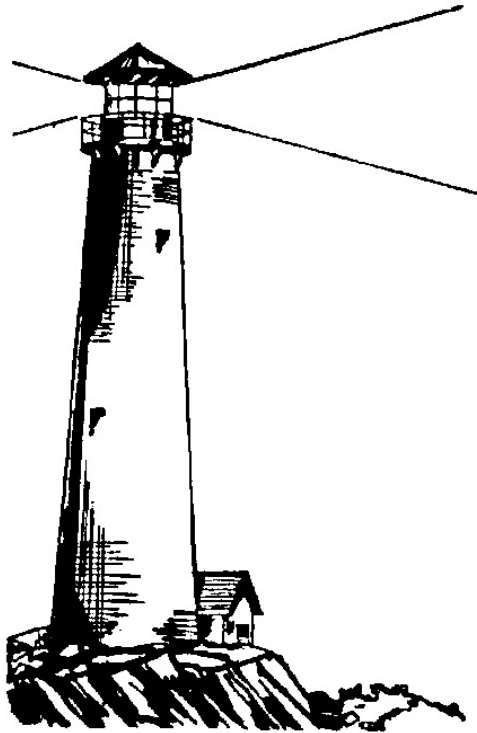


CHURCH OF GOD

SUNDAY SCHOOL QUARTERLY



**THE RESPONSIBILITIES
OF FAMILIES**

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF FAMILIES

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NOTE TO THE TEACHERS

This booklet is intended to be a *help* in preparing Sunday school lessons. The title, subject, and topics are only the menu. It is *your responsibility* to prepare the meal.

The proper ingredients are the salty inspirations of the Holy Spirit, seasoned with His grace. Bake the ingredients at a hot temperature in the oven of prayer. The time-tested recipe for preparing a nutritious meal is found in 2 Timothy 2:15, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

LESSON 1

TRAINING OUR YOUTH FOR THE WAY OF LIFE

Scripture Texts: Joshua 1:7-9; Psalm 19:7-14; 2 Timothy 3:14-17

In this series of lessons, we will study some of the more important aspects of the training our children must receive to become successful in life and the source from which this help must come.

MEMORY VERSE: Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.
—Proverbs 22:6

Help From the Crippling Effect of Improper Training

"The way" children should be trained in is the highway of holiness (Isaiah 35:8). Children have responsibilities within the family, but they need training to understand those responsibilities. To be successful in the way of life, the child must be trained concerning his responsibilities as a child, teenager, and adult to prevent him from being crippled in any aspect of "the way" in the years to follow.

Training is much more than teaching. What is taught to the children must first be modeled in the lives of the parents. In addition to obeying the rules of the home, children need to learn the importance of obeying the laws of God and the laws of the land. Parents are to set the example. Can obedience from the children be expected when the pattern is not set before them?

Children must be taught how to respect the rights and feelings of others. Parents should teach by example. When teaching the laws of the home or when discipline is needed, be firm but also be loving and patient. Children need parents to take the time to listen and explain. This is important. A child who has not been trained properly in the home very well might have a deficiency in character that causes unnecessary struggles in his life. If he was not taught obedience and submission in the home, it will be more difficult to submit his will in obedience to God's laws. This can contribute to "an up-and-down experience" or "a limp in his walk with God."

Training means "to direct the growth of, to form by instruction, discipline or drill, and to teach so as to be fitted or qualified and prepared for the greatest tests of life." This will not happen by chance. Many hours of prayer and tears are necessary to successfully bring about this training. Begin during the months the child is being formed by praying and dedicating him to God. Start

the training in the early years; do not wait until school age to begin. The training should not stop until he is out from under parental care and guidance. If you have failed to provide the proper training, you can begin NOW in the right direction. God is ready to help.

A Good Training Program

The military knows the benefits of a balanced training program. Much of its program can be helpful to us with our children. They check up and treat any defects. (Parents need to be alert to and correct any character "defects," such as lying or stealing.) Just as the military informs soldiers of their rights, rules, and punishment for breaking those rules, children need to know what is expected of them in the home and the consequences of disobedience. Godly training includes love and explanation.

A good training program includes teaching healthy eating habits, exercise, modest dress, and proper care of the body. The military trains soldiers to be experts in their particular field of work. It also prepares them for the great, responsible task ahead—defending our country. Likewise, children need to be prepared for the life that is ahead. They need godly training in the way they should go.

Character and personality defects caused by improper parental training can hinder children in their walk with God.

JUST A THOUGHT

**Those who deserve love least,
need it most.**



LESSON 2

THE HOME INFLUENCE HAS GREAT EFFECT

Scripture Texts: Joshua 24:14-16; 2 Timothy 1:5-6

Each generation has a responsibility to pass along the teaching and training proved successful in past generations. This is the key to all the following lessons.

MEMORY VERSE: When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also. —2 Timothy 1:5

Children Tend to Become as Their Elders

In most cases, children will grow to become like their parents and grandparents. Children grow faster and learn more in the first three to four years of their lives than in any other period of growth. Our home training program must be well-rounded and balanced and adhered to closely. When parents have no self-esteem, are always beaten down, and frequently have a negative attitude, the children will become the same way. God, in His Word, tells mothers to be "keepers at home" (Titus 2:5). It is a full-time job to give training to a family. This is one reason the devil is attacking the home in so many ways and trying to destroy marriage.

Most couples are capable of becoming parents, but not all realize their great responsibility as parents to their children. It is much more than providing food, clothing, and shelter. Lines of communication must be opened and maintained between parents and child. Children must feel their parents are interested in their feelings and problems. Children need parents to give them time and the freedom to express their problems.

If parents listen to the small things, children will feel free to discuss the heavy burdens that come along a little later. Share their bad moments by giving them an ear, and they will allow you to share their good moments. Share without criticism, and give input of praise and encouragement. Allow the child to make mistakes and errors of judgment. Teach him that this is a normal part of growth and that it should not cause him to feel inferior or uncomfortable. Do not be overcritical. You are training that child to be either strong in mind, body, and soul, or you are making him a cripple, unable to cope with the great tests of life that lie ahead. Remember, each of your

children is a different person and must be taught as a separate and distinct person.

If a child lives with criticism, he learns to criticize. If he lives with hostility, he learns to fight. If he faces ridicule, he learns to be shy. If he is shamed, he learns to feel guilty. If he is shown tolerance, he learns to be patient. If he is encouraged, he learns confidence. If he is praised, he learns to appreciate others. If his parents are fair, he learns justice. If he obtains approval, he learns self-esteem. If he is shown friendship, he will be friendly. If he is given love and acceptance, he will love and accept others.

