Ages 14 - 15

Missionary Baptist

Vacation Bible School Literature

"There Is No New Thing Under the Sun"

Ecc. 1:9

The Missionary Baptist
Vacation Bible School Literature Committee presents

"No New Thing Under The Sun"

Vacation Bible School Lessons for Ages 14–15

Written by Bro. Mike Jackson, Bro. Greg Powell, Sis. Karen Powell, Bro. Brent Sanford, Bro. Chris Shuffitt, and Bro. Brad Wheeler

Table of Contents

Searching For Satisfaction 4
Temptations And Choices 7
Dealing With Ridicule And Deceit 11
God's Love 14
The Plan Of Salvation 17

Editors:
Bro. Bobby Vanderpool and Bro. Dallas Wheat

Contributing Editors:
Elder Kenneth Davis, Elder Billy Moran, and Elder H.C. Vanderpool

Proofreaders:
Sis. Carol Cole, Sis. Nichole Moore, and Sis. Sheila Thompson

Cover Design:
Bro. Jason Shuffitt

Booklet Design and Layout:
Bro. Joey Hayes

Written and published by the authority of
Mount Lebanon Missionary Baptist Church

Price Per Booklet: $1.50

Treasurer
Bro. Mitch Glasscock
3841 Mt. Lebanon Church Road
Alvaton, KY 42122
502-782-0103

LESSON ONE

SEARCHING FOR SATISFACTION

LESSON TEXT
ECCLESIASTES 2:1-15

1. I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity.
2. I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?
3. I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.
4. I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards:
5. I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits:
6. I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees:
7. I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me:
8. I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts.
9. So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me.
10. And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labor: and this was my portion of all my labor.
11. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.
12. And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly: for what can the man do that cometh after the king? Even that which hath been already done.
13. Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.
14. The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all.
15. Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity.

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever considered what a paradox it is that those tangible things we spend the greatest amount of our time and effort to achieve, which supposedly bring us the greatest happiness and sense of satisfaction, won't even be in existence in a short while. The only things that last are those things done in the name of God, yet how much of our life is devoted to His work? The most important aspect of our existence is the fostering of a personal relationship with God and being an instrument that He can utilize to help someone else along the way. These things and only these things will abide.

HISTORICAL ASPECT

The book of Ecclesiates wrestles with the philosophical and speculative question, "What is the meaning of life?" The Hebrew translation of the Greek word Ecclesiates is Koheleth, which means one who convenes an assembly. Given this meaning, this book is commonly referred to as the preacher or the speaker. Solomon is considered by most to be the author of this book. Thus, it gives a personal life lecture with Solomon himself acting as the "speaker". This book was most likely written near the end of his reign as he reflected back over his life and accomplishments.

Recall that around twenty years of age Solomon inherited the throne of Israel from his father David. He assumed leadership of this nation at a time of great material and spiritual prosperity. Therefore, Solomon was surrounded with all the riches and fame traditionally considered to bring happiness and satisfaction to one's life. Early in his forty-year reign, Solomon was asked by God in a dream, "What shall I give thee?" Solomon requested an understanding heart (I Kings 3:5-13).

Thus this book of the old testament provides a unique and insightful account of the search for satisfaction by a man that had all the wealth of the Kingdom of Israel and a God-given understanding and wisdom unparalleled by any other mortal.

Is true satisfaction found in wealth and intelligence?

This lesson gives Solomon's answer to that very question. Chapter 2:1-11 of the lesson text deal specifically with Solomon's attempts to find satisfaction in the things of pleasure while 2:12-15 address his contemplations on the ultimate fate of all men.

ALL IS VANITY

What is vanity? The word vanity translates as "breath" or "vapor" and refers to things that are transitory, futile, or utter emptiness. Solomon is quick to say that all the worldly pleasures he has enjoyed are vanity. The enjoyment was short lived.

ACQUAINTING THE HEART WITH WISDOM

Solomon proclaimed in verse three that he did not blindly grasp for life's pleasures but instead he "acquainted his heart (mind) with wisdom." In other words, he conducted his search for satisfaction with thoughtfulness and care but to no avail.

He poses the question, "What is good for the sons of men to do with all the days of their lives?" What is the right thing to do with the time we have been given? It seems that the answer to this question is central to the true search for satisfaction.

