

Living Like a Christian

Introduction

This study is a compilation of topics that can face Christians at different stages of their walk after they have surrendered their lives to the Lord. From topics like love, lying, and laborers we are reminded of many important principles of the Holy Scriptures.

We pray that these lessons will give each reader an opportunity to seek a deeper relationship with the Lord and to find ways that we can express that love through our actions.

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We are pleased to share these lessons for your spiritual enrichment. As with the ACTS magazine, we would like to take a moment and remind our readers that the General Council Churches of God, (Seventh Day), is in a state of constant growth and we all have different backgrounds, it is possible that your views may differ somewhat from those presented in this study. We pray these lessons may be used as a point of entry for your own study.

“Test all things; hold fast what is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Lesson 1: The Love of Jesus

Scripture Reading: John 15:1-17

Memory Verse: “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.” John 15:9

The Love of Jesus

The love of Jesus surrounds me
like the air & sky above.
The love of Jesus gives me
light to brighten all my dark times.
The love of Jesus makes me laugh.
The love of Jesus helps me, keeps me,
comforts me, saves me from death.
The love of Jesus...the love of Jesus.¹

Introduction:

How did Jesus demonstrate his love towards his Father? How did Jesus demonstrate his love towards mankind? Love has many different meanings to many different people. To some people love is the emotional togetherness between a woman and a man. Love can also be a deep feeling toward a certain person, place, or thing. But, love is more than a feeling. Love involves an action. By his willingness to take on the sins of the world through his atoning sacrifice on the cross, Jesus demonstrated his love for his Father and his love for us. Jesus was completely devoted to God and was committed to following His commands. If we abide in Jesus, the true vine, and his words abide in us, we will have the opportunity to demonstrate love towards God and we will love one another in the way God intended us to. We will put the other person first and seek to love even those who have made themselves unlovable.

Lesson Questions:

1. How is the Father’s love of Jesus described? Matthew 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:17.
2. How great a love did Jesus have for mankind? Ephesians 5:2; 1 John 3:16.
3. What was Jesus’ crucial test that proved His love for us? Luke 23:23-24; Romans 5:8.
4. Why did Jesus pray for deliverance from the suffering and sacrifice that he knew was coming? Mark 8:31-33; Matthew 26:36-44; Luke 22:41-44;
In spite of his feelings, Jesus obeyed his Heavenly Father and gave up His life for our every sin.
5. What does Jesus’ example show us about the love we can have for one another? John 15:12-13; John 13:34.
6. What are some ways we can lay down our lives for others? Matthew 25:35-36; Hebrews 13:3; James 1:27
7. What are some of the proofs that show we love Jesus? John 3:21; 14:15; 1 John 5:3; Galatians 5:22-23.

Keeping the commandments, believing and obeying God, and following Jesus demonstrates that we love. God. To believe means we are doers of His word. An example of this is: when we get into our car, we believe it will take us to our destination. But before it can be done, we must do our part. Inserting the keys and starting the engine is just the beginning. The same applies with Jesus. If we say we believe in Him, we must be doers of His words and then continue onward until our full redemption. — As Jesus loved us, let us also love one another!

¹ The poem above was very precious to Mike Ahlborn, who originally wrote this study. It was written by his son, Steven, when he was seven years old. Mike edited it for this study since it so aptly exemplifies the thought of today’s lesson.

Lesson 2: The Danger of Greed

Scripture Reading: Luke 12:13-32

Memory Verse: *“And He said to them, ‘Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.’”* Luke 12:15

Introduction:

The basis of Christ’s teaching on money is that we must be good stewards. Not only money, but every gift of God, is received in trust by us for His use. Man is not the owner of possessions, but rather he is a trustee of God’s goods and estates (Luke 12:42; 16:1-8).

As faithful stewards, we are to make wise investments of our gifts of money so that they can be used for our Lord and His church. It is in this very area that Satan can slip in so slyly and begin convincing us to use money in covetous and greedy ways. First Satan cunningly gets us to cut back on our offerings, so we can increase our worldly goods. Then he finagles us into decreasing our tithing until eventually money becomes our master instead of our servant.

