

A person wearing a dark suit jacket is holding a large, thick, yellow rope. The rope is coiled and held in a way that forms a shape resembling a brain. The background is dark, and the lighting highlights the texture of the rope and the person's hands.

# **Solving Life's Problems**



# Solving Life's Problems

**A CHRISTIAN APPROACH**

by Dorothy L. Johns

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# Table of Contents

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	Page
Course Introduction .....	5
<b>UNIT ONE:</b> <i>BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR PROBLEM SOLVING</i>	
Lesson	
1 The Source of Problems .....	14
2 Finding Solutions-A Christian Approach .....	38
3 Christian Principles of Problem Solving .....	66
<b>UNIT TWO:</b> <i>PROBLEMS IN RELATIONSHIPS</i>	
4 Problems in Social Relationships .....	94
5 Family Problems .....	120
6 Problems of a Single Life .....	148
<b>UNIT THREE:</b> <i>SPECIAL PROBLEM AREAS</i>	
7 Sexuality in God's Design .....	176
8 Overcoming Depression .....	200
9 Suffering and Death .....	226
10 Maintaining Hope .....	252
Bibliography .....	270
Glossary .....	272
Answers to Self-Tests .....	280
Unit Student Reports .....	288
Answer Sheets .....	299

## THE ICI CHRISTIAN SERVICE PROGRAM



This is one of 18 courses (subjects) that make up the ICI Christian Service Program. The symbol at the left is a guide for order of study in the series, which is divided into three units of six courses each. *Solving Life's Problems—A Christian Approach* is Course 6 in Unit I. You will benefit by studying the courses in the proper order.

Study materials in the Christian Service Program have been prepared in a self-teaching format especially for Christian workers. These courses provide a student with Bible knowledge and skills needed for practical Christian service. You may study this course in order to receive a certificate, or for personal enrichment.

### ATTENTION

Please read the course introduction very carefully. It is important that you follow these instructions so you can achieve the goals of the course, and be prepared for the student reports.

Address all correspondence concerning the course to your ICI instructor at the address stamped on the copyright page of this study guide.

# Course Introduction

## Turning Problems Into Victories

A philosopher once wrote this observation of life: “Life is an interval from oblivion to oblivion, interspersed by tears.” Certainly it is not a Christian point of view that life goes from nothingness to nothingness and is filled with tears. But even those of us who are Christians have our share of tears and trials, and we need help to find answers to our problems.

What *is* the purpose in life? Why do the godly suffer? Why is there so much pain and sorrow and hatred in the world? What is the source of problems, and how can Christians avoid problems? Are all problems caused by sin in our lives? Where can we go for the answers to life’s problems? These are some of the questions we consider in this course.

There is no clear cut solution for some problems which confront us. However, the Bible does give us guidelines for finding solutions to many of the problems which come to us, and it also shows us how we can avoid many problems.

It is not God’s will that Christians be defeated by their problem. He has provided a Problem-Solver who will give us direction and help us to turn our problems into victories, if we go to Him for help.

As you study this course, apply the principles of problem solving to situations in your own life, and you will discover the wonderful blessing of allowing your Problem-Solver, Jesus Christ, to help you as you give your problems to Him! The principles you learn will also help you in your ministry to others who have problems.

## Course Description

*Solving Life's Problems—A Christian Approach* is a study of the source of problems, methods of problem solving, and ways of finding solutions, from a Christian perspective. Major universal problems are presented, such as problems in social and family relationships, problems of the single person, problems related to human sexuality, and other problems related to suffering and death. Biblical solutions are given for all of these problem areas, and principles are developed which provide a solid foundation for the Christian to find solutions for his problems, or to help others who are in need. Emphasis is given to the Christian's sure hope, which is based on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, his Problem-Solver.

## Course Objectives

*When you finish this course you should be able to:*

1. Explain the source of problems in the life of a Christian.
2. Discuss ways to find solutions for your problems according to biblical teaching.
3. Know the steps in the two methods of problem solving and apply them to problem situations in your own life in order to find the right solutions.
4. Find biblical solutions for specific problems of a Christian.
5. Help other people to approach their own problems from a Christian perspective and find solutions according to biblical principles.
6. Affirm in every circumstance your trust and hope in Jesus Christ to give you victory and help you to be an overcomer.

## Textbooks

You will use *Solving Life's Problems—A Christian Approach* by Dorothy L. Johns, as both the textbook and study guide for the course. The Bible (*New International Version*) is the only other textbook required. *Today's English Version* (TEV) has also been used for some quotations from the Bible.



## 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
- a) 100 books.
  - b) 66 books.
  - c) 27 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.

- |                     |                                  |           |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| .. <del>1</del> . a | Received the Law at Mt. Sinai    | 1) Moses  |
| .. <del>2</del> . b | Led the Israelites across Jordan | 2) Joshua |
| .. <del>2</del> . c | Marched around Jericho           |           |
| .. <del>1</del> . 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 ICI course by yourself, all of your work can be completed by mail. Although ICI 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 ICI instructor, you will receive your Certificate of Award.

## Author of This Course

Dorothy Johns has taught in elementary and middle schools in New York and Missouri, USA. She has also taught at Central Bible College in Springfield, Missouri. She is currently teaching in elementary and middle schools in Missouri.

Mrs. Johns received a Bachelor of Music Degree from Eastern School of Music in Rochester, New York. She received a Master of Science Degree in Education from the State University of New York at Brockport, New York. She did additional studies at Drury College, Central Bible College, and Missouri State University, all in Springfield, Missouri.

## Additional Helps

Other materials are available for use with this Individual Study Textbook, such as an Instructor's Guide and an Instructor's Packet (for instructor's use only). Consult the Evangelism, Discipleship, and Training Manual.

## Your ICI Instructor

Your ICI 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.

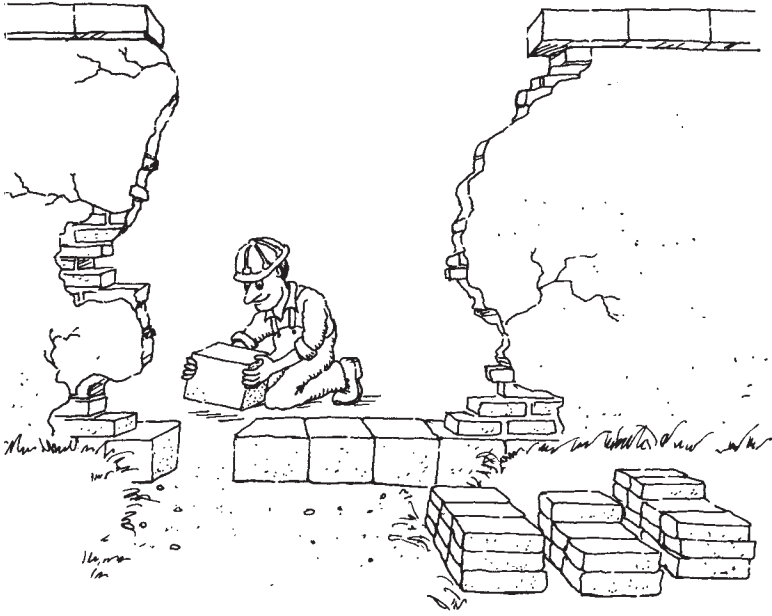
God bless you as you begin to study *Solving Life's Problems—A Christian Approach*. May it enrich your life and Christian service and help you fulfill more effectively your part in the body of Christ.





# 1 Unit

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# BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR PROBLEM SOLVING

## Lessons

- 1 The Source of Problems
- 2 Finding Solutions — A Christian Approach
- 3 Christian Principles of Problem Solving

# 1 The Source of Problems

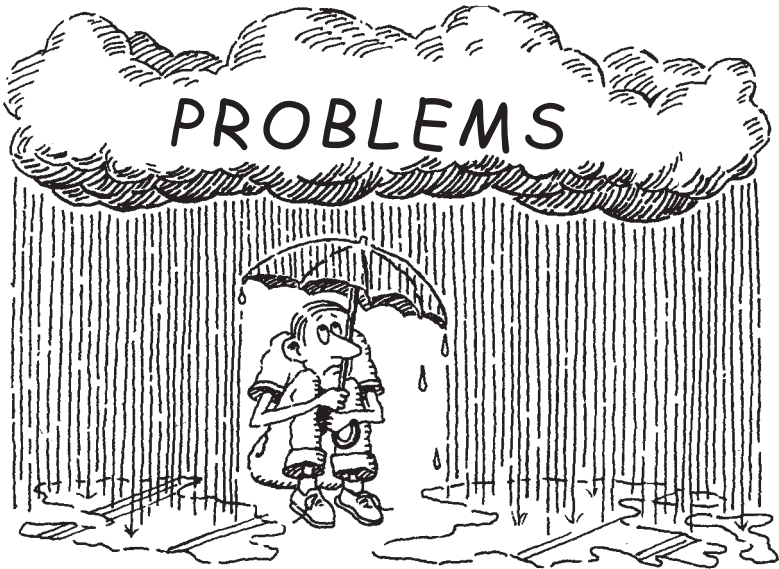
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Just before His death on the cross, Jesus talked to His disciples about what would happen to them after He returned to heaven. One of the things He said was, “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Then Jesus prayed for His disciples, “Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name . . . My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one” (John 17:11, 15).

As long as we remain in the world, we will have problems. Where do these problems come from? Is there anything we can do to prevent them from happening? Why does God allow the Christian to suffer hardships and trials?

In this lesson we will consider the source of our problems, and why we must all face problems. Understanding *why* things happen helps us to understand ways of finding solutions, or of turning our problems into opportunities to grow stronger in our Christian experience. As you study the lesson, think about problems in your own life and their source. Once you have identified the source of a problem, you are ready to consider possible solutions. Knowing the source may also help you to avoid certain problems. And that is the best solution of all.





### ***lesson outline***

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- A Result of Sin
- A Result of Outside Influences
- A Result of Our Own Choices
- A Result of God's Concern for Us

### ***lesson objectives***

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When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Identify the root cause of problems.
- Give an example of a problem resulting from our living in a sin-damaged world.
- State what choice men can make if they wish to avoid problems caused by personal sin.
- Identify examples of problems that result from outside influences over which you have no control.
- Explain the relationship of problems to mistakes in judgment.
- Select examples of good choices you would make even if you knew they might cause problems.

- Describe the difference between Satan's purpose in tempting us and God's purpose in testing us.
- Determine the message implied in Romans 8:17, 28-29 in relation to the problems we face.
- Explain how our trials can benefit our relationships to other people and to God.

### ***learning activities***

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1. Read the introduction to this independent-study textbook and study the course objectives carefully.
2. Read the introductory section, outline, and objectives of the lesson. Look over the key words. You will find their definitions in the glossary at the end of this study guide. Be sure to find the meanings of any words that are not familiar to you.
3. As background for this lesson, read Genesis 1, 2, and 3.
4. Study the lesson development section by section, reading all Scriptures indicated and answering all study questions. Be sure you are able to fulfill the objective for each section before going on to the next section.
5. Take the self-test at the end of the lesson and check your answers with those given at the end of the study guide. Review any items answered incorrectly.

### ***key words***

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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.

benefit	immorality	priorities
capacity	interact	purified
compassion	maturing	refined
conformed	persecution	solution
disaster	perseverance	

## *lesson development*

---

### **A RESULT OF SIN**

**Objective 1.** *Identify the root cause of problems.*

#### **Adam's Sin**

Adam and Eve were created as perfect human beings in a perfect world (Genesis 2). They had perfect fellowship with God and they had no problems. But God gave them the power to *choose* to obey and serve Him.

There was an evil influence in the world which was Satan, whom Jesus called “the evil one” (John 17:15). He was in the garden of Eden in the form of a serpent. The Bible does not tell us how he got there, but we read in Genesis 3 how the serpent (Satan) used his evil influence to tempt Adam and Eve to disobey God. Their disobedience brought a curse upon the whole earth. The earth and all humanity were damaged by this sin. This was the beginning of pain, suffering, hardships, disasters, and hard work.

#### *Application*

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- 1 Which of these statements best summarizes what we have just discussed concerning the source or root of our problems?
- a) Satan is the cause of all of our problems.
  - b) The sin of Adam and Eve is the source of all of our problems.
  - c) Satan's evil influence and man's disobedience brought a curse upon the whole earth and were the beginning of problems.
- 

#### **A Sin-Damaged World**

**Objective 2.** *Give an example of a problem resulting from our living in a sin-damaged world.*

Genesis chapter 3, verses 16-19, records the curse which came upon the earth as a result of sin. It is as a result of this curse that we grow old and die. Because of sin, the earth is imperfect, and there are disasters such as famine, floods, and earthquakes. Because of sin, we must struggle against wind

and storm and wild beasts and insects to provide food for our nourishment. Even though we are not all farmers, our existence depends upon this provision. Because of sin, some children are born with brain damage, or crippled limbs, or disease.

*Application*

**2** Consider the area where you live. Can you give an example of some problem you have seen or faced which was a result of the sin-damaged world?

.....  
.....



**Our Own Sinful Nature**

**Objective 3.** *State what choice men can make if they wish to avoid problems caused by personal sin.*

You've probably heard the story of the little boy who was caught misbehaving. When his mother asked him why he did it, he replied, "The devil made me do it!" It's easy to blame all our problems on the devil (Satan), but the truth is that many of our problems are a result of our own sinful nature.

We are given the power to choose to obey God or not to obey Him. When we sin, it is a matter of personal choice and we are personally responsible for our sin. In Romans 5:12, we read these words: "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned. . . ."

*Application*

**3** Read Isaiah 53:6, Isaiah 64:6, Proverbs 20:9, Romans 3:23, and 1 John 1:8. Which of the following statements best summarizes the message repeated in these Scriptures?

- a) Some men are more sinful than others.
- b) Adam is responsible for our own sinful nature.
- c) All men are born with a sinful nature, and all are guilty of personal sin.



These Scriptures make it clear that each of us is born with a capacity to sin, and we are all accountable for our own choices to do good or evil. Many of our problems are a result of sinful acts that we have committed, careless words we have spoken, or sinful attitudes such as willfulness, selfishness, greed, jealousy, or wrong priorities.

The Bible records one instance where Jesus healed a man who had been sick for a long time. Later, Jesus found the man in the temple, and gave him this advice: “See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you” (John 5:14). Apparently in this instance it was the man’s sin which caused his illness.

People who abuse their bodies by using harmful drugs or tobacco, by excessive eating or drinking, by immorality, or by other sinful acts may have severe physical problems as a result. When we sin by disobeying God and His Word, we can bring many problems upon ourselves, such as broken homes, broken relationships, sorrow, suffering, sickness, or even death. Romans 6:23 reminds us that “the wages of sin is death.” This speaks not only of physical death, but also of spiritual death, which is eternal separation from God.

The way we respond to problems can sometimes create additional problems. A bad attitude or a complaining spirit are sinful responses to our circumstances. When this happens, our problems can defeat us and cause us to lose fellowship with God. As we will see later in this course, a positive attitude will help us to turn our problems into victories, and the result will be spiritual growth.

### Application

4 What can we do to avoid problems caused by our personal sin?

.....



It would be a mistake to imply that it is possible in this life to avoid all sin-related problems by living a perfect life free from sin. Your own experience will tell you that, try as you may, you are not perfect, and even though you may be gaining victories over sin, your old sinful nature may sometimes cause you to fail. Thus,

from time to time you may have problems resulting from your own failings. But the wonderful truth is that even when we sin God still loves us, and He will help us to find solutions to all of our problems when we confess our sins and call upon Him for help.

In later lessons we will look at specific examples of how sin causes problems, and what we can do to avoid or overcome such problems.

## A RESULT OF OUTSIDE INFLUENCES

**Objective 4.** *Identify examples of problems that result from outside influences over which you have no control.*

We have seen that human problems result from sin. Because of sin we live in a damaged world. Sin brought a curse upon the whole world, and Satan's influence in the world has brought chaos, confusion, trouble, and despair. All men are born with a sinful nature (Romans 3:23).

Does this mean, then, that our problems are always caused by our personal sin? Of course not! Many problems which we face are caused by forces completely outside our control. What are some of these forces?

### Natural Disasters

When the British *Titanic* was built in 1912, it was the largest ship in the world. Experts said the ship was unsinkable. But on the night of April 14, 1912, it struck an iceberg and sank during its first voyage from England to America. About 1500 of its 2200 passengers died before they could be rescued. No one could have imagined that an iceberg would tear such a hole in the ship that it would sink within two and one-half hours.

Think of all the problems caused by this disaster! No doubt there were many Christians who lost loved ones in this accident. The resulting problems of grief, pain, suffering, and dealing with the aftereffects of this event cannot be attributed to the personal sin of any one person. They were simply the result of a natural disaster.

Possibly you have been the victim of a disaster such as a flood, an earthquake, a hurricane, or a famine. Or perhaps you have experienced problems within your family such as sickness,

death, mental disorders, financial difficulties, or other situations over which you have no control. Certainly the root cause of these problems is the curse that came upon the earth as a result of the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. But they were not the result of personal sin. The Bible makes it clear that godly Christians as well as sinful unbelievers may encounter problems simply because we live in a world cursed by sin.

### *Application*

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5 Read Matthew 24:4-9. Jesus describes in this passage what the believer can expect as Christ's second coming approaches. What disasters beyond the control of the believer are mentioned here?

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### Actions of Other People

In a time of economic depression businesses fail and many people lose their jobs. This might happen to you through no fault of your own. Your employer may decide to transfer you to another location of work, creating problems for your entire family. Someone driving an automobile may overlook a stop sign and strike your automobile, causing damage and injury. A neighbor may misunderstand some activity of yours, and accuse you unjustly of wrongdoing. An enemy of your country may declare war and you might be required to defend your country in battle. You may be the victim of a crime. These are all examples of problems, large or small, which come our way as a result of decisions or actions of others which are entirely outside of our control.



Because it is the nature of people to interact with one another, our own happiness and welfare sometimes depend upon the choices other people make. Much attention will be given in this course to problem solving as it relates to our relationships with others, and our reactions to problems which we face as a result of choices made by others.

### Application

- 6 Analyze the following situations, and put a circle around the letter in front of those which would be caused by forces outside your control.
- a A loved one dies in an airplane crash.
  - b You plant your crops late and they do not grow.
  - c Your home is broken into by a thief and you are robbed.
  - d You accidentally leave your wallet on the counter in the meat market, and it is stolen.
  - e Your boss dismisses you because you have a habit of arriving late for work.
  - f An earthquake damages your home and you are injured.
  - g You lose your job because of a serious illness.



## A RESULT OF OUR OWN CHOICES

### Mistakes in Judgment

**Objective 5.** *Explain the relationship of problems to mistakes in judgment.*





“If only I had driven a little slower, the accident wouldn’t have happened!”

“If I had been more careful, I wouldn’t have slipped and fallen!”

“If I had known all the facts, I would have made a better decision!”

Have you ever caught yourself making statements like these, after something you did created a problem for you? As we go about our activities we must make many choices. Some of them have good results, and we are pleased. Others may be poor choices, and they cause problems. They are not necessarily sinful choices, but may be caused by carelessness, or ignorance, or mixed-up priorities. Or perhaps they *were* carefully thought out, we made a decision that we considered the best possible one, and the result was not what we expected. Because we do not have perfect wisdom, we are bound to make mistakes from time to time. Even though there may be no *sin* involved in this kind of situation, we must deal with the problem that develops from it.

When a child is learning to walk, he stumbles and falls many times in the process. But he learns from experience how to prevent the falls, until he has gained full control of his movements and is able to walk without falling. In the same way, we *do* learn from our mistakes to pay more attention, to exercise greater care in the choices we make. This is part of our maturing process.

### Application

---

7 How can our problems sometimes be related to mistakes in judgment?

.....  
.....

8 When we cause a problem for ourselves through a mistake in judgment, what can we learn from the situation?

.....  
.....



## Carefully Considered Choices

**Objective 6.** *Select examples of good choices you would make even if you knew they might cause problems.*

Not all choices which cause problems are bad choices. We sometimes make choices which we know are good and right, even though we also know they may cause problems.

There are many biblical examples of this kind of choice. In Daniel 3 we read the story of the three young Hebrew men who chose *not* to bow down and worship a golden image of the king, even though their decision meant certain death. When the king heard of their refusal he was very angry, and asked them to explain. Here is their reply:

O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. *But even if he does not*, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up (Daniel 3:16-18).

In this instance God *did* rescue them from death as a witness of his power. But these three men would have chosen death rather than disobey God!

Throughout his ministry, the apostle Paul chose to preach the gospel even though it brought persecution. Once he was preaching in Lystre and the crowd became so angered that it stoned him and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead (Acts 14:19).

### *Application*

**9** Read Acts 14:20-21. What was Paul's next action after he had been stoned and left for dead?


.....  
 .....

10 What were Paul's words to the other disciples there (Acts 14:22)?

.....

.....

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Paul's choice to preach the gospel even if it meant persecution finally resulted in his being thrown into prison for a long period of time. Finally, he was put to death by those who hated the gospel. What an inspiration his words in Philippians 1:12-14 are to us:

Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.

Church history provides many examples of Christians who chose to suffer and die rather than give up their Christian testimony. And there are examples of missionaries like Jim Elliot, who died at the hands of the Auca Indians, a primitive tribe in South America to whom he had gone with the gospel. His choice is made clear in these words which he wrote shortly before his death:

*He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.*

Jim Elliot was willing to choose eternal values rather than the more immediate benefits of earthly values. As a result of Jim's death, his wife, Elizabeth, was able to approach the Auca tribe along with Rachel Saint, whose brother, Nate, also was martyred with Jim Elliot. Many of the members of the tribe have accepted Christ as their personal Savior through the witness of these two dedicated women.

*Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life (John 12:24-25).*

## Application

---

**11** Which of the following would you consider to be a good choice even though it might cause problems? Circle the letter in front of each statement you choose.

- a** You choose to protect a friend who has committed a crime, by stating that he was with you at the time the crime took place.
  - b** You choose to end a relationship that might lead to your marriage to an unbeliever, even though you love the person very much.
  - c** You choose to work every Sunday, rather than ask your employer to allow you time to go to church.
  - d** You choose to bow your head before eating and thank God for your food, even in the presence of unbelievers who may ridicule you.
  - e** You make a decision without knowing all the important facts.
- 

## A RESULT OF GOD'S CONCERN FOR US

**Objective 7.** *Describe the difference between Satan's purpose in tempting us and God's purpose in testing us.*

Why would a good God allow His people to suffer? If He really cares about us, why doesn't He rescue us from all our problems? Have you ever asked questions like this when your trials seem more than you can bear?

God does sometimes rescue us from our trials. We have seen how He rescued the three Hebrew men from the fiery furnace. Possibly you have experienced a miraculous healing, or God has provided in some other unexpected or unexplainable way to meet your needs. We rejoice when this happens, yet we know that at times God allows suffering. He does not do this because He takes pleasure in our suffering, but because He is concerned for us, and His concern goes beyond our momentary trial. Let's look at some reasons why He allows us to experience problems.

### To Purify Us and Prove Our Faith

A story is told of a railroad bridge which became old and weak. It was in danger of collapse if a train passed over it, so the railroad

company rebuilt it completely to make it safe and strong. When the work was completed, a dedication ceremony was announced to the entire community. The high point of the ceremony came when two trains crossed the bridge at the same time. Were the officials trying to make the bridge fall? No, they were sure it would not. Their purpose was to prove to the community that the bridge was now very strong and would not fall under pressure.

There is a very important point here. Does God tempt us? No! Does He test us? Yes! There is a great difference between *tempting* someone to do evil, and *testing* something to show its fine quality.

**Application**

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**12** Read James 1:2-4 and 12-17, then answer these questions:

- a** How is a Christian supposed to face his trials? .....
- b** Why is he to have this attitude?.....  
.....
- c** Does God tempt us to do evil? .....
- d** Who is responsible for the evil that we do? (See also John 17:15.)  
.....  
.....



There is a reason why we are told to be joyful even in times of trial. Nehemiah 8:10 gives us the reason: “Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” It is our joy in the Lord that gives us the strength to persevere and win the victory over our problems.

**Application**

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**13** Now read 1 Peter 1:6-7. This Scripture also tells us to rejoice even though we have to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. What is the purpose of these trials?

.....  
.....



Peter points out in this Scripture that gold is tested and purified or refined by putting it in the fire, but it can be destroyed. Our faith is of far greater value than gold, because it has eternal value, and it is purified or refined by the trials we go through.

Even as God allows us to be tested, He has promised to be with us. In 1 Corinthians 10:13 we discover these things:

1. God will not allow us to be tested beyond our power to remain firm (persevere, be faithful).
2. He will give us the strength to endure our trials.
3. He will provide us with a way to escape our trials (the solution).

### Application

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**14** Based on these Scriptures, explain the following:

**a** What is Satan's purpose in tempting us?

.....

**b** What is God's purpose in testing us?

.....



## To Form The Image of Christ in Us

**Objective 8.** *Determine the message implied in Romans 8:17, 28-29 in relation to the problems we face.*

God's desire for you and me is that we should become like Jesus. This life is a preparation for our eternal life in heaven, and God is interested in helping us to mature in our Christian experience so that we become more and more like Christ. If we approach our problems with the right attitude, He will use them for our good, to develop in us the characteristics of Christ.

I remember two women who each had to care for a dying relative over a long period of time. One of the women became a bitter, complaining person who felt sorry for herself. No one wanted to be around her. The other woman, though her problems were just as difficult to bear, became a patient, loving person and a testimony of the grace of God to give strength and joy even

in times of difficulty. She turned her problem into a victory by allowing it to form the character of Christ in her.

### *Application*

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**15** Read Romans 8:17, 28-29, then select the statements which correctly express the message implied in these verses.

- a** If we love God, He will allow only good things to happen to us.
  - b** Those who love the Lord and have faith in Him to direct them will benefit spiritually from the trials they go through.
  - c** Part of the process of being conformed in the image of Christ is to share in His sufferings.
  - d** God's purpose in working for good in the things that happen to us is to make us like His Son.
- 

Paul expresses this very beautifully in 2 Corinthians 4:7-10:

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

It is God's power in us that makes it possible for us to bear our burdens without being crushed, or in despair, or destroyed. And the purpose is that Jesus might be revealed in us! What a glorious victory!

### To Enable Us to Help Others

**Objective 9.** *Explain how our trials can benefit our relationships to other people and to God.*

Another reason God allows us to endure hardships is to help us respond better to the needs of others. The person who has been lonely can reach out to others who are lonely. A parent whose child has suffered has greater compassion for other parents whose children are suffering. We identify with those who have experienced the same trials we have had. Our own testimony of God's strength and blessing as we experienced difficulty will help another person to look to Him and not despair.

The apostle Paul expressed this in 2 Corinthians 1:34:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

### *Application*

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- 16** Choose the correct answer. This Scripture shows us that
- God purposely brings trials upon us so that we will be able to help others who have the same trials.
  - God is concerned for us in our suffering, and He wants us to have the same concern for others.
- 

### To Teach Us to Lean on Him

I have heard many Christians express the feeling that a burden they were bearing would have been impossible to bear alone, but they were aware of God's strength and help in the trial. In 1 Peter 5:7 this is emphasized: "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

The apostle Paul recognized this benefit of suffering. Here are his words in 2 Corinthians 1:8-10:

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us.

Paul had learned that he could depend on God not only in past trials, but in future times of difficulty also.

### *Application*

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**17** Compare 2 Corinthians 1:8-10 with 1 Corinthians 10:13. What truth is emphasized in both of these Scriptures?

.....

.....



**18** How can trials benefit our relationships to other people and to God?

.....

.....

**19** As a final exercise in this lesson, take time to make a list of problems you are facing right now. Then look over the lesson and see if you can identify the source of each problem. List the source next to each problem. Then as we go to the next lesson you will begin to see ways of finding solutions to your problems.



In this lesson we have studied the source of problems. We have seen that the presence of evil in the world is the root of our problems. But we can turn our problems into victories by allowing God to work good for us through them, perfecting us into the image of Christ and making us more useful servants of God.

In our next lesson we will look at the Christian approach to problem solving, and the resources God has given us to deal with our problems in a positive way, so that His name is glorified in everything we do.

**self-test**

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

**MULTIPLE CHOICE.** Choose the one best answer to each question.

- 1 Until they disobeyed God, Adam and Eve had no
  - a) choices.
  - b) problems.
  - c) communion with God.
  - d) judgment.
- 2 We can avoid problems caused by personal sin by
  - a) obedience to God and His Word.
  - b) doing what feels right to us.
  - c) following Adam's example.
- 3 The Bible tells us that we will receive divine strength when we face our problems with
  - a) fear.
  - b) sorrow.
  - c) determination.
  - d) joy.
- 4 It is Satan's desire to
  - a) help us.
  - b) test us.
  - c) tempt us.
  - d) refine us.
- 5 Which of these statements is correct?
  - a) All men are guilty of personal sin.
  - b) We are sinners only because of Adam's sin.
  - c) We are not personally responsible when we sin, because Satan tempts us to sin.
  - d) Some men are sinners by birth, while others are born Christians because their parents are Christians.
- 6 When something happens which causes a problem, we should first of all be careful about
  - a) wrong reactions.
  - b) what other people will think.
  - c) our own well-being.

- 7 The apostle Paul and Jim Elliot are testimonies to us that our greatest concern should be
- a) personal happiness.
  - b) eternal values.
  - c) avoiding problems.
  - d) meeting our present needs.
- 8 To *persevere* means to
- a) avoid problems.
  - b) continue with your purpose and don't give up.
  - c) solve your problems by your own efforts.
  - d) give in to Satan's temptation.
- 9 Which of these is NOT God's purpose in testing us?
- a) Make us more like Christ.
  - b) Refine us.
  - c) Tempt us to do evil.
  - d) Purify us.

**10 MATCHING.** How would you identify the source of each of these problems? Write the letter of your choice in the blank space in front of each problem stated.

- |         |  |   |
|---------|--|---|
| ..... a | “I thought I was doing the right thing when I refused that job, but now I see that I should have taken it, because my employer is closing his business.” | 1) Sin-damaged world<br>2) Personal sin<br>3) Outside influence |
| ..... b | “While I was sick, I began to realize I had been neglecting my personal time of prayer and Bible study.”   | 4) Mistaken judgment<br>5) Carefully considered choice          |
| ..... c | “He had an accident while driving under the influence of alcohol.”   | 6) God’s dealing with us  |
| ..... d | “I need a new coat for winter, but I used my savings to help purchase Bibles for a missionary project.”  |   |
| ..... e | “He cheated while taking the exam, and was not permitted to continue the class.”   |   |
| ..... f | “There was an earthquake in my village and many people lost their lives.”  |   |
| ..... g | “The whole village has suffered from an epidemic of cholera and many people have died.”  |   |

## answers to study questions

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These answers have been mixed so that you will not accidentally see the answer to the next question before you write your own response. Please do not look ahead, but write your own answer to each question before comparing it with the one we have given. This will help you to remember what you have studied.

**10** “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.”

**1 c)** Satan’s evil influence and man’s disobedience brought a curse upon the whole earth and were the beginning of problems.

**11** Answer b is a good choice, even though it might cause you to suffer, because it is made in obedience to God’s Word. (We will discuss this further in another lesson.) Answer d is also a good choice because it glorifies God and is a testimony of your love for Him. Answers a and c are wrong choices, because answer a involves dishonesty and answer c involves disobedience to God’s Word. Answer e is a wrong choice because it is based on mistaken judgment.

**2** Your answer. An example in my area is that certain trees are dying because they have been overcome by insects.

**12 a** With joy.

**b** So that he will develop perseverance, which leads to spiritual maturity. (*Perseverance* means “to continue with a purpose or aim, never giving up.” For the Christian, it means continuing in his Christian experience, being faithful, whatever the cost.)

**c** No, never!

**d** We are enticed (tempted) by Satan, and we give in to our own evil desires.

**3 c)** All men are born with a sinful nature, and all are guilty of personal sin.

**13** To test our faith, so that it may be proved genuine.

**4** Obey God and His Word.

**14 a** To cause us to do evil, to fall.

**b** To cause us to persevere, to prove that our faith is genuine (real).

**5** Wars, famines, earthquakes, persecution, death.

- 15 a False.  
b True.  
c True.  
d True.
- 6 Based on the evidence given, I would circle a, c, f, and g. There seems to be some personal responsibility indicated in answers b, d, and e.
- 16 b) God is concerned for us in our suffering, and He wants us to have the same concern for others. This is one of the ways God brings good out of a situation that seemingly has no good in it.
- 7 Careless or unwise choices can result in problems.
- 17 God will not give us more trials than we can bear.
- 8 Your answer. We can learn to exercise greater care in the choices we make.
- 18 As we experience trials we become more compassionate to others who are going through similar trials. We also turn to God for help and learn to trust Him more.
- 9 He got up and went to the next town (Derbe) where he continued to preach the good news about Christ
- 19 Your answer.

***For Your Notes***

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# LESSON 2 Finding Solutions — A Christian Approach

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*The Lord has filled my heart with joy; how happy I am because of what he has done! . . . how joyful I am because God has helped me! (1 Samuel 2:1 TEV)*

Do these words sound like they came from a person in deep despair over life's heavy problems? No! They sound like the testimony of someone living in joyous victory and confidence. They are the words of Hannah, a woman whose life was weighted down with problems. Her problems resulted from being one of two wives of Elkanah, and being unable to bear children. The other wife laughed at her and made her life miserable because she was barren. Hannah was overcome by a spirit of sadness and she wept many tears because of these problems. She lost her appetite. Her sadness was a problem for her husband, too, because he loved her very much.

How could a woman with such problems be the same one who spoke the words of 1 Samuel 2:1? She took her problems to God. She made a commitment that God had been waiting to hear. The commitment brought peace to her heart even before her problems were solved. "She went away, ate some food, and was no longer sad" (1 Samuel 1:18 TEV). Later, the Lord gave her the son she had so long desired. Her life began to turn around when she took her problems to the Lord.





In this lesson we will study a Christian approach to finding solutions to our problems. God has provided many helps for us in finding solutions. If we take our heavy burdens to Him with a sincere and obedient heart, we, too, will be able to say with Hannah, “The Lord has filled my heart with joy!”

### ***lesson outline***

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Solve the Sin Problem First  
Let the Bible Be Your Guide  
Use Your Other Resources

### ***lesson objectives***

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When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Make an application to your own situation of the principles given for solving the sin problem.
- Give two reasons why the Bible should be our guide in finding solutions to problems.
- Identify examples of broken commandments and the problems that could result from them.
- Recognize attitudes which are opposite to those which will help you avoid problems.

- Use 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 to outline what love IS and IS NOT; and what love DOES and DOES NOT do.
- Identify from Scriptures ways that prayer and the Holy Spirit will help us solve problems.
- Select examples that illustrate the use of common sense or reason to solve a problem.
- Recognize true statements concerning the proper use of conscience and self-control.
- Analyze your own feelings about seeking help with problems from other people and compare your feelings with attitudes suggested in this lesson.

### ***learning activities***

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1. As background for this lesson read Exodus 20:1-17 and Matthew chapters 5 through 7. As you work through the lesson development, read all Scripture texts given.
2. Study the lesson following the study plan given in the learning activities for Lesson 1.
3. Look up any key words you do not know. You will find their definitions in the glossary at the end of the study guide.
4. Take the self-test and check your answers.

### ***key words***

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abolish	conscience	penalty
acknowledge	covet	perspective
attitude	dissension	principles
bondage	insight	psychological
confess	meek	sensitive

## *lesson development*

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### **SOLVE THE SIN PROBLEM FIRST**

**Objective 1.** *Make an application to your own situation of the principles given for solving the sin problem.*

The greatest problem any of us will have to solve is the sin problem—and there is a solution! In Lesson 1 we read several Scriptures which tell us that all have sinned, that no one is righteous, and that we are all guilty before God for our sins. We also saw that the penalty for sin is death—eternal separation from God.

Before we can approach our other problems from the right perspective, we must first solve the sin problem. Before we can help others find solutions to the problems they face, we must show them their need to solve the sin problem in their life. Jesus Christ is the only answer to that problem. We come to Him and receive forgiveness through *confession* and *belief*. We maintain our relationship to Him as our Lord and Savior through *obedience*.

### Confession

#### *Application*

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1 Read 1 John 1:9 and Romans 10:9-10. What two things must the sinner confess?

.....

2 What happens when we confess our sins to God?

.....



Confession includes being willing to admit that we are sinners, being sorry for our sins, and agreeing that we will stop sinning. It is also an acknowledgment that we want Christ to be the Lord and Master of our lives. It is a willingness to entrust our lives completely into His hands.

## Belief

### *Application*

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**3** What must the sinner believe? (See Romans 10:9.)

.....

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With Christ's death upon the cross and His resurrection from the dead, God completed His redemption plan so that man might be restored to fellowship with Him. Christ became the covering for our sin. His resurrection was an essential part of the plan. In 1 Corinthians 15:17, 21-22 we read these words:

And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile [hopeless]; you are still in your sins. . . . For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

When we acknowledge that Christ has won the victory over death and the grave, we also acknowledge that He has provided a way for us to receive forgiveness for our sins, and to gain victory over them. We believe that He has power to help us overcome temptation and to live a godly life. We also believe that He will direct our lives as we put our trust in Him, and that He will prepare us for eternal life in heaven with Him.

### *Application*


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**4** Why is Christ's resurrection important for our salvation? Relate this to Adam's sin.

.....

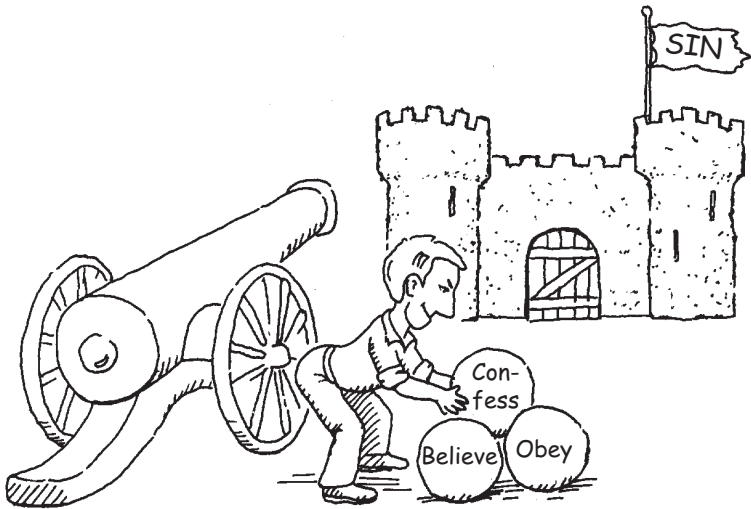
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## Obedience

Once we have confessed our sins and acknowledged Jesus Christ as our risen Lord and Master, we must live a life of obedience to Him and His Word. This is the way we show our love for Him. Jesus emphasized the importance of obedience in His words to the disciples (John 14:15,21,23): “If you love me, you will obey what I command . . . Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. . . . If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching.”



In the next section of this lesson we will look at some of the teachings of Jesus, and see how obedience to His commands will help us to avoid many problems and find solutions for others.

## Application

**5** Have you solved your sin problem? Test yourself by checking the appropriate response to each statement.

	YES	NO
a I recognize that all men, including myself, are sinners.		
b I have confessed my sins to God.		
c I have confessed that Jesus is my Lord.		
d I believe that Christ rose from the dead and by His resurrection gives me victory over sin, death, and the grave.		
e I believe that if Christ can solve the sin problem in my life, He can also help me to find solutions for my other problems.		
f I want to be obedient to Christ and His Word.		
g I believe obedience will help me to avoid many problems.		



You will be enriched by the study of the ICI course *Alive in Christ*, by David Duncan, which deals in depth with the sin problem and the steps involved in its solution.

## LET THE BIBLE BE YOUR GUIDE

**Objective 2.** Give two reasons why the Bible should be our guide in finding solutions to problems.

After we become Christians, we do not look for just any solution which will get us out of a hard place. We look for solutions from God's Word that are consistent with the Christian way of life. The ways in which a Christian believer solves his problems are very important.

First, a Christian is committed to a life of obedience to Jesus Christ. Therefore, all possible solutions must be examined in the light of Scripture, and especially the teachings of Jesus and His disciples. Many Scriptures are clear on the subject of right and honorable actions. Solutions contrary to Scripture must be rejected!