SOLOMON'S WORKS

Listed in verses 4-10 we find many of Solomon's worldly accomplishments. He boasts that he was greater and wiser than any other man in all of Israel. This was quiet a personal achievement, bringing Solomon great social status and luxury of life. In verse 10 Solomon admits that he did find short-lived pleasure and satisfaction from his labors. He felt the enjoyment was his portion , or profit, from the toil. However, verse 11 clearly demonstrates Solomon's wisdom as he expresses how all he has striven to accomplish is ultimately vanity (emptiness) and a vexation of the spirit (like the wind). All of it provided no real profit under the sun.

WISDOM VERSUS FOLLY

Given the above realization, he began to ponder if even the wisdom he had been granted from God offered any advantage over a life led by folly and madness. He concluded that wisdom and understanding does have certain uses in that it keeps one from unnecessary suffering. "The wise man's eyes are in his head" and he can see what lies ahead of him and thus choose the path that leads to the most happiness. While "the fool walketh in darkness", groping his way, obtaining any happiness by chance.

A COMMON FATE

The last two verses of the lesson text deal with Solomon's awareness of death and its

continued

commonalty to every man. He, being the wisest in the land, would meet the same ending as the greatest fool: "As it happeneth to the fool so it happeneth to me." Regardless of who we are or the deeds of our lives, one fate comes to all! This concept was puzzling to Solomon. As he considered the possible reasoning for this, he realized that the answer was far beyond his scope of understanding and that the contemplation of an unanswerable question was futile. "Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity."

ADJUNCT VERSES

This could be perceived as a very depressing lesson, that great accomplishments and earthly possessions do not bring lasting satisfaction but instead are futile and vain, unless one considers some of the verses that follow.

LIFE IS TO BE ENJOYED

Ecc. 3:12-13: "I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice and do good in his life. And also, that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labor, it is the gift of God."

MAN'S TRUE DUTY

Ecc. 12:13: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."

TRUE SATISFACTION AND HAPPINESS

This lesson teaches that the only way to find true and lasting satisfaction and happiness is a proper reverence of God in all of life. God wants for us to enjoy life and seek after wisdom and understanding, but all things gained in this world should be kept in their proper place and viewed in the appropriate light. The highest good attainable in life is being saved and a close walk with God. It's the only thing that will last beyond our existence.

- Even though Solomon knew what was right and experienced the fleeting happiness associated with worldly pleasure, did he always practice what he preached? (Refer to I Kings 11:6-10).
- Did the greatest riches and intelligence bring Solomon satisfaction?
- What things currently bring you personal satisfaction and happiness?
- Has something of the world hindered you from performing your "true duty" to God such as placing something before Him or dishonoring your parents?
- Was the momentary happiness really worth it?

THE PRODIGAL SON

In Luke 15:11-32, Jesus told a parable concerning a certain young man who became unsatisfied at his father's home. The Bible gives us no reason for his unhappiness and urge to journey into a far country.

What are some of the reasons that have momentarily made you unsatisfied at home?

The parable goes on to tell us that the "far country" wasn't what the young man had expected. He soon found out that no one there cared for him at all. They were more concerned about feeding the livestock than him. Hungry and defeated, he remembered how things were at his father's house. What once was the place he couldn't wait to leave had now become the place he yearned for the most. Swallowing his pride, he journeyed back to his father's house and asked to be given servant status. However, his father rejoiced in his return and accepted him as his son.

- How can this parable be related to our relationship with God?
- How can this parable be related to our relationship with our family?
- What are the things that really bring us happiness and satisfaction?
- Where should you begin your personal search for satisfaction?

STUDY REFERENCES

Songs of Solomon 3:1-4
Psalms 38:1-15
Psalms 116:1-10
John 4:1-15

LESSON TWO

TEMPTATIONS AND CHOICES

LESSON TEXT
GENESIS 39:7-21 & JOSHUA 7:20-25

Gen 39:7-21

7. And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.
8. But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand;
9. There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?
10. And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.
11. And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within.
12. And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.
13. And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth,
14. That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice:
15. And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out.
16. And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home.
17. And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me:
18. And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out.
19. And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled.
20. And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.
21. But the LORD was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

Josh 7:20-25

20. And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus have I done:
21. When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.
22. So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it.

continued

23. And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD.
24. And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor.
25. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? The LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.