Parents, it will be difficult to help our children to understand and respect us as parents or to respect themselves if we do not model that in self respect and our respect of others. The home influence has a great effect on our children.

JUST A THOUGHT

**You can preach a better sermon with your life
than with your lips.**



LESSON 3

THE HUSBAND AND WIFE RELATIONSHIP

Scripture Texts: Ephesians 5:21-29, 33; Genesis 3:16; Romans 12:3-4

The Scripture gives the order of authority for things to run smoothly in the home and all other situations of life. God is the head of Christ. Christ is the head of the man. Man is the head of the woman. If all are not placed and held in their rightful order, serious problems will arise in the home.

MEMORY VERSE: But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. —1 Corinthians 11:3

Togetherness

Even before He made man, God, in His wisdom, had plans for a successful home life. The home is the oldest of all institutions, being older than the church or the state. It is the basis of all civilization and order. As goes the home, so goes the world. The man is the *head* of the home. The woman is the *heart* of the home. God's plan is for the man to provide the income—become the breadwinner. God's plan is for the woman to stay at home, keep house, and bring up children. When these objectives are taken out of perspective and men think they have a better plan, trouble in the home is sure to come. The husband is the leader of the home. He is responsible for choosing whom that household will serve (Joshua 24:14-16). This responsibility is to be handed down from generation to generation (Deuteronomy 31:7; Joshua 11:15).

Lean not to your own understanding of what is best for your home, but seek God's help and guidance. There are many enemies to the Christian home, and only by God's divine guidance are we able to detect them before they do a destroying work. Whatever injures the home strikes at God's plan for a sacred work.

It is a very dangerous practice for parents to attempt to give their children all that they ask for or desire. It is a good practice to give the children a weekly allowance and to teach them to spend it wisely. Teach them to tithe from their allowance. If they do not learn to tithe while young, chances are they will not tithe when they earn their own income. This would be a good time to create a simple plan for budgeting their finances. Teach them the importance of saving. Children can reap great dividends for success in their

early marriage by learning to budget their limited income. Financial problems cause family trouble in a high number of marriages. Teaching our children the value of money and proper budgeting can help prepare them for when they are raising their own families.

A Smooth Mixture

Providing food and raiment is important for a good home life. Yet, more important is providing a happy, peaceful, godly atmosphere for the children every day. Parents should have each child take part in the family worship. Parents should strive to make each child feel equally important and loved. God does not show respect of persons with His children, and neither should we as parents. Showing partiality and favoritism to a particular child will bring havoc to the family structure. A good example of this is the resentment Joseph's brothers had toward him (Genesis 37:3-4). Teach children that things which do not belong to them alone are to be shared with others. On the other hand, some things do belong to them alone, and other members of the family need to be taught to respect this. Children should be trained, by example, that some things talked about and done in the family are not to be talked about outside the family.

Teach the child about the physical development and sacredness of his body and how to care for it properly. Certainly, he should be taught his body is the temple of God, and it should not be defiled. Parents can teach their children to love and respect them as parents by loving and respecting one another as husband and wife.

Stewardship of the home has in it more love than force. It succeeds, especially through the sharing and helping process. When importance is placed on helping others instead of getting everything possible for one's self, growth in character develops and life takes on a new meaning, both in the home and in the community.

JUST A THOUGHT

The most impressive evidence of tolerance is a

Golden Wedding Anniversary.



LESSON 4

CORRECTION AND DISCIPLINE

Scripture Texts: Ephesians 6:14; Colossians 3:20-21; Hebrews 12:7-9; Proverbs 3:12

In Deuteronomy 6:4-10, God gave instruction on how to teach children constantly—day after day and week after week—until they are brought into another land, in which much shall be obtained. This is the ultimate purpose for our interest and training of our children. Is not faithful church attendance of great importance here?

MEMORY VERSE: Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

—Exodus 20:12

The Question

The question may be asked, "How severely should we punish our child?" The purpose of punishment is to reach a goal. Consider the purpose of the punishment and what is required to reach that goal, which is to cause the child's will to be brought into subjection of the will of another. Be careful of disciplining out of anger. We correct the child because we love him (Proverbs 3:12).

Several things determine the severity of the punishment.

1. Is this the first time or has it happened before?
2. How severe was it? While even small transgressions should not be ignored, handle it according to the severity.
3. Was it a true misunderstanding, or was it outright disobedience?
4. Did the child attempt to cover the wrong?
5. Was the disobedience against the law of the home, man's law, or the law of God?

Others could be mentioned, but these will do for the present. When you, as a parent, have told your children what discipline will be given, do not fail them; follow through. Say what you mean and mean what you say. The children, in time, may apply a Scripture found in Proverbs 12:22 to the parents, if the parents fail to do as they say. The Bible states we should not spare the

rod (Proverbs 13:24) because, in doing so, we will spoil the child. This is true, contrary to modern thinking and child psychology. Spoiled children find it difficult to be brought under the law of the community in which they live.

God's Answer

Read Proverbs 22:15; 23:13; 29:15-18; 20:30. Do not let the child's crying and pleading cause you to change your mind (Proverbs 19:18). Correction, when done correctly, proves your love for the child. Correction and discipline should have the support of both parents at all times in the presence of the children. Any differences on the subject should never be discussed in the presence of the children. This can hinder your prayers.

Other forms of correction can be used to good advantage as well. Rather than the rod, for example, confining them to their rooms, dropping their allowances for a time, and taking away certain privileges for a short time can be beneficial. Use whichever proves to be best for the particular child. The child's will must be brought into submission while he is still young and tender. If parents do not enforce laws on children in the home, law enforcement officers may have to use force if they break the laws of the community. More importantly, God will not be able to get them to submit to His laws when they face the choice of taking God's way or walking after their own ways. God's wrath was kindled against Eli, the priest, because his sons did evil. Eli was chastened severely and cursed by God for neglecting to do his duty in governing his children (1 Samuel 2:12, 27-30; 3:13-14).

It would be wrong to punish or correct a child for doing something that you are doing. We should be careful not to blame a child when the root of the matter may be in us. At all times, keep your punishment under control. We need God in our hearts, so that His gentleness, mercy, love, and righteousness might always be manifested before the children. This teaches them to grow up to be men and women of faith with confidence in God. Wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ Jesus, and it takes wisdom from above to know when to correct, in what way to correct, and the amount of correction or punishment needed.

JUST A THOUGHT

It is a bit difficult to sell anyone a product you have never used, or a religion you have never lived.