We can so easily slip into the love of money and become like the rich young ruler in Matthew 19:16-26. With all his attractive qualities, money ruled him, and it was his idol. He was a slave to greed and turned away from Jesus sorrowful, clinging to his money and possessions.

The definition of greed is: Inordinately desirous or excessively eager to obtain and possess. Today’s lesson will expose covetousness and greed and show us where our priorities truly should be when it comes to money.

Lesson Questions:

1. To whom does the money and property we hold really belong? Haggai 2:8; 1 Chronicles 29:14; James 1:17.
2. What demonstrated greed in this rich man? Luke 12:18-19. What does the Lord call such a man as this and what did he say to him? Luke 12:20.
3. What conclusion does the Savior draw from this parable? Luke 12:21; Luke 12:15; Matthew 6:19. What are some additional conclusions found in these Proverbs that support this conclusion: Proverbs 11:24, 13:7.
4. What did greed lead Judas to do? Mark 14:10-11.
5. What does the apostle Paul say about greed? Colossians 3:5-6; 1 Timothy 6:10.
6. What commands are given to those who are wealthy? 1 Timothy 6:17-18.
7. What was one of the special requirements demanded in those men chosen for leadership in the Lord’s work? Exodus 18:21; 1 Timothy 3:2-3.
8. What is said about greed in the last days? 2 Timothy 3:1-2; James 5:3.
9. What effect does it have upon the person himself to give of his means to help the cause of the Lord? Acts 20:35; Proverbs 11:24-25; Matthew 6:2.

Lesson 3: How to Get Rich (Spiritual Investments)

Scripture Reading: Matthew 25:14-30

Memory Verse: “If you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday.” Isaiah 58:10

Introduction:

The world over seems focused on one issue and that is how to make more money. The techniques used to make more money can involve saving and investing, and even, covetousness and stealing.

The truth of the matter is the way of the world is completely opposite of the way of spiritual investments.

This lesson will teach that we become spiritually rich toward God by giving. It will also discuss the proper attitudes we should have when giving.

Money is the most common instrument we can offer in our giving. However, we can also give more intangible things such as our time, service, and talents. Some of the best investments we can place in God’s work are godliness, faith, humility, and love.

If you have a savings account, you know that the money you invest in the account brings dividends back to you. You earn interest. When you have a job and you invest your time, energy, and talent into that job, you receive a reward—a paycheck. These temporary benefits are shadows of the eternal benefits we receive in God’s Kingdom. And just like our earthly investments, the more we put in, the more we are rewarded. When we invest in God’s work, we also receive a feeling of accomplishment, joy, happiness, and the Lord’s abundant spiritual riches back upon us for our liberality!

Lesson Questions:

1. What does the Bible say about being rich in earthly treasures and poor toward God? Matthew 6:19-20; 1 Timothy 6:7-10.
2. What promises are made to those who give? Proverbs 11:25; Malachi 3:10; 2 Corinthians 9:6.
3. How should we give?
 - a. Deuteronomy 16:17.
 - b. Matthew 6:1-4.
 - c. 1 Chronicles 29:3-9.
 - d. 2 Corinthians 9:6-15.
4. What are some aspects of sacrificial giving?
 - a. The churches of Macedonia—2 Corinthians 8:3-4.
 - b. Members of the early church—Acts 4:34.
 - c. The poor widow—Luke 21:4.
 - d. Mary of Bethany—Matthew 26:7.
5. In what ways is a self-sacrifice a paying investment? Matthew 19:21, 29; Philippians 3:7-15.
6. In what great way will God supply the needs of those who are cheerful and sacrificial givers? Philippians 4:15-19.

Lesson 4: Lying

Scripture Reading: 2 Kings 5:20-27

Memory Verse: “Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who deal truthfully are His delight.”
Proverbs 12:22

Introduction:

Once when the famous minister, Warren A. Candler, was preaching to a large audience, he used as his text the story of Ananias and Sapphira, who told a lie to God and were struck dead. The old bishop proclaimed: “God doesn’t strike people dead for lying like He used to. If He did, where would I be?” After allowing his audience to snicker for a bit, he went on. “I’ll tell you where I would be,” he roared. “I would be right here preaching to an empty house!”