INTRODUCTION

If every young person had a dollar for every time friends asked him/her to "come on—everybody's doing it–It'll be fun!", most could pay for four years of college. Being a part of the group feels great and all of us need friends. However, friends don't always have our best interests at heart. In fact, sometimes our friends invite us to join in questionable or even bad situations. Unfortunately, wanting to be liked and accepted, we indulge their invitation when we otherwise would not.

Everyone is tempted to bend their personal rules. During the teenage years, this kind of pressure can be intense and generate a gnawing desire to do what others are doing in order to fit in. The important thing to do is make the right choice. Joseph was a young man of the Old Testament who made the right choice when temptation came.

JOSEPH

We are told in Genesis 37:3 that Joseph was the favored son of Jacob—"But Israel (Jacob) loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors." Joseph's brothers were jealous of him and they sold him to the Midianites who then sold him into Egyptian slavery. Joseph was bought by Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's army, who made him overseer of all his house (Gen. 39:4). As our lesson text states, Joseph was tempted by Potiphar's wife to "lie with her" on several occasions. Joseph answered her by asking her "how then could I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" This statement did not stop Potiphar's wife from her attempts. One day when Joseph came to do his business of the house, Potiphar's wife was alone. Grabbing Joseph's clothes, she again made her desire known. This time Joseph ran from the house but as he ran she tore his clothes from him. Using them, she claimed that Joseph had raped her and he was put into prison.

Some may say that it would have been better to indulge her request rather than go to prison. However, the Bible speaks strongly about engaging in sexual sins. God made very clear his laws concerning such sins. In the Mosaic Law, God stated harsh punishment for these offenders even to the extent of stoning them to death (Deut. 22:13-30). Today statistics show that premarital sex/teenage pregnancy ranks with drugs and alcohol abuse in being the leading temptation among American teenagers. Since American society seems to put their stamp of approval on "cohabitation" and acting on desires of lust, this is one of the greatest temptations that our young people face. God's command is to go to the marriage bed undefiled. Remember the Bible tells us to fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul rather than him who can destroy only the body.

Joseph feared God and withstood this temptation by making an honorable choice to not indulge in this sinful act. Joseph was truly a man of God! "And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" (Gen. 41:38). Eventually God rewarded Joseph for his steadfast faith and solid moral standing by making him second in command over all of Egypt (Genesis 43).

WHAT WOULD YOU DO

1. Read Proverbs 20:1 and 23:29-35. Explain how symbolism is used to describe the characteristics of an alcoholic; the dangers of drinking.
2. Read 2 Samuel 11 and 12:1-19. As David or Bathsheba, describe in your own words how the consequences of your sin affected you as well as those around you. TO THE TEACHER: This is a good opportunity to discuss how personal sin can hurt others with a ripple effect.

CHOOSE WISELY!

Our choices make a difference. Choosing to follow God's will produces good results. Choosing to abandon God's ways brings harmful results to us and others. While many in the Bible made good choices, unfortunately, several made the wrong choices. Achan was one of these in particular.

During the fall of the city of Jericho, God commanded that the "accursed thing should be destroyed" (Joshua 6:17-19) but Achan, an Israelite of the tribe of Judah, coveted all of the great riches which made up the accursed thing and he took it and hid it in his tent. As a result of Achan's bad choice, God punished all of Israel for one's disobedience. Many men died and Israel's army was paralyzed with fear (Joshua 7:5); the leader faltered and became confused (Joshua 7:7-9); God said it was a possibility that He would withdraw His presence from the people (Joshua 7:12); and as a consequence of Achan's sin, he and his family were to be destroyed (Joshua 7:24-26). "...And all Israel stoned him (Achan) with stones, and burned them (Achan and his family) with fire, after they had stoned them with stones" (Joshua 7:26).

When Israel had eliminated the sin within the community, it resulted in the attainment of the following blessings: (1) encouragement from and the presence of God in battle (Joshua 7:1); (2) God's guidance and promise of victory; and (3) God's permission to keep the spoils from the battle for themselves (Joshua 8:1-2). Throughout Israel's history, blessings came when the people made the right choice—standing for righteousness by choosing to remain on God's side and true to His word!

