the beginning of each lesson will help you as you study. You will find key words defined in the glossary at the back of this independent-study textbook. If you are in doubt about the meaning of any of the words on the list, you may look them up now or when you come across them in your reading. Please take time to learn the definitions of any new words, since they are important to a complete understanding of this course.

adulterous

image

homosexual

lesson development

GETTING A GOAL TO GROW TOWARD

Objective 1. *State the Bible goal for which every Christian must work.*

We have already seen in Ephesians 4:13 that God intends us to “become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” The original language of the New Testament is actually “a mature manhood” or we might say “a complete person or a fully grown person.”

Application

- 1 According to this verse what is the actual measurement of that maturity? (Circle the correct answer.)
- a) A special spiritual gift
 - b) The mature manhood of Christ
 - c) Sinless perfection



The word *stature* means “height or quality gained by growth.” Jesus Christ did not come to us as an adult, but as a baby who had to grow like each of us.

Application

- 2 Hebrews 5:8 refers to Jesus. It begins with these words, “Although he was a son.” Write the rest of this verse here.

.....

.....



- 3 Review the meaning in the glossary of the word *perfect*, which means “to complete” or “to bring to final form.” How do you think this word may be applied to Jesus?

.....



Since Jesus always had sinless spiritual perfection He is a perfect model for our growth in all areas (Hebrews 4:15). Although we cannot expect to reach sinless spiritual perfection, Christlikeness is a realistic goal for our spiritual growth because working toward a goal beyond what we can expect to reach will help us to accomplish more than a lesser goal.

Application

4 Read carefully Hebrews 4:14–16. Is Jesus able to identify with our problems of growing up as Christians? Explain.

.....

.....

You can see why Jesus is often referred to as our brother (Hebrews 2:11–12, 17). If you have an older brother, you know the influence he has as the firstborn and thus the first one in the family to mature.

Carefully read Hebrews 2:10 and write it in your notebook. Do you see that Jesus, having grown or been made perfect, is thereby able to lead other sons into God’s full purpose? Doesn’t that encourage you in your own desire to grow up as a Christian?

SEEING HOW JESUS GREW

Objective 2. List four specific ways Jesus grew.

We have seen that Jesus Christ is to be our example, and His stature our goal. To be specific, the Bible shows that Jesus grew or matured in four basic areas.

Application

5 Read Luke 2:52. List the four areas in which Jesus grew.

.....

.....

Can you relate these four areas to areas in which you must grow? Do you see why the verse we learned in 2 Peter 3:18 tells us to grow in the “knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”? As we learn about His life, we will better understand the goal and purpose of our own maturity as believers.

Physical Maturity

Objective 3. *Form habits that will help you to attain Christian physical maturity.*

The Bible teaches us that Christian maturity in the physical sense involves much more than the simple growth of the body. It involves an understanding of the purpose of the body. Physical maturity for the believer involves conducting the body in a way pleasing to God the Father. The following Scriptures will help you to understand this area and form Christian physical habits: 1 Thessalonians 4:3–8; 1 Corinthians 6:9–15, 18–19; 1 Timothy 4:8; Galatians 6:7–8. Please write these Scriptures in your notebook under the heading “*Physical.*”

Application

- 6 What does 1 Corinthians 6:9–10 say about the destiny of those who abuse their bodies in immorality?
- a) They will be severely punished.
 - b) They are to be excluded from the church.
 - c) They will not possess God’s kingdom.
-

Mental Maturity

Objective 4. *Develop Christian mental maturity by filling your mind with good thoughts.*


The human mind is a wonderful gift from God. Yet, have you ever noticed how difficult it is to keep the mind under control? It is easy to allow the mind to wander and even to think unchristian thoughts. No wonder Peter told the Christians “Prepare your minds for action” (1 Peter 1:13). Jesus teaches that the mind is really a problem area in our lives.

Application

7 Read Mark 7:18–23. According to Jesus, where do the evil things a person does come from?

.....

.....



In fact, letting our minds dwell on evil things can be sinful.

Write out Matthew 5:28, Mark 7:18–23, Philippians 4:8, 2 Corinthians 10:4–5, and 1 Peter 1:13 in your notebook column titled “*Mental.*”

Application

8 In 2 Corinthians 10:4–5, Paul tells how to destroy strongholds, then lists three ways to develop Christian mental maturity. What are they?

a


b

c

9 What does Philippians 4:8 say we should think about?

.....

.....



Now carefully read Romans 12:1–2. Notice the last phrase, “test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Here is that word *perfect* again, which means “mature” or “complete and whole.” We must try through our own will to know God’s will, to know how He wants us to live.

Application

10 According to Romans 12:2, how does God transform the person who has been living by the standards of this world?

.....



You can see how important it is to be mature in our mind.

Social Maturity

Objective 5. *Make progress toward Christian social maturity.*

Christian growth involves the social aspect of our lives as well as the physical and mental aspects. You could list many areas of your social experience: family, friends, marriage, government, neighbors, and so forth. It would be impossible to list or discuss in this course all the Scriptures in this area.

Write in your notebook column titled “*Social*,” Psalm 101, Ephesians 5, and James 4:4–5.

NOTE: Ephesians 5 begins by exhorting us to conduct ourselves without fault (verse 1) then mentions evil things we must not do (verses 3–5). Verse 11 emphasizes how we should react to worthless things people do: “Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness.” The chapter closes with instructions on godliness in the marriage relationship (verses 21–33).

Application

11 Read Psalm 101 aloud. Now, prayerfully choose one area of the psalmist’s life in this psalm which you would like to strengthen in your life. (Examples: honesty, dealings with evil, purity of life in the family, etc.)

.....



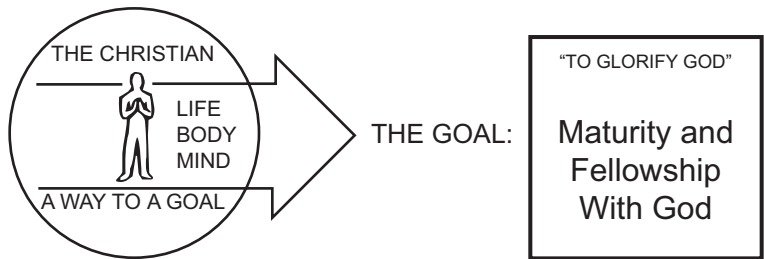
God wants to help you grow in each area of your life.

Spiritual Maturity

Objective 6. Choose habits, thoughts, and relationships that will help you on your way toward spiritual maturity.

This entire course is on this subject! Lesson 6 will discuss spiritual maturity in detail. We will not define it here. But please remember when you study Lesson 6 to write Scripture passages in your notebook column titled “*Spiritual.*”

This illustration sums up what we have studied:



Look at the illustration and you will see that the Christian’s goal is outside himself. To reach the Christian goal, we must move toward that goal.

Application

12 Does the illustration above describe a dynamic life? (Explain)

.....

Every decision I make concerning habits, thoughts, and relationships must be made in view of the goal of spiritual maturity.

LEARNING ABOUT JESUS' IMAGE

Objective 7. *Describe the servanthood of Jesus and identify yourself as His servant.*

Some biblical principles seem hard to understand. We have already discovered that God has set us apart to become many brothers (Romans 8:29). Perhaps you are asking, "How can I be like Jesus?" That question arises when we remember He was sinless and God in human form. Let us understand a simple but important point: It is in the role of servants that we become like Jesus.

Application

13 Read Philippians 2:5–8. According to Philippians 2:5, what attitude or mind are we to have?

14 According to Philippians 2:6–8, what nature did Jesus willingly take on?

This nature was expressed, according to Philippians 2:5–8, by humility and obedience. In Hebrews 10:7 Jesus said, "Here I am ... to do your will, O God." And remember what He prayed in Gethsemane: "Not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42).

Application

15 What does Hebrews 10:7 point out that describes Jesus' servanthood?

Do you understand now why Paul, James, Jude, and others identified themselves as servants of Jesus Christ? That is how we become like Jesus. We are not saved from sin for the sake of salvation only, we are saved to serve. We accept a relationship of obedience to Jesus Christ. He becomes our *Master* and we become

love-servants to His will. Salvation, with its joys, victory, and freedom, is more than an experience. Through salvation we are brought into the true understanding of our purpose. We are created to glorify God. Our goal is to be conformed to Jesus Christ and thus restored to true fellowship with God. Such a relationship fulfills man's deepest desire for purpose in life. We should all declare with Paul the apostle: "I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death" (Philippians 1:20).

self-test

TRUE-FALSE. Write **T** in the blank space if the statement is true. Write **F** if it is false. Then, change the FALSE statements to make them true.

..... **1** *Stature* is a word that means “height or quality gained by growth.”

Stature is a word that means

..... **2** According to Jesus, all sorts of evil things come from within a person’s heart.

According to Jesus, all sorts of evil things come from

..... **3** The Bible teaches us that the Christian is to have the mind or attitude of Moses.

The Bible teaches us that the believer is to have the mind or attitude of

MULTIPLE CHOICE. Circle the letter(s) before the correct choice(s) to each question.

4 The Bible teaches in Luke 2:52 that Jesus grew in four areas of life. Select these four areas from the words below.

- a) Spiritual
- b) Physical
- c) Emotional
- d) Mental
- e) Medical
- f) Biblical
- g) Psychological
- h) Social

5 According to 1 Corinthians 6:9–10, certain uses of our body will keep us from possessing God’s kingdom. Select those uses from this series of descriptive words.

- a) Immoral
- b) Athletic
- c) Tiring
- d) Adulterous
- e) Homosexual
- f) Thinking

- 6 Philippians 2:5–8 indicates that Jesus Christ willingly took upon himself not only a human form but also the nature of a
- a) priest.
 - b) servant.
 - c) king.
 - d) prophet.

SHORT ANSWER. Write the answer to the question on the lines provided.

- 7 In what ways does a believer mature in Christ socially?

.....

.....

answers to the study questions

- 1 b)** The mature manhood of Christ
- 9** Whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy
- 2** “he learned obedience from what he suffered.”
- 10** By a complete change of one’s mind
- 3** To the full development of His physical and mental characteristics and work
- 11** Your answer
- 4** Yes, because He was tempted as we are and can feel sympathy for our weakness
- 12** Yes, because both dynamic life and the illustration indicate a life that moves toward a goal.
- 5** In wisdom, stature, favor with God, and favor with men
- 13** The attitude of Jesus Christ
- 6 c)** They will not possess God’s kingdom.
- 14** The nature of a servant
- 7** From within his heart
- 15** His obedience
- 8 a** Destroy false arguments.
- b** Pull down obstacles to the knowledge of God.
- c** Make every thought obey Christ.

LESSON 3 Further Illustrations of Growth

The primary illustration of Christian maturity in the Bible is Jesus Christ. He is our elder brother. He took the form of a servant, and obeyed the Father perfectly. He humbled himself through death on the Cross. Christians are to be conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ. This is the goal of Christian maturity. The believer lives to do the will of Jesus Christ. This is revealed by God's Word and the Holy Spirit. The "likeness of Jesus Christ" applies to the physical, mental, and social parts of our lives as well as to the spiritual part.

But the Bible illustrates our Christian growth in other ways too. In this lesson, we will study several other illustrations. These will include the family, farming, and building. Our purpose is to see the concept of Christian maturity as clearly as possible.

Perhaps you have seen a great hill or mountain. From a distance, it looks rather close. You think you can reach it in a short time. As you approach it, the distance seems much greater. We sometimes call this perspective or point of view. We are trying to see our subject from several perspectives—several approaches. Allow the Holy Spirit to give you the right perspective.

lesson outline

We Grow Up in a Family

Starting As a Baby

Changing Our Diet

Accepting Different Roles

We Are Like a Valuable Farm

Belonging to God

Carrying Out Responsibility

We Are a Building of God

Foundation and Building

How to Build God's Building

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson, you should be able to:

- State how a new Christian can grow from a spiritual baby toward Christian maturity.
- Explain how a Christian can gain understanding of more advanced spiritual truth.
- List three things included in the process of our growing up spiritually.
- Explain how Ephesians 3:17–18 indicates that we belong to God.
- Describe the responsibility to God's field that we must carry out in order to reap God's harvest of blessing.
- Use 1 Corinthians 3:12 to explain the operation of man's free will in the choice of materials for God's spiritual building.

learning activities

1. Check the glossary at the end of your study textbook for definitions to any key words you do not understand.
2. If a concept seems difficult, read the section twice or more. Underline or mark important parts of the lesson development.
3. Work carefully through the study questions, writing your answers in pencil *before* checking the correct responses.
4. Ask the Holy Spirit to make these examples of growing up very real to you.

5. Take the self-test at the end of this lesson, and check your answers carefully.

key words

architect

artisan

brokenness

childish

conformed

conviction

cultivate

repentance

responsibility

viewpoint

lesson development

WE GROW UP IN A FAMILY

Every human life is a product of parents. The human infant is born with a great need for care, and it is the responsibility of parents to provide that care.

Starting As a Baby

Objective 1. *State how a new Christian can grow from a spiritual baby toward Christian maturity.*

Have you noticed an infant recently? Think of the various things which must be done for the child to keep it alive and healthy. Parents gladly provide for the infant, knowing it will eventually mature. A new Christian has been “born again” (John 3:3). Scripture refers to him as a *baby*. He needs spiritual food in order to grow from spiritual infancy into spiritual maturity.

Application

1 Read John 3:3–6. What is the source of our spiritual birth?

.....



Notice in John 3:6 that John contrasts physical birth with spiritual birth.

When you thought about an infant a moment ago, you may have remembered hearing it cry when hungry. God’s Word describes this reaction in the new Christian.

Application

2 According to 1 Peter 2:2, what can we expect of a born-again person?

.....



Changing Our Diet

Objective 2. *Explain how a Christian can gain understanding of more advanced spiritual truth.*

It is clear in the Scripture that the believer is neither to remain a spiritual baby, nor to continue to use spiritual milk. Let us examine several Scriptures which we shall develop later.

Application

- 3 Look first at 1 Corinthians 3:1–3. Please circle the letter before the correct answer. This passage indicates
- a) mature Christians no longer need spiritual milk.
 - b) mature Christians continue to need spiritual milk.
 - c) nothing definite concerning mature Christians and spiritual milk.
- 4 Now read aloud an important message in Hebrews 5:11–14. Here again the Christians are still using “milk” and not “solid food.” Verse 13 indicates that a milk-drinking Christian is
- a) experienced in the matter of right.
 - b) still a child.
 - c) experienced in the matter of wrong.
- 5 What does Hebrews 5:14 imply mature Christians can do which milk-drinking Christians cannot do?
-
-

Perhaps you are asking, “What is the difference between spiritual milk and spiritual solid food?” Milk comes from a body which has eaten solid food. Milk has gone through the digestive system of another: the mother, for example. Milk to a Christian is primary spiritual truth rather than more advanced spiritual truth. Understanding of more advanced truth comes through practical application of already known primary truth (see 1 John 1:6–7).

Application

- 6 Turn to 1 Corinthians 14:20. The apostle commends a childlike attitude toward evil. But he urges the believers to not be like.....in their

7 Again in 1 Corinthians 13:11 we are urged to grow up. In what three ways does a child reveal himself according to this verse?

.....

Paul continues in this verse by saying, “When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.” Do you remember when you put away play things or clothes you used as a child? It was not always easy. Growing up *can be painful*.

Accepting Different Roles

Objective 3. *List three things included in the process of our growing up spiritually.*

God’s concern for the believer to achieve full spiritual stature is found in many places in the Bible. God is concerned that the believer knows His full purpose for His children. The apostles shared God’s yearning father’s heart. Paul and John particularly sought to move the believer through childhood into adulthood.

Do you remember the changes of your duties as you became older? Are you now a mother or father yourself? If so, your view of life certainly differs from that of a child or youth. The apostle John writes from the position of a spiritual father in 1 John 2:12–13.

Application

8 Read 1 John 2:12–13 carefully. Select the three stages John refers to from the following list. Circle the letter before each correct answer.

- a) Babies
 - b) Children
 - c) Old men
 - d) Young men
 - e) Boys
 - f) Fathers
-

You can see in 1 John 2:12–13 that the situations are different at each of the three levels of maturity. The children *receive* forgiveness for their sins; the young men *do* notable deeds in their victory over evil, and the fathers *know* God better than the others. The children are portrayed as the *most dependent*, the young men as the *most active*, and the fathers as the *most mature*. Fathers have fullest understanding of God and His purposes.

You have noticed that three levels of growth in God's family are represented in this passage. Three things included in the process of growing up spiritually are *reaching higher levels of knowledge, accepting more responsibility, and performing more significant duties*. As we have seen, *growing* means “leaving,” leaving childish things to gain greater stature.

WE ARE LIKE A VALUABLE FARM

Some farmland is much more valuable than other land. Good land with rich soil and well-watered plains is precious. The farmer's very life is built around his land. He clears and plows, plants and cultivates, waters and waits. The harvest is his reward. He has worked hard for long hours. He deserves the joy of a good harvest. How sad when his efforts are in vain and the land or climate robs him of his due reward.

Belonging to God

Objective 4. *Explain how Ephesians 3:17–18 indicates that we belong to God.*

The Bible often refers to God's people as being the Lord's vineyard or field (Isaiah 5:1–7; Jeremiah 12:10). God has chosen us and we are His field. He has carefully planted His seed in the soil of our lives. He expects and deserves a harvest. He awaits our maturity as anxiously as the farmer awaits the harvest of his crops.

Application

9 Read 1 Corinthians 3:9. According to this verse, believers are God's field. Now read verses 5–8. Notice the phrases “planted the seed,” “watered it,” and “made it grow.” According to these verses, who makes the plant grow? Circle the letter of the correct answer.

- a) Apollos
 - b) God
 - c) Man
 - d) Partners
-

NOTE: *Although God has the power to develop spiritual growth in us, He requires our cooperation with Him in developing it.*

Ephesians 3:17–18 is a prayer by the apostle Paul that the believers may have their *roots* in love, so that they together with all God's people, may have the power to understand how broad and long, how high and deep, is Christ's love. To have our *roots in God's love* denotes that we belong to God and continues the analogy between believers and a valuable farm. God's love, like rich soil, will help growth. In this passage Paul is praying for what God awaits in us: Christian maturity.

Carrying Out Responsibility

Objective 5. *Describe the responsibility to God's field that we must carry out in order to reap God's harvest of blessing.*

The believer is sometimes pictured as the keeper of the field of God. He has responsibility as a workman in God's field. You remember reading in 1 Corinthians 3 that Paul sowed seed, Apollos watered, and so forth.

Application

10 In Jeremiah 4:3, what is God telling His people to do that refers in a literal sense to farming?

.....

The answer to the preceding question means we can make the spiritual soil of our lives ready to receive God's seed. Perhaps you ask, "How can I plow the soil of my life?" Plowing breaks up soil to eliminate its hard crust. Then both seed and moisture can enter the soil and cause growth. Brokenness in the believer's life is a result of responding in humility to God's conviction. Such response keeps the soil of one's heart open. The Holy Spirit will faithfully tell or show (convict) our spirit when something is wrong.



Can you remember a recent time in your life when the Holy Spirit convicted you? Perhaps it was because of something you said. Or maybe you were angry or bitter toward a fellow believer. How did you respond? Did you excuse yourself? Did you resist the conviction? An attitude of brokenness in true humility responds with repentance to God's conviction.

Repentance means "to turn away from." An illustration of brokenness and repentance in response to God's conviction is found in the following prayer:

Thank You, Holy Spirit, for showing me this sin. I am genuinely sorry for this wrong. I repent and turn from this. Thank You that I am forgiven through Jesus' sacrifice. Praise You, Father.

Through my brokenness and repentance, the soil of my life is kept open and permits spiritual growth.

Application

11 Read another verse concerning this matter: Hosea 10:12. This is a wonderful command from God to His people. According to this verse, what are the people to plant and reap?



Our responsibility to God's field is to plow and plant in devotion to the Lord. When we carry out these responsibilities, we are blessed with God's abundant harvest.

WE ARE A BUILDING OF GOD

Perhaps near where you live is a grand building. Does it stand above all others in size? Is it made of more beautiful materials? No doubt it was built with the skill and care of dedicated workmen. Its perfection shows it was built to an exact design. People like to look at it. Other buildings are built more quickly, with less skill, and contain less costly materials. They are less durable. Anyone can tell the difference.

Application

12 Quote the part of 1 Corinthians 3:9 that relates most closely to this section of the lesson.

.....



Foundation and Building

Objective 6. *Use 1 Corinthians 3:12 to explain the operation of man's free will in the choice of materials for God's spiritual building.*

In 1 Corinthians 3:9–12, Paul places special emphasis on three things:

1. God's building.
2. Foundation for God's building.
3. Materials in God's building.

Notice the specific difference between the composition of the foundation for this building and the composition of the building upon that foundation.

Application

13 Who is the foundation for this building (verse 11)?

.....

14 What are the six building materials listed in this passage (verse 12)?

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)
- e)
- f)



We saw above that we are both God’s field and the keepers of His field. Now we understand we are both His building and His builders. It is significant that man can exercise his free will in choosing materials he uses in building God’s building. In one sense, the great building we are working on is the church (the body of Jesus Christ in the world—not a physical building). In another sense, our bodies are like a church.