Second, the Bible is God’s *operations manual* for us. When a manufacturer sells a piece of complicated machinery, he provides an operations manual, a set of instructions which explain how to keep the machine in good working order. These instructions must be followed if the machine is to work properly. In a similar manner, people were made by God, and He knows what it takes to make human life successful. The Bible is the “operations manual” that He has provided. To scorn (reject) or ignore God’s stated instructions is to invite trouble and problems. We saw in Lesson 1 that *disobedience brings disaster!*

It would be impossible to list here all of the Scriptures which deal with the way we should live. As we proceed with this course and discuss specific problems, we will see what the Bible has to say about them. But some general guidelines are found in the *Ten Commandments* (Exodus 20:1-17) and in Jesus’ *Sermon on the Mount* (Matthew chapters 5–7) which we want to consider briefly.



### Application

6 Explain briefly two reasons why the Bible should be our guide.

.....

.....

.....



## The Ten Commandments

**Objective 3.** *Identify examples of broken commandments and the problems that could result from them.*

There is a popular teaching that says, “Since Christ paid the penalty for our sin, we are no longer under the Law, and have complete liberty to live as we choose.” It is true that Christ has set us free from the bondage of sin, but examine His words in Matthew 5:17-18:

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

Christ did not do away with the moral Law of God, *but He does give us the power to be obedient to the Law*. Take time now to read Exodus 20:1-17 and Matthew chapters 5 through 7. You will see that Christ expects His followers to be careful observers of His commandments, and to go even a step further in determining to avoid those things which might *lead* to disobedience.

The purpose of this course is to help you find solutions to your problems. In order to have a proper foundation in approaching your problems from a Christian perspective, you need to know what the Bible says that will be of help to you. As a starting point, we will compare the Ten Commandments (the moral Law of God) with related Scriptures in the New Testament. These Scriptures deal with our *behavior*—what we *do*. Find each Scripture in your Bible and read it carefully.



<p><b>THE TEN COMMANDMENTS</b> Exodus 20:3-17</p>	<p><b>RELATED NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES</b> Matthew 19:17-19; Romans 13:8-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11</p>
<p>1. v. 3 You shall have no other gods before me.</p>	<p>Mark 12:29-30</p>
<p>2. v. 4 You shall not make for yourself an idol . . . You shall not bow down to them or worship them.</p>	<p>Matthew 4:10; 1 John 5:21</p>
<p>3. v. 7 You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.</p>	<p>Matthew 5:33-37; Matthew 6:9; James 5:12; James 3:10</p>
<p>4. v. 8 Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.</p>	<p>Luke 4:16; Hebrews 10:25 (Note: Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week. Since then, many Christians have set aside that day as the Lord's day. See Acts 20:7; Revelation 1:10.)</p>
<p>5. v. 12 Honor your father and mother.</p>	<p>Matthew 15:4; Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20; 1 Timothy 5:1-2</p>
<p>6. v. 13 You shall not murder.</p>	<p>Matthew 5:21-25; 19:17-19; Romans 13:8-10; 1 Peter 4:15</p>
<p>7. v. 14 You shall not commit adultery.</p>	<p>Titus 1:6; Matthew 5:27-28, 31-32; Matthew 19:4, 9; Romans 7:3; 1 Corinthians 6:9</p>
<p>8. v. 15 You shall not steal.</p>	<p>Matthew 19:18; Romans 13:9; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Peter 4:15</p>
<p>9. v. 16 You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.</p>	<p>Matthew 5:43-44; 19:18; Colossians 4:6; Titus 2:8; James 3:2-10</p>
<p>10. v. 17 You shall not covet your neighbor's house . . . wife . . . manservant . . . ox . . . donkey . . . or anything that belongs to your neighbor.</p>	<p>Mark 12:31; Romans 13:10; Romans 15:1-2; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8</p>

## Application

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**7** Identify which commandments have been broken and suggest possible problems that could result from each of the following behaviors:

Behavior	Commandments broken	Possible results
a Joseph's job has become the most important thing in life to him, more important than his relationship to God or his family.		
b Henry's friend stole a test and gave a copy to Henry so he would know the answers before he took the test in his class.		
c Homer has been attracted to a married woman he works with, and has been unfaithful to his wife.		
d Marjorie is jealous because her neighbor has a new car. She suggests to friends that he got the car by dishonest means.		

**8** Now apply this same exercise to problems which you have in your life, or problems of people you know. In a separate notebook state the behavior which created the problem, identify which commandment was broken, and state what problems resulted from the behavior.



God did not give us these commandments because He wants to make us His slaves. He gave them to us because He knew that obeying them would help us to avoid many problems and have happy, fulfilled lives.

## The “Be” Attitudes

**Objective 4.** *Recognize attitudes which are opposite to those which will help you avoid problem's.*

One day I heard a conversation about a woman who had moved several hundred miles away from her original home. One person said, “Mrs. White moved there because she was so unhappy.” “She will still be unhappy there,” replied the friend, “because she had to take herself along!”

The friend spoke an important truth. If your attitude is wrong, no *outside* solution to a problem will be of permanent help. But when you approach your problem with the right attitude, you can expect victory over the problem, whether the desired solution comes or not.

Jesus had much to say about attitudes. The *Beatitudes*, which are part of His *Sermon on the Mount*, have often been called the “*be attitudes*” because they describe what we should be.



If you studied the first course in this series, *Christian Maturity* by Rick Howard, you have already considered the teaching of the Beatitudes (1980, p. 152). They are recorded in Matthew 5:3-10. These are the attitudes of heart and character which the Holy Spirit will produce in believers who allow Him to do so.

### *Application*

9 In this exercise we will summarize in the left column Rick Howard's comments on each of the Beatitudes. In the right column we will list attitudes which are *opposite* to those taught by Jesus. Match the wrong attitude to its opposite right attitude. Can

you see how the wrong attitudes can be a source of problems, or can make existing problems much worse? (See Matthew 5:3-10.)

- |         |   |  |
|---------|---|--|
| ..... a | Verse 3: <i>The poor in spirit</i> , an attitude of dependency on God                                       | 1) Willful<br>(wants own way)                |
| ..... b | Verse 4: <i>Those who mourn</i> , an attitude of sorrow for sin which results in confession and repentance  | 2) Disobedient<br>3) Proud<br>4) Independent |
| ..... c | Verse 5: <i>The meek</i> , attitude of humility and submission to God                                       | 5) Without hope<br>6) Sinful                 |
| ..... d | Verse 6: <i>Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness</i> , attitude of obedience                       | 7) Unforgiving<br>8) Troublemaker            |
| ..... e | Verse 7: <i>The merciful</i> , attitude of forgiveness  |  |
| ..... f | Verse 8: <i>The pure in heart</i> , attitude of purity  |  |
| ..... g | Verse 9: <i>The peacemakers</i> , attitude of one who wants to make peace (See James 3:17.18)               |  |
| ..... h | Verse 10: <i>Those who are persecuted because of righteousness</i> , attitude of trusting God in all things |  |

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## Love Is the Key

**Objective 5.** Use 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 to outline what love IS and IS NOT; and what love DOES and DOES NOT do.

Throughout the Scriptures, love is given as the key to finding solutions for problems. Once someone asked Jesus, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" (Mark 12:28). Here is His answer (Mark 12:29-31):

"The most important one . . . is this: . . . 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

*Application*

**10** Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 and write in the correct columns what it says that love *is* and *is not*, and what love *does* and *does not* do.

LOVE IS	LOVE IS NOT	LOVE DOES	LOVE DOES NOT
.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....
	.....	.....	.....
		.....	.....
		.....	.....



Just think of all the problems that could be avoided if we would determine to show the kind of love described by Paul! That is the attitude God wants us to have, and if we have it we don't need to worry about breaking the Law. In Romans 13:8-10 the apostle Paul expressed this:

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellow man has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself" Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

*Application*

- 11** How did Christ fulfill the Law? With .....
- 12** How can we fulfill the Law? With .....



We have just briefly illustrated in this section how the Bible gives us guidelines for problem solving. You will want to refer back to these references as we proceed through the course, and we will continue to look into the Scriptures to find answers for specific problems. The teachings of Jesus and the apostles are rich in practical

instruction for our everyday lives, and we can gain much by reading God's Word daily and applying the truths in it to our own situations.

## USE YOUR OTHER RESOURCES

### Prayer and Holy Spirit Guidance

**Objective 6.** *Identify from Scriptures ways that prayer and the Holy Spirit will help us solve problems.*

In this very personal ministry to you, God Himself will help you solve your problems. You can take them to God in prayer and He will either show you the solution so that you understand what you must do, or He will work in circumstances so that the problem is solved in other ways. To have this kind of relationship with God, establish the habit of communicating often with Him!

### *Application*

**13** Read the Scriptures listed in the right column. Identify what each one gives as a way prayer will help us. Then match each Scripture with the ways of solving problems given in the left column.

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| ..... <b>a</b> Overcome temptation            | 1) 1 Chronicles 16:1 |
| ..... <b>b</b> Receive joy                    | 2) Matthew 26:41     |
| ..... <b>c</b> Develop perseverance           | 3) James 5:13        |
| ..... <b>d</b> Receive strength               | 4) Ephesians 6:18    |
| ..... <b>e</b> Relieve affliction (suffering) | 5) John 16:24        |

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John 16:13 promises that the Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth. You can also count on the Holy Spirit to direct your daily path. *He will always direct you according to biblical principles.*

Your word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path. I will keep my solemn promise to obey your just instructions (Psalm 119:105-106 TEV).

To frequent prayer, offered with praise and thanksgiving, must be added *obedience*. We have talked about obedience before. Did you notice in the Psalm you just read that the Psalmist connected light for his path to the fact that he was going to keep his promise

to obey God's instructions? Answered prayer and obedience go hand in hand. Impossible problems can be solved through prayer!

### *Application*

**14** Read Luke 12:12, John 14:26, 1 Corinthians 2:13, and explain what these Scriptures tell us the Holy Spirit will do for us.

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## Common Sense and Reason

**Objective 7.** *Select examples that illustrate the use of common sense or reason to solve a problem.*

God has given each of us a certain capacity for considering obvious facts and making a judgment. He must expect us to use this ability. You probably use common sense and reasoning to solve many problems every day. In fact, it becomes such a familiar process that it may be overlooked.

For example, a friend of mine had a problem with children in her neighborhood. Seven of them had gotten into the habit of coming into her yard every morning to play with her two children, and often they would stay the whole day. First she considered all the facts:

1. It was good to have her own children nearby so that she knew what they were doing.
2. Her children needed to be with other children often.
3. Having so many children in her yard all day was often unpleasant, or inconvenient for her.

There are several common-sense solutions to this problem. My friend used her common sense to limit the amount of time the children could visit in her yard. She chose a simple solution to the problem.

We also experience times when God's solution to one of our problems might indeed be quite uncommon! He might lead you in ways that would not be easy for other people to understand. Nevertheless, for most of the ordinary situations of life, common sense and our ability to reason are important problem-solving tools.

## Application

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- 15** Which of the following would you consider to be unreasonable solutions to the problem just described?
- a** Scold the mothers of the other children for not keeping them in their own yards.
  - b** Arrange with the other mothers for the children to play in a different yard each day.
  - c** Refuse to allow her own children to play in the yard, so that the other children would go away.
  - d** Tell the other children they may come into the yard to play only after asking permission of her.
- 16** Which of these are examples of our use of common sense or reason to solve a problem? Circle the letter in front of your choices.
- a** Studying carefully to pass a test
  - b** Making excuses for a foolish mistake we made
  - c** Resting after working hard
  - d** Crossing the street to avoid meeting someone who has been unkind
  - e** Asking forgiveness when we have offended someone
  - f** Waiting to purchase a new watch until other bills are paid
  - g** Staying away from people who have a bad influence on us
- 

## Conscience and Self-Control

**Objective 8.** *Recognize true statements concerning the proper use of conscience and self-control.*

*Conscience* is the word we use to name that inner voice or “feeling” that tells us what is right or wrong. Sometimes your conscience can be a tool in helping you solve your problems. I must say *sometimes*, because if you have ignored your conscience, its messages may be unclear. This sad possibility is taught in Romans 1:18-32. The pattern is explained in verse 28: “Because those people refuse to keep in mind the true knowledge about God, he has given them over to corrupted minds . . .” (TEV). Your conscience is misused when it sends out warnings that you continue to ignore.

If you ask the Holy Spirit to guide you, and if you are obedient to His teaching, you can depend upon your conscience to warn you



about those things which are wrong. The person who is sensitive to the warnings of his conscience will feel guilt when he has done wrong, and he will want to ask God for forgiveness. Keep your conscience sensitive by paying attention to its inner warning voice! Then it can be a useful tool in helping you solve your problems. It will help you to know which solutions to reject.

There are three areas where *self-control* is necessary in order to avoid problems or solve existing problems which we have brought upon ourselves. They are the control of *thoughts*, *speech*, and *behavior*. I have linked them with conscience, because your conscience will warn you when you are weak in any of these areas.

*Thoughts* are the roots of spoken words and outward acts. Jesus taught that murder has its roots in angry thoughts and words; adultery begins with thinking unclean thoughts (Matthew 5:21-30). Your thoughts are in your direct control. You can refuse to dwell on thoughts that will lead to trouble. Follow the teachings of Scripture:

“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (Philippians 4:8).

One way to put good thoughts into your mind is to read books that will inspire and help you. There are many good Christian books that give us insight into the problems and experiences of other Christians. When I read such books and learn how God has brought guidance to others in solving their problems, I can be encouraged that He will also guide me. A Christian should be very careful in his selection of books, magazines, television or radio programs, and other forms of entertainment, so that he can control his thoughts carefully.

Control of *speech* is probably the most difficult task for all of us. The apostle James tells us in James 3:2, “If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check [control].” Read verses 3 through 12 in this chapter. These verses emphasize what a deadly weapon the tongue can be. Surely it can cause us a great deal of trouble if we do not control it.

## Application

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**17** Read Proverbs 10:19; 17:28; and 30:32. What is the message of these proverbs? Choose the correct answer.

- a) Never talk to anyone who is wiser than you.
- b) Be careful what you say—control your tongue.
- c) You can show how wise you are by saying what you think.

**18** What is the message of Proverbs 21:23 and 10:14?

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Here are some results of an uncontrolled tongue:

1. *Separates friends* (Proverbs 16:28): “A gossip separates close friends.”
2. *Causes deadly wounds* (Proverbs 18:8): “The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man’s inmost parts.”
3. *Causes discord among brethren* (Proverbs 6:16, 19): “There are six things the Lord hates . . . a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.”

Once you have learned to better control of your thoughts and speech, you will also be able to better control your *behavior*. In all of this, you need the help of the Holy Spirit, because your sinful nature would lead you to do that which is wrong. The apostle Paul recognized this. He discussed it in Romans 7:18-19, and 24-25:

I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil that I do not want to—this I keep on doing . . . What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

## Application

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**19** Circle the letter preceding TRUE statements concerning your conscience and self-control.

- a) My conscience is an “inner voice” that God has given me to guard me against sin.

- b When I ignore my conscience, it will still give me clear warning of those things which are wrong.
  - c I can count on my conscience to give me correct signals as long as I allow the Holy Spirit to guide and teach me.
  - d What I say and do has its roots in what I think.
  - e The things I read and listen to have no lasting effect on my thoughts.
  - f If I learn to control my tongue, I will have no problem controlling other areas of my life.
  - g I need the power of Jesus Christ in my life in order to practice self-control successfully.
- 

## Other People

**Objective 9.** *Analyze your own feelings about seeking help with problems from other people and compare your feelings with attitudes suggested in this lesson.*

Many of your problems can be solved by following your conscience and using common sense and reason. You can find solutions to other problems through prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes a problem is so heavy and so personal that you should take it only to God, and allow Him to work out the solution in your heart. But often God uses other people as His instruments in helping you find solutions for your problems.

*Friends and caring people.* You might begin by seeking out a wise and godly friend (one who can be trusted to keep a confidence). Friends have the advantage of not being emotionally involved in the problem. Since they are outside the situation, they can look at the problem from a different angle. Their advice should always be according to scriptural teaching.

Christian friends can often be a blessing to one another in this way. Prayer groups, Sunday school classes, and other small groups within the church can share together and pray together. I have seen wonderful solutions to problems come as a result of united prayer by a caring church family.

On the other hand, *you* can be the friend that someone else needs. I hope your study of this course will help you to be more

sensitive to the needs of others, and better able to help them find solutions to their problems.

*Professional counselors.* There are some problems so serious or complex that God's best way of helping us is through the advice of someone with special knowledge or training. Medical or psychological problems often need this kind of specialized help. There are delicate or sensitive matters that should not be shared with friends; they may not have enough knowledge to help you find the best solutions.

In such cases, expert advice should be sought from a caring pastor, professional Christian counselors, doctors, or others who have made the area of your concern their special study. God can use their judgments just as He can use yours. Be sure to choose a Christian counselor, or one who will not oppose the Christian principles by which you live.

### *Application*

**20** People have different feelings about sharing their problems with others. Use this checklist to analyze your own feelings or experience, then compare your feelings with the positive suggestions we have made.

	<b>I AGREE</b>	<b>I DISAGREE</b>
a I don't want to bother other people with my problems.		
b It would seem like a sign of weakness to ask for help with a problem.		
c I do not have any Christian friends to share a problem with.		
d It is embarrassing to let someone else know I have a problem.		
e I don't share my problems because people have enough of their own troubles to worry about.		

f	I have learned that you can't trust other people with your problems.		
g	My friends don't want to be bothered with my problems.		
h	I have often received help with problems from Christian friends.		
i	I have often helped my friends with their problems.		
j	Everyone has problems, so it is no disgrace to admit that I need help with a problem.		
k	Christians should count it a privilege to share prayer burdens with their brothers and sisters in Christ.		
l	A wise counselor will keep your problem to himself unless you have asked him to share it with others.		



In this lesson we have discussed the Christian approach to finding solutions to our problems. In the next lesson we will discuss basic principles of problem solving and how you can apply these principles to problems in your own life. We hope this study will enrich your life and be an encouragement to you.

**self-test**

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**MULTIPLE CHOICE.** Choose the one best answer to complete each statement

- 1 Confession includes admitting that I have sinned, and that
  - a) God loves me.
  - b) I love my neighbor.
  - c) Jesus is Lord.
- 2 The most important problem I will ever face in life is my
  - a) selfishness.
  - b) sin problem.
  - c) lack of self-control.
- 3 Christ's resurrection is important for my salvation because it
  - a) provides the way for me to be released from the penalty of death.
  - b) is related to Adam's sin and my sinful nature.
  - c) is my only proof that Christ is the Son of God.
  - d) gives me victory over Sin.
- 4 We prove our love for Christ by
  - a) saying we love Him.
  - b) refusing to get angry.
  - c) avoiding problems.
  - d) obeying His Word.
- 5 All possible solutions to a problem must be examined in the light of
  - a) common sense.
  - b) conscience.
  - c) Scripture.
  - d) advice of friends.

**TRUE-FALSE** Write **T** in front of the TRUE statements, and write **F** in front of those that are FALSE

- ..... 6 The Bible contains God's instructions for avoiding problems.
- ..... 7 Christ came to replace the Law.
- ..... 8 The teachings of Christ actually require less of us than does the Old Testament Law.
- ..... 9 Christ emphasized what we should be as much as what we should do.

- ..... **10** A wrong attitude can make any problem worse.
- ..... **11** Prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit are only necessary when common sense fails.
- ..... **12** The most important commandment is to control your tongue.
- ..... **13** The Law is fulfilled by an attitude of love.
- ..... **14** A person's conscience is the same as Holy Spirit guidance.
- ..... **15** We must keep our thoughts in control if we want to control our speech and behavior.
- ..... **16** A good way to examine the advice of a friend is to find out if it is in agreement with scriptural teaching.

**answers to study questions**

---

11 love.

1 He must confess his sins, and confess that Jesus is Lord.

12 love.

2 He forgives us, He cleanses (purifies) us, and He saves us from the penalty of sin.

13 a 2) Matthew 26:41.

b 5) John 16:24.

c 4) Ephesians 6:18.

d 1) 1 Chronicles 16:1.

e 3) James 5:13.

3 That God has raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

14 He will teach us.

4 Death came into the world through the sin of Adam. Because we have his sinful nature, we are born in sin. Christ's resurrection provided for our release from the penalty of sin, which is death. Because of Christ, we can have eternal life!

15 I would consider answers a and c to be unreasonable solutions to the problems.

5 Your answer. If you have solved the sin problem in your life, you should be able to answer yes to all of these statements. Do you see the need to solve this most important problem before trying to solve others?

16 a Yes.

b No.

c Yes.

d No.

e Yes. (This may also involve our conscience.)

f Yes.

g Yes.

6 First, in order for us to obey Christ, we must know what He wants us to do. We find this in His teachings. Second, the Bible contains God's instructions for the way we, His creation, should live to have successful lives.

17 b) Be careful what you say—control your tongue.



**7** (Your answers may not be exactly like mine. I have suggested some common results. There could, of course, be many other results.)

<b>Commandment broken:</b>	<b>Possible results</b>
a No. 1	— Family problems, spiritual death, etc.
b No. 8	— Their sin will be discovered, everyone will know what they have done; they will be expelled from school, etc.
c Nos. 7 and 10	— Guilt feelings; unhappiness of his wife; two broken homes, etc.
d Nos. 9 and 10	— Damage to the neighbor's name; discovery by the neighbor of what she said; the neighbor may become her enemy and seek ways to hurt her in return, etc.

**18** If you do not control your tongue, you will bring trouble and ruin upon yourself.

**8** Your answers. Can you see why God gave us these commandments, and why Jesus and other New Testament teachers emphasized the importance of obeying them?

- 19**
- a True.
  - b False.
  - c True.
  - d True.
  - e False.
  - f True.
  - g True.

**9** Your answers. Here are mine:

- a 4) Independent
- b 1) Willful *or* 6) Sinful.
- c 3) Proud *or* 1) Willful.
- d 2) Disobedient
- e 7) Unforgiving.
- f 6) Sinful.
- g 8) Troublemaker.
- h 5) Without hope.

**20** I hope you checked I DISAGREE for answers **a** through **g** and I AGREE for answers **h** through **i**.

**10** (These answers are taken from the NIV version of the Bible. Your version may use slightly different words, but the meaning is the same.)

<b>LOVE IS</b>	<b>LOVE IS NOT</b>	<b>LOVE DOES</b>	<b>LOVE DOES NOT</b>
— patient	— proud	— rejoices with truth	— envy
— kind	— rude	— protects	— boast
	— self-seeking	— trusts	— keep a record of wrongs
	— easily angered	— hopes	— delight in evil
		— perseveres	— fail

***For Your Notes***

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# LESSON 3 Christian Principles of Problem Solving

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If you were in prison, surrounded by armed guards and deprived of your freedom to come and go as you pleased, you would probably say that you had a problem—or even several problems! You would most likely feel that the best solution for the problem would be freedom!

When the apostle Paul found himself in that situation, he didn't see it as a problem at all. Instead, he saw it as God's divine appointment for his life. He considered the *privilege* God had given him to defend and establish the gospel (Philippians 1:7). He considered the *opportunities* he had been given of sharing Jesus Christ with the palace guards and with his fellow ministers in the city. In Lesson 1 we mentioned Paul's reaction to his imprisonment. He was rejoicing because he knew God was using him even in prison.

Perhaps the best point of view with which to face problems is to see them as opportunities to exercise faith, to practice trusting the Lord, to prove God's great faithfulness, and to be proved by Him. Your Christian faith is made stronger when you work together with the Lord to find solutions to life's problems. He *does* have the right solution for every problem!

In this lesson we will consider some Christian principles for problem solving. When you follow these principles, you can expect God to work with you, and you can expect to work through every problem with joy and victory!



## ***lesson outline***

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Start With a Christian Approach  
Avoid Wrong Reactions  
Use a Systematic Method  
Rejoice and Give Thanks

## ***lesson objectives***

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When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Evaluate your own situation concerning spiritual preparation and finding God's will.
- Recognize kinds of wrong reactions from examples given, and make a personal application.
- Explain why it is important not to try to solve your problems by human effort alone.
- Develop a checklist to follow in working out a problem situation, based on given methods, and apply the checklist to a given problem.
- State the principle which explains what helped the apostle Paul to be content in every circumstance.

**learning activities**

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1. Study the lesson according to the instructions given in the learning activities in Lesson 1. Be sure to read all Scripture texts given, and answer each study question before looking at the answer we have given at the end of the lesson.
2. Look in the glossary at the end of the study guide for definitions of key words you do not know. Understanding the meaning of these words is necessary so that you will understand the lesson content.
3. Take the self-test and check your answers with those we have given at the end of the study guide.
4. This is the final lesson in Unit 1. Review all three lessons in this unit, and answer the questions in Unit Student Report 1.

**key words**

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accusation	confronted	reaction
adjustments	consequences	retreat
aggressive	contrary	revenge
alternatives	deprived	supernatural
bitterness	fanaticism	unoffendable
categories	impulse	withdrawal
compassionate	meditation	
conduct	offense	

## ***lesson development***

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# **START WITH A CHRISTIAN APPROACH**

**Objective 1.** *Evaluate your own situation concerning spiritual preparation and finding God's will.*

## **Two Important Questions**

Recently I heard about a young couple who had decided to get a divorce. When they had married, they were both dedicated Christians who faithfully attended their church, read the Bible, and prayed together. But as he got more and more involved in his work, and she became occupied with the two children that came along in the first four years of marriage, their lives became too busy. First their daily habit of reading the Word and praying together dropped off, and gradually they found more and more reasons to stay away from church.

Quite naturally, when problems began to creep into their marriage, they were not spiritually prepared to deal with them. Even though they were well aware of what the Bible taught in matters of faith and conduct, they were not willing to practice this teaching. They made up their own minds about the solution to their problems. Christian friends tried to persuade them to work on their relationship and not seek a divorce, but they had made their decision. They didn't want to hear what God's Word said about divorce because hearing it might affect their decision (see Mark 10:2-12; Matthew 5:31-32). They went ahead with the divorce, and exchanged one set of problems for some worse ones.

By choosing a way to solve their problems which was contrary to God's revealed will as given in His Word, this young couple deprived themselves of these blessings:

1. Divine strength to work through a problem until it is solved.
2. Peace which comes from obedience.
3. Direction from the Holy Spirit so that God's will can be known.

4. God's power to bring an unexpected or even supernatural answer to a problem.

This young couple is an example of people who had the wrong answers to two very important questions I ask myself often, and which I want to share with you. They are:

1. Do I really want to know God's will about this problem?
2. Am I willing to follow God's will when I know it?

If, when you ask yourself these two questions, you cannot answer a firm yes, then you need first of all to spend time in spiritual preparation, asking the Lord to make you willing to say, "Yes, I want to find AND carry out God's solution for my problems."

### Application

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1 Apply what you learned in Lessons 1 and 2 to answer these questions:

- a Identify the problem described in the example just given.

.....

b Identify the *source* of the problem.

.....

- c If this young couple would identify their real problem and its source, and acknowledge it, what common-sense solution could they find which would help them approach all their other problems in the right way?

.....



### Spiritual Preparation

Spiritual preparation is of great importance to successful problem solving. A time of stress is the time to *increase* your devotional prayer and Bible reading, not to *decrease* it. Solving a problem in a Christ-like way is not something we can decide to do at the moment the problem occurs. Problems may occur suddenly and need immediate action. A wise Christian will maintain an attitude of spiritual readiness with his heart and mind continually open to guidance from the Holy Spirit.



The apostle Paul gives some helpful instructions in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, 21, 22: “Be joyful always, pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances. . . . Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.”

Spiritual preparation should include these activities:

1. Have a regular time of Bible reading, meditation (thinking about what you read), and prayer every day. Open your mind to what the Bible teaches. Allow the Holy Spirit to direct your thoughts.
2. Listen to scriptural teaching from your pastor and other Christian teachers.
3. Determine in your heart to consider every problem in terms of what the Bible teaches about it, even if the scriptural solution seems very difficult to follow.

### Application

2 Think of a problem you have at the present time, or that you have had. Evaluate whether you have prepared or are preparing yourself spiritually for solving the problem and finding God’s will. Check the answer which applies to you.

	YES	NO
a I want to know God’s will concerning this problem.		
b I have studied the Bible to learn if God gives specific instructions about this problem or about similar situations.		
c I have asked the Holy Spirit to guide me in knowing God’s will.		
d If I need additional help to find God’s instructions which apply to this situation, I will consult my pastor or a wise Christian friend.		
e I am determined to obey God and follow His will even if it is difficult for me.		



Spiritual preparation in advance will help you to know God’s will; it will give you strength and courage to act upon the best solution; and it will keep you from making decisions that would bring disaster.

## AVOID WRONG REACTIONS

**Objective 2.** *Recognize kinds of wrong reactions from examples given, and make a personal application.*

Spiritual preparation will help you to reject and avoid certain common but wrong ways of dealing with problem situations. Many of these wrong ways will fit under one of these categories: *anger*, *retreat*, and *human effort alone*. Let's consider each of them briefly.

### Anger

Many people who are wronged or offended have a first impulse to react in an angry or aggressive way. This can take many forms: *anger* aimed at other people, at God, or at our circumstances; *accusation*, or placing the blame on someone else; and even *revenge*. When we are hurting, it is easy to want to hurt the one who caused the pain. This is not the way Christ taught us to react, but it is a common fault. Christ's way is this:

You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. . . .

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:38-39, 43-45).

Actually, when we turn our anger over to the Lord, we can trust Him to take care of us. In Romans 12:19 the apostle Paul tells us, "Never take revenge, my friends, but instead let God's anger do it. For the Scripture says, 'I will take revenge, I will pay back, says the Lord'" (TEV)

Christ is the perfect example of one who was "unoffendable"—that is, He did not allow Himself to become offended when He was treated wrongly. He never reacted in anger. As He hung on the cross looking down upon the Roman soldiers who had beaten Him, spit upon Him, and nailed Him to the cross, He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). If you will refuse to be offended or to react in anger when someone mistreats you, you will experience real joy to know that you have come through the

trial with a right attitude. This will strengthen you so that when the next offense comes it will be easier to face it without anger.

Being “unoffendable” takes prayer and practice, but what a blessing it is when you can look back and say, “I’m so glad I didn’t react in anger, but I was able to show love to the one who tried to offend me.”

## Application

**3** Match the reaction given in the right column with its descriptive behavior in the left column. Place the letter of your choice in each blank space.

- |                |  |                           |
|----------------|--|---------------------------|
| ..... <b>a</b> | “It was his fault I didn’t get the job. He purposely kept me from getting it.” | 1) Anger<br>2) Accusation |
| ..... <b>b</b> | “I’ll get even with him if it’s the last thing I ever do!”                     | 3) Offended<br>4) Revenge |
| ..... <b>c</b> | “She hurt me so much I’ll never speak to her again!”                           |                           |
| ..... <b>d</b> | “I told her exactly what I thought about her mean and ugly behavior!”          |                           |

## Retreat

Retreat, or withdrawal, can take many forms. Sometimes it means running away from a problem, looking for a hiding place. Some people escape reality by losing themselves in drug addiction, in alcoholism, in seeking worldly pleasures, in overeating or overwork, in religious fanaticism, or in other ways. You can hide behind almost anything to avoid facing the truth. (There is, of course, a constructive kind of withdrawal also, when a Christian might choose to leave a situation to *avoid* a problem.)

Retreat sometimes takes the form of physical escape. I know of one young woman who was not married and still lived with her parents. She began to worry that she would never marry, and would soon be responsible for the care of her aging parents, while her married brothers and sisters would not have that responsibility. Soon her feelings of self-pity and bitterness

caused her to pack all her belongings and leave home without letting anyone know where she was going.

Another form of retreat is *withdrawal*. A widow I know of refuses to leave her house except in emergencies, and has stopped seeing her family and friends since her husband died. She is very lonely and unhappy.

### *Application*

4 Which of these attitudes do you see in those who try to escape their problems by retreat or withdrawal?

- a Unselfishness
- b Selfishness
- c Self-pity
- d Joy
- e Hope
- f Bitterness
- g Anger

5 Answer the following questions by checking yes or no.

	YES	NO
a When things do not go your way, do you usually react in anger?		
b When something goes wrong, do you usually manage to blame someone else, even if it was somewhat your fault?		
c Are people always offending you?		
d Are you frequently in a negative, complaining mood?		
e If someone wrongs you, are you the kind of person that will not rest until you have done something to "pay him back"?		
f Have you ever tried to retreat or withdraw from a difficult situation instead of dealing with it in a positive way?		



## Human Effort Alone

**Objective 3.** *Explain why it is important not to try to solve your problems by human effort alone.*

I have saved this self-help response until last because it is not all negative. God has made the human will a powerful, positive force which is able to rise above life's difficulties in a remarkable way. If there were nothing to "positive thinking" the non-Christian world would never be able to survive. But to trust in human will-power as the main resource for handling life's problems is certainly not the Christian way! God's intent is for His children to face their problems in the power of the risen Christ, and to use their problems as opportunities for Him to reveal His power and grace. So in considering reactions to avoid in dealing with problems, it is important to remember *not* to try to solve them by your own human efforts alone, but take them to God in prayer!



There is no problem too small to take to the Lord. When I am driving my car and am pressed for time, with many errands that must be taken care of, I even pray for parking spaces! Is this foolish? No! God is the Grand Creator of the universe, but He is also the God who knows when a sparrow falls to the ground, and who numbers the hairs on your head (Matthew 10:29-31). He cares about even the little problems in your life, and He wants to help you. Therefore, the most important thing you can do about solving life's problems is to follow the advice of the writer of Proverbs 3:5-8. Read this Scripture, then select the best answer to the following questions.

## Application

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- 6** This proverb tells you to trust in
- what you think you know.
  - the Lord.
- 7** It also tells you never to rely on
- other people.
  - your own understanding (what you think you know).
  - your feelings.
- 8** If you remember the Lord (acknowledge Him) in everything you do, you can expect Him to
- show you the right way to go.
  - give you fewer problems to solve.



It may be easier for you to take your little problems to the Lord than to trust Him when you are confronted with a problem that seems to have no solution. This is God's opportunity to work a miracle in your life—His power is unlimited when you learn to commit every thing into His hands, and He will never disappoint you! (See Ephesians 3:20; 1 John 5:14-15.)

## Application

---

- 9** Why is it important not to try to solve your problems by human effort alone?

.....

.....



## USE A SYSTEMATIC METHOD

**Objective 4.** *Develop a checklist to follow in working out a problem situation, based on given methods, and apply the checklist to a given problem.*

We have been laying the foundation thus far in this lesson for the use of a systematic method of problem solving based on Christian principles. Many books have been written to help people with all kinds of problems. This is a complex subject,

and there are many approaches to it. Our purpose is to give you some guidelines which, if followed, will help you to deal with your problems with the right attitude and with a Christlike spirit, allowing God to provide the answers!

After we have discussed the six basic steps in a systematic method of problem solving, we will give you the opportunity to work through the steps using a problem situation from Scripture, and from present day situations. As we discuss specific problems in future lessons, you will have opportunities to apply the steps to arrive at biblical solutions. We hope in this way to help you make an application of the principles to real problems in your own life, or in the lives of people you want to help.

<b>STEPS TO PROBLEM-SOLVING</b>	
<p><b>METHOD A</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the problem.                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identify the source.</li> <li>b. Look for deeper causes.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Commit your problem to the Lord.</li> <li>3. Consider all possible solutions in the light of scriptural teaching. (Use your resources.)</li> <li>4. Consider the possible consequences of all alternatives. (Use your resources.)</li> <li>5. Choose one solution and act on it.</li> <li>6. Evaluate the results of your solution and make any needed adjustments.</li> </ol>	<p><b>METHOD B</b></p> <p>(For problems which seem to have no immediate solution)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the problem.</li> <li>2. Commit it to God.</li> <li>3. Expect God to work for your good.</li> </ol>

## Method A



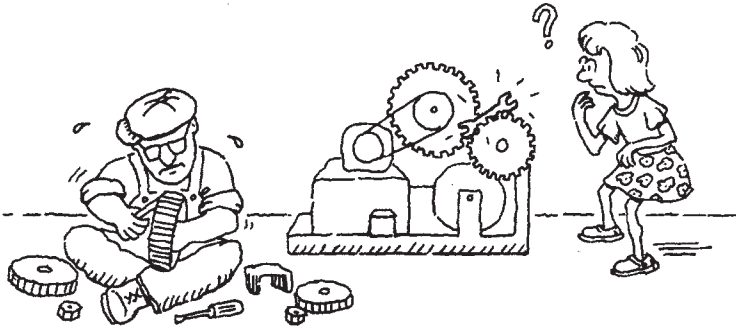
### Step 1. Identify the Problem

Not all problems are easily identified. Others are. Suppose I need money, or have unpleasant neighbors, or notice that my eyes are getting weak. These kinds of problems are easily identified.

If, on the other hand, I feel unhappy but don't know why, have trouble sleeping, or feel uneasy but can't explain what

has caused the feeling, I may have to give myself to specific meditation and prayer to discover the source of the problem. I may even need outside help to discover it.

a. First you need to *identify the source* of the problem. We talked about sources of problems in Lesson 1. Once this has been established, you will be better able to face up to the problem. When you have defined it as something that really can be changed, you are ready for the next step.



b. You may need to *look for deeper causes*. For example, suppose I am short of money for food and I will not receive my pay for several more days. The cause may be that I have been careless with my money and used it for unnecessary things. I can solve the problem easily by planning more carefully in the future. But if I find that the necessities of life are greater than my weekly income can cover, on a regular basis, then I must find a more permanent solution. The deeper cause is that I regularly need more money than is available to pay for my necessities. I must either increase my income or cut my expenses.

### *Application*

**10** In a separate notebook, begin a checklist of questions which you can use in working out a problem. You will add to these questions as you proceed through this section. Review Step 1 and try to write three or four questions to help you follow through on this step. Check my answer at the end of the lesson after you have written your questions.







### Step 2. Commit Your Problem to the Lord

God is greater than any problem you may have. Lift your eyes away from your problem and to the all-knowing, all-wise, all-loving, and all-powerful Jesus Christ. He cares about you (1 Peter 5:7). Talk about the problem to God. That is, say it out loud in your own words. God knows what the problem is, it's true, but He wants us to come to Him in prayer.

There is something very important about being definite in prayer. One dear Christian lady I know writes down her prayer requests and the date when she began praying about each of them. Then as the answers come she records that date also. She says it strengthens her faith to go over the record and see how faithful God is. It also reminds her to give thanks for answered prayers.

As you turn your attention from your problem to the Lord, you will feel that a great weight has rolled from your shoulders. The worry must leave, because you are trusting Christ. The burden must go, because He has said, "Come unto me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28 TEV). "Leave all your worries with him, because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7 TEV). This is the true meaning of commitment: concern enough to do what has to be done, and a trusting heart that does away with worry and fear.

### Application

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11 Add question 5 to your checklist, based on Step 2.

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### Step 3. Consider All Possible Solutions

We have already discussed in Lesson 2 the ways for finding solutions. Sometimes there is more than one solution to a problem. What you want to do is find the *best* solution. Apply these steps to each possible solution:

- a. Discover the scriptural principles that apply to the problem. Reject any solutions that do not measure up to these principles.

- b. Seek answers in all the appropriate (right) places. Use your resources. (See Lesson 2.)
- c. Seek God's will.

### *Application*

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**12** You should add questions 6 through 8 to your checklist based on Step 3. Be sure to write your questions before you look at the ones I have written. This will help you to remember what you have learned.

---



### *Step 4. Consider the Possible Consequences of All Alternatives*

Think of the possible consequences for the couple who decided divorce was the solution to their problems. The results of a broken home affect not only the husband and wife, but also the children. A wrong solution can create greater problems than those you started with. That's why it is so important to reject any solutions which cannot be supported by scriptural teaching. Use your resources to determine what consequences might result from any decision you make. (See Lesson 2.)

### *Application*

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**13** Add question 9 to your checklist based on Step 4. Consider the eternal values of your decision as well as the immediate *earthly* values.

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### *Step 5. Choose One Solution and Act on It*

You have identified your problem, and you have committed it to God in prayer. You have carefully studied God's Word to find His teaching concerning your problem or related problems. If necessary, you have discussed your problem with a Christian friend, pastor, or counselor. Now you have used your best judgment, guided by the Holy Spirit, to decide what is God's will for you in this situation. It is now time to act upon the decision

you choose. Believe that God will help you and He will be with you as you take this step toward solving your problem.