SUMMARY

Proverbs 4:14 tells us to "enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men." Teenagers today face many temptations and are called upon to make choices every day. Headlines today are frightening. The development of Satanic cults, gangs, and violent crime in general permeates our very livelihoods. For example, the violent crimes index for juvenile crime is the highest it has been in history with 3400 arrests for murder; 6300 arrests for forcible rape; 44,500 arrests for robbery; and 68,700 arrests for aggravated assault. EVIL impacts the quality of life for our children! Satan is at work daily tempting our young people luring them into sinful acts! Keep Proverbs 4:14 in your heart! Genesis 3:1 tells us that the serpent (Satan) is more subtle (crafty) than any beast of the field that God made. He uses his craftiness to lure people into his web of sin. Things that don't seem so bad at first can end up becoming nightmares—even situations that we cannot control. Satanists use methods such as astrology, Ouiji boards, symbols, and drugs to lure young people into their cults. Some of these things may seem harmless at first, such as dressing in black, wearing black make-up, reading your horoscope, "goofing" around with a Ouiji board, or even drawing a pentagram symbol on notebooks and clothing. However, little by little with each added practice, a person is drawn in a little deeper until he/she is consumed in the world of Satanism before he/she is even aware. God tells us that these things are an abomination to him (Deut. 18:9-14) and we are NOT to involve ourselves!

While Joseph and Achan are two examples of the positive and negative side of temptation and choices, we should follow the great-

continued

est example of resisting temptation and making the right choice—our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who resisted all of Satan's temptations (Luke 4:5-8). Therefore, the next time you are faced with temptation, who will you become—Joseph or Achan?

QUESTIONS

1. How do you feel when a friend makes a choice that leads to a bad consequence in his/her life?
2. How do you feel when a friend makes a choice that is a bad one according to God's will, but it seems like he/she is not experiencing any negative consequences? Explain.
3. Is it possible for a person to make a choice against God's will and "get away with it"? Explain.
4. What causes Christians to choose sin even though they know what is right? Explain.
5. Why is it important to read, study, and be reminded of God's commands in your life? Explain.

LESSON THREE

DEALING WITH RIDICULE AND DECEIT

LESSON TEXT
2 CORINTHIANS 4:8-18

8. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;
9. Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;
10. Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.
11. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.
12. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.
13. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;
14. Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.
15. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.
16. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.
17. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;
18. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

INTRODUCTION

As many of you may have experienced by now, there are those in the world who do not understand God's ways and a Christian's life style. It is our duty and way to keep God's commandment and to abstain from the practices of the world. When those in the world, and even our friends or schoolmates, see us behaving differently or not participating in wrong activities, they may make fun of us, or ridicule us, or even call us by names. Those are the times when we should, like the Apostle Paul, look to the Lord for strength and continue on in the faith, doing what we know is right in the sight of God.

THE CHURCH AT CORINTH

As you read Paul's letter to the Church at Corinth, it is obvious they were experiencing a tremendous amount of ridicule and trouble. In fact Paul had heard about their problems across an entire country. There were those at Corinth who were not of God and were trying to cause discord in the Church. It is this way in many churches today. Someone doesn't like the way we carry on our services or doesn't like the way we talk. They may ridicule us or talk bad behind our back and cause hard feelings among the people. Many times these people have gone astray or do not know God at all. These are the very ones we should be praying for. In 2 Corinthians 2:11 Paul says that we should be aware of Satan's devices, for we are not ignorant of them. Ridicule is one of them.

continued

DISCOURAGEMENT IN RIDICULE

For most of us, especially the young, it is difficult to listen to the ridicule of our friends or others. We sometimes even allow our faith in God to be weakened when we stop and try to analyze why they are saying these things. We will often find opposition when we put our minds and heart to serving God. We may even at times become angry or envious of someone. We may let ourselves hate another or even lose a friend. These are the times that our faith is being tested. This is when we should be reminded of what Jesus says in Matt 5:12, "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

REMEMBER ENCOURAGEMENT

In every aspect of trouble, Paul also had an answer in hope and strength. Let's look at these words of encouragement. In verses 8 and 9 he says, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; and persecuted but not forsaken"; God is always there with us, during the good times and the bad times. He is the one who gives us strength; all we have to do is call on Him.