Application

15 In 1 Corinthians 6:19–20, our body is compared to

- a) a growing field of grain.
- b) a tall, fruit-bearing tree.
- c) a pearl of great price.
- d) the temple of the Holy Spirit.



How to Build God's Building

Read 1 Corinthians 3:13–17, and answer the following questions.

Application

16 What about man's work on God's building will be judged?

- a) The amount
- b) The quality
- c) The beauty

17 In the Day of Christ, every man's work will be exposed and revealed by

If what was built on the foundation survives the fire, the builder will receive a.....

Every day, I must choose how and what to build. The foundation cannot be changed. It is Jesus Christ our Lord. The Father has a wonderful plan for what my personal *Christian building* should be like. He tells me in His Word of the right attitudes, habits, words, and character. He designed what a Christian should be like. When I build to His specifications (the specific orders on *His* plan), the *building of* my life will be beautiful and durable. It will be like the grand building we talked about. If I neglect God's plan and choose materials that do not please Him (wood, grass, or straw), my building will not survive fire and I will never become a mature Christian.

Perhaps you would like to pray this prayer with me:

Father, Your plan is best. The materials You choose are best. I want the building of my life to be made to your standard. I want to be conformed to your Son Jesus Christ in my body, mind, and spirit. Amen.

self-test

SHORT ANSWER. Write the answer to the question on the lines provided.

1 At what point should a believer no longer need the *milk* of God's Word?

.....

.....

.....

2 MATCHING. Match the Scripture to the basic ideas brought out in this lesson by writing the correct number in each blank space. (The first answer is provided.)

- 1) "Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness" (Hebrews 5:13).
- 2) "I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning" (1 John 2:13).
- 3) "Break up your unplowed ground and do not sow among thorns" (Jeremiah 4:3).
- 4) "Each one should be careful how he builds ... If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is" (1 Corinthians 3:10, 12-13).

- ...2 a A fuller level of maturity is to have a fuller knowledge of God and His purpose.
- b Believers choose the material they use to build their lives upon the foundation of Christ.
- c The soil of our lives can be kept open by responding in humility to God's conviction.
- d An understanding of more advanced spiritual truth must be added to our knowledge of primary truth in order to understand more difficult problems.

MULTIPLE CHOICE. Circle the correct letters before the correct choices to each question.

3 In this lesson, the believer is compared to several things by way of illustration. Select the five correct illustrations.

- a) A tree
- b) A baby
- c) God's field
- d) A ship
- e) An island
- f) Soil
- g) An old man
- h) God's building
- i) A road
- j) The temple of the Holy Spirit

4 Select the three building materials which represent qualities that will last at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

- a) Gold
- b) Hay
- c) Straw
- d) Wood
- e) Silver
- f) Costly stones

answers to the study questions

- 1 The Spirit of God
- 10 To plow up their unplowed fields
- 2 Thirst for pure spiritual milk
- 11 They are to plant righteousness and reap unfailing love or blessings.
- 3 a) that mature Christians no longer need spiritual milk.
- 12 “You are . . . God’s building.”
- 4 b) still a child.
- 13 Jesus Christ
- 5 Distinguish between good and evil
- 14 a) Gold
 - b) Silver
 - c) Costly stones
 - d) Wood
 - e) Hay
 - f) Straw
- 6 children, thinking.
- 15 d) the temple of the Holy Spirit
- 7 In speech, thinking, and behavior
- 16 b) The quality
- 8 b) Children
 - d) Young men
 - f) Fathers
- 17 fire, reward.
- 9 b) God

LESSON 4 Hindrance and Help to Christian Growth

After the last lesson, you should feel somewhat like a son growing up, a valuable piece of land being carefully farmed, or a great and beautiful building under construction. Which likeness do you most identify with? No matter! In a sense, we are like all three at once! Each illustration describes exciting potential for Christian growth.

One part of this lesson is meant to show you from Scripture things that cause Christian maturity to be delayed or even stopped entirely. Recognizing these will help us identify them in our own lives. Knowing why we are not growing spiritually can help us bring about change.

Another part of this lesson lists things which aid spiritual growth. Knowing these things, we can cooperate with the Holy Spirit in allowing our new lives in Christ to grow. Together we should find encouragement and help in this study.

lesson outline

What Hinders Our Growth

Wrong Timing

Wrong Exercise of Will

Lack in Diet

What Helps Our Growth

The Holy Spirit Our Helper

The Holy Spirit Working Through Our Spirit

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- State what caused the people's retarded spiritual condition in Hebrews 5:12.
- Point out a specific wrong exercise of the human will in its relationship to God's will.
- Explain why it seems evident in 1 Corinthians 3:1–2 that the Christians' own negligence had caused their lack in spiritual diet.
- Explain why a believer may grow in Christ through the Holy Spirit.
- Identify two opposing forces in your life.
- Describe your part in achieving a walk in the Spirit.

learning activities

1. Read the lesson.
2. Do the exercises in the lesson development, and check your answers with those given in this textbook.
3. Take the self-test at the end of this lesson. Review those items answered incorrectly.

key words

automatic
hinder

hindrance
negligence

rational
sift

lesson development

WHAT HINDERS OUR GROWTH

There are enemies of natural growth; we have briefly studied this in reference to soil and building. The Bible is direct about some areas which hinder Christian maturity. We need to know them. Perhaps you remember when you were a child and your parents had to teach you about harmful things. Maybe they told you to avoid certain plants or animals. The first thing they did was teach you to recognize them. Let us identify some things that hinder spiritual growth.

Wrong Timing

Objective 1. State what caused the people's retarded spiritual condition in Hebrews 5:12.

The new birth begins a time of spiritual childhood. Have you ever seen children “dressing up” in adult clothes or pretending to be grown-up? It’s humorous to see them walking about in too large shoes or sandals, or pulling a hat over their ears. Sometimes we say to such children, “Wait until you’re older to do these things.”



Timing is important. We must not only be concerned with doing right things but also with doing them when the time is right. Wrong timing refers not only to premature action but also to retarded condition. Hebrews 5:12 presents an outstanding example of retarded spiritual condition due to failure to apply present knowledge of God toward further spiritual progress.

Application

1 After reading Hebrews 5:11–14 underline verse 12. What was the people's problem as described in this verse?

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The Greeks, in whose language the New Testament was written, thought of time in two basic ways: (1) *chronos* signified a succession of minutes, hours, and days; and (2) *kairos* referred to crisis periods. These periods included such important times as growing, testing, and other experiences in an adult's life.

In the process of Christian maturity, both of these ideas of time are important. God expects certain things of us based on the actual length of time we have been Christians. He is in charge of our times of crisis also. Read Ecclesiastes 3:1–8 concerning God's control of times and seasons.

How long has it been since you were born again? Perhaps it was very recent. Perhaps you have been a Christian a long time. Just remember that the *actual time is important*. We should not expect more of ourselves than God does. Growing up is a time-consuming process. Lack of time can limit growth. But if you have not shown enough progress, do not despair. Ask the Lord to help you, through this course, to faithfully apply your present knowledge of spiritual things toward further maturity in Christ.

Often the Bible speaks of time as being fulfilled. Ephesians 1:10 is one such example of God's time plan: "When the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ."

Application

2 Who must complete the plan mentioned in Ephesians 1:10?

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How encouraging to believe that God controls all aspects of the believer's time! *Kairos*, periods of crisis, come at irregular times that only God can order. They bring circumstances that teach us.

Application

- 3 Read Luke 22:31. Who asked permission to test Peter?
- a) Satan
 - b) God
 - c) Fellow believers
-

Who gave permission to test Jesus' disciples? (This question is not directly answered in Luke 22:31.) God permitted Satan to test the disciples just as He had given him permission to test Job (Job 1:6–12).

The object of this test in Luke 22:31 was to sift the disciples, and Peter in particular. In the following verse, Jesus was praying for Peter that he would come through his moment of *kairos*—not just to survive, but to be stronger and strengthen others. Let us pray that we, also, may show the endurance in crisis that produces spiritual growth in us and in others.

Application

- 4 According to Romans 5:3–4, what produces endurance?
-
- 5 Complete the following statement on the basis of Romans 5:4. Persevering will produce
- and from that will come
-

God allows and arranges times of pressure and times of crisis, which are opportunities for us to grow toward Christian maturity.

Wrong Exercise of Will

Objective 2. *Point out a specific wrong exercise of the human will in its relationship to God's will.*

Why are you studying this course? If maturity were automatic, why should anyone try to mature? You already know the answer. God arranges the *kairos* (crisis), but we must decide how to respond. When God created us, He gave us a will. God has chosen not to violate this right.

Application

6 Let us return to Hebrews 5:11–14 for a moment. According to verse 11, why was it hard for the writer to explain spiritual truth to the Hebrews?

The verb “are” in the original language of verse 11 is better translated, “have become.” The Hebrews were not always dull, slow, and hard to move. The Greek word for “slow,” *nothros*, means “hard to push.” Here is what was being said: “Many truths cannot be given because you have become slow and hard to move.”

You can see that these Hebrews had a *choice* in the matter. Their *will* was involved. They had hardened their hearts against the process of growing up. Again in the last part of verse 12 is the concept that the people were slow to understand. They had to have milk and could not take solid food. In a way it seems fair to say that most Christians are as mature as they *will* make up their minds to be. God provides the school, but we decide whether or not to learn!



Application

7 Read again Luke 22:31–32 and complete this sentence: Jesus prayed that Peter's faith would

8 Read Jesus' words to His disciples in Luke 21:34–36. Notice how many things the disciples must decide or do for themselves. In your notebook, list the actions of the will found in these verses.



Almost all the things we have studied, or are going to study, have to do with our *will*. Many Scriptures that do not directly mention our *will* do, nevertheless, imply the use of the human will. Here are portions of two verses rephrased to emphasize more directly the *will* concept in them:

1 Peter 2:2: A new believer should be like a new baby. He should *will to drink* spiritual milk.

2 Peter 3:18: The believer should always *will to grow* in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Application

9 Reword the following Scriptures in your notebook. Emphasize the *will* concepts by underlining them.

a Ephesians 4:15

b 2 Peter 1:6

c 1 Corinthians 13:11

d Ephesians 4:13



Have you completed your notebook work for the preceding exercise? You will find that a good understanding of the *will* is important and that this extra long assignment will help.

Hebrews 12:1–2 emphasizes the importance of human will in the race of life. This passage indicates that we are to:

Will to rid ourselves of anything that would hinder our spiritual progress, and will to keep our eyes on Jesus in order to make progress toward spiritual maturity in the race of life.

If you rebel against God's will, you are exercising your will wrongly. Christian maturity requires submission of our will to

God's will. Even Jesus had to submit His human will to the divine will in order to bear the cross (Matthew 26:39–42).

Application

10 According to Hebrews 12:2, Jesus was able to die on the Cross because of the

- a) fellowship of those around Him.
 - b) victories during His earthly life.
 - c) anticipation of future joy.
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This is a good moment for you to reflect. Do you wish and will to become a mature Christian? Pray that you will respond rightly to the situations God places you in.

Lack in Diet

Objective 3. *Explain why it seems evident in 1 Corinthians 3:1–2 that the Christians' own negligence had caused their lack in spiritual diet.*

There is a saying in many cultures that a man becomes what he eats! It is important not only how much we eat, but what we eat. Some foods contain things which produce only fat. Other foods are good for energy and strength. Christian maturity is limited by spiritual diet. We have already looked at this to some degree in Lesson 3. The newborn Christian is to desire milk. But, in order to grow, the believer must move from milk to solid food.

Notice in Hebrews 5:12 that if the Christians were maturing, they would *be* teachers. Instead, they needed teachers. They could not yet eat solid food (digest the truth directly), but had to drink milk (predigested food). *Someone else* had to study the truth of God in the Bible, prayerfully learn from God, and then prepare his own mind and spirit to teach them on a level they could understand.

In Hebrews 5:11, the writer to these Christians says, “We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn.” The full teaching of the Christian faith is by no means an easy thing to understand. It cannot be grasped or learned

in one day. A believer will often avoid teaching which is difficult. Similar rejection is seen in a baby. A baby does not like it when the mother stops the milk feeding and insists on solid food. Yet the mother knows it is the next step for her child’s growing up.

You have proved your desire to come into Christian maturity. But that does not make it easy, does it? We will see in later lessons that for the believer *solid food means*: (1) moving beyond basic Christian principles to more difficult concepts, (2) learning to know the difference between right and wrong, (3) accepting responsibility, and (4) forming Christian character. To do all this you must *look to God for supernatural help* as well as exercise your own will.

Application

11 In 1 Corinthians 3:1–2 it seems evident that the Christians should have been able to digest advanced spiritual food and that Paul, therefore, regrets having to feed them with milk. What was his reason for feeding them milk (v. 2)?

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WHAT HELPS OUR GROWTH

Earlier, we discussed the power to grow which is in all life. Then, in the first part of this lesson, we pointed out reasons growth does not happen. Growth has its limitations and its enemies. We begin to grow by receiving Jesus Christ: repenting of our sin and confessing His lordship in our life. We have learned that this is the process of being born again. Our new life is spiritual. Do you remember Jesus’ description of this experience in John 3:6?

Application

12 According to this passage there are two births: one by human parents and the other by the



The Holy Spirit Our Helper

Objective 4. *Explain why a believer may grow in Christ through the Holy Spirit.*

It is important to understand how the Spirit helps us grow. You have seen parents helping their children grow by teaching them to walk and to speak, patiently helping them to mature. In a similar way, the Holy Spirit is the trainer for the new Christian life. The apostle Paul explains this process in 1 Corinthians 2. The Holy Spirit reveals God's secrets to us.

Application

13 Base your answers to these questions on 1 Corinthians 2:10–11.

- a** By whom did God make known His secret?
- b** Who searches the hidden depths of God's purposes?
- c** What knows all about a person?
- d** Who knows all about God?



First Corinthians 2:12 says: "We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us." What a statement! The Holy Spirit helps us know all that comes from God. We could say the Spirit helps us "grow up" to full adulthood. He helps us mature and patiently works with us toward this goal.

Jesus was born in human form through a direct act of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). The Holy Spirit is who helped Jesus fulfill His human purpose. He was led by the Spirit to be the obedient servant of the Father (Matthew 4:1).

Application

14 According to Acts 10:38, how was Jesus prepared for His earthly ministry?

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As Jesus prepared to return to the Father, He promised His followers another *Helper*. The word “another” (John 14:16) suggests one like Jesus himself. This is an important promise, and we should study it carefully. The word *helper* [or *counselor*] here means “one who works beside us to help.”

Application

15 Read John 14:15–20, then answer these questions:

- a How long will the Helper stay with us (v. 16)?
 - b Where will the Helper be while helping us (v. 17)?
- 16 Read John 14:25–26. Jesus promised His disciples that the Helper would make them remember
- a) part of what He had told them.
 - b) all that He had told them.
 - c) more than He had told them.
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It is important for you to read John 16:5–15. Stop now and do this. Jesus says in this passage that it is better for His followers that He leave the earth.

Application

17 What reason did Jesus give His disciples in John 16:7 for His going away?

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Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to the church so the Spirit might teach us and lead us “into all the truth” (John 16:13). He will bring us into the likeness of Jesus Christ. In this likeness we fulfill

the true destiny of people. The Holy Spirit led Jesus to fulfill His human purpose as the obedient servant of the Father. Thus, through suffering death and being resurrected, He won for us salvation. The Holy Spirit leads us to Jesus' likeness, so that as His servants, we may be a body that reflects Christ upon the earth. What a wonderful plan! We are part of God's purpose in the world.

The Holy Spirit Working through Our Lives

Objective 5. *Identify two opposing forces in your life.*

Objective 6. *Describe your part in achieving a walk in the Spirit.*

The Holy Spirit is at work in the lives of all true believers. The question is how. Man is composed of body, soul, and spirit. The body is physical and easily identifiable. We sometimes refer to it as the "outer man."



To be more specific, the soul is generally thought of as that part of man containing the mind, the will, and the emotions. The spirit is generally thought of as that part of man which is made alive or regenerated when we are born-again and linked to God's Spirit. In other words, the human spirit is the point of contact between God and redeemed humanity. The Spirit is very much at work in our "inner man." Because we have a will or "free moral agency" (the power of choosing or making decisions), we may feel our lives are a battleground. As God's Spirit seeks to direct our lives, communicating through our spirits to our souls, sinful human nature coupled with a will may resist Him. There may be spiritual tug-of-war as described in Galatians 5:16–17.

The spirit of man becomes a battleground when man refuses to let God's Spirit direct his life. Have you ever watched two people pulling against each other to possess something. It looks like they will pull it apart. That is like the spiritual *tug-of-war* we find in Galatians 5:16–17.

Application

18 Read Galatians 5:16–17. According to verse 17, what two forces oppose each other?

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Galatians 5:19–23 describes our lives first when human nature is in control, then when the Spirit is in control. Human nature produces life as described in verses 19–21. However, when the Holy Spirit controls man’s spirit, He produces an entirely different lifestyle.

Application

19 The qualities in Galatians 5:22–23 are developed through *the Holy Spirit’s control of our spirit* and are called the *fruit of the Spirit*. List these qualities in the order they are mentioned.

- | | | | |
|---|-------|---|-------|
| a | | f | |
| b | | g | |
| c | | h | |
| d | | i | |
| e | | | |

20 Through the Spirit’s anointing, Jesus received gifts for His human ministry. Read Acts 10:38 again. When God poured out the Holy Spirit upon Jesus, what did Jesus do?

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When the Holy Spirit controls our lives, He will do the work of Jesus in us. What a promise!

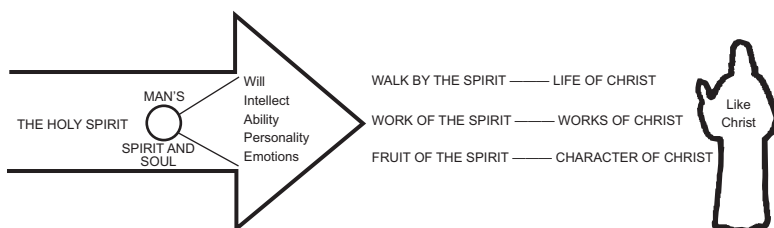
Application

21 Read John 14:12–14. How does Jesus compare what those who believe in Him will do with what He is doing (v. 12)?

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Galatians 5:25 says, “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” Another aspect of control is the daily control of our lives, the continual surrender of our will. This is called *walking by the Spirit*. It is the way Jesus lived daily in His human experience. We, too, can walk by the Spirit. Study the illustration below.



Many other things which help us grow will be dealt with in Chapter 6, but one is important for us to understand now: *We are born into a spiritual family which is provided by God for our help.*

Application

22 Read Ephesians 4:7–16. Christ placed people as gifts to minister to mankind in various ways (v. 11). What was the purpose of the work of these ministers (v. 12)?

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We must surrender our inner man—personality, intellect, ability, and will or choice—to the Holy Spirit if He, the Helper, is to make us into the likeness of Jesus Christ. In His likeness,

we fulfill God's desire for us. We will also fulfill our basic need for direction toward our spiritual goal.

self-test

TRUE-FALSE. Write **T** in the blank space if the statement is true. Write **F** if it is false. Then, change the FALSE statements to make them true.

-1 Time has nothing to do with the believer's maturity.
Time has
-2 We must will to rid ourselves of obstacles to spiritual progress.
We must will to rid ourselves
-3 A believer who receives only the milk of the Word will grow faster than one who receives solid food.
A believer who receives only the milk of the Word will
.....
-4 The only source of complete knowledge about a man is his parents.
The only source of complete knowledge about a man is his
.....
-5 Galatians 5:25 implies that it is possible to live in the Spirit without allowing Him to control our lives.
Galatians 5:25 implies that it is
.....

MULTIPLE CHOICE. Circle the correct answer for each question.

- 6 The writer to the Hebrew Christians criticized their slowness to understand by telling them there had been enough time for them to
- a) be teachers.
 - b) build churches.
 - c) have families.

SHORT ANSWER. Write the answer to the question on the lines provided.

7 List at least four of the nine personal qualities of a life controlled by the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23.

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Before you continue your study with Lesson 5, be sure to complete your unit student report for Unit 1 and return the answer sheet to your GU instructor.
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answers to the study questions

- 1 Lack of spiritual progress they should have made during the time they had known God
- 12 Spirit.
- 2 God
- 13 a His Spirit
b God's Spirit
c That person's own spirit
d His Spirit
- 3 a) Satan
- 14 Through God's pouring out the Holy Spirit and power upon Him
- 4 Trouble
- 15 a Forever
b In us
- 5 character, hope
- 16 b) all that He had told them.
- 6 Because they were slow to understand
- 17 In order to send the Holy Spirit to them
- 7 not fail.
- 18 Human nature and the Spirit
- 8 Be careful or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness, and anxiety.
Be always on the watch.
Pray.
- 19 a Love
b Joy
c Peace
d Patience
e Kindness
f Goodness
g Faithfulness
h Gentleness
i Self-control

- 9 Your answers may vary a little but should be similar to these:
- a We must *will to grow up* in every way to Christ.
 - b To your knowledge you must *will to add self-control*.
 - c Now that I am a man, I have *willed to have no more use for* childish ways.
 - d We shall all *will to come together* to that oneness in our faith.
- 20 He went everywhere doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil.
- 10 c) anticipation of future joy.
- 21 By saying they will do what He is doing and greater
- 11 Because they were not ready for the solid food of advanced Bible teaching
- 22 To prepare God's people for Christian service

For Your Notes





Progress in Christian Maturity

Lessons

- 5 Motivations Toward Growth
- 6 Elements That Build Christian Maturity
- 7 Foundational Truths and Beyond

LESSON 5 Motivations Toward Growth

Growing is an exciting and yet difficult task. I remember a child whose mother helped him plant some seed. She wanted him to experience the process of growth. One day he came to her crying, “Mother, my seed won’t grow. Every day I pull it up to look at it and it isn’t growing!” Small wonder, you say. Yet, we are often like this. Growth requires time, proper diet, and good soil. For the believer, the soil is our human spirit and will. If you cooperate with the Holy Spirit, your growth will be natural and continuous.