LESSON 5

THE CHILDREN'S RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE HOME

Scripture Texts: Exodus 20:12; Proverbs 15:32; Ephesians 6:1-3; Luke 2:49-52; Lamentations 3:27

Government without the consent of the governed will fall. Legislated morality cannot survive a rebellious heart. Old-fashioned obedience is still a virtue, even though modern conditions tend to make children independent at an early age. Obedience is just and proper, and God requires it of children. The lesson texts clearly express this truth.

MEMORY VERSE: Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. —Colossians 3:20

Maintaining Family Solidarity

In Luke 2:52, the development of Jesus pictures the normal development of the child. The home is the principal means of this development. Children should show respect for authority at home. They should know that service to God includes doing family duties. As parents grow older and weaker, the children who are able have an obligation to repay them the love and care received from them. This includes financial support when needed, but especially important is love and consideration. Love makes it a joy. Rarely, in these modern times, does a child have any occasion to honor his parents with physical substance. This is good. No one wants a return to the poverty that formerly made parents depend upon the charity of their offspring in their last days. We thank God that in our time, for their own sakes, our dear parents are generally self-reliant, maintaining the dignity of independence in life's sunset. But there is a danger here of which we should be aware. It may cause an adverse effect on family closeness and honor of one's parents, resulting from the child's never sacrificing for them. In honoring our parents, we honor God as well. A child's actions outside the home reflect on all aspects of the family.

The home is the child's first school, and here he is learning the most valuable lessons of his life. If properly disciplined in the home, he will be more likely to develop a strong inner character, enabling him to live a disciplined life and get along with others when he leaves his parents' home. He will have the much-needed training concerning physical and moral development.

By bearing the yoke early, children become men and women, not overgrown babies. They learn self-discipline, both physically and spiritually.

Obedience

In Colossians 3:20, children are commanded to "obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." In Ephesians 6:1, children are commanded to obey simply because "this is right," leaving no question as to God's attitude toward children's obedience to their parents. Is there any better reason than that it "is right"?

Children have as sure a position and as definite responsibilities as the other members of the family. They are to obey clear and plain, not unwillingly, but from love and respect. The commandment found in Exodus 20:12 requires this but also offers long life as a reward for doing so. Many individuals have shortened their lifespan as a result of dishonoring their fathers and mothers.

It is important for children to obey their parents to maintain family solidarity. Rebelling against parental authority is a very serious sin in the sight of God. He said, "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft" (1 Samuel 15:23), a very serious charge indeed. In the event there is a divided condition in the home and a parent commands the child to violate God's law, the child should always hold God's law as a priority. To honor God's law from the heart always holds priority over every man-made law of the home or the community.

Self-Discipline

"It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth" (Lamentations 3:27). A child should learn to work, to bear responsibility, to meet hard things in life, and hold steady. Only in these ways can he gain self-discipline. Through these, children learn to carry their part in life. Children who are allowed to always take and never give, to seek pleasure rather than to give service, learn to be leeches and not fruit bearers. Learn to work, and you will find out soon enough that the world does not owe you anything.

The will of the parents rules the home, not the will of the children. The child obeys whether his parents see him or not. In 2 Timothy 3:1-2, God tells us, "In the last days perilous [or dangerous] times shall come." That time is now. The times are dangerous because many sinful customs make it harder to stand for the right. One of these sins is children being disobedient to their parents. This sin is prevalent today. No matter what others may do, God's command of obedience to parents still stands.

Overcoming in the Battle

Youth may ask, "How can I win in this battle of life which I have been thrown into?" Thank God, there is a way through safely and with victory at the end. Ecclesiastes 12:1 shows us the way. Be saved early in life. Obey God's voice as soon as you are old enough for Him to talk to you and convict your heart of sin. The devil always tries to get us to put off surrendering to God because he knows it becomes more difficult as we get older, and he may prevent it altogether. For this same reason, God tells us to be saved in the days of our youth.

JUST A THOUGHT

**Happiness is enjoying what you have
instead of fretting over what you do not have.**

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LESSON 6

WHY DO WE HAVE RULES AND LAWS?

Scripture Texts: Micah 4:1-5; 1 Kings 21:1-15; Galatians 3:24; Romans 13:8; Exodus 20:1-17; Genesis 2:15-17

Rules and laws have come a long way since God gave the first one to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Rules and laws were in God's plan from the beginning. God knew man needed laws to help guide him along the road of life. As there are signs on our streets and highways, so are there signs on life's road to remind us that others are depending on our actions as well as we are depending on theirs. Without laws and rules, life everywhere would be in chaos. Many laws made by man are derived from the original ten laws given to man by God in Exodus 20:1-17.

MEMORY VERSE: For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

—Galatians 5:14

To Do or Not to Do

The story is told of a man who set sail for a distant country. A violent storm came up, and his ship sank. Of all the passengers, he alone escaped. He was stranded on a deserted island amid a great sea. So Robinson Crusoe set out to build a house. He looked about until he found just the site he wanted. The wonder of wonders! He did not have to ask anyone if he could use it, nor did he have to pay for it. He did not have to sign any papers, nor did he have to get a permit to build. He hunted about for materials to use. When he found them, he took them and did not have any fear of the police coming to arrest him for stealing. Anything he wanted, he took. Anything he wanted to do, he could do. Did he need rules?

King Ahab was a powerful king of Israel. One day, he saw a beautiful vineyard near his palace. He wanted it for a garden of herbs for his use. He sent for its owner, Naboth. When Naboth came, King Ahab asked him to sell the vineyard. Yet, according to the rules God had given the Israelites, each man was to keep his own land and hand it down to his sons. So Naboth refused to sell. King Ahab went back to his palace and all his luxuries, but he was very unhappy. He lay down on his bed, turned his face to the wall, and refused to eat. When the queen found him, she asked what was bothering

him. He told her he wanted the vineyard but could not get it. She suggested that as he was king, he might take it anyway; so they planned a scheme whereby Naboth would be killed. When word came of Naboth's death, King Ahab took the vineyard. He thought now he would be happy, but God sent a severe punishment upon him for his wicked deed.

What is the difference between these cases? One man took what he wanted, and we say that he did right. Another man did the same, but we say that he did wrong. Were rules important here?

Why Laws Are Necessary

When the pioneers left the coast of Virginia and started across the Allegheny Mountains into the Ohio Valley, they went into a land that had no laws. Here, they had to take care of themselves. There were no policemen or soldiers to protect them from enemies. Soon, they found they needed a leader; so they chose someone to be their leader. They had to tell him what his powers were; so they gave him certain rights and authority. One of their first projects was to build a stockade around their settlement to protect them from Indians and other enemies. Some refused to help with the work. So the leader was called for, and together they made a law. Everyone must either do his share or get out of the settlement.