Verse 13 says, "We having the same spirit of faith." When we are saved, God gives us a portion of His own Holy Spirit that remains with us until we die. Verse 14, says "Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus." Whatever befalls us in life, God's power prevails over all things. God's power which raised Jesus Christ on the third day will raise us up into heaven when we die. The tragedy of the shootings recently in a high school prayer group only goes to prove that we seldom know when our time is up on earth. Those teens in the prayer group who were saved certainly went on to heaven to be with the Lord. They were young, had been ridiculed and made fun of, yet still remained true Christians. This goes hand in hand with verse 17, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Paul says "our light affliction." He means the troubles we have to endure in our lives are absolutely no comparison to the sufferings Jesus went through on our behalf during His persecution and crucifixion. Even if we live to be very old, it will be but a moment in the time of eternity.

DECEITFULNESS

Webster defines deceitfulness as dishonest, misleading, lying. This is a complex act that usually involves many sins. Let us look at Jacob in Genesis 27. Isaac, Jacob and Esau's father, was getting very old. He had decided to bless his eldest son Esau before he died. Verses 3 and 4 say, "Now therefore take I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison; and make me a savory meat, such as I love and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die." Back in olden days the eldest son was given a double portion of his father's wealth. We see in Verse 5 that Rebekah heard this and began to devise a plan to see that Jacob received the blessing from Isaac because she favored and loved Jacob more than Esau. When she put her misleading plan into effect, Jacob became dishonest with her. Verses 9 and 10 say, "Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savory meat for thy father, such as he loveth; and thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death." As Jacob followed through with this plan, many things came into view. It would be beneficial to read through Verse 30. As stated previously, deceitfulness usually involves many sins. How many lies are being formed here? All that is being done by Rebekah and Jacob is to mislead Isaac. You will see how one lie must turn into many. What deceitfulness! In Verse 34 after Jacob receives his father's blessing and portion, Esau discovers what happened: "And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his fa-

ther, bless me, even me also, O my father." Their plan of deceitfulness continued to affect everyone in a negative way. In verse 41, Esau plans to kill Jacob because of his dishonesty: "And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, the days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob." This plot continues to worsen because of so many wrong doings:

1. Lies
2. Dishonesty
3. Stealing
4. Covetousness
5. Premeditated Plan for Murder.

It is obvious to see how deception can envelope everyone. Nothing good can be brought out by something like this. Always remember that love, truth, and honesty are the wonderful elements of life the Lord Jesus wants us to practice. They are the important tasks of life. These will be the acts that will gain us rewards in heaven. The good things done for Christ will be waiting for us on the other side of life.

CONCLUSION

In Matt: 19:27-29 we find that Peter asks Jesus a question pertaining to forsaking the world and following Him. "Then answered Peter and said unto him 'Behold, we have forsaken all and followed Thee: What shall we have therefore?'" And Jesus said unto them, "Verily I say unto you that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." "And everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father or mother, or wife or children or lands, for my name's sake shall receive an hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life." Just think about this, everlasting life in heaven, with Jesus and all the saved, in the presence of God, forever. Now that is a reward!

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. Who was the Apostle Paul writing his letter to?
2. What kind of letter was it?
3. Whose idea was it to mislead Isaac?
4. What other sins does deception include?

LESSON FOUR

GOD'S LOVE

LESSON TEXT
ROMANS 5:1-11 & 8:35-39

Rom 5:1-11

1. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:
2. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
3. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;
4. And patience, experience; and experience, hope:
5. And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.
6. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.
7. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.
8. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
9. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.
10. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.
11. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

Rom 8:35-39

35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?
36. As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.
37. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.
38. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,
39. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

INTRODUCTION

Almost every time we go to church or study our Bible, we see evidence of God's love. Love exists in the teachings of the Bible, in the sacrifice of His only son, and in the blessings we receive for following His will. Often, we do not realize the magnitude of His love. Sometimes, we doubt his love, because things do not go our way. But the fact remains, God loves us and will always love us. Jeremiah 31:3 states "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love"

We experience God's love in two main ways. We are able to reap the rewards of His love for us, and can gain strength and honor from His love within us. Either way, we always benefit from God's love.