Parents and teachers often use rewards to encourage us to grow. These prizes are called incentives. *An incentive is something that moves us to action.* The Bible shows us many of the incentives provided for Christian maturity. Some are rewards we realize immediately as we begin to grow. Others are realized only after patient waiting. Yet, each of these incentives is important. This lesson is meant to introduce some of these Bible rewards to you.

lesson outline

Goals We Relate to Now

Desiring to Grow Up

Knowing Right and Wrong

Receiving and Serving

Goals We See Further Away

Becoming Useful

Looking Like Jesus

Preparing for the Final Test

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson, you should be able to:

- Point out the kind of people God wants us to become.
- State how mature people are enabled to distinguish between good and evil.
- Explain how and why a believer receives spiritual instruction.
- Describe the endeavor to which Paul likens the Christian life.
- Identify the goal of God's Word in the believer's life.
- State the likeness into which the Spirit transforms us.
- Explain how the believer is to prepare for the final test.

learning activities

1. Read the lesson.
2. Do the exercises in the lesson development. Check your answers with those in the textbook.
3. Take the self-test at the end of this lesson, and check your answers carefully. Review those items answered incorrectly.

key words

cycle
endeavor
equip
eventual

issue
judicial
liken
option

preparatory
seek
ultimate

lesson development

GOALS WE RELATE TO NOW

Sometimes the Christian is accused of being “other-worldly.” This means he thinks more in terms of heaven than earth. The Bible, however, presents a balanced view of things relating to both heaven and earth. It relates to the *here and now* as well as the hereafter. Maturing as a Christian offers wonderful, immediate rewards. The Holy Spirit presents them to us as incentives to move us toward our goal in God.

Desiring to Grow Up

Objective 1. *Point out the kind of people God wants us to become.*

Every individual wants to grow up as quickly as possible. Adulthood represents independence and additional duties and privileges. Spiritual adulthood is a real *incentive* for Christian maturity. We have seen from 1 John 2:12–14 that the passage from “children” to “young men” to “fathers” is an important one.

The desire to be adult and the fear of not growing should cause us to make several important decisions. We must be willing to separate ourselves from habits, speech, and behavior which are childish. Remember that Jesus commended a childlike spirit (Matthew 18:2–5). But there is much difference between being *childlike*, as Jesus meant it, and being *childish*.

First Corinthians 13:11 tells us to put away childish speech, feelings, and thinking. Perhaps our childish ways are seen most in our demanding that people do things for us. This attitude shows selfishness rather than concern for others, and is always taking rather than giving.

Also, we must grow to a higher level of knowing: that of understanding. To understand means to advance beyond simple memorization in order to apply knowledge and truth to everyday life. A child begins by learning only to say words, but a man learns what to say and when to say it.

Application

1 In 1 Corinthians 13:11 Paul says, “I put childish ways behind me,” and in 14:20 he tells the Corinthian Christians to be grown-up in their thinking. In 13:11, these childish ways are listed as *speech, feelings, and thinking*. How mature are you in these areas of life? Use this simple chart as the basis for writing a self-examination in your notebook. Then pray that God will help you in areas where you definitely plan to improve.

	CHILDISH	MATURE
Speech	Usually about oneself: problems, plans, actions	Often about things of interest to others
Feelings	Reacts with joy, anger, or self-pity according to personal desire of the moment	Controlled; considers consequences, expresses concern for well-being of the group as well as oneself
Thinking	Values determined by own desires for pleasure and entertainment	Values determined by ultimate effect on others as well as oneself; pleasure is secondary to duty

Desire for our spiritual growth comes from three sources. First, our heavenly Father longs for us to come into full maturity as sons. Then, He can fellowship more fully with us. Our spiritual adulthood will glorify our Lord.

Application

2 Read again Ephesians 4:13 again. According to this verse, what kind of people does God desire that we become? Circle the letter before the correct answer.

- a) Christian
- b) Loving
- c) Important
- d) Mature

A second source of desire for our spiritual growth comes from the church and its leaders. The apostle Paul discusses his concern in Colossians 1:28: “We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching

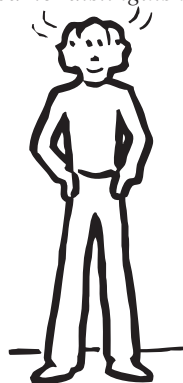
everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.”

Third, because of their need to grow up, people desire their own spiritual growth. Maturity is completion of growth or full age. It is normal for all genuine believers to desire spiritual adulthood. Let us earnestly seek spiritual growth in order to perform special duties and receive special privileges (blessings) that require spiritual maturity.

Knowing Right and Wrong

Objective 2. *State how mature people are enabled to distinguish between good and evil.*

Have you watched a baby crawling on the floor? He will put *anything* into his mouth. It could be edible, or it could be poison. He has no ability to judge between the right and wrong thing to eat. His play with objects can also be dangerous. A stick or other object can greatly harm such an infant. As we grow up, our ability to use good judgment develops. This type of development helps us to tell right from wrong. This is an incentive for the believer to grow up. He needs the ability to tell right from wrong.

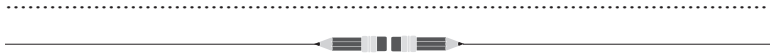


Believers who do not grow up are in danger. They often read or listen to false teaching. Because they are immature, they do not recognize error. They are open to deception. Satan finds it easy to confuse the “childish” Christian.

Application

- 3 Hebrews 5:14 describes an adult as being able to
- a) become a father.
 - b) get married.
 - c) distinguish between good and evil.
 - d) quote many Scriptures.

4 According to Ephesians 4:13–14, children can be easily blown about by every shifting wind of the teaching of deceitful men. What do these men do?



Do you see why we must grow in our ability to know the difference between right and wrong? Knowing right from wrong is important to each of us! We need to “grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ” (Ephesians 4:15). Thus, we avoid the dangers of immaturity.

Hebrews 5:14 tells us that it is through *practice* that mature people are able “to distinguish good from evil.” Our word *gymnasium* comes from the Greek word for “practice.” As an athlete practices or exercises in a gymnasium, so we need to increase our ability to distinguish between right and wrong by practicing the right. We must grow up by the *practice* of God’s Word, examining and doing things in the light of God’s Word.

Receiving and Serving

Objective 3. *Explain how and why a believer receives spiritual instruction.*

One terrible thing about being immature is that we miss important messages. You often say to a child, “I can’t explain this to you because you wouldn’t understand.” Yet, children want to know “why” and “how.”

This is the cry of the writer to the Hebrews: “We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn” (Hebrews 5:11). The letter to the Hebrews was written to people who were in great spiritual danger. They were losing their way spiritually. Their author’s message could have greatly helped them, but their immaturity prevented them from receiving it.

Application

5 Read Hebrews 5:12. What lessons did these people still need?

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Because the first lessons had to be repeated, new lessons could not be given. How sad! The full teaching of the Christian faith is by no means easy. It cannot be learned in one day.

The apostle Paul had a desire for the Ephesian Christians also. He wanted them to grow up. They could then REALLY understand the wonderful things about being Christians.

Application

6 Read Paul’s prayer for the believer in Ephesians 1:15–20. What do believers need to open to receive spiritual light?

- a) The window
- b) The Bible
- c) Their minds
- d) Their eyes

7 In Ephesians 1:18–19, what three important things need to be revealed to the believer?

- a)
- b)
- c)



As we mature in this Christian experience, we are able to receive wonderful teaching by the Holy Spirit. The Word becomes very real, and it also is a means of teaching. The believer cannot afford to miss great messages from God through His Spirit and His Word; therefore, he must open his mind to receive these messages.

Application

8 According to 2 Timothy 3:16–17, Scripture rebukes, corrects, and instructs so

God wants us to be mature and well-equipped for His service. This is a great reason in this present life for our pressing on to Christian maturity.

GOALS WE SEE FURTHER AWAY

Objective 4. *Describe the endeavor to which Paul likens the Christian life.*

Do you enjoy personal testimonies? I do. I especially enjoy hearing from older Christians. They have proven God's grace. Also, they are nearer the end of their lives. They are soon to see their Lord directly. They see life from a better perspective. For many of us, the incentives we have just studied seem more real. But, the Bible clearly teaches both immediate and future goals for Christian maturity.

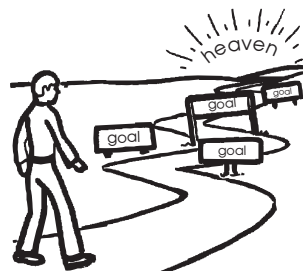
The apostle Paul testifies to the future in the process of Christian maturity. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7).

Application

9 According to 2 Timothy 4:8, what is waiting for Paul?

- a) A crown of righteousness
- b) Another race
- c) A financial reward

Paul views the Christian life as a race. He sees the necessity of keeping the goal in mind. Have you ever been in a race or other athletic contest? The winner is usually the one best trained. We say, "He is able to go the distance." His body has



been strengthened by exercise. As the athlete trains for a physical contest, *train yourself to reach the more distant goals of a godly life* that require Christian maturity.

Application

10 Read 1 Corinthians 9:24–27. What does every athlete in training submit to?

.....

11 In verse 26, Paul says he runs the race

- a) aimlessly.
- b) perfectly, without error.
- c) purposefully.

12 Referring still to the contest of life, Paul says in verse 27 that he keeps something under control so he will not be disqualified. What is it?

.....



An athlete in training *must harden his body*, through physical exercise, for the race. The Bible prescribes both physical and spiritual discipline for the race of life: “Train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come” (1 Timothy 4:7–8). The believer accepts hard assignments because he views the ultimate goals.

Becoming Useful

Objective 5. *Identify the goal of God’s Word in the believer’s life.*

Usefulness may be classified as a somewhat distant goal. In one sense the believer is always available to God. From the beginning, the Christian life is one of service. The newest believer can work for God. However, as we mature in God, we become prepared for greater responsibility.

At our house, the children are given work to do from their earliest years. The work assignment is to teach them responsibility. At first, the quality of their work is not good. But

it is good for them to work. As they grow, they do much better. They can be trusted with more important assignments.

Application

13 According to 2 Timothy 3:16–17, the goal of God’s Word is to qualify and equip us to serve God. What kind of good deeds are we to be able to do?

- a) A particular kind
- b) Some kinds
- c) Every kind



We will spend an entire lesson later on the subject of our usefulness. At this point we simply need to realize that *total usefulness* is our goal. God equips some people to do some kinds of good deeds and other people to do other kinds. He wants to prepare us for *every kind* that He plans for us to do. Let us desire to become *senior ambassadors* for God, prepared for any assignment from God, trustworthy and ready.

Looking Like Jesus

Objective 6. *State the likeness into which the Spirit transforms us.*

Another goal is to become more and more like Jesus. The believer has an immediate desire for this. But this particular goal of Christian maturity is a lifelong process. As we have seen, this is the work of the Holy Spirit. The believer must choose to allow the Holy Spirit to control his or her personality, emotions, intellect, and will. The Spirit continually works at maturing the submissive believer into Christlikeness.

Application

14 Review Romans 8:29, and rephrase it in your own words.

.....



To be like Jesus is an important goal on which we will spend an entire lesson in Unit 3. Here, we are discussing it briefly. Jesus Christ loved us and bought our freedom with His blood. To know Him and be like Him is both a daily and a lifelong goal.

Application

15 Read 2 Corinthians 3:18. Into what likeness does the Spirit transform us?



To reflect the glory of the Lord, we must keep His beauty, His fullness, and His obedience constantly before us. Physically, mentally, and spiritually we must keep our eyes fixed on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2) in order to reflect a measure of His likeness now and a greater measure of it as we mature in Him. What a challenge for an entire lifetime! But we have much more to say on this in Lesson 8.

Preparing for the Final Test

Objective 7. *Explain how the believer is to prepare for the final test.*

One great incentive for the believer's maturity is seldom discussed. Multitudes of Christians have almost no knowledge concerning *God's judgment of believers*. I am frequently reminded of a time in my college life when I returned to class after more than a week's absence. I walked in on the day of a mid-semester examination. What a shock! I had not read the assignments and did not even know the area of material to be covered. But I had to take the test! That will be the situation with countless believers. Our heavenly Instructor has told us clearly what is required and has carefully announced the time and type of examination. A consideration of these truths is most important for the believer today. It affects his priorities, motivations, and Christian life in every respect. May this study help prepare and alert us for the test.

Romans describes this eternally significant event!

Why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: "As surely as I live," says the Lord, "every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God." So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. (Romans 14:10–12)

More than anything else, however, we want to please Him, whether in our home here or there, for we all must appear before Christ, to be judged by Him. Each one will receive what he deserves, according to everything he has done, good or bad, in his life (2 Corinthians 5:9–10).

Application

16 According to 2 Corinthians 5:10, before whom shall we stand to be judged?

- a) Christ
- b) The church
- c) The Holy Spirit

Please note carefully the following pronouns I have italicized. Romans 14:10–12 says "each of *us*" shall give account of himself. Note also the language in 2 Corinthians 5:8–10: "*We* are confident...*we* make it our goal to please him...*we* must *all* appear." These are the pronouns of God's family! It is not "they" or "them" but "we" and "us," the inclusive pronouns, that are used with reference to the body of believers.

One further thing of importance to discuss concerning our appearance at this seat of examination is the matter of option. Is it by choice? May we in some manner avoid it? Romans 14:10–12 says, "We will all stand...[and] give an account." Second Corinthians 5:10 says, "We must all appear." The words *will* and *must* leave no doubt about the certainty of our appointment with judgment.

We must quickly put away wrong understandings about this evaluation. This judgment seat has nothing to do with our salvation. In fact, as we have already stated, it is a family affair. There will be no unbelievers there. The original Greek word

bema refers literally to a raised platform, like that on which the umpire of the Grecian games would sit, and from which he watched the contestants and rewarded the winners. That specific seat was known as the “reward seat,” not related to a judicial decision. This is not where the believer’s salvation is reviewed. It is a place of inspection, examination, reward, and loss on the basis of one’s life.

We have stated that every believer is called to be like Jesus Christ. Jesus lived according to the Father’s will and found His complete joy in that fulfillment. According to Philippians 2, He took upon himself the form of a servant. Believers are called to take on His image, to be His sons and servants. Thus we can readily see that this *bema* will be the judging of the believer’s servanthood under the lordship of Jesus Christ. This will be even more obvious as we move through Scripture.

Application

17 Read Galatians 6:7–8. This passage states a law of God which applies to the natural and spiritual world. State the law of God in verse 7.

.....

Every farmer is involved in a cycle of buying, planting, working land, and awaiting the reward of his labor with keen anticipation. At great price, God has purchased and worked the soil of our lives. He expects results. Results will be a major issue on that day of judgment.

Application

18 Read 2 Corinthians 9:6. Who will have a small crop, according to this verse?

- a) He who sows little
- b) A poor man
- c) A city man

Now let us note two passages which were written by the apostle Paul to different churches, but which contain a great deal of similar teaching addressed to slaves and servants in the churches:

Slaves, obey your earthly masters. . . . Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. (Ephesians 6:5–8)

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. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism. (Colossians 3:23–25)

These Scriptures are addressed to all believers. We are the servants of Jesus Christ. He promises that there will be a time of reward for faithfulness, but warns that we will receive repayment for the wrong we have done.

Application

19 In both the above Scriptures we are to do our work as though we were working for whom?

- a) The church
- b) Our own father
- c) The Lord

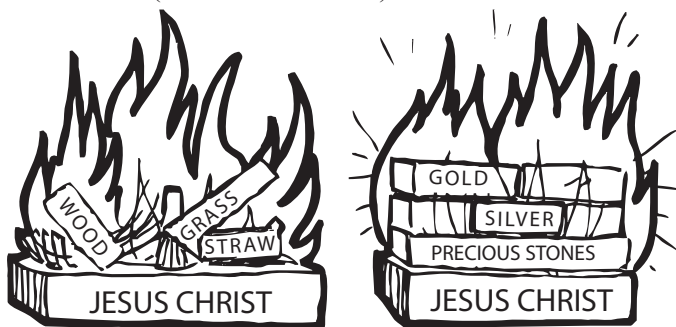
According to Romans 14:12, the believer must give account of himself to God. *Account* is a word which suggests a setting down of our blessings and opportunities to compare them with what we have accomplished: God's investment in us compared with our profitable return to Him. This concept is also found in 2 Corinthians 5:9–10. It says every believer will actually appear before the Lord. At that time, the results of his entire life will be reviewed. Evidently, this does not mean a recounting of sin. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from sin. Sin will

enter the issue only to the degree that it has kept us from being the profitable field, the worthy building, the image of Jesus Christ the Holy Spirit tried to help us be. But let us not treat this point lightly. This will be a serious evaluation of our lives. Concern over the outcome of this judgment should motivate the believer to do the work and will of God.

Even in this course, part of the incentive to learn is the examination or test. Paul clearly implies that being examined before Jesus Christ who gave himself for us will be, for some, an embarrassing moment. It will be so particularly for the Christian who has received the grace of God but has produced no fruit.

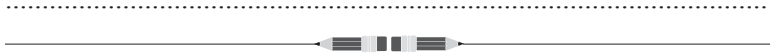
Do you remember our study in 1 Corinthians 3? Turn to 1 Corinthians 3:9–15. Paul likens the believer to a building. Christ is the one and only foundation for this building. Thus, every believer begins with the same foundation. The believer then begins to build upon that foundation. He builds with either carelessness or fine craftsmanship; he chooses his materials well or builds cheaply. According to the apostle, some use gold, silver, or precious stones; while others use wood, grass, or straw. Can we doubt the meaning of that comparison? The message becomes direct (rather than symbolic):

[The quality of each person's] work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. (1 Corinthians 3:13)



Application

20 Now read 1 Corinthians 3:14. If what was built survives, what will happen to the builder?



Take a moment to copy 1 Corinthians 3:15 into your notebook.

Here is a clear picture. Every believer begins his building on Jesus Christ, the foundation, when he receives Him as Lord and Savior. His building materials are shaped from attitudes, choices, priorities, maturity, carnality, Christian character or lack of it, things he does which affect God and himself, doctrine, use of finances, stewardship of possessions and time, words, habits, motivations, quality of his Christian service to others, and on and on.

The list seems endless. Every day we choose materials and add to the structure. But there will come the moment of inspection. The examination of what we have built will be so severe the apostle likens it to a test by fire.

Construction that is useless, careless, unchristlike, selfish, and carnal will quickly be consumed. Some Christians have so used their lives that when their works are tested, nothing will remain. Their works will be without reward. It will be as though they had never built upon their salvation. Others will experience loss but will find the fire powerless to consume what remains of true Christian works. These will be rewarded. And what better reward than to feel we have wisely built upon the foundation our blessed Lord provided for us at the price of His life.

Every portion of Scripture that explains how God intends the believer to live becomes part of the evidence at the judgment seat of Christ. Colossians 3, Romans 14, and 1 Corinthians 4:1–5 indicate this. Perhaps you are now asking, “Just where does this place me? What should I do now?” Here are several points to consider:

First, it should not surprise us that such a costly salvation demands an accounting. Think or read through the Lord’s parables. How many concern servants left with responsibilities

and eventually brought before their lord for an accounting? Ask yourself: Does this scriptural review of the judgment seat of Christ make me more aware of my responsibility for having received such a great salvation?

Second is a clear implication in Scripture that the believer who is aware of future judgment can make changes in his priorities and life which will make the “examination” more successful. For example, carefully consider the message in 1 Corinthians 11:31–32: “If we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.”

We can examine our lives now in preparation for the future judgment. We can change attitudes, review motivations, and redirect our energies toward the things that matter in God’s sight. Above all, we can remain open to the Holy Spirit who will guide us into fruitful, spiritual Christian life and service.

self-test

TRUE-FALSE. Write **T** in the blank space if the statement is true. Write **F** if it is false. Then, change the FALSE statements to make them true.

.....1 An incentive is something that prevents or blocks us from action.

An incentive is something that

.....

.....2 A believer who does not grow up is often subject to the deceptive teaching of deceitful men.

A believer who does not grow up is

.....

.....3 The letter to the Hebrews shows that the Hebrew Christians could not receive an important message because they were slow to understand.