Undoubtedly the congregation became hushed, because lying is a severe problem everyone’s tongue seems to innately have. The Bible speaks very strongly about the consequences of lying. It also shows us the benefit of being truthful and honest.

Maurice Dametz once told a story about three boys who arrived late to school at about 10:00 a.m. one day. They had been fishing. They told the teacher that they were delayed because of a flat tire. The teacher decided to give them a test immediately, so she had them sit apart from one another. She said, “This test will have only one question, and I will give you thirty seconds to put down your answer.” Then she wrote the question on the board, “Which tire?” The teacher was pretty wise, the results of the test showed the three boys had lied.

If we lie, we may think, like these three boys, that we won’t be found out by our friends and neighbors, but our lying is not hidden from God. Maybe God will choose to hold back (for a season) judgment against us for our lying. But do not be deceived, God knows about every lying word we speak, and He will judge us.

Lesson Questions:

1. Who is the father of all lies? John 8:44.
2. What does the Lord think of a lying tongue? Proverbs 12:22.
3. Share some thoughts on these verses about lying:
 - Psalm 31:18.
 - Proverbs 12:19.
 - Proverbs 19:22.
 - Proverbs 21:6.
 - Jeremiah 7:4, 8.
 - Ephesians 4:25.
4. Is there a chance for an unrepentant liar to make it in the kingdom? Revelation 21:8; Revelation 21:27.
5. What question did Elisha ask Gehazi, and what was his answer? 2 Kings 5:25. Did Elisha know what Gehazi had done? 2 Kings 5:26.
6. Who lied about knowing Jesus? Mark 14:66-71. Did the Lord know this was going to happen? Matthew 26:34.
7. What was Gehazi’s punishment for lying? 2 Kings 5:27. Why wasn’t Peter punished similarly to the way Gehazi was punished? Mark 14:72; 1 John 1:9.

Lesson 5: Concealment Always Leads to Exposure

Scripture Reading: Genesis 3:1-13

Memory Verse: *“He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.”* Proverbs 28:13

Introduction:

Have you ever sinned or done something you were ashamed of and quickly wanted to sweep it under the rug? Too often we are led to believe that we can hide these things from others, sometimes even from God. Galatians 6:7 says, *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.”* God is all knowing and nothing can be hidden from His eyes.

What are we therefore to do? Ask God to give us strength and depend on Him to help us out. 1 John 1:9 gives assurance that we can confidently confess our faults and failures and be forgiven: *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

In this lesson, we will discover that it is truly impossible to hide our sins. All the people herein discussed believed that their faults, failures, and sins could be hidden from God and others. Knowing that we can't hide our sins we should always own up to all our wrongs and make amends.

Jesus taught His disciples in Luke 12:2-3: *“For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.”* One day all unrepentant sins and all idle words will be openly revealed. Oh, how Jesus wants to cleanse us now!

Lesson Questions:

1. What may happen when we try to hide a sin? Proverbs 20:17; Isaiah 30:1.
2. Share some thoughts on the exposure of sin in these verses: 1 Chronicles 28:9; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Luke 12:1-3; 1 Corinthians 4:5.
3. Share some thoughts on the motivations and results of the following persons who attempted to hide their sins. How/when was their sin revealed?
 - The sin of Cain (Genesis 4:8-15)
 - The sin of Joseph's Brothers (Genesis 37:23-33, 42:1-6)
 - The sin of Achan (Joshua 7:1-25)
 - The sin of David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:1-12:14)
 - The sin of Jezebel (1 Kings 21)
 - The sin of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11)
4. What happened to David when he tried to hide his sins from God? Psalm 32:3-4.
5. What steps did David take to remedy this sinful problem? Psalm 32:5.
6. What attitude is promised to those who confess and forsake their sin? Psalm 32:1-2.
7. Share some examples of your own experiences in the past. What were the results of covering those sins?
8. What are some of your own experiences where you confessed your sin or faults?
9. Share some thoughts on these promises about confessing your sin? 1 John 1:9; James 5:16; 2 Peter 3:9.

Lesson 6: Parental Example

Scripture Reading: Titus 2:1-8

Memory Verse: *“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.”* Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Introduction:

Consider this question: “How do you train your children with the Word of God and your example?”