### Step 6. Evaluate the Results and Make Any Needed Adjustments

I have included this step because we need to evaluate the results of the solution we chose. Sometimes after we have acted to solve a problem, we find that it was not the best choice—further adjustment may be necessary. Don't despair if you have acted according to your best judgment, after committing your problem to God and asking for His direction, and then you find that somehow your solution failed to achieve the desired results. Problem solving is learned through experience. It is not a talent we inherited at birth. This is a time to look within yourself to see if you have fully committed yourself to God's will and are ready to follow wherever He leads you.

### Application

14 To conclude your checklist, add question 10, based on Step 6.



Remember, too, that not all inconvenient situations are problems in the sense of needing solutions. If it is something that cannot be changed, a different kind of adjustment is needed. For the solution to this kind of problem, let's look at *Method B*.

### Method B



#### Step 1. Identify the Problem

Use the same procedure as in Method A.



#### Step 2. Commit It to God

Use the same procedure as in Method A.



### Step 3. Expect God to Work for Your Good

When the apostle Paul found himself behind prison bars, he knew he could not change the situation. God did not release him from prison that time, as He had done earlier in Paul's ministry (Acts chapter 16). But Paul expected God to work for his good anyway. As a result the Lord used him in a wonderful way to spread the gospel even in prison.

The real solution to this kind of problem is to joyfully accept what cannot be changed, and allow the situation to be a growing experience for you—forming you into the likeness of Christ and making you a more caring, compassionate human being. Remind yourself often that “in all things God works for good with those who love him” (Romans 8:28 TEV). It is unhealthy to dwell on how things “might have been, if only . . .” Such thoughts are a waste of time and energy. You can expect God to work for your good no matter what your situation may be.

### Application

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**15** To which of these problems would you most likely apply Method B?

- a** You have deeply offended a friend by gossiping about him.
- b** You must care for a sick and aging parent who has no other means of support.
- c** Your husband has died and now you are alone.
- d** The place where you live is in poor condition, but it is all you can afford at the present time.
- e** Your teenage son has left home and you don't know where he is.
- f** You want to continue with your schooling, but your parents are unable to help you pay for it.

**16** Read Daniel 1:1-17 and follow through the steps in problem solving by writing opposite each question on your checklist the Scripture text and action which show how Daniel with God's help worked out each part of the solution. If you cannot find an answer to any question, leave it blank. Relate the questions to Daniel's situation: for example, question No. 1 would be, “What was Daniel's problem?” Write your answers in your notebook.

17 Now apply Methods A and B to the events recorded in Daniel 6:1-28. Which method seems to provide the solution in this case?

.....

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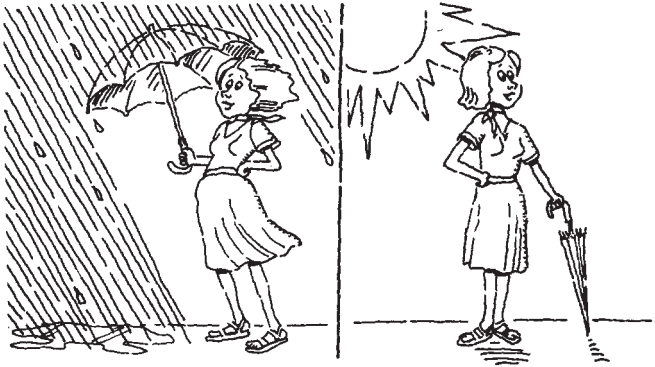
## REJOICE AND GIVE THANKS

**Objective 5.** *State the principle which explains what helped the apostle Paul to be content in every circumstance.*

The last principle in the Christian response to problem solving is to give God the glory. “Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). Praise God continually. Whenever your mind is not occupied with necessary business, develop the habit of letting praise flow silently to God. This simple practice will transform your mind. Praise Him for His faithfulness, for standing with you in all your problems.

Like Paul, share your good news with others! Paul wrote about the faithfulness of Christ when he penned the letter to his friends the Philippian Christians (Philippians 1:12). He didn’t want them to feel sorry for him! He said joyfully, “In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel” (Philippians 1:4-5). Paul also shared with them some of the things he had learned as he allowed God to work out the problems in his life:

I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength (Philippians 4:11-13).



**REJOICE!**

### *Application*

**18** What principle that we have discussed in this lesson explains what helped Paul to be content and joyful in any and every situation?

.....  
**19** This Scripture reveals that the values of greatest importance to Paul were

- a) present earthly values.
- b) eternal values.

---

When we recognize that Christ is the Master of every situation that comes into our lives, that He cares about us, and that He is always working for our eternal good, we can do nothing but praise Him. He is worthy of our praise! We are ready now to consider specific problems which are common to many people, and which you may face. In the next unit of study we will talk about problems in relationships. We pray that this study will be of great help to you.

You have now concluded the final lesson in this unit. Take the self-test and check your answers. Then review the unit and answer the questions for this unit in the student report at the back of the book.

**self-test**

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In this self-test we will describe some problem situations and their results; then we will give you an opportunity to apply the principles of this lesson to see how they might have been worked out in a better way. After you have completed the self-test, compare your answers with those we have given at the end of the study guide.

1 Raymond and Arlene were the children of a pastor whose church was small and whose income was very limited. Raymond had always wanted to be a doctor. When he reached college age, his parents decided to use the money they had saved to send him to medical school. This meant there was no money to help Arlene attend college. Her parents expected that she would marry and would not need a college education. However, Arlene also had a dream of going to college, and her parents' decision was a great disappointment to her. Because they could not help her, Arlene retreated into self-pity. She began to withdraw into a world of her own, spending her time grieving over her parents' decision. Her great mental sadness almost destroyed her health. For many weeks she was confined to the same hospital where her brother was taking his training. Raymond was a dedicated Christian. Arlene was also a Christian, but she had been overcome by her problem.

- a What was Arlene's problem?  
.....
- b What was the source of her problem?  
.....
- c How did Arlene react to this problem?  
.....
- d If Arlene had followed the principles for problem solving which we have given in this lesson, what solution would have been possible for her? You may think of more than one solution.  
.....  
.....
- e What Scripture that we have reviewed describes the approach Arlene should have taken in finding a solution for her problem?  
.....

2 Jordan was a Christian businessman who owned a meat market. One day he bought some sheep from his friend, David, who was also a Christian. Jordan butchered the sheep, but the health

inspector did not approve the meat for sale, saying it was diseased and must be destroyed. Jordan was very angry—he went to David and demanded his money back. David denied that the sheep were diseased when sold, and refused to return the money. In his anger, Jordan brought a court case against David. When their pastor heard about the problem, he tried to get David and Jordan to come and discuss the matter with him and settle it in a Christian manner. He reminded them that Scripture warns Christians not to take their arguments before ungodly men (1 Corinthians 6:1-8). But Jordan refused to listen, and went ahead with the lawsuit. The two men are no longer friends, and there is a feeling of defeat in the church.

**a** What principles of problem solving should Jordan have followed to handle the problem in a Christian way?

.....

**b** What was the end result of his behavior?

.....

**c** What should it have been?

.....

**d** Apply the steps in problem solving to show how this could have been solved successfully and to the glory of God. Write your answer in your notebook.

**3** James and Esther have been married for ten years, but they have no children. Both of them have a great desire for children and have prayed many times that the Lord would meet this need. They have sought medical help but there is nothing doctors can do. In the meantime, they have offered their services to their pastor to work with the children in the church, and the Lord has blessed their ministry of teaching many children and winning them to the Lord. Their lives are filled with praise to God.

**a** Which method of problem solving seems to have been applied here?

.....

**b** Use your checklist to show how James and Esther worked out their problem. Write your answer in your notebook.

**4** Now use your checklist for a problem in your own life or in the life of someone you know. Apply the steps given, and believe that God will help you to find the right solution.



## answers to study questions

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**10** Your questions should be similar to these:

1. What is my problem?
2. What is its source?
3. Is there a deeper cause that I should consider?
4. Is it possible to find a definite solution?

**1** Your answer. Here is how I would answer:

- a** The real problem is *disobedience to God*, which includes failure to read His Word and pray, and failure to keep His day holy (church attendance).
- b** The source is a *sinful nature*.
- c** The common-sense solution would be *confession* of sin, and *obedience* to God. This solution will prepare the couple spiritually to deal with other problems that come.

**11** 5. Have I talked to God about this problem?

**2** If you answered *no* to any of these questions, I encourage you to take the necessary steps to correct the situation.

**12** 6. Are there scriptural principles that apply to this problem? What are they?

7. Do I need help from a Christian friend or counselor to find a solution?

8. What solution would agree with scriptural teaching?

- 3 a** 2) Accusation.
- b** 4) Revenge; 1) Anger.
- c** 3) Offended.
- d** 1) Anger.

**13** 9. In my best judgment, after following all of the steps to find a solution, which solution will be best for me as a Christian?

- 4 **b** Selfishness.  
**c** Self-pity.  
**f** Bitterness.  
**g** Anger.

- 14 10. Am I satisfied with the solution, or do I need to make further adjustments?

Note: If further adjustments are needed, you may want to start back at Step 1 and work through the problem again.

- 5 If you answered yes to any of these questions you need to give much thought and prayer to finding positive ways of dealing with your problems. Ask the Lord to help you in the future to recognize these wrong reactions to problems and avoid them.
- 15 Probably you would apply Method B to problems **b**, **c**, **d**, and **e**. You could apply Method A to problems **a** and **f**.
- 6 **b**) the Lord.

16	Question	Answer
	1. What was Daniel's problem?	He was required to eat food that would make him unclean according to God's instructions for Hebrews (Daniel 1:5, 8).
	2. What was the source?	The king.
	3. Was there a deeper cause?	No.
	4. Was a definite solution possible?	Yes.
	5. Did Daniel talk to God about this problem?	Yes, this is implied in verses 8, 9, and 17. God made Ashpenaz sympathetic to Daniel and his friends.
	6. Were there scriptural principles that applied to this problem?	Yes, Daniel knew that God had declared certain foods unclean (for example, see Leviticus 10:9, and chapter 11).

7. Did Daniel need help to find a solution?	No, he knew the food would defile him (make him unclean before God) (v. 8).
8. What solution would agree with scriptural teaching?	No, he knew the food would defile him (make him unclean before God) (v. 8).
9. What solution did Daniel choose as best for him as one of God’s chosen people?	He chose not to eat the food. He chose a ten-day test of eating vegetables and water instead (vs. 11-13). He asked Ashpenaz and the guard for help, and he did not eat the king’s food. The ten-day test was successful and the Hebrew men continued to eat the vegetables and water (vs. 8, 11-16).
10. Were further adjustments needed?	No, God honored Daniel’s decision by blessing him (vs. 17, 20).

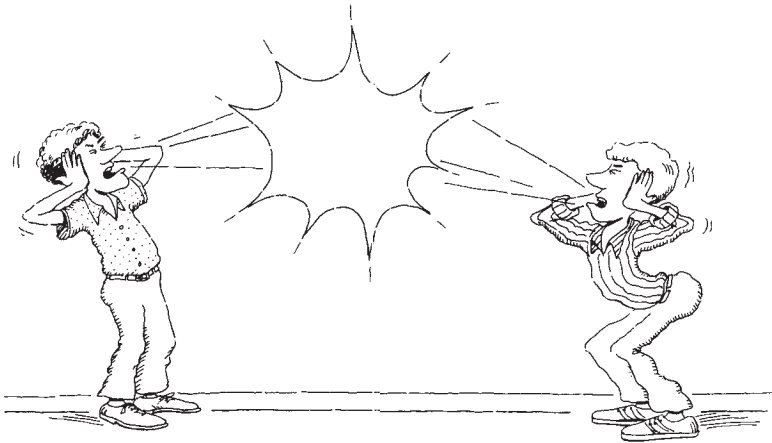
- 7 b) your own understanding (what you think you know).
- 17 I would say that Method B is the one Daniel used in this instance—he defined his problem, committed it to God, and expected God to work for his good. There was no way he could obey the king without disobeying God. He chose eternal values, and God honored his choice.
- 8 a) show you the right way to go.
- 18 The principle of trusting God to work for his good in any situation.
- 9 Because your own understanding is limited and you may not know the best solution; also because there are some problems that are solved only by putting your trust in God, who can do the impossible.
- 19 b) eternal values.

***For Your Notes***

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# PROBLEMS IN RELATIONSHIPS

## Lessons

- 4 Problems In Social Relationships
- 5 Family Problems
- 6 Problems of a Single Life

## LESSON

# 4 Problems In Social Relationships

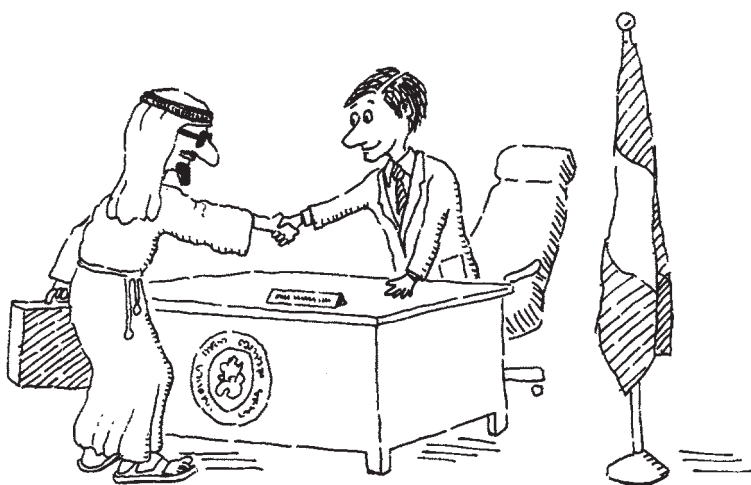
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Occasionally we hear about a foreign ambassador who has been called home because of disagreements between his country and the one in which he was serving as his country's representative. There have even been occasions when ambassadors were killed because of such disagreements. Fortunately these stories are not the rule, but the exception. Most of the time, between friendly nations, ambassadors are respected and honored as the authorized representatives of their government, and their own behavior gains honor and respect for their country.

Did you know that you are such an ambassador? You are a citizen of the kingdom of Heaven, and as such, you represent its King, the Lord Jesus Christ, on earth. From the very beginning of human history, God's aim has been to bring humanity back into close relationship with Himself. The amazing truth, however, is that now "he has committed to us the message of reconciliation [bringing back together]. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us" (2 Corinthians 5:19-20).

It would be much easier for us to deal with problems in our social relationships—at work, at school, in our church, in our neighborhood—if we could keep in focus *who* we are, and *whose* we are! In this lesson we will look at some critical problem areas in the light of our relationship with Christ, and through Him, with others who may not know Him, and who are motivated by selfish desires alone. How are Christians to deal with these problems that are part of our daily experience? The Bible gives very positive guidelines for the ways we should *act* and *react*. Let it speak to your needs as you study this lesson.





## ***lesson outline***

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Covetousness  
Desire for Status  
Christian Immaturity  
Wealth and Poverty  
Injustice

## ***lesson objectives***

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When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Evaluate your own attitudes to determine whether you have a problem with covetousness.
- Recognize teachings of Jesus concerning how to overcome the desire for status.
- Find in Ephesians chapters 4 and 5 the solutions for Christian immaturity and write them in a chart.
- Select statements which correctly define sources for achieving maturity in Christ.
- Identify biblical solutions for problems related to wealth and poverty.
- Recognize and correct errors in statements regarding Christian values in relation to money.

- State a principle that should govern the reactions of a Christian who is a victim of injustice.

### ***learning activities***

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1. Study the lesson according to the instructions given in the learning activities in Lesson 1. Answer each study question before looking at the answer we have given at the end of the lesson.
2. There are many important Scripture references in this lesson. Be sure to read each one carefully in your Bible.
3. Study the key words and their definitions.
4. Take the self-test and check your answers.

### ***keywords***

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covetousness  
deceitfulness  
generosity  
greed  
immaturity

inferiority  
injustice  
obscene  
poverty  
profane

self-indulgence  
status  
steward  
superiority  
vulgar

## lesson development

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### COVETOUSNESS

**Objective 1.** *Evaluate your own attitudes to determine whether you have a problem with covetousness.*

We live in a social world. By that I mean that our world is made up of communities of people living, working, playing, and interacting with one another in many ways. Each individual in this world has been given a will of his own. Each has inherited a nature that seems inclined toward selfishness, ambition, the satisfying of personal desires, and the desire to be highly regarded by other individuals. It is no wonder, then, that we create many problems for one another by wrong behavior. One of the greatest problems in our relationships with others is that of *covetousness* or greed—wanting what the other person has. We want someone else’s power, or wealth, or position, or friends, or attractiveness, or talents—we want the best of everything for ourselves, even at the expense of someone else. The last of the Ten Commandments is a strong warning against this:

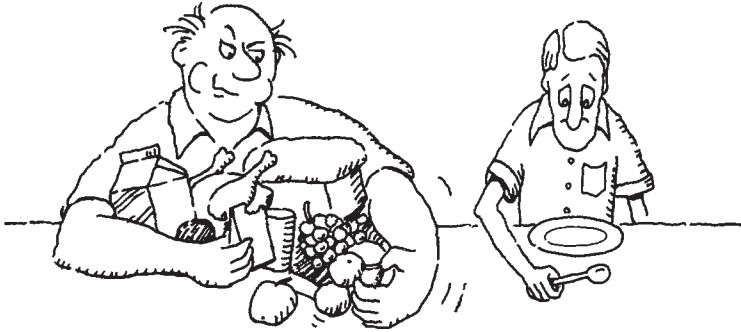
You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor (Exodus 20:17).

Are you always comparing yourself with other people and their accomplishments? This can be helpful in some respects, but it can be harmful if it keeps you in constant turmoil and dissatisfaction. Should you try to keep up with everyone you admire? Not necessarily. You can learn from others, of course. We all do. But at the same time you should be aware of your own limitations and accept yourself as you are. Also be aware of your own strengths and develop them fully. But don’t seek the impossible!

I can enjoy a concert violinist without having to be one, or without resenting the person who is one. I can admire my neighbor’s new house, or car, or bicycle, and rejoice with him without having to have the same thing myself. The Bible teaches that we should “Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those

who mourn” (Romans 12:15). Being sorry for someone isn’t hard, but sometimes being glad is, especially if you feel jealous.

The sin of covetousness may lead to other problem-making sins: lying or stealing to get what you want, anger, compromise of your Christian testimony, jealousy, resentment, hatred, revenge, deception. . . . No wonder God included in the Ten Commandments the warning against covetousness.



## **Application**

**1** In Lesson 2 we discussed the one possible solution for problems related to covetousness. Can you state what it is, and give the Scripture reference which supports it as a solution?

.....

**2** Test yourself. If you answer YES to any of these questions, you need to apply the problem-solving steps to your problem of covetousness, and ask the Lord to help you turn it into an attitude of love. You may substitute other names wherever we use the name “X” if it fits your situation.

	YES	NO
a I have a friend who seems to have success in everything, and I resent feeling inferior to him.		
b I am unhappy with the talent I have, and I am always wishing I could be as talented as “X.”		
c I am tired of being poor. I wish I had as many nice things as “X.”		

d	I have a right to be jealous of "X," because my employer or supervisor gives him better treatment than I receive.		
e	I am angry with God, because I seem to get the worst of everything, while my friends always seem to have whatever they want or need.		
f	It usually gives me satisfaction when one of my co-workers is scolded for making a mistake.		
g	"X" has something I want so much I can hardly think of anything else.		



## DESIRE FOR STATUS

**Objective 2.** *Recognize teachings of Jesus concerning how to overcome the desire for status.*

Someone has said, "The world has yet to see what could be accomplished for the kingdom of God by someone who is not concerned about getting the credit for it."

It is part of our human nature that we want to be noticed, to receive praise, position, honor, status, recognition, and power. Have you ever had your feelings hurt because you did not get the proper recognition for something you had done? I have. Probably everyone has, at some time or another. Problems occur for the person who is always striving to be at the top, who wants to be in charge and receive the credit for whatever is done. Problems also occur for the person who feels jealousy when someone else gains honor and recognition, or who feels resentment when his own contribution seems to go unnoticed.

But Jesus has the cure for these kinds of hurts, as well as for all the other harmful things that accompany status seeking. The cure is within ourselves. It must be in the attitude with which we serve God.

Jesus knew what was in man (John 2:24-25). He knew of man's tendency to feel jealousy and to desire power. While he was still with His disciples, they had argued about who among them was the greatest (Luke 22:24). He told them not to be like

the heathen kings who sought power and wanted to lord it over those under them. He said, "Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves" (Luke 22:25-26).

Jesus showed them by His example what He meant by being a servant. At the last Passover supper with His disciples, Jesus washed their feet as one of the slaves would do. At the conclusion of this act, He said,

Do you understand what I have done for you? . . . You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and your Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them" (John 13:12-17).

### ***Application***

---

**3** Which of the following statements represent what Jesus was trying to teach His disciples (and us) about seeking status? Circle the letter preceding TRUE statements.

- a** Jesus is the Lord and Master.
- b** He washed the disciples' feet because He wanted to show them how humble He was.
- c** Jesus, as the greatest of all, had done a lowly service by washing their feet.
- d** Even though God might use the disciples in great ways, they were not to look upon themselves as great persons, but as servants and messengers.
- e** They were to establish the practice of washing the feet of those who were under them.
- f** Knowing themselves to be only servants and messengers, the disciples were to do a servant's work for each other.
- g** Jesus promised them a blessing if they would wash each other's feet.
- h** Jesus promised them a blessing if they would be as servants to each other.



There are two lessons we can learn from this that should help us to overcome problems of resentment, pride, and superior or inferior feelings.

1. The person who has a position of leadership should be as one who serves. His position should be a means of exalting Christ, not himself.
2. The person who has a lowly position should fulfill it “as unto the Lord,” remembering that God is in control of his life and will bless him if he maintains a servant attitude even in what may be difficult circumstances. Whatever your position, you are to fill it to the best of your ability.

A life of service without concern for status is really the key to personal contentment and to pleasing the Lord. The desire to be the greatest is a destructive force. It destroys peace. It destroys relationships. It destroys communion with God. True freedom to express Christ fully comes when we are willing to give up our ambition for status in this world. Our real rewards are not in this life: “To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life” (Romans 2:7). He will give glory and honor to those whose ambition is to do good!

### **Application**

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- 4 Read Luke 17:5-10. Which of the following statements most clearly expresses what Jesus was teaching in this story?
- a It is natural to want to be honored for the things we do, and we deserve to be given recognition when we make a contribution. That is why we want to succeed.
  - b When we do what the Lord tells us to do we should not look for honor and self-glory, but have the attitude, “We have only done what it was our duty to do.”
  - c We should never give recognition or praise to those who have made a contribution, because this will make them feel too important and superior.
- 

Of course it is natural to want to receive approval when we do a good job, but the desire to gain honor and recognition should not be our motive in doing good. On the other hand, the person in a position of leadership can reduce the possibility of problems

by giving credit where it is due. An encouraging word will inspire people to work even harder, and with a more positive attitude.

Not everyone has been called to be a leader. God will not judge you by the level of your position, but by how well you have done what it is *your* duty to do. (See Matthew 25:14-30.)

A well-known song says, “To God be the glory for the things He has done.” Can you also say, “To God be the glory for the things we have done!”?

## CHRISTIAN IMMATURITY

### Evidences of Immaturity

**Objective 3.** *Find in Ephesians chapters 4 and 5 the solutions for Christian immaturity and write them in a chart.*

When you became a Christian, you did not lose your humanity, your desires, emotions, needs, or the capability of being hurt. These are feelings we must each struggle with every day in our relationships with others. Overcoming them takes time—it is the process of Christian maturity. I’m sure you must know people, perhaps Christians, who always want to be first in line, who want to be given the best seats, who always feel that they are being slighted, and who will complain until they get the best of whatever is being offered. When things go their way, they are happy. When problems arise, they become unpleasant and moody.

Or perhaps you know Christians who spend most of their time worrying—about their children, about a lack of money, about what will happen when they get old. This is another sign of Christian immaturity.

I know a fine Christian widow who is busy and productive, yet she sometimes struggles with loneliness. Does a mature Christian have battles? The same question could be applied to fear, anxiety, depression, doubt, selfishness, anger, and a host of other very human feelings. Certainly even mature Christians battle every day, but they have learned how to win!

In Ephesians chapters 4 and 5 the apostle Paul deals with evidences of immaturity. You will notice that most of these



evidences have to do with our relationships with other people. Paul is talking to Christians in this Scripture portion. He warns them not to continue to live like the heathen. Then, just in case they did not understand the full meaning of what he was saying, he gave them some specific instructions for ways to gain maturity.

## Application

5 Read Ephesians 4 and 5, then complete the chart which follows by deciding first if the problem mentioned is one that you are struggling with. Then in the right column write down all the solutions the apostle Paul gives for each problem. We have listed the solutions below the chart. Find where each one fits and write it in the correct space.

Reference	If I Have This Problem	Then I Must Do This:
Ephesians <b>a</b> 4:25	Lying	
<b>b</b> 4:26	Anger	
<b>c</b> 4:28	Stealing	
<b>d</b> 4:29	Using harmful words	
<b>e</b> 4:30	Doing things that make God's Holy Spirit sad	
<b>f</b> 4:31-32; 5:1-2	Bitterness, passion, anger, shouting, insulting, or any hateful feelings	
<b>g</b> 5:3-5	Even <i>mentioning</i> sexual immorality, indecency, greed, or using language which is obscene, profane, or vulgar	
<b>h</b> 5:6-11	Being led into sin by the ungodly, being deceived by them	
<b>i</b> 5:15-16	Being careless and ignorant in the way I live	
<b>j</b> 5:17	Being foolish	
<b>k</b> 5:18	Drunkenness	



**SOLUTIONS** (The order is mixed. Find where each one fits on the chart and write it in the correct space. Each solution is taken from Ephesians 4 and 5.)

- 1) Do not make God's Spirit sad.
- 2) Have nothing to do with such people. Expose them.
- 3) Try to find what the Lord wants you to do.
- 4) Fill your mind with praise—give thanks.
- 5) Do not sin. Do not stay angry.
- 6) Be kind. Be tenderhearted. Be forgiving. Be controlled by love.
- 7) Don't be drunk, but be filled with the Holy Spirit.
- 8) Tell the truth.
- 9) Use helpful words that do good.
- 10) Live as a wise person. Make good use of every opportunity.
- 11) Stop stealing and start working. Provide for yourself and help the poor.

The only way to gain Christian maturity is to start doing those things which will help you to mature. Put into practice those solutions which you need to apply in your own life.

## Sources for Achieving Maturity

**Objective 4.** *Select statements which correctly define sources for achieving maturity in Christ.*

Growth does not happen by accident. It is not a result of something God does *to* you while you sit by doing nothing. There are two sources of power for Christian maturity: *God's power*, and your own *will power*.

*God's Power.* God's power, of course, is the foundation on which your own will power must rest. Trying to be good without first being made new in Christ would never achieve the kind of behavior the apostle Paul recommended in Ephesians 4 and 5. Read Ephesians 4:15-16 again. Notice that Christ is the Head. *Under His control* all the parts of the body fit and work together. In Ephesians 4:23 you see that "your hearts and minds must be made completely new" (TEV). And finally, in Ephesians 6:10 the apostle Paul tells us to "Build up your strength in union with the Lord and by means of His mighty power" (TEV).

So it is first of all God's power that gives us the ability really to live for Him and do what we are told to do in Ephesians 4 and 5.

## Application

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- 6** This is another way of stating the most important step in finding solutions to our problems (see Lesson 2). God will make us completely new when we
- a)** get advice from Christian friends.
  - b)** confess, believe, and obey—solve the sin problem first.
  - c)** try to be good neighbors.
- 

*Will Power.* Ephesians 4:27 says, “Don’t give the Devil a chance” (TEV). This certainly implies that it is possible to give him a chance. Notice that in Ephesians 4 and 5 there were many instructions for things you must *do*. God has His part, and He will faithfully do it. But if you and I do not do our part we will not grow to maturity, and we may even lose our fellowship with God. We put our own will power into effect by being *obedient* to the instructions given in God’s Word. It is only through obedience that we can reach Christian maturity and overcome the problem of immaturity.

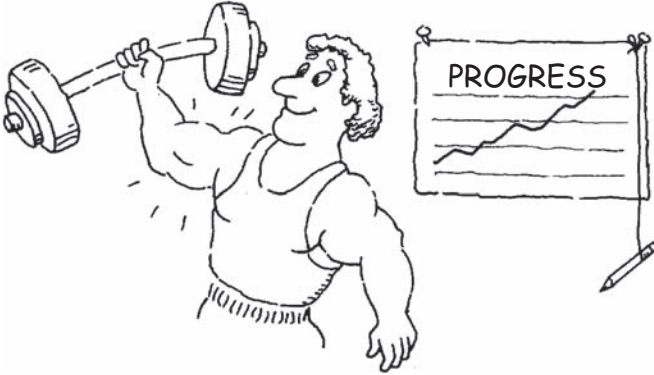
## Application

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- 7** Circle the letters in front of TRUE statements which define the sources for achieving Christian maturity.
- a** God’s power to make us completely new does not depend in any way upon our own behavior.
  - b** We use our own will power to confess Christ, believe that He is our resurrected Lord, and obey His commands.
  - c** Obedience is possible only because of the power of Christ in us after He makes us completely new.
  - d** Failure to do our part will keep us from Christian maturity.
  - e** Obedience is the key to Christian maturity.
  - f** Problems in a Christian’s life are a sure sign of immaturity.
- 

Paul continues in Ephesians 6 to discuss the weapons which we need to fight against immaturity. They are *truth*, *righteousness*, (right living), *readiness to announce the gospel* (our testimony), *faith*, and the *Word of God*. His final instruction is to *pray* (Ephesians 6:18).

Christian maturity involves an ongoing process of spiritual growth. Every time you make a decision to obey God, you progress in your spiritual growth.



## WEALTH AND POVERTY

**Objective 5.** *Identify biblical solutions for problems related to wealth and poverty.*

Money seems like such an innocent thing. It can buy us physical comforts, the necessities of life, and can do good if we allow it to. Yet we are warned in 1 Timothy 6:10, “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.” The Bible says less about heaven than it does about the deceitfulness of wealth and its terrible temptations.

We have included wealth and poverty as problems in social relationships because people are guilty of doing all kinds of evil acts against one another in order to gain possessions for themselves. This subject is related to our discussion of covetousness (greed) earlier in the lesson. It would be impossible to include here all of the warnings given in Scripture that are related to our desire for wealth and our fear of poverty. But we hope to give you some basic guidelines which will help you to avoid problems associated with money and its effect upon your relationships with others. First we will talk about problems associated with wealth and poverty, and then we will offer biblical solutions to these problems, which all have to do with our *attitudes* toward money and what it will do for us.

## Problems Related to Wealth

1. *Wealth enslaves us.* The rich young man who asked Jesus how to get eternal life went away sad, because he was enslaved (bound) by his wealth, and he could not give it up (Matthew 19:16-22). Sometimes instead of having possessions, our possessions have us—all of our time is taken up caring for our possessions or trying to get more.

2. *Wealth gives feelings of superiority.* The worldly way is to hold people in high regard because they are wealthy. Often Christians are guilty of doing the same thing. Because people look upon them with high regard and even awe, those who are wealthy may consider themselves superior to people who are not as wealthy as they are.

3. *Wealth distorts or changes our values.* It is easy to fall into the trap of valuing riches more than spiritual life. The danger of wealth is the tendency to trust in what money can do instead of what God can do. Money may make you more comfortable physically, but it cannot save you! Wealth is deceitful (Matthew 13:22). Riches do not endure! (Proverbs 27:24). See also Psalm 49:16, 20; Mark 4:19; Luke 8:14; and Luke 12:18-21.

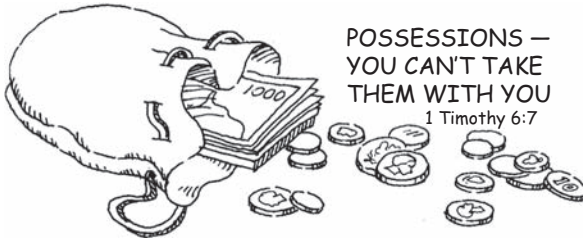
## Application

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8 Choose the correct completion. The preceding Scriptures reveal that wealth is deceitful because

- a) it seems so enduring, but it is not.
  - b) it can be trusted for what it will do for us.
  - c) it makes us more comfortable physically.
- 

4. *Wealth brings about temptation to sin.* A man may be morally upright but be a slave to greed and not recognize it as sin. Ephesians 5:1-6 links greed with idolatry. Greed puts money in the place of God. It causes men to be dishonest in their dealings with other men, and to do other evils such as living in luxury and self-indulgence at the expense of others, or failing to pay honest wages, and has even caused men to condemn and murder other people (see James 5:1-6).



## Problems Related to Poverty

Many times poverty is accompanied by real problems. The person with not enough money usually has problems he might consider to be more physical than spiritual. Much of the world is plagued by poverty and the fear of starvation that goes with it.

1. *Worry and fear.* Worry and fear about how we are going to provide for our own or our family's needs is a problem shared by many people, including Christians. We worry about losing our job, becoming ill and unable to work, not having enough money to pay our bills. This is a natural reaction to a very real problem.

2. *Temptation to dishonesty.* The rich and the poor may be bothered by the temptation to gain wealth by dishonesty, but for different reasons. A poor person may make excuses for taking something that belongs to his employer, or a neighbor, or some wealthy person. After all, his need is greater than theirs. But God's commandment covers dishonesty whatever the reason: "You shall not steal" (Exodus 20:15). The greatest dishonesty of all, which is found among both the rich and the poor, is to rob God of what is rightfully His. "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' In tithes and offerings" (Malachi 3:8).

3. *Feelings of inferiority.* Just as the wealthy person may consider himself superior to other men, the poor person is inclined to consider himself inferior, of lower quality than others who have more money. Although this is a very real problem for many people, it is based on wrong values, as we shall see.

4. *Mistaken ideas about God's provision.* For some reason, in spite of all that is said about the dangers of wealth in the Bible, many people get the mistaken idea that godliness is a means to

financial gain (1 Timothy 6:5). They are likely to preach that if you have enough faith you can be rich. Or, if you aren't rich you are failing God in some way. They approach God with the wrong motives, seeking material profit rather than spiritual gain.

The Bible has solutions for all of the problems we have just studied. In the following exercise we are going to give you the opportunity to find for yourself what the Bible has to say about each one.

## Application

**9** In the left column we have listed the problems mentioned, along with a Scripture which offers a solution to each problem. In the right column we have summarized the solutions you will find in the Scripture passages. Match each solution (right column) with its related Scripture (left column). Write the number of your choice in each blank space.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ..... <b>a</b> <i>Slavery to wealth:</i><br>Matthew 19:21-22, 29               | 1) Trust God. Seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness, and He will provide for your daily needs.             |
| ..... <b>b</b> <i>Feelings of superiority:</i> James 1:10                      | 2) The man of God should run from this, and seek after the things of God.   |
| ..... <b>c</b> <i>Changed or distorted values:</i> Luke 12:32-34               | 3) Be thankful for your high position as a son of God and a servant of God.   |
| ..... <b>d</b> <i>Temptation to sin:</i><br>1 Timothy 6:9-11                   | 4) Be concerned about things of eternal value rather than earthly wealth, for your heart is where your treasure is. |
| ..... <b>e</b> <i>Fear and worry:</i><br>Matthew 6:25-34                       | 5) Godliness is not dependent on how much earthly wealth you have.  |
| ..... <b>f</b> <i>Temptation to dishonesty:</i><br>Isaiah 33:15-16             | 6) Put Christ and His kingdom first in your life.   |
| ..... <b>g</b> <i>Feelings of inferiority:</i><br>James 1:9-10                 | 7) God will provide your bread and your water. (He will provide whatever you have need of.)                         |
| ..... <b>h</b> <i>Mistaken ideas about God's provision:</i><br>1 Timothy 6:5-8 | 8) See yourself as a servant; take pride not in your money but in your low position.                                |



## Christian Values Concerning Money

**Objective 6.** *Recognize and correct errors in statements regarding Christian values in relation to money.*

Here are some general guidelines as to the values we should have concerning material possessions. Developing these attitudes will help you to avoid the pitfalls that too much or too little money may cause. Be sure to read all the Scriptures given.

1. *You are a steward of God's money* (Luke 16:1-13). I am firmly convinced that the Christian who is careful to be honest in his dealings concerning money, and who will give back to God the first tenth of his income, will be blessed (see Malachi 3:8-11). God has obligated Himself to provide for our daily needs when we commit our lives to Him. If you seem always to be in need of money to meet your obligations, or if you continually have problems such as unexpected expenses, illness, or loss of work, ask yourself: "Am I a faithful steward of God's money? Do I give back to Him the tenth that I owe Him? Am I trusting Him to provide for my needs?"

2. *God's obligation to provide your needs is based on your total commitment to His kingdom.* God has obligated Himself to provide for everything that we need. In Matthew 6:25-34 Jesus repeatedly tells us: "Do not worry . . ." It would be foolish for me to write in this lesson a solution to problems as simple as "Do not worry" because I have no power to meet your needs. But we have a powerful God who keeps His promises. When He says that if you seek to please Him He will meet your material needs, He has the power to fulfill that promise, *and he will!*

### Application

**10** Read the following Scriptures, and write the promise or obligation God has made to you in each one.

- a Philippians 4:19 .....
- b Matthew 6:25-34 .....
- c Hebrews 13:5-6 .....





3. *Riches cannot save you.* Wealth will be worthless in the day of judgment (Proverbs 11:4; Matthew 6:19-20).

4. *The gain that should interest the Christian person is godliness and contentment* (Luke 12:15, 1 Timothy 6:6-7).

5. *True values are spiritual, eternal values* (Colossians 3:1-4).

6. *Generosity toward God is the right spirit for both rich and poor.* God does not count only what you give, but what you have left. Jesus said that the poor widow gave more than all the rich people in the temple (Luke 21:1-4). The apostle Paul commended the poor people of Macedonia because they gave out of “overflowing joy and rich generosity” and even gave sacrificially (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).

Paul discovered that when he had fully committed his life to Jesus Christ, all things took on new values. The things he had thought were so important before seemed like rubbish. The things pertaining to Christ and His resurrection power became all important (Philippians 3:7-10). Every true believer will find this to be true. We use the things of this world but do not become engrossed in them (1 Corinthians 7:31). It is a joy and privilege to give to God because He has first place in our hearts.

## **Application**

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**11** Read each of the following statements carefully. There is something wrong with each one of them. Rewrite each statement so that it correctly gives a Christian value concerning money.

**a** The amount of riches I have now will be of great value to me when I am judged by God.

.....

.....

**b** God requires that the rich be good stewards of His money.

.....

**c** God has obligated Himself to provide for every need that everyone has.

.....

d We should put God first in our lives so that He will take care of us.

.....

.....

e Generosity is something that only the rich are expected to have.

.....



## INJUSTICE

**Objective 7.** *State a principle that should govern the reactions of a Christian who is a victim of injustice.*

The problems in social relationships we have discussed up to this point have to do more with our own attitudes and behavior. Now we want to talk about a problem that we have all faced, and over which we have little or no control. That is the problem of *injustice*: when someone treats you badly, or wrongly, and you didn't deserve it

For example, suppose you have a business dealing with a Christian brother and he takes advantage of you, then refuses to make it right. Suppose you work hard at your job and do more than your employer requires, and your immediate supervisor takes credit for the extra work. Or perhaps you have done a good job, and a jealous co-worker reports that you have been careless or lazy in your work. Or a friend who was caught cheating in school tells the teacher you were cheating too, even though you weren't. Perhaps someone who is less qualified than you has been promoted to a higher position and you felt you deserved the promotion.

I'm sure you can think of many other occasions when injustice has been performed against you. The important question is: How did you react? Did you become angry, say hateful things to the one who had wronged you, withdraw, feel sorry for yourself, or complain to everyone who would listen? It is natural to want to stand up for your own "rights"— those things that you have a right to have, or be. How should a Christian respond in such circumstances? What is the Christian solution to injustice?

