

6 Things God Hates & the Seven-fold Armor of God

INTRODUCTION:

Pet peeves defined: Those things that most easily annoy us. It seems that everyone has them. It's really no wonder that we do, because God is easily annoyed by certain things. We find that special list in Proverbs 6:16-19. Six things there are that God hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, and a heart that devises wicked thoughts, feet that run to mischief swiftly, a false witness that speaks lies, and he who sows discord in the church. If you are striving to please God, a study of this list could be well worth your time.

The first six lessons of this quarterly will help you to understand these areas better. By self-examination and the help of the Holy Spirit you can identify any of these that may be existing areas in your own life. One good way to do this is to pray before each lesson, asking God to reveal to you as you study if you are in anyway engaged in these activities, directly or indirectly. As an example, you may have never killed anyone physically, but ask yourself if you have trampled over the innocent, emotionally or spiritually, with your words or behavior. In this manner, by confession and renouncing these acts, we can be set free to be pleasing and obedient to Him.

Can you imagine a professional football team coming to the Super Bowl without their protective pads and helmets? How well do you think they would do? Without a doubt, they would get creamed—and just imagine the injuries!

Furthermore, can you imagine the Church of Jesus Christ standing without their spiritual armor in these dark and perilous times, when Satan and his demons are raging against the Saints? How is the church doing? Many are living a victorious life because they are fighting with equipment that God provided. But, many in the church are living weak and defeated lives. Their lives are in turmoil, their families are a mess, and many local churches are in trouble. The second half of this quarterly is devoted to a deeper understanding of the armor of God. We hope that as you study, you will give devoted attention to applying the armor and becoming stronger in the Lord.

Our thanks go to the person who wrote this quarterly, years ago. We have chosen to reprint it due to its important subject matter. May God bless you as we look into His precious Word!

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Lesson One - A Proud Look

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” --I John 2:16

Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 8:10-20

Introduction

The first six lessons in this quarterly are based upon the six things that God hates, as found in Proverbs 6:16-19. Although it states, “seven are an abomination...” two are so closely related that they were combined in one lesson.

There is no apparent significance to the order in which these six things appear in the text, but the first one mentioned is a proud look. The pride that God hates is not the look of satisfaction of a job well done, an admiration for our children, being able to solve a problem, or the things with which we often associate pride. The pride God hates is fostered by the one air that sees no need of God. A person with this type of pride may be rich but he can also be poor. It knows no cultural or ethnic bounds. It is a very basic trait to all humanity.

Why does God hate this latter type of pride? It is a barrier to any dealings with God. It doesn't recognize God and feels no need of Him. A person so inclined feels he can do things in his own power and in his own way. He is also a person who refuses to admit any wrong or to say, “I'm sorry.” He may be hard to deal with. This pride must be broken or it will break the person. God cannot help someone who doesn't want help.

In our own efforts to help ourselves, without God's help, He sees us as cold and naked and blind (Revelation 3:17). He wants to help us but in order to do so we must humble ourselves and ask for help. When the arrogant pride is replaced by a strong trust in Someone wiser, God can open us to a whole new world that had been closed by pride. We can feel the peace within that only He can give—a peace that passes understanding.

Lesson Questions

1. Describe the outward manifestations of the pride that God hates. Revelation 3:14-18; Proverbs 21:4, 24-30.
2. What would God prefer our attitude to be? Jeremiah 9:23-24; Deuteronomy 8:17-18.
3. List problems that pride can cause. Proverbs 28:25-26; Proverbs 17:19; Proverbs 13:10; III John 9-11.
4. Describe the problems pride caused in Jesus' day. Mark 12:38-40; Luke 11:43, 52-54.
5. How does Paul put down boasting? I Corinthians 4:6-7. 6. What did pride do to Nebuchadnezzar? Daniel 4:28-33. How many times was he warned? Daniel 2:47; Daniel 3:28; Daniel 4:4, 22, 26-27. When his judgment was lifted what did he proclaim? Daniel 4:34-37.
6. What did pride almost do to Naaman? II Kings 5:8-12. What wisdom prevailed and what was the result? II Kings 5:13-14.
7. Explain what Paul thought his “thorn in the flesh” was for? II Corinthians 12:5-10.
8. How can a person overcome pride? Philippians 2:2-5; James 4:6-7; I Corinthians 13; 4-7; Romans 12:3, 16.
9. What will God do to the proud? Isaiah 2:11-12; Isaiah 13:11; Proverbs 16:5, 18.

Life Application

An area that many Christians develop prideful attitudes in is their church. Often they have pride in the building itself, because they have helped build it or given finances towards the building of it. Many also have pride in the services, classes or the assistance they provide in these areas. Because of their pride, God is unable to speak to them, they are closed to Him: they don't hear His chastisement or rebuke, He is unable to move them to repentance, and unable to lead them to a greater walk with Him.

Examine your own life. What areas of pride do you have?

Lesson Two - A Lying Tongue / A False Witness

"He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit." --Proverbs 12:17

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 9:1-9

Introduction

A lying tongue and a false witness are closely related and yet can follow different paths of application.

To lie is to fail to tell the truth in the matter. Little children learn to do this rather early in life and it is a trait that must be corrected early. Some have a more difficult time than others overcoming this habit. But this type of lying is generally misrepresenting facts in our own lives—whether we took something or not, how big the fish really was, how fast we went, what we did, etc. it is generally defensive in nature.