More problems came day after day. How would they take care of their property? How could they keep their land if someone else should want it? If two people wanted the same piece of land, how could they decide to whom it should go? They met and created rules to make their property safe. Some rules may have been such as these: everyone must register at a certain place, stating the date he came and the location of the land he desired. Another may have been, no one shall trespass on another man's property without his consent. So there came into being a long list of regulations regarding property rights.

Another problem concerned the conduct of the people. But someone says, "Are we not to be free to do as we please away out in the wilderness?" We can never be entirely free to do as we please as long as there is another person near us. The law may state the gates would be closed at a certain time and anyone not in by that time would not be permitted to enter. As more people came, the laws became more numerous, and someone had to enforce the laws. That is how we began our system of having policemen enforce the laws made by the people. These rules were necessary so that everyone might enjoy the greatest freedom and happiness possible. Without them, no one was safe.

As our Scripture lesson shows, if everyone would obey the rules of right

living, there would be no need for swords or weapons of warfare. We could use them all in making things for peace and happiness. There would be more plows and pruning hooks instead of swords and spears. There would be no need for armed men to use force to make people respect the rights of others. All would love each other and do what is right.

Rules in the Game

We know that in order to play a game, there must be certain rules, or no one will know how to play. If in a baseball game, every player went out and did as he took a notion, without an idea of the rules, what kind of game would you have? When we all play by the rules, we are much happier and play together with greater ease and better results. Try to think about what your life would be like without rules.

Rules in the Home

Perhaps the first place where we run into rules is in the home. Here we are always hearing "Don't do this" and "Do that." When we do not realize the reason for these statements, we are likely to dislike them. How would you like to live in a home where there were no rules, a place where everyone may do just as he pleases when he pleases?

Imagine such a day in the home. Mother gets up a little tired and decides she will not get breakfast at seven, but will wait until she feels like it. Father has to go to work without his breakfast. Children have to go to school without their breakfast. When the family comes home that night, they expect to find things in order, but Mother has not yet recovered, and everything is topsy-turvy. When the son goes to his room to get some of his possessions, he finds his sister or brother wanted them, and he cannot find them. Someone has decided that his bed is more comfortable and has moved it to their room. When the daughter needs to charge her cell phone, she finds that someone has taken her charger. Someone is listening to music as loudly as possible, making it impossible for his siblings to concentrate on homework. Even when it is time to go to bed, sleep is disturbed by a brother or sister making a lot of noise. Consider if one complains, and the reply is, "Well, I have a right to do just what I want to do." Are you not glad there are rules in your home upon which you can depend? With this in mind, how could you help to make the home happier by your attitude toward the rules?

Rules in the Community

John Jones told his mother all about how very unhappy he was. Nobody liked him. He had no friends. He was always getting into trouble. He had run across the neighbor's newly planted flower bed and spoiled several valuable plants. He was out with a group of boys who made a lot of noise and frightened some elderly citizens of the neighborhood one night last week. He had taken Henry's ball and bat. However, Henry had left them out in the yard. Are they not "finders keepers, losers weepers"? Why should the grocer have been so upset when John spoiled his carefully made signs? Why should everyone be so angry about John marking all over the walls in the community recreation center? What would you say caused John's unhappiness? What would you tell him if you were his mother? How could John regain the goodwill of these people?

JUST A THOUGHT

**When the Rule of Law disappears,
we are ruled by the whims of men.**

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LESSON 7

LAWS OF LOYALTY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Scripture Texts: Romans 13:8-10; Philippians 2:1-5

There are certain rules we must follow if we are to be loyal. In our Scripture lesson, we find the secret of true loyalty is love—love for others more than for ourselves. If we truly love someone, it is not very hard for us to do things for that person. You do not mind giving up some of your most treasured possessions to your best friend. The reason is, you want to see that person happy. It makes you happy even if you have to give up some of your own pleasures. Mothers and fathers give up much for their children, not because they like to go without, but because of love. If we want to be more loyal, let us learn to have more love for others.

MEMORY VERSE: And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. —Luke 10:27

A Child's Loyalty to the Home

A few years ago, you came into the world a tiny, helpless baby. Kind, loving hands received you gladly and took care of you. You were fed and tended with the most watchful care. You were given clothes, a place to sleep and to play. Everything that could be done to make you happy and well was done. When you became ill at various times, someone walked the floor with you or worked over you, even though that someone was very worn and tired from a hard day's work. As you grew older and started school, someone worked long and hard to furnish you with what you needed to get your education. Throughout your life, Father and Mother have given their very best to you. Many times, they sacrificed their own desires so that you might be made happy. About all that you have been able to give to them in return is your sincere love and loyalty. How well have you done this? This test will help you to check yourself:

1. _____ I have been kind and courteous to Mother and Father.
2. _____ I have not said unkind things about my family to anyone outside my home.
3. _____ I have tried to do my part in keeping my home a happy place

in which to live.

4. _____ I have been loyal to the ideals and rules of my home.

Loyalty to School

Joe was a member of the basketball team. The team had strict training rules, which he had been very careful to obey. One evening, he was invited to a party that lasted over two hours past the training bedtime. Joe did not want to break the rules, but in order to be polite to his hostess, he decided it was necessary. The coach heard about it and would not let Joe play the next game. His team lost.

1. Was Joe loyal to his team?
2. Was it worth it?
3. Was it necessary?

Mary and some of her friends went out on a hike. They were to write a story about their trip for an assignment. After Mary had written her story, Susan asked if she might borrow it to get an idea concerning how she should write hers. Instead of writing in her own style, she copied Mary's story. When the teacher received both copies, she accused Mary of cheating. Susan did not tell the truth. Mary said nothing, but wrote another story. When someone asked her about it she said, "I must be loyal to Susan."

1. Should Mary help her friend by letting her get by with cheating? Why?
2. Should you be loyal to your friends when it means doing wrong?
3. What do we mean by being loyal?
4. Was this loyalty?

Loyalty to Friends

Outside the members of your home are many people whom you call friends. They are those with whom you like to be. You enjoy their company above others. When you are with them, you are happy, and when they are gone, you miss them. They would do many things for you, and you would be glad to do much for them. If every friend were taken away from you, how much of your happiness would go with them?

Check the following list as you think of the loyalty you owe to your friends:

1. _____ I should keep my promises to my friends.
2. _____ I should tell others the faults of my friends.
3. _____ I should stand by my friend when he is in trouble or in need.
4. _____ I should keep the secrets my friend trusts with me.
5. _____ I should never tell on my friends, even if they have done something that harms others.
6. _____ I should be completely honest with my friends.