I have a friend named Paul who was a policeman when he became a Christian. Immediately his life was filled with joy, and he wanted to share his experience in Christ with everyone he met. Nothing could change his joyful attitude—except the police sergeant who was over him. My friend would go to work in the morning with a song in his heart, only to be greeted by a sour, mean, critical, unhappy sergeant who seemed determined to make life miserable for Paul. Paul’s reaction was to become silent, to burn with anger inside but say nothing, to think of ways he could “get even” with his supervisor. But one morning the thought suddenly occurred to Paul: “Why am I allowing *him* to take away my joy and victory? His bad attitude is *his* problem, not mine! I am going to rejoice in the Lord no matter what the sergeant does to me!” As a result, Paul began to show love and compassion to him, and eventually won him as a good friend.

My friend, Paul, had learned the truth contained in this Scripture:

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven (Matthew 5:10-12).

This Scripture emphasizes what we said at the beginning of this lesson: We are ambassadors of Christ, His representatives to the world. Our own good behavior will gain honor and respect for our heavenly Father and for His kingdom.

There are times, of course, when it may be possible to correct an injustice caused by a misunderstanding. But whenever an injustice occurs, you can react in a Christlike way, recognizing that the problem is not *yours*, but someone else’s, and that you have a heavenly Father who cares for you and who will give you victory in your heart. Sometimes He may allow you to bear the injustice, but He will use it to work for your eternal good!

### **Application**

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**12** State a principle that should govern the reactions of a Christian who is a victim of injustice.

.....

.....



I can think of no better conclusion to this lesson than to urge you to read Romans chapter 12 very prayerfully and carefully. If you have a modern English translation of the Bible, use that one. This chapter gives in a few verses complete instructions for those who want to have a right relationship with God and with their fellowmen. Read it often, and let it be a guide for all your relationships.

### **Application**

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**13** Now before you take the self-test, review the various problems in social relationships. Make a list of any problems given that you are presently experiencing. Then refer to Lessons 1–3 and apply Christian principles for problem solving to find a solution for each problem. Be sure your solution is supported by Scripture. Our purpose in making this assignment is to help you make a personal application of the principles taught in this course, so that you may receive spiritual benefit. We trust that you will approach the assignment with a sincere desire to find solutions for possible problem areas in your life.



In our next lesson we will discuss problems in family relationships. This, too, is an area of vital concern to every Christian. May the Lord bless you as you continue your study.

**self-test**

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**MULTIPLE CHOICE.** There is one best answer for each question. Circle the letter in front of the answer you choose.

- 1 Covetousness is
  - a) being dishonest.
  - b) comparing yourself with others.
  - c) wanting what someone else has.
  - d) trying to be best.
- 2 Jesus washed His disciples' feet to show them they should have a ministry of
  - a) service to one another.
  - b) leadership.
  - c) great importance.
  - d) high status.
- 3 What provides the foundation for Christian maturity?
  - a) Confession.
  - b) Will power.
  - c) Building up your strength.
  - d) God's power.
- 4 Which of these is NOT a problem usually associated with wealth?
  - a) Feelings of superiority.
  - b) Feelings of inferiority.
  - c) Distorted values.
  - d) Temptation to sin.
- 5 Wealth is deceitful because riches do not
  - a) endure.
  - b) satisfy.
  - c) bring happiness.
  - d) make you feel important.
- 6 The solution to covetousness is love, because love
  - a) is not proud.
  - b) trusts.
  - c) is patient.
  - d) does not envy.
- 7 The Christian will not seek personal status and recognition if he sees his position as a means of
  - a) gaining power.
  - b) exalting Christ.
  - c) remaining humble.
  - d) being lowly.

- 8** To be a good steward of God's money you must
- a) get as much as you can.
  - b) have everything you want.
  - c) sell everything you have and give to the poor.
  - d) put God's kingdom first and give with generosity.
- 9** God's obligation to provide your needs is based on
- a) His power to do it.
  - b) the importance of your needs.
  - c) your total commitment to His kingdom.
  - d) whether or not you worry about them.
- 10** The Christian solution to injustice is to
- a) take the injustice in a Christ-like way, and trust God to give you victory over it.
  - b) pray that God will punish the person who wronged you.
  - c) stand for your own rights.
  - d) get even with the one who wronged you.

TRUE-FALSE. Write **T** in the blank space if the answer is TRUE, and write **F** if it is FALSE.

- ..... **11** Jesus taught that the one who serves should be like the one who rules.
- ..... **12** The amount of effort a person should give to a job depends on how important the job is.
- ..... **13** A true servant attitude is one that says, "I have only done what it was my duty to do."
- ..... **14** It is wrong to praise someone for doing a good job.
- ..... **15** The mature Christian is free from problems.
- ..... **16** The best way to gain Christian maturity is to start doing those things which will help you to mature.
- ..... **17** God has given us many things that we must do to obtain Christian maturity.
- ..... **18** We put our will power into effect by being obedient.
- ..... **19** A danger of wealth is that we may trust it instead of God.
- ..... **20** If you have enough faith you can be rich.

**answers to study questions**

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- 7 **a** False.  
**b** True.  
**c** True.  
**d** True.  
**e** True.  
**f** False. (Some problems may be, but certainly not all of them.)
- 1 The solution is LOVE and the Scripture is 1 Corinthians chapter 13. (Love is patient, kind, rejoices with the truth, protects, trusts, hopes, perseveres, is not proud, rude, self-seeking, or easily angered, and *does not envy*, boast, keep a record of wrongs, delight in evil, or fail.)
- 8 **a)** it seems so enduring, but it is not.
- 2 Did your answers reveal any problem with covetousness in your life? If so, I advise you to go through the steps in problem solving with an honest desire to correct this problem and develop right attitudes. These steps are given in Lesson 3.
- 9 **a** 6) Put Christ first . . .  
**b** 8) See yourself as a servant . . .  
**c** 4) Be concerned about eternal value . . .  
**d** 2) The man of God should run . . .  
**e** 1) Trust God . . . He will provide . . .  
**f** 7) God will provide . . .  
**g** 3) Be thankful for your high position as a son and a servant of God.  
**h** 5) Godliness is not dependent on earthly wealth.
- 3 **a** True.  
**b** False.  
**c** True.  
**d** True.  
**e** False.  
**f** True.  
**g** False.  
**h** True.
- 10 **a** He will meet all your needs.  
**b** If you put His kingdom first in your life, He will provide all the things that you need.  
**c** He will never leave you nor forsake you.
- 4 Answer **b** correctly expresses what Jesus was teaching. The other two statements both represent opposing and wrong attitudes.

- 11 a** The amount of riches I have will be of *no* value to me when I am judged by God.
- b** God requires that both the rich and the poor be good stewards of His money.
- c** God has obligated Himself to meet all the needs of those who put His kingdom first in their lives.
- d** We should put God first in our lives and then *trust* Him to take care of us.
- e** All Christians, both rich and poor, should have a spirit of generosity.
- 5 a** 8) Tell the truth.
- b** 5) Do not sin. Do not stay angry.
- c** 11) Stop stealing, start working. Provide for yourself and help the poor.
- d** 9) Use helpful words that do good.
- e** 1) Do not make God's Spirit sad.
- f** 6) Be kind. Be tenderhearted. Be forgiving. Be controlled by love.
- g** 4) Fill your mind with praise—give thanks.
- h** 2) Have nothing to do with such people. Expose them.
- i** 10) Live as a wise person. Make good use of every opportunity.
- j** 3) Try to find what the Lord wants you to do.
- k** 7) Don't be drunk, but be filled with the Holy Spirit.
- 12** Your answer. It should include this thought: A Christian can react in a Christlike way to any injustice by remembering that he is a representative of His heavenly Father, who cares for him.
- 6 b)** confess, believe, and obey—solve the sin problem first.
- 13** Your answer.





# LESSON 5 Family Problems

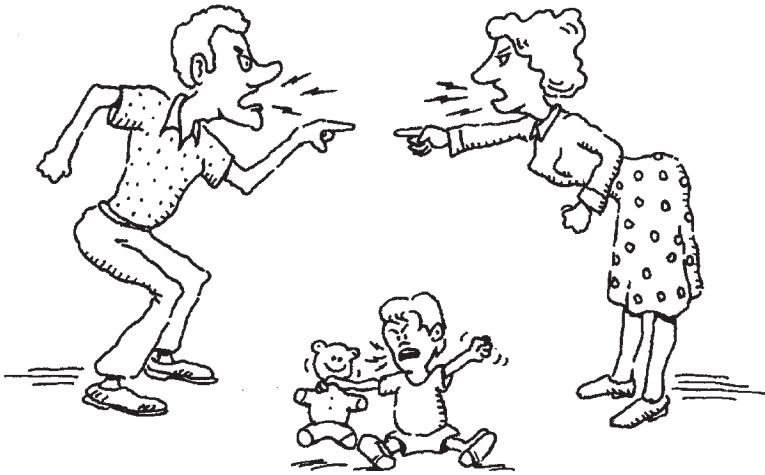
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A Sunday school teacher was trying to help her eight-year-old students understand what heaven was like. She concluded her discussion by saying, “I like to compare heaven to my home—a place filled with love, where I can find peace and acceptance. Yes, heaven is like being at home.”

One little boy looked at her with big, serious eyes. “If heaven is like my home,” he responded, “then I don’t want to go there!”

The family was God’s idea from the beginning of Creation. Order in society and order in the church are based on order in the family. God has given specific rules for the responsibilities of the husband, the wife, and the children. When these rules are obeyed, the family unit is strong, and each member is fulfilled and happy. When any of them are ignored, the family is in trouble, and may even fall apart.

In many parts of the world today, the family is indeed in trouble. In some countries, more than 50% of marriages end in divorce. In others, the position of the wife is little more than that of a servant. Children who grow up in an unhappy family are likely to establish the same kind of family unit when they marry. What are some of the difficulties that disrupt family unity, and what does the Bible say about them? That is our topic for Lesson 5. If heaven were like your home, would you want to go there? We encourage you to make personal applications where appropriate as you study this lesson.



## ***lesson outline***

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Problems of the Husband and Wife  
Problems of Children  
Biblical Solutions for Family Problems

## ***lesson objectives***

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When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- State two principles which will help to correct problems caused by spiritual differences between a husband and wife.
- Identify the attitude that will help a married couple successfully resolve differing sexual needs.
- Select statements which are in agreement with biblical teaching concerning how a Christian should react in a case of adultery.
- State the general rules for divorce which apply to Christians.
- Match to problem situations the correct solution for each problem.
- Choose a statement which correctly summarizes the attitude parents should have in training their children.
- Summarize in a chart the position and responsibilities of each member of the family.

### ***learning activities***

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1. Work through the lesson development as instructed in the learning activities for Lesson 1. Be sure to read all Scripture texts given, and answer each study question before looking at the answer we have given.
2. Look up the glossary definitions of any key words you do not know.
3. Take the self-test and check your answers.

### ***keywords***

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adolescence  
belittle  
consistency  
discord  
disrupt  
exasperate

humiliate  
indulgent  
infidelity  
prohibited  
restricted  
spouse

structure  
submissive  
victims  
yoked

## *lesson development*

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# PROBLEMS OF THE HUSBAND AND WIFE

It would be impossible in this short space to discuss and find solutions for every problem faced within the family. In our discussion of social relationships we covered many problem areas which could also be applied to the family situation. We will endeavor in this lesson to discuss those problems which are unique to the family, and find biblical principles which would give guidance in each instance. First we will look at some of the more serious problems that can occur between a husband and wife.

## Spiritual Differences

**Objective 1.** *State two principles which will help to correct problems caused by spiritual differences between a husband and wife.*

Problems occur in some marriages because one of the marriage partners is a Christian and the other is not. Many times people enter into marriage with an unbeliever thinking that after they are married, they will be able to lead their spouse to the Lord. Or perhaps a husband or wife will become a Christian after marriage, and the other partner does not. The problems that arise from such a situation are enormous: the Christian partner has a desire for the things of God, church attendance, and developing Christian maturity, while the unsaved partner is attracted by worldly pleasures and involvements. There may be discord as to the rearing of children, and the children may be less likely to accept Christ as their own personal Savior because of the non-Christian example of the unbelieving parent. Sometimes the unbeliever even draws the Christian partner away from faith in God and into sin.

The best solution for this, or any problem, of course, is to avoid it. Marriage is forbidden with unbelievers according to 2 Corinthians 6:14-18:

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what

fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial [Satan]? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God.

### ***Application***

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- 1 Which of the following answers would you consider best for the questions we have just read?
- a) There can be some measure of agreement in each of these examples.
  - b) There can be no agreement between any of these things because they have opposing values.
  - c) As long as each respects the standards of the other, they can work together.
- 

Of course, the answer to all of these questions is that right and wrong, light and darkness, Christ and Satan cannot agree or be partners. A believer and an unbeliever have nothing in common other than the basic human requirements. The young person who wants marriage so much that he or she is willing to ignore this important biblical teaching is opening the door to a life of heartache and problems. God's way is the best way, and He will provide for all of our needs if we will obey Him. We will talk about this further in our next lesson, which deals with the problems of the unmarried person.

For a Christian who is already married to an unbeliever, possibly married before becoming a Christian, the apostle Paul has given some special instructions in 1 Corinthians 7:12-16. If you will read this Scripture, you will find that he encourages the Christian to go on with the marriage as long as the ungodly partner is willing for it to continue. The Christian must not be the one to leave. Again, God is able to supply what is needed of grace and love, and who knows, the unbeliever may eventually be saved. "But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace" (1 Corinthians 7:15).

### Application

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2 Why do you suppose the Christian is instructed to remain with the unbeliever in a case such as the one just described? (See Matthew 19:4-6.)

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In many homes it is the mother who must assume the responsibility of spiritual leader. This is not the ideal situation, for God has established the husband as the head of the home, including spiritual leadership. Children often look to their father's example, and a father cannot expect his family to rise above his own spiritual level.

Spiritual problems in the home can only be solved by obedience to scriptural principles. In the final section of this lesson we will discuss Christian principles for the family. If you are having problems in this area of family life, you can change them by applying these principles to your own life.

### Application

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3 We have just discussed two basic principles which will help to correct or prevent spiritual differences between a husband and wife. State them in your own words.

a .....

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b .....

.....



## Differing Sexual Needs

**Objective 2.** *Identify the attitude that will help a married couple successfully resolve differing sexual needs.*

Sometimes in a marriage one partner's need for sexual relations is greater than the other partner's needs. Denial of sexual

relations is contrary to Scripture except by mutual agreement (see 1 Corinthians 7:5) and then only for a short period of time. A husband and wife who want to please each other will be submissive one to the other according to biblical teaching (see 1 Corinthians 7:3-4). At the same time, each will be sensitive to real needs of the other person for other expressions of love and affection that do not have sexual relations as their goal.

Sexuality in marriage will be discussed more fully in Lesson 7. The married couple who will follow biblical teaching in this respect will find that sexual fulfillment in marriage helps to bring about unity in other problem areas.

## ***Application***

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- 4 Which of these attitudes will best help a married couple to resolve the problem of differing sexual needs?
- a) A wife who is always submissive.
  - b) A desire to please each other.
  - c) More limited sexual relations by mutual agreement.
- 

## **Unfaithfulness**

**Objective 3.** *Select statements which are in agreement with biblical teaching concerning how a Christian should react in a case of adultery.*

Probably the problem that most threatens a marriage is unfaithfulness (sexual infidelity or adultery). This, too, is discussed in Lesson 7. Adultery is strictly forbidden in both the Old and New Testaments, as we saw in Lesson 2. In this lesson, we want to look at it from the point of view of the innocent or offended partner. How should you react if your partner has committed adultery? Should you immediately seek a divorce? Should you continue in the marriage relationship if the offense is repeated over and over again? There are three aspects of this problem that we want to consider:

1. If your marriage partner continually commits acts of adultery, are you under obligation to continue in the marriage anyway? According to the words of Jesus in Matthew 19:9, divorce is



permitted only in cases of adultery: “I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.” Thus, a husband or wife is under no obligation to remain in a marriage with an unfaithful partner.

2. If a marriage is ended because of unfaithfulness, can the offended partner remarry? Bible scholars do not agree on the interpretation of Scripture in this regard. According to some, the words of Jesus in Matthew 19:9 permit remarriage in such instances. Their interpretation is that once a person has committed adultery, he has dissolved the union that made him “one flesh” with his marriage partner. Thus, the partner is no longer bound by that union. If this is the case, then the offended partner would be free to marry another person who was not in some way restricted from marriage.

Another interpretation is that divorce is permitted in case of adultery, but not remarriage. We will discuss this further under the subject of *divorce*.

3. Many things might contribute to an act of adultery. A marriage partner might refuse to engage in sexual relations with the other partner, thus causing him or her to look elsewhere to meet this need. Or there may be a moment of great temptation when a spiritually unprepared partner would yield to temptation. Certainly God does not excuse either action, and they are both sinful. But suppose the unfaithful partner repented, was truly sorry for his or her sin, and asked forgiveness. Should the offended partner forgive, and renew the oneness of their relationship?

This is possibly one of the most difficult offenses to forgive that a person would ever face in this life. The hurt of a broken trust goes deep into the heart, making it very difficult to trust again. But the principle of forgiveness is one of the most powerful teachings in all of Scripture. Christ not only taught forgiveness (Matthew 6:14) but He forgave (Luke 7:47-50). God hates sin, but He loves the sinner so much that He allowed His own beloved Son to be wounded, insulted, and hanged on a wooden cross so that our sin could be forgiven. Christ forgave the woman taken in adultery (John 8:3-11).

What greater love could be shown to a marriage partner than to grant him or her the same measure of forgiveness that Christ demonstrated to us? If a marriage can be saved and a Christian home preserved, and if the husband and wife can renew their vows to each other and to the Lord, God will bless the one who is able to forgive. In such a case, neither partner should discuss the matter again, with each other or with anyone else. It should be forgiven and *forgotten*, except as a reminder of the power of the devil to draw us into sin.

### **Application**

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- 5 Which of these statements represent biblical principles concerning how a Christian should react if his or her spouse committed adultery?
- a) A Christian must remain with his marriage partner in all circumstances.
  - b) If a marriage partner commits adultery, the other partner is obligated to leave and marry another Christian.
  - c) A marriage partner is free to leave if the other partner has committed the sin of adultery.
  - d) The sin of adultery can be forgiven and the marriage vows renewed.
- 6 Some Bible scholars interpret the words of Jesus in Matthew 19:9 as permission for
- a) the partner who commits adultery to divorce and remarry.
  - b) the innocent partner to divorce and remarry.
  - c) both partners to remarry.
- 

## **Divorce**

**Objective 4.** *State the general rules for divorce which apply to Christians.*

God's opinion concerning divorce is clearly stated in Malachi 2:13-16 (TEV): "I hate divorce," says the Lord God of Israel. "I hate it when one of you does such a cruel thing to his wife. Make sure that you do not break your promise to be faithful to your wife" (v. 16).

In this Scripture, God explains that one reason he expects a husband and wife to be faithful to each other is so that their

children will also come to be God's people. Children of a Christian marriage enjoy many wonderful blessings such as stability, high morals, love, parental involvement, prayer and biblical training. Great problems arise for children who are the victims of divorce. I know a pastor who for two years taught 40 delinquent boys who had been placed in a special home by the legal authorities because they had been involved in various crimes. The pastor told me that the one experience all of these boys had in common was that their parents were divorced. Of course, not all children of divorced parents turn to crime, but most of them suffer in one way or another.

The general rules for divorce are these:

1. Divorce is prohibited (forbidden) for a Christian (1 Corinthians 7:10-11).
2. Marriage is prohibited with divorced persons (Luke 16:18; Matthew 5:32; 19:9; and 1 Corinthians 7:11).
3. Divorced persons are not to remarry (1 Corinthians 7:10-11).

Earlier in this lesson, we discussed the one possible reason why divorce and remarriage would be permitted for a Christian.



DIVORCE

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

But even in such a case there is a price to pay in suffering, damage to children, and Christian example.

In those cases where divorce has already occurred and there is no possibility of renewing the marriage vows because one of the partners has remarried, the Christian community can be a

source of comfort and help to the one who has been divorced. God does not turn His back on anyone who cries out to Him for help, and He will give the strength to remake a life and deal with the problems that divorce brings. In Lesson 6 we will look at this from the perspective of the divorced single person.

I know a couple who had both been divorced many years before they met and married each other. Some time after their marriage they became Christians. The husband was overcome with guilt because he thought since he had divorced and remarried, he was living in adultery in his second marriage. The apostle Paul has given instructions concerning this type of situation, also.

### Application

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7 Read 1 Corinthians 7:17-24. How can this Scripture be applied to the situation just described?

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8 Without looking back at the previous material, state the general rules for divorce which apply to a Christian.

.....  
.....



### Other Martial Problems

**Objective 5.** Match to problem situations the correct solution for each problem.

We will briefly mention here several other problems which can create unhappiness and discord in a home.

1. *Lack of mutual respect and trust.* I know a husband who seems to delight in humiliating his wife in the presence of others. I know a wife who seems to seek every opportunity to belittle her husband in the presence of others by disagreeing with or correcting whatever he says. Perhaps they are using this method to repay some behavior of their spouse such as lack of showing love, or lack of submission, but this certainly is not the Christian

approach to solving problems in relationships. The Bible pattern is that the husband should love his wife in the same measure that Christ loves the church (Ephesians 5:25-28) and that the wife should honor and respect her husband (Ephesians 5:33).

Neither partner should give the other any reasons to feel jealousy. The Christian couple who has this problem should discuss it together openly and agree to avoid any situations which could cause jealous feelings to occur. The person who is constantly jealous without just cause should ask the Lord to help him overcome such feelings and develop trust in his spouse.

### **Application**

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- 9 Jealousy occurs when there is a lack of
- a) respect.
  - b) submission.
  - c) commitment.
  - d) trust
- 

2. *Lack of communication.* “My husband never talks to me.” This is a common complaint of wives who perhaps spend their entire day caring for small children and who look forward to communication with their husbands in the evening. There must be good communication in order to have a good marriage. A husband and wife should be able to share with their partner, more than with anyone else, their joys and sorrows, hopes and dreams, as well as their small every-day problems.

3. *Overcommitment.* One well-known Christian psychologist has called this the No. 1 problem in many Christian homes, including those of pastors and people in other full-time ministries. It is easy to become involved in so many activities outside the home that there is no time left for a home life. Home becomes a place to eat, bathe, and sleep. The family is neglected while the father is busy earning money, or ministering to the spiritual needs of others. He gives his best to his work, and leaves little or nothing of himself for his wife and children. God expects us to use the wisdom He has given us to establish the right priorities in our

lives. If the husband is going to be the spiritual leader of the home, he must spend time with his family in fellowship and training.

### Application

**10** Read 1 Timothy 3:1-12. What instruction does Paul give regarding church leaders which would indicate that they must give careful priority to their own families?

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.....

4. *Financial problems.* A husband and wife must work together to establish a family budget which will meet their needs and keep them from the burden of debts that are difficult to pay. The best foundation is to tithe faithfully the first ten percent of the family income to the Lord, according to scriptural teaching (Malachi 3:8; Matthew 23:23). I firmly believe that many families suffer unnecessary financial problems, sickness, and unexpected expenses because they are not cheerful givers of God's portion of their income. God's Word emphasizes over and over again the principle of giving. We cannot outgive God. He has promised to meet our needs as we are faithful to Him (Luke 6:38).

#### IT ALL BELONGS TO GOD



GOD'S  
TITHE

THE FAMILY'S  
SHARE

The apostle Paul said that he had learned to be content whether he had plenty, or whether he had little (Philippians

4:11). Happiness is certainly not dependent upon riches. God does not want us to worry about accumulating wealth, but He wants us to trust Him to provide for our daily needs.

5. *Differences over the training of children.* Many problems arise because parents cannot agree on the training and discipline of their children. This can be avoided by obedience to the principles of child rearing given in the Bible. We will discuss some of these principles later in this lesson. Parents should always show unity in decisions concerning children, and they should discuss any differences privately, so that their children will not take advantage of their divided opinions and create more discord between the parents.

6. *Problems concerning relatives.* When a man marries, he is to leave his father and mother and devote himself to his wife (Matthew 19:5). His responsibility then is to his wife and children, and nothing should be permitted to disrupt the oneness of his marriage relationship. But the Bible does teach that if any member of the family has a serious need, we are not to turn away from the one in need. First Timothy 5:4-8 expands the believer's responsibility to include grandparents, relatives, and any widows in the family. Verse 8 adds: "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

## ***Application***

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11 If the parents of a married man make demands on him which conflict with his responsibilities to his wife and children, which usually has the first priority?

- a) The parents.
- b) The wife and children.

**12** Match each marital problem listed (right column) with its correct solution (left column). Write the number of each problem in front of the solution you choose for it.

- |                |   |  |
|----------------|---|--|
| ..... <b>a</b> | A careful budget which gives first priority to God's portion.   | 1) Overcommitment                        |
| ..... <b>b</b> | Follow the biblical pattern for loving and honoring each other.   | 2) Problems concerning relatives         |
| ..... <b>c</b> | Trust each other and be trustworthy.  | 3) Financial problems                    |
| ..... <b>d</b> | Spend more time with the family.  | 4) Lack of respect                       |
| ..... <b>e</b> | Obey Christian principles and show unity.   | 5) Differences over training of children |
| ..... <b>f</b> | A man's first priority is his immediate family's needs, then the serious needs of other family members. | 6) Lack of communication                 |
| ..... <b>g</b> | Share with one another.   | 7) Jealousy                              |



## PROBLEMS OF CHILDREN

**Objective 6.** *Choose a statement which correctly summarizes the attitude parents should have in training their children.*

### Disobedience

Disobedience to parents is one of the signs of the last days. The only commandment that includes a promise is this one: "Honor your father and your mother . . . so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you" (Exodus 20:12). Children must learn obedience through careful training and discipline provided by their parents. "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Training doesn't just happen—it takes determination and a willingness to keep control of the situation. "A child left to itself disgraces his mother" (Proverbs 29:15). Parents must not permit disobedience in the early years of a child's life if they want to have control in the later years of his adolescence.



Today, many parents' hearts are saddened by the rebelliousness of their teenage children. Added to this are increasing temptations for young people to try drugs or alcoholic beverages, or experiment with sex. The church has felt the impact of these pressures as Christian families suffer because an unmarried daughter has become pregnant, or a son has become addicted to drugs, or a son or daughter rejects the family and leaves home seeking satisfaction in ungodly ways.

If your family is suffering because of such a problem, let me encourage you to strengthen your faith and don't give up, because God cares about you and He loves your wayward child. Take courage from the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-32.

The father in this story did not try to prevent the son from leaving home—yet his heart must have been greatly saddened to see him go. I believe he must have prayed for his son night and day, and never stopped expecting God to work for his good in the situation. How many times a day do you suppose he went to the road and looked for his son? The Bible says that finally the son decided to return home, after he had spent all his money and lost everything he had. “But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him” (v. 20).

Christian parents can claim the promise in Proverbs 22:6. There may be times when all you can do is commit a problem child to the Lord, and trust Him to work for good. But always be ready to help your child work out the problem when he turns to you for help. Just as your heavenly Father welcomes back a repentant sinner, no matter what he has done, Christian parents must show love and compassion to their rebellious children when they call out for help.

## Lack of Training and Discipline

Many times both parents work outside the home, and they have little energy for the important responsibility of training and discipline of their children. Often they expect the church and school to fulfill these functions which God has given to them. Training a child is hard work. You can't train a child simply

by telling him how he should live. You must work with him to correct every mistake, to show him what is right and wrong, to teach him what God's Word says. It is an activity that must continue until the child is old enough to leave home and assume the responsibilities of an adult.

## Lack of Love and Understanding

Every person has a need for love and affection. Children who grow up in a home where there is little demonstration of love find it difficult to express love to others. Parents should take time often to show their children that they are loved.

Parents lack understanding when they demand too much of their children, or when they are permissive and indulgent, always allowing the child to have his own way. These are two extremes which can cause problems. A child who is constantly criticized or ridiculed will develop feelings of inferiority and insecurity which will go with him into adulthood. A positive approach in training children will help to avoid these problems.

Everyone responds well to approval. Correction for wrongdoing should be balanced with praise for doing what is right. The rules of love which we studied in Lesson 2 (from 1 Corinthians 13) should be applied to the parents' attitudes and treatment of their children, as well as to other relationships. Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of age.

## ***Application***

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**13** Which of these statements best summarizes how parents should respond to children's problems of disobedience, lack of training, and lack of love?

- a) Parents should not permit disobedience, but should carefully train a child and show him he is loved.
- b) The most important thing a parent can do for a child is punish him when he disobeys.



## BIBLICAL SOLUTIONS FOR FAMILY PROBLEMS

**Objective 7.** *Summarize in a chart the position and responsibilities of each member of the family.*

I would like to summarize, in concluding this lesson, some basic biblical principles concerning the responsibilities of a husband, a wife, parents, and children. Following these principles will help you to work out many problems which occur within the family. They are God's pattern for the successful Christian family.

### Responsibilities of the Husband

1. *To give direction.* The biblical pattern is that the husband receives direction from the Lord for the family. Abraham was directed by God to leave his home and go into the land chosen by God (Genesis 12:1). Jacob was directed by the Lord to return to the land of his father (Genesis 31:3). Joseph was directed by God to escape into Egypt to protect his family (Matthew 2:13).

The Holy Spirit led Paul to explain the pattern of authority for the Christian family: "Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:3, 8-12). "Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" (Ephesians 6:1).

Just as a head must be sensitive to the whole body before it can communicate direction, the husband must be sensitive to the needs of his wife and children, and the direction from God, in order to be a spiritual leader in the home. A man who lives in complete submission to Christ will know how to direct the affairs of his family in ways pleasing to the Lord. This includes direction in spiritual matters: "But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). (See also Acts 16:31.) His Christian wife and children, in submission to the same Lord, will gladly support his authority.

2. *To provide.* The husband is responsible to provide for the material needs of the family and for their protection (1 Timothy 5:8).

3. *To love.* The husband is to love his wife *as Christ loved the church* (Ephesians 5:25, 28). How did Christ love the church?
- a. He gave Himself up for her (Ephesians 5:25; Romans 5:8). This is a husband's sacrificial love that is willing to suffer for his wife's benefit.
  - b. To make her holy (Ephesians 5:26). A husband's love should be uplifting and encouraging to his wife in her spiritual walk with Christ.
  - c. To cleanse her by the washing with water through the Word (Ephesians 5:26). A husband's love should include sharing the Word of God with his wife that they both might be purified and nurtured through it.
  - d. To present her to Himself . . . holy and blameless (Ephesians 5:27). Love that has as its goal the wife's spiritual benefit, will be reflected back to the husband by a spiritual, blameless wife.
  - e. Christ FIRST loved us (1 John 4:19). The husband should be the one to initiate expressions of love.
  - f. As His own body (Ephesians 5:29). The church is known as the body of Christ (Romans 12:5). This expression of love includes all the things a man does for his own body, love that causes him to care for and provide for his wife in every way. This love is proved by his faithfulness to her (Proverbs 5:15, 18, 19; Malachi 2:15-16); by being considerate (1 Peter 3:7; Colossians 3:19); and by showing appreciation (Proverbs 31:28-31).

### Application

14 Why do you think it is so important for a husband to love his wife in all of these ways?

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### Responsibilities of the Wife

The New Testament does not teach that women are inferior to men. "There is neither . . . male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). That passage mentions slaves, freemen, Jews, and Greeks as well as male and female. It teaches

that Christ accepts all people on an equal level, in spite of their differences. The headship of the husband is a matter of responsibility and orderly structure. Every community must have leadership and God has chosen the husband to be the leader in the family.



## PARTNERS TOGETHER

In order to have a leader, there must be followers. The wife is to follow the leadership of her husband by her submission: “Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything” (Ephesians 5:24). The wife’s submission is demonstrated *as to the Lord* (5:22); *respectfully* (5:33); *as is fitting* (Colossians 3:18). Think of it! The same commitment and yieldedness that would be your response to the Lord should also be your response to your husband. A Christian wife will place her husband in high regard—she will honor him, prefer him and his company to that of others, and admire him. And if her husband is not a believer, she will possibly win him by her behavior without *talk* (1 Peter 3:1). This means that a consistent lifestyle according to Christian principles will win an unbelieving husband without the necessity of words.

In Titus 2:3-5 we find some other responsibilities of the wife given. These are things the older women should teach the younger women. But first the older women must be sure their own lives are an example. They must be reverent in the way they live, not slanderers or addicted to wine. Then they can teach the younger wives.

## Application

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**15** Read Titus 2:3-5 and list the seven good things that older women should teach younger women.

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## Responsibilities of Parents

1. *The parents are responsible to train their children* (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4). Training involves a total approach of *example*, *teaching*, and *discipline* when needed. Children learn by the things they see in their environment, they learn by being taught, and they sometimes learn by being disciplined in a fair manner (Proverbs 29:15, 17).

2. *Discipline of children must be fair.* “Fathers, do not exasperate your children” (Ephesians 6:4). “Fathers, do not embitter your children or they will become discouraged” (Colossians 3:21). Children should not be disciplined for something they did not know was wrong, and they should not be disciplined in anger. There must be consistency. They must know there will be certain consequences for certain actions. This means that a parent must take the time and energy necessary to discipline a child when he deserves it, explain why he is being disciplined, and then perhaps pray with him about it (Hebrews 12:6-9; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Discipline of children means life to them. A child cannot bring himself under God’s authority if he has never learned to bring himself under his parents’ authority (see Proverbs 19:18; 23:13-14; 29:17).

3. *Training and discipline must be done in love.* Parents should pattern their attitudes after those of the heavenly Father: “Though he bring grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unflinching love. For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men” (Lamentations 3:32-33).

## Application

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**16** Read Hebrews 12:5-11 and circle the letter in front of TRUE statements below which explain why God disciplines His children and why parents should discipline their children.

- a** Because He likes to rebuke His children.
  - b** Because He loves His children.
  - c** Because they are *His* children (He is responsible for them).
  - d** Because He is angry with them and wants to punish them.
  - e** To win their respect.
  - f** For their good, that they may share His holiness.
  - g** To give them pain.
  - h** To produce righteousness and peace.
- 

We see from this Scripture that the child's response to his parents' discipline has a direct bearing on the child's later life, in his submission to God and His discipline.

## Responsibilities of Children

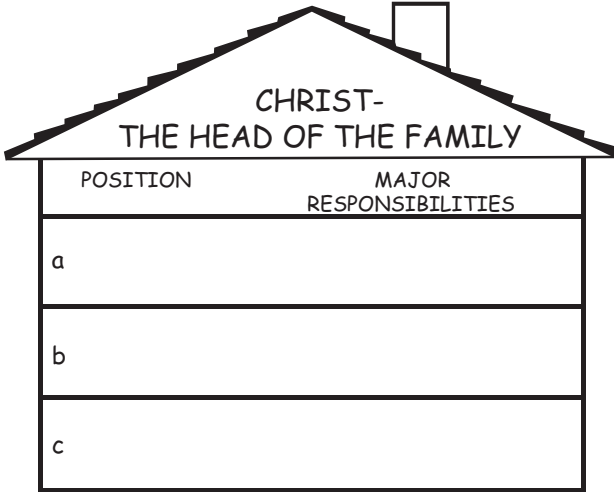
The first requirement for children is to honor and obey their parents (Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:1-3). God's blessing is upon children who obey their parents (Jeremiah 35:6-7, 18-19). Children who obey their parents are more likely to train their own children properly.

Honoring your parents does not stop with the end of childhood. A young man should remember the instruction and teaching of his father and mother when he goes out into the world on his own. A young person who profits from the teaching of his parents brings them great joy (Proverbs 23:22-25).

In the Old Testament severe judgment was brought upon disobedient or disrespectful children (see Exodus 21:15; Leviticus 20:9; Deuteronomy 21:18-21; Proverbs 28:24; 30:17).

**Application**

17 In the following chart write the position of each family member and give the major responsibilities of each in the home.



When these divine instructions concerning the responsibilities of the family members are ignored, it is no wonder that problems arise. God's pattern works, and the family which lives by these principles will know love, happiness, and fulfillment. Is this the kind of family you have? If not, what can you do to make your family what God wants it to be? You can start with yourself—when *you* are fulfilling your God-given responsibilities to your family, it will be easier to get other family members to take the same steps. Making a change may not be easily or quickly done, but the results will make it all worthwhile!

**Application**

18 As we did in the previous lesson, we encourage you now to apply the principles of this lesson to find solutions to problems you may have in your family. God's Word is an abundant source of help. Read it together as a family, and let it speak to your hearts.



**self-test**

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MULTIPLE CHOICE. Choose the one best answer to each question.

- 1 The position of the husband in relation to his wife can be compared to the position of
  - a) a mother to her children.
  - b) the church to Christ.
  - c) Christ to the church.
- 2 Training a child correctly involves
  - a) punishment and approval.
  - b) teaching, discipline, and love.
  - c) permissiveness.
  - d) criticism.
- 3 Divorce is permitted only in the case of
  - a) adultery.
  - b) marriage to an unbeliever.
  - c) disagreements over children.
  - d) jealousy.
- 4 The greatest victim of a divorce is the
  - a) husband.
  - b) wife.
  - c) offended partner.
  - d) children.
- 5 If a divorced person remarries before being converted, he should after conversion
  - a) return to his former marriage.
  - b) leave his second marriage and live alone.
  - c) remain as he was at the time of conversion.
- 6 What is missing from a marriage where one partner belittles the other?
  - a) Leadership
  - b) Love and respect
  - c) Trust
  - d) Oneness
- 7 Financial problems in a home can be more easily resolved when a couple agrees to
  - a) work longer hours.
  - b) let the wife handle the finances.
  - c) pay their tithe first
  - d) avoid unexpected expenses.

TRUE-FALSE Write **T** in front of the TRUE statements, and **F** in front of those which are FALSE.

- ..... **8** The mother should be the spiritual leader in the home.
- ..... **9** Overcommitment to activities outside the home is a problem when it keeps the family from spending time together.
- ..... **10** The obedient child is more likely to serve God than the disobedient child.
- ..... **11** A Christian married to an unbeliever is free to leave at any time.
- ..... **12** A man's first priority is to his parents.
- ..... **13** Parents should always be ready to help a child who has been rebellious.
- ..... **14** It is the husband's responsibility to give direction to his family and provide for them.
- ..... **15** Headship of the family must be accompanied by love in order to function properly.

**answers to study questions**

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- 10** Each leader must manage his own family and household well, and see that his children obey and respect him (vs. 4, 5, 12).
- 1 b)** There can be no agreement between any of these things because they have opposing values.
- 11 b)** The wife and children. (An exception might be a need of the parents which the wife agrees should be given higher priority.)
- 2** Because they are already one flesh, and that is a lifetime commitment.
- 12 a)** 3) Financial problems.  
**b)** 4) Lack of respect.  
**c)** 7) Jealousy.  
**d)** 1) Overcommitment.  
**e)** 5) Differences over training of children.  
**f)** 2) Problems concerning relatives.  
**g)** 6) Lack of communication.
- 3 a)** A Christian should only marry someone who is also a Christian.  
**b)** The husband should be the spiritual leader in the home.
- 13 a)** Parents should not permit disobedience, but should carefully train a child and show him that he is loved.
- 4 b)** A desire to please each other.
- 14** Your answer. I would answer in this way: The husband has been given headship over the wife. The only way he can fulfill this responsibility properly is with *love*.
- 5 a)** False.  
**b)** False.  
**c)** True.  
**d)** True.
- 15** Each should love her husband; love her children; be self-controlled; be pure; be busy at home; be kind; be subject to her husband.
- 6 b)** the innocent partner to divorce and remarry.  
**b)** dfsdf

- 16 a False.
  - b True.
  - c True.
  - d False.
  - e True.
  - f True.
  - g False.
  - h True.
- 7 This couple should remain in the situation they were in at the moment of salvation—that is, they should remain married to one another and accept the oneness God has given them through their repentance and new birth in Christ.
- 17 a The husband—gives direction, provides, loves wife and children, trains children.
- b The wife—is submissive to husband's leadership, cares for the home, loves husband and children, helps to train children.
- c The children—obey and honor their parents.
- 8 A Christian is forbidden to divorce. A Christian cannot marry a divorced person. Divorced persons are not to remarry.
- 18 Your answer.
- 9 d) trust.