A false witness is generally misrepresenting something in another person's life or against another person. It is generally of an offensive nature. It can be blaming someone else for what we did, trying to cause a blot in another person's character through jealousy or retribution or obscuring justice. Also included, would be implications that would lead someone to believe something that is not true. Of course, this is referring to deliberate, not innocent, representations.

Why would God hate lying? Indeed, why do we hate lying in other people? Because our world is run on trust. Someone who is known for their lying cannot be trusted, even when he tells the truth, for you don't know when that is. Someone who is honest can be trusted in all things. The bulk of our laws deal with trying to keep people honest, can you imagine the amount of problems that would be solved if all people would tell the truth?

Then there were those whose motto of life is, "Never trust anyone." Then why should they be trusted? This can only lead to a frustrated, suspicious life. We all must trust others, many times each day. We need to resolve that we can be trusted in all things and then pray for an epidemic of the same in others.

Lesson Questions

1. Explain what God meant by the ninth commandment. Exodus 20:16; Exodus 23:1-2.
2. How sure is God's promise? Hebrews 6:17-19.
3. What does that mean to us? Hebrews 6:11-12. By what means did Ahab obtain a vineyard that was not for sale? I Kings 21:5-10, 16. What was his judgment? I Kings 21:17-20, 25-29.
4. What did Joseph's brothers cause Jacob to believe? Genesis 37:31-33. How is this, a false witness?
5. Explain the significance of John 8:43-47, after reading Genesis 3:4-5 and Genesis 12:10-20. Are half-truths acceptable in today's society, based on these scriptures?
6. How wild can lies get at times? Exodus 32:1-6, 21-25.
7. What was a major problem in Judah and Israel before their captivity? Isaiah 59:2-4, 12-15; Jeremiah 9:3-6.
8. What further damage can lying and false witnessing do? Proverbs 11:9; Proverbs 20:17; Matthew 26:59-61; Acts 6:9-14.
9. What is the Christian taught in this matter? Luke 3:14; Proverbs 24:28-29; Ephesians 4:25, 29; Colossians 3:8-9. And if false witness is made about us? I Peter 3:16-17.
10. What is the final result to all who continue to lie? Revelation 21:8; Proverbs 19:5.

Life Application

Sometimes we excuse our actions by saying, "It is only a little white lie." Discuss this statement in light of the ninth commandment. Is the ninth commandment as viable for us today as the fourth commandment is? Can we say that there is any sin that is not a serious matter?

Lesson Three - Shedding Innocent Blood

“In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.” –I John 3:10

Scripture Reading Proverbs 1:7-19

Introduction

Nothing seems more wasteful than the unnecessary murders of innocent people. Yet, it has been going on from the very beginning, with the murder of Abel, on down to the present with the recent terrorist activities.

Even though wars are heinous, probably more in mind here is indiscriminate murder by individuals or groups. Examples abound: Cain killed Abel; David killed Uriah; Jezebel killed Naboth; the inquisitions of the Dark and Middle Ages; the righteous prophets who were killed simply because they brought a message from God.

And then, there was Jesus. He was sinless, without guile in His mouth; and yet, the religious leaders of His day hated Him and had Him put to death. The instigators of the crime are as guilty as if they had carried it out themselves. When they cried, “Let His blood be upon us and our children,” it was—with great severity. Rome, whom they wanted to crucify Jesus, dealt them the same death blow.

The killing of innocent people does not go unpunished. Rome fell. The Holy Roman Empire came to an end. Hitler’s Germany fell and other nations, terrorist groups, and individuals, will meet a similar fate unless they repent. God will take up the cause of the persecuted and innocent victims (Psalm 94:23).

Lest we think that these examples are far removed from us, Jesus brings it closer home when He says, “That whosoever is angry with his brother without cause shall be in danger of the judgment.” The way to stop murder is to stop it at its source—the heart. When it is set right with God, the actions do not go far enough to cause harm.

Lesson Questions

1. How did the first murder come about? Genesis 4:3-5, 8. What was the underlying cause? Genesis 4:6-7.
2. What king was known for shedding innocent blood? II Kings 21:1, 6, 16. What did he later do? II Chronicles 33:9-16, 18-19
3. What king was held responsible for murder even though it wasn’t done by his hand? II Samuel 11:14-17. Why is this principle important?
4. Where did mob rule cause a murder? Acts 7:54-60. How could this anger have been controlled?
5. What is said about hate towards a brother? Matthew 5:21-22; I John 3:15-16.
6. Who are often the victims of crimes? Psalm 10:2, 8-10; Psalm 94:4-6, 21.
7. Who will take up their cause? Malachi 3:5; Psalm 94:1-2, 22-23; Hosea 4:1-3; Deuteronomy 27:24-25.
8. What instruction does God give us concerning violence? Jeremiah 22:3; I Peter 4:15.
9. What happens when judgment against evil is delayed? Ecclesiastes 8:11.
10. How might we disarm an enemy of ours? Matthew 5:33-48; Romans 12:14, 17-21.