For many Christians this is a difficult (nearly impossible) question to respond to. Perhaps this is because the training of our children is by hit-and-miss, rather than by utilizing the pattern God established for us to use.

As parents, we are responsible to *“train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it”* (Proverbs 22:6). The most important method of training we can use is that of a role model. We should be an example to our children of what a true Christian is and does.

Children begin to understand the love of God as they see it demonstrated by their parents. Their love towards God is to be a response to the godly love they receive from their parents.

When children see a godly father showering praise and affection on his wife, they are getting a glimpse of the relationship Christ has with His bride, the church. By our example (daily Bible reading and prayer), we can show our children how to stay in constant communication with God. By a strong Christ-like image, we can teach our children patience, kindness, joy, meekness, temperance, faith, (in fact all the fruit of the Spirit!), but most of all we can teach them about love – God’s love.

Lesson Questions:

1. What are our children supposed to mean to us? Genesis 33:5; Psalm 127:3-5.
2. What should we teach our children? Deuteronomy 6:6-7; 4:9; Isaiah 28:9.
3. For what reason should we teach our children? Deuteronomy 11:18-21; Proverbs 22:6.
4. How does the Bible describe rebellious children? Deuteronomy 21:20; Proverbs 30:11; Micah 7:6, 2 Timothy 3:2.
5. Why are so many children this way? 1 Samuel 3:13; 8:3; Proverbs 29:15; Jeremiah 9:14.
6. How can we teach children respect? Deuteronomy 5:16, 29; Ephesians 6:4.
7. What are some characteristics that we can be examples of? 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 2:2-4, 7.
8. What was Jesus’ attitude toward spending time with the children? Mark 9:36-37; 10:13-16; Matthew 18:2-5.

Lesson 7: Love God with All Your Heart

Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 6:1-15

Memory Verse: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.” Deuteronomy 6:4-5

Introduction:

Have you ever thought about how much you love God? Do you show God how much you love Him?

I heard a man say one time that God only created us to be His puppets-on-a-string. Think about this statement. If it were true that we are only puppets to God, we would be no more than a doll in God’s eyes. Have you ever tried to hug a doll? No matter how much love you give a doll, it never loves back. It cannot give you a hug or express to you how much it loves you. It is lifeless and non-committal in its expression of love.

Does God really want this of His precious children? Absolutely not! He desires us to show our love for Him. He loves us and He wants us to return that love. He doesn’t want us to just occasionally say, “I love you.” He wants us to daily show with everything that makes us “us,” that we love Him. In all we do, in all we say, in everything that we are, we should show God that He is our Lord and that we love Him.

The French evangelical preacher, Adolphe Monod, said just before dying in 1856, “I have strength for nothing more than to love God and think about His love for me. He has loved us—that is the whole of dogma. We must love Him—that is the sum total of the Gospel.”

Lesson Questions:

1. What does Jesus say was the first commandment? Matthew 22:37-38. How can we love the Lord our God all day and every day with all our heart, mind and soul? Deuteronomy 6:4-9,
2. Does the Lord look upon appearances? 1 Samuel 16:7; Proverbs 21:2; Jeremiah 17:10.
3. What things issue forth from the heart? Matthew 12:34-35.
4. Is it necessary for those who serve the Lord to receive a new heart? Jeremiah 24:7; Ezekiel 36:26; John 3:3.
5. How does what we say and do demonstrate what is in our heart? Matthew 12:33-37.
6. If we obey His word, and “*seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness,*” (Matthew 6:33) what kinds of blessings follow? Deuteronomy 6:3; Psalm 84:5, 11-12; Philippians 4:19; Isaiah 26:3.
7. What instruction did Jesus give about the heart? Matthew 5:8; Matthew 11:29.
8. Who should direct our hearts? 1 Kings 8:58; Psalm 51:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:5.

Lesson 8: A Heart Harder Than Stone

Scripture Reading: Zechariah 7:8-14

Memory Verse: *“But exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”* Hebrews 3:13

Introduction:

A minister recently related a true story about events that occurred after a local service held by a Christian evangelist. The evangelist had spoken about his ministry and about teenagers who were turning from Satan’s world of rock and roll to Christian rock. The audience accoladed this news with shouts of “Amen!” and “Hallelujah.” When the audience filed out of the auditorium and into the streets, they were greeted by one lone man who was preaching on the sidewalk.