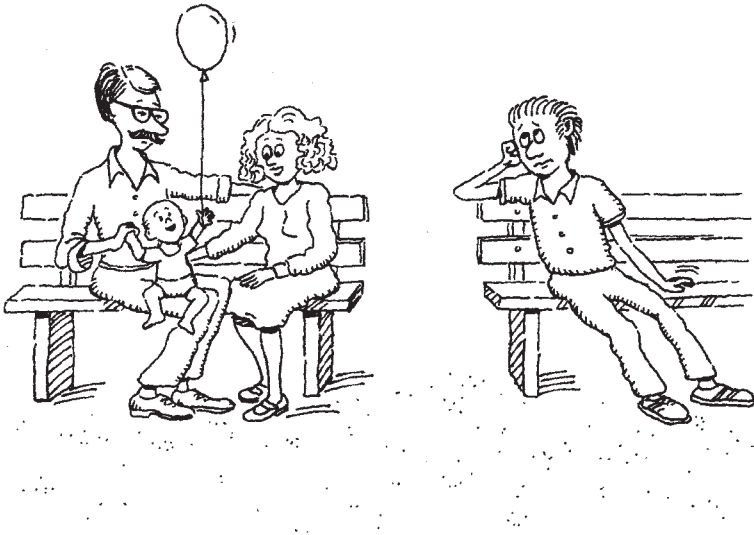
# LESSON 6 Problems of a Single Life

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We live in a couples-oriented society where the usual status is to be married. There is often a stigma attached to being single—many people seem to think that if a person is single there must be something wrong with that person! This is not a new idea. In the Old Testament the single life was considered undesirable (see Judges 11:38; Isaiah 4:1, and Jeremiah 16:9).

In Lesson 4 we discussed problems in social relationships. These are problems which are faced by all people, whether single or married. In Lesson 5 we dealt with problems in family life. The person living alone, or without a mate, has in addition special problems to deal with, such as greater loneliness, depression, fear, facing decisions alone, the need for love and affection, and sexual desires that must be kept under control.

The single life does not have to be a negative experience. The single person is described in Scripture as a special gift to the church (Matthew 19:12 and 1 Corinthians 7:7). In this lesson we will discover some very positive values of the single life, and how they can contribute to a satisfying and meaningful lifestyle for the single person. And we will find that the single person does not have to cope with his problems alone—not only does he have the help of his divine Problem Solver, Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit's guidance, but the church can also be a wonderful source of help and strength!



### ***lesson outline***

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- Defining the Problems
- Values of a Single Life
- Deciding Whether to Marry
- Facing Special Problems
- How the Church Can Help

### ***lesson objectives***

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When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Select Scriptures which would be helpful in counseling single persons with specific problems.
- Select true statements that give values of a single life.
- Formulate a principle to guide the person who is making a decision about whether or not to marry.
- Apply guidelines which will help to solve problems of a single person.
- Recognize true principles which the church should follow to help its single members.

### ***learning activities***

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1. Study the lesson following the study plan given in the learning activities for Lesson 1.
2. Find the definitions for any key words you do not know.
3. Take the self-test and check your answers.
4. Review Lessons 4 through 6 and answer the questions in Unit Student Report 2. Follow the directions in the student report.

### ***keywords***

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abandoned	extended family
celibate	insensitivity
default	rejected
demeaning	submerged



## *lesson development*

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### DEFINING THE PROBLEMS

**Objective 1.** *Select Scriptures which would be helpful in counseling single persons with specific problems.*

Single persons are defined in our society as those who are unmarried. They fall into three categories:

1. Those who have never married.
2. Those who are divorced.
3. Those who are widowed.

1. *Those who have never married.* In many parts of the world the extended family normally provides shelter and companionship for the unmarried adults in the family. But many adults are now moving away from their families and into the cities for employment or other reasons. For the first time in their lives, they are alone, away from the protection and society of their family.

Mary Jeanne is 28 years old and unmarried. She has moved to the city to find employment and lives alone in a small apartment. She is working as a secretary and has found a church to attend. But she is very unhappy. She says, "Most of my friends are married so they don't often include me in their activities. I spend most of my time alone, except when I am working or in church. Sometimes I feel so lonely I cry myself to sleep. No one really cares about me. I want to be loved, to have a family and children."

Susan, who is 38 years old and unmarried, says, "I don't really mind being single most of the time. I enjoy my work, and I am involved in many activities at church. I sing in the choir, teach a Sunday school class, and enjoy working with people. Certainly I would like to be married and have a family. There have been opportunities for marriage, but they did not seem to be right for me. I have committed my future to God, and I will accept His plan for my life. My main problem is that people are always teasing me about being single, or telling me that I should get married in order to have a fulfilled life. There is so much pressure in our society to be married! It makes me feel that there is something wrong with me, that I shouldn't be happy as a single person."

Robert is a young man who would like to marry, and who has had several opportunities to develop fine relationships with Christian girls. But each time a relationship has developed to the point where he was seriously considering marriage, he has become afraid and has stopped seeing the girl. His explanation is, "Marriage is a great responsibility, and I'm afraid I will make a terrible mistake, or that I won't be able to provide for a family as I should. I'm not sure I'm ready to commit the rest of my life to another person."

Another man in his 40s has chosen not to marry because he must care for his aged mother, who has been in poor health for many years. Although he would like very much to marry, he does not feel that he should burden a wife with the care and medical expense that he considers is his responsibility alone.

These four examples illustrate special problems of many people who have never married, such as a low self-image, a feeling of rejection, pressures to marry, fear of responsibility, a desire for a family, lack of interest in planning for the future, a desire to be needed. And single women often feel that people take advantage of them because they have no husband to protect them.

## ***Application***

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- 1 Which of these attitudes seems to be shared by all of the people in the four examples given?
- a) Fear
  - b) Uncertainty
  - c) Contentment
  - d) Hopelessness
- 

2. *Those who are divorced.* We have discussed divorce in greater detail in Lesson 5. Our emphasis in this lesson is the problems faced by a divorced person as a single person.

Margaret was divorced by her husband, who has since remarried. This is her story: "I loved my husband very much, but after I became a Christian he began to spend more and more time away from home. He wanted to do things that I felt a Christian should not do. Even though I tried to keep our marriage happy, he decided

to divorce me. I feel sad and guilty that our marriage broke up, and I feel rejected by the person I trusted most. Now I have to work to take care of my two children, and I feel that people are critical of me because I am divorced. I am ashamed to face people at church. How can I make a happy home for my children now that I am alone?"

The divorced person may have feelings of rejection, or of being judged harshly. He or she may also experience suffering, loss of hope, a sudden change of lifestyle, or will have the sole responsibility for the care of children. A divorced person may also have to deal with problems of anger, bitterness, resentment, loneliness, and the grief of a loss.

3. *Those who are widowed.* A friend of mine was widowed following her husband's lengthy illness. She had cared for him constantly during the final months of his illness. Now she says, "My life is so empty. I have nothing worthwhile to do, and nothing to live for. My husband was my whole life. I feel I have lost my identity. My mind is filled with memories of my husband's painful illness. My children are married and do not live near me. No one needs me now."

A man who was widowed told me, "One of my greatest problems is the loneliness I feel when I go home to an empty house. I have lost weight, because I have no desire to prepare food and eat it alone."

This illustrates some of the problems of the widowed person: grief, loneliness, a drastic change of lifestyle, perhaps financial difficulties or adjustments (especially for a woman), having nothing to live for, feeling abandoned. The need for love and affection is a universal need. Everyone wants to be needed by someone.



## **Application**

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**2** Read each set of Scriptures given below, then choose the ones you would consider best to help a person with the following problems.

**a** Suffering as a result of the unkind actions of another person:  
Psalm 91:4; 1 Peter 4:12-19; Hebrews 2:18

.....  
**b** Rejection: 2 Corinthians 12:9; Isaiah 53:3; John 1:11; Psalm 130:4-5

.....  
**c** Fear: Deuteronomy 33:12; 1 John 1:9; Joshua 1:9;  
2 Corinthians 12:10

.....  
**d** Sorrow: Psalm 18:29; Psalm 66:10-12; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, 6

.....  
**3** Read Psalm 66:10-12.

**a** When would it be appropriate to use this Scripture to help someone?

.....  
**b** How would it be helpful?

.....  
**4** Read Isaiah 54:4-10.

**a** When would it be appropriate to use this Scripture to help someone?

.....  
**b** How would it be helpful?

.....  
**5** In a separate notebook, list the names of three single people you know, and list the problems that, in your opinion, each of them may be experiencing. (If you are single, list any problems you have as a result of being single.) Try to find a Scripture which would be helpful in each instance, and write it next to the problem listed.



## VALUES OF A SINGLE LIFE

**Objective 2.** *Select true statements that give values of a single life.*

Before we look for solutions to the problems that single persons may have, let's look at some of the values of a single life as revealed in God's Word. These values may give us insight as to possible solutions.

1. *The single life is an approved alternative to marriage.* In speaking of the single life, we are talking about the single person who has no sexual involvement, or who is *celibate*. We will discuss celibacy in more detail in Lesson 7, in our discussion of human sexuality.

Because of the possibility of distress in the world, and of the everyday troubles that married people may have, the apostle Paul suggested that single people were probably better off to remain single. Unmarried people are free from the worries and problems that come to those who have families to be responsible for (1 Corinthians 7:26-32). He did not say this to put anyone under bondage to remain single, but to suggest it as a good thing for those who do wish to remain single (1 Corinthians 7:35).

2. *The single life is a special gift.* The single or celibate state is maintained by those who have a *gift* for it. I believe this is a gift that God will freely give to any single person who needs it, *when* he needs it, and for as long as he needs it. Jesus, and later Paul, mentioned this *gift* aspect of both singleness and marriage. God loves you and me. He has made provision for all of our needs, whatever they may be, and at whatever time in life we have particular need for His provision. Here is what Jesus replied to His disciples when they suggested that perhaps it was better not to marry:

Not everyone can accept this teaching, but only those to whom it has been given. For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and *others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven*. The one who can accept this should accept it (Matthew 19:11-12—italics mine).

The single person who gives up marriage so he can devote his time to building up the kingdom of heaven is a special gift to

the church. I know several dedicated men and women who had opportunities to marry but chose rather to spend their time in gospel ministry, some on a mission field far from their homeland. They made this choice because they knew that, for them, it would otherwise not be possible to carry out the work God had called them to do. The apostle Paul is an example of such a person. He said, "Actually, I would prefer that all of you were as I am; but each one has a special gift from God, one person this gift, another one that gift" (1 Corinthians 7:7 TEV).

3. *The single life is an opportunity.* Notice that in the preceding section Jesus is quoted as mentioning some who do not marry "because of the kingdom of heaven." Paul also emphasizes this reason for choosing the single life in 1 Corinthians 7:32-35. He points out that an unmarried man is free to concern himself with the Lord's work, while a married man is pulled in two directions. In the same way, a married woman is concerned with pleasing her husband (and rightfully so), but an unmarried woman is free to give herself completely to the Lord's service without holding back anything. It is true that every Christian is called to be completely dedicated to the Lord. For those who are single, however, there are opportunities for expressing this dedication which are not available to those who have the responsibility of caring for a family.

### ***Application***

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**6** Read Matthew 6:33 and explain how it relates to the Christian single person who has a great desire to marry.

.....

.....

.....

**7** Circle the letter in front of TRUE statements that give values of a single life.

- a** Unmarried people are free from worries and problems.
- b** Single life is not only approved, but it is also encouraged by the apostle Paul to the Corinthians, who were experiencing difficult times.

- c Those who remain single have the possibility of giving more time to Christian service.
  - d Everybody has been given the gift to remain single.
  - e A married person must divide his attention between his family and his service to God.
  - f The single person is a special gift to the church.
- 

Those who have chosen not to marry in order to devote themselves fully to God's work will find that He helps them continually to commit all their needs to Him and serve Him wholeheartedly. And His reward to those who make such a commitment is great: "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life" (Matthew 19:29).

## DECIDING WHETHER TO MARRY

**Objective 3.** *Formulate a principle to guide the person who is making a decision about whether or not to marry.*

Some people who are single feel they have not chosen to be single. The divorcee in the example we gave earlier did not choose to be divorced. The widow certainly did not choose to be widowed. These are problems over which they had no control. The person who has never married may not choose to remain single. What of such people?

We have already emphasized that God's grace is sufficient for every problem that we face. He does not ask us to bear more than we are able to bear. Every trial we face is an opportunity for us to draw closer to God, and to experience His love and care. Here is another occasion when we must identify our problem, commit it to God, and expect Him to work for our good. He will never fail us.

The pressure to get married from within oneself, or from others, often causes people to use unrighteous means to achieve marriage, or to settle for *a* mate instead of *God's* mate. Don't settle for second best! God's will is that we should first be *godly*, not first married.

*Timing* is important to every aspect of the Lord's program for our lives. Marriages planned too quickly or before a person is really prepared have failed for this reason. Sometimes the partners have been wrong for one another, or perhaps they have been too immature to handle the pressures of married life. The Lord can and will provide for meeting the social needs of singles through the Christian community of brothers and sisters in Christ. Single persons should never be pressured into relationships that are not the Lord's will. All of us, whether married or single, should work at developing and maintaining strong, mature Christian character. We talked about this in Lesson 4. God's standards are the same whether you are married or single. Thus, if God directs a single life into marriage, the foundation for it will be well established.

One Christian woman rejected two offers of marriage because she did not believe they were God's direction for her life. God had called her into a special ministry which would have been impossible if she had accepted either marriage proposal. For ten years she faithfully served the Lord. But as she neared the age of 40 the years of loneliness, the hurtful remarks of well-meaning people, and the thought of facing old age alone caused her to become desperate. At that moment in her life she met a man who was not a Christian and she allowed a relationship to develop. Eventually she married him, even though he made it clear that he was not interested in becoming a Christian. She is no longer involved in Christian ministry. Her time is devoted to trying to make a happy home in a divided household.

### ***Application***

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**8** Which of God's standards was violated in the example just described?

.....



I know an elderly missionary woman who spent her youth and her middle age alone in a remote African village. For many years when there were no male missionaries available for that



area, she labored alone in Bible school work and evangelism. She did this because she knew it was God's will for her life. At the age of 64, when she was in her homeland preparing for her final term of service in Africa, she met a retired missionary widower. Their love for each other grew, and shortly after her return to the mission field, he followed her. They were married in her adopted land, and they are now working together preaching the gospel and training Christian workers.

In telling me about this change in her life, she said, "I have been surprised by joy!" God blessed her dedication and faithfulness in a very special way. Certainly over the years she experienced much loneliness, discouragement, rejection, financial needs, and insecurity. But she chose eternal values over earthly values, and God did not forget her.

### Application

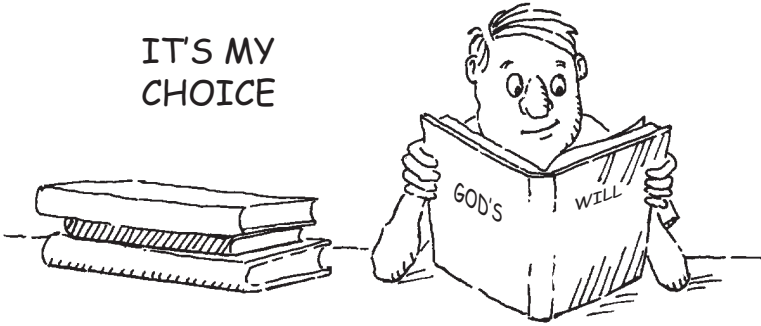
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- 9 This story reveals to us that
- a) God will provide a spouse for everyone who puts Him first.
  - b) it is God's will for everyone to marry.
  - c) those who put God's will first can trust Him to meet their needs, whatever they may be, at the right time.
- 

Should the single, widowed, or divorced person seek marriage? We have already seen that there is no scriptural teaching which forbids marriage for a single person who has never been married. The apostle Paul does encourage *widows* not to remarry, but they are permitted to marry if they so choose (1 Corinthians 7:8-9).

In Lesson 5 we discussed biblical teaching concerning divorce. As we indicated, although scriptural teaching is not absolutely clear in this regard, it does appear that generally remarriage is forbidden to the Christian who has been divorced. The possible exception is those cases where one marriage partner had dissolved the marital oneness by an act of adultery. Of this we *are* sure: if you seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, He will guide you in your decisions and give you a life that is rich and full and pleasing to Him.

IT'S MY  
CHOICE



### Application

10 Write a principle to guide the person who is making a decision about whether or not to marry.

.....

.....



## FACING SPECIAL PROBLEMS

**Objective 4.** *Apply guidelines which will help to solve problems of a single person.*

Did you notice in the illustrations of the two single women given earlier in this lesson that one was happy and the other was not, although their circumstances were very similar? This would indicate that their problems were not outside of themselves, but within themselves. Here are some guidelines which will help you in finding solutions to the problems you face as a single person.

1. *Look within yourself.* You may not be able to change your circumstances, but you can change the way you look at them! Remember that the joy of the Lord is your strength! "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13).

2. *Recognize your position in Christ.* He gave His life for you! He loves *you*, and you are complete in Him (Colossians 2:10). You are His special gift to the church. Take advantage of

the special freedom you have to give yourself in His service. Thank Him for giving you this opportunity to be of service to Him, and be all you can be for Him.

3. *Get involved in helping others.* There are many people who are more lonely, more depressed than you are, who are suffering more than you. Look for ways to lighten their load. Be sociable. Keep busy—always have *something* to look forward to.

A friend of mine is a widow. For several months after her husband died she just went through the motions of living. She dreaded getting up in the morning, and forced herself through the routines of the day. She just wanted to get through each day so that she could lose herself in sleep again. Gradually she began to realize that this kind of life was not pleasing to God. She repented of her attitude of self-pity, and asked God to help her fill her life with useful activities. Now every evening before going to sleep she makes a list of the things she will do the next day. First on her list is a time alone with God in Bible reading, meditation, and prayer. She allows a certain amount of time for her daily chores, and then plans some activity which will help someone else—such as a visit to the hospital, visitation for the pastor, a dish of food for someone who is sick or in need, or a helping hand for a busy mother. Now she has something to look forward to every day. Her life is full and happy. She is gaining new friendships continually. She has turned her sorrowful condition into an opportunity to accomplish things of eternal value. She needed no special talents to do this—she just used the gifts God had given her.

Perhaps you must work at an unpleasant or time-consuming job to earn a living, and do not have as much free time as this widow. Use your job as an opportunity to show the love of Christ. Think of ways that you can honor Him in your job. As you concentrate on Him, He will fill your life with joy and peace.

4. *Increase your Bible reading, meditation, and prayer time.* I know a widow who sometimes comes home from a hard day of work tired, alone, discouraged because of the pressures of the day, and feeling a deep sadness and loneliness for her husband. She has learned to overcome these bad times. The cure? Reading

from God's Word! Read it out loud, read it at every opportunity you have. Listen to the Bible being read on tape or record. Somehow get it into your mind, and the atmosphere changes by the power of the living Christ! His Word brings comfort to the brokenhearted. It brings rest for the weary. It brings hope to the hopeless. It will lift you above your burdens and give you strength for tomorrow. Let God speak to you through His Word, and in your times of prayer and waiting before Him. He will fill your heart to overflowing as His love flows through you.

5. *Finally, apply Christian principles for solving your problems that we have given in the first unit of this study.* If there is a definite solution, God will show you the answer as you apply yourself to the problem. If you can see no solution at the present time, commit the problem to God, and trust Him to work for your good. You can live a victorious, joyful Christian life no matter what your circumstances may be. And the greater your trials, the greater will be your testimony to others as you allow God to work out His will for you with an attitude of trust and obedience.

### **Application**

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11 Which guideline should be applied to help find solutions to the following problems?

a Since her husband divorced her, Miriam is having a problem seeing herself as someone of worth in her own right. Her own identity was submerged in her husband's to the point that after the divorce there seemed to be no more purpose in life. What will help her?

.....

b George is a young man who fell in love with a classmate in college. They became engaged, but shortly before their marriage she told him she couldn't marry him. To escape his sorrow, George has gotten involved with other college students in constantly seeking after pleasure, playing loud music when he is alone, and doing everything he can to avoid thinking about his problem. He is a Christian, however, and none of this has satisfied him—in fact, he feels restless and unhappy most of the time. What guideline would be of most help to him?

.....

- c Anne is bitter because she has had to return home from college to care for her widowed mother, who is ill. She feels that life is unfair to her.
- .....
- .....
- d Since Jane's husband died, she has come to depend on family, friends, and neighbors to do things for her. She almost never leaves her home, but she expects people to visit her often, keep her supplied with food, and do whatever she asks them to do. She seems to be concerned only with herself. She complains that people don't really care about her, and that no one else has suffered as much as she has. She is very depressed.
- .....
- e Philip has just graduated from college and is preparing to enter the ministry. However, his father, who is a farmer, recently fell and broke his back. He will be unable to do his farm work for several months. He has asked Philip to come and help him until he is able to do the work alone. Philip has been offered a position as associate pastor by one of the leading ministers in his organization. He is afraid that if he rejects this offer he will not have such an opportunity again.
- .....
- .....



## HOW THE CHURCH CAN HELP

**Objective 5.** *Recognize true principles which the church should follow to help its single members.*

Recently I read this advertisement in a church bulletin: "Come to our new class for singles, ages 19 to 90, whether single by default or design." *By default* implies that you are single because nobody wanted you; *by design* implies that you chose to be single. This statement reveals a great deal of insensitivity to the needs and personal dignity of the single person. This church had the intention of *helping* those who were alone, but it lacked understanding of the people it was trying to reach, and how to help them.

Another church has a Bible study class for “Pairs and Spares.” *Pairs*, of course, implies married couples. *Spares* has the implication of being left over, not needed. The church *can* have a very effective and important ministry to the single person. In the epistles Christians are encouraged many times to minister one to the other. Here are some examples:

Galatians 6:2 “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

Ephesians 4:32 “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

Galatians 6:10 “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”

James 5:16 “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.”

Romans 12:5, 10, 13, 15 “So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. . . . Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. . . . Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. . . . Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.”

Philippians 2:4 “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”



One church has encouraged each family group within the church to “adopt” one of the single members, and include that person often in family meals, recreation times, or other ways of sharing. Another church arranges the members in groups of 10 to 15, including both families and singles, and these groups meet often for times of fellowship and sharing. The groups are reorganized every three months so that the people in the church get to know others that they might not otherwise have the opportunity to know.

For younger single persons special times for Bible study, sharing, and fellowship directed toward their specific needs can be helpful. Older single persons may feel more comfortable in a class with a mixture of married and single persons.

The best way the married believers can help is to develop a sensitivity to the feelings and special needs of the single believers. Avoid demeaning labels such as “old maid” or “unclaimed blessing.” Involve single adults in meaningful church activities where their talents can be used. Take advantage of (but don’t abuse) their freedom to devote more of their time to acts of ministry. They

can be a marvelous aid to the pastor and other leaders in the church. Look especially for those who tend to be withdrawn and timid about getting involved. They may be suffering an unbearable hurt and need to be reassured that they are loved.

A popular song contains, among others, these words:

I am a rock, I am an island.

And a rock feels no pain.

And an island never cries.

This poem sounds like the cry of a single person who has been deeply hurt by relationships in life. Christ taught us that we should get involved with people, even at the risk of being betrayed by some. The gain is far greater than any possible loss.

Married believers who will take time to develop friendships with single persons of all ages will be richly rewarded by adding to their own lives new attitudes and new understanding about the rich variety to be found in God's creation. Everyone should remember that the basis for Christian fellowship is not a person's social or marital status, but the fact that he or she belongs to Christ. We can learn and be blessed by the lives of others!

## ***Application***

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- 12** Which of the following statements represent good principles for the church to follow in order to help its single members?
- a** The major emphasis of the church should be meeting the needs of family groups.
  - b** Single persons should be included in activities with families.
  - c** It is better to group people according to whether they are married or single, rather than by age group.
  - d** Great care should be taken to avoid labeling people in a way that would be demeaning or that would rob them of personal dignity.
  - e** The Bible exhorts those who belong to Christ to be concerned about one another.
  - f** The single person's greater freedom can be a blessing for the church who will involve these persons in meaningful ministries.
  - g** Christian fellowship should include everyone who belongs to Christ.
-



In our final unit we will look at some special problem areas that we all must face to some degree in our life's experience. We hope you have profited from this unit of study, and that the final unit will help you to realize how precious it is to belong to Christ and to rest in the shadow of His wings. May the Lord bless you as you continue your study.

You have now concluded the final lesson in this unit. Take the self-test and check your answers. Then review the unit and answer the questions for this unit in the student report at the back of the book.

## **self-test**

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**MULTIPLE CHOICE.** Choose the one best answer to each question.

- 1 A feeling of rejection is more likely to be experienced by
  - a) a widowed person.
  - b) an unmarried person.
  - c) a divorced person.
- 2 The apostle Paul said single persons were better off if they remained single because
  - a) single persons live longer than married persons.
  - b) the single life is happier.
  - c) marriage should be considered only as an alternative to immorality.
  - d) single persons have the possibility of devoting more time to God's work without distractions.
- 3 Why is the single life considered a special gift? Because
  - a) those who choose to devote their time to the kingdom of heaven rather than to marry are a particular blessing to the church.
  - b) anyone can remain single, but few choose to do so.
  - c) it is a provision of God for people who have chosen to remain celibate.
- 4 What should be the first priority in a single person's life?
  - a) Marriage to a Christian.
  - b) God's will for his life.
  - c) Doing what pleases others.
  - d) Overcoming loneliness.
- 5 God's will is that we should first be
  - a) single.
  - b) godly.
  - c) married.
- 6 The right foundation for a solid marriage is
  - a) a variety of social relationships.
  - b) several years of working in the church.
  - c) development of a strong, mature Christian character.
- 7 Which of these would be the worst choice for a Christian single person?
  - a) Remain single even if he desires marriage.
  - b) Marry an unbeliever.
  - c) Find fellowship with other single Christians.

**8** The Scriptures teach that generally marriage is forbidden for the person who is

- a) divorced.
- b) widowed.
- c) single.
- d) celibate.

**9** Which of these should be the first step before deciding whether to marry?

- a) Find a Christian partner.
- b) Follow the advice of an older Christian.
- c) Build a secure lifestyle for yourself.
- d) Make a full commitment to God's will for your life.

**10** Which of these principles is most important to guide the church in meeting the needs of single persons?

- a) People should be grouped according to whether they are married or single, in order to minister to the specific needs of each.
- b) Keep single persons busy in church activities and they will be happy.
- c) The basis for Christian fellowship is not a person's social status, but the fact that he or she belongs to Christ.

**11** SHORT ANSWER. List the five guidelines which will help the single person to find solutions for his problems.

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## **Answers to study questions**

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- 7 a False.  
b True.  
c True.  
d False.  
e True.  
f True.
- 1 b) Uncertainty.  
(You may have also indicated a) Fear. Although Susan in the second example does not seem to be fearful, as she has put her trust in the Lord for her future.)
- 8 A Christian is not to be unequally yoked to an unbeliever (2 Corinthians 6:14).
- 2 a 1 Peter 4:12-19.  
b Isaiah 53:3; John 1:11.  
c Deuteronomy 33:12; Joshua 1:9.  
d 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, 6.
- 9 c) those who put God first can trust Him to meet their needs.
- 3 a It would be appropriate for anyone who was going through a hard trial which was not the result of his own mistakes.  
b It reveals that even though God allows us to be tested, He will bring us through the trial victoriously.
- 10 Your answer. It should include this idea: The first step in deciding whether to marry is to make a full commitment to God's will for your life. Then allow God to confirm in your heart what His will is for you. He will guide you in the right way.
- 4 a It would be appropriate for a widowed person.  
b It reveals that God is aware of our grief, and He is compassionate. He will bring us through the time of sorrow into a time of rejoicing, if we but trust Him.
- 11 Your answers. Here are mine:
- a Miriam needs first of all to recognize her position in Christ.  
b George would benefit greatly by increasing his Bible reading, meditation, and prayer time, and fellowship with believers of both sexes.  
c Anne needs to examine her heart and change the way she views her circumstances. This is a wonderful time to show her love to her mother and develop a greater closeness to her.  
d Jane would benefit by getting involved with helping others. She should be grateful that her needs are met, that she is healthy, and that she is able to be of service to others.

- e Philip should apply Christian principles for problem solving to determine God's will in this matter. Perhaps the time spent with his father would be better training for him than the time spent with the other minister. Or perhaps there would be a possibility of finding someone else to work with his father. The important thing is that he find God's will.
- 5 Your answer. I hope you have given serious thought to this question, and have tried to find some scriptural help for problem areas.
- 12
- a Not a good principle.
  - b A good principle.
  - c Not a good principle.
  - d A good principle.
  - e A good principle.
  - f A good principle.
  - g A good principle.
- 6 Rather than seeking after marriage, we should seek after God's kingdom, and His will for our lives. If we will do that, He will add to our lives what is best for us. This *may* include marriage, but if it doesn't, we will still know that God is in control of our lives and working for our good.

***For Your Notes***

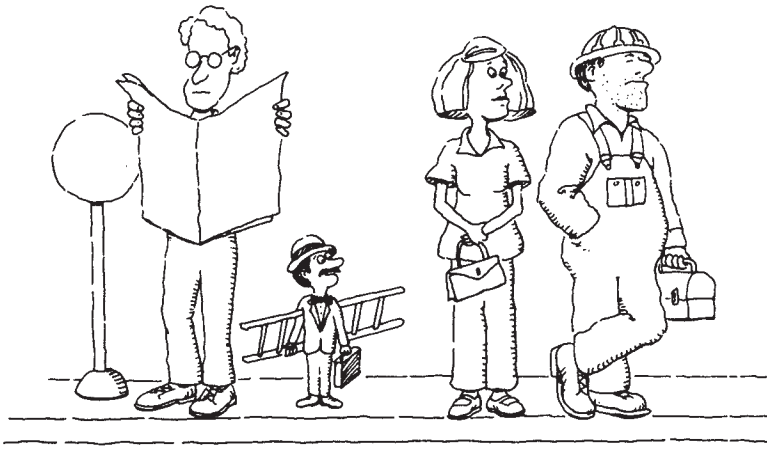
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The logo features the letters 'QR' in a large, bold, grey sans-serif font. Below 'QR' is the word 'Unit' in a smaller, bold, black sans-serif font. The text is set against a background of a light grey wireframe globe. A solid black horizontal bar is positioned at the bottom of the image.

# QR Unit





# SPECIAL PROBLEM AREAS

## Lessons

- 7 Sexuality In God's Design
- 8 Overcoming Depression
- 9 Suffering and Death
- 10 Maintaining Hope

# LESSON 7 Sexuality In God's Design

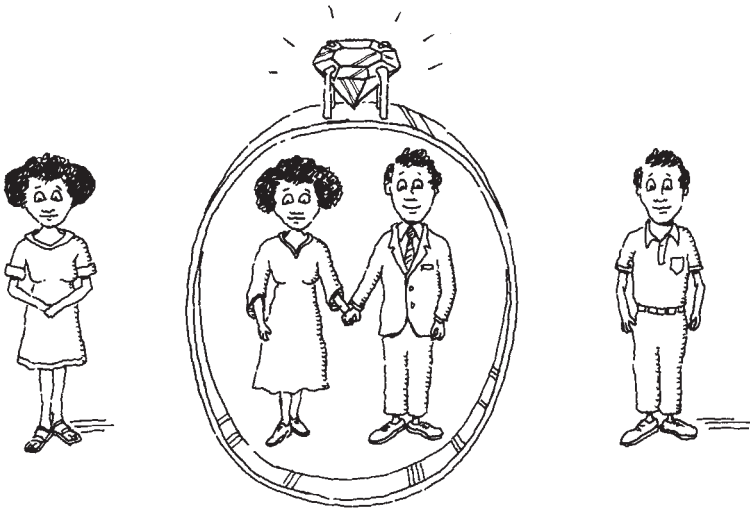
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One of the most beautiful relationships in life is that of a man and a woman who join in marriage and become one flesh. Human sexuality is a gift from God which not only enables us to bring children into the world, but also provides for the most intimate union possible between a man and a woman.

Some of life's greatest problems arise when men and women abuse their sexuality. Many people try to deal with their sexuality without benefit of God's revealed wisdom and His enablement to keep their bodies in subjection. As a result, they find themselves trapped in a lifestyle which is unholy and damaging both physically and emotionally.

God has not left us without very specific instructions to govern the powerful sexual drive within us. Whether you are married or single, God expects you to exercise control in this area of your life. The instructions He has given in His Word set the boundaries for sexual expression. Disobedience brings guilt, shame, suffering, and sin into your life. Obedience will make it possible for you to serve the Lord with joy and purity in the distinct sexuality which is His gift to you.

In this lesson we will discuss the boundaries God has set for sexual expression, and we will answer the question, "What are the biblical principles which should govern sexuality in the Christian believer's life?"



## ***lesson outline***

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Sexuality and Celibacy  
Sexuality and Marriage  
Disapproved Sexual Practices  
Dealing with Sexual Problems

## ***lesson objectives***

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When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- State the biblical principle concerning sexuality and the celibate life.
- Recognize biblical principles concerning sexuality and marriage.
- Give reasons why a Christian should refrain from biblically disapproved sexual practices.
- Explain how we know that homosexuality is a sinful practice.
- Identify from given Scriptures attitudes that will help provide solutions to sexual problems.

## ***learning activities***

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1. As background for this lesson, read 1 Corinthians 6:12-7:40, and Ephesians 5:22-33.

2. Study the lesson following the study plan given in the learning activities for Lesson 1.
3. You may discover a number of words in this lesson which are new to you. Be sure to look up the meaning of all key words you do not know in the glossary.
4. Take the self-test and check your answers.

***key words***

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abort	heterosexual	procreation
abortion	homosexuality	sexuality
adultery	illegitimate	sublimation
celibacy	infertile	syphilis
degraded	monogamous	venereal disease
fornication	mutuality	
gonorrhea	pregnant	

## lesson development

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# SEXUALITY AND CELIBACY

**Objective 1.** *State the biblical principle concerning sexuality and the celibate life.*

It is common practice today in many parts of the world for unmarried men and women to establish short-term relationships or casual affairs for the purpose of meeting their sexual “needs.” Sex has become so glamorized by the world that young people feel deprived and unfulfilled if they are not sexually involved. The biblical pattern of *celibacy* (unmarried and without sexual involvement) is unpopular and often unheeded.

Is it possible for a person to remain celibate? Certainly it is! We can draw on the same divine resources to avoid temptation in this respect as we do in other areas of our lives. The Scripture we discussed in Lesson 1—1 Corinthians 10:13—can be applied to our sexual desires as well as to other desires. God *will* give you the power to resist temptation to sin, and this includes the sin of sexual involvement outside of marriage.

## Application

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1 According to 1 Corinthians 10:13, how will God help you to overcome the temptation of sexual sin?

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Why does God forbid sexual involvement outside of marriage? There are many reasons, and all of them have to do with His love and concern for you. He wants to protect you from these serious problems that we see all around us today:

1. *Illegitimate children.* Children born outside of marriage do not have the privilege of both a father and mother to care for them and fulfill the duties of parents. Often they are neglected and unloved.

2. *An increase in abortions.* Many unmarried women choose to have their pregnancies aborted surgically, rather than give birth to a child outside of marriage. This often results in feelings of guilt for taking the life of the unborn child, causing intense spiritual turmoil and emotional pain.

3. *An increase in venereal disease.* People who involve themselves sexually in casual relationships take a high risk of contracting a venereal disease such as syphilis or gonorrhea, which can also affect unborn children, cause blindness, and cause other physical or mental problems. There is also the threat of AIDS.

4. *Emotional scars.* God did not plan for the act of sex to be separated from a permanent love relationship. When there is no love commitment between sex partners, the result often is a feeling of rejection, or of being abused and degraded. Feelings of guilt cause mental anguish and self-condemnation.

## ***Application***

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- 2 Guilt feelings are often a warning to us that
- a) there is no hope for us.
  - b) sin does not bother us.
  - c) we should listen to our God-given conscience.
- 

Celibacy is the only alternative to marriage sanctioned (approved) by the Bible. In 1 Corinthians chapter 7, the apostle Paul advises those who are unable to remain celibate to marry. Maintaining celibacy in a single life is likely to be more troublesome for someone who is unwillingly single, and who does a lot of thinking and day-dreaming about sex or about being married. In Lesson 6 we saw that the single person who is committed to Christ is a gift to the church. The best way a single person can cooperate with the Lord in maintaining sexual purity is to guard his thoughts (James 1:14-15). In Lesson 2 we talked about the importance of guarding your thoughts so that you will not be tempted to sin. The Lord can and will help you in this regard if you have made up your mind to keep yourself pure. Live

your life in joy and obedience to the Lord. Trust the future to Him in all aspects. He will help you in every step that you take.

Here is a Scripture which will help you deal with sexual needs from the right perspective:

Everything is permissible for me”—but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible for me”—but I will not be mastered by anything. “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food”—but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.... Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body (1 Corinthians 6:12-13, 19-20).

God *has* provided a way to control sexual desires rather than giving in to them. That way is called *sublimation*—it involves the channeling of sexual tensions into worthy activities. *Sublimation* is defined as “the mental process by which basic sexual drives are unconsciously converted into other socially acceptable endeavors.” Real satisfaction can be found in work, play, social, and religious activities. Sexual energies may be channeled beneficially into art, literature, music, athletics, prayer, devotional study, Christian service, or other meaningful activities that captivate your mind and interest.

Young people should also be encouraged to stay active physically by exercising regularly, engaging in sports, and avoiding lethargy. This will help keep the sexual drive under control and assist the young person refrain from fantasizing and masturbation. Avoiding sexually explicit television programs and movies is also necessary. Though these measures may seem tough, they work and help produce purity.

## ***Application***

**3** Name two ways a person can maintain sexual purity.

.....

.....



It must be pointed out that sexual desire is *not* a sin—it is part of our physical makeup and is a gift of God. But it is to be kept in complete subjection until the time of marriage. The Lord can and will provide a fulfilled, overcoming life for the unmarried person who will seek first His kingdom and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33). If it is God's will for you to remain unmarried, He will enable you to discipline this area of your life so that you can “offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is your spiritual worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:1-2).



### Application

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4 What four problems does the celibate person avoid?

.....

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5 Based on what we have discussed in this section, state the biblical principle concerning sexuality and the celibate life.

.....

.....





The apostle Paul acknowledged that the gift of celibacy was not for everyone, but those who have it can be a special blessing to the kingdom of God as they devote themselves to God's will and serve Him without distraction.

## SEXUALITY AND MARRIAGE

**Objective 2.** *Recognize biblical principles concerning sexuality and marriage.*

Sexual relations are a normal, honorable part of marriage. The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us: "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral" (Hebrews 13:4).

The apostle Paul, recognizing the powerful force of human sexual desire, encouraged those Christians who were experiencing difficulty in controlling this desire to marry, so that they would not be tempted to sin (1 Corinthians 7:9).

What was God's purpose in designing the sexual act as an important part of the marriage relationship?

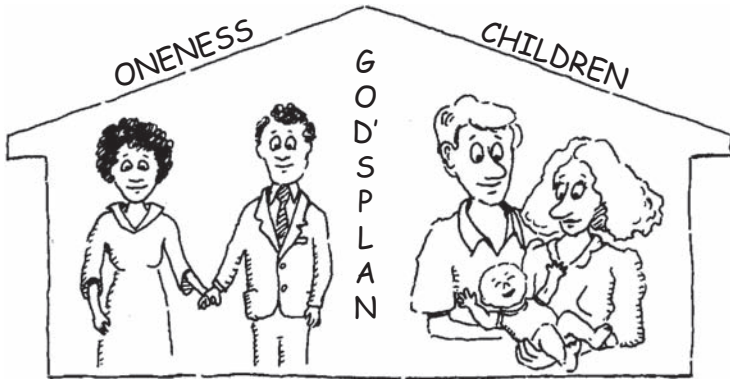
One purpose, of course, is *procreation* (producing children). It was God's plan that the earth be populated with human beings, and so He gave them the desire to have physical union to bring forth children.

For most living creatures, sexual relations take place only during the periods of time when the female can become pregnant. But God created men and women so that they would have sexual desire even during the woman's infertile periods. So the sexual relationship is not limited to the purpose of bringing children into the world. Another purpose of the sexual act is *oneness*. This oneness includes the pleasure experienced in communicating sexual love. God has given the husband and wife the right to enjoy this pleasure regularly.

Oneness is referred to by Jesus in Matthew 19:4-6. The apostle Paul later quoted these words of Jesus when he used this mysterious feature of oneness in the marriage union to picture the spiritual relationship of Jesus Christ to His church:

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:31-32).