Loyalty to the Church

No other institution can help us more throughout our lives than God's church, if we will give it our loyalty. When we are part of the family of God, we are with people who are interested in the same things we are. We find help in our times of discouragement and sorrow. We find opportunities to make other lives happier and better. Can you imagine what the world would be without the Church of God? If the church is worth all this to us, then we owe something to it. How can we express our loyalty to the church?

A real test of loyalty is the test of responsibility. If you are asked to do some task for your family, your school, or your church, what do you do? Some people think such a task is not very important, and they pay very little attention to it unless it is something they particularly want to do. Could the following be said about you: "It is useless to ask him to do anything. He never does anything well. You cannot depend upon him"? You may not have thought of it as being disloyal, but is it not? Another person always complains about being asked to spend a little time or do a little work for someone else. It is so hard to get him to do things, thus no one ever asks him to help. Is he being loyal? Compare these people with the one who is always willing to do what needs to be done. If you ask that person to do something, you can depend on it being done well. Who is the more loyal? Who will be the most successful?

Loyalty to God

It may sometimes become confusing as to whom we owe the greatest loyalty, for loyalties are often hard to determine. As you discovered in the stories at the beginning of the lesson, there are times when there seems to be no way by which one can be loyal to two conflicting persons. However, there is One to whom we owe our first loyalty. That is God. He calls out the very best that we have and, in return, gives the very best to us. If we are always loyal to Him, there can be no doubt of our choosing the best loyalty to

others.

Think of some men in the Bible who were loyal to God, although they had to do some hard things. Consider people in your life who have been loyal to God. What have been the results of their loyalty?

JUST A THOUGHT

**Do not compromise your loyalty to God
for the sake of fitting in with man.**

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LESSON 8

LAWS FOR BUILDING A GOOD LIFE

Scripture Texts: Proverbs 3:1-7; Romans 12:9-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:14-22; Daniel 1:8-21

The lesson Scriptures present what should be a building brought together by the framing of what was presented in the past lessons. Daniel (as described in Daniel 1:8-21) proved by example that young people can attain spiritual maturity before God and escape the world's defilement if they truly desire to do so.

MEMORY VERSE: *But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank.* —Daniel 1:8

Laws Made by God

We have been studying about laws, one kind or another, for the last several lessons. For the most part, the laws have been man made. They were made because someone saw a need for them and felt they would make people better and happier. There are other kinds of laws that we will talk about today. They are the laws made by God.

A common law of nature is what we call the Law of Gravity. We say that if an object is put into space, it will fall until it comes to rest against some object. This does not happen because we say it is the law. We say it is the law because we know that it happens that way. Natural laws cannot be changed by any action of man. They exist because God created them. Jeremiah 33:25 calls them "the whole order of nature" (*Amplified Bible*).

God also has a moral law, which He has "written in [man's] hearts" (Romans 2:15). Punishment for disobedience to these laws was not made by man. The penalty belongs to God's law and naturally follows disobedience. In many cases, people may seem to get by without paying the penalty, but Romans 6:23 warns, "The wages of sin is death."

There are certain laws to regulate the working of our bodies, which are delicately made. We may look at certain machinery and marvel at how it operates. Yet, there is no machine more complicated and beautifully arranged than the human body. The more complicated the machine, the greater the necessity for order in its operation. So it is with our bodies. If we eat the

wrong foods, often the results are an upset stomach. If we do not get the proper rest, we are too tired to be our best. If we fail to drink water as we should, we might become dehydrated or develop a headache. If our bodies are not given the proper rest and nutrition, we should not be surprised at the results.

Why Protect Our Health?

No one enjoys being ill. Not only can it be depressing, but it hinders us from being our best. We know to be good citizens of our country, we must obey its laws. If we wish to be good businessmen, we must follow carefully the rules that regulate business. If we wish to be good musicians, we must learn and obey the rules that govern music. Likewise, we must learn and follow health rules if we expect to have good health. What business could be more important than keeping our bodies at their best?

In 2023, the American Hospital Association reported there are over 6,000 hospitals in the United States. Why do we need so many? While emergency care is part of the hospital's care (such as broken bones, injuries, or accidents), often people are there because they failed to take the proper care of their health. Strength and health have been wasted by careless and wrong living. Many times, it is because of a lack of good teaching concerning the care and protection of health.

Alcohol and Your Health

Alcohol, no doubt, could be at the top of the list of causes of poor health. Few other things can cause more difficulty, unhappiness, poor health, poverty, cruelty, crime, and a host of other evils than alcohol. Tests have proven that alcohol affects many parts of the body. First, alcohol affects the brain, the organ of our thoughts and the seat of our actions. The monitor that warns us there is a danger for us in doing this or that now does not function properly. We assume an attitude of indifference to the guiding of the conscience and to the teaching that has, up to this time, allowed us to distinguish between the deeds of right and wrong. That is why so much crime is caused by those who use alcohol.

Alcohol affects the nervous system, the arms, legs, eyesight, and speech. It will cause one to feel safe when he is not. Alcohol also has a great effect on the vital organs of the body. There is a test that will prove this to you. Break a raw egg into a dish of alcohol. The egg will be cooked in a few minutes. If alcohol will do that to an egg, what will it do when poured into

the stomach, irritating and gradually eroding the stomach lining? Much could also be said about tobacco and drugs.

You, Your Friends, Neighbors, and Alcohol

Many people think it is their business alone if they want to drink alcohol. They say, "We live in a free country; that is my right." Yet, drinking often affects more than just the person who is drinking. We understand the wrong of a man shooting a gun and killing someone. Is it not the same idea when a man drinks alcohol, drives his car onto the highway, then hits and kills someone? Many have been killed by drunk drivers, leaving behind grieving families whose lives have been destroyed. Whose rights were violated?

Consider, if you have experienced unpleasant situations at social events by people nearby who have been drinking, whose rights are violated there?

What Shall We Do About It?

Daniel showed the people of his day that he could be true to his best. He presented a beautiful picture of an ideal Christian. If we make this ideal ours and try our very best to live up to it, we will avoid the temptations of intoxicating drinks, tobacco in all forms, drugs, and anything that could become an ungodly habit. When we do this, we will influence our friends and neighbors, which can cause them to desire the same ideals we have.

Daniel "purposed in his heart" to do what was right. It was a difficult situation, but he would not stoop to disobey what he knew to be right. He put his ideal to the test, and the test proved he was right.

Those who violate the law regarding the harmful effects of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs will surely pay the penalty. How much better to purpose in our heart to avoid all these things that defile the body.