The man beseeched the brethren who were walking past to become holy as Christ was holy. He cried to them to examine their lives and turn from any sin they were harboring in their hearts. No one shouted “Amen!” in response to this. People went out of their way to avoid him or went by mocking his preaching. They made comments about him saying he was a fanatic, perhaps even a lunatic.

This one man was like a modern-day John the Baptist, calling out for repentance within the church. The people never heard. They may have received Christ as their personal Savior, but their hearts were hardened—they were harder than stone.

Lesson Questions:

1. What was the difference between the testimony of the evangelist and preaching of the man on the street? Matthew 13:14-15.
2. What word did the Lord give the prophet Zechariah to speak unto the people? Zechariah 7:8-10.
3. Did the people listen? Zechariah 7:11-12. What was the end result? Zechariah 7:13-14.
4. What warnings are we given about this same situation? Proverbs 28:14; Hebrews 3:13-19.
5. How does hardness of heart develop? Ecclesiastes 8:11; Proverbs 16:18; Ezekiel 33:31; James 4:3.
6. How does God know our motivations? Proverbs 21:1-4; 24:12; Jeremiah 17:10; Hosea 7:2; Romans 8:27.
7. Can we trust our own hearts? Proverbs 20:9; 28:26; Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:21-22.
8. If we don’t repent of all our hard ways, what will happen? Proverbs 29:1; Ezekiel 11:21; Romans 2:5.
9. Who can take the hardness from our hearts? Ezekiel 11:19-20; 36:26-28; Philippians 4:7.

Lesson 9: Hot or Cold

Scripture Reading: Revelation 3:14-22

Memory Verse: “So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.” Revelation 3:16

Introduction:

Hot or cold. Which are we? This is a question we should all honestly ask ourselves. Perhaps you make excuses for your lukewarmness. Maybe you declare how weary you are of well-doing. Have you ever considered that God is also weary—He is weary of seeing how little progress we have made toward becoming “Christ-like.”

What God asks of us is our “reasonable service.” He desires that we be faithful servants and stewards. When we find ourselves falling into lukewarmness it is important to consider what the outcome will be. If we do nothing about our condition, the consequences can be grave and can even jeopardize our salvation. We can balance on the fence between total commitment to God and compromise with the world. We can fool each other in this state and we can fool ourselves, but we can never fool God.

The following anecdote, although humorous, helps us see how we often are fooled into thinking we are doing so much for God, and yet we are not on fire for Him at all. God wants us to be HOT.

“There is a church which sends in its annual statistical statement, year after year, as follows:

Number of members added by baptism0

Number of members added by letter.....0

Number of members dismissed by letter.5

Number of members who have died.3

Amount raised/or home missions.....0

Amount raised for foreign missions.....0

Pray for us, brethren, that we continue faithful to the end.”

—Current Anecdotes

Lesson Questions:

1. What does Jesus call those who are not active in the Kingdom? Revelation 3:15.
2. What does God think about this condition? Revelation 3:16; 2 Peter 2:20-22.
3. Can we sometimes deceive ourselves in thinking we are on fire for the Lord? Matthew 26:31-35, 69-75; Acts 9:1. (Note: Saul thought he was doing God’s will. In Acts 9:3-6, he realized he was not.)
4. Why did the Lord say the Laodiceans were lukewarm? Revelation 3:17. Share some thoughts on these other warnings from the Bible: Deuteronomy 8:11-14; Matthew 7:21; 2 Timothy 3:5; James 4:4.
5. What are some steps we should take to keep us on fire for God? Deuteronomy 4:9; Colossians 3:1-9; 1 Thessalonians 5:14-23; Philippians 4:5-9.

Question to consider: Am I on fire for God? Check these areas...daily prayer, Bible study, keeping the commandments, love of my fellow man, expounding God’s Word (witnessing), worship, giving to support the Gospel work?

Lesson 10: Where Are God's Laborers?