The aspect of oneness is used as a strong argument against immorality in 1 Corinthians 6:15. Paul explains that since, in the sexual act, the two partners become one, and since believers' bodies are parts of the body of Christ, and temples of the Holy Spirit, an immoral sexual act is a terrible sin against Christ as well as against the body.



**Application**

6 What purpose of the sexual act is indicated in these Scriptures?

- a Genesis 1:28 .....
- b Genesis 2:24 .....



God's Word gives clear instructions concerning sexual relations within marriage. We will summarize them here:

- 1. *Marriage is a union between one man and one woman.*

This is confirmed in the words of Jesus (Matthew 19:4-6):

“Haven't you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united

to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one."

Thus, sexual relations are permitted only between a man and his wife. This is a lifetime relationship. If either of them enters into a sexual relationship with another person, the one who does so is guilty of the sin of adultery.

2. *Mutuality is the rule for sexual relations within marriage* (1 Corinthians 7:3-4). Both husband and wife are each to consider the needs of the other, with love, mutual respect, and understanding. Paul says very clearly that the wife is not master of her own body, but her husband is. In the same way, a husband is not master of his own body, but his wife is. They are to "submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Ephesians 5:21).

In Ephesians chapter 5 the Holy Spirit again prompts Paul to picture the submission and love between Christ and the church by using the illustration of the intimate marriage relationship.

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord . . . . Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything . . . . Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church . . . . He who loves his wife loves himself . . . . However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband (Ephesians 5:22-25, 28, 33).

This Scripture describes well the idea of *mutuality*. When a wife is submissive to her husband, including the sexual act, her husband is more likely to respond by showing love than he would be if she denies him this right. In the same way, the husband who shows love in all his actions towards his wife is much more likely to have her respond by being submissive to his desires. Each is to meet willingly the needs of the other.

3. *The husband and wife should not refrain from sexual relations except by mutual agreement*. Such an agreement should be for a short period of time only, and for the purpose of prayer (1 Corinthians 7:5).

There may be other valid reasons for a period of no sexual activity, such as a need for travel to conduct business, serious

illness. However, refraining from sexual relations within marriage is not to be done without good reason and by mutual consent.

### ***Application***

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7 What warning did Paul give in this regard (1 Corinthians 7:5)?

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4. *Sexual relations safeguard the marriage.* I wonder how many times one partner in marriage has committed adultery because the other partner failed to respond to his or her sexual needs. Normal sexual relations within marriage should keep the married person from giving in to Satan's temptation to look elsewhere for satisfaction because of a lack of self control, or because of bitterness.

The physical union between a husband and wife who love and respect each other provides a basis for a strong marriage and a strong family unit. The love and affection of parents for each other will be felt by their children, who will respond with love and affection.

### ***Application***

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- 8 Which of the following statements agree with biblical principles concerning sexuality and marriage?
- a The only real purpose for sexual relations is procreation.
  - b Marriage is a lifetime relationship between one man and one woman.
  - c Married couples should refrain from sexual relations only by mutual agreement for a short period of time.
  - d Submission and love are important elements of mutuality in a marriage.
  - e The sexual act provides oneness in marriage, as the two become one flesh.
  - f A husband and wife can protect their marriage by meeting the sexual needs of each other.
  - g If a husband doesn't show love to his wife, she is not required to be submissive.
- 



## DISAPPROVED SEXUAL PRACTICES

**Objective 3.** Give reasons why a Christian should refrain from biblically disapproved sexual practices.

God hates immorality. He has given clear instructions in His Word concerning what is, and is not, permissible. During Old Testament times, sexual immorality among the Israelites was punishable by death to those involved.

### Application

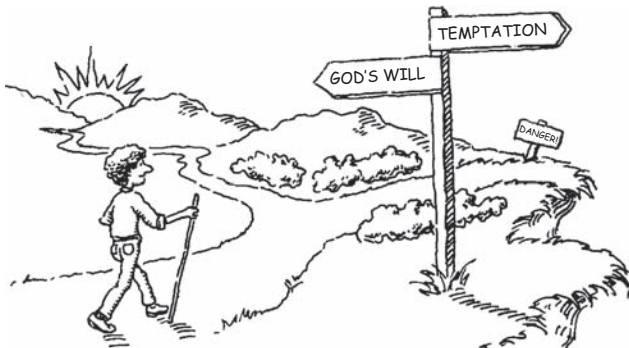
9 Read Leviticus 20:10-21 and 1 Corinthians 6:12-7:40. These Scriptures clearly indicate that sexual relations are approved by God only between

- a) close friends.
- b) family members.
- c) husband and wife.

---

Leviticus 20 also makes it clear that husband and wife are not to be close blood relatives. Sexual relations between close blood relatives is called *incest* and is strictly forbidden by Scripture. It is also strictly forbidden by most societies of people worldwide.

There are three disapproved practices which are serious problem areas in today's world, and which we wish to discuss briefly in this lesson. They are *adultery*, *fornication*, and *homosexuality*. Christians need to be aware of the danger of temptation in these areas in order to guard themselves or to help others who may be involved in such sexual immorality.



## Adultery

Adultery is sexual relations between a married person and someone to whom he (or she) is not married. It can be between a married man and a married woman who is not his wife, or between a married person and an unmarried person. It is also called *extramarital sex*.

One of the ten commandments is this: “You shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14). This Scripture is repeated and the commandment is emphasized many times in the Bible. (See Matthew 5:27-28; Matthew 19:9; Romans 13:9; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

### Application

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**10** Read Proverbs 6:32. What does it say about the person who commits adultery?

.....

**11** What reason is given in 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 for avoiding sexual immorality, including adultery?

.....



The words of Jesus in Matthew 5:27-28 are a warning to each of us to guard our thoughts carefully and avoid circumstances which might lead us into temptation in this area of our lives. He said: “But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Many acts of adultery are the result of careless words or behavior that may have seemed quite innocent to begin with, but which developed to the point where temptation occurred. The Bible tells us to *run*, to quickly get away from such temptation (1 Corinthians 6:18). Daily spiritual preparation will help you to conduct yourself in a Christlike way in all your relationships with members of the opposite sex. (We discussed spiritual preparation in Lesson 3.)

I know of a man who was a strong spiritual leader in his church. He became sympathetic to a widow with two small children, and often took food to her or made repairs when they

were needed in her home. This led to close acquaintance, and the relationship developed slowly until eventually they were overcome by temptation. The man's testimony was ruined, both he and the woman were shamed in the eyes of their families and friends, and there was much pain experienced by all those involved. Even though they repented, and stopped seeing each other, much damage had been done in their lives and in the lives of others. What started perhaps as a spiritual ministry ended in disaster.

### ***Application***

**12** Look at questions 10 and 11 again. Relate these to the situation described in the preceding paragraph.

.....

.....



### **Fornication**

Fornication, which involves sexual relations other than between a man and his wife, also refers to sexual relations between unmarried people. We discussed this earlier in the lesson when we talked about celibacy. Sexual relations between unmarried people are referred to as *premarital sex*.

### ***Application***

**13** What four reasons did we give for refraining from fornication (or remaining celibate)?

.....

.....

**14** Read 1 Corinthians 7:2, 8-9. What should unmarried people do if they are tempted to engage in sexual relations?

.....

.....



The apostle Paul concludes chapter 6 of 1 Corinthians with these words: "You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body." A sinful body does not bring honor and glory to God. You honor Him by keeping yourself pure, free from sexual sin. You honor Christ, who paid the penalty for your salvation with His own body through suffering and death.

### Application

15 What is the most important reason for keeping yourself pure?

.....  
.....



### Homosexuality

**Objective 4.** *Explain how we know that homosexuality is a sinful practice.*

In some parts of the world, homosexuality (sexual relations between two people of the same sex) is openly advertised as an "alternative" lifestyle. However, the Bible clearly declares homosexuality to be sin.

1. *It is sin because it is contrary to principles of sexuality that God established.* Human sexuality was planned at Creation to be monogamous and heterosexual (one man with one woman). When people choose to be homosexuals, they reject God's principles of sexuality. Romans 1:18-32 explains how this comes about: they do shameful things, they exchange the truth about God for a lie, and so God gives them over to shameful passions. Romans 1:28 says, "Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done."

2. *It is sin because the Bible refers to it as evil.* "Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders . . . will inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). (See also Leviticus 18:22-23; Romans 1:21-27.)



3. *It is sin which comes under divine judgment.* “God’s anger is revealed from heaven against all the sin and evil of the people whose evil ways prevent the truth from being known” (Romans 1:18 TEV) (See also Genesis 19:4-11; 24-23.) Genesis 19 describes God’s severe judgment on the city of Sodom where the sin of homosexuality was widespread. (See also 2 Peter 2:6 and Jude 7.)

This is not a hopeless situation. The sin of homosexuality can be cleansed and forgiven. In the church at Corinth were former homosexuals who had been delivered from the bondage of this sin by the blood of Jesus Christ. In 1 Corinthians 6:9, Paul lists homosexuals among those who cannot inherit or possess God’s kingdom. But later in verse 11 he wrote: “And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

### ***Application***

**16** Complete this sentence: We know that homosexuality is a sinful practice because .....

.....

**17** How would you respond to someone who said to you, “I am a homosexual because God made me that way. I cannot change”?

.....

.....



## **DEALING WITH SEXUAL PROBLEMS**

**Objective 5.** *Identify from given Scriptures attitudes that will help provide solutions to sexual problems.*

It would be impossible in this short space to discuss every type of sexual problem and ways of dealing with each one. Some sexual problems are of a physical nature which may require the help of a physician. Most others would basically be a sin problem, and the solution for those would be *repentance* and *a renewed life*.

## God Forgives

In dealing with someone who has been involved in sexual sin, there is an important message to share with them: God forgives.

### **Application**

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**18** Read John 8:3-11 and answer these questions.

**a** Why was the woman brought to Jesus? .....

**b** What did the crowd want to do with her?  
.....

**c** What was the attitude of Jesus? .....

**d** What did He say to the woman?  
.....

**19** Now read Luke 7:36-50. How did Jesus respond to the woman's repentant spirit and faith?



No matter how people may judge you, nor how terrible the results of your sin, there is always forgiveness in Christ. He will not only forgive your sin, but He will help you to have a renewed life!

## A Renewed Mind

Those who have committed sexual sin can be assured that not only has God forgiven them when they confessed their sin, but also they are given a renewed mind as they yield themselves to God's will. They are no longer under the condemnation of their sin, because they have been set free from sin. This is what the Bible says about it:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin death . . . . Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires . . . the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace (Romans 8:1-2, 5-6).

Problems concerning the sexual aspects of life can be especially sensitive and troublesome. But God is sufficient for every problem if we are obedient to His Word. For this reason, knowing the Bible principles which apply is of great importance. We have given you these principles in this lesson. Put them into practice in your own life, so that you may “. . . be transformed by the renewing of your mind” for the instructions He has given so that you will be able to avoid temptation and honor God as the temple of His Holy Spirit.

***Application***

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**20** According to Romans 8:5-6, what is necessary in order to have a renewed mind which brings life and peace?

.....



## **self-test**

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**MULTIPLE CHOICE.** There is one best answer to every question. Circle the letter preceding your choice.

- 1 The most important reason for keeping yourself pure is to
  - a) avoid sexual problems.
  - b) honor God with your body.
  - c) have people's approval.
  - d) find a pure partner.
- 2 A celibate is a person who
  - a) has sexual relations outside of marriage.
  - b) is unmarried and without sexual involvement.
  - c) uses sex only for procreation.
  - d) is unable to practice self-control.
- 3 Sexual relations within marriage are for the purpose of
  - a) procreation.
  - b) oneness.
  - c) both procreation and oneness.
  - d) subjection.
- 4 Which of these has been compared to Christ and the church?
  - a) Relationship of parents and children.
  - b) Celibates and Christian service.
  - c) Procreation.
  - d) The marriage relationship.
- 5 In dealing with someone who has been involved in sexual immorality it is important to
  - a) make him feel guilty.
  - b) make excuses for his sin.
  - c) help him to understand that God forgives a repentant sinner.
  - d) let him know how wrong he has been.
- 6 Which of these does NOT result from sexual immorality?
  - a) Emotional scars and suffering.
  - b) A pure life.
  - c) Illegitimate children.
  - d) Venereal diseases.
- 7 Which of these questions should you ask yourself when tempted to do something which is not clearly discussed in the Bible?
  - a) Will it honor God?
  - b) Will it give me pleasure?
  - c) What can I gain from it?
  - d) Is it permissible for me?

8 Sexual desire is

- a) sinful.
- b) something we can't control.
- c) shameful.
- d) a gift of God.

9 The rule for sexual relations within marriage is

- a) mutuality.
- b) celibacy.
- c) procreation.

10 SHORT ANSWER State three reasons why we know homosexuality is a sin.

- a) .....
- b) .....
- c) .....

11 Refer to Scripture texts in this lesson and in Lesson 2 and give two Scriptures which you might use to help persons who make the following statements to know what the Bible has to say about their problem.

a "We can't afford to get married yet, but we love each other, so that makes sexual relations okay."

.....

b "Why should I try to satisfy my husband—he never tells me he loves me or shows me any love."

.....

c "I'm pregnant and my boyfriend won't marry me. I want to have an abortion."

.....

d "I think I can be a homosexual and also be a Christian."

.....

e "I have had such a sinful life I can't be a Christian. God would never accept me."

.....

## **answers to study questions**

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- 11** The person who does so is sinning against his own body, which belongs to God, and therefore He sins against God.
- 1** He will provide a way of escape, so that you can bear the temptation without yielding to it.
- 12** The Scriptures given in questions **10** and **11** describe what happened to the man and woman in the situation.
- 2 c)** we should listen to our God-given conscience.
- 13** To avoid the possibility of illegitimate children, abortions, venereal disease, and emotional scars. (Also, it is a sin subject to divine judgment.)
- 3** By guarding his thoughts; by sublimation.
- 14** They should practice self-control, or they should marry.
- 4** He (or she) avoids the possibility of having illegitimate children, causing abortions, getting venereal diseases, or suffering emotional scars.
- 15** To honor God.
- 5** Your own words should include these concepts: Celibacy is the only biblical alternative to marriage. The single Christian is expected to be celibate. His (or her) body belongs to God and is a temple of the Holy Spirit. His sexual desires must be kept in subjection at all time.
- 16** it does not agree with God's principles of sexuality, the Bible calls it evil, and it comes under divine judgment
- 6 a** Oneness.  
**b** Procreation.
- 17** Your answer. I would show him what the Bible says about this practice and how he *can* be changed by being washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God.
- 7** So that you will not lose control and be tempted to sin.
- 18 a** She was caught in the act of adultery.  
**b** Stone her to death, according to the Law.  
**c** Forgiveness.  
**d** "Neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin."

- 8 a** Does not agree.
  - b** Agrees.
  - c** Agrees.
  - d** Agrees.
  - e** Agrees.
  - f** Agrees.
  - g** Does not agree.
- 19** He forgave all her sins.
- 9 c)** husband and wife.
- 20** We must live in accordance with the Holy Spirit.
- 10** He lacks judgment, destroys himself, brings blows, disgrace, and shame upon himself.

***For Your Notes***

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# LESSON 8 Overcoming Depression

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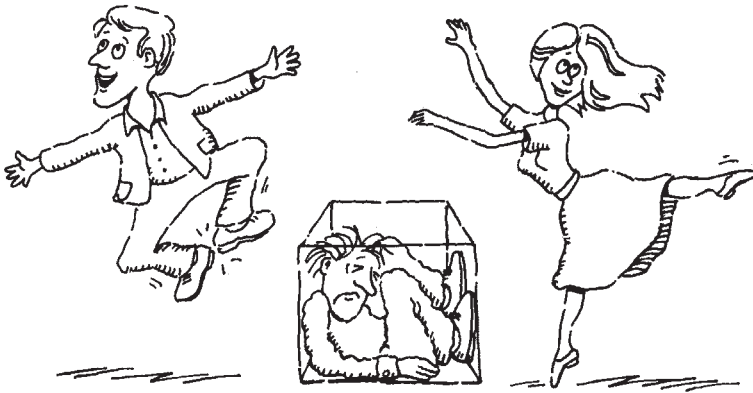
*My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, "Where is your God?" . . . . Why are you downcast O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? . . . . I say to God my Rock, "Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?" My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, "Where is your God?"*

—from Psalm 42

Would you expect these to be the words of a man who also composed many jubilant songs of praise and thanksgiving to God for His mercy and grace? Is it possible that this same man could cry out to God, "Why have you forgotten me?"

This heart's cry of the psalmist David reveals to us that it is possible for one who loves and trusts God to experience times of great depression when God seems far away and silent. The important point is that David *did* cry out to God for help. He did not simply allow himself to wallow in self-pity and misery. At the conclusion of this Psalm he speaks to himself again: "Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God" (Psalm 42:11).

In this lesson we will identify causes of depression, and discover what resources are available to help the Christian prevent or overcome times of depression. We will also look at ways to help others who are experiencing depression. We can put our hope in God and know that He has *not* forgotten us!



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### ***lesson outline***

Defining Depression  
Discovering Causes and Cures  
Preventing Depression  
Helping Others

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### ***lesson objectives***

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Identify true statements regarding the definition of depression.
- Name three ways that depression can be related to illness.
- Choose a principle that will help Christians to overcome depression resulting from stress.
- Explain the attitude a Christian should develop in regard to fearful events in life that cause one to despair.
- Identify examples of guilt related to sin, and assumed guilt or guilt caused by regret, and solutions for each of these.
- Apply Matthew 5:10-11 as a solution for bitterness or resentment.
- Select true statements concerning ways to prevent depression.
- Recognize activities which can provide positive help to others who are suffering depression.

### ***learning activities***

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1. Work through the lesson development in the usual manner. Be sure to read all Scripture texts given, and answer all study questions.
2. Study the glossary definitions of any key words you do not know.
3. Take the self-test and check your answers.

### ***keywords***

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accumulation	stress
condemnation	terminal
dejection	therapy
depressive	tranquillity
impulsive	vitality
resentment	vulnerable

## *lesson development*

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### DEFINING DEPRESSION

**Objective 1.** *Identify true statements regarding the definition of depression.*

What is depression? One medical doctor describes it like this: “The whole world looks shadowed in gloom. What is worse—you’ll come to believe that things *really are* as bad as you imagine them to be!” He believes it is negative thoughts which bring about depression.

Webster’s Dictionary gives these definitions, among others, for depression: *a state of feeling sad; dejection; a psychotic disorder marked by sadness, inactivity, difficulty in thinking and concentration, and feelings of dejection; a reduction in activity, amount, quality, or force; a lowering of vitality or functional activity.*

Many of us go through occasional times of depression. Life suddenly seems to have no joy; our problems overwhelm us, and we sink into extreme self-pity, misery, and despair.

Here is how one person describes the depression that she experienced some time after her husband’s untimely death:

“When my husband died, I was surrounded by family and caring friends, and I felt the presence of God very close to me. He gave me strength throughout my husband’s long illness and the days following his death. Many people remarked what a testimony I was of the peace and tranquillity that Jesus gives to those who mourn. He *did* comfort me, and keep me, and lead me.”

“As the days passed, I became involved in a very exciting and fulfilling ministry. Even though I was separated from my family and dearest friends, my life was reasonably happy and I kept very busy. Nearly a year passed. There were changes in personnel where I worked, and some of them affected my work in a threatening way. I became very sensitive to any form of criticism, and resentful when I did not receive praise which I felt I had earned. My time away

from my work was often spent alone, and I began to feel lonely and abandoned by those I loved most.

“At this very time, a person that I greatly admired and whose approval I desired caused me great hurt. My reaction was to withdraw from everything that could possibly add to that hurt. This was the start of my depression. For the first time, I experienced overwhelming grief over the death of my husband. I felt unloved, unworthy, and unimportant. There seemed to be nothing worth living for. I did not want to read the Bible, pray, or receive any advice from Christian friends. I just wanted to be left alone to enjoy my misery and indulge in self-pity.”

If you have ever experienced depression, perhaps you can identify with some of the feelings described by this woman. Here is a list of some common symptoms of one who is depressed:

1. Trouble sleeping and fatigue
2. Difficulty concentrating
3. Loss of interest in things one ordinarily enjoys, ..... including sex
4. Preference of being alone
5. Difficulty making decisions
6. Has a negative attitude about oneself and others
7. Other illness brought on by depression (such as ulcers)
8. Impaired decision-making ability (often impulsive and .... faulty such as a decision to commit suicide)
9. Intense sadness and despair
10. Greatly decreased activity

Certainly, things happen in our lives from time to time which cause us to feel sad, fearful, or uncertain. All of us have good and bad days—days when we feel wonderful and everything seems to be perfect in our lives, and other days when everything seems to go wrong. These could be called *mood swings*. Normally these moods do not last long. We recover quickly from the bad days with no negative results. Depression, on the other hand, is a state of mind which may come upon us slowly and which persists for an extended period of time.

We need to be able to identify the causes of depression and discover ways that it can be overcome or prevented. In the next section of this lesson we will discuss some of the major *causes* of depression and how to combat them.

## Application

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- 1 Which of these statements are TRUE definitions of depression? Circle the letter preceding each choice you make.
  - a Depression is marked by a lack of energy and a reduction of activity.
  - b Any feeling of sadness or loneliness is depression.
  - c Sometimes it is a combination of events which brings on depression.
  - d A depressed person usually has a high opinion of himself.
  - e Withdrawal is often a symptom of depression.
  - f The depressed person enjoys being with happy people.
  - g A depressed person has a tendency to make quick and poor decisions.
  
- 2 How can the length of time that symptoms persist indicate that a person is suffering from depression?

.....

.....



## DISCOVERING CAUSES AND CURES

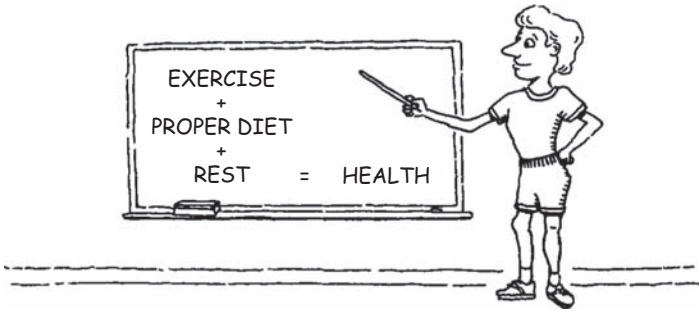
Many things can, of course, contribute to depression. In previous lessons we have already discussed numerous problems such as financial difficulties, problems with children, loneliness, and broken relationships which can lead to depression. Depression is not usually caused by one problem alone, but by an accumulation of setbacks which together finally become more than a person can bear.

In this part of the lesson we shall consider some general problem areas that may lead to depression, and how the Christian can find victory over problems such as these.

## Illness

**Objective 2.** *Name three ways that depression can be related to illness.*

One psychologist has said, “Whenever a patient comes to me in a depressive state, I first send him to a medical doctor for a physical exam.” Depression can be a symptom of a physical illness which needs attention, or it can develop as a *result* of trying to cope with a serious illness. It is one of the stages a person goes through when he learns that he has a terminal illness. We will discuss this more in our next lesson.



Sometimes we allow our bodies to become fatigued by overwork to the point that we become ill and depressed. Even those who are involved in Christian ministries can experience depression as a result of over commitment and fatigue. I have seen pastors or their wives who have almost reached the breaking point after an extended period of trying to fulfill several areas of ministry which required that they work night and day. In Mark 6:30-31 we read that when the disciples were deeply involved in conditions such as these, Jesus prescribed the therapy of *rest*:

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

Our bodies need proper exercise, proper diet, and adequate rest in order to function properly. It is no wonder that when we neglect any of these things there is a reaction, we lose our vitality, and we want to give up.



The Word of God is a spiritual resource in times of illness to help us combat depression: “Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave” (Psalm 107:19-20).

The Bible is filled with testimonies of healings through the power of God’s Word. These testimonies encourage us to call upon the Lord in our times of distress, to allow His Word to minister to our need, and trust Him to provide healing.

### ***Application***

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**3** Name three ways that depression can be related to illness.

.....

.....

**4** What should be the first step in overcoming depression in each of these cases?

.....

.....



## **Stress**

**Objective 3.** *Choose a principle that will help the Christian to overcome depression resulting from stress.*

Stress is defined as “a physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension and may be a factor in disease causation” (causing illness). This is what happens when one problem builds upon another until the person is under such pressure that there is a physical, chemical, or emotional reaction. Often the reaction is depression.

One psychologist developed a scale to rate the degree of impact upon a person of various events in his life. Here are a few of the events listed on the scale and their impact level as determined by him:

<b>Event</b>	<b>Scale of Impact</b>
Death of spouse	100
Divorce	73
Death of close family member	63
Personal injury or illness	53
Marriage	50
Loss of job	47
Change to different line of work	36
Change in responsibilities of work	29
Son or daughter leaving home	29
Outstanding personal achievement	28
Change in residence	20
Change in church activities	19
Vacation	12
Christmas	12

This psychologist concluded from his research that if a person experienced more than 300 points in life-changing events over a period of two years, he ran the risk of developing a major illness (Greene, *Introduction to Psychology*, 1976, p. 146).

Grief is high on the list of stress factors; suffering and the death of a loved one are major causes of grief. These are stresses which most of us encounter during our lifetime. How we react to them depends greatly upon our spiritual preparation. (See Lesson 3.)

After a loss, a period of grief is a normal process. But I do not believe it is inevitable for a person who experiences great stress to suffer illness or depression as a result. We can receive strength and comfort from the Holy Spirit. Consider these verses:

Nehemiah 8:10: "Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

John 16:22: "Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy."

## Application

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- 5 Choose the best answer. These verses tell us that
- it is wrong for Christians to grieve when they have suffered a loss.
  - there is a time for grief, but the Lord is able to replace our grief with His joy.
  - it is impossible to grieve and know the joy of the Lord at the same time.
- 

If you begin to see signs of stress in your life, do what you can to ease the stressful situation. If there is nothing you can do to lighten your load, increase your time in the Word—wait upon the Lord and allow Him to bear your burden. Jesus' words to His disciples are words of hope for you today:

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me . . . . Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid (John 14:1, 27).

From the world we can expect stress, pain, suffering—but Jesus has provided the cure for all of these: His peace and joy. We have only to ask for it.

## Application

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- 6 Which of these principles will best help the Christian to overcome depression resulting from stress? Choose the best answer.
- The Christian should ask God to help him avoid life-changing events which cause stress.
  - The Christian should learn to control his emotions so that life-changing events will not create tensions in his life.
  - As stress increases, there should be a corresponding increase in spiritual preparedness: more time for God's Word to speak, and more time in prayer.
  - A Christian who is truly committed to God will not experience stress no matter what events take place in his life.
-

## Fear and Despair

**Objective 4.** *Explain the attitude a Christian should develop in regard to fearful events in life that cause one to despair.*

We are living in an age of fear and despair. Terrorism and political unrest threaten stability. Cancer is a dreaded disease which seems to affect every family. Crime is epidemic, and innocent victims suffer the consequences. In many parts of the world, people are afraid to be on the streets at night. We fear that we will lose our jobs; we fear getting old; we fear pain; we fear that something will happen to our loved ones.

It is when we become obsessed by fear that depression can overtake us. Such fear causes despair: there is no point trying to go on with life, or trying to be happy, because life is hopeless. There seems to be no way out of our miserable circumstances—nothing good can possibly happen to us. It is at this point that the despairing person may even think of suicide as the way out of his fearful condition.

### ***Application***

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7 What is wrong with this line of reasoning?

.....

---



The cure for fear is love. If we love God, we will have confidence in Him to lift us out of our fear. In 1 John 4:16-18 we are told:

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. Love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The man who fears is not made perfect in love.

Whenever your heart is filled with fear, ask God to take away the fear and replace it with His everlasting love. And be encouraged by these words of Jesus to His disciples: “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

## Application

**8** What attitude should a Christian develop regarding fearful events in life that could cause him to despair?

.....

.....

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## Guilt and Regret

**Objective 5.** *Identify examples of guilt related to sin, and assumed guilt or guilt caused by regret, and solutions for each of these.*

Often grief is accompanied by feelings of guilt or regret, because of things we have done, or things we should have done. I have met parents who were grieving over a child who had left home and gotten involved in a life of sin. They heaped blame upon themselves for failing the child in one way or another. A father who permitted his son to purchase a motorcycle was overcome by grief and guilt when an automobile struck and killed his son while he was riding his motorcycle. “If only I had said *no!*” the father cried over and over again. Still others feel terrible guilt because of ugly things they have said or done to harm someone.

There are two kinds of guilt involved here: real guilt as a result of some sinful action, and assumed guilt for something over which we have no control. Real guilt is a wholesome guilt which is rooted in relationships—to God, to others, and to ourselves. It is accompanied by a strong desire to confess, and it always responds to forgiveness. Assumed (or *neurotic*) guilt is usually related to rules and regulations. It, too, is accompanied by a strong desire to confess, but seldom responds to forgiveness. Both forms of guilt feel the same, but they are rooted in different problems and they respond differently to forgiveness. Both kinds of guilt can cause depression, but the cure is different for each one.

*Guilt related to sin.* The Christian does not need to live in self-condemnation for sins committed. When our conscience condemns us, we have an advocate who intercedes with us before our Father in heaven (1 John 2:1-2). “If we confess our

sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins, and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

There is no need to bear the burden of sin. Repent, confess your sin to God (and if possible, to the one against whom you have sinned, if someone else is involved), and receive His forgiveness. Then accept the fact that it is finished, it is behind you, and forget about it.

*Assumed guilt.* I heard about a young mother who had taken her small child for a walk. She met a neighbor, and they stood on the sidewalk talking while the child played nearby. Suddenly the child darted into the street and was struck by an automobile and instantly killed. The young mother, overcome with grief, was burdened down by guilt that she had allowed such a thing to happen. As the days went by, she became more and more withdrawn and depressed. She could not handle the personal blame that she felt for this accident.

Certainly many things happen in life which we deeply regret. We look back and see things we would have done differently if we could change them. Widowed persons often have regrets and think of many ways they might have made their spouse happier. Parents are often filled with guilt and regret because they feel they could have done a better job of training their children.

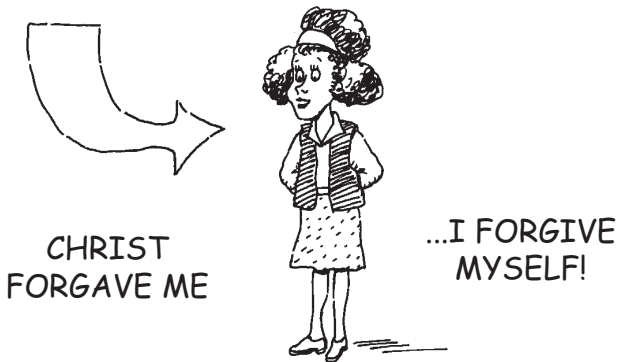
These are all wasted efforts, because we cannot change the past—we can only learn from it and try to avoid the same mistakes in the future. And if events take place in our lives that are beyond our control, we should recognize that we are not guilty of wrongdoing, and that our lives are committed into God’s care. If He in His mercy and grace will forgive even the most awful of our sins, should we not accept His forgiveness also for all of those painful circumstances which have filled us with regret and self-condemnation?

The psalmist David knew that he could turn to the Lord no matter what mistakes he had made, and receive cleansing. Here are his words in Psalm 130:1-4, 7:

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. If

you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness . . . O Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption.

No matter what has happened in your life, there is *full redemption* with the Lord. If He is so gracious and willing to forgive, can you not also forgive yourself? Put behind you all your regrets and unnecessary guilt. Use them as opportunities to make known to others the wonderful release to be found in casting your failures upon the Lord, and receiving His love and grace.



## Application

**9** In this exercise, match the examples and solutions in the left column with the type of guilt each describes (right column). Place the number representing your choice in each blank space.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ..... <b>a</b> A young man who was away from home on a journey when his mother unexpectedly died. | 1) Guilt caused by sin.                     |
| ..... <b>b</b> Repent, confess, and receive forgiveness.  | 2) Assumed guilt or guilt caused by regret. |
| ..... <b>c</b> An unmarried woman who had an abortion.  |   |
| ..... <b>d</b> A mother who gave birth to a deformed child.                                       |   |
| ..... <b>e</b> Forgive yourself.  |   |

## Bitterness and Resentment

**Objective 6.** *Apply Matthew 5:10-11 as a solution for bitterness or resentment.*

Nothing can rob a Christian of spiritual victory more than a spirit of bitterness or resentment against someone who has wronged him. Bitterness is like a worm that eats into every aspect of your life so that all of your actions are motivated by the festering hatred that you have for the one who has offended you. Bitterness and resentment are two dimensions of anger.

Recently I read about a fine Christian man whose life over the years was filled with hard trials. A son died in infancy; some time later his home burned to the ground and he lost all his possessions; still later his wife died after a long and painful illness which required expensive medical treatment. The fruits of the Spirit were evident in his life through every trial. For many years he taught the adult Sunday school class in his church, and lives were touched by his gentle spirit and devout faith.

One day a deacon who sat in his class decided that the man's teaching ministry had lost its effectiveness. He began to suggest to others that their teacher was not as capable as he used to be, and that they should have a new teacher. When word got back to the teacher that members of the class were not satisfied with his teaching, he was deeply hurt. Out of this grew a spirit of bitterness and resentment against the man who had criticized him. He had been able to endure all of his trials up to this point, but when he was personally attacked, he could not take it. He withdrew from all his involvement in the church, and was overcome with extreme depression. He allowed his bitterness to dominate his thoughts until he became obsessed by it. Once a blessing to the church, he now was a reproach.

In Lesson 4 we talked about injustices and how the Christian should react to them. If this man had been able to apply Matthew 5:10-12 to his problem, he could have avoided the bitterness and depression that resulted. Ephesians 4:31 tells us to "get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice." In Hebrews 12:15, we read these words:



“See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.”

### **Application**

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**10** Choose the correct response. Not only can bitterness and resentment lead to depression and rob us of spiritual victory, but, as these Scriptures indicate, they are also

- a) attitudes which cause trouble and bring harm to many people.
  - b) something that we must expect from time to time, because people will do things to hurt us.
  - c) the fault of the person who causes the bitter feelings to develop.
- 

The only solution for a bitter or resentful spirit against someone is forgiveness. Jesus told His disciples, “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matthew 6:14-15). In another place He told them: “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you” (Luke 6:27). If you will follow this instruction, and pray for the one who has wronged you, it will be impossible for you at the same time to hold in your heart bitter feelings against that person. The Lord will give you real love for such a one as you pray for him.

Bitterness can also be turned upward, against God. This some times develops as a result of blaming Him for our troubles, instead of discovering what the real source is. It is no wonder that the person who harbors bitterness in his heart is easily overcome by depression. Bitterness not only affects us physically, but it also drains us spiritually. The greatest harm is done to the person who allows bitterness to overtake him—the person responsible for the condition which led to bitterness may be entirely unaware of the damage he has done.

## **Application**

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**11** Read Matthew 5:10-12. Apply it to the problem of bitterness and resentment, and explain the influence it can have upon this problem.

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## **PREVENTING DEPRESSION**

**Objective 7.** *Select true statements concerning ways to prevent depression.*

Is there any way to prevent depression? Can we see it coming and take steps to avoid it? I believe there are ways a Christian can be prepared to combat depression and recognize symptoms of depression before it overtakes him.

Here are some principles that we should keep in mind when thinking of ways to prevent depression:

1. We should not allow any unconfessed sin to remain in our lives. Sin will bring depression and grief. The only way to get rid of the depression is to get rid of the sin.

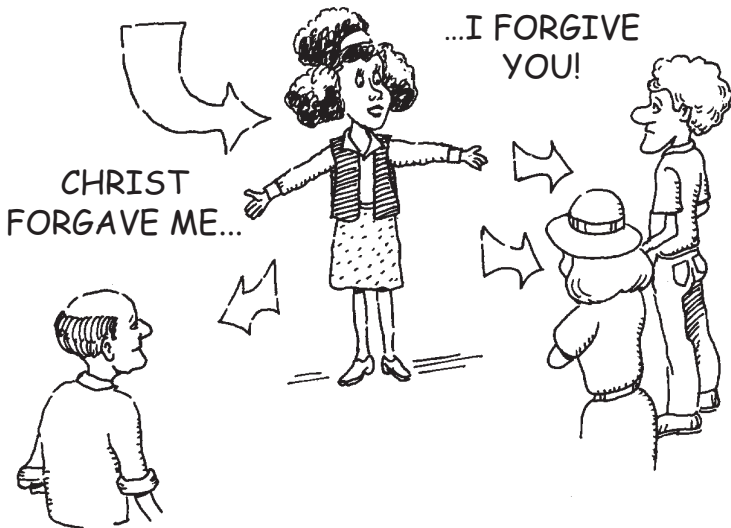
2. Not all depression is sin. Christ knew anguish when He wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41). When He went into the garden of Gethsemane, the Bible tells us, “He took Peter, James, and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. ‘My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,’ he said to them” (Mark 14:33-34). Job did not sin against God, but he knew great depression (Job chapter 3). If grief is turned inward, it will cause depression. But as we look to God in times of sorrow, He will replace our grief with His joy.

3. We are physical as well as spiritual beings. Overcommitment and fatigue, improper rest, diet, and exercise all can lead to depression. Neglect of our spiritual life, such as neglecting worship, Bible reading, meditation, and prayer, will weaken us and make us vulnerable to the attacks of Satan.

4. Whenever we have a problem, we should identify the cause and seek the appropriate solution as quickly as possible. When unsolved problems begin to pile up, we are easily overcome.

5. There is therapy in reaching out to others who have needs. Instead of looking inward, and dwelling upon your own stresses or pain, look outward. The trial you are enduring will give you a special sensitivity to others who are hurting, and you can be an expression of Christ's love in their lives. Your own depression will be replaced with joy in serving the Lord and helping others. That is why it is so important to be active in a Christian community—a church where believers show concern and minister to each other.

6. A person who practices forgiveness will know freedom from the stress of bitterness and resentment. He has truly learned what love is, and what it is not (1 Corinthians 13).



God's promise in 1 Corinthians 10:13 has helped me many times to draw upon His strength to see me through times of difficulty, and He has never failed me.

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond

what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

### **Application**


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12 What principle can we draw from this Scripture for the prevention of depression?

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Sometimes Christian counsel is essential to help a person prevent or overcome depression. If you are unable to find release in any of the ways we have suggested here, do not hesitate to seek the help of someone trained to provide this kind of help.

### **Application**

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13 Which of these statements are TRUE concerning depression? Circle the letter preceding each choice you make.

- a Forgiveness provides release from guilt and from bitterness.
- b Unsolved problems create a condition where depression can easily occur.
- c Spiritual neglect is more likely to lead to depression than physical neglect.
- d Depression is usually related to sin.
- e We are more likely to overcome depression if we look upward to God than if we look inward to ourselves.
- f Jesus showed us how to combat depression by his example in the garden of Gethsemane.
- g Our own suffering sometimes helps us to minister better to others who are suffering.

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## **HELPING OTHERS**

**Objective 8.** *Recognize activities which can provide positive help to others who are suffering depression.*

When Job suffered his great trials (Job 1 and 2) the Bible tells us that his three friends “set out from their homes and

met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was” (Job 2:11-13).

If you go on to read the book of Job, you will discover that Job’s friends did not stop with their silent participation in his suffering. Rather, they added to his distress by heaping blame upon him and accusing him of sinning against God.

The best way to help someone who is experiencing great depression is by a loving, caring attitude, by simply *being* there to show your support and concern. A suffering person does not need someone who will add to his sorrow, as Job’s friends did. He *does* need a friend who will not be judgmental, but who will help him find the cause for his depression, when *he* is ready to face it, and support him as he applies the steps necessary to overcome his depressive condition.

We have described depression as a loss of joy, a loss of vitality, a feeling of dejection and a time of inactivity. Often the depressed person lacks the strength or the will to make an effort to overcome his condition. A person who will say to him, “I know you are hurting—I want you to know that I care; is there anything I can do to help you?” and who will then be prepared to pray, to weep, to comfort, to show love, such a person may be God’s instrument to lift a soul from the depths of despair to blessed victory through Christ.

The helper’s role is one of encouragement and the giving of hope. If there is unconfessed sin, allow the Holy Spirit to speak and lead to repentance. There is deliverance in Christ. And let us remind each other, whenever life’s burdens seem more than we can bear, of these words of the apostle Paul:

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.... Therefore, we do not lose heart.

Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all (2 Corinthians 4:8-9, 16-17).

### **Application**

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**14** Which of the following attitudes or activities would provide positive help to someone who is suffering depression? Circle the letter preceding your choices.

- a** Show concern.
- b** Be loving.
- c** Be judgmental.
- d** Suggest reasons why he is depressed.
- e** Listen.
- f** Be there.
- g** Be willing to share sorrow.
- h** Leave him alone.
- i** Support him.
- j** Offer help.
- k** Give comfort and hope.
- l** Encourage him.



**self-test**

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TRUE-FALSE. Write T in the blank space if the statement is TRUE. Write F if the statement is FALSE.

- ..... 1 Depression involves negative thoughts, feelings, and reactions.
- ..... 2 Depression is any feeling of sadness or discouragement a person may experience.
- ..... 3 A depressed person usually makes decisions easily.
- ..... 4 Three symptoms of depression are inability to sleep, lack of interest in things usually enjoyed, and great sadness.
- ..... 5 Depression can be both a symptom of illness and a result of illness.
- ..... 6 There is a relationship between the amount of stress that builds up in a person and the possibility that he will suffer a serious illness or depression.
- ..... 7 Depression sometimes occurs because people blame themselves for events over which they had no control.
- ..... 8 A good self-image often accompanies depression.
- ..... 9 From the words of Jesus in John 14:1 we have assurance that a troubled heart can be cured by trust in God.
- ..... 10 The best way to reduce stress is to keep yourself spiritually prepared to face life's problems.
- ..... 11 The cure for fear is courage.
- ..... 12 Whenever we have guilty feelings, we know we have done something wrong.
- ..... 13 A person can be free from the guilt that accompanies regret for past actions when he accepts Christ's forgiveness and then forgives himself.
- ..... 14 The person who is most injured by feelings of resentment or bitterness is the one who allows those feelings to remain in his heart.
- ..... 15 The best way to get rid of bitter feelings against another person is to pray for that person.

SHORT ANSWER. Fill in each blank space with one word to complete these principles for preventing depression.

16 We are less likely to suffer depression if we take care of our ..... and ..... health.

17 We should never allow unconfessed ..... to remain in our lives.

18 We can help ourselves as we ..... others who are in need.

19 We should try to ..... each problem as it occurs, so that we can avoid building up stress.

20 It is important that we replace bitterness or resentment with

.....

21 In times of sorrow, we need to allow God to replace our grief with His ....., which gives us supernatural strength.

22 Name three ways to help someone who is suffering from depression.

.....

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.....



## answers to study questions

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- 8 Your answer. It should include these thoughts: An attitude of love for God and trust in Him will overcome fear. We can have confidence that, in every fearful situation, Christ is the overcomer—He is with us, and His love sustains us.
- 1 a True.  
b False.  
c True.  
d False.  
e True.  
f False.  
g True.
- 9 a 2) Assumed guilt or guilt caused by regret.  
b 1) Guilt caused by sin.  
c 1) Guilt caused by sin.  
d 2) Assumed guilt or guilt caused by regret.  
e 2) Assumed guilt or guilt caused by regret.
- 2 Symptoms of depression will persist over an extended period of time. (Many of us have bad days occasionally. Depression is a condition that may come upon us slowly and endure for an extended period of time.)
- 10 a) attitudes which cause trouble and bring harm to many people.
- 3 Depression may be a *symptom* of a physical problem; it may be a *result* of a physical problem; it may be a result of improper care of the body.
- 11 Your answer. If we can only realize and remember that the Lord *blesses* us when we bear insults and other wrongs in a Christlike manner, we can actually feel a sense of rejoicing even when men turn against us, because we are aware that Christ is our overcomer and He will never turn against us. Our victory over bitter feelings will make us a blessing to others.
- 4 First, have a physical checkup to discover if there is a physical problem. Second, when depression occurs as a *result* of dealing with a physical problem, God's Word will help us to cope with the problem with a positive attitude. Third, proper exercise, diet, and rest may be all that is needed to avoid depression.
- 12 Your answer. It says this to me: No matter what trial or testing I am going through, God has helped others through the same thing already, and *He will help me, too*.
- 5 b) there is a time for grief, but the Lord is able to replace our grief with His joy.

- 13** **a** True.  
**b** True.  
**c** False.  
**d** False.  
**e** True.  
**f** True.  
**g** True. (See 2 Corinthians 1:1-11.)
- 6 c)** As stress increases, there should be a corresponding increase in spiritual preparedness.
- 14** All of these activities would be helpful except c, d, and h.
- 7** It overlooks the fact that God is in control of our lives, and He will not give us more than we can bear.



# LESSON 9 Suffering and Death

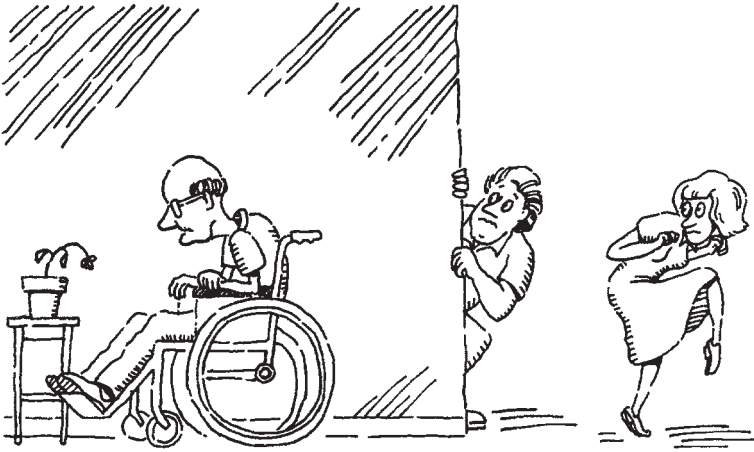
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A little boy wrote this letter to God: “Dear God, if there really is life after death, then why do we have to die?”

We dislike thinking about death. If a loved one were to say to you, “Today I would like to talk about what you should do when I die,” would you willingly enter into the discussion? Or would you try to avoid talking about such an unpleasant subject? We find it difficult to accept the fact that we, or someone we love, will someday die. We tend to think that if we refuse to talk about it, it won’t happen to us.

For the Christian, death itself should not be considered a problem. As the apostle Paul said, “to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). Death is not the end, but the beginning! But the process of dying is a fearful thing for young and old alike, because we are afraid of pain and suffering.

In Lesson 1 we explored the questions, “Why do Christians suffer?” “Why do we have to experience pain?” “Why is life so filled with misery?” Now our purpose is to discuss ways suffering and death bring problems into human lives, and how the Christian should approach these problems. How we respond to painful experiences is of utmost importance, as we consider them in the light of eternal values.



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### ***lesson outline***

Benefits of Pain and Suffering  
Problems Related to Suffering and Dying  
Helping the Suffering and Dying  
Problems Related to Death  
A Christian Perspective

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### ***lesson objectives***

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Give three examples of the benefits of pain and suffering.
- Explain what enabled Job to keep a positive attitude even while enduring great pain.
- Compare problems common to sick persons with those you may have personally experienced when ill.
- Recognize stages of dealing with terminal illness and how the gospel can make a difference for the terminally ill.
- Select true statements concerning ways a Christian can help those who are suffering or dying.
- Based on 1 Corinthians 15:55-57, explain the strength and peace experienced by the bereaved when a Christian dies.
- State a principle based on Christ's example which should guide the Christian when he faces suffering or death.

- Identify basic principles which reflect a Christian attitude toward suffering and dying.

### ***learning activities***

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1. Read Isaiah 52:13-15 and Isaiah 53. As an optional reading assignment, read the book of Job.
2. Work through the lesson development in the usual manner. Be sure to look for definitions of key words you do not know, and answer each study question before looking at the answer we have given.
3. Take the self-test, and check your answers.

### ***keywords***

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afflicted	diagnosis	symptoms
antidote	intensity	ultimate
bereaved	isolation	
bereavement	stricken	

## *lesson development*

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# **BENEFITS OF PAIN AND SUFFERING**

**Objective 1.** *Give three examples of the benefits of pain or suffering.*

You are probably thinking, “How could pain and suffering possibly be beneficial?” If pain is a result of sin entering into the world, is it not entirely evil? Can there be any benefit in something that is evil? Yes, there are some benefits to be gained from pain, both of a physical and a spiritual nature.

## **Physical Benefit**

How does a small child learn that fire is dangerous? By getting his hand too close to the fire! When he does this, there is a physical sensation that we call *pain*. Pain *hurts*. When we feel pain, we want to do something to stop the pain. Pain occurs to tell us there is a problem that needs to be dealt with. When the child feels pain from the fire, he deals with the problem by quickly removing his hand from contact with the fire. When there is pain in any part of our body, we do what we can to find out why we are feeling pain and how to get rid of it.

When God created man, He did not intend that man should experience pain. But because of man’s sin, God provided the sensation of pain so that we would have a warning against things that would harm or destroy our bodies. If we felt no pain, we would be unable to protect ourselves against germs, disease, or other attacks on the body.

## **Spiritual Benefits**

C. S. Lewis said, “God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains” (C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, New York: HarperCollins, 1996 p. 91). Pain causes suffering, and it is impossible to ignore.

## **Application**

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**1** The spiritual benefit of pain is similar to the physical benefit. In your own words, explain what it is.

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Some people only turn to God in emergencies. When things are going well, they feel self-sufficient. But suffering causes them to realize that there are some things beyond their own power to control, and in desperation they look to God for help. Certainly God is pleased when we place our trust in Him and worship Him *because* He is God and worthy of our adoration. But how marvelous it is that even when we go our own way and fail to recognize His right to be our Lord and Master, He yet loves us so much that He will draw us to Himself through any possible means. If through pain and suffering God can reach me and rescue me from sin and eternal death, is this not a wonderful benefit of suffering? That is why the apostle Paul could say, “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).

God knows that the most important decision we can make in life is to love and serve Him. If we fail to make that decision, our end will be hopeless agony for eternity. If He can capture our attention and our obedience to His will only by allowing us to suffer, then we should be grateful that He loves us so much!

## **Application**

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**2** Choose the best completion. We could illustrate this concept by saying that it can be compared to a loving father who will

- a) show his love by never scolding or punishing his son.
- b) give to his son the best of everything in order to win his obedience.
- c) discipline his son as often as necessary to teach him how he ought to behave.

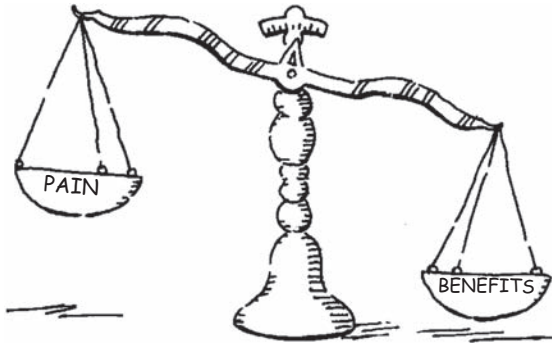
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Another spiritual benefit of suffering which we discussed in Lesson 1 is that those who have suffered make the best



comforters (see 2 Corinthians 1:3-6). We identify with those who share experiences such as we have had. As members of the body of Christ, we are instructed to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2); to weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15); and to pray for those who are hurting (James 5:16). The apostle Paul speaks of this in 1 Corinthians 12: "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts . . . . If one part suffers, every part suffers with it . . . . Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it" (vs. 12, 26, 27).

In Lesson 1 we also saw that suffering comes to us to purify us and prove our faith (1 Peter 1:6-7) and to develop in us the character of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:7-10). When viewed in the light of our eternal good, the spiritual benefits of suffering far outweigh any pain and misery that we are called upon to bear.



## PRESENT SUFFERING - FUTURE GLORY

### ***Application***

**3** Give an example of a benefit of pain which has both physical and spiritual value.

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**4** Give two other examples of spiritual benefits of pain.

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## PROBLEMS RELATED TO SUFFERING AND DYING

As we have seen in other lessons, suffering can take many forms. It can be physical or emotional in nature. We suffer because of illness, because of injustice, because of natural disasters which affect us, because of our own sins, and for many other reasons. Throughout this course we have discussed specific problem areas that cause us to suffer. Now we want to center our thoughts on problems related to pain, sickness, dying, and death.

### Pain

**Objective 2.** *Explain what enabled Job to keep a positive attitude even while enduring great pain.*

It is natural to fear pain and try to avoid it. It is a sobering experience to walk through the corridors of a hospital and view the misery and suffering of the stricken. A pastor told of visiting a hospital for the mentally disturbed. As he saw those tortured souls who had lost all touch with reality, some tied to their beds so they could not harm themselves or others, his heart was torn by their pain and grief. Later he went to a military hospital where he saw rows of beds filled with young men who were the victims of war. Some were blinded, others had lost an arm or a leg, and others were paralyzed. Once again he agonized over their pain.

Pain can make it impossible for us to function in a normal way. It can affect our behavior, our attitudes to others, and our self-image. Pain that endures can cause discouragement and despair.

The book of Job gives us a classic example of a man who suffered extreme pain. Job was a man of God who lost all his possessions. His children all died in a series of terrible disasters. Then he suffered physically, covered with terrible sores. His sufferings took him to the depths of despair. There were times when he felt God was far away from him. Yet in all this, he maintained his faith in God. He worshipped God in spite of his troubles (Job 1:21-22).

Not everyone responds to pain as Job did. There can be anger, resentment, doubts, and fear. Probably you can give several

examples of Christians you know who have responded to pain in different ways—some positive, and some negative.

### **Application**

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**5** Name five possible negative reactions to pain.

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**6** What made it possible for Job to maintain a right attitude even while enduring great pain?

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## Sickness

**Objective 3.** *Compare problems common to sick persons with those you may have personally experienced when ill.*

Sickness is another problem that affects all of us in varying degrees. There have been many wonderful advances in medical technology which have extended life expectancy. Man has successfully combated and overcome many diseases. But sickness still strikes young and old, rich and poor, good and bad. Here are some typical problems that may result for the sick person:

1. Financial problems (medical expenses, inability to work and earn money)
2. Worry about being a burden to others.
3. Fear of dying, uncertainty about the future.
4. Withdrawal from normal activities.
5. Anger and frustration at being afflicted.
6. Resentment of those who are healthy.
7. Disruption of plans.

Those who are responsible for a sick person may also share some of these same problems. In addition, they may suffer in a different way, because they feel helpless to relieve the distress of the one who is sick.

### Application

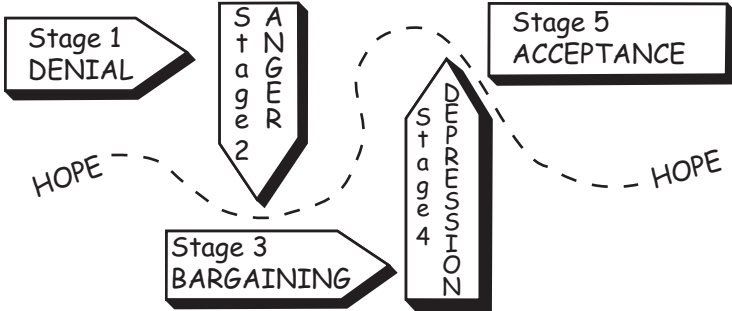
- 7 Put a check mark (✓) in front of any of the problems listed above which you have personally experienced.
- a List any other problems related to sickness which you have had.
- .....
- .....
- b If you found solutions for any of these problems, state what they were. You may need to use a notebook if your answer is lengthy.
- .....
- .....



### Dying

**Objective 4.** Recognize stages of dealing with terminal illness and how the gospel can make a difference for the terminally ill.

A medical doctor, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, has done a great deal of research concerning problem attitudes of those who are dying of a terminal disease. In her book, *On Death and Dying*, chapters 3-8, she has determined that there are certain attitudes which are common to those who know they are dying, and that their attitudes go through several stages of change. These are as follows:



*Stage 1—Denial.* The first reaction is, “This can’t be true. This can’t happen to me.” Denial is one way of dealing with the shock which accompanies the knowledge that death is coming. Often people who are ill refuse to go to a doctor because they fear what he might tell them. This is a form of denial.

This may be a particularly difficult problem for a Christian, because the idea that we may be dying contradicts our knowledge that Christ has provided for our healing through His own suffering and death. In my own experience I have been close to people who knew they were dying, but who trusted God for healing until the moment of their death. I also know several people with terminal illnesses who were miraculously healed. We should always encourage those who are terminally ill to pray for healing and trust God whatever happens, and we should pray and trust with them.

Often isolation accompanies denial—the sick person may need time to himself, and we should be sensitive to special needs of the sick in dealing with the idea of possible death.

*Stage 2—Anger.* The second reaction is, “Why me?” When a person comes to the realization that, unless a miracle happens, he really is going to die, it seems natural for him to rebel against the idea. The will to live is strong within us—it is part of our human nature. There are many reasons for the anger: illness has interrupted his activities, his plans for the future, his dreams; other people are going on with a full life, and his life has been cut short; there still are many things he wants to *do* with his life; he doesn’t want to be separated from his loved ones.

## ***Application***

**8** Do you think it’s wrong for a Christian to rebel against the knowledge that he is going to die? Explain your answer.

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*Stage 3—Bargaining.* Many dying people go through this stage, particularly trying to bargain with God. This is an opportunity for a caring Christian to help them find release from guilt, and accept God’s will for their life whether healing is “part of the bargain” or not. Sometimes people feel that God is punishing them. Certainly He does allow us to experience

problems to discipline us and draw us closer to Himself, as we have seen in previous lessons. But His grace does not depend upon our making bargains with Him.

*Stage 4—Depression.* When a dying person can no longer deny his illness, when his symptoms become more severe and the disease more advanced, he eventually senses a great loss. The illness may have brought many changes in his life—loss of a job, financial strain, pain, and others. Finally he is unable to cope, and he sinks into depression. This depression is related to what he has already gone through. But, according to Dr. Kubler-Ross, there is another stage of depression in which the sick person must have an opportunity to grieve over the fact that he is going to be separated from everything and everyone he loves. This is not a time to try to cheer the person, but a time to comfort him and, if necessary, weep with him. This stage prepares the person for what is coming, and helps him to accept the fact that he may die.

*Stage 5—Acceptance.* Finally, the dying person reaches the stage of acceptance, where he seems to resign himself to the idea of dying and becomes less interested in what is going on around him. He may become withdrawn and detached from other people. He has lost his anger, and while he may not be happy he seems at peace with the idea of death. This is a time when those close to him may need to be comforted even more than he does.

It has been noted that some people go through various of these stages more than once, or they move back and forth from one stage to the other. There is another common response which human beings seem to share, and that is *hope*. There is an old saying, “Hope springs eternal in the human breast.” The dying person may have hope that the doctors are wrong in their diagnosis; or that the symptoms may disappear; or that there will soon be a cure for his disease. This may be a response of both the non-Christian and the Christian. Hope is a thread that runs through each stage and keeps the emotions from being too intense. The Christian, of course, also has a blessed hope built on faith in God. We will be talking about the Christian’s hope in our next lesson. It is our greatest antidote for all of life’s problems.

**“The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”  
“Death is swallowed up in victory—  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.”**

1 Corinthians 15:26, 54, 57

*Other Problems.* There are also many problems of a practical nature that accompany the process of dying. Here are some of the more prominent ones:

1. The need to hide the fact that one is dying. One person said to me, “I wouldn’t tell anyone that I was dying, because when people know, they treat you differently. I want to keep my life as normal as possible as long as I can.”

2. Worry about who will take care of unfinished business, what will happen to the family, and other such worries. “Someone needs to know where the keys are, where the money is, how much insurance there is, where the important family papers are . . .” a nurse suggested. “Just imagine you’re not here. What would your family need to know?”

3. Financial problems related to medical bills or loss of income of a wage-earner.

4. Reluctance of family members to discuss the possibility of death and how it will affect the family. The person who is dying has a right to know the seriousness of his condition, and be able to talk about it with his family.

Possibly you can think of other similar problems that must be dealt with in this type of situation. In addition, there are emotional and spiritual problems of the dying person and the family, related to loss, grief, or questions about unanswered prayers concerning healing.

## ***Application***

**9** Make a list of things you would want your family to know in case of your death. Write this in your notebook.



The best time to discuss important family matters is when you are still healthy and you can do it in an objective, unemotional way. If you have possessions, you can best protect your spouse and children by making out a will. Husband and wife should plan together as best they can for the future care of their children in case one or both of them should die. These are important matters that should not be neglected.

### Application

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**10** How can you best prepare for handling the practical problems associated with death?

.....  
.....

**11** In the right column are listed stages a person may go through in dealing with the fact that he is dying. In the left column are listed symptoms of each stage. Match the stages to the symptoms by writing the correct number in each blank space.

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| ..... <b>a</b> Outspoken rebellion against the fact.                      | 1) Denial     |
| ..... <b>b</b> Belief that something will happen to change the situation. | 2) Anger      |
| ..... <b>c</b> Resignation, detachment, a sense of peace.                 | 3) Bargaining |
| ..... <b>d</b> Refusal to accept the fact.                                | 4) Depression |
| ..... <b>e</b> Promises of changed behavior if God will intervene.        | 5) Acceptance |
| ..... <b>f</b> Grief and a sense of great loss.                           | 6) Hope       |



It is perhaps during physical suffering that the Christian discovers the true impact of the gospel of Jesus Christ in his life. Billy Graham said, "I have seen great beauty of spirit in some who were great sufferers." Many beautiful hymns and eloquent sermons have been written by saints undergoing extreme pain. What an inspiration are those believers who radiate joy and peace, who reflect Jesus Christ in the midst of their hardest trials!



## Application

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**12** In what way does the gospel make a difference in the way you deal with the possibility of dying?

.....

.....

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## HELPING THE SUFFERING AND DYING

**Objective 5.** *Select true statements concerning ways a Christian can help those who are suffering or dying.*

In this course we have already seen many ways of ministering to those who are suffering. At this point we will deal more specifically with ways to help those who are suffering physical or emotional pain, or who are dying.

### Be There

Probably the most important thing you can do is simply to *be there*. Your closeness, a gentle voice, the touch of a hand can speak more loudly of your love and concern than many words. Make yourself available to the suffering or dying person, and to his family. Brief, frequent visits to a sick person's bedside are an encouragement. If you stay too long, your visit will become a burden for him. You can show your love in many ways—perhaps by running errands for the family, caring for their children, reading to the sick person, or possibly even ministering to his physical needs.

### Be Honest

In talking with sick and dying people, be honest. Allow your own feelings to show, but also let them know that you have found Christ to be a wonderful resource in times of fear and discouragement. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak words of comfort through you. Share Scripture passages that are uplifting and encouraging. Pray with them and for them. Be sensitive to any

of the stages of reactions we discussed earlier, and don't try to convince the sick person that he is wrong in having such reactions.

## Be Sensitive

Even though Christians are freed from the fear of death itself, it is still an enemy, and the strangeness of it can produce some uneasiness. You need to be especially sensitive to the special loneliness felt by the dying and also by the bereaved. They need the presence of brothers and sisters in Christ to help ease the feeling of being cut off from the life they have known.

Dying people frequently mention that other people tend to treat them as less than human, as though they were already dead. Just at the time when they most need comfort and encouragement, other people often withdraw and leave them to face death alone. Or family and friends discuss their condition, their symptoms, or their behavior in their presence, just as if they were not present. The sensitive Christian will never allow this to happen. A person's healing may remain even if he is unable to respond to you. It is important at this time for you to communicate hope and comfort.

## *Application*

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**13** Circle the letter preceding TRUE statements which reflect ways a Christian can help those who are suffering or dying. A Christian should

- a** spend long hours at the sick person's bedside talking to him, to show that he cares.
- b** be honest in sharing his feelings and concern with the sick person.
- c** be available often to minister in whatever way is needed.
- d** avoid discussing a person's condition with others in his presence.
- e** share personal problems with him to get his mind off his own.
- f** speak words of comfort and hope as guided by the Holy Spirit.
- g** be sensitive to the dying person's need to be treated as the whole person that he still is.



## PROBLEMS RELATED TO DEATH

**Objective 6.** *Based on 1 Corinthians 15:55-57, explain the strength and peace experienced by the bereaved when a Christian dies.*

### Spiritual Condition

The most critical problem for those facing death is this: “Am I ready to meet God?” If a person has solved his sin problem, if he has become a new creature in Christ Jesus, death is not a problem to him, because Christ solved that problem by His own death on the cross, and His resurrection from the grave. This is revealed in 1 Corinthians 15:55-57:

“Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?”

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

### CHRIST - THE PROBLEM SOLVER



**"DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY"**

The Christian can declare with the apostle Paul, therefore, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain . . . I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far” (Philippians 1:21, 23). Psalm 116:15 tells us that “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.”

### Bereavement

Death, then, is a greater problem for the ones left behind than it is for the Christian who has gone to be with the Lord. The

bereaved persons will experience a time of grief. They may also feel guilt because of their helplessness to prevent the death, or because of regrets they may have. They will suffer a great sense of loss and will need to accept the reality that death has occurred. They will need someone to stand and mourn with them.

Most of us have feelings of helplessness in trying to comfort the bereaved. Often things are said that do more harm than good. Once again, your presence, the touch of your hand, your willingness to help will accomplish more than many words. Later, after the shock has worn off and life has settled once again into a routine, your interest and friendship will be needed to help the bereaved as they adjust to life without their loved one.

Those of us who have experienced the death of a close family member know that this is a time when God provides supernatural strength and peace as we look to Him for help. He sustains us in every decision and in every heartache. And He gives us the blessed hope that one day we shall be reunited with our loved one forever in heaven!

### ***Application***

**14** Based on 1 Corinthians 15:55-57, explain the strength and peace experienced by the bereaved when a Christian dies.

.....  
.....



## **A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE**

### **The Suffering and Death of Christ**

**Objective 7.** *State a principle based on Christ's example which should guide the Christian when he faces suffering or death.*

Isaiah foretold this about Jesus Christ:

Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will

of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light (of life) and be satisfied (Isaiah 53:10-11).

Jesus committed no sin. He suffered as the innocent for the guilty. But He knew, long before He came to earth, that coming would mean crushing sorrow and suffering. After Jesus had died and was risen from the dead, He explained, “This is what is written: the Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day” (Luke 24:46).

## Application

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15 Read Acts 3:18 and Acts 26:22-23. What do these Scriptures both say that Christ did?

.....

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The Jews were expecting a Messiah to come as a mighty king with political power who would release them from Roman oppression. They had overlooked the fact that Old Testament prophets had said He would come as a suffering servant. They, as many do today, rejected the *suffering* image of Christ as too unpleasant to consider.

Even though it was to be of temporary duration, the intensity of His suffering caused Jesus to pray in Gethsemane, “Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will but what you will” (Mark 14:36). Jesus knew that His suffering had a purpose. Even though He would have preferred to be spared if that were possible, His ultimate desire was to fulfill the Father’s will. He was more concerned with the eternal values to be gained through His suffering and death than with His momentary distress and sorrow. He is our perfect example.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame . . . . Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart (Hebrews 12:2-3).

## Application

**16** State a principle based on Christ's example which should guide the Christian when he faces suffering or death.

.....  
.....  
.....



## The Christian's Response to Suffering and Dying

**Objective 8.** *Identify basic principles which reflect a Christian attitude toward suffering and dying.*

### Confidence in God

In the scriptural account of Job's suffering, Job was never told why the suffering had come to him. But he had confidence that God's purposes were good, and that God did not want to destroy him, but to purify him. Job said of God, "But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). Job confirmed that his love and trust in God sprang from a confidence in who God is, and not in how much material wealth and satisfaction God would give him, nor in the condition of his health.

God often delivers us from suffering by His mighty power and grace. Yet some suffering remains in spite of all our prayer and travail before God. Suffering is important in the plan of God to discipline us (Hebrews 12:7-11); to test us (Job 23:10); to prepare us for service (2 Corinthians 1:4-5); and to form in us the image of Christ. The apostle Paul said, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death" (Philippians 3:10).

### Joy

In the New Testament we see a strong connection between suffering and joy:

- James 1:2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.
- Acts 5:41 The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name [of Christ].
- Colossians 1:24 Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you  
...
- 1 Thessalonians 1:6 You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.
- 1 Peter 4:13 But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.
- John 16:22 Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.

Read also Hebrews 10:34, James 5:11, Revelation 12:2, Romans 8:18, John 16:20-22, and Luke 6:21-23.

Joyfulness is a way of life for the Christian. Not only can he experience joy in the midst of trials, but rejoicing in the Lord is an *antidote* for sorrow and grief (see Nehemiah 8:10, Psalm 30:5, and Colossians 1:10-12).

The Christian knows that even though death is a necessity because of sin, it has been conquered by Christ (Revelation 1:17-18, 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, John 11:26). Our faith in Christ has not brought us to some place of dread and gloom. That is not the picture of death at all for the Christian! Those who stand by the body of their departed loved one feel the sadness of separation. But for the one who has departed, a glorious, joyful arrival has taken place.

But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel (Hebrews 12:22-24).

## *Surrender*

Like Jesus, when suffering comes, we pray for relief. Often God graciously brings us deliverance. But there are times when our prayers are not answered in the way that we would choose. These times may have nothing to do with a lack of faith. Perhaps it takes more faith to endure a severe trial and maintain the right spirit towards God than if a miracle had taken place. Whatever the answer when we pray, we need also to affirm with Jesus, “Not what I will, but what you will.”

Someone has said, “The full acting out of the self’s surrender to God demands pain.” Accepting God’s will may be contrary to our human nature. It may even require a willingness to suffer:

Anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it (Matthew 10:38-39).

For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live (Romans 8:13).

Romans 14:7 teaches us that none of us lives to ourselves alone, nor do we die to ourselves alone. We live, and die, to the Lord. And in so doing, we strongly influence those around us. If you are called upon to suffer, perhaps your experience, or your response to it, will have a life-changing effect on someone else (2 Corinthians 1:4-5.)

## *Divine Vision*

How should the scriptural principles which you have studied in this section change your life?

*Time.* Psalm 90 is a prayer of Moses, the man of God. In it he prays, “Teach us to number our days aright” (Psalm 90:12). The knowledge that death will come to all of us should make us careful how we use the time that God gives us. Love for God and service to others is of great eternal value, and it pleases God.

*Values.* When you understand that the things of earth are perishable and temporary, you see them in their true light. They are here for us to use, but they must be held lightly. Place less



value on earthly, material things and more on heavenly things. True happiness, true joy, is available even in the midst of suffering for those who seek first the kingdom of God.

*Comfort.* Just by his presence, the caring Christian can minister to someone feeling the sharp pain and loneliness of illness, dying, or bereavement.

*Commitment.* Since you know Christ who has promised you eternal life, you are relieved of fear and worry about death. Jesus shared in our humanity “so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death” (Hebrews 2:14-15). You can fully commit yourself to God, your faithful Creator who sustains you, and continue to do good (1 Peter 5:2).

## Application

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**17** Write **G** in the blank space if the statement represents a sound and *good* principle concerning a Christian attitude toward suffering and dying. Write **P** in the blank space if the statement is *poor* or incorrect.

- ..... **a** Confidence in God is based on deliverance from suffering and pain.
- ..... **b** God always has a purpose in allowing us to suffer.
- ..... **c** Following Christ includes a willingness to share in His suffering.
- ..... **d** There can be rejoicing in suffering not only because of present benefits but also because of future glory.
- ..... **e** The more tightly we hold on to material possessions, the more we will be required to suffer.
- ..... **f** If we have a true awareness of the possibility of our own death, we will put greater value on how we use our time.
- ..... **g** If we respond to personal suffering in a Christlike way, we will be enabled to influence or comfort others who are suffering.
- ..... **h** A Christian must endure great suffering in order to prove his faith and in order to comfort others.



## **self-test**

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- 1 One way that pain can be considered a blessing is that it
  - a) hurts.
  - b) is a universal experience.
  - c) warns us of a problem that needs attention.
  - d) is God's way of reminding us that we have inherited a sinful nature.
- 2 Sometimes God allows us to experience pain because we
  - a) ignore Him when He speaks to us in other ways.
  - b) deserve to suffer.
  - c) can't help others unless we have suffered.
  - d) worship Him for the wrong reasons.
- 3 When God chooses to discipline us by allowing us to suffer, it is because He
  - a) wants to hurt us.
  - b) is angry with us.
  - c) wants to make us self-sufficient.
  - d) loves us so much.
- 4 The spiritual benefits of suffering far outweigh any pain that we must bear because our present suffering leads to
  - a) death.
  - b) understanding.
  - c) future glory.
  - d) temporary relief.
- 5 Even though Job experienced some of the negative reactions which may accompany pain, his strongest reaction was to
  - a) blame God.
  - b) keep his faith in God and continue to worship Him.
  - c) resent his friends because they were not suffering.
  - d) blame himself for the things that happened to him.
- 6 Which of these explains the main reaction of a Christian to the possibility of dying, based on his faith in God?
  - a) Hope
  - b) Denial
  - c) Anger
  - d) Acceptance
- 7 Which stage is illustrated by a person who promises God that he will pay his tithe faithfully if he is healed?
  - a) Anger
  - b) Hope
  - c) Depression
  - d) Bargaining

**8** In which stage does a person deal with his grief over the possibility of dying and leaving his family and all of his plans for the future?

- a) Anger
- b) Depression
- c) Denial
- d) Hope

**9** When is the best time to discuss family matters concerning things you would want your family to know or do in case of your death?

- a) When you are near death.
- b) As soon as you discover that you have a terminal illness.
- c) While you are still healthy.
- d) When you near the age of 70.

**10** Which of these is NOT a good way to help those who are suffering or dying?

- a) Be available to help.
- b) Be honest in showing your feelings.
- c) Be sensitive to their special needs.
- d) Pretend that they are going to recover from their pain and not die.
- e) Pray for them to be delivered and healed.

**11** How does Christ's reaction to suffering serve as an example for us?

- a) He expected God to deliver Him from suffering.
- b) He prayed for deliverance providing that was God's will for Him.
- c) He bore His suffering without any outward show of emotion.
- d) He was afraid of the pain that He would be called upon to bear.

**12** Which of these does NOT represent a Christian response to suffering?

- a) Withdrawal
- b) Confidence
- c) Joy
- d) Surrender
- e) Divine vision

## **answers to study questions**

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- 9** Your answer.
- 1** Pain lets us know we have a problem that needs to be resolved. In this case, it is a spiritual problem that we are made aware of.
- 10** By discussing them with family members now, and providing in every possible way for the family's welfare (such as obtaining insurance, making a will, arranging for guardianship of children).
- 2** c) discipline his son as often as necessary to teach him how he ought to behave.
- 11** a) 2) Anger.  
b) 6) Hope.  
c) 5) Acceptance.  
d) 1) Denial.  
e) 3) Bargaining.  
f) 4) Depression.
- 3** Pain lets us know something is wrong, that there is a problem which needs to be taken care of.
- 12** Your answer. Because of my faith in Christ, I know that death is not the end, but the beginning. I can face the thought of death because of my trust in God, knowing that He is in control of my life and my death.
- 4** Any of these: Those who have known pain are better able to comfort others who are in pain; suffering purifies us and proves our faith; suffering develops in us the character of Christ.
- 13** a) False.  
b) True.  
c) True.  
d) True.  
e) False.  
f) True.  
g) True.
- 5** Wrong behavior, bad attitudes, poor self-image, discouragement, despair, anger, resentment, doubts, fear.
- 14** Your answer should be similar to this: Because we know that Christ has overcome death for all who accept His atoning work, we know that our Christian loved ones are in His presence after death, and that some day we shall be with them in His presence. That knowledge takes the sting out of death and gives us peace.

- 6** He kept his faith in God through it all. He never stopped worshipping God.
- 15** He suffered.
- 7** Your answers. If you are still seeking solutions in this area, apply the problem-solving methods we have given, and expect God to help you!
- 16** Your answer should be similar to this: God is able to deliver me from suffering and death if that is His will for me. I will pray for deliverance, yet accept what He chooses as for my eternal good, whether it be deliverance, suffering, or death.
- 8** Your answer. Anger is certainly a natural first reaction to the threat of death, because death is an enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26). But Christ has conquered death, and so we can accept whatever happens if we commit our lives into His care. But we are to pray for healing and have faith in God; we are to seek deliverance from death.
- 17**
- a** Poor.
  - b** Good.
  - c** Good.
  - d** Good.
  - e** Poor.
  - f** Good.
  - g** Good.
  - h** Poor.

# LESSON 10 Maintaining Hope

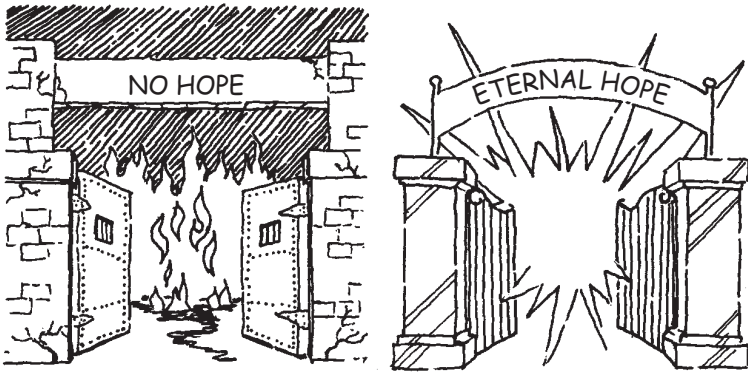
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In the poet Dante's *Inferno*, he describes the gates of hell. The sign over the gates says, "Abandon hope, all ye who enter in."

None of us knows the full and final answer to suffering. God may not reveal to us the *why* of our problems, but He asks us to believe that every one of them has a purpose to work out that which is best for us. And we who know and love the Lord have this blessed hope: this life is like a race that we are running, and the end of the race is not death—death will just carry us across the threshold into life everlasting! What a glorious hope!

This certain hope of being saved is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls, connecting us with God himself behind the sacred curtains of heaven, where Christ has gone ahead to plead for us from his position as our High Priest (Hebrews 6:19-20 Living Bible).

We do not know what the future holds for us in this life. But we do know who holds our future, and He has revealed to us that in Him there is *hope*! In this lesson we will consider what the Scriptures say about the hope of the Christian, and we will look at ways of maintaining hope. One day all of our problems will be behind us, and we will be ushered through the gates of heaven where Jesus Christ is our eternal hope!



### ***lesson outline***

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Through Christ the Over comer

Through Affirmation

Through Faith

### ***lesson objectives***

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When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Identify from given Scriptures how our hope is based on Christ the over comer.
- Identify promises of God given in Scriptures that we can claim, and conditions that accompany His promises.
- Based on biblical examples, write a statement of affirmation of what God has done in the past and what He can be expected to do in the future.
- Recognize true statements relating our problems to our eternal hope of full communion with God.

### ***learning activities***

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1. Study the lesson in the same manner as you have done for previous lessons. Be sure to read all Scripture texts given, as they are important to a full understanding of the lesson. Answer all study questions and check your answers with those we have given.
2. Find the definitions in the glossary for any key words you do not know.

3. Take the self-test and check your answers.
4. Answer the questions in Unit Student Report 3, then submit your answer sheets to your ICI instructor.

***key words***

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affirm  
affirmation  
commended  
comprehend

maintain  
reflection  
speculate  
temporary

turmoil  
uniqueness



## *lesson development*

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# THROUGH CHRIST THE OVERCOMER

**Objective 1.** *Identify from given Scriptures how our hope is based on Christ the over comer.*

We started this course by quoting these words of Jesus: “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Christ through His death and resurrection overcame the power of sin and death. In His life He overcame the temptation of His enemy, the devil. By His power we, too, can be over comers.

*Jesus Is triumphant over death and Hades (hell).* When John, the writer of the book of Revelation, saw Jesus, he fell at His feet as though dead. Jesus spoke, “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades” (Revelation 1:17-18).

*Jesus, rose from the dead after His crucifixion and burial.* He appeared to His disciples and friends several times, and to more than 500 of His followers at the same time (1 Corinthians 15:1-8).

*According to the words of Jesus, those who live and believe in Him will never die.* Jesus used the occasion of the raising of Lazarus from the dead to give this teaching. His words to Martha at that time are words that bring comfort and hope to every believer: “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die” (John 11:25-26).

It is clear from the teaching of Scripture that those who love Christ never die—they merely change location. They depart from their temporary dwelling here (their physical body) and are immediately in the presence of the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:6, 8). Because Christ has overcome death and the grave, we have an eternal hope that is steadfast and sure—the hope of eternal life in heaven with Him.