JUST A THOUGHT

**Health is like money—we never have a true idea
of its value until we lose it.**



LESSON 9

THE IMPORTANCE OF COURTSHIP

Scripture Texts: Romans 12:1-2; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Titus 2:6-12; James 1:27; 1 Corinthians 6:12; Romans 14:21

Some homes become Christian after establishment. This is good, but the best way is that a home be founded upon Jesus Christ from its beginning. For that to occur, the courtship must also be Christian.

So much depends upon our dating and courtship—our lives, the lives of others, the homes we set up, and our service to God—that they must not be guided by chance or one's own human judgment. Parents and older saints can give good counsel, but God promises to direct the path of those who trust Him and lean not to their own understanding.

MEMORY VERSE: Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

—*Amos 3:3*

Protect Your Body

In Romans 12:1-2, God commands all people to present their bodies "a living sacrifice" for all of life. "Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:19). In our bodies, we carry on all activities of this earthly life. The body is the tool of the mind and spirit. We can protect body, mind, and spirit by giving them over in holy, acceptable service unto God. Young people, as well as older ones, who give themselves in this way will not be conformed to this world. They will not follow the pattern set by worldly people. People thus dedicated will conduct their courtship in a pleasing manner to God. They will not be conformed to this world but transformed by Christ's life within them so that they do God's perfect will.

In the earlier lessons, we tried to encourage the youth to view their teen years as a time for serious thought and planning, not just as a time of fun and frivolity. In this lesson, we will see how our lives can be a beautiful part of God's plan.

In Ecclesiastes 12:1, we are reminded, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." That is the best time to think about God and turn to Him. Mental and physical faculties are at their best. Hope, zeal, and initiative are strong. The heart is not yet hardened, nor is the body bound by sin. Young people who are saved at an early age will be able to carry on a Christian

courtship, establish a Christian home, and desire to serve God with their joined lives.

When God advised young men and women "to be sober minded" (Titus 2:6), He did not mean for them to be pessimistic or sour. He meant for them to set their minds on things that really matter, to seek wheat rather than chaff. He meant for them to desire eternal things (wheat) more than passing, temporary things (chaff).

Deny Yourself

In Titus 2:12, we are told to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts." Unregenerated young people are guided by desires, or lusts, and uncontrolled by God's will. This is sin. Worldly possessions, popular favor, power, material security, pleasure, thrills, and adventure—when seeking any of these things comes before seeking God, they are "worldly lusts." God wants us to "live soberly, righteously, and godly."

God gave young people a desire for the companionship of the opposite sex. It is a good desire. He made rules for its right enjoyment. They are good rules. Only when we break His rules and let lust rule does trouble come. Some, disobeying God, bring a lifetime of sorrow upon themselves and their families. Even things within a courtship that seem to be lawful must be considered carefully. If an act would hurt one's reputation or bring dishonor to another, we must not do it. Even though it is lawful, if it dishonors Christ, we must not do it.

Protect Your Mind and Spirit

We cannot follow the world's courtship standards set by movies, TV shows, videos, and social media. Respectable people, let alone Christians, should reject as unthinkable some of the physical intimacies common today, such as freely touching and handling of one of the opposite sex, making out, improper positions (such as lying down together), and kissing when there is no real love or engagement. Young people should never be alone together without other adults in the house. These, and like practices, cater to worldly and youthful lust, which often lead to sin and heartbreak.

Many young people see so much false, or counterfeit, love that they do not know when there is true love. Playing with the false defiles lives and often has serious consequences. Manipulating another's affections leads to deep problems. Unhappiness, divorce, bitterness, and sin follow the trail of these cheated ones.

Dating

It is wrong to date a person whom, for any reason, one has no right to marry. We should not make intimate friends of those who do not love the Lord or those of false religion. Dating those invites problems. Any *act* that defiles your body, any *thought* that defiles your spirit, and any *word* or *story* that defiles your mind will bring destruction to you. Right courtship is carried on when we realize body, mind, and spirit belong to God. "Ye are bought with a price [the price of the life of the Son of God]" (1 Corinthians 6:20). That measures our obligation to glorify God in our bodies, minds, and spirits.

JUST A THOUGHT

**Nothing is politically right
when it is morally wrong.**

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LESSON 10

RULES FOR CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Scripture Texts: Genesis 2:18-24; 1 Timothy 3:12; 2 Corinthians 6:14-16; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Corinthians 6:19

When two Christian people are truly in love, know one another well, have prayed together, and know it is the will of God for them to marry, then (and only then) will God be pleased to sanction their union in marriage. With this foundation laid, they can build a Christian home. They build a Christian home as they establish Biblical principles and practices by which to carry on their daily activities.

MEMORY VERSE: What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. —Mark 10:9

One Man, One Woman for Life

From the beginning, it was God's will that men and women should marry. Therefore, marriage is good if carried out in God's way. This was the rule. His way includes a basic principle that husband and wife cleave to one another. The word "cleave" means to adhere closely. In marrying, one separates from all others and holds fast to the husband or wife. Many marriages are not joined together by God and therefore cannot be considered as a sacred or heavenly union. After this sacred union is entered, one can never go back and be entirely outside of it. Divorce may divide man and wife, but it can never completely erase the ties that made them one. Any effort to separate a man and wife or any act tending to damage their union is a sin, whether coming from one of them or an outside party. "Let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6).

Marriage Is Honorable to God

Marriage was instituted by God at Creation before man sinned (Genesis 1:27-28). Therefore, it was made to fit good people in a good society. It is not a concession to man's sinful tendencies, as was divorce temporarily (Matthew 19:8). "Marriage is honorable in all . . . but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4) because they are going contrary to God's established plan. They are sinning. Society, in large part, has changed

its attitude toward the so-called modern lifestyle, but God's attitude is still the same. It is still sin. All living in sin reap the same wages. How can the modern philosophy on single parents ever lead to a happy marriage or healthy home life for children? Children need both a mother and a father.

In 1 Timothy 3:12, we are taught that a leader in the Church of God must be a fit example in all ways. He is not under any different rules than others, for God has one standard for all. One point of that standard is, a man must have but one wife and a woman but one husband. Another point is that he rules his children and house well.

God's way is one husband and one wife bound together for life. The only thing that can break this tie and give either freedom to marry another is the death of one of them. God sets a limitation on all saved persons who are free to marry again. Every marriage is subject to this limitation—ONLY IN THE LORD, only a person who is saved and who is free to marry. God gives no one the right to marry an unsaved person. This would show dishonor to God. It is only saved men and women whose purified personalities, qualities, and capabilities will complement each other in God's perfect plan. Only when a partner breaks the marriage union by committing adultery is the other partner permitted a divorce (Matthew 19:9).