The letter to the Hebrews shows that the Hebrew Christians could not receive an important message

because

.....4 The believer is set apart by God to become like His Son.

The believer is set apart by God to

.....5 A believer's salvation will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ.

A believer's will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ.

ALTERNATE CHOICE. When Christ returns and a Christian's works are tested, those which are eternal will remain while those that are temporal will be consumed.

Write the letter **E** before works that are eternal.

Write the letter **T** before works that are temporal.

..... 6 Desire to develop beyond spiritual childhood

..... 7 Judging a Christian brother or sister

..... 8 Concern over the praises of men

..... **9** Ultimate Christlikeness

.....**10** Living according to God's Word

..... **11** Storing up riches on earth

SHORT ANSWER. Write the answer to the question on the lines provided.

12 What is the name for the place of judgment and reward for a believer's work?

answers to the study questions

- 1 Your own self-evaluation.
- 11 c) purposefully.
- 2 d) Mature.
- 12 His body.
- 3 c) distinguish between good and evil.
- 13 c) Every kind.
- 4 Lead others into error by tricks they invent.
- 14 Here is a sample answer:
God planned that those He already knew would be like His Son, so His Son would be the first among many brothers.
- 5 First lessons of God's message
- 15 Into the likeness of the Lord.
- 6 c) Their minds
- 16 a) Christ.
- 7 a) The hope of his calling.
b) The richness of God's blessings for him.
c) The greatness of God's power in him.
- 17 A person reaps what he or she sows
- 8 The person who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do good deeds.
- 18 a) He who sows little
- 9 a) A crown of righteousness
- 19 c) The Lord.
- 10 Strict training.
- 20 He will receive his reward.

LESSON 6 Elements That Build Christian Maturity

What could a workman do without his tools? No matter how beautiful the plans for his building. No matter how wonderful the seed for his planting. He must have tools to accomplish his task.

Christian maturity, as we have seen, is a goal for the believer. The Bible provides us with many helpful motivations for growth. Growing up in Christ will enable you to assume adult privilege and responsibility. It will preserve you from being tossed and blown about as a child. Maturing Christians are able to receive teaching that the Holy Spirit has for them. This teaching leads to goals of Christ. The growing Christian must be aware of the final exam he must take before his Lord.

Reaching these goals is the problem. We must become a grand building of God. We are to be His fruitful field. Mature family responsibility is a position that must be attained. But how do we accomplish these goals? This chapter deals with practical steps for accomplishing them. The following outline presents human actions and attitudes God can use to bring transform into the likeness of His Son.

lesson outline

Total Commitment to Jesus Christ
Growth through Bible Study and Living
Spiritual Power of Prayer
Recognition of Servanthood Under Christ
 Sanctified Living
 Living by Will
Understanding the Ministries of the Holy Spirit
Cooperation with the Holy Spirit's Leadership
Relationship with Other Christians
 Mutual Help and Growth
 Sharing Faith with Others

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Explain the relationship of our position to Christ's position.
- State how the Bible can keep us from sinning against God.
- Describe the results of the believers' prayer in Acts 4:24–31.
- Use Colossians 1:10 to describe the life and deeds of the believer.
- Point out how a believer's sin affects his Christian maturity.
- State how we relate our wills to God's will in order to mature in Christ.
- Relate the Holy Spirit's ministry of truth to the believer's growth in Christ.
- Relate the believer's cooperation with the Spirit to his spiritual growth.
- Explain why Christ placed ministers in the church.
- List four helpful directions for Christian witnessing.

learning activities

1. Read the lesson.
2. Do the exercises in the lesson development, referring as needed to the textbook. Check your answers with those in the textbook.

3. Turn to the notebook chart you made in Lesson 2. Under the heading *Spiritual* write the Scriptures that seem most helpful to you for spiritual growth.
4. Take the self-test at the end of this lesson, and check your answers carefully with those given in this textbook. Review items answered incorrectly.

key words

audience
direction
excellent
interact
lens

obvious
prevail
remarkable
response
sacred

tool
vital
weapon

lesson development

In this lesson, I wish to share some simple, practical tools. These tools are the main headings of the lesson outline. They have greatly helped me in my own effort to attain Christian maturity. I would like to suggest that you write these headings on a card and carry them with you, or perhaps copy them in the front of your Bible. Use them to examine your own life. I hope you will find these tools helpful.

TOTAL COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST

Objective 1. *Explain the relationship of our position to Christ's position.*

We are born again by the Spirit of God. This cannot happen until we humbly repent of our sins and trust Jesus Christ as our Savior. But, in addition, we must confess with our mouth that Jesus Christ is our Lord. "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

Kurios is the word for "lord" in the original language of the New Testament. In that day, it was used of an important person such as the Roman emperor. In fact, by the time the book of Romans was written, each Roman citizen had to go once a year to the temple. There he threw a pinch of incense into the fire and shouted, "Caesar is Lord." The word *kurios* meant absolute king, unreserved ruler. When the Jews translated the Old Testament into the Greek language, they chose *kurios* and used it where "Jehovah" appeared in the Old Testament.

Do you see how meaningful it is for a Christian to say, "Jesus is Lord"? This means Jesus is king, master, and ruler. When we say "Jesus Christ is Lord," we are not just repeating a creed. We are saying: "For me, Jesus Christ has a unique and powerful place as my Master and sovereign ruler. He is my Lord."

Now, please turn to Colossians 1:9–20. This is a wonderful Scripture which lifts up Jesus. Here we find that Jesus is called “the firstborn over all creation.” In fact, God made the world through Him.

Application

1 Read Colossians 1:9–20. Write the last sentence of verse 18 in your notebook. What position is Jesus to have?



This first-place position means my desires, relationships, and very life must be second to His place. Jesus becomes a *lens* through which I see my world and my personal life. A simple way to say this is:

CHRIST CONSTANTLY IN COMMAND — CHRIST COMPLETELY IN CONTROL

I receive instruction from Him by His Spirit. The Holy Spirit is in control of my life. Can you join me in the following prayer?

O God, help me to make Jesus Christ, Your Son and my Savior, truly Lord of all my life. I open every area to His command and control. My heart is open for the Holy Spirit to work and give Jesus first place in me. May others see only Jesus in my life. Amen.

GROWTH THROUGH BIBLE STUDY AND LIVING

Objective 2. *State how the Bible can keep us from sinning against God.*

My Christian growth is directly related to the time I have spent with the Word of God. The Bible is the Christian’s main textbook. It is your weapon, your map and guidebook, your daily food. The Scriptures will guard your spirit, give you light, and plan your life. We have already seen in 1 Peter 2:2 that new Christians should be like new babies, crying for the pure milk of the Word. We have further learned from Hebrews 5:11–15 that by use of the Word we grow from babies to mature adults.

Let us look at some basic statements about the Word of God.

Application

- 2 Read Hebrews 4:12. According to this passage, the Bible is compared to
and it judges



The Word of God has a way of cleansing to our lives. This is important for growth.

Application

- 3 Read John 15:1–4. Jesus uses the branch and vine to tell His disciples that because of His teaching, they can be
- a) clean.
 - b) mature.
 - c) friendly.
 - d) Christian.



Psalm 119—the longest chapter in the Bible—is one of the most wonderful Scriptures about the Word of God. Almost every verse contains a reference to the Word of God. God’s Word is called His law, His command, His instruction, His teaching, etc. Now is a good time to read the entire psalm, and then answer questions to help your understanding of God’s Word.

Application

- 4 Psalm 119:9 asks, “How can a young man keep his way pure?” We can keep our lives pure by
- a) reading books.
 - b) going to church.
 - c) obeying God’s commands.
- 5 Look at Psalm 119:11. How can we keep from sinning against God?
-



A simple truth is that God's Word will keep us from sinning, and sinning will keep us from God's Word. His Word will also provide direction for our lives.

Application

6 Using Psalm 119:105, fill in the missing blanks. "Your word is a to my feet and a for my path."

7 Using Psalm 119:130 fill in the missing blanks. "The unfolding of your words gives ; it givesto the simple."

You can study the Bible in many ways. Some read a certain amount of the Scriptures every day. One suggested study is called "2-2-1." Beginning with Genesis and Matthew, this plan calls for two chapters of the Old Testament and two chapters of the New Testament, plus one Psalm or chapter of Proverbs each day. Another plan is called "Topical Study." This focuses on a subject, such as the Holy Spirit, and studies all available Scriptures on that subject.

Another ICI course, *Understanding the Bible*, teaches you how to use God's Word. *Understanding the Bible* is a course in this same Christian Service Series. Perhaps that would be a good direction for you after the *Christian Maturity* study is completed.

Remember: Your Christian growth depends on God's Word. Through the written Word, God reveals the Living Word—our Lord Jesus Christ. You will grow in relation to the amount of time you give to God's Word, both in studying it and obeying it.

SPIRITUAL POWER OF PRAYER

Objective 3. *Describe the results of the believers' prayer in Acts 4:24–31.*

Prayer is talking with God. It is a privilege for the believer to have an audience with the King. Prayer is a powerful way a believer matures. Frequently time with the Father in prayer helps us grow to be more like Him.

The believer prays to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Seventeen words are translated “prayer” in the original languages of the Bible. Each has the definite meaning of *asking*. Prayer can best be illustrated by a child’s talking to his parents. As the child matures, the level of the conversation grows. Our emphasis in this study is on the necessity of being consistent in personal prayer life.

Application

8 Answer the following questions based on Hebrews 11:6:

- a** What must we have when we come to God?
- b** Whom does God reward?



God has ordained that man can communicate with Him through prayer. It is a sacred privilege and a great responsibility. It is most important to understand that our prayer makes a difference in our lives and the lives of others.

Application

9 Reserve a two-page section in your notebook for *Christian Maturity*, and entitle it: “Promises for Prayer.” For now, write in the following Scripture references, leaving room between them.



Promises and Instructions for Prayer

Ephesians 2:18; 3:12; 6:18
Hebrews 4:16; 7:25; 10:9;10:19–20; 11:6
John 9:31; 14:13–14; 15:7, 16; 16:24
Romans 5:8; 12:12
1 Peter 3:7; 4:7; 5:7
Philippians 4:6, 7, 19
Psalms 3:4; 5:3; 62:8

These Scriptures give examples that are encouraging to our spirit and that teach us how the tool of prayer can become important to our growth.

Application

- 10 Read the earnest prayer in Acts 4:24–31.
- a Who prayed this prayer?
- b What were the results of this prayer?



George Mueller, a great Christian in the nineteenth century, cared for thousands of orphans, yet he never asked any man for support. He prayed and all the needs of the work were met. This great man of faith and prayer discovered it was better to begin the day with reading the Word of God than to try to begin by prayer. The reading of the Word of God in humility and meditation brings faith and power and the *desire to pray*.

An old Christian motto says, “Prayer changes things.” But we must remember that *prayer also changes people*. To be used of God, we must learn the lesson of prayer. It is a lesson learned more by practice than by study. The Holy Spirit teaches us to pray. Do not worry about how much or how little you know about prayer—begin *praying*. Pray every day.

Application

11 Read Daniel 6:10. How consistent was Daniel's prayer life?



It is possible to pray anywhere and in any position. I can pray during the activities of life. It is, however, important to set aside times when you and the Lord are alone in communion. This is how you can be refreshed, made strong, and given direction for your day. Little prayer will equal little power; more prayer, more power; much prayer, much power.

RECOGNITION OF SERVANTHOOD UNDER CHRIST

Objective 4. Use *Colossians 1:10* to describe the life and deeds of the believer.

Consistent Christian living requires that we recognize that we are Christ's love-servants. The word *consistent* is important. It means "agreement" or "harmony." Our conduct cannot be consistent unless it is in agreement with what we profess. Stated simply, we must practice what we teach. We need to prove by our lives the faith we profess.

Application

12 Read *Colossians 1:9–14*. According to verse 10, how is the believer to live, and what will he always do?



Pleasing the Lord means doing what the Master desires even before we are commanded to do it. Any servant does what he is commanded to do. But the love-servant, the believer, lives differently. He sees what he should do and does it even before being commanded. Thus, his life shows he really means it when he says, "Jesus Christ is my Lord."

Application

13 In 1 Chronicles 11:15–19 is a wonderful story of three of David’s mightiest men. Read the story and write a paragraph in your notebook about *walking worthy of the Lord*. The Holy Spirit can use your story. Do not go on until you have done this.

Now, read Colossians 3. If you are alone, read it aloud. This section of Scripture is a pattern for the Christian walk.

Remember our previous study. To have the likeness of Jesus Christ is to have His mind or attitude (Philippians 2:5–8). This means, as we have seen, acceptance of our servant relationship to our wonderful Lord. Our acceptance of this relationship is based on sincere *recognition of our servanthood under Christ*. This recognition produces not only enjoyable Christian blessings but also *Christian maturity that performs Christian duties*. *If Jesus is really my Lord, then I will do my duties gladly and to the best of my ability.*

Sanctified Living

Objective 5. *Point out how a believer’s sin affects his Christian maturity.*

Another aspect of consistent life concerns *sanctification*. This is an important word. It refers to our special relationship to God’s holiness. Romans 6 is an important chapter on this subject. The underlying thought behind the chapter is: “Since God has saved us by His grace and mercy, we should not keep on living in our sinful way.” The apostle teaches that we are to live as people *dead* to our old sinful desires. Our new life is to live for Christ.

Application

14 Read carefully Romans 6:11–13. Verses 11 and 13 speak of death to sin and life in Christ. According to verse 13 we are to surrender our whole being to God’s purposes. What are God’s purposes?

A way for me to keep sanctified and holy is to be sensitive to sin in my life. The Holy Spirit is always faithful to convict of sin, but we sometimes allow pride, self, and excuses to cover the *rays* of conviction. If we choose to respond in humility to conviction, we have two wonderful promises in 1 John 1:7, 9.

Application

15 According to 1 John 1:7, we are purified from every sin by the

- a) Word of God.
- b) blood of Jesus.
- c) light.

16 According to 1 John 1:9, when we confess our sins, God's two-fold response will be to

.....

How does *sin* in a Christian's life relate to his growth in Christ? It *prevents* that *growth* by blocking the way to spiritual maturity. If I am to be consistent—if I am to “practice what I teach”—I must keep my life emptied and cleansed of sin. Sanctified living is essential to Christian maturity.

Living by Will

Objective 6. *State how we relate our wills to God's will in order to mature in Christ.*

Truly consistent Christian life depends largely upon the use of our human will. God will not do for us what we must do. We have already said the human will is part of the “inner man.” Every Christian must have definite “I will's” and some equally definite “I will not's.” God promises His help and power to support our decisions.

Application

17 For each of the following verses, state in your own words how human will relates to human action. (The answer to the first verse is provided.)

- a) Daniel 1:8Daniel willed not to become unclean.
- b) Daniel 3:18
- c) Luke 15:18
- d) Esther 4:16



Philippians 2:12–13 says, “Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.”

These verses show us the cooperation between our part and God’s part in our accomplishing His desires for us. God wants our lives to have consistent growth, and He is willing to help us to bring about His purposes. *Through the submission of our wills to God’s will, we experience increasing Christian maturity.*

Application

18 Another verse for this area of our growth is Colossians 3:17. According to this verse, you should do in the name of the Lord Jesus

- a) everything you do or say.
- b) most of what you do or say.
- c) only those things that are spiritual.



UNDERSTANDING THE MINISTRIES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Objective 7. *Relate the Holy Spirit’s ministry of truth to the believer’s growth in Christ.*

Since the human being is fundamentally spirit, Christian maturity is fundamentally spiritual. Spirit is our highest quality. It is in *spirit* that we find the image or likeness of God in people.

Application

- 19 John 4:24 points out that God is
- a) like man.
 - b) Spirit.
 - c) eternal.
 - d) kind.
-



God and people are similar in that both are mind, personality, and spirit. Thus, they can have fellowship or communion. God is Spirit: the Holy Spirit. Inner man is also spirit. Man can only worship God through the spirit and truth of his own being.

We have already studied the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives in Lesson 4. Jesus told His disciples in John 16:7–15 that it was a good thing He was going away. Although this was shocking to His disciples, it was necessary to His sending the Holy Spirit. From that moment, believers were to “grow up” under the influence of the invisible Spirit—not the visible Jesus. Thus, increased faith would become necessary. Man is convicted of sin, shown the way to salvation, placed in Christ’s body (the church), taught spiritual truth, and given power for service—all through God’s Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the source of energy for the Christian life.

Jesus Christ can only be revealed and glorified through the Holy Spirit, and it is only through this same Spirit that the believer can mature. John 16:8 tells us the Holy Spirit will show people that they are wrong about *sin*, about what is *right*, and about God’s *judgment*.

Application

- 20 What two ministries of the Holy Spirit to the believer are pointed out in John 16:13?
-
-



In the first part of the answer to the preceding exercise, the Spirit ministers knowledge of truth to the believer. In the second part of the answer, He helps the believer to practice (believe and obey) truth. We must know truth before we can practice it, and its practice must be added to knowledge to develop Christian maturity.

Application

21 Acts 1:8 teaches us about another ministry of the Holy Spirit, the work of

- a) destruction of sin by fire.
- b) inspiring us to worship.
- c) filling us with power to witness.

When you have completed this course, you may be interested in doing an entire course on *The Holy Spirit, Spiritual Gifts*, or the *Fruit of the Spirit*. They would help you greatly to mature in your Christian experience. There is not space enough in this course to cover each of these subjects.

COOPERATION WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT'S LEADERSHIP

Objective 8. *Describe the believer's cooperation with the Spirit and relate it to his spiritual growth.*

Rewiew some of the truths on the Holy Spirit in Lesson 4. Now, we are ready to study Ephesians 5:18, which says, "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit." Here, the word *filled* does not mean as water fills a bottle. It is from the Greek word that suggests "to pervade or take possession of." The Holy Spirit is not a substance to fill an empty receptacle. He is a *Person* to control another personality—namely, the believer.

In Ephesians 5:18, the Greek word for "filled" represents a *moment by moment experience*. We are to be continually *filled or controlled* by the Holy Spirit. When we are filled with anything, we are controlled by it. This statement applies to being filled with love, filled with hate, filled with ambition, etc. We saw in Lesson 4 that there are certain evil works that prevail when

human nature controls us. But the believer filled with the Holy Spirit is controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:16–17 speaks forcefully of the necessity of our cooperating with the Holy Spirit’s leadership: “Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature.”

Application

22 Describe briefly the fruit we might expect in our lives if we allow divine nature to *control* us (see Galatians 5:22–23).

.....

We can see that although the Spirit of God is within every believer, the individual believer must cooperate with Him by yielding to His leadership. If I completely surrender my spirit to God’s Spirit, I will become motivated, energized, taught, and strengthened toward my goal of spiritual maturity.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS

Mutual Help and Growth

Objective 9. *Explain why Christ placed ministers in the church.*

The individual believer does not grow up alone. Like the child maturing in a family, the Christian needs others to help him grow. We need the fellowship, encouragement, and contribution of others. God made us to need fellowship with each other as well as fellowship with Him.

Application

23 Hebrews 10:24–25 contains commands about the believers’ fellowship. Verse 25 states that we are NOT to give up the habit of

- a) meeting together.
 - b) prayer.
 - c) Bible reading.
-

It is wonderful when there are many believers in our home area. Many Christians meeting together is often enjoyable. But perhaps this is not possible where you live. Our Lord gave a helpful promise for even small meetings of believers: “Where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them” (Matthew 18:20).

There is a remarkable strengthening of our lives when we meet with just one other person. When two believers pray and work for Christ together, they multiply their effectiveness. (See Leviticus 26:8 and Deuteronomy 32:30.) Jesus Christ sent His disciples to spread the gospel in teams.

Application

24 Read Luke 10:1. How were the first gospel teams sent out?

There are many other passages on the principle of working together for God. See Acts 10:23, 11:12, and 15:36–41. When the Holy Spirit separated people unto ministry and witness in the early days of the church, He separated them by two’s, three’s, and four’s. There is an obvious reason for this: when two are together, they support each other. They encourage and help establish each other. It is scriptural to believe and ask God to bring one or more others to work closely with you in your Christian life.

Bible study comes alive when we can discuss and compare views with someone else. Our witness becomes bolder when two stand together. Life becomes more consistent when lived before another.

If you are fortunate enough to be part of a good church, you are in a helpful setting for growth. God has put excellent gifts in the body of Christ to strengthen the believer. Teachers are a gift of God for our growth. Even this course of study can help you mature.

Application

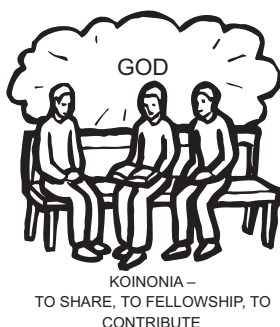
25 Read again Ephesians 4:11–12. Why did Christ give ministers to the church?

.....

.....

In short, the believer is called to grow in the fellowship of others. *Koinonia* is an important Greek word that appears often in the New Testament. It means “to share, to fellowship, to contribute.” Look up the following references: 1 John 1:3, Philippians 1:5, Philemon 6, and 1 Corinthians 10:16–17. In each of these Scriptures *koinonia* appears.

Fellowship with God, with one another, witnessing before the world, and sharing the nature of Jesus Christ—what a wonderful way to grow!