GOD'S LOVE TOWARD US

As a child, we were taught the song "Jesus Loves Me." This song was one of the first lessons of God's love for us. God manifested His love for us through His son, Jesus Christ. From the Bible, we also learned of Jesus' teachings of peace and love, His miracles healing the sick and raising the dead, and finally, of His sacrifice for the plan of salvation. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was the greatest expression of God's love. This expression of love was given for the unsaved.

The importance of Jesus' gesture of love is explained in what is often called the most precious verse of the Bible, John 3:16. This verse states: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." When Jesus died, He created a pathway to salvation for all sinners. Jesus tells us in John 15:13: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." This verse not only tells us the magnitude of God's love, but also lets us know that Jesus considered the unsaved his friends. We read in 1 John 3:1 "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:" God's love, which is given to every man, woman, and child, gives everyone the opportunity to receive his love and become one of his children. Indeed, we should consider it an honor to receive this manner of love from God.

So far, we have learned of the love that God has shown us and of the sacrifice that Jesus made for the plan of salvation. What should the unsaved do, as a first step, in returning His love?

GOD'S LOVE IN US

Once we are saved, we experience another aspect of God's love. We experience love that is instilled in us as Christians. Romans 5:5 from our lesson text tells us that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. We feel this love for others and desire to see them saved. From this love God places in us, we can also get strength to deal with the trials in our lives and a desire and knowledge to help others deal with their trials.

First Peter 3:21 states: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." This scripture tells us that we should live our lives like Jesus, using every opportunity to follow the Lord. Being saved makes a change in our character and 2 Peter 1:4 lets us know that we become partakers of the divine nature. Once receiving this change in our inner nature, we are more inclined to follow God's will. We learn that when following His will, God will bless us for our efforts, allowing us to receive even more of His love. Chapter four of 1 John also states that a man that loves must know God, because God is love. In this verse, we discover that knowing God and His love allows us to love others more completely.

When the saved person receives this love from God, that person is not allowed to keep it to himself/herself. In John 15:12, God commands us to "love one another, as I have loved you." Having love for one another allows us to share each other's burdens and to offer refuge in difficult times. If we gave as much to each other as the Lord has given to us, the world would be a much better place in which to live. Just sharing the love that God has given us could eliminate many problems, including revenge and hate. We find that, in Matthew chapter 22 Jesus also commands "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." As humans, we are always looking out for our well being. But as Christians, God expects us to look out for the well being of everyone.

God makes change in our character when we are saved. He intends for us to pass the love He has given us to those around us. The saved should conduct themselves in a way that shows love to and for others.

continued

QUESTIONS

1. In what ways did Jesus express God's love?
2. Give examples of how God has shown love towards you.
3. When God saves the lost, what changes take place? What is expected of the saved?
4. How should the saved conduct themselves?
5. In our lesson, we learned that God expects us to show love to each other. List ways you can show love.

STUDY REFERENCES

1 John 4:7-12; Romans 8:32; Jeremiah 31:3; 1 John 4:16; 1 Peter 1:22

KEY VERSE

John 3:16

LESSON FIVE

THE PLAN OF SALVATION

LESSON TEXT
PSALM 116:1-15 & ACTS 16:25-34

Psalm 116:1-15

1. I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.
2. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.
3. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.
4. Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.
5. Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.
6. The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.
7. Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.
8. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.
9. I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.
10. I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted:
11. I said in my haste, All men are liars.
12. What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?
13. I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.
14. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.
15. Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

Acts 16:25-34

25. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.
26. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.
27. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.
28. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.
29. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,
30. And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?
31. And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.
32. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.
33. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.
34. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

continued

INTRODUCTION

Salvation is the most important belief addressed in the pages of the Bible. Furthermore, it is the most important experience life has to offer. We often hear the words being saved, but what do those words actually mean? The word saved means to rescue from certain destruction. When a firefighter goes into a burning building and rescues a person or a pet, the firefighter has saved the person's or pet's life. This works the same way spiritually as it does physically. However, there is much more at stake when one is talking about the spiritual nature of man. God, when He created us as a human family, made us like Himself in certain ways. One of the characteristics He gave humanity was his image. God is eternal; therefore, He made man eternal. Even though an individual passes from this life, that person will go on existing. Salvation is about the condition that individual will be in after he or she leaves this world and goes into eternity.