Lean Not to Your Own Understanding

Since the companion you choose should be your life companion, it is most important you get help from One who knows all about each of us. Outward beauty soon fades, but inner beauty increases with the passing years. A beautiful woman is not always good, but a good woman is always beautiful. The same is true of the handsome man. The fleshly mind has difficulty seeing the beauty that does not fade. Ask God and have faith in His wisdom. He has never made a bad match. Proverbs 31:30 says, "Beauty is vain."

"As the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman" (1 Corinthians 11:11. As pertains to marriage, these words teach the basic equality and mutual dependence of the sexes. Since this is true, each should honor and respect the other in the Lord. We all owe our being entirely to God. Proverbs 31:10-31 shows the picture of the model woman. Young man, ask God to help you find her.

JUST A THOUGHT

**Some wives meet their husbands with a kiss,
others with orders to wipe their feet.**

LESSON 11

CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES IN EARNING A LIVING

Scripture Texts: Luke 12:13-48; 1 Thessalonians 4:10-12; James 4:13-17; 1 Timothy 6:6-11; Proverbs 11:1; 20:6

Christianity deals with the money problem in a most fundamental and searching way. Jesus had a deep concern about what the love of money can do to the soul of man. Jesus taught much about prayer and about money. Our lesson today is the first of two lessons about economic relationships. It deals with the application of Christian principles to the earning and possessing of money under the guidance of God's Spirit.

MEMORY VERSE: Divers weights are an abomination unto the LORD; and a false balance is not good. —Proverbs 20:23

A Fundamental Principle

Throughout Luke, Chapter 12, Jesus spoke about deep spiritual issues. He dealt with practical, earthly matters, but He seriously pointed out their heavenly implications. Right amid His serious message about the eternal matters of the soul, Jesus was interrupted by a man who had a grievance against his brother because of disappointment over an inheritance. The grievance appeared to have been real and justified. The man had evidently been cheated in the division of property. However, Jesus refused to interfere. He was talking about matters much more important than the division of earthly goods. In fact, this whole lesson shows the immense contrast between the value of things *temporal* and the value of things *eternal*.

Jesus had just been speaking about courts. The reference to courts of law must have suggested to the man in the crowd that Jesus, with His wisdom and moral influence, might settle his grievance. He, who at the end of time will judge men, said, "Who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (Luke 12:14).

Jesus did not teach that the primary duty of Christianity was to establish economic justice. Earnest as He was to bring about economic justice and to encourage honest dealings among men, He realized this sort of thing follows the changing of men's hearts. He knew the secret lies not in *making* the brother divide but in making over the brother's heart until he is *willing* to divide.

When a man puts his possessions first, then he does not possess these things—they possess him. If the preaching of the Gospel can endanger your work or business, you are in the wrong line of work.

Not Rich Toward God

After the interruption, Jesus spoke about "a certain rich man" (Luke 12:16-21). Unlike the one who had wrongfully appropriated some of the inheritance, this man was probably a self-made man—what we would call a successful businessman. Just as a shortage of funds can cause people to do wrong to obtain what they want, so a surplus of funds can cause problems to arise. The rich man wondered what to do with his excess. Should he hoard it or should he distribute his goods to help others? Poverty and needs were all about him. What a blessing he could have been to himself and others had he been willing to share. He decided to hoard, and he would attempt to feed his soul on material things.

All men should make their decisions realizing they face death and the Judgment. This unwise man also faced death and the Judgment. God called him a fool. We are foolish when we lay up much of this world's goods but are not rich toward God. The trouble with this man was not that he laid up treasure, but that he laid it up for himself. He exalted the needs of his body and neglected the needs of his soul. God asked him, "Whose shall those things be," not the things "which thou hast possessed" but the things "which thou hast provided?" (Luke 12:20).

Christians Work for a Living

In James 4:13-17, we are taught a great truth—to consider the Lord's will in the matter of getting gain. Christ said in John 5:17, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." In 2 Thessalonians 3:7-10, Paul told how some of the Christians in Thessalonica had slowed down so far as profitable work was concerned. These disciples were saying: "What's the use of working? The Lord will come soon, and the world will be destroyed; let us give ourselves to prayer and watchfulness." Paul had taught them to look for the return of the Lord, but in the meantime, he believed they should stick to their daily work and shun no responsibility. Paul knew there were loafers in Thessalonica, people who were using the great hope of Christ's Second Coming as an excuse for being lazy and shiftless. Christians should work as if Christ was not coming for a long while and, on the other hand, as if He was coming back the next hour. Paul set a good example for these people and us by working

with his hands. He was impressed with the dignity of labor.

Useful employment does something essential to the enrichment of men's hearts and minds. Here in verse 7, Paul referred to idle people as "disorderly." He also said, "If any would not work, neither should he eat" (verse 10). Could anything be plainer or more just than that? Paul represents the man who works both with his hands and with his head. He was a tentmaker. At the same time, he was one of the greatest intellectuals in history.

Christian Principles in Modern Life

We live in a society in which economics plays an important part. Money has a significance in modern life that it did not have in earlier times. In the past, most people raised their own food and made their own clothes. Today, men work for wages and salaries. Without money to buy food, we might starve to death. Today, we purchase almost everything we use. We need money because of the economic significance of this present age.

Can Christian principles be applied to this modern situation? Well, if they cannot, there is no hope for any of us. First Timothy 6:10 tells us, "For the love of money is the root of all evil." The danger is not in having money, but in coveting it. It is an impossibility to covet money and not err from the faith. When we covet money, we will be tempted to shade the balance and to give a man less than we have agreed to give. This includes a day's work and in a business transaction. We should give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. A Christian will, at all times, honor his word to his fellowman. He will never give a second thought about taking advantage of anyone. He will be honest in all his dealings.

This kind of living could result in Christians being taken advantage of by others. Yet, the perfect and infallible principles of Jesus Christ are the only things that will bring true happiness. Paul was a workman; Paul was a thinker; Paul was a great Christian; and Paul was happy. We can find our happiness in this modern world only if we put first things first. Money is never, under any circumstances, the first thing. We must possess money without having it possess us.

JUST A THOUGHT

**If you would like to leave footprints in the sand of time,
you had better wear work shoes.**

LESSON 12

THE CHRISTIAN'S USE OF MONEY AND GOODS

Scripture Texts: Mark 10:29-30; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; Philippians 4:11-13; Matthew 7:12; 1 Timothy 5:8

Our lesson today deals with stewardship of the money and goods God has entrusted to our care. Our last lesson had to do with *acquiring* under the guidance of God's Spirit. Today's lesson deals with *using*, under the guidance of God's Spirit, what we have acquired.