Sharing Faith With Others

Objective 10. *List four helpful directions for Christian witnessing.*

Perhaps no area of Christian life is more confusing than witnessing. Many times we feel the need to share Christ with friends. We feel guilty when we do not. The witness of our faith is both an *expression of maturity and a means for more growing*. The first and greatest witness we give is our life itself. Second Corinthians 3:3 tells us that Christ writes a letter with the Spirit on human hearts. Everyone can know and read this kind of letter. In a certain sense it may be said that the believer's life is a Bible, the only Bible that some people ever read!

There is an important likeness between conditions that keep humans from reproducing children and conditions that keep Christians from helping to reproduce more Christians. Let us consider some of those conditions.

1. Just as a small child cannot have a baby because of the lack of maturity necessary for reproduction, so immaturity in our Christian life will often prevent our witness from being effective.

2. Just as reproduction requires union between a man and a woman (a union the Bible says must be through marriage), so a believer only reproduces spiritually when living in vital union with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

3. Just as disease or impairment of vital body areas prevents reproduction, so sin and careless living affect the believer's ability to reproduce spiritually.

Application

26 Prayerfully read Colossians 4:5–6. In these verses are four simple directions to follow in our witnessing. List them here in the order they are mentioned.

- a**
- b**
- c**
- d**



Each of these directions could be expanded, but our space is limited. You may wish to list the following Scriptures in your notebook (under *spiritual*) for future reference on the subject of witnessing: 1 Peter 3:15, Matthew 5:13, and Luke 12:11–12. When you share your faith, it is strengthened. Witnessing not only brings others to the Lord but also increases our own spiritual maturity.

self-test

COMPLETION. Since our effectiveness for God and our growth depends on how we use the tools God has provided for us, examine yourself on these points. Complete the following statements by marking **S** if your use of the numbered “tool” is Strong, **M**, for Medium, **W** for Weak, and **N** for Needs change.

	S	M	W	N
1. TOTAL COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST				
2. BIBLE STUDY				
3. PRAYER				
4. LIVING AS CHRIST’S SERVANT				
5. YIELDING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT				
6. RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS				
7. WITNESSING				

TRUE-FALSE. Write **T** in the blank space preceding the following statement if the statement is true. Write **F** if the statement is false.

- **8** God will forgive our sins and purify us from wrongdoing whether or not we confess our sins.
- **9** According to George Mueller, a great prayer warrior, it is better to begin the day with prayer rather than by reading God’s Word.
- **10** Sanctification refers to the believer’s special relationship to God’s holiness.

MULTIPLE CHOICE. There is only one correct answer for the following question. Circle the letter of the correct answer.

- 11** The word *koinonia* in the original language of the New Testament is connected with which important concept?
- a) Spiritual as opposed to carnal
 - b) Fellowship sharing, contributing
 - c) Growth through suffering
 - d) The plan of God’s Word

SHORT ANSWER. Write the proper to the question on the lines provided.

12 Just as certain conditions prevent humans from reproducing children, certain conditions keep Christians from reproducing other Christians. List two of such conditions.

.....

.....

answers to the study questions

- 1 First place in all things.
- 15 b) blood of Jesus.
- 2 a double-edged sword; the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.
- 16 forgive our sins and purify us from wrongdoing.
- 3 a) clean.
- 17 a See example.
 - b Three men would not worship heathen gods.
 - c A man would go to his father.
 - d A woman would go to the king.
- 4 c) obeying God's commands.
- 18 a) everything you do or say.
- 5 By keeping God's Word in our heart
- 19 b) Spirit.
- 6 lamp, light.
- 20 Revelation of truth, and leading into truth.
- 7 light, understanding
- 21 c) filling us with power to witness.
- 8 a Faith.
 - b Those who seek Him.
- 22 The fruit of the Holy Spirit.
- 9 Your copy of these Scripture references.
- 23 a) meeting together.
- 10 a The believers
 - b The place was shaken and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to proclaim God's message with boldness.
- 24 Two by two
- 11 Daniel prayed three times every day.
- 25 To prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service
- 12 He is to live as the Lord wants and do what pleases the Lord.
- 13 Your paragraph on walking worthy of the Lord.
- 26 a Be wise in the way you act.
 - b Make good use of opportunity.
 - c Use pleasant and interesting speech.
 - d Know how to answer queries.
- 14 Yielding our bodies as instruments of righteousness

LESSON 7 Foundational Truths and Beyond

Have you ever been lost? Perhaps you lost your sense of direction in the woods, a jungle, or a strange village or town. You continued walking and, after passing a place you had already been, you realized your error. You had been walking in a circle instead of going forward!

This can be true in our Christian experience. Many believers, as we have seen, refuse to grow up. Others cannot seem to find their way. They want to go forward, but they seem to go in circles. God's Word teaches an important principle: *We must establish what we have learned and then go on.* We should not continue to repeat the same lesson. Let us not linger in childhood. The foundation of our Christian experience must be made secure. Then, we must build beyond foundational truths.

lesson outline

Maturity: Building and Leaving

Seeing the Goal

Knowing How to Reach the Goal

Leaving: A Necessity to Arriving

Six Stones in Our Foundation

Conditions for Becoming a Christian

Repenting from Useless Works

Believing in God

Practices in the Christian Life

Teaching About Baptisms

Teaching About Laying on of Hands

Pictures of the Future

Resurrection of the Dead

Eternal Judgment

Summary

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the kind of faith Christian maturity requires.
- State what the believer's spiritual growth includes in addition to personal effort.
- Identify things the believer must make secure in his life before leaving them to go forward in Christian maturity.
- Define the word *catechism*, explaining its relationship to our spiritual experience.
- Describe the repentance necessary to salvation.
- State what everyone who believes in God's Son receives.
- State the purpose of baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- Describe special blessings and responsibilities that accompany the laying on of hands.
- Point out the guarantee that believers will be resurrected.
- Explain why our belief in the sacrifice of Christ delivers us from the penalty of eternal death.

learning activities

1. Read the lesson.
2. Look up in the glossary the definitions to key words you do not understand.
3. Do the exercises in the lesson development, referring as needed to the lesson.
4. Take the self-test at the end of this lesson, and check your answers carefully. Review those items answered incorrectly.
5. Review Unit 2 (Lessons 5–7), then take the unit progress evaluation and send it to your ICI instructor.

key words

doctrine
foundation
guarantee

ordain
penance
require

resurrection

lesson development

MATURITY: BUILDING AND LEAVING

We have several times in our study come to Hebrews 5:11–14. Writing to a group of first-century Christians, the author discusses their immaturity. He wants to teach them important truths. However, the truths cannot be received because the believers have not grown beyond the baby stage. It is necessary to teach them the first lessons of God’s message over and over. They have not used the Word of God to grow. They will take only milk.

Seeing the Goal

Objective 1. Describe the kind of faith Christian maturity requires.

Hebrews 6:1 continues this discussion on moving ahead: “Let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity.” The word in the original language which is translated *maturity* means “a full age or a mature adulthood.”

Application

1 According to Hebrews 6:1, who determines our maturity?

.....



What progress could be made on a building if the workmen laid the foundation every day? None! Likewise, no teacher can progress if he or she lays the foundations repeatedly.

Great teachers of the New Testament era generally divided their students into three groups: (1) beginners, (2) those making some progress, and (3) those making more progress. The goal of the believer is to be among those maturing: those who do not need the first lessons repeated. *This should be your desire.* You should want to go forward.

We have studied this goal of maturity from many points of view. It is to become like Jesus Christ, to accept our role under His Lordship. It is to grow in understanding. It is to be a teacher

sometimes rather than having to be taught all the time. Remember that Christian maturity does not refer to total or complete knowledge. It is not sinless perfection. It does require a growing and responsible faith. The longer we have known Jesus, the better understanding we should have of who we believe Him to be. The longer we know Christ the more He should be reflected in our lives. Old faults should disappear. New virtues should appear and develop.

Knowing How to Reach the Goal

Objective 2. *State what the believer's spiritual growth includes in addition to personal effort.*

The teacher in Hebrews writes, “And God permitting, we will do so” (Hebrews 6:3). Notice that this passage includes the writer. This is not just an exhortation to the Hebrews.

An important point must be made from the original language in Hebrews 6:1. The word translated “we will do so” is from the Greek verb *phero*, which means “to carry or bear.” Here it is in the passive voice and means, “Let us be carried along” to mature teaching.

Two important teachings come from this word study. First, the will to do is not accomplished by personal effort alone! Christian maturity is achieved under the active power of the Holy Spirit. We have studied this in several places. The thought in this passage is of our personal *surrender* to an active influence. God is already working toward our growth. We have only to surrender ourselves. We must yield to Him.

Christian perfection or maturity would be difficult if we were left to do it on our own. Instead, Hebrews 6 and many other Scriptures tell us we are to be carried along toward this goal.

Have you ever tried to row a boat against the current? That is very difficult. In a way, the believer must fight the world's current. But in spiritual matters, the strong current of the Holy Spirit is moving the believer toward maturity. We have only to cooperate, by our will, with God's purpose.

Application

2 According to Hebrews 13:20–21, who provides every good thing you need, and why are these things provided for you?

.....

.....



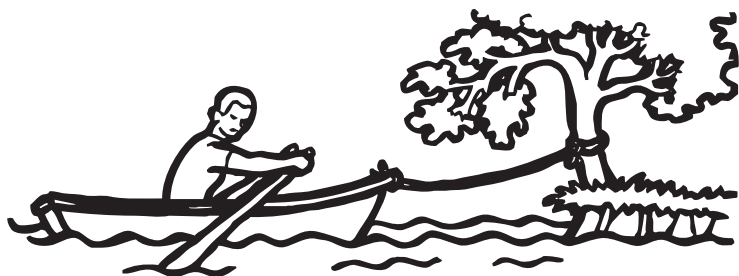
This passage explains further that an important reason for our obedience and progression is that God may “work in us what is pleasing to him.” The goal is our maturity and the glory and purpose of God!

The second thing that must be learned from the study of *phero* in Hebrews 6:1 is that this Greek verb is in a form which shows a continuous action. “Being carried along” through the active influence of the Holy Spirit is a continuous action. It does not happen through a single crisis. Maturity in Jesus Christ does not come to us in a single moment. *This is vital to know.* The goal of this action of the Holy Spirit is spiritual growth into full maturity. In the same way, our surrender must be continuous. We might translate this passage, “Let us continue to allow ourselves to be carried along toward maturity.”

Leaving: A Necessity to Arriving

Objective 3. *Identify things the believer must secure in his life before leaving them to go forward in Christian maturity.*

We tie a boat or canoe to a tree or dock so it will not float away. But we must untie the boat before we move away. Wouldn't it look strange to see someone rowing without removing the rope? He would be going nowhere! Thus, it is necessary to leave one place in order to get to another place.



Perhaps this illustration seems funny. “No one would be that silly,” you say. Yet, in the Christian life this can happen. Every believer knows he is supposed to move toward the fullness of Christian maturity. The full stature of Jesus Christ is the goal for his life. In spite of this, many believers are still occupied with the foundation. They continue to lay again the first teachings.

Recall the instructions of Hebrews 6:1, not to repeat the early lessons of the Christian message but to go on to maturity. The necessary condition to progress is giving up. As children mature, they must abandon old toys and other childish ways. Here, the word “leave” refers to moving from elementary lessons to a deeper knowledge, as those who pass on to a new subject or another grade in school.

But it would be foolish to build higher without first making sure the foundation is secure. The writer to the Hebrews makes sure believers recognize their duty to progress. Recognizing this will make them anxious to see the foundation is secure. Then they can begin to build upon it, rather than constantly relearning the foundation. In this study, we will take a short look at the truths *foundational*. Our purpose will be to let you establish them in your own life.

Application

3 According to 1 Corinthians 3:11, what is the only foundation for the Christian experience?

- a) The Bible
- b) The church
- c) Jesus Christ

4 In Hebrews 6:1, things the believer must leave behind are called the of the Christian message.



SIX STONES IN OUR FOUNDATION

Objective 4. Define the word catechism, explaining its relationship to our spiritual experience.

The Bible clearly states in Hebrews 6:1–3 that certain doctrines are more basic or foundational than others. The goal, you remember, is to go on to true Christian maturity. But we cannot hope to do this unless the sure foundation in Christian doctrine has been secured. A doctrine is *an important principle or belief of Christian faith*. In speaking of this foundation, the writer lists six doctrines.

Application

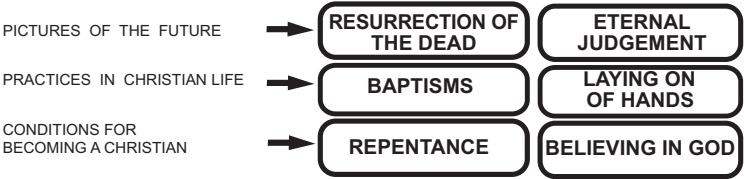
5 Carefully read Hebrews 6:1–2, then list the six stones (topics) in this doctrinal foundation.

- a
- b
- c
- d
- e
- f



Ancient records tell us Christians in the first century treated these foundational teachings as a catechism. *A catechism is made up of the elementary points of Christian doctrine taught to a new Christian*. No one would suggest that these stones make up all the important early teaching for a Christian. Yet they are a foundation. You can see that these six stones are basically divided into three sets of two each. The groundwork is laid in becoming a Christian. The next two stones are examples of practices in Christian life.

Doctrines concerning the future make up the third set. We shall study them according to this arrangement.



Conditions for Becoming a Christian

Repenting from Useless Works

Objective 5. *Describe the repentance necessary to salvation.*

The first stone of our foundation for becoming a Christian is turning away from useless works (Hebrews 6:1). This is an act of repentance. *Metanoein* is the Greek word for “repenting” in this verse. This Greek verb has one meaning throughout the history of the language. It means “to change one’s mind.” Repentance in the New Testament emphasizes *decision* rather than emotion. Many people think of repentance as an emotion—the shedding of tears and so forth. Others think repentance is a religious rite, such as “doing penance.” It is possible to cry or to go through penance and not repent. Repentance is a firm inward decision—a change of mind.

The word translated “repentance” in the Old Testament means literally “to turn” or “to return” or “to turn back.” The New Testament word emphasizes the inner decision, and the Old Testament word emphasizes the outward action. Put the two together and *repentance* becomes “an inner change of mind which brings about an outward turning back or turning around.” Through it, we begin to move in a new direction. Repentance is necessary to salvation of sinful people.

Application

6 Read Luke 15:11–32. The story is probably familiar to you. Point out in your own words the inner decision that the prodigal made in verse 18.

.....

7 Read Luke 15:20. How did the prodigal carry out his inner decision?

We have already seen that sinful man turned his back on God's purposes for his life. Every step he took was away from God. Sinful man must change in two ways: he must change his mind and change his direction. He must turn from his sin toward God.

Read Matthew 27:3–4. Here Judas is said to have repented. The word here is not the Greek word we have discussed. It is a word which means “to feel sorry, to experience anguish.” Apparently, he did not change his inner attitude or outward direction, for the next verse says he “hanged himself.”

Application

8 John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus Christ. He preached a special baptism. According to Mark 1:4, what did he tell the people to do about their sins?

- a) Turn away from their sins
- b) Learn the ways of God
- c) Become sorry and cry over wrongdoings

9 Read Mark 1:15. What did Jesus preach we must do with our sins?

Everywhere in the New Testament, repentance is the first necessary response of man to the gospel. God demands it. You may want to write in your notebook some other passages that teach this. They include Luke 13:3; Acts 2:37–38; and Acts 20:20–21.

Note further that this first stone in our Christian foundation describes a certain kind of repentance or turning around. It is a repentance from dead or useless works. I am sure you know the whole world is “religious.” Every person worships something. And there are many religious “works.” People hope to earn favor

with various gods by religious works. Buy these are useless, dead works.

Application

10 According to Ephesians 2:1, what causes people to be dead spiritually?

.....

Colossians 2:13 says, “You were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature.” Human’s acts lack the power to meet even the basic need of man. How then can we satisfy the holy God!

Believing in God

Objective 6. *State what everyone who believes in God’s Son receives.*

The second stone of our foundation conditions for becoming a Christian is believing in God. Jesus said in John 6:47, “He who believes has everlasting life.” To believe is to place our trust and confidence in someone or something. Hebrews 11:1–2 tells us, “Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.”

John 3:14–21 gives one of the best explanations of the importance of belief in Christ to the Christian life. Many believers around the world are helped by it.

Application

11 What will everyone who believes in God’s Son receive?

.....

12 According to John 3:18, why is a person judged?

- a) Because of his sins
 - b) Because he is not a part of the church
 - c) Because he has not believed in God’s only Son
 - d) Because he does not do the works of righteousness
-

In the original language, the phrase “believing in God” suggests the idea of *being directed* toward. Our faith is toward God. The special tense or time of this word suggests we are resting in that decision.

A great missionary was once trying to translate the Gospel of John into the language of the people he was working with. He could not find a word for “believe” in their language. One day, a friend from among the people came into the missionary’s house. He was exhausted from working under the hot sun. He fell into a chair and used a word in his language which meant: “I’m putting all my weight on this chair. I’m unable to hold myself up.”

Immediately the missionary jumped up and said, “That’s the word I need.” Faith means placing our entire weight and hope in Jesus Christ as God’s Son and our Savior.



Practices in the Christian Life

Our second couplet of foundation truths has to do with God-ordained practices in the church. Some are called *ordinances* or *institutes*. An ordinance is a practice God has ordered the church to keep. For example, the Lord’s Supper or communion is an ordinance.

Teaching About Baptisms

Objective 7. *State the purpose of baptism in the Holy Spirit.*

According to Hebrews 6:2, the teaching about baptisms is a critical part of our Christian foundation. There are several baptisms in the Scripture. They include John’s baptism as a sign of repentance, the baptism of Christ, and the baptism of suffering. The Christian is concerned about three basic baptisms: (1) baptism into Christ’s body through the new birth, (2) baptism in water as an outward evidence of one’s experience in Jesus Christ, (3) baptism in the Holy Spirit. A thorough coverage

of this subject is beyond the scope of this course. A course in Christian Doctrine would be highly recommended for this coverage. However, through this course you will gain at least a working knowledge of this foundational truth.

Application

13 Baptism into Christ's body through the new birth is the subject of 1 Corinthians 12:11–13. According to this passage, we have all been..... into one body by the same.....



Underline in your Bible all the appearances of “one” in 1 Corinthians 12:11–13.

An important Scripture for us to remember on the subject of the union of all believers with Christ is Galatians 3:26–28:

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

The second baptism we need to know is easier to understand. I refer to the believer's baptism in water. It is physical. All Christians agree that baptism must be meaningful. It must not be an empty ritual (as would be the baptism of an unbeliever). When the believer is born again, it is an inward and invisible work. But the person experiencing this work is commanded to show it in a physical way by being baptized in water.

Application

14 Read Acts 2:38. From this passage explain the step Peter told people to take following repentance.

.....

15 First Peter 3:21 says baptism is “not the removal of dirt from the body.” According to this passage, what is water baptism?

.....



Romans 6:1–4 illustrates water baptism. It teaches that baptism is an identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The waters believers go into are likened to the grave. Through faith, we leave in those waters any remnants of our old life. When we burst forth from the baptismal waters, we relate to Christ’s resurrection. “Just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” Again, I recommend that you study this subject in more detail.

The third baptism we should know is the one Jesus promised to His disciples: “John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:5). John had prophesied this in Matthew 3:11–12, “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I.... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” In Acts 2 we read about the experiences of Jesus’ followers when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Do not be confused because this experience in the Holy Spirit is spoken of in different ways. It is a “pouring” in Joel 2:28–29, a “filling” in Ephesians 5:18, “rains” in Hosea 6:3 and James 5:7. Specific passages tell of other believers (besides the first disciples) being baptized in the Holy Spirit: the Samaritans in Acts 8:14–17, the apostle Paul in Acts 9:17 and 1 Corinthians 14:18, the house of Cornelius in Acts 10:44–48, and the Ephesian disciples in Acts 19:1–7. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is for the purpose of exalting Christ, producing spiritual gifts and fruit in our lives, and giving us power for God’s service.

Teaching About Laying on of Hands

Objective 8. *Describe special blessings and responsibilities that accompany the laying on of hands.*

Another Christian practice which the Word of God considers a foundation truth is the teaching about “the laying on of hands” (Hebrews 6:2). In Old Testament Jewish practice, this rite was used to symbolically transfer man’s guilt to the animal sacrifice. It was also used to transfer a special blessing to a person, or to

signify his being set apart for a special office. Practice of the last two of these forms continued into the New Testament. Let us briefly look at them.

Jesus blessed children by laying His hands on them (Mark 10:16), and others laid hands on people as a solemn means of blessing them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. People received the Holy Spirit when an apostle laid hands on them (Acts 19:6).

Application

16 According to James 5:14–15, what blessings are given to a sick person as the elders of the church “anoint him with oil” and pray for him?

.....

The laying on of hands was also used to set apart a person for special work. Sometimes this is called *ordaining*. To ordain simply means to put in an official position or responsibility.