Life Application

Whether a Christian should ever resort to physical violence has been a controversy for many years. What is often overlooked however is that there are many other ways to kill and destroy. The person who first said, “Sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never harm me,” was in error. Words can build up, complement, soothe and make peace—but words can also tear down, wound the spirit, damage the emotions and lead men away from the truth that sets us free. This is why Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.” How ironic that so many men and women who would never physically strike another person with their fists, are willing to cause even worse damage with their tongues. God gave us the power to choose our words, so, choose wisely, be a maker of peace.

Lesson Four - Wicked Imaginations

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” –Philippians 4:8

Scripture Reading: Mark 7:14-23

Introduction

Some of man’s greatest ingenuity is invested in devising evil. Much of this was to create new battle implements or techniques of torture.

It takes a depraved mind to focus on ways of harming other people. The flood in Noah’s day and the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah in the days of Abraham show how far violence and immorality can go and how God stepped in to remedy the situation.

History abounds with examples of such degeneracy. The Bible describes some at the time of the judges and kings of Israel, and how it also involved their idolatry. But all the major empires—Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome—fell for the same reasons. The rise to power involved hard work, strict discipline and strong morals. Then much of their success “went to their heads.” Because of slavery, many people had too much idle time and their thoughts turned to fun and games. The human appetite never seemed satiated and demanded the games become more gruesome and immoral. Soon, the nations had become so undisciplined and degenerate that they couldn’t repel invading conquerors. All their thoughts were only evil continually. The few who tried to warn of impending doom were often ignored, but some of them were made subjects in the “blood sport” games. When Rome fell, the people weren’t clamoring for better defenses or a stronger army, but for more circuses and grosser immoral activity. Wickedness feeds on itself, leading only to greater and greater wickedness.

Jesus declared that evil begins in the hearts of men and it is these imaginations that have caused suffering since time began. Rebellion and selfishness are at the core of man’s fallen nature. It takes a change of heart touched by Christ to bring us to a righteous way of life. With this conversion our lives can be directed for good instead of evil.

Lesson Questions

1. What does God see as a general condition of man? Genesis 6:5; Matthew 15:17-19; Psalm 94:11. (Note: This would include man’s purposes and desires.)
2. Are we able to hide our inner feelings and thoughts from God? I Samuel 16:7; I Kings 8:39; Jeremiah 17:9-10.
3. What contributed to Sodom’s downfall? Ezekiel 16:49-50. What was behind much of the wickedness of Israel? Deuteronomy 29:16-19.
4. What was involved in some of this worship? II Kings 16:2-4; II Kings 21:6-7; II Chronicles 28:1-4; Isaiah 57:3-5.
5. What horrible things did men devise against our Savior? Matthew 27:26-31.
6. What admonition did David give to Solomon? I Chronicles 28:9.
7. When left to themselves, how far will men go in depravity? Romans 1:21-31.
8. What is God’s judgment against such things? Romans 1:18-20, 32.

Life Application

One of the most important conversions that God wants to make in us is our way of thinking (II Corinthians 10:3-5). We have been given powerful spiritual weapons of truth to overcome proud, evil and corrupt thinking. The primary battle fought for a man’s life is within his mind. This is not a struggle for power but for truth. Jesus said, “...if you continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” John 8:31b-32. If you believe the Lord and you realize that we are given power to pull down the strongholds the enemy has erected in our minds, then you will strive to know God’s Word and apply it to your life. The battle for our lives, families and churches, can be won; but we must be willing to fight the good fight of faith. Are you equipped for battle? Study Ephesians 6:10-18 this week and Be strong in the Lord!

Lesson Five - Swiftmess to do Evil

“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” –Titus 2:12

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 59:1-8

Introduction

The Bible says that we all have sinned and come short of the grace of God. no matter how gratifying, when sin is finished, it brings forth death. Yet, there are certain sins that are more vile than others, both in showing the condition of the sinner and its effect on others. The same seems to be true about the readiness and willingness of some to do evil.

Again certain notable Bible examples come to mind. Kings Ahab and Manasseh seem to head the list in both the quality and quantity of evil that they exercised, whereas Jeroboam was noted for institutionalizing idolatry in Israel after the kingdom divided. God hates a readiness and an ingenuity to do evil. Part of the reason may be that it has such a broad effect on other people, either in causing them to follow in such evil ways or in victimizing them.

Today we can think of the Mafia and terrorists as fitting into the category of swiftmess to do evil. The Mafia spreads its tentacles into all sorts of legitimate businesses, causing fear and maybe death, while also fostering all sorts of immoral practices for their own gain. Yet, many put on a charitable front and attend church regularly. Terrorists are devising new methods of terror each day with innocent people as their victims. They spout a “righteous” cause but their only product is destruction.

All over the world there are people whose lives are geared toward evil. Some are the criminal element that live by doing evil and are always involved in some kind of wild living. However, all these people will soon harvest bitter fruit from the seeds they are sowing.

Jesus provides a way out of this vicious cycle of living. As God received King Manasseh when he repented of evil, He will hear our prayer of repentance that we may have a new life in Christ (See Romans 6:8).

