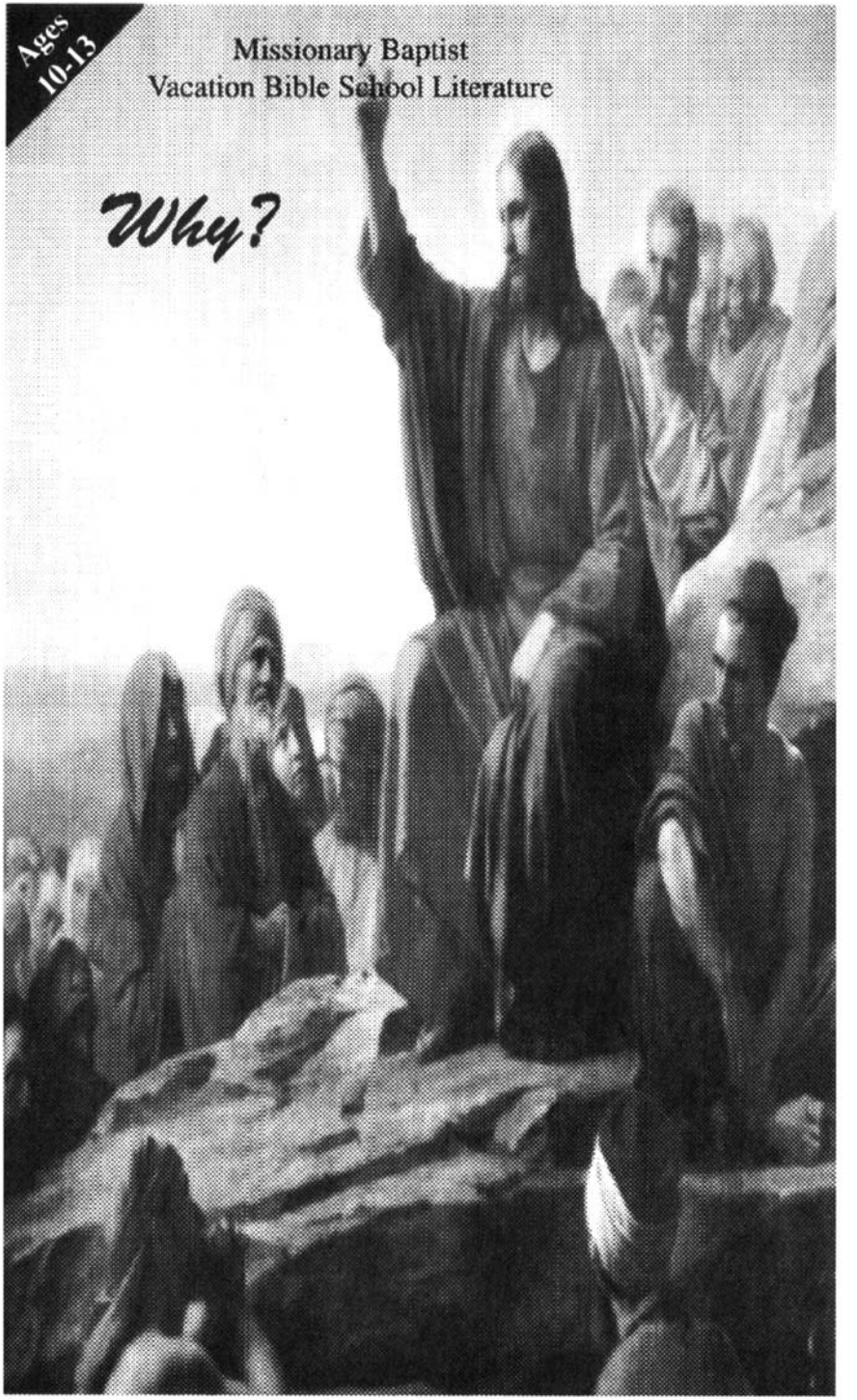
Ages 10-13

Missionary Baptist
Vacation Bible School Literature

Why?



The Missionary Baptist
Vacation Bible School Literature Committee presents

"WHY?"

Vacation Bible School Lessons for Ages 10 - 13

Written by Sister Janet Hill and Brother Steve Hill, Sister Ronica Shuffitt, Sister Seroba Hardcastle, Sister Paulita Hayes, and Sister Janet Carlock

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LESSON ONE

WHY OBEY?

LESSON TEXT
LEVITICUS 26:3-12

WRITTEN BY
JANET HILL AND STEVE HILL

3. If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them;
4. Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.
5. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely.
6. And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