Application

17 Read Acts 6:1–6. Who were being set apart to a special work by the laying on of hands in verse 6?

- a) The apostles
- b) Seven men to take charge of business
- c) Elders for the church

18 Read Acts 13:1–3. Who asked for two men to be set apart for a special work?

.....

19 Name the two men in this passage who were set apart by the laying on of hands.

.....

The Holy Spirit thinks it important that we have a basic knowledge of these three kinds of baptisms and the practice of laying on of hands.

Pictures of the Future

Now we come to the last pair of truths in the six foundation stones of our Christian doctrine. These are “the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment” (Hebrews 6:2). These truths taken together emphasize the permanence of our present actions. They speak of the significance of our earthly lives in the eternal order. These are the foundation stones which speak loudly of man’s current responsibility.

Resurrection of the Dead

Objective 9. *Point out the guarantee that believers will be resurrected.*

There has always been a dispute in the world over any teaching about the resurrection of the dead. Even in Jesus’ day, one group of Jews did not believe in the resurrection. It is a teaching that places responsibility upon man. Some men would rather not know there will be a resurrection. Yet deep in man’s spirit is the hope of life after death.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is very important to us. First Corinthians 15:12–28 is a section of Scripture that shows the relationship of our resurrection to that of Jesus.

Application

20 State in your own words (based on 1 Corinthians 15:15–16) how Paul relates Christ’s resurrection to our resurrection.

.....

.....



Let us emphasize what Paul says on this subject in 1 Corinthians 15:20: “Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” In Acts 4:2

the resurrection of Jesus Christ was being preached as proof that the dead will rise to life.

Application

21 Read 1 Peter 1:3–5. According to verse 3, what is the believer given through the resurrection of Jesus?



Paul's dominant desire was "to know Christ and the power of his resurrection" (Philippians 3:10). We, too, should want to know Jesus Christ in the power of His resurrection. Remember that in Romans 6:4 even our water baptism links Christ's resurrection with our own NEW LIFE. Praise God!

Eternal Judgment

Objective 10. *Explain why our belief in the sacrifice of Christ delivers us from the penalty of eternal death.*

Resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment are (as we have said) the last two foundational truths. Acts 17:31 speaks clearly about them: "He has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."

There remains before man the judicial process of God. It will be God's judgment through Jesus Christ. At least seven specific judgments are referred to in Scripture:

1. The judgment of the cross where Christ, as a substitute, bore the judgment from God which was due the sinner because of his sins. At that judgment the substitute was executed. Thus, all who believe in His sacrifice are delivered from the penalty of eternal death (John 5:24).

2. Judgment or punishment of the believer who persists in willful disobedience. We looked at this in the section on Wrong Exercise of Will in Lesson 4 of our course. Perhaps you would like to review that section. Note in particular the teaching from Hebrews 12. (See also 1 Corinthians 11:31–32.)

3. The judgment of Israel (Ezekiel 36:16–21).
4. The judgment of believers at the judgment seat of Christ. Perhaps you would like to turn back to the section on Preparing for the Final Test in Lesson 5 and review the teaching we have already given in this area (see 2 Corinthians 5:10).
5. The judgment of the nations (Matthew 25:31–46).
6. The judgment of the fallen angels (Jude 6).
7. The judgment at the great white throne, which is the place of judgment for the unbelieving world (Revelation 20:11–15).

These last two foundational truths are important to us because they help us live with eternal values in mind. There is no specific exercise involved with our study of judgments; however, reviewing the Scriptures referred to in this section will help to reinforce these truths.

SUMMARY

The truths we have briefly studied are the foundation of Christian experience. We are to move on to maturity by not laying this foundation over and over again like children building, knocking down, and rebuilding in the sand. However, the believer must secure the foundation. We can't build higher until it is secure.

But once it has been secured, it is time to leave the foundation for other things. I believe the writer to the Hebrews is showing that both Christian doctrine and Christian experience are necessary to spiritual growth.

The thief on the cross, the woman at the well, the apostle Paul, the Philippian jailer—ALL had definite, though widely differing, experiences. We too must know we have had a real experience with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. Doctrine is also important. Many Christians, like Apollos in the New Testament, teach sincerely but without sufficient knowledge.

We are to go forward to the building itself which is true Christian character. It is the life, the reflection of Christ in us, that really counts. This is a building above the foundation. It can be seen by people who may thereby glorify our Father.

self-test

TRUE-FALSE. Write **T** in the blank space if the statement is true. Write **F** if it is false.

-1 If the believer is to mature, he must do it entirely on his own without any active help from God.
-2 When the believer has established foundational truths, he must leave these truths and move on, building on them.
-3 A catechism is made up of the elementary points of Christian doctrine taught to new Christians.
-4 Repentance has to do mainly with an emotional feeling.
-5 Doctrine is an inner change of mind which brings about an outward turning back or turning around.
-6 An ordinance is a practice God has ordered the church to keep.
-7 There is no judgment for believers following their acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

8–13 The believer's foundation consists of three layers of two blocks each, as illustrated below. Please write, in the order of presentation in this course, the correct name for each block.

Pictures of the Future	12	13
Practices in the Christian Life	10	11
Conditions for becoming a Christian	8	9

Before you continue your study with Lesson 8, be sure to complete your unit student report for Unit 2 and return the answer sheet to your GU instructor.

answers to the study questions

- 1 We do.
- 12 c) Because he has not believed in God's only Son
- 2 The God of peace, in order that you may do His will
- 13 baptized, Spirit
- 3 c) Jesus Christ
- 14 Be baptized.
- 4 elementary teachings
- 15 The pledge or promise made to God from a good conscience
- 5 a Repenting from useless works
- b Believing in God
- c Teaching about baptisms
- d Teaching about laying on of hands
- e Resurrection of the dead
- f Eternal judgment
- 16 Physical healing and forgiveness of sins
- 6 He decided to go to his father.
- 17 b) Seven men to take charge of business
- 7 By getting up and going back to his father
- 18 The Holy Spirit
- 8 a) Turn away from their sins
- 19 Barnabas and Saul
- 9 Repent
- 20 Paul indicates that if we will not be raised to life, Christ has not been resurrected.
- 10 Their sins
- 21 A new birth into living hope
- 11 Eternal life





Proofs of Christian Maturity

Lessons

- 8 Evidence of Christian Character
- 9 Evidence of Useful Ministry
- 10 Evidence of Spiritual Transformation

LESSON 8 Evidence of Christian Character

We are nearing the end of our study. This final unit will deal with evidences that we are growing into Christian maturity. It is important to have measurements to check our progress against. The word *evidence* means “something that will furnish proof.” Evidence is often presented in a court of law. It is the proof of the guilt or innocence of the person on trial. A judge, magistrate, or jury of persons must weigh the evidence. They have the responsibility of judging whether or not the evidence is sufficient for a decision.

Scriptures contain many clear teachings on Christian evidences. In a sense the world is like a jury as even unbelievers recognize whether or not the Christian lives up to what he professes or says. This lesson deals with the most convincing evidence of mature Christian life: the believer’s manifestation of Jesus’ character in his or her life.

lesson outline

Resembling Jesus

 Reviewing the Goal

 Characteristics of Jesus' Life

Being Like Jesus

 Choice of Will

 Surrendering to the Holy Spirit

 Type of Lifestyle

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson, you should be able to:

- Identify our pattern for spiritual growth.
- Distinguish between partial and perfect (complete) Christian maturity.
- Identify traits of Jesus' character.
- Explain why it is difficult for the believer to be like Jesus.
- Explain how the believer is enabled to be like Jesus.
- Relate the believer's surrender to the Spirit to his being like Jesus.
- State who produces in submissive believers the spiritual growth that develops from attitudes described in the beatitudes.

learning activities

1. Read the lesson.
2. Look up in the glossary the definitions to key words you do not understand.
3. Do the exercises in the lesson development, referring as needed to the lesson.
4. Take the self-test at the end of this lesson, and check your answers carefully. Review those items answered incorrectly.

key words

character
enable
intimate

knowledge
manifestation
observe

victorious

lesson development

RESEMBLING JESUS

Objective 1. *Identify our pattern for spiritual growth.*

The newborn spirit (seed) within the new believer contains the likeness of God. Like a baby growing into the likeness of its family, the believer grows into the likeness of God. That likeness was seen in the face of Jesus Christ. Jesus was God living in human form. He set a pattern which gives every believer a model and standard for spiritual growth.

Reviewing the Goal

Objective 2. *Distinguish between partial and perfect (complete) Christian maturity.*

Let us review the goal of Christian growth:

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

What we have already studied in this course has helped to define what it is to become like God's Son. In this lesson, we are presenting the highest Christian evidence of all. This is the reflection of the character of Jesus Christ in our own character and lifestyle.

Another description of the goal toward which we press is found in Ephesians 4:12–13:

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.

Notice that the “knowledge of the Son of God” is a factor in becoming a mature person. There are three basic levels of knowledge. We can know facts about someone we have not met; we can know a person better through having met him; and we can know a person intimately, such as we know a close friend.

Application

1 Which of the three levels of knowledge do you think Paul referred to in Philippians 3:10? (Remember that this passage was written from prison near the end of Paul's life and ministry.)

.....

.....

Now compare your answer with the detailed one given in the answer section. Hopefully, Paul's heart-cry also illustrates our desire to know Christ intimately. We need to *seek* the most intimate knowledge of Christ as an aid to Christian maturity.

Growth was a constant goal for the apostle Paul. In Philippians 3:12 he states, "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me." A few verses later, Paul writes, "All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you" (Philippians 3:15). This should greatly encourage us. We can be mature—growing as we should—yet seek the goal of likeness to Jesus Christ.

Characteristics of Jesus' Life

Objective 3. *Identify traits of Jesus' character.*

Jesus Christ lived among us. He learned and developed in His human role. He grew physically, mentally, and in favor with God and people (Luke 2:52). He accepted the role of a servant in order to fulfill God's purpose for Him.

Look back in Lesson 2 and review this material. Please do not go on until you have done so.

Our purpose now is to see what Jesus was in His character. *Character* is "the parts or features of our essential nature which distinguish us from others." When we see a person's character, by their words or deeds, we see the essential person.

The children of God have basic characteristics though they may be from different nations, speak different languages, and have different skin color. Yet, when outsiders study true Christians, the observers can see common traits among the Christians. This commonality shows that Christians belong to a common group—the family of God.

To study the character of Jesus is a lifelong effort. For this study, let us look at several primary aspects of His character. First is Jesus' *selflessness*. He lived entirely to the glory and credit of the Father. John 1:14 writes, "We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father."

Application

2 Philip asked Jesus to show him the Father (see John 14:8). Jesus answered that anyone who had seen Him had seen the Father. In John 14:10, what did Jesus say about His words and work?

-
- 3** In Hebrews 1:3, Jesus is described as reflecting
- a) a borrowed nature.
 - b) earthly glory.
 - c) God's glory.

In Hebrews 1:3 Jesus is referred to as "the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being." Even evil spirits recognized that He was the Son of God. (See Matthew 8:29, Mark 1:24, Mark 3:11, and Luke 4:41.)

Application

4 Acts 19:11–16 implies that the demons saw God in Jesus Christ and in another teacher who was merely human. Who was this human person in whom demons recognized God's likeness?

.....

In addition to Christ's selflessness, there were two prominent characteristics of Jesus' life that are patterns for us. Both of

them are found in Philippians 2, where Jesus is shown taking upon himself not only human nature but also, by a choice of His will, the role of a servant.

Application

5 Read Philippians 2:5–11. Circle the letter before the two characteristics of Jesus described in verse 8.

- a) Kindness and goodness
 - b) Meekness and tolerance
 - c) Joy and love
 - d) Humility and obedience
-

These qualities of the character of Jesus Christ are apparent throughout His ministry. We find many of the character traits of Jesus more indirectly. As you study His life, you see the characteristics of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control.

Application

6 Read about Jesus' life in John 8:1–11, and list three character traits of Jesus found in this story.

.....

The traits we have listed above are some of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. They are what we will produce when we yield to Him rather than our human nature. These traits are like windows of our soul through which God reveals himself to the world. Jesus had all the windows of His human spirit open for showing the Father to the world.

BEING LIKE JESUS

Objective 4. *Explain why it is difficult for the believer to be like Jesus.*

To be like Jesus is both natural and difficult. It is natural because the “seed” or nature of God is in us when we are born again by the Holy Spirit. This seed manifests God’s likeness as it grows in us. Paul expressed this truth: “He predestined us to be adopted as his

sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will” (Ephesians 1:5). It is difficult to be like Jesus because “the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want” (Galatians 5:17).

Choice of Will

Objective 5. *Explain how the believer is enabled to be like Jesus.*

Philippians 2:7 says Jesus “made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”

While there is in every believer the seed of God’s likeness, the believer must allow God’s nature shine through. Ephesians 3:16 and 19 give important insights on how the believer makes this decision:

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, . . . and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.



Application

7 Read Ephesians 3:14–18. In the spaces below write phrases from this passage which involve a *decision of the human will*. The first one, for example, is in verse 16: “strengthen you with power.” (Do not repeat this example in your answer.)

.....

.....

.....



It is God’s wish that all the virtues and characteristics in the phrases you have listed be ours. One notable goal for the Christian is “to live a life worthy of the calling” (Ephesians 4:1).

Thus, there is a standard, and the individual believer must *decide* to live up to that standard.

Application

8 According to the last part of Ephesians 4:13, what is the standard for the believer?

.....

9 In Ephesians 4:2 are at least four character traits which we are urged to show. Circle the four letters below for the traits mentioned in this verse.

- a) Tolerance
 - b) Faith
 - c) Love
 - d) Peace
 - e) Gentleness
 - f) Patience
-

This principle of the believer's *will* determining the character traits is found in many Scriptures. Read the book of Ephesians, and you will see how many times an appeal is made to your will. For instance, there is "Put on the new self" (4:24); "Be very careful, then, how you live" (5:15), "Put on the full armor of God" (6:11), and so on.

The passage below shows that God provides, but we must *will* to do something to manifest the character of Christ:

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who *called us by his own glory and goodness*. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and *escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires*.

For this very reason, *make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you*

from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:3–8, italics mine)

Reread this passage, noting the italicized words.

In this passage, the believer has the responsibility to add virtuous traits to his or her life. Yet we are told that God has given us precious gifts and the divine nature itself. The power to be like God is realized through our new birth and our own free will. This balance between God’s gift and our work is seen in another: “Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose” (Philippians 2:12–13).

Salvation can best be described as wholeness: the completion of the plan of God for each person. We must work, but God must make us willing and able. Praise God for that wonderful balance!

Surrendering to the Holy Spirit

Objective 6. *Relate the believer’s surrender to the Spirit to his being like Jesus.*

We have studied the ministry of the Holy Spirit in Lessons 4 and 6. Remember that it was the Holy Spirit who enabled Jesus to fulfill His human role. Jesus was led and anointed of the Spirit. The character of Jesus can only be ours through the Spirit’s control of our lives. The apostle Paul writes to the Galatians: “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25).

When the Holy Spirit is in control of the believer’s life, He produces the character of Christ in it. The following chart will help you visualize the nine *windows* of Galatians 5:22–23 through which Christian character is seen.

Windows of Galatians 5:22–23		
Love	Joy	Peace
Patience	Kindness	Goodness
Faithfulness	Gentleness	Self-Control

Application

10 Write in this space the positive command to us in Ephesians 5:18.

.....

The more we let God's Spirit control us the more like Jesus we will be in character and life. Sometime, read the book of Acts and underline each place that tells of someone's being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Type of Lifestyle

Objective 7. *State who produces in submissive believers the spiritual growth that develops from attitudes described in the beatitudes.*

The Sermon on the Mount is one of the most notable of Jesus' sermons. The sermon consists of brief statements called *beatitudes*. *Beatitude* is a word which means "the utmost happiness or bliss." Hence, in these short statements, Jesus described happy or blissful living.

Each of the beatitudes in Matthew 5:3–10 describes an attitude of heart and character which the Holy Spirit will produce in believers who allow Him to do so. Let us examine the beatitudes.

Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor (v. 3). The Holy Spirit will help us to be constantly aware of our need. This attitude of dependency on God will produce rich rewards.

Happy are those who mourn (v. 4). This refers to an attitude of sorrow concerning anything that will keep Christ from being glorified in our life. It is the *godly sorrow* of confession and repentance.

Happy are those who are humble (v. 5). The nature and attitude of Jesus shows humility and submission to the will of God. Humility is the most easily recognized characteristic of a servant of Christ.

Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires (v. 6). This is obedience. The actions of the lover of God must be: “‘Here I am...to do your will, O God’” (Hebrews 10:7).

Happy are those who are merciful to others (v. 7). Here is the outgoing attitude of the forgiveness and grace of God. There can be no bitterness and resentfulness in the heart. Again, this is an obvious quality of Christ’s life.

Happy are the pure in heart (v. 8). If the heart is not occupied with desires of human nature, our vision of Jesus’ reality will be greater.

Happy are those who work for peace (v. 9). Here is the characteristic of a sharing that pours out concern and compassion to others.

Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires (v. 10). Here is the quality of rejoicing in all things. The believer can recognize the Father’s loving care in every experience.

Application

11 As you read Matthew 5:3–10 again, write in your notebook the part of each verse that shows how God will reward those who are described in each beatitude. (Response to verse 3 is provided as an example.)

Verse 3: The kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

The evidence that most demonstrates Christian maturity is the character of Christ in one’s life. The Bible says that believers were first called Christians in the city of Antioch (Acts 11:26). Up to that time and for several more years, they were simply known as “the people of the Way.”

Antioch was the slave capital of the world, and slaves bore their master’s names. Perhaps the unbelieving world saw these believers as slaves of Christ. Nevertheless, there is no greater honor than being called a Christian, for a Christian is a servant

of the Lord Jesus Christ, who both does the Lord's bidding and conforms to His nature.

self-test

TRUE-FALSE. Write **T** in the blank space if the statement is true. Write **F** if it is false.

-1 Evidence means something that furnishes proof.
-2 Knowledge of God's Word is necessary to become a mature Christian.
-3 The apostle Paul claimed to have already succeeded and become perfect.
-4 Character is the parts or features of our essential nature which distinguish us from others.
-5 The beatitudes describe attitudes of heart and character that the Holy Spirit will produce in the believer.

SHORT ANSWER. Write the proper to the questions on the lines provided.

6 Place an **X** beside the characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22–23.

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
|a) Goodness |i) Healings |
|b) Miracles |j) Faithfulness |
|c) Peace |k) Gentleness |
|d) Being |l) Self-control |
|e) Tongues |m) Love |
|f) Patience |n) Wisdom |
|g) Kindness |o) Joy |
|h) Faith | |

7 Evaluate yourself on the following characteristics of Christian maturity. Check **S** for strong, **M** for medium, **W** for weak, and **N** for need to grow.

Characteristics	S	M	W	N
Love
Joy
Peace
Patience
Kindness
Goodness
Faithfulness
Gentleness
Self-control
Knowledge
Godliness

answers to the study questions

- 1 Paul referred to the third or intimate level. He knew the facts of Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:6–10). He knew Christ through personal experience (Acts 9:1–19). But the desire to know the Lord intimately is a lifelong desire which will only be completely fulfilled in the Lord's presence in eternity.
- 7 through faith" (v. 17), "you, being rooted and established in love" (v. 17), "you . . . may have power ... to grasp" (v. 18)
- 2 That they came from the Father
- 8 The fullness of Christ
- 3 c) God's glory.
- 9 a) Tolerance
c) Love
e) Gentleness
f) Patience
- 4 Paul
- 5 d) Humility and obedience
- 10 Be filled with the Spirit.
- 6 Kindness, love, and gentleness (Other traits of Jesus may be found here.)
- 11 Verse 3:..... The kingdom of heaven belongs to them.
Verse 4:..... God will comfort them.
Verse 5:..... They will receive what God has promised.
Verse 6:..... God will satisfy them fully.
Verse 7:..... God will be merciful to them.
Verse 8:..... They will see God.
Verse 9:..... God will call them His children.
Verse 10:..... The kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

LESSON 9 Evidence of Useful Ministry

Christian maturity can be hindered and stopped by enemies of maturity within and outside the believer. Yet, John writes, “The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

Specific evidences mark a believer who is moving toward the image of Jesus Christ. First, the believer bears the unmistakable family resemblance and expresses the character of Jesus Christ in his habits and attitudes. The maturing believer is an answer to the world as the world!

The believer’s work is also a clear evidence of maturity. A growing believer is a useful believer. As maturity increases, the believer is better able to accept responsibility. One of the greatest thrills of a parent is to see his or her child grow and become a useful member of society. Similarly, useful ministry is proof that we are coming to our goal as believers.

lesson outline

Christ's Ministry

Christ's Example of Usefulness

The Father's Glory

The Believer's Ministry

Fulfilling Jesus' Ministry

Showing Maturity Through Works

Continuing by the Holy Spirit

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson, you should be able to:

- Identify the difference between the witness of Jesus and that of John the Baptist.
- Explain the relationship between Jesus' work and the Father's glory.
- State how the ministry of Jesus is being fulfilled in the world now.
- Explain how the seven men chosen in Acts 6:1–7 showed evidence of their maturity.
- Explain how the Holy Spirit wants to relate us to Christ through character and works.

learning activities

1. Read the lesson.
2. Do the exercises in the lesson development, referring as needed to the textbook.
3. Take the self-test at the end of this lesson, and check your answers carefully. Review those items answered incorrectly.

key words

commend
equipped
glorify

paralyzed
qualification
redeem

reminder

lesson development

Our earliest glimpse of man is of his usefulness in the Garden of Eden: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it” (Genesis 2:15). God is shown throughout the Scriptures as creating the world and working in it. When God made man, His intent was that man would “rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground” (Genesis 1:26). God further commanded man to live all over the earth and bring it under control (Genesis 1:28). At this point, God was very pleased with His creation.