Lesson Questions

1. What was Ahab noted for? I Kings 21:20. What does “sold” mean here?
2. Before the flood, what was the condition on earth? Genesis 6:11-13. How does that compare to our current time?
3. After the flood, who was largely responsible for reinstituting idolatry? Genesis 10:8-10. What does “before the Lord” mean here? I Samuel 15:22-23; Genesis 6:11.
4. What may be another cause of rampant wickedness? Psalm 14:1.
5. Consider God’s indictment against mankind. Romans 3:9-18. Are there any racial or ethnic boundaries to this type of activity?
6. What judgment will come to these people? II Peter 2:9-22. Were some backsliders?
7. What provision did God make to change individuals? Romans 3:23-26; Romans 8:1-2.
8. Why is this necessary? Romans 8:5-8; I Corinthians 2:10-16.
9. Why did King Manasseh need forgiveness for his deeds, and what caused him to repent? II Chronicles 33:6, 11-19.
10. Compare God’s instructions to us with what often goes on in the world. Romans 13:7-10; I Thessalonians 4:11-12; I Thessalonians 5:14-15; Titus 2:11-15.

Life Application

Nearness to evildoing or evil speaking can have a serious negative impact upon a Christian’s life. By nurturing close relationships with worldly people, we can be opening our minds to their bad attitudes and vain philosophies. Who was the man who once said, “If you stand next to garbage, after awhile you won’t be able to smell it?” he was right! But, we can add to it: “If you continue to stand by the garbage, you will begin to smell like it does.” Ultimately, if we don’t move away from the garbage, we will become the garbage! This is the desensitizing effect of evil.

Lesson Six - Sowing Discord Among Brethren

“Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.” –Proverbs 26:20

Scripture Reading: I Corinthians 3:1-9, 18-23

Introduction

The last thing mentioned in Proverbs 6:19 that God hates is one who sows discord among brethren. Brethren would be any group of people who have a close fellowship and common ties that bind them together for the common good.

God is always trying to bring peace and harmony to people’s lives and especially to the church. He is trying to bring all mankind together through Christ. In fact, Christ’s kingdom will be made up of those who will get along. The various divisions in the world are the doings of man, not God.

This doesn’t mean we are to embrace that which we do not believe, and certainly we know there are differences. Nor does it mean that we have to get our own way. Sometimes compromises are necessary for the common good.

God’s energies are directed toward reconciliation rather than division. So, those who are causing conflict may actually be working against God.

A primary example of discord, are the conflicts within a church. Strife and divisions abound. All through the centuries since Christ, churches have split causing bad feelings among those who should be friends. Most times the work of Christ has been hindered and a poor example was set before the world. In local churches it is surprising how often this is caused: not by some great doctrinal differences, but by pettiness and bickering over little things.

Lesson Questions

1. What is the major cause of most strife and discord? Proverbs 16:28; Proverbs 17:9; Proverbs 26:18-28.
2. What does this do to the victim? Proverbs 18:8; Proverbs 26:22.
3. Contrast what is found in Proverbs 11:13. What is good for us to remember? Proverbs 20:19; Proverbs 26:20.
4. What may be another cause? Acts 13:13; Acts 15:36-40. Did this strife remain? Colossians 4:10; II Timothy 4:11.
5. What did God say to Israel in Leviticus 19:16? What does He say through David in Psalm 15:1-3?
6. What was the chief concern of Jesus’ last prayer before His death? John 17:20-23. How does strife among brethren lessen the impact of the Gospel? How should we do things? Philippians 2:14-16.
7. What was a problem in the Corinthian church? I Corinthians 3:3; I Corinthians 6:1, 5-8. How did Paul say to solve the disputes among brethren? I Corinthians 6:4-5.
8. What did Jesus say would be a sign to the world that we are His disciples? John 13:34-35. How does John reinforce this concept? I John 3:23-24.
9. What strong teaching does John give concerning loving our brethren? I John 2:8-11; I John 3:14-18.

Life Application

Politics in the church is an extremely sensitive issue. It can be one of the most counterproductive elements of the church to spiritual unity. Much discord has been sown in the past because of the clashing self-wills of church members. Many who were once close spiritual brothers grew distant and unfriendly to each other over disagreements in church affairs. Remember that our adversary, the devil, will use anything to destroy the unity of the faith. Satan is masterful at the “divide and conquer” strategy. True “brotherly love” and “readiness to forgive” will stop the enemy from his divisive work. Love and forgive!

Lesson Seven - The Belt of Truth

*“Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.”
– Psalm 51:6*

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 6:10-20

Introduction

The next seven lessons deal with the Christian’s armor, used in daily battle. Paul is emphasizing that our major battles are not against people but against forces that are unseen. He then outlines what is necessary for a Christian to stand against anything Satan can throw at us.

“The word rendered ‘wiles’ means, properly, that which is traced out appropriately here rendered wiles meaning cunning devices, arts, attempts to delude and destroy us. The wiles of the devil are the various arts and stratagems which he employs to drag souls down to perdition. We can more easily encounter open force than we can cunning; and we need the weapons of Christian armor to meet the attempts to draw us into a snare, as much as to meet open force. The idea here is that Satan does not carry on an open warfare” (Barnes’ Notes on the New Testament, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p. 1011).

To have loins girt about with truth, “...the idea here may be that as the girdle was the bracer up, or support of the body, so truth is fitted to brace us up and to gird us for constancy and firmness. The girdle kept all parts of the armor in their proper place, and preserved firmness and consistency in the dress; and so truth might serve to give consistency and firmness to our conduct... Truth preserves a man for those lax views of morals, of duty, and of religion, which leave him exposed to every assault. It makes the soul sincere, firm, constant, and always on its guard. A man who has no consistent view of truth, is just the man for the adversary successfully to assail” (Ibid, p. 1012, 1013).