Scripture Reading: Luke 10:1-16

Memory Verse: *"Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.'"*
Matthew 9:37

Introduction:

Time is or seems to be speeding up at an ever-increasing rate. It seems as if as soon as one day starts, another day ends and as each day goes by, it seems as if we haven't accomplished anything. We take time to read a good book or enjoy some T.V. programs or play games or a number of other activities and that is usually how our lives go day in and day out. We spend an hour or two in church on Sabbath, but is there more to Christianity than this? Are there things we aren't doing we should be doing? Are we being God's laborers or not?

Many Christians have already memorized the memory verse for this lesson. However, how many of us know the next verse: *"Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest"* (Matthew 9:38)? In church today there is too much emphasis placed on the numerical aspect of the "harvest" and very little energy spent on stirring up a committed group of laborers to reap that harvest.

The Gaither Vocal Band has a song whose refrain closes with this statement: "He just needs a few good men."² This cry should be ringing out in churches throughout the world, "Pray that the Lord will send laborers!" And we should echo, "I'll pray therefore that the Lord... will send ME!"

Lesson Questions:

1. What key thing does Jesus tell us to pray for? Luke 10:2; Matthew 9:38.
2. Why should this be our prayer? Matthew 9:36; Ezekiel 34:6.
3. Why are our works important? James 2:14-18, 22; Mathew 7:16-20; John 15:8.
4. Why is it so important we labor to help save others? Romans 10:13-14; James 5:20.
5. Is preaching the only job that can be done by Christians? 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 What are some of the other ways to serve in the church? 1 Corinthians 12:28.
6. What did Paul tell us about his labor? 1 Corinthians 3:6; 15:10.
7. Why must we labor and work now? John 9:4; Romans 13:11-12; James 4:14; 2 Peter 3:10-11.
8. What final test is coming upon all of us? Matthew 16:27 1 Corinthians 3:11-15.
9. What are some key points Paul says about reaping and harvesting? 2 Corinthians 9:6-8; Galatians 6:7-10.

² Artist: Gaither Vocal Band; Album: A Few Good Men; Released: 1990

Lesson 11: Supporting God's Ministry

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 9:1-14

Memory Verse: *“And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's. It is holy to the LORD.”* Leviticus 27:30

Introduction:

God's instruction on money, if obeyed, could forever banish all financial limitations on the work of the church and the propagation of the gospel. Malachi 3:10 is very clear when it says, *“‘Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.’”*

If we first realize we are only stewards of His money, we can begin employing that money to His use. Our first responsibility is to tithe, for the Lord has said that the first tenth of our increase belongs to Him directly. Secondly, we invest God's money by giving, *“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you”* (Luke 6:38). As stewards, we need to make wise investments. Whatever money God gives us through our job or other means benefits only us, until we give (invest) it to bring good to others.

When Jesus was watching the offering box in Matthew 12:41-44, there were many rich givers that gave large amounts. But there was one poor woman who put in 2 mites. Jesus declared that her offering greatly surpassed that of the rich persons because hers was a sacrificial offering. She gave all that she had. She gave in faith; she gave in trust; she gave in love. Are we giving this way to God?

Lesson Questions:

1. What great gift did God give to the World? Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9; John 3:16.
2. What is the greatest commandment? Matthew 22:37-38; Deuteronomy 6:5.
3. How can we show our love toward God? John 14:15, 23; 1 John 5:1-3; 2 John 1:6.
4. In what ways could giving effect us? Proverbs 11:24-25; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7.
5. What command did the Lord give us? Exodus 22:29; Proverbs 3:9-10.
6. How may those who have abundance here lay hold on eternal life? 1 Timothy 6:17-19. What are some different ways we can give to the Lord's work?
7. What system of giving for the ministry is set forth in the Old Testament? Numbers 18:21. How is this similarly spoken of in the New Testament? 1 Corinthians 9:12-14.
8. How did Jesus speak of giving? Acts 20:35.