Then sin interfered with man’s fulfilling this ministry. He was driven from the Garden and from his place of shared dominion over the earth. But there was still to be work for man. God told Adam, “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. . . . By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground” (Genesis 3:17–19).

Thank God that through Jesus Christ, humans can be redeemed from sin by faith! Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can again do the useful works that God intended. The pattern for our useful ministry is Jesus himself.

CHRIST’S MINISTRY

Christ’s Example of Usefulness

Objective 1. *Identify the difference between the witness of Jesus and that of John the Baptist.*

Luke begins *The Acts of the Apostles*, “In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven” (Acts 1:1). Later, Luke emphasizes the *usefulness* of Jesus’ work: “He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil” (Acts 10:38).

Early in His ministry, Jesus healed a paralyzed man on the Sabbath. Then Jewish authorities persecuted Him because He had done this on a Sabbath. Jesus answered them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working” (John 5:17).

Application

- 1 According to John 5:36, what is the greater witness than that of John the Baptist’s?
- a) Jesus’ miraculous power
 - b) Jesus’ acceptance of common people
 - c) Jesus’ works
-



The Father’s Glory

Objective 2. *Explain the relationship between Jesus’ work and the Father’s glory.*

Jesus would do nothing against the Father’s will. He lived entirely to accomplish the Father’s purpose. Jesus said, “My food. . . is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work” (John 4:34). And at the end of Jesus’ life, He proclaimed to His Father, “I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do” (John 17:4).

Application

- 2 According to Jesus’ words in John 10:25, what will speak on His behalf?
-
-



- 3 According to John 17:4, why did Jesus’ work bring glory to the Father?
-
-



THE BELIEVER'S MINISTRY

Fulfilling Jesus' Ministry

Objective 3. *State how the ministry of Jesus is being fulfilled in the world now.*

In John 14:12–14, Jesus declared:

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Do you understand this declaration from Jesus? The believer will give proof of Christian maturity by doing the works Jesus did. These works will *glorify* the Father as did the works of Jesus himself.

Application

4 Through whom is the ministry of Jesus being fulfilled in the world now?



We have seen in our earlier study that the subject of maturity in the Bible is sometimes compared to farming. Jesus used this illustration in a powerful teaching on the believer's ministry. Jesus said, "I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last" (John 15:16). In this teaching, Jesus also stated that He is the vine and the Father is the gardener. The believer is likened to a branch that bears fruit only as it remains in union with the vine.

Application

5 According to John 15:7, what condition must the believer fulfill to receive from Jesus?



6 According to John 15:10, what must the believer do to remain in Jesus' love?

.....

The believer's fruitfulness is evidence of his ministry. But each believer must remember that his or her ministry is a fulfillment of Jesus' ministry. The believer "can do nothing" without Him (John 15:5).

Showing Maturity Through Works

Objective 4. *Explain how the seven men chosen in Acts 6:1–7 showed evidence of their maturity.*

Growing Christians must be useful. Apostle Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3:16–17:

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The phrase "thoroughly equipped" in the original language expresses the idea of maturity. God's purpose is to bring us to maturity or completion through His Word. Then we will be able to do works that glorify Him. Again, the good deeds which follow will be evidence that we have been fully qualified to do them, and that we are maturing in Jesus Christ.

Application

7 Read Acts 6:1–7. Because of a great need in the church, the apostles ordered the church to select seven mature men for service. In Acts 6:3, two evidences of maturity are stated as necessary qualifications for those to be chosen. Indicate these evidences by completing the following statement.

These seven men were to be full of and

.....

8 How did these men show evidence of their maturity?

.....

In Colossians 1, the apostle Paul tells of his prayers for the early Christians:

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God. (Colossians 1:9–10)

Application

9 In Colossians 1:10, what is an evidence that the believer pleases the Lord?

- a) That the believer is maturing in general
 - b) That the believer does not sin any longer
 - c) That the believer's life will produce good work
 - d) That the believer always fellowships with others
-

Ephesians 2:8–10 combines the subjects of how and why God saved us. While focusing on the importance of the believer's good deeds, let us not forget that a person can be redeemed only by means of *something else*.

Application

10 According to Ephesians 2:8, how is a person saved?

.....

Let us conclude this section by reemphasizing two points concerning the believer's works:

1. A person is not forgiven or saved through his or her works. Salvation comes only through faith in what Jesus Christ did on the Cross. The death of Christ paid the price for

humanity's sinfulness. Now we can be saved through God's grace. This grace is undeserved and free.

2. Although works do not save the sinner, or redeem the believer, they are an important part of our purpose or goal as Christians. We are born to glorify the Father through useful lives.

Continuing by the Holy Spirit

Objective 5. *Explain how the Holy Spirit wants to relate us to Christ through character and works.*

Evidence of the Holy Spirit's control of our personality is Christ's character in us. But the evidence of the Holy Spirit's control over our mind and will is works that continue Christ's ministry.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are special abilities given to the believer. Romans 12 and Corinthians 12 teach on these special abilities. Romans 12:5–6 says,

In Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 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.

Different functions of the members of our physical body illustrate well the spiritual ministries of believers. The fingers must be able to do specific tasks, but the toes are not like the fingers. Very few people could use their toes like their fingers! Yet, the toes help us hold our balance, walk, run, and so forth.

Application

11 In Romans 12:6–8 is listed seven ministries for believers. The first two are noted below. Complete the list.

a Prophesying

b Serving

c

d

e

f

g



First Corinthians 12 is the most studied Scripture concerning *gifts* from the Holy Spirit. Paul writes,

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:4–7)

Application

12 What follows in 1 Corinthians 12:8–11 is a listing of nine special abilities or gifts. Three of these gifts have to do with speaking. List these speech or utterance gifts.

- a**
- b**
- c**

Another three gifts in this passage have to do with unusual scriptural spiritual power: (1) the power of special faith, (2) the power to heal, and (3) the power to work miracles. These powers enable the believer to do many of the amazing works Jesus did.

The last three gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:8–11 have to do with special abilities to think and understand above the human level. These are: (1) a message of wisdom, (2) a message of knowledge, and (3) the ability to tell the difference between gifts that come from the Spirit and those that do not.

Each of these special abilities makes it possible for believers to do works that show the likeness of Jesus Christ. These gifts must draw attention to Jesus, not to the person through whom they operate. First Corinthians 14 instructs us how these gifts are to function.

Application

13 How does the Spirit want to relate us to Christ through character and works?

.....

Jesus told a story about work, which involved two sons (see Matthew 21:28–31). When the father asked the older son to work in the vineyard, the son refused but later changed his mind and did the task. The father made the same request to the other son, who promised to work in the vineyard but did not follow through on his promise. Then Jesus asked those who were listening, “Which of the two did what his father wanted?” The people who were listening replied, “The first.”

The message in that story is clear. It is *doing* the will of God that counts—not talking about it. A powerful evidence of Christian maturity is a life of usefulness.

Application

14 In Matthew 25:34–36, Jesus mentions six good works that righteous people have done. List those works below. (The first answer is provided.)

a Feed the hungry

b

c

d

e

f



Jesus informed the righteous that good works they had done for needy people were counted as having been done for Him (see Matthew 25:37–40).

There are many such Scriptures that we could study. Our purpose, however, is to demonstrate usefulness as evidence of Christian maturity. Jesus said, “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

self-test

TRUE-FALSE. Write **T** in the blank space if the statement is true. Write **F** if it is false.

-1 God wanted man to have power over the fish, the birds, and the animals.
-2 The witness of John the Baptist was a greater witness to Jesus than the deeds that Jesus himself did.
-3 The gifts of the Holy Spirit enable the believer to produce works like those of Jesus Christ.

SHORT ANSWER. Write the answers to the questions on the lines provided.

- 4 What idea does the phrase “thoroughly equipped” express?

.....

.....

According to 1 Corinthians 12:8–11, what three special gifts of the Holy Spirit give Christians supernatural ability in speaking?

- 5
- 6
- 7

List three of the six good works for which Jesus commended righteous people in Matthew 25:34–36.

- 8
- 9
- 10

answers to the study questions

- 1 c) Jesus' works
- 8 By doing useful work for the church
- 9 c) That the believer's life will produce good work
- 2 The miracles He did in His Father's name
- 10 By God's grace through faith
- 3 Because He completed the tasks His Father gave Him
- 11
 - a See example
 - b See example
 - c Teaching
 - d Encouraging others
 - e Giving
 - f Leading
 - g Showing mercy
- 4 Through Christian believers
- 12
 - a Prophesying
 - b Speaking in different tongues
 - c Interpretation of tongues
- 5 He must remain in Jesus, and Jesus' words must remain in him.
- 13 The Spirit wants to form the character of Christ in us and show the works of Christ through us.
- 6 Obey Jesus' commands
- 14
 - a See example
 - b Give drink to the thirsty
 - c Receive the stranger
 - d Clothe the naked
 - e Take care of the sick
 - f Visit those in prison
- 7 the Holy Spirit, wisdom.

LESSON 10 Evidence of Spiritual Transformation

Together we have looked at pictures, progress, and proofs of Christian maturity. This last unit provides a measuring rod to determine our progress. Maturing believers will look and act like Jesus Christ and will demonstrate more of His character and works.

Perhaps you are discouraged when you see this goal and your human limitations. To measure ourselves by the standard Jesus Christ achieved on the earth seems hard. Cheer up! God not only sets the standard for us but also helps us reach the goal. It is God's greatest delight to transform and empower weak people.

lesson outline

Strength in Weakness

God's Glory

God's Power

Doubt and Self-Condernnation

Doubting Our Ability

Doubt Caused by Satan's Accusations

Transformation through the Holy Spirit

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson, you should be able to:

- Identify the believer's sources of strength and weakness.
- Use 1 Corinthians 1:26–31 to point out what the believer is to boast of.
- Use Ezekiel 2:2 to explain what enabled Ezekiel to stand before God.
- List four things Timothy was told to practice so his progress could be seen.
- Identify a major source of doubts, and state how you can overcome them.
- Explain how Acts 17:6 shows believers were spiritually transformed.

learning activities

1. Read the lesson.
2. Do the exercises in the lesson development, referring as needed to the textbook.
3. Take the self-test at the end of this lesson, and check your answers carefully. Review those items answered incorrectly.

key words

accusation

achieved

attitude

boast

condernnation

record

lesson development

STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

Objective 1. *Identify the believer's sources of strength and weakness.*

Birds fly much higher when moving to a distant place than when in local flight, and they do so for three reasons. First, by flying higher they have a better view of their direction. Second, they are above the birds that would prey on them. Third, thinner air at a higher level helps them fly faster.

Believers can learn a lesson from this. When discouraged, we must rise to God's view of life and receive spiritual sight and strength to reach God's goal for us.

Perhaps you are already saying, "I don't believe I can ever achieve spiritual maturity. I am so weak. How can I ever be like Jesus?" That attitude can be a start in the right direction. A believer who recognizes personal weakness will be better able to see his or her need for God.

Application

1 Name the believer's source of strength.

.....



God's Glory

Objective 2. *Use 1 Corinthians 1:26–31 to point out what the believer is to boast of.*

Humans apart from God try to show their independence by rebellion and sin. They exalt human wisdom and depend on human strength. This is the story of every civilization. But God chose Christ's sacrifice and faith as the means of right standing with Him. This insulted the world's thinking.

In 1 Corinthians 1:21, Paul says the message of the gospel is a so-called *foolish* message. It is a message of dependence

upon God, and the world rejects this. The truth of this message is significant. Read it carefully:

Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 1:26–31)

Application

2 According to 1 Corinthians 1:26–31, the believer’s wisdom is to be

- a) Christ Jesus.
- b) the Bible.
- c) his or her mental growth.

3 According to 1 Corinthians 1:26–31, the believer is to boast of

.....

The life of the apostle Paul is an example of God’s revelation of His glory through human weakness. Although well educated, Paul had many pressing weaknesses. One of them was a painful physical ailment which he asked God to remove (2 Corinthians 12:7–8). God responded to Paul: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). The apostle then wrote:

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9–10)

Like the apostle, let us glorify the Lord in all we do and say.

God's Power

Objective 3. Use Ezekiel 2:2 to explain what enabled Ezekiel to stand before God.

Another example of God's power through human weakness is in the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel. He was a thirty-year-old priest when God called him. His nation was defeated and being destroyed. Ezekiel's priesthood was almost useless as he was working as a captive on a farm. But Ezekiel could still hear God's call to him in these circumstances. God revealed His power in the midst of a storm (Ezekiel 1:4). Let us read Ezekiel's description in Ezekiel 2:1–3:

He said to me, "Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you." As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me. He said: "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their fathers have been in revolt against me to this very day.



The name God used for Ezekiel, *Son of man*, draws attention to Ezekiel's humanity. This name appears frequently in the book of Ezekiel as God constantly reminds Ezekiel that He wants to work through his humanity. The name *Ezekiel* means, "the one whom God will strengthen" or "he whose character is personal proof of the strengthening of God."

Application

- 4 Read Ezekiel 2:2 and answer the following question: How was Ezekiel able to stand before God?
 - a) Ezekiel got up through his own power.
 - b) God's command itself raised Ezekiel.
 - c) God's Spirit entered Ezekiel and raised him up.

Ezekiel's personality was transformed by God's power. It was through that transforming power alone that the former weak and confused Ezekiel could affirm: "I did as I was commanded"

(Ezekiel 12:7). God received the glory from Ezekiel's long and fruitful ministry.

DOUBT AND SELF-CONDEMNATION

Many people God has called to serve Him have felt unable to do it. Such a feeling in itself is not wrong. But sometimes that feeling is a lack of faith in God. Such a condition sometimes leads a weak Christian to condemn himself. God knows our weaknesses. *When He chooses us, He gives us the strength and power to do His calling.*

Doubting Our Ability

Objective 4. *List four things Timothy was told to practice so his progress could be seen.*

In Exodus 3, God called Moses to serve Him, but Moses doubted his own ability. When God miraculously spoke to him from the burning bush, Moses answered, "Here I am" (v. 4). God told Moses that He was sending him to the king of Egypt so that he could lead His people out of the country. Moses questioned, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" (v. 11). God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain" (v. 12). Then, Moses made a series of excuses, including the fact that he was not a good speaker. The Lord asked him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say" (Exodus 4:11–12). But Moses said, "O, Lord, please send someone else to do it" (Exodus 4:13). At this point, the Lord became angry with Moses.

Note God's patience in this interaction with Moses. God understood Moses' doubt and was willing to work with him. However, Moses' arguing with God became an issue of lack of faith. Finally, Moses did go to Egypt, and each day his confidence grew as God helped him. He became a great leader for God.

Perhaps during this course you have realized your purpose as a believer, and Christian maturity seems difficult. You might even doubt your ability, but when God calls us He promises to help. God made every part of us and knows us better than we know ourselves. Therefore, we must overcome our inabilities by exercising faith in God. He is the God of power, and His glory is shown as weak people do His great work.

Application

5 Read 1 Timothy 4:11–16. According to verse 12, Timothy was advised not to let anyone look down on him because he was

- a) not handsome.
- b) young.
- c) weak.

6 In 1 Timothy 4:13–15, Timothy was told to practice four things so that his progress could be visible. List these four practices in the order they are mentioned.

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)



Doubt Caused by Satan's Accusations

Objective 5. *Identify a major source of doubts, and state how you can overcome them.*

After the Israelites had been in captivity for 70 years, God made it possible for them to return to Jerusalem. Joshua, the high priest, was chosen to be the spiritual leader. (*Do not confuse this Joshua with the one who brought the people into the promised land.*) When God's people got to Jerusalem, they started to rebuild the temple. But shortly thereafter they became discouraged and quarrelsome.

Only the foundation was laid before the people gave up the work, and no work continued on the temple for 16 years. Then,

God raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to motivate the people to continue construction on the temple.

Application

7 Read Zechariah 3. Who stood ready to accuse Joshua?

Through a vision, Zechariah learned that the filthy clothes he saw on Joshua represented the mistakes of Joshua and the people. Nevertheless, the angel of the Lord answered the charges of Satan: “The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?” (Zechariah 3:2). Then, the dirty robes were taken away and Joshua was given new clothes, among which was a turban that symbolized God’s authority. In verses 6–7, Joshua is told to walk in a new relationship with the Lord.

This Scripture reveals how Satan works on our weaknesses. He calls them to our attention and accuses us. This leads us to doubt ourselves and become discouraged. Notice, however, the example in Zechariah 3. God will take care of our weaknesses and doubts when we stop listening to Satan’s accusation.

Satan’s accusing of the believers is called *condemnation*. To condemn means “to declare someone unfit or unworthy” or “to judge and pronounce someone guilty.” Romans 8:1 tells us, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” And John writes, “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son” (John 3:18). Satan tries to judge and destroy us, but God will transform us and give us victory if we allow Him.

One picture of God’s final victory over Satan is in Revelation 12:10–11. Read the record:

Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our

God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

Application

8 Mark (1), (2), and (3) in front of the three things in Revelation 12:11 that brought the believers victory over Satan.

These three powers are available to us today. Remember the truth of the Scripture, “The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

TRANSFORMATION THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Objective 6. *Explain how Acts 17:6 shows believers were spiritually transformed.*

The people God worked through were much like us. Moses, Joshua, Ruth, Ezekiel, Mary, Paul, Timothy, and many others were among them. These were people with everyday weaknesses, but God’s Spirit entered and transformed them. The book of Acts tells of such transformation. The disciples were scattered and discouraged at the crucifixion of Jesus. Even the resurrection did not solve their problem. But when the Holy Spirit came upon them as Jesus promised, things changed. They worked and witnessed with great power.

Application

- 9** Read John 14:26. Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as the
- a) Counselor.
 - b) Healer.
 - c) Power.
-

In Acts 1:8, Jesus told the disciples, “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.” The book of Acts records the story of transformed people, who did not have formal training in ministry. These were also people with particular weaknesses. Yet, under the power of the Holy Spirit, they changed the world! Many of them were strong even while suffering and facing death.

We have the same opportunity to bear witness to Jesus Christ through the power of the divine Helper. When we are weak, God’s Spirit can empower us as we move toward the goal of maturity.

self-test

SHORT ANSWER. Write the answer to the question on the lines provided.

1 What is the advantage of viewing our lives as God views them?

.....

TRUE-FALSE. Write **T** in the blank space if the statement is true. Write **F** if it is false. Then, change the FALSE statements to make them true.

.....2 The believer must boast only of what the Lord has done.
 The believer must boast

.....3 Moses protested to God that he was a poor speaker.
 Moses protested to God that he was.....

.....4 Condemnation means to declare someone fit and worthy.
 Condemnation means to declare someone..... and

MATCHING. Following are illustrations of the basic concepts in this lesson. Match each illustration (5–9) to the concept it fits best (a–e) by writing the correct letter in the blank before the illustration.

- | | | |
|---------|---|--|
| 5 | The apostle Paul, a powerful Christian worker, had weaknesses, including a physical ailment which he asked God to remove. | a) God understands our weaknesses, but He expects us to do His will by faith in His power. |
| 6 | God called Ezekiel “Son of Man” frequently in the book bearing Ezekiel’s name. | b) God wants to remind us of our humanity that we might depend upon His power. |
| 7 | Although the Lord listened patiently to Moses’ excuses, He became angry when Moses continued to resist His plan for him. | c) Satan tries to condemn believers because of their failure. |
| 8 | Timothy was advised not to allow people to reject him because of his youth. | d) The shortness of a believer’s spiritual experience should not keep him from being an accepted example to other believers. |
| 9 | Satan stood ready to accuse Joshua (the High Priest during Israel’s restoration) when Joshua was shown in dirty robes before the angel of the Lord. | e) God’s power is strongest when the believer is weak. |

MULTIPLE CHOICE. Circle the letter of the correct answer.

- 10 Satan stands before God and works against the brethren as
- a) a true reporter.
 - b) an accuser.
 - c) a common serpent.

Be sure to complete your unit student report for Unit 3 and return the answer sheet to your GU instructor.

answers to the study questions

- 1 God is the source of strength.
- 7 Satan
- 2 a) Christ Jesus.
- 3 the Lord.
- 8
 - 1) The blood of the Lamb
 - 2) The testimony they proclaimed
 - 3) Their willingness to give up their lives and die
- 4 c) God's Spirit entered Ezekiel and raised him.
- 9 a) Counselor (or Helper).
- 5 b) young.
- 6
 - a Public reading of Scriptures
 - b Preaching
 - c Teaching
 - d Not neglecting the spiritual gift within him

For Your Notes

Glossary

The right-hand column lists the lesson in the study guide in which the word is first used.