Then knowledge, knowledge of right things, true things, is very important to a Christian. And then, “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them” John 13:17.

Lesson Questions

1. Define “truth.” Why is it essential that truth be absolute?
2. Who is the source of truth? John 17:17. What did Jesus say of Himself? John 14:6.
3. Why is truth an important attribute of God? Deuteronomy 32:4; Hebrews 6:17-19.
4. If we reject these sources of truth to what are we left vulnerable? II Timothy 4:2-4; II Peter 2:1-12.
5. What happens to those who seek truth another way? II Timothy 3:1-9. Explain why.
6. What may be one way of bringing them out of this? II Timothy 2:21-25.
7. What can the scriptures do for us? II Timothy 3:14-17; John 8:31-32.
8. How do we gain truth and what is to be done with it? II Timothy 2:15. What help is available? John 16:13.
9. How important is it to believe the truth? II Thessalonians 2:9-12; Romans 2:8-9.
10. What promises concerning truth are given the true believer? Psalm 91:2-4; Romans 2:7; Luke 12:31, 34-36.

Life Application

We are living in perilous times, when every truth of God is questioned and the Bible is regarded as outdated. This is primarily because men are unwilling to accept absolute principles of right and wrong. Situation ethics and “values clarification” has almost completely replaced the teaching of true morality in the classrooms of America. The only hope for our age—the only hope for any age—is to return to God and the Bible for a strict definition of right and wrong. To believe that the means justifies the end is to be deceived! The absolutes of God teach that evil means of any kind will produce death. Our only hope is to discern and embrace the truth—it will make us free!

Lesson Eight - Breastplate of Righteousness

“Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness.” –II Corinthians 9:10

Scripture Reading: Romans 6:11-23

Introduction

The breastplate was an important part of a soldier’s armor that covered his vital organs, especially the heart and lungs. The breastplate had two parts, the front and the back, and they went from his neck to his thighs. Most were made of plates or rings of metal, either like the scales of a fish or looped together to allow flexibility of movement, yet offered protection from sword, spear, or arrow.

The righteousness here refers to “integrity, holiness, purity of life, sincerity of piety. The breastplate defended the vital parts of the body and the idea here may be that integrity of life, and righteousness of character, are as necessary to defend us from the assaults of Satan, as the coat of mail was to preserve the heart from the arrows of an enemy. It was in incorruptible integrity of Job, and in a higher sense, of the Redeemer Himself, that saved them from the temptations of the devil. And it is as true now that no one can successfully meet the power of temptation unless he is righteous... A want of integrity will leave a man exposed to the assaults of the enemy, just as a man would be whose coat of mail was defective, or some part of which was wanting. The King of Israel was smitten by an arrow, “...between the joints of his harness” I Kings 22:34; and many a man who thinks he has on the Christian armor is smitten in the same manner. There is some defect of character; some want of incorruptible integrity; some point that is unguarded--and that will be sure to be the point of attack by the foe. So David was tempted to commit the enormous crimes that stain his memory, and Peter to deny his Lord. So Judas was assailed for the want of the armor of righteousness, through his avarice; and so, by some want, of incorruptible integrity in a single point, many a minister of the gospel has been assailed and has fallen. It may be added here, That we need a righteousness which God alone can give... to make us perfectly invulnerable to all the arrows of the foe” (Barnes’ Notes on the New Testament, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p. 1013).

Lesson Questions

1. What is an important first step for any believer? Romans 4:3-5; Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19-24; Isaiah 55:6-7.
2. What then is expected to follow? James 2:20-24; Ephesians 2:8-10.
3. Should sin still have control? Romans 6:1-2, 11-16. What are we to do with our “members?” Note: the margin renders “instruments” as “arms” or “weapons.”
4. Contrast the two ways we can be servants. Romans 6:18, 20-22.
5. What should our attitude be toward righteousness? Matthew 5:6.
6. What call to faith and blessing does God give? Isaiah 55:1-3.
7. What is a good indication of conversion? I John 2:28-29; I John 3:7, 10; Matthew 12:34-37.
8. How is this possible? Philippians 2:13; II Corinthians 3:5-6; Romans 8:10.
9. Why is it important to examine our spiritual condition? II Corinthians 13:5.
10. What is another way that righteousness is symbolized? Revelation 19:7-8; Revelation 3:18-19. How important is this? Matthew 22:11-14.

Life Application

Who are you? That is the question, who are you really? Look at your “inner man.” What do you see? Someone has observed that who we really are is who we are when we are all by ourselves and no one else is watching. If we are real Christians from the inside out, truly righteous and converted, then we are just the same in private as we are in church.

Have we ignored a basic obligation when we accepted the King’s gracious invitation, have we put on our garment? Or, have we refused to wear the correct garment? To accept the invitation but then refuse to put on the “garment” or think it’s not needed would be a refusal of Christ’s sacrifice and hence, we would then be an imposter.

Who are you?