DAVID'S RELIEF FROM TROUBLE AND SORROW

The scripture, from Psalms, is a copy of the Psalmist's own salvation experience with God. The theme this week is "there is nothing new under the sun." The writer felt what all individuals feel at one time or another - God's convicting hand. The Psalmist found deliverance from the same God from which we all can find deliverance. Understanding the Psalmist's condition, requires an understanding of recorded Bible history many years before the time of this writing.

Many have heard the story about the first two people God created. Their names were Adam and Eve. They were in a perfect state where nothing went wrong and everything was holy before God. They took care of a garden and enjoyed the full blessings of what God had to offer. God gave one rule that was not to be broken. This rule was not to eat of a certain tree in the garden. Adam and Eve broke that rule and brought the shame of sin upon themselves and upon all that live today. The Bible states that "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." Basically, this means that all have sinned and missed God's holy ruler that we are measured against. The payment for this transgression of God's law is eternal death. Because of sin all of us will die on this Earth and if one does not prepare himself he will die for all eternity.

God has established two places in the afterlife. The places are heaven and hell. Hell is the place prepared for those that have not been saved. God has loved man so much that He has provided a way to escape from Hell. Salvation is God's plan of deliverance for a fallen race.

God tells an individual when they are lost and He tells them when they are saved. No other person can know the point and time an individual is saved except that individual. God will tell an individual when he is lost through conviction. Conviction is where one recognizes that he is a sinner and needs something from God to heal the soul. The Psalmist felt God's convicting hand on him when he wrote "the pains of hell got hold of me and I found trouble and sorrow". There is a time when one will feel the same feeling the Psalmist felt; whether at home in bed or at church. When a person realizes that he is lost he should go to God in prayer. The Psalmist realized his condition and went to God in prayer. He "called upon the name of the Lord" and begged deliverance. God heard his cry, answered his prayer, and mercifully saved him. The writer did not go to anyone for salvation but received it directly from God. The Psalmist's account was written over 3,000 years ago and the plan of salvation has remained the same. He finishes telling us that "he will walk before the Lord in the land of the living".

THE PLAN OF SALVATION

God in His infinite wisdom uses many different ways to reach the lost. In the second group of verses preachers had been thrown in jail, not for any crime, but for preaching the gospel. They had spent all night singing and preaching the gospel in their cell. An earthquake occurred and unlocked all the doors and removed all the chains that bound them. When the jailer awoke, he was afraid that all the prisoners were gone. And when he discovered that all the prisoners remained, he sought the Lord and was saved. Furthermore, the gospel was also spread to his family and they gladly received it.

Jesus Christ came to this world to save man from his sins. He was nailed to a cross and died the most painful death a person can experience. He took your sins and the sins of the world upon his back to save you from eternal death. Christ did not have to die, but did so willingly so that you could have the opportunity for forgiveness of your sins. The Bible states that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." This does not mean that a halfhearted individual that simply calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. However, the Bible does state that a person must search after the Lord with fear and trembling, working out their own salvation between that individual and God. This method is the appropriate method of calling on the almighty God. If you are truly seeking the Lord, you will search until the Lord provides peace in your heart.

CONCLUSION

There are many plans that individuals have devised to get the world to heaven. But there is only one true way. The true way of salvation is through Christ, who shed his blood, and its application to your own heart. You can do nothing to earn salvation. Signing cards, saying someone else's prayer, shaking someone's hand, joining some church, trusting the words of a person, being baptized or sprinkled are all methods that will not save. The Bible tells us that salvation is not of works lest anyone be proud of what they did and not what Christ did for them. Therefore, all of the above methods are ways made by man to try to get someone to heaven. The only method is earnestly repenting and trusting in Jesus Christ completely. A person cannot do this in, and, of themselves, but it requires the grace and help of God. Seek the Lord when he calls and he will give you the greatest gift known to man - eternal salvation.

RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES

Teachers: Tell your own experience of salvation, and the reasons why you are with the class today. Encourage the ones in the class to tell how they too have been saved or their own experiences of conviction. End the lesson and this week with a session of prayer and thankfulness for the plan of salvation and your own deliverance from hell.

OTHER SALVATION EXPERIENCES

Saul
Acts 9:1-9

The Samaritan Woman
John 4:1-30, Luke 7: 36-50

The Eunuch
Acts 8:35-37

NO CHARGE FOR BOOKLET