		<i>Lesson</i>
accusation	— a charge or wrong saying against someone	10
achieved	— gained; finished successfully	10
adulterous	— sexually unfaithful	2
attitude	— way one feels or thinks about something	3
audience	— hearers, people in a meeting	6
automatic	— moving or working by itself	4
boast	— speak proudly of	10
brokenness	— a weakening in strength or spirit; taming, crushing	3
character	— one's nature as shown by one's acts	8
childish	— like a child; immature	3
commend	— praise	9
condemnation	— declaration of unfitness	10
conformed	— is like; made similar	3
conviction	— what one believes to be right	3
cultivate	— prepare land for crops	3
cycle	— set of events regularly repeated in a particular order	5
destiny	— fate	1
direction	— a specific instruction	6
doctrine	— what is taught	7

dynamic	— having to do with or producing power or force	1
enable	— make able	8
endeavor	— attempt	5
equip	— supply with the necessary knowledge for doing certain special work	5
equipped	— supplied with the necessary knowledge for doing certain special work	9
evaluation	— determination or fixing of the value of	1
eventual	— coming in the end	5
excellent	— very good	6
fellowship	— companionship, friendliness; sharing	1
foundation	— the basis	3
glorify	— praise highly	1
growth	— act or amount of growing or maturing	1
guarantee	— promise to see that another person fulfills a promise	7
hinder	— make an effort to stop someone or something	4
hindrance	— anything that causes trouble or difficulty	4
homosexual	— one who enjoys sexual relations with persons of the same sex	2
image	— likeness or copy of anything	2
interact	— have an effect upon each other	6
intimate	— inside, close	8
issue	— matter on which a decision must be reached	5

judicial	— having to do with a judge	5
knowledge	— things known	8
lens	— piece of glass that collects light into one beam	6
liken	— compare	5
manifestation	— a showing; revelation	8
maturity	— state of being fully grown	1
negligence	— failure to exercise care	4
observe	— act according to, notice	8
obvious	— clearly noticed	6
option	— that which may or may not be done, at one's own choice	5
ordain	— officially appoint or consecrate as a minister in a Christian church	7
paralyzed	— unable to move	9
penance	— act of devotion or suffering given to oneself as a sign of sorrow for wrongdoing	7
perfect	— complete or whole	1
point of view	— way of looking on or considering something	3
preparatory	— getting ready; designed to prepare	5
prevail	— win, become generally accepted as a custom	6
purpose	— aim, desire, plan	1
qualification	— a quality or skill that fits a person (as for an office)	9
rational	— reasonable	4
record	— set down in writing, or a setting down in writing	10

redeem	— to buy back; recover	9
relationship	— state of being related, connection	1
remarkable	— worthy of notice, especially good	6
reminder	— something to cause someone to remember	9
repentance	— a turning inwardly and outwardly away from wrongdoing	3
require	— need; call or ask for; demand	5
response	— answer	6
responsibility	— something for which one is responsible or obligated	3
resurrection	— the act of rising again from the dead	7
sacred	— solemn	6
seek	— look for; try to get	5
sift	— to separate; examine very carefully	4
stature	— development; physical, mental, or moral growth	1
tool	— person or thing used by another as an instrument	6
ultimate	— last, final	1
victorious	— successful	8
vital	— full of life and spirit, lively	6
weapon	— instrument used for fighting or protection	6

Answers to Self-Tests

Lesson 1

- 1 F
- 2 F
- 3 T
- 4 F
- 5 T
- 6 a) Full grown
c) Complete
d) Whole
e) Finished
- 7 c) spirit.
- 8 b) As a model of correct God-man relationship
c) That man might be brought into abundant life
- 9 Satan.
- 10 *Any two of the following:* soil along the path, rocky ground without moisture, soil with choking thorns, good soil

Lesson 2

- 1 T
- 2 T
- 3 F, Jesus Christ.
- 4 a) Spiritual
b) Physical
d) Mental
h) Social
- 5 a) Immoral
d) Adulterous
e) Homosexual
- 6 b) servant.
- 7 By turning away from evil behavior and by developing Christlike relationships

Lesson 3

1 When he becomes a mature believer.

2 a) 2

b) 4

c) 3

d) 1

3 b) A baby

c) God's field

f) Soil

h) God's building

i) The temple of the Holy Spirit

4 a) Gold

e) Silver

f) Previous stones

Lesson 4

1 F, a great deal to do with the believer's maturity.

2 T

3 F, grow slower than one who receives solid food.

4 F, spirit.

5 T

6 a) be teachers.

7 Any four of these nine: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Lesson 5

1 F, moves us to action.

2 T

3 T

4 T

5 F, works (or life)

6 E

7 T

8 T

9 E

10 E

11 T

12 The judgment seat of Christ

Lesson 6

- 1-7 Your answers.
- 8 F
- 9 F
- 10 T
- 11 b) Fellowship, sharing, contributing
- 12 Immaturity, lack of vital union and disease or impairment are three such causes (there are others).

Lesson 7

- 1 F
- 2 T
- 3 T
- 4 F
- 5 F
- 6 T
- 7 F
- 8 Repentance
- 9 Believing in God
- 10 Baptisms
- 11 Laying on of hands
- 12 Resurrection of the dead
- 13 Eternal judgment

Lesson 8

- 1 T
- 2 T
- 3 F
- 4 T
- 5 T
- 6 a) Goodness
 - c) Peace
 - f) Patience
 - g) Kindness
 - j) Faithfulness
 - k) Gentleness
 - l) Self-control

- m) Love
- o) Joy
- 7 Your answer

Lesson 9

- 1 T
- 2 F
- 3 T
- 4 The idea of maturity
- 5 Prophesying
- 6 Speaking in different tongues
- 7 Interpretation of tongues
- 8–10 Any three of the following:
 - Feed the hungry.
 - Give drink to the thirsty.
 - Receive the stranger.
 - Clothe the naked.
 - Take care of the sick.
 - Visit those in prison.

Lesson 10

- 1 Viewing our lives as God views them will enable us to reach God's goal for us.
- 2 T
- 3 T
- 4 F, unfit, unworthy
- 5 e)
- 6 b)
- 7 a)
- 8 d)
- 9 c)
- 10 b) an accuser.

Christian Maturity

UNIT STUDENT REPORTS AND ANSWER SHEETS



DIRECTIONS

When you have completed your study of each unit, fill out the unit student report answer sheet for that unit. The following are directions how to indicate your answer to each question. There are two kinds of questions: TRUE-FALSE and MULTIPLE-CHOICE.

TRUE-FALSE QUESTION EXAMPLE

*The following statement is either true or false. If the statement is
TRUE, blacken space A.
FALSE, blacken space B.*

1 The Bible is God's message for us.

The above statement, *The Bible is God's message for us*, is

TRUE, so you would blacken space A like this:

1 ☐ ☒ ☐ ☐

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION EXAMPLE

There is one best answer for the following question. Blacken the space for the answer you have chosen.

- 2 To be born again means to
- a) be young in age.
 - b) accept Jesus as Savior.
 - c) start a new year.
 - d) find a different church.

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

2 ☐ ☒ ☐ ☐

UNIT STUDENT REPORT I

Answer all questions on Unit Student Report Answer Sheet 1.

PART 1—TRUE-FALSE QUESTIONS

The following statements are either true or false. If the statement is

TRUE—blacken space A.

FALSE—blacken space B.

- 1 I have carefully read all of the lessons in Unit One.
- 2 Believers will grow into Christian maturity even if they do not want to.
- 3 God has a specific plan for my personal Christian *building*.
- 4 Salvation brings to each person full maturity in a short time.
- 5 Christian maturity involves only the spiritual area of my life.
- 6 Mature Christians can help others grow by teaching them the Word of God.
- 7 Believers will grow if they always continue to drink spiritual “milk.”
- 8 If I want to grow in Christian maturity, I must repent when the Holy Spirit convicts me of sin.

PART 2—MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

There is one best answer for each of the following questions. Blacken the space on your answer sheet for the answer you have chosen.

- 9 A person’s purpose cannot be fulfilled without a
 - a) proper relationship to God.
 - b) special position in the church.
 - c) life completely free from sin.
- 10 In the Scriptures the word *perfect* means
 - a) sinless.
 - b) childish.
 - c) innocent.
 - d) complete.
- 11 The area of a person that demands a purpose or reason for being is his or her
 - a) body.
 - b) spirit.
 - c) mind.
 - d) desire.

- 12 The main reason why Christ came into the world was to
- a) condemn people for sin.
 - b) be a good teacher.
 - c) form a new type of religion.
 - d) perfect humanity's relationship with God.
- 13 The Bible teaches us in Luke 2:52 that Jesus
- a) did not need to grow as people do.
 - b) grew only in His physical body.
 - c) grew in four ways that people grow.
 - d) was spiritually mature from birth.
- 14 Jesus took upon himself the form of a man, who was also
- a) an earthly king.
 - b) a famous preacher.
 - c) the owner of a vineyard.
 - d) a servant to others.
- 15 In order to grow toward the likeness of Christ, we must be
- a) willing servants to Christ.
 - b) leaders in spiritual services.
 - c) mature in body and mind.
 - d) mature in biblical understanding.
- 16 The Bible gives many illustrations of growth in order to
- a) help us understand the truth.
 - b) give us problems to solve.
 - c) make the lesson interesting.
 - d) keep the meaning from children.
- 17 The illustration of milk and meat (Hebrews 5:14) teaches that
- a) Christians do not need milk.
 - b) most Christians are still children.
 - c) children cannot understand the Bible.
 - d) maturing Christians need understanding of advanced truth.
- 18 The illustration of the building materials (1 Corinthians 3:3–17) teaches us that
- a) fire will always burn wood, straw, and grass.
 - b) God wants us to build our lives according to His plan.
 - c) mature Christians should have actual gold, silver, and precious stones.
 - d) gold and silver buildings are more beautiful.

- 19 Christian growth is most often hindered by
- a) the human will.
 - b) friends and neighbors.
 - c) enemies.
 - d) crisis times.
- 20 The Holy Spirit helps us to grow when we
- a) live perfect lives every day.
 - b) make many good promises.
 - c) stop drinking milk.
 - d) allow Him to control us.

END OF REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIT ONE. Follow the remaining instructions in your answer sheet and return it to your GU instructor or office in your area. Then begin your study of Unit Two.

UNIT STUDENT REPORT 2

Answer all questions on Unit Student Report Answer Sheet 2.

PART 1—TRUE-FALSE QUESTIONS

The following statements are either true or false. If the statement is

TRUE—blacken space A.

FALSE—blacken space B.

- 1 I have carefully read all of the lessons in Unit Two.
- 2 The Bible talks only about heavenly things.
- 3 The only thing a Christian will give an account for is whether or not he or she has received salvation.
- 4 Christians need to know God's Word to help keep them from sin.
- 5 Believers are consistent when their lives agree with their profession of faith in Jesus Christ.
- 6 Even if only two believers are meeting together, the Lord promises to be with them.
- 7 Judas' tears proved his repentance.
- 8 Believers can prepare themselves for the judgment.

PART 2—MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

There is one best answer for each of the following questions.

Blacken the space on your answer sheet for the answer you have chosen.

- 9 The most important evidence of repentance is that a person
 - a) goes to church.
 - b) sheds tears.
 - c) changes direction.
 - d) does penance.
- 10 Doctrines concerning the future include those about
 - a) believing in God.
 - b) ordinances.
 - c) resurrection of the dead.
 - d) institutes.

- 11 Conditions for becoming a Christian include
 - a) ordinances.
 - b) repentance.
 - c) perfection.
 - d) institutes.
- 12 A *childish* Christian is one who is
 - a) easy to deceive and lead astray.
 - b) experienced in distinguishing good from evil.
 - c) able to do many things for God.
 - d) mature in his or her understanding.
- 13 When Christians say, “Jesus is Lord,” they mean that Christ is
 - a) a great man and a wise teacher.
 - b) a very good person.
 - c) an important Roman emperor.
 - d) the Master of their lives.
- 14 The six foundational truths of Christian doctrine are
 - a) found in the Old Testament.
 - b) all there is to know about the Christian life.
 - c) the “first lessons” of Christian doctrine.
- 15 Baptism in the Holy Spirit is for the purpose of
 - a) producing spiritual gifts and fruit in our lives.
 - b) showing that we have been born again.
 - c) making us more important than we were before.
 - d) demonstrating that we are mature.
- 16 A mature believer can distinguish between good and evil by
 - a) memorizing God’s Word.
 - b) reading God’s Word.
 - c) practicing God’s Word.
 - d) loving God’s Word.
- 17 Believers know they will be raised from the dead because
 - a) they have joined a local church.
 - b) of Jesus’ example of resurrection.
 - c) they live in fantasy.
 - d) they simply want to have life after death.
- 18 The judgment a Christian is most concerned with is the judgment of
 - a) Israel.
 - b) fallen angels.
 - c) believers.
 - d) the nations.

19 Mature Christians

- a) react often with self-pity.
- b) think of their own desires first.
- c) talk about themselves most of the time.
- d) express concern for others.

20 Going forward in the Christian life is accomplished by

- a) the power of the Holy Spirit.
- b) only personal effort of the believer.
- c) sincere desire of the believer.

END OF REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIT TWO. Follow the remaining instructions in your answer sheet and return it to your GU instructor or office in your area. Then begin your study of Unit Three.

UNIT STUDENT REPORT 3

Answer all questions on Unit Student Report Answer Sheet 3.

PART 1—TRUE-FALSE QUESTIONS

The following statements are either true or false. If the statement is

TRUE—blacken space A.

FALSE—blacken space B.

- 1 I have carefully read all of the lessons in Unit Three.
- 2 The goal of Christian growth is for a believer to be like other Christians.
- 3 Evil spirits knew who Jesus was.
- 4 We do not have to decide to be like Jesus; it will just happen.
- 5 God planned for humankind to do useful works.
- 6 A believer can do the kinds of works Jesus did.
- 7 The Holy Spirit gives all believers the same ministry gifts.
- 8 Satan does not try to discourage those who are serving God.

PART 2—MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

There is one best answer for each of the following questions. Blacken the space on your answer sheet for the answer you have chosen.

- 9 To be like Jesus, a believer must
 - a) preach to crowds like He did.
 - b) live the unselfish way He did.
 - c) travel from place to place like He did.
- 10 A person's character is his or her
 - a) physical features.
 - b) essential nature.
 - c) mental abilities.
 - d) biblical knowledge.
- 11 It is difficult to be like Jesus because we
 - a) have no idea what He was like.
 - b) do not live in the same kind of situation He did.
 - c) have a nature that opposes it.
 - d) have no help to do so.

- 12 Jesus was able to do God's will because He
- a) let the Spirit control Him.
 - b) was a good and wise man.
 - c) had no other choice.
 - d) was different than we are.
- 13 God's purpose for Christians is that they
- a) earn salvation by their useful works.
 - b) grow to maturity so they can do useful works.
 - c) let others be teachers of the Word.
 - d) remain as they were when first saved.
- 14 Believers show maturity by
- a) telling others what to do.
 - b) having the character of Christ.
 - c) working their way to forgiveness.
 - d) trying hard to be sinless.
- 15 The ministry of Jesus in the world
- a) is impossible for us to carry on now.
 - b) has stopped because He went to heaven.
 - c) can be continued by believers.
- 16 Gifts are given by the Holy Spirit so believers can
- a) all become preachers.
 - b) earn their way to heaven.
 - c) draw attention to themselves.
 - d) build up the church.
- 17 To serve the Lord, believers must
- a) feel very strong in themselves.
 - b) have no weaknesses at all.
 - c) feel able to do anything God asks.
 - d) realize that God will help them.
- 18 In Zechariah's vision (Zechariah 3:1–2), Satan accused Joshua. Who rebuked Satan?
- a) Zechariah
 - b) The angel of the Lord
 - c) Joshua
- 19 The event that transformed the discouraged disciples into men of power was the
- a) coming of the Spirit.
 - b) crucifixion of Jesus.
 - c) resurrection of Jesus.

20 Jesus' story of the two sons in Matthew 21:28–31 showed the importance of

- a) telling God we will do what He asks us to do.
- b) doing what God asks us to do.
- c) listening to what God asks us to do.
- d) understanding what God asks us to do.

END OF REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIT THREE. Follow the remaining instructions in your answer sheet and return it to your GU instructor or office in your area. This completes your study of this course. Ask your instructor to recommend another course of study for you.

CS1111 Christian Maturity
UNIT ONE ANSWER SHEET

*Congratulations on finishing your study of the lessons in Unit 1!
Please fill in all the blanks below.*

Your Name

Your GU Student Number
(Leave blank if you do not know what it is.)

Your Mailing Address

City

Province/State Postal/Zip

Country

Occupation Age

Sex.....

Are you married? How many members are in your family?

How many years have you studied in school?

Are you a member of a church?

If so, what is the name of the church?

What responsibility do you have in your church?

How are you studying this course: Alone?

In a group?

What other GU courses have you studied?

.....

.....

Cut this page and send to your GU instructor



ANSWER SHEET FOR UNIT ONE

Blacken the correct space for each numbered item. For all questions, be sure the number beside the spaces on the answer sheet is the same as the number of the question.

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

Write below any questions you would like to ask your instructor about the lessons.

.....
.....
.....

Now look over this student report answer sheet to be sure you have completed all the questions. Then return it to your GU instructor or office in your area. The address should be stamped on the copyright page near the front of your study guide.

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GU CHRISTIAN SERVICE PROGRAM

CS1111 Christian Maturity
UNIT TWO ANSWER SHEET

*We hope you have enjoyed your study of the lessons in Unit 2!
Please fill in all the blanks below.*

Your Name

Your GU Student Number
(Leave blank if you do not know what it is.)

Your Mailing Address

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ANSWER SHEET FOR UNIT TWO

Blacken the correct space for each numbered item. For all questions, be sure the number beside the spaces on the answer sheet is the same as the number of the question.

1

A	B	C	D
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8

A	B	C	D
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15

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

2

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

9

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

16

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

3

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

10

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

17

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

4

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

11

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

18

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

5

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

12

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

19

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

6

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

13

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

20

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

7

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

14

A	B	C	D
---	---	---	---

Write below any questions you would like to ask your instructor about the lessons.

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UNIT THREE ANSWER SHEET

*We hope you have enjoyed your study of the lessons in Unit 3!
Please fill in all the blanks below.*

Your Name

Your GU Student Number
(Leave blank if you do not know what it is.)

Your Mailing Address

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City

Province/State Postal/Zip

Country

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ANSWER SHEET FOR UNIT THREE

Blacken the correct space for each numbered item. For all questions, be sure the number beside the spaces on the answer sheet is the same as the number of the question.

1	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	8	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	15	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D
2	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	9	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	16	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D
3	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	10	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	17	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D
4	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	11	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	18	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D
5	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	12	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	19	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D
6	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	13	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	20	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D
7	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	14	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D					

Write below any questions you would like to ask your instructor about the lessons.

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Now look over this student report answer sheet to be sure you have completed all the questions. Then return it to your GU instructor or office in your area. The address should be stamped on the copyright page near the front of your study guide.

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Your Name

Your GU Student Number
(Leave blank if you do not know what it is.)

Your Mailing Address

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REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The GU office in your area will be happy to send you information about other GU courses that are available and their cost. You may use the space below to ask for that information.

.....

.....

.....

Cut this page and send to your GU instructor



INVITATION TO ACCEPT JESUS CHRIST AS LORD AND SAVIOR

Becoming a Christian and receiving the gift of eternal life is a choice you make. God has done everything possible to open the door to heaven for you. Jesus suffered a cruel death on the Cross, taking the punishment we rightfully deserved, so that the very worst of sinners can now be fully forgiven and receive the gift of eternal life.

To receive this gift, you need to admit that you are a sinner and ask God to forgive you of all the evil deeds you have done. You need to trust in and take Jesus Christ into your life as your Lord and Savior.

If you are ready to receive Jesus, say this prayer now and mean it from your heart:

Dear Father in heaven, I recognize today that I have sinned against you, and it is my desire to turn away from my sins from this day forward. Please forgive me. I also believe You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, to die in my place on the cross and that He rose from the dead on the third day. I receive Him today as my Lord and Savior by faith and will live for Him the rest of my life. Please change my life and make your presence known in me. I ask this in Jesus' holy name, Amen.

Please write in BLOCK letters:

Your Name:

Post Office Box:

Street Address:

.....

City:

State/Province:

Postal or Zip Code:

Country :

E-mail address:

1. *Were you a Christian, having understood God's plan of salvation and accepted Jesus as your Savior, before starting this course?*
2. *Did you accept Jesus Christ as a result of studying these lessons?*
3. *Do you belong to a local church? If so, what church?*
4. *Would you like to have an address of a local church in your area?*
5. *Would you like to have information about other courses like this that you can study?*

Congratulations on having finished this Christian Service course. Cut this sheet from your course and send it to your national Global University office if indicated or local church study center or Global University's international headquarters in Springfield, MO, USA (address shown on the back cover).

May God bless you as you love and serve Him.

SEND US THE NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF YOUR FRIENDS

We will send them Lesson 1 of our evangelism booklet “The Great Questions of Life.”

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Christian Maturity

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