Lesson Nine - The Shoes of the Gospel

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” –Romans 5:1

Scripture Reading: Romans 10:6-17

Introduction

As a good shoe is important to many things, as in sports, farming, logging, hiking etc., so it was to the ancient warrior. “The protection of the feet and ankles consisted of two parts: 1) the sandals, or shoes, which often were fitted with nails or armed with spikes to make them hold firm in the ground; or 2) with greaves that were fitted to the legs...” (Barnes’ Notes on the New Testament, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p. 1013).

But the Apostle Paul is talking about being prepared with the gospel of Peace. “The word rendered “preparation” ...means: properly, readiness, fitness for alacrity; and the idea,... that they were to be ever ready to go forth to preach the gospel... The apostle figured to himself a soldier, clad in the usual manner. Christians were to resemble him. One part of his dress or preparation consisted in the covering and defense of the foot. It was to preserve the foot from danger, and to secure the facility of his march, and perhaps to make him firm in battle. Christians were to have the principles of the gospel of peace—the peaceful and pure gospel—to facilitate them; to aid them in their marches; to make them firm in the day of conflict with their foes. They were not to be furnished with carnal weapons, but with the peaceful gospel of the Redeemer; and sustained by this, they were to go on in their march through the world. The principles of the gospel were to do for them what the greaves and iron-spiked sandals did for the soldier—to make them ready for the march, to make them firm in the foot tread, and to be a part of their defenses against the foes” (Ibid, p. 1013-1014). It does no good to be a completely outfitted Christian soldier and not be able to carry the gospel because our feet can’t take it or we lack the desire or readiness to minister in Christ’s name.

Lesson Questions

1. How did Jesus make preparation for the gospel to spread? Ephesians 2:12-22; Colossians 1:16-20. What peace is this?
2. How do we gain this peace? Romans 5:1-2.
3. Where do we get our peace and what encouragement is given? John 14:27. Why is this peace important? John 16:33.
4. What command is given to believers in Christ? Matthew 28:19-20.
5. How is this often done and why is it important? Romans 10:13-18.
6. What do you think is indicated in John 7:37-38?
7. What are the mixed feelings concerning preaching? I Corinthians 1:17-21.
8. What is important to remember concerning the preacher? I Thessalonians 2:4; Titus 1:3.
9. Although not a preacher, what was Philemon noted for? Philemon 4-6. What does “communication” mean here?
10. Discuss the admonition given in the following verses. Philippians 4:7; Colossians 3:15 and Hebrews 12:14-15.

Life Application

Would you walk barefoot through a thorn patch? Unlikely. Nor was the Christian ever intended to walk barefoot through the spiritual “thorny ground” of the world. The shoes of Christ’s peace provide protection for us—but they do something else that is much more important: They are specially designed for us to do the work of the gospel. We wouldn’t wear spiked golf shoes to walk the dog down the sidewalk, nor dress shoes to go out and chop firewood. Christ designed our spiritual shoes so that we would use them for the right reason—to be prepared with the gospel that saves men’s souls. Who was it that said, “The shoes make the man!”?

Lesson Ten - Shield of Faith

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

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 11:32-40

Introduction

“Above all” in the context of Ephesians 6:16, is “not above all in point of importance of value, but ‘over-all,’ as a soldier holds his shield to defend himself. It constitutes a protection over every part of his body, as it can be turned in every direction. The idea is, that as the shield covered or protected the other parts of the armor, so faith had a similar importance in the Christian virtues...the shield was an ingenious device by which blows and arrows might be parried off, and the whole body defended... As long as the soldier had his shield, he felt secure; and as long as a Christian has faith, he is safe. It comes to his aid in every attack that is made on him, no matter from what quarter; it is the defense and guardian of every other Christian grace; and it secures the protection which the Christian needs in the whole of the spiritual war... By the ‘fiery darts of the wicked,’ Paul here refers, probably, to the temptations of the great adversary, which are like fiery darts; or those furious suggestions of evil, and excitements to sin, which he may throw into the mind like fiery darts. They are blasphemous and torment the soul. In regard to them, we may observe, 1) that they come suddenly,... 2) they come from unexpected quarters,...3) they pierce, and penetrate, and torment the soul,... 4) they set the soul on fire, and enkindle the worst passions,... The only way to meet them is by the ‘shield of faith;’ by confidence in God, and by relying on his gracious promises and aid. It is not by our own strength; and, if we have not faith in God, we are wholly defenseless. We should have a shield that we can turn in any direction, on which we may receive the arrow, and by which it may be put out” (Barnes’ Notes on the New Testament, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p. 1014).

Lesson Questions

1. What is the most common definition of faith? Hebrews 11:1; II Corinthians 4:18; II Corinthians 5:7.
2. What two other words are closely associated with faith? Mark 9:23; Proverbs 3:5.
3. What faith is necessary to be saved? Hebrews 11:6; John 3:14-18; Acts 16:31; Acts 26:15-18.
4. What process takes care of past sins? Romans 3:20-26; Ephesians 2:8.
5. With our past taken care of and the results accepted by faith, what is important for us to remember? John 15:3-5.
6. What is the next important step? Ephesians 3:17-19; Colossians 1:19-23; James 2:17-20, 24, 26.
7. From whom should we be able to learn and what should it do for us? Hebrews 12:1-2. Note: The “cloud of witnesses” are those mentioned in chapter 11, they were a testament to the truth of the Faith.
8. What promises concerning faith are available to encourage us? Ephesians 3:20-21; I Peter 1:3-5; I Corinthians 2:9-10.
9. How then is our “shield of faith” put to the test? I Peter 1:7-9; I Corinthians 10:11-13. What should this do for us? II Thessalonians 1:3-4; II Peter 3:17-18.
10. What is our victory over the world? I John 5:4-6.

Life Application

By faith Peter stepped from the boat and walked on the sea to Jesus. We can see that his fear of the storm distracted him and made him sink, and we can be thankful for the loving Master who reached down and caught Peter just in time. But, more than anything else, let’s remember that for those few steps that Peter took on top of the water, his faith in God’s ability allowed him to operate supernaturally. By faith, he stepped from the boat—that was the first challenge! The Master had called him but he got himself overboard. It’s much easier to believe in what God can do from the safety of our little comfort zones. But putting faith on the line where there is no safety net and no way out is where real faith begins. Are you walking in faith?

Lesson Eleven - Helmet of Salvation

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” –John 1:12

Scripture Reading: John 3:1-12

Introduction

There are many Christians who are often perplexed because they feel they will not know whether they are saved until Jesus returns. Yet, a scrutiny of the teachings of Jesus and of the apostles indicate the opposite. The greatest comfort a Christian can have is “knowing” he is saved. The Bible gives this assurance, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” Mark 16:16. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” Acts 16:31.

The helmet of salvation in Paul’s discourse also indicates a definite knowledge and hope of salvation. This is something we realize with our mind, not our feelings. “The idea is, that a well-founded hope of salvation will preserve us in the day of spiritual conflict, and will guard us from the blows which an enemy would strike. The helmet defended the head—a vital part; and so the hope of salvation will defend the soul, and keep it from the blows of the enemy. A soldier would not fight well without a hope of victory. A Christian could not contend with his foes without the hope of final salvation; but, sustained by this, what has he to dread?” (Barnes’ Notes on the New Testament, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p. 1014)

Satan often desires to put doubts into our mind, especially concerning our salvation. New converts are particularly bothered by this problem. They wonder if it was just the emotional atmosphere of the time, pressure by someone else, or whether because of inner conflicts or sin, they really had “locked into” salvation. To them, and to us, nothing can be more reassuring than turning to the Word of God and re-establishing in our mind the plan of salvation and its surety. “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” Romans 10:13.

Lesson Questions

1. What is man’s greatest need and how is it met? Romans 5:12-21.
2. How does God plead with us? Isaiah 1:16-18.
3. How was the atonement made for us? Isaiah 53:4-6; Colossians 1:12-14; I Peter 2:21-24.
4. Once a “knowledge” of this is obtained, what must be done? Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19-21. Is there any other way? Acts 4:12.
5. What do we become when Jesus comes into our lives? II Corinthians 5:17-21; I John 5:4-5
6. What should we do and what do we become? I John 4:13-15; Romans 10:9-11; II Corinthians 5:18-21.
7. What salvation promise do we receive from God? I John 5:11-15; John 3:36; John 17:3; John 20:31.
8. Once we are assured of this, what should it do for us? I John 1:3-4; I John 3:14-15; I John 4:16-19; Isaiah 12.
9. What confidence can we have in Christ? John 10:27-29; II Timothy 1:12; Romans 8:35-39.

Life Application

The devil operates in the realms of fear, doubt and deception. His power is in the lie. By his lie, he brought down the first, a man and woman, which polluted the human line with the nature of sin. Many deceptions concerning biblical doctrines and the gospel can be found within the modern church. The main target of Satan’s attack has been to weaken the believer’s doctrines on how to be saved. The extremes of “don’t-even-breathe” iron-fisted legalism and the “anything-goes, it’s under the blood” license to sin, have wreaked havoc among God’s people: Both lead to the gates of damnation. Do you know and understand the doctrine of salvation as taught in the Bible? If you are in doubt to your own salvation, notify the elders of your church. They will be willing to help you settle this important question.

Lesson Twelve - Sword of the Spirit

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” –Romans 15:4

Scripture Reading: Matthew 4:1-11

Introduction

This lesson may seem to overlap a little with the one on the “Loins Girt About with Truth.” However, there is a major difference. The former dealt with the knowledge of truth, this one will deal with putting it to use.

You will notice in this lesson that the Sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. This is not dealing with the various aspects of the Holy Spirit, but rather, how the Holy Spirit helps reveal the truths of God to us and then helps us to apply those truths powerfully in times of need.

We define the Word of God as “What God has spoken—His truth and promises... It was with this weapon that the Savior met the tempter in the wilderness... it is only by this that Satan can now be met. Error and falsehood will not put back temptation; or can we hope for victory unless we are armed with the truth. Learn hence, 1) that we should study the Bible, that we may understand what the truth is. 2) We should have texts of scripture at command, as the Savior did, to meet the various forms of temptation. 3) We should not depend on our own reason, or rely on our own wisdom. A single text of scripture is better to meet a temptation than all the philosophy which the world contains.. The tempter can reason and reason plausibly too; but he cannot resist a direct and positive command of the Almighty... So we shall be safe if we adhere to the simple declarations of the Bible, and oppose a temptation by a positive command of God. But the moment we leave that, and begin to parley with sin, that moment we are gone. It is as if a man should throw away his sword and use his naked hands only in meeting an adversary. Hence, 4) We may see the importance of training up the young in the accurate study of the Bible. There is nothing which will furnish a better security to them in future life, when temptation comes upon them, than to have a pertinent text of scripture at command” (Barnes’ Notes on the New Testament, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p. 1014, 1015).

Lesson Questions

1. How did Eve fail in meeting the tempter? Genesis 3:1-6. How did Satan appeal to her and what was Eve’s logic?
2. How did Jesus foil Satan’s temptations? Matthew 4:4, 7, 10. What three things was Satan appealing to there? Matthew 4:3, 5-6, 8-9.
3. What should be our desire? I Peter 2:2-3. Of what quality is it? Proverbs 30:5.
4. What must we do before the Word can be of benefit to us? II Timothy 2:15. When should this start? II Timothy 3:14-15.
5. What important help will the Holy Spirit give us? John 14:26. Is this possible if we don’t study?
6. What is the important function of the Word of God and the Spirit? II Timothy 3:16-17; John 16:7-14.
7. What is the Word of God also capable of? Hebrews 4:12-13.
8. What caution is given concerning the Word? Proverbs 30:6.
9. What else is necessary besides a knowledge of the Word? Luke 11:28; James 1:25; Matthew 13:23; Matthew 7:21; I John 2:17.

Life Application

Memorizing and meditating upon God’s Word will transform our lives, for the Word of God is powerful and alive. When we take God’s Word into our memory, it brings that same power and life into us, energizing our spirits. It was the memorized Word of God that Jesus used against the tempter in the wilderness. When people tried to trap Jesus on His doctrine or ministry, the Lord was so filled with the Word of God that it would come spilling out. In this same manner, we need to be like sponges that are soaked with the Word of God. When we get squeezed by the enemy or the pressures of life, what will come out is the lovely and powerful Word of God. Start with Joshua 1:8!

Lesson Thirteen - Praying and Watching

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” –Ephesians 6:18

Scripture Reading: Luke 11:1-13

Introduction

It would do a soldier little good to be completely outfitted for battle and then fall asleep when he is fighting or on guard duty. It is our prayer life that keeps us alert and ready to use the other parts of our armor when necessary. Prayer is indispensable to the Christian. “Prayer crowns all lawful efforts with success, and gives a victory when nothing else would. No matter how complete the armor, no matter how skilled we may be in the science of war, no matter how courageous we may be—we may be certain that without prayer we shall be defeated. God alone can give the victory, and when the Christian soldier goes forth armed completely for the spiritual conflict, if he looks to God by prayer, he may be sure of a triumph. This prayer is not to be intermittent: It is to be always. In every temptation and spiritual conflict, we are to pray” (Barnes’ Notes on the New Testament, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p.1015).

We are to pray all types of prayers: in the closet, with family, in meetings, when tempted, for ourselves, for others, etc... and we are to do it with the aid of the Holy Spirit. We are to guard against things that would hinder prayer and not to become discouraged or disheartened.

Prayer should also be for all Christians, “1) because they are our brethren—though they may have a different skin, language, or name. 2) Because, like us, they have hearts prone to evil and need with us, the grace of God. 3) Because nothing tends so much to make us love others, and to forget their faults, as to pray for them. 4) Because the condition of the church is always such that it greatly needs the grace of God. Many Christians have backslidden; many are cold or lukewarm; many are in error; many are conformed to the world: and we should pray that they may become more holy, and may devote themselves more to God. 5) Because each day many a Christian is subjected to some peculiar temptation or trial: and though he may be unknown to us, yet our prayers may benefit him” (Ibid).

Lesson Questions

1. What does God, who is our Gatherer, expect us to do? Matthew 7:6-8; Philippians 4:4-6; I Peter 5:6-8; Psalm 50:15.
2. What must accompany our prayers? Matthew 21:22; Mark 11:24-26; James 1:5-6.
3. What is an important element in our desires? John 15:7-11; I John 5:14-15; I John 3:22-24.
4. What important lesson did Jesus teach about prayer? Luke 18:1-8. What did Paul admonish and what else should be included? I Thessalonians 5:17; Colossians 4:2; Psalm 105:1.
5. How can we be assured that when we pray for something we will not get a substitute? Matthew 7:9-11.
6. What should answered prayer do for us? John 16:23-24.
7. Consistent, meaningful prayer is hard work, what help is available to us? Romans 8:26-28; Jude 20-21.
8. What can prayer accomplish? James 5:13-16.
9. Besides watching for opportunities to pray, what other watching is necessary? Revelation 16:15; Matthew 25:13.
10. Do we need to be prodded, because of time? Romans 13:11.

Life Application

Do you keep a prayer journal? If not, you should consider it. In it you would record your prayer requests, answers to prayer, and the things you feel that God is telling your spirit. Write in your journal the names of missionaries, pastors and church workers that you have a burden for. Write the names of those with whom you are in conflict: pray for your enemies! You’ll find that once you get started, you will just keep adding to your list of things to pray for. Never again will you struggle to remember what to pray about. And what a blessing to go back and remind yourself and others how God has blessed you through answered prayer. If your prayer time is flourishing or struggling, a prayer journal will enhance and aid your time before the Lord. Start today!