MEMORY VERSE: But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you —Matthew 6:33

The Divine Exchange

The Christian life is not all taking from God's hand to ours. It is also giving up for His sake—from our hand to others. The heart where Christ dwells prefers Him above comfort, ease, or satisfaction of appetite. If, in surrendering these, one keeps his trust anchored in God, He will provide substitutes more precious than those lost. In Mark 10:29-30, He promises the use of plenty of the necessary goods here in this life and "in the world to come eternal life." Even with persecution, who can say the exchange is not profitable?

The Riches of God's Grace

First Timothy 6:8 tells us to be content with "having food and raiment." This is an important lesson for all people to learn. If friends and neighbors purchase many things we cannot afford, that should not affect our contentment with what we are blessed with. Trying to "keep up with the Joneses," so to speak, has led to the ruin of many good Christian financial situations.

If young people have learned, to some extent, to budget their income *before* they are married, they will have much less difficulty living within a budgeted income *after* they are married. Plan a workable budget, and live within these means. There is no way to know how many people have been led to a bankrupt condition because they allowed greed to cause them to be dissatisfied with their situation. They continued to ask for loans they did not need, that they never could expect to repay. This is spoken about in Hebrews

13:5. This tight financial position causes people to decrease, and many times to stop altogether, their giving to the Christian cause. They rob God. What greater sin can a man commit than this? This brings spiritual bankruptcy. First John 3:17 makes this truth clear. **THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU USE THAT CREDIT CARD!**

When people invest wisely in heavenly business, God will help them invest wisely in earthly business. If an individual seeks God's wisdom in all financial matters, God will help him to meet those obligations. When a Christian cannot meet an obligation at the time it is due, he will never shun it, but he will meet the creditor and give an honest explanation of his plan to pay.

When we have godly contentment, there will rarely be a need for both husband and wife to find outside employment to supply material needs.

Christian Responsibility for the Use of Goods

Psalm 24:1 gives the true basis of stewardship. The Lord owns it ALL—ourselves and all creation; we own nothing. We only hold some in trust for the Owner, God. We must give an account for our use of it. In Isaiah 55:2, we are warned not to spend money "for that which is not bread." This simply tells us not to be wasteful. Spend to provide for the needs of your family. In 1 Timothy 5:8, we are told of the importance of providing for one's family. While some money might be used for self, none must be used selfishly.

Contributions

These days, there are many requests for contributions or donations. Should we give? Withhold? Investigate? Many times, a simple investigation will plainly show them to be unworthy of our financial support.

To what cause ought we give? Not give? Will we not be responsible for the money we give to agencies who do not regard the teachings of God's Word? How about agencies that support organizations which work against God's true cause? Before making a contribution, check them out.

JUST A THOUGHT

**Christians need only to be shown a worthy need,
and they will desire to supply it.**

LESSON 13

ADVERSARIES OF THE HOME

Scripture Texts: Isaiah 33:14-16; John 8:1-11; 1 John 3:15; John 17:6-15; 1 John 2:15-17

Christians must be pure in thought AND deed. It is not enough to believe in high principles alone; it is necessary to live by them as well. We must not judge others by a standard we are not willing to accept for ourselves.

The old concern was with *fruits*. The new concern is with *roots*. Jesus did not destroy the legalism and positive demand of the Mosaic Law; He breathed life and power on it. Evil acts stand condemned, and no excuse can be made for them. They will meet judgment and suffer the consequence. The eye and the heart are the brokers of sin.

MEMORY VERSE: Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

—1 John 2:15

The Evil of Adultery

Since Jesus came into the world, women have enjoyed a freedom they never had before. Yet, with new freedom comes new responsibilities and new dangers. Civilizations have risen and fallen on the moral purity or impurity of their women. In our day of loose morals, we see a civilization deteriorating and institutions filling with those who have broken themselves upon the seventh commandment.

The sanctity of marriage is the cornerstone of our civilization. Whatever the specific form it may involve, the "want to" stamps guilt upon the soul. The seventh commandment seems to prohibit only the act of adultery. Christ taught a higher standard in John 8:3-11.

Is it possible to forgive sin without condoning it? Did not Christ forgive adultery here, without minimizing the heinousness of the sin? The sin of adultery leads to many other sins. God only knows how many have been led to the sin of murder, resulting from the sin of adultery. Abortion is murder. It only adds sin to sin. To desire to terminate a pregnancy is murder in the sight of God. First John 3:15 deals with this principle. The sixth commandment recognizes the value of a life and makes a man or a woman answerable to God for taking the life of another.

The Evils of Gambling and Dancing

In the service of Christ, the lusts of the flesh have no part. The Christian has the mind of Christ and has ceased from his sins and worldly lusts to serve God. Gambling and dancing bring a life of frivolity, self-gratification, and vice. They also cause a pullback to former associates and worldly minded friends. God's Word states in Titus 2:12 and Romans 13:14, we should deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts" and "make not provision for the flesh." These vices carry with them a sort of intoxication that causes men to throw caution to the wind. Once in this whirlpool, one is at the mercy of the spirit of the age. These vices are morally injurious. Dancing thrives on sensual pleasure. Would such dancing survive without the mixture of the sexes? The obvious answer is, "No."

Gambling causes one to depend on luck and fraud. It becomes his god. No one expects to find honesty in a gambler. Dancing and gambling become uncontrollable habits. They become as binding on the lives of men and women as tobacco, alcohol, and drugs.

The Evils of the Theater and Television

The theater and television are commercial, worldly institutions that are not subject to reform. They use methods that bring in money. Little do they care about the morals or the spiritual life of the people. Their success is measured only by the dollars they bring in. The nature of the theater and TV industry is carnal. Paul wrote in Romans 8:7, "The carnal mind is . . . not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

One might as well think of reforming the barrooms, dance halls, or places of prostitution as to expect the theater and television to reform. They make sin a thing to laugh at. They destroy the moral code. They depreciate virtue. They teach crime. They present exaggerated views of real life, rendering life to be unrealistic. Indecency corrupts the audience. Immodest dress, indecent conduct, and the breaking down of moral barriers weaken the will of those who watch.

Christian men of all ages have persistently opposed the movie theater. Can we not see the danger of these worldly channels in the weakening of the Christian home?

Many more vices endanger the foundation of the home. The Holy Spirit will give warning of them if we sincerely desire to know what He has to say to us.

JUST A THOUGHT

**If you do not want the fruits of sin,
stay out of the orchard.**

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