Lesson 12: The Message of Encouragement

Scripture Reading: Luke 4:16-19

Memory Verse: *“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”* Luke 19:10

Introduction:

If we examine our highly sophisticated world full of technology and much success, we can find that behind it all lies a people who are still dead—spiritually. There are many people who are needing God in their lives. Many have no one to look up to. Can we help them? Yes, we have been commissioned by our Lord to help all those in need. How? We can give hope to those by sharing our testimony with them. Another way is by encouragement. We live in a world that is so negative and discouraging. Before many hear doctrinal issues, we should first share our joy that we have in serving a loving God who really cares about us and wants to help us through our trials and translate us into His wonderful plan of salvation. The ultimate goal is eternal life in the Kingdom of God. So many are committing suicide and hurting their lives because they feel their life has no meaning. We must encourage and strengthen all to know that God has a purpose—a plan for their life.

Ask God about the specific mission He is waiting to share with you. We must remember since our world is so discouraging, people want something different when they come to church. Always remember in order to have a strong church, there must be encouragement. And what is our message to you who are needing strength and those laden with burdens? Well, I'd like to introduce you to a very special friend of mine who really cares and would like to help. His name is Jesus...He never fails!

Lesson Questions:

1. What did Jesus ask of Peter? Luke 22:32; John 21:15-17.
2. What hope and encouragement did the disciples bring to many who were lost? Matthew 10:6-8; Luke 24:47.
3. What was the end result of their preaching? Luke 10:17-20; Acts 5:12-16.
4. How did Paul encourage Timothy? 2 Timothy 1:1-6.
5. How did King David encourage Solomon? 1 Kings 2:1-4.
6. How did Moses strengthen and encourage Joshua? Deuteronomy 3:28.
7. In what ways can we encourage others?
Note: Children need a considerable amount of positive encouragement and attention. If we do not give them what they need, the ways of the world will encourage them for us in the wrong ways. Many need help due to all the pressures that are placed upon them to fit in with the rest of the world.
8. How has God been there to strengthen you in times of need? (Share brief testimonies of God's help in your own life).
9. In what ways can we give encouragement and strengthen members of our own church? Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 2:19.
10. Who can we look to that will never fail us? Isaiah 41:10; 55:3-4; Romans 8:31.

Lesson 13: God Is Our Refuge

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 2:10-21

Memory Verse: *“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust’”* Psalm 91:1-2

Introduction:

We all know in these last years that man’s increase of knowledge has helped him to learn many things which he is delighted to call progress. New ways have been found to make his work easier. Means of transportation have changed. The means of communication are far better than they were 10 years ago, and through air waves we can receive news on the spot from anywhere in the world, or even from outer space.

Now if all increases of knowledge have been to help man lessen the burdens of the past and to be used as a convenience for mankind, why isn’t the world a better place in which to live?

Evil influences have succeeded in using man’s advanced knowledge to spread crime, which has made a rapid use of increased knowledge. The increase of knowledge has not lessened the dangers of accidents and carelessness, nor has it placed a higher value on human life. Strife among nations increases with the advancement of knowledge. Changes in the types of warfare have shown no regard to human lives. There is no portion of the earth free from the threat of destruction.

At present, man is seeking security and safety from what he sees coming. The sad part is, he’s seeking man-made ways of security and safety. Man is disregarding what is written in the Bible.

Man’s advanced knowledge, his wealth, his vast achievements, his self-made plans of security and safety will fail. When God rises to terribly shake the earth it will be too late. Man will see how foolish all his work has been.

Lesson Questions:

1. Share instances in which God helped His people when it seemed they were doomed? For example: Noah (Genesis 6:9-9:19); Lot (Genesis 18:16-19:25); Daniel (6:23); Peter (Acts 12:3-19). How about us?
2. What is to come, and when? Daniel 12:1; Isaiah 13:9-11; Matthew 24:36. Who are meant by “*Your people*” in Daniel 12:1?
3. Who will cause of the earth to shake? Isaiah 13:13; Joel 3:16; Nahum 1:5.
4. Why has the increase of knowledge failed to turn many to righteousness? Daniel 12:4; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 4:3-4; Isaiah 5:20-24.
5. Is man’s great increase in knowledge and security and safety going to help him when the Lord comes? Isaiah 2:19-21; Ezekiel 7:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:3.
6. What does the Lord tell us, His people, about our security? Psalm 91:4-8; Nahum 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 3:3.
7. What is God’s promise of safety and security to us? Psalm 91:9-12; 138:7; Proverbs 18:10; Isaiah 41:10; Romans 8:31.