A beautiful old song by Edward Mote, “The Solid Rock”, expresses the hope we have in Christ:

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.  
When darkness veils His lovely face  
I rest on His unchanging grace;  
In every high and stormy gale,  
My anchor holds within the veil.  
His oath, His covenant, His blood,  
Support me in the whelming flood.  
When all around my soul gives way,  
He then is all my hope and stay.  
When He shall come with trumpet sound,  
Oh, may I then in Him be found,  
Dressed in His righteousness alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne.  
*On Christ the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.*

Knowing what Christ has done for us, and knowing that when we depart this life we shall be forever with Him, gives us a hope that sustains us in the darkest hours of our life.

**Application**

1 Read Acts 24:15. What is our hope based on in this Scripture?

.....  
2 Read 1 Peter 1:3. What does this Scripture say is the source of our hope?

.....

- 3 Read Colossians 1:5; Titus 2:13; and Hebrews 6:19. When do these Scriptures reveal that our hope is going to be fully realized?
- In the trials that we go through.
  - When we are saved.
  - When we are united with Jesus in heaven.
- 

## THROUGH AFFIRMATION

**Objective 2.** *Identify promises of God given in Scriptures that we can claim, and conditions that accompany His promises.*

As we saw in Lesson 2, one of the first things a person must do to become a Christian is *confess* that the resurrected Christ is Lord of his life. Confession, or *affirmation*, is also very important in maintaining Christian hope. The person who sees only the dark side of life, the problems and testings, and talks about them constantly, is bound to be discouraged and fearful. But the person who recognizes God's power to help him in every circumstance, and who talks about the many blessings and good things God has done in his life, will have hope even in the most difficult circumstances.

Sometimes all we can see is the problem we are faced with. I have a friend who has helped me many times when I have had difficult problems to deal with—by reminding me of how wonderfully God has helped me in similar situations in the past, and of all the blessings He has showered upon me over the years. When we think of His goodness and all of the promises He has given in His Word to be with us and keep us, our faith grows strong and we can be victorious in any trial.

### Review God's Promises

- His promises are unfailing (1 Kings 8:56).
- He has the power to do what He promises (Romans 4:21).
- He promises deliverance (Psalm 34:19-20).
- He promises to be with us (Isaiah 43:2).
- He promises that our prayers will be answered (Mark 11:24).
- He promises that our faith will be honored (Luke 17:6).

- 7. He promises blessings to those who give liberally (Proverbs 3:9-10, Luke 6:38, 2 Corinthians 9:6).
- 8. He promises to be with those who are obedient (John 14:23).
- 9. He promises to come to the aid of those who seek Him (2 Chronicles 7:14, Luke 11:9).
- 10. He promises eternal life (1 John 2:25, James 2:5).

These are but a few of the many promises contained in God's Word. Find each one in your Bible and read it. As we review His promises, our hearts are encouraged to *trust* Him, and we can't help but affirm, "What a mighty God we serve!" No wonder the prophet Micah, after reviewing God's promise to Israel, "As in the days when you came out of Egypt, I will show them my wonders" (Micah 7:15), responded with these words of affirmation:

Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:18-19).

### ***Application***

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**4** Read the following Scriptures and match the text with what promised in each one.

- |   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| ..... <b>a</b> God will answer our prayers.             | 1) Psalm 34:19-20  |
| ..... <b>b</b> He blesses those who give.               | 2) Kings 8:56      |
| ..... <b>c</b> If we ask for His help, He will give it. | 3) Luke 17:6       |
| ..... <b>d</b> He will deliver us from our problems.    | 4) Mark 11:24      |
| ..... <b>e</b> He will honor our faith.                 | 5) John 14:23      |
| ..... <b>f</b> If we obey Him, He will be with us.      | 6) Proverbs 3:9-10 |
| ..... <b>g</b> He will not fail to keep His promises.   | 7) Luke 11:9       |



One of God's most beautiful promises is given in Psalm 91. In this Psalm He promises His protection against all the forces of evil that would seek to harm us.

## Application

---

5 Read Psalm 91. What is God’s protection based on? (See vs. 1, 9, and 14.) Choose the best answer.

- a) We must call upon His name when we need help.
- b) We must abide in Him and love Him.
- c) We must be strong and fight against the enemy.

6 Read the following Scriptures and explain the condition for receiving the promise given in each.

- a 2 Chronicles 16:9 .....
- b Psalm 34:7 .....
- c John 15:7 .....
- d Mark 11:24 .....
- e 1 John 3:21-22 .....

7 Read Psalm 91:15; Isaiah 58:9; 65:24; and Zechariah 13:9. What promise is given in each of these Scriptures?

.....



## Consider Biblical Examples

**Objective 3.** *Based on biblical examples, write a statement of affirmation of what God has done in the past and what He can be expected to do in the future.*

There are many biblical examples of positive affirmation in the face of great difficulty. By positive affirmation I do not mean claiming that something is different from what it actually is. I mean recognizing the goodness of God and His power to help in every situation—His power to deliver us from the evil one, to protect us in times of danger, to comfort us in our sorrow. This affirmation is based upon what God has *already* done, and our belief that He will *continue* to act in the future as He has done in the past.

## Application

---

**8** Read Daniel 3:13-18. What statement of affirmation is made in this passage of Scripture?

.....

.....



In Habakkuk 3:17-19, the prophet makes this affirmation of trust in God:

Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, *yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on to the heights.* (Italics mine)

One of the greatest statements of affirmation in the Bible is found in Psalm 23. King David was a man who knew joy and sorrow, victory and defeat, safety and danger. Many times he had to run from his enemies. He knew what it was to sin against God and receive forgiveness. His was a troubled life, filled with turmoil, grief, persecution, regrets, doubts, and opposition. The Psalms are filled with his cries to the Lord for help and mercy. But Psalm 23 is one of the most positive statements of affirmation found in the Bible. It speaks to many areas of life where we need the Lord's help.

**PSALM 23**

**THE AFFIRMATION**

**WHAT GOD GIVES US**

*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing.  
 He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
 he leads me beside quiet waters, he  
 restores my soul.  
 He guides me in paths of righteousness for  
 his name's sake.  
 Even though I walk through the valley of the  
 shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you  
 are with me;  
 your rod and your staff, they comfort me.  
 You prepare a table before me in the  
 presence of my enemies.  
 You anoint my head with oil; my cup  
 overflows.  
 Surely goodness and love will follow me all  
 the days of my life, and I will dwell in the  
 house of the Lord forever.*

**Provision**  
**Satisfaction**  
**Peace**  
**Renewal**  
**Guidance**  
**Protection**  
**Comfort**  
**Assurance in the time  
 of danger**  
**Honor, blessing**  
**Countless blessings**  
**Eternal goodness and  
 love**  
**Eternal hope**

**Application**

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**9** Read Psalm 66:16-18. These verses are a testimony or affirmation of what?

.....  
**10** What two specific acts of God are mentioned in this Scripture?

.....  
**11** What was the condition for receiving these two acts of God?

.....  
**12** What is Paul's testimony in 2 Timothy 3:11?

.....  
**13** What two affirmations does the apostle Paul give in 2 Timothy 4:16-18?

- a** In the past: .....
- b** In the future: .....

14 In a separate notebook, write your own affirmation of what the Lord has done for you in the past, and based on that, what you can expect Him to do for you in the future. Then share this affirmation with someone else. Start your statement with these words: *Come and . . . let me tell you what God has done for me.*



## THROUGH FAITH

**Objective 4.** *Recognize true statements relating our problems to our eternal hope of full communion with God.*

Maintaining hope depends upon a strong faith in God. Hebrews 11 is called the *faith chapter* of the Bible. In verse 1 we read these words: "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."

Read all of Hebrews 11. The first part of this chapter records the victories won by men and women who had great faith in God. Their faith revealed the power of God working through their lives.

### ***Application***

15 How do verses 35 through 38 differ from verses 4 through 34?

.....  
.....

16 According to verse 40, why did they not receive deliverance?

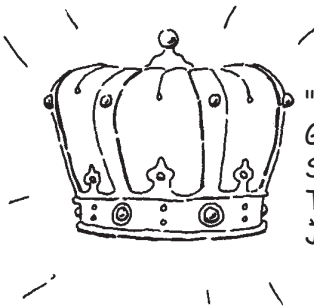
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Therefore, these people were not commended because they were victorious over their enemies, *but because they were sure of what they hoped for but had not seen* (v.1). And what did they hope for? God's promise of eternal life with Him in heaven! Note that the experiences of these men and women of faith were each unique. No two of them experienced the same things. It is from their various trials and victories that we can see the hand of God working in their lives, and we can have faith that He will work in our lives in a similar way.

In his book, *The Problem of Pain*, C. S. Lewis discusses the uniqueness of each soul. He suggests that if God had no use for the differences between us, He would not have created more than one soul. We are the temple of God (2 Corinthians 6:16). God dwells within you, and within me. I am His temple. God knew me before I was born (Psalm 139:13-16). I am wondrously made by Him. I was created for *His* pleasure. All my life, my heart has been yearning for Him, and yet I only catch brief, momentary glimpses of that which is contained within the divine nature (1 Corinthians 13:12). We can only speculate as to the wonderful things He has prepared for us in our heavenly home. But is it not possible that in my earthly trials, tears, joys, sufferings, and victories God is forming me in such a way that I will be able to fill a unique place in His kingdom? Is it not possible that my own assortment of experiences, good and bad, has revealed God to me in a way known and understood only by me? Is it not possible that each Christian is being given, through his own unique experiences in this life, knowledge of a particular facet of God which only he can fully comprehend?



"WELL DONE, THOU  
GOOD AND FAITHFUL  
SERVANT ... ENTER  
THOU INTO THE  
JOY OF THE LORD"

Mathew 25:21

C. S. Lewis suggests: “Your place in heaven will seem to be made for you and you alone, because you were made for it—stitch by stitch as a glove is made for a hand.” He further concludes that if everyone experienced God in the same way and worshipped Him in an identical way, “the song of the church triumphant would have no symphony, it would be like an orchestra in which all the instruments played the same note” (1976, pp. 132-142).

In Revelation 2:17 these words are written to the church: “To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it”

Think of it! The reward for being an overcomer in this life is a new name known only to God and to me! That name perhaps is a symbol between God and me of all that I am, all that I have suffered, all the victories I have won, all that I have become through the power of Jesus Christ working in me! It will represent my own personal fellowship and communion with my Creator, which will be different from that of all other overcomers. What a glorious thought that in heaven, our communication with the saints of all the ages, including those men and women of great faith listed in Hebrews 11, will include the sharing with each other of God’s revelation of Himself to *us*! As I share with you, and you share with me, each of us will receive a greater comprehension of our wonderful God, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

In 1 Corinthians 2:9 we are told, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.” When I think of the wonderful things God has prepared for us, my faith is made strong, and I can accept whatever trials and difficulties He leads me through in preparation for my eternal place with Him. In John 14:1-3, Jesus comforted His disciples with these words: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.”

## Application

---

**17** Which of these are TRUE statements relating earthly problems and suffering to the Christian's hope of eternal fellowship with God? Circle the letters preceding your choices.

- a** All of the people mentioned in Hebrews 11 received full deliverance from their earthly trials.
  - b** The people of faith in Hebrews 11 were able to face their difficulties bravely because their hope was strongly fixed upon God's promise to them of eternal life.
  - c** The new name we will receive in heaven will be a reward for overcoming the trials and temptations of this earthly life and placing our hope in Christ Jesus.
  - d** My new name in heaven will only be known by God and me.
  - e** We can have a full revelation of God in this life if we are overcomers.
  - f** The cure for a troubled heart is trust in God and what He has promised.
- 

The apostle Paul says, in 1 Corinthians 13:12, "Now we see but a poor reflection; then we shall see face to face." Now our hearts long for full communion with our Savior—in heaven that communion will be complete. Revelation 1:7 tells us, "Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him." When that day comes, I shall see Him with my own eyes, and not through the eyes of another. Until then, my faith will keep me sure of what I hope for, and certain of what I do not see.

Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.

So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while,

“He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.”

But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.

—*Hebrews 10:32-39*

As a conclusion to your study of this book, can you not say, with me, the words of this poem?

It will be worth it all when we see Jesus.

Earth's trials will seem so small, when we see Him.

One glimpse of His dear face all sorrows will erase,

So bravely run the race, till we see Him.

—Written by Esther Kerr Rusthoi,  
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You have now concluded the final lesson in this unit. Take the self-test and check your answers. Then review the unit and answer the questions for this unit in the student report at the back of the book.

**self-test**

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TRUE-FALSE If the statement is TRUE, write **T** in the blank space. Write **F** if the statement is FALSE

- ..... **1** The term *Christ the Overcomer* reminds us that Christ gained victory over death and the grave for Himself and for us.
- ..... **2** When the physical body dies, the Christian immediately enters into the presence of the Lord.
- ..... **3** When Christ said that those who live and believe in Him would never die He was talking about physical death.
- ..... **4** Our hope in Christ the overcomer is based on the knowledge that because of His death and resurrection we have eternal life in heaven with Him.
- ..... **5** *Positive affirmation* means claiming that God has answered our prayers even before we see the answer.
- ..... **6** One way to affirm God's power to help in every circumstance is to review and believe His promises.
- ..... **7** Some of God's promises are made with the condition that we meet certain requirements in order to receive the promises.
- ..... **8** The Twenty-third Psalm was written by the Psalmist David in a moment of despair because his prayers had not been answered.
- ..... **9** We can with assurance affirm what we can expect God to do in the future, because He has proven His power to us in the past.
- ..... **10** The faith of the men and women listed in Hebrews 11 was based on the victories they won throughout their lives.
- ..... **11** One of the beauties of heaven will be the sharing of the saints with one another of their unique relationship with God As they trusted Him in every one of life's situations.
- ..... **12** The new name each of us will receive from our Creator in heaven will be a reward for being overcomers in this life, no matter what trials we have endured.

## **answers to study questions**

---

- 9 Of what God had done for the Psalmist.
- 1 That there shall be a resurrection of the dead.
- 10 Answered prayer, and giving of love.
- 2 The resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- 11 The Psalmist got rid of any sin in his heart.
- 3 c) When we are united with Jesus in heaven.
- 12 That the Lord rescued him from every trial and persecution.
- 4 a) 4) Mark 11:24.  
b) 6) Proverbs 3:9-10.  
c) 7) Luke 11:9.  
d) 1) Psalm 34:19-20.  
e) 3) Luke 17:6.  
f) 5) John 14:23.  
g) 2) 1 Kings 8:56.
- 13 a) The Lord stood at my side and gave me strength.  
b) The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom.
- 5 b) We must abide in Him and love Him.
- 14 Your answer. This is probably the most important exercise you will do in this lesson.
- 6 a) A heart fully committed to God.  
b) Fear of God (honor, respect, reverence).  
c) Remain in Christ and allow Him to dwell in you.  
d) Belief (faith) that you will receive what you ask for.  
e) Obey His commands and do what pleases Him.
- 15 Verses 35 through 38 tell about men and women of great faith who did *not* receive deliverance from their trials and persecutions, but who suffered or gave their lives in order to serve God.
- 7 God will answer us when we call upon Him.
- 16 Because God had planned something better (for all of us). (Their real deliverance did not depend upon temporary relief from earthly trials.)
- 8 "If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king" (v. 17).

- 17 a** False. (Some were put to death. Their deliverance was of a different nature.)
- b** True.
- c** True.
- d** True.
- e** False.
- f** True.

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# Glossary

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The right-hand column lists the lesson in the study guide in which the word is first used.

		<i>Lesson</i>
abandoned	— forsaken, deserted, left entirely at the mercy of someone or something	6
abolish	— to do away with; to destroy completely	2
abort	— to stop a pregnancy before term; to give birth to stillborn offspring; to destroy a fetus	7
abortion	— destroying an unborn baby	7
accumulation	— a heaping or piling up; the process of increasing in quantity or number	8
accusation	— a charge of fault or blame	3
acknowledge	— to take notice of; to recognize the rights, authority, or status of	2
adjustments	— the acts or processes of bringing to a more satisfactory state; adaptations	3
adolescence	— the state or process of growing up; the period of life leading to maturity	5
adultery	— voluntary sexual relations between a married man and someone other than his wife, or between a married woman and someone other than her husband	7
affirm	— to state positively; to assert as true or confirmed	10
affirmation	— the act of making a positive statement	10
afflicted	— severely distressed so as to cause continued suffering	9
aggressive	— having a tendency to dominate, often in disregard of the rights of others	3

alternatives	— two or more different propositions or possibilities requiring a choice	3
antidote	— something that relieves, prevents, or counteracts	9
attitude	— a feeling or emotion toward a fact or a state	2
belittle	— to make seem little or less	5
benefit	— an act of kindness; something that promotes well-being; a blessing; an advantage	1
bereaved	— deprived, especially by death	9
bereavement	— state of losing a loved one by death	9
bitterness	— resentfulness, accompanied by pain or suffering; state of being distressing to the mind	3
bondage	— slavery, servitude	2
capacity	— the ability to hold, receive, or store; a measure of content	1
categories	— class, group, classification	3
celibacy	— the state of being unmarried and not involved in sexual activity	7
celibate	— one who is unmarried and who does not engage in sexual activity	6
commended	— mentioned with approval	10
compassion	— sympathetic awareness of another person's distress combined with a desire to help	1
compassionate	— having compassion; state of caring	3
comprehend	— understand	10
condemnation	— the state of being blamed or declared wrong or guilty	8
conduct	— behavior; to show the way	3
confess	— to admit; to disclose one's faults	2
conformed	— brought into harmony or agreement	1

confronted	—	caused to meet face-to-face; encountered	3
conscience	—	the sense of moral goodness of one's own conduct, intentions, or character together with a feeling to do right or good	2
consequences	—	effects; the results of a set of conditions	3
consistency	—	a condition of living or acting in accordance with one's own beliefs	5
contrary	—	opposite	3
covet	—	to desire; to wish for enviously; to desire excessively what belongs to another	2
covetousness	—	state of craving another's possessions	4
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deceitfulness	—	state of being dishonest, false; attempt to deceive	4
default	—	failure, lack	6
degraded	—	reduced far below ordinary standards; deprived of status, rank, standing	7
dejection	—	sadness; lowness of spirits	8
demeaning	—	degrading	6
depressive	—	tending to be weighed down, saddened, discouraged	8
deprived	—	withheld from; having removed or taken away	3
diagnosis	—	the art or act of identifying a disease from its signs and symptoms	9
disaster	—	a sudden or great misfortune; catastrophe; a terrible event or occurrence	1
discord	—	a lack of agreement or harmony	5
disrupt	—	to break apart; to cause to break down	5
dissension	—	disagreement in opinion	2
<hr/>			
exasperate	—	to cause irritation or annoyance; to make angry	5

extended family	— family members beyond that of the immediate family (parents and children)	6
fanaticism	— outlook or behavior marked by excessive enthusiasm or devotion	3
fornication	— sexual relations other than between a man and his wife; sexual intercourse between unmarried people	7
generosity	— liberality in spirit or act	4
gonorrhea	— a venereal disease; a disease caused through sexual relations, especially those involving numerous partners	7
greed	— excessive desire for wealth or gain	4
heterosexual	— of or relating to differing sexes; attracted to members of the opposite sex	7
homosexuality	— relating to sexual desire toward a member of one's own sex	7
humiliate	— to reduce to a lower position in one's own eyes or others' eyes; to demean	5
illegitimate	— born outside of wedlock	7
immaturity	— state of lacking complete growth or development	4
immorality	— wickedness; inconsistency with purity or right behavior	1
impulsive	— acting without forethought	8
impulse	— a sudden inclination toward some unplanned action	3
indulgent	— describes one who yields to the desire of another; to treat generously	5
inferiority	— the quality or state of having less value, importance, or merit	4
infertile	— unable to produce; barren	7

infidelity	— a marital unfaithfulness	5
injustice	— injury; unfairness; a wrong	4
insight	— the power or act of seeing into a situation; the act of seeing the inner nature of things	2
insensitivity	— the condition of lacking feeling; indifference	6
interact	— to act upon one another; to have meaningful communication	1
intensity	— extreme degree of force, strength, or energy	9
isolation	— the condition of being set apart from others; aloneness	9
<hr/>		
maintain	— to keep in an existing state; to continue or persevere in	10
maturing	— process of completing growth and development	1
meditation	— the act or process of thinking about, pondering; prayerful consideration	3
meek	— enduring injury with patience and without resentment; not violent or strong	2
monogamous	— relating to marriage with but one person	7
mutuality	— the quality or state of giving and receiving in equal amount	7
<hr/>		
obscene	— disgusting to the senses; designed to cause lust or depravity	4
offense	— an act of stumbling; the act of attacking; the act of displeasing	3
<hr/>		
penalty	— disadvantage, loss, or hardship due to some action; the suffering or price to pay for an action	2
persecution	— the act or practice of causing to suffer because of belief, especially to those who differ in origin, religion, or social beliefs	1

perseverance	— the action or condition of being steadfast, of maintaining a position	1
perspective	— ability to view things in their true relations or importance	2
poverty	— lack of money or material possessions	4
pregnant	— containing unborn young within the body	7
principles	— rules or codes of conduct	2
priorities	— those things which come first in importance	1
procreation	— production of offspring	7
profane	— unholy, impure, irreverent	4
prohibited	— forbidden; prevented from doing some thing; made impossible	5
psychological	— mental; directed toward the will or toward the mind; having to do with mind and behavior	2
purified	— made free from guilt or imperfection; cleansed	1
<hr/>		
reaction	— an action brought about by strong resistance to another action	3
refined	— made pure; improved or perfected by pruning or polishing	1
reflection	— the production of an image as if by a mirror; that which is given back as an image or likeness	10
rejected	— cast off; refused; thrown back	6
resentment	— a feeling of angry displeasure of something regarded as a wrong, insult, or injury	8
restricted	— restrained; confined within bounds; limited	5
retreat	— to withdraw from something that is difficult, dangerous, or unpleasant	3

revenge	— to cause injury in return for an injury suffered	3
<hr/>		
self-indulgence	— giving in to one's own desires, appetites, or whims	4
sensitive	— highly responsive (as to a problem or need of another person); concerned	2
sexuality	— the quality or state of being sexual	7
solution	— an action or process of solving a problem; the answer	1
speculate	— to meditate on or ponder a subject; to assume	10
spouse	— a married person; a man's wife or a woman's husband	5
status	— a position or rank in relation to others or in the eyes of others	4
steward	— one who actively directs affairs; one who serves others	4
stress	— a physical, mental, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension	8
stricken	— afflicted with disease, misfortune, or sorrow	9
structure	— something made up of parts that depend upon each other	5
sublimation	— to direct the energy from its first aim to one that is ethically or culturally higher	7
submerge	— to go under; lose sight of; sink (as in poverty or misery); hide	6
submissive	— yielding to others	5
superiority	— the quality or state of having higher rank or importance	4
supernatural	— of or relating to God; relating to an order beyond what can be seen or observed in the natural universe	3



symptoms	— evidences of disease or other physical disturbances; things that indicate the existence of other things	9
syphilis	— a contagious venereal disease usually transmitted through sexual relations	7
temporary	— lasting for a time only	10
terminal	— of or relating to an end, such as death	8
therapy	— treatment of bodily disorder; something that helps to bring about adjustment	8
tranquillity	— the state of being at peace or of being calm, steady, serene	8
turmoil	— a completely confused or extremely agitated state or condition	10
ultimate	— final, eventual, basic; last in a progression	9
uniqueness	— condition of being without equal; condition of being unlike any other	10
unoffendable	— ability to take an offense without anger or resentment	3
venereal disease	— a contagious disease that is usually acquired in sexual relations	7
victims	— those who are injured, destroyed, or damaged under any of various conditions over which they have no control	5
vitality	— highly developed physical or mental strength	8
vulgar	— crude, coarse, offensive	4
vulnerable	— capable of being wounded; open to attack	8
withdrawal	— retreat or retirement into a more secluded position	3
yoked	— joined together	5

# **Answers to Self-Tests**

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## **Lesson 1**

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- 1 b) problems.
- 2 a) obedience to God and His Word
- 3 d) joy.
- 4 c) tempt us.
- 5 a) All men are guilty of personal sin.
- 6 a) wrong reactions.
- 7 b) eternal values.
- 8 b) continue with your purpose and don't give up.
- 9 c) Tempt us to do evil.
- 10 a) 4) Mistaken judgment *or* 3) Outside influence.  
b) 6) God's dealing with us.  
c) 2) Personal sin.  
d) 5) Carefully-consider choice.  
e) 2) Personal sin.  
f) 3) Outside influence *or* 1) Sin-damaged world.  
g) 1) Sin-damaged world.

## **Lesson 2**

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- 1 c) Jesus is Lord.
- 2 b) sin problem.
- 3 a) provides the way for me to be released from the penalty of death.
- 4 d) obeying His Word.
- 5 c) Scripture.
- 6 True.
- 7 False.
- 8 False.
- 9 True.
- 10 True.
- 11 False.
- 12 False.
- 13 True.

14 False.

15 True.

16 True.

### Lesson 3

---

- 1 a Arlene's problem was that there was no money for her college education.
- b The source of the problem was her parents' decision to use their money for their son's education. This was a decision outside of Arlene's control.
- c Arlene reacted by withdrawing. (Her reaction involved jealousy, selfishness, and self-pity. Her reaction only added to her problem by bringing about the more serious problem of mental illness.)
- d If Arlene had committed this problem to the Lord, He could have helped her to find a common-sense solution, such as working her way through college as many other people do. Or He may have provided a miraculous solution to the problem that Arlene could not have imagined possible.
- e Arlene should have trusted God to work for her good, as promised in Romans 8:28.
- 2 a Jordon should have started with a Christian approach: spiritual preparation through Bible reading and prayer; and a willingness to know and do God's will. Then he would have avoided his wrong reactions and he could have taken steps to find a Christian solution. This would have been a glory to God.
- b The end result was that Jordan and David became enemies and this had a bad effect on the entire church which they attended. It was also a very bad testimony to their non-Christian friends.
- c The end result should have been that Jordan's heart would be filled with praise that God had given him spiritual victory in dealing with the situation, whether he got his money back or not. This would have glorified God.
- d Jordan should have identified the source of the problem as being something over which he had no control. Then he should have committed the problem to God and asked for His direction in finding a solution. He would have looked in God's Word to see what instructions he might find there that would apply to the situation. Perhaps he would have consulted his pastor at this point, and his pastor

would have brought 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 to his attention. Then perhaps Jordan would have gone to David with a Christ-like attitude, and David's response would have been different. But even if David still refused to return his money, Jordan would have found victory over the problem by committing it to God and trusting God to work for his good in the situation.

- 3 a** Method B seems to apply: Identify the problem, commit it to God, and expect Him to work for good in the situation.
- b** James and Esther identified their problem as being physically unable to have children. They committed their problem to God and expected Him to work for their good. God's solution in this instance was not to give them a child, but make them spiritual parents of many children, which was of far greater eternal value. The end result was that, even though they had no child of their own, their hearts were filled with praise for the many children God had allowed them to bring into His kingdom.

**4** Your answer.

## **Lesson 4**

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- 1 c)** wanting what someone else has.
- 2 a)** service to one another.
- 3 d)** God's power.
- 4 b)** Feelings of inferiority.
- 5 a)** endure.
- 6 d)** does not envy.
- 7 b)** exalting Christ.
- 8 d)** put God's kingdom first and give with generosity.
- 9 c)** your total commitment to His kingdom.
- 10 a)** take the injustice in a Christlike way, and trust God to give you victory over it.
- 11** False.
- 12** False.
- 13** True.
- 14** False.
- 15** False.
- 16** True.
- 17** True.

- 18 True.
- 19 True.
- 20 False.

## **Lesson 5**

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- 1 c) Christ to the church.
- 2 b) teaching, discipline, and love.
- 3 a) adultery.
- 4 d) children.
- 5 c) remain as he was at the time of conversion.
- 6 b) Love and respect.
- 7 c) pay their tithe first.
- 8 False.
- 9 True.
- 10 True.
- 11 False.
- 12 False.
- 13 True.
- 14 True.
- 15 True.

## **Lesson 6**

---

- 1 c) a divorced person.
- 2 d) single persons have the possibility of devoting more time to God's work without distractions.
- 3 a) those who choose to devote their time to the kingdom of heaven rather than to marry are a particular blessing to the church.
- 4 b) God's will for his life.
- 5 b) godly.
- 6 c) development of a strong, mature Christian character.
- 7 b) Marry an unbeliever.
- 8 a) divorced.
- 9 d) Make a full commitment to God's will for your life.
- 10 c) The basis for Christian fellowship is not a person's social status, but the fact that he or she belongs to Christ.

- 11 (In any order) Look within yourself—recognize that the Lord is your joy and your strength. Recognize your special position in Christ. Get involved in helping others. Spend more time in Bible reading, meditation, and prayer. Apply Christian principles of problem solving.

## **Lesson 7**

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- 1 b) honor God with your body.  
2 b) is unmarried and without sexual involvement.  
3 c) both procreation and oneness.  
4 d) The marriage relationship.  
5 c) help him to understand that God forgives a repentant sinner.  
6 b) A pure life.  
7 a) Will it honor God?  
8 d) a gift of God.  
9 a) mutuality.  
10 a) It is against God's principle of sexuality, which is one man and one woman.  
b) The Bible calls it evil.  
c) It comes under divine judgment.  
11 Your answer. Here are some possible answers.  
a) 1 Corinthians 6:12-13, 19-20, and chapter 7.  
b) 1 Corinthians 7:3-4; Ephesians 5:22-23.  
c) Exodus 20:13; 1 Corinthians 6 and 7; John 8:11.  
d) Romans 1:18-32; Leviticus 18:22-23; 2 Peter 2:6-10.  
e) Matthew 5:6; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Luke 7:50.

## **Lesson 8**

---

- 1 True.  
2 False.  
3 False.  
4 True.  
5 True.  
6 True.  
7 True.  
8 False.  
9 True.

- 10 True.
- 11 False.
- 12 False.
- 13 True.
- 14 True.
- 15 True.
- 16 spiritual, physical
- 17 sin
- 18 help *or* reach out to
- 19 solve
- 20 forgiveness
- 21 joy
- 22 (Any of these) Show concern; be loving; listen; be available; share sorrow; offer help; give support; give comfort, hope, and encouragement.

## Lesson 9

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- 1 c) warns us of a problem that needs attention.
- 2 a) ignore Him when He speaks to us in other ways.
- 3 d) loves us so much.
- 4 c) future glory.
- 5 b) keep his faith in God and continue to worship Him.
- 6 a) Hope.
- 7 d) Bargaining.
- 8 b) Depression.
- 9 c) While you are still healthy.
- 10 d) Pretend that they are going to recover from their pain and not die. (This is dishonest—however, you *can* pray for their healing and encourage them to trust God to undertake for them.) (See answer e.)
- 11 b) He prayed for deliverance providing that was God's will for Him.
- 12 a) Withdrawal.

## **Lesson 10**

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- 1 True.
- 2 True.
- 3 False.
- 4 True.
- 5 False.
- 6 True.
- 7 True.
- 8 False.
- 9 True.
- 10 False.
- 11 True.
- 12 True.





# Solving Life's Problems:

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## UNIT STUDENT REPORTS AND ANSWER SHEETS

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### 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   B  C  D

## 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    A    B    C    D

## 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 1.
- 2 Choices which may cause problems are always wrong.
- 3 Obedience to God's commands brings disaster.
- 4 The sin of Adam and Eve brought a curse upon the earth and is a source of problems.
- 5 When we confess our sins to God, He punishes us.
- 6 A time of stress is a time to increase prayer and Bible reading.
- 7 Our own human effort is sufficient to find answers for most problems we face.
- 8 When we cannot find a solution for a problem we should commit it to God and expect Him to work for our good.

### 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 Which of these is an example of natural disaster caused by a sin-damaged world?
  - a) Famine, floods, and earthquakes.
  - b) An automobile accident.
  - c) Harmful use of drugs or tobacco.
  - d) A robbery.
- 10 Which of these represents a problem caused by forces outside your control?
  - a) You ride your bicycle too fast, and you run into an automobile crossing the intersection.
  - b) Your employer scolds you because you have wasted time.
  - c) Your neighbor cuts down a tree, and it falls on your house.
  - d) You leave your windows open, and a heavy rain ruins your furniture.

- 11 The story of the three Hebrew men who refused to obey the king's order is an example of
- a wrong choice.
  - a good choice even if it caused a problem.
  - a problem over which they had no control.
  - foolish judgment.
- 12 God's purpose in testing us is to cause us to
- fail.
  - worry.
  - suffer.
  - persevere.
- 13 Jesus' Sermon on the Mount revealed to us that the Law as given in the Ten commandments
- is impossible to obey.
  - no longer needs to be obeyed.
  - was fulfilled by Christ, who makes it possible to obey.
  - was an Old Testament requirement that has been replaced by personal freedom of choice.
- 14 The Ten Commandments relate to what we *do* and the Beatitudes of Christ relate to what we
- have.
  - believe.
  - are.
  - want.
- 15 The key to keeping the commandments of Christ is
- faith.
  - love.
  - understanding.
  - covetousness.
- 16 The best way to control other areas of your life is first to control your
- tongue.
  - activities.
  - family.
  - conscience.
- 17 Two important questions we should ask ourselves when we have a problem is "Do I want to know God's will in this matter?" and
- "What do I really want to do about the problem?"
  - "What will my friends say if I follow God's will?"
  - "Should I bother God with this problem?"
  - "Am I willing to do God's will when I know it?"

18 Once we have decided on a solution to a problem and acted on it, we need to

- a) evaluate the results and make any needed adjustments.
- b) forget about it.
- c) consider the possible consequences of our action.
- d) commit the problem to the Lord.

19 Even if there seems to be no solution to a problem, we can commit it to God and expect Him to

- a) continue to test us.
- b) work for our good in the situation.
- c) provide a quick solution.
- d) show us a solution.

20 Doing something to hurt someone who has hurt you is called

- a) withdrawal.
- b) unoffendability.
- c) accusation.
- d) revenge.

*END OF REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIT ONE. Follow the remaining instructions in your answer sheet and return it to your ICI 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 2.
- 2 Covetousness is wanting to have something that belongs to someone else.
- 3 The person who has a position of leadership should maintain a superior attitude in order to keep the respect of those under him.
- 4 The correct attitude for those who serve the Lord is, “We have only done our duty.”
- 5 The husband should be the spiritual leader in the home.
- 6 Divorce is unscriptural for *any* reason.
- 7 It is better to marry than to remain single.
- 8 The single person is a special gift to the church.

### 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 Which of these is NOT an example of Christian immaturity?
  - a) Wanting to get the best of everything
  - b) Worrying constantly
  - c) Yielding to temptation
  - d) Battling problems and discouragement
- 10 Two sources of power of Christian maturity are God’s power and will power. We put our will power into effect by
  - a) being obedient to God’s Word.
  - b) making decisions without outside help.
  - c) developing a strong self-will.
  - d) being of service to others.

- 11 Which of these is a correct Christian attitude concerning wealth or poverty?
- a) The person who is wealthy is superior to those who are poor.
  - b) The poor have more need of God's help than the wealthy.
  - c) We can trust God to provide for all of our needs when we are totally committed to His will.
  - d) According to the Bible, generosity is something the wealthy should have for the poor; the poor, in turn, should accept their inferior position.
- 12 The most important thing you can do when you are the victim of an injustice is to
- a) correct the injustice.
  - b) react in a Christlike way.
  - c) tell everyone what has been done to you.
  - d) get revenge at any cost.
- 13 Which of these is NOT a general biblical rule for divorce?
- a) Divorce is not permitted.
  - b) Divorced persons may remarry.
  - c) Divorced persons may not remarry.
  - d) A single person is not to marry a divorced person.
- 14 When a husband or wife is so involved in other activities that there is little time to spend with the family, the marriage suffers because of
- a) lack of love.
  - b) lack of submission.
  - c) overcommitment.
  - d) misunderstanding.
- 15 If parents want to teach their children to be obedient, they must provide
- a) freedom for self-expression.
  - b) whatever the child wants.
  - c) strict rules for every moment.
  - d) training and discipline.
- 16 Discipline of children must be
- a) fair.
  - b) avoided.
  - c) severe.
  - d) limited to times when they cause anger.



- 17 Which is the best choice for the person who greatly desires marriage but lacks the opportunity to marry a Christian?
- a) Marry an unbeliever.
  - b) Remain single but not celibate.
  - c) Remain godly and trust God to meet the need.
  - d) Try to be happy being single.
- 18 The basis for Christian fellowship is whether or not a person
- a) has social status.
  - b) belongs to Christ.
  - c) has interests similar to your own.
  - d) is married.
- 19 The best way to get rid of loneliness and self-pity is to
- a) tell someone about it.
  - b) go to a social event where there are many people.
  - c) help someone who has greater needs than you have.
  - d) stay alone and think about your loneliness.
- 20 The apostle Paul recommended that people remain single if possible, because if they married they would
- a) turn away from the gospel.
  - b) have more time to serve God.
  - c) lose their Christian testimony.
  - d) have more problems.

*END OF REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIT TWO. Follow the remaining instructions in your answer sheet and return it to your ICI 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 3.
- 2 Sexual desire is a sin for the unmarried person.
- 3 Whether you are married or single, God expects you to exercise control in matters of sexuality.
- 4 Depression is a period of intense sadness, loss of energy, inactivity, and difficulty in thinking clearly or making good decisions.
- 5 The more stress a person has, the less likely he is to suffer depression.
- 6 There are some benefits to be gained through pain and suffering.
- 7 The Christian perspective on suffering is to pray for God to take it away whatever the cost.
- 8 The Christian's eternal hope is based on Christ the Overcomer.

### 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 What is the only biblical alternative to marriage in the area of sexuality?
  - a) Premarital sex
  - b) Celibacy
  - c) Oneness
  - d) Procreation
- 10 The rule for sexuality with marriage can be summed up in the word
  - a) procreation.
  - b) sublimation.
  - c) mutuality.
  - d) forgiveness.

- 11 What message should we give to the person who has committed sexual sins and who has suffered as a result?
- a) "God will forgive you if you repent."
  - b) "It is only right that you suffer for what you have done."
  - c) "You are only human, and it is normal to find release for your sexual needs in whatever way you can."
  - d) "You have sinned, so now you must live with the results."
- 12 The best antidote for stress is
- a) withdrawal.
  - b) an increase in spiritual preparation.
  - c) forgiveness.
  - d) bitterness.
- 13 The best cure for fear is
- a) anxiety.
  - b) despair.
  - c) courage.
  - d) love.
- 14 Feelings of guilt, whether as a result of sin or due to regrets, can be removed when we accept
- a) punishment.
  - b) advice.
  - c) forgiveness.
  - d) depression.
- 15 Which of these is NOT a stage of reaction of the dying person?
- a) Hope
  - b) Anger
  - c) Bargaining
  - d) Fulfillment
- 16 The Christian response to suffering is confidence, surrender, divine vision, and
- a) joy.
  - b) fear.
  - c) bargaining.
  - d) denial.
- 17 The most critical problem for those facing death is
- a) "Who will take care of my family?"
  - b) "Am I ready to meet God?"
  - c) "Do I have enough insurance?"
  - d) "How can I relieve my suffering?"

- 18 Jesus said that those who live and believe in Him will never
- a) fail.
  - b) die.
  - c) suffer.
  - d) be tempted.

19 When we state our belief that God is able to rescue us in the future, and that belief is based on what He has already done in the past, this is called

- a) hope.
- b) renewal.
- c) affirmation.
- d) protection.

20 According to Revelation 2:17, your reward for overcoming all temptation, trials, and testing in this life will be

- a) a special new name known only by God and you.
- b) a place of honor in heaven.
- c) a beautiful mansion.
- d) communication with the saints.

*END OF REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIT THREE. Follow the remaining instructions In your answer sheet and return it to your ICI instructor or office In your area. This completes your study of this course. Ask your ICI Instructor to recommend another course of study for you.*

# CS6161

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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 ICI courses have you studied? .....

.....

.....

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# 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.

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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 ICI 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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# ANSWER SHEET FOR UNIT ONE

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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					

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## REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The ICI office in your area will be happy to send you information about other ICI courses that are available and their cost. You may use the space below to ask for that information.

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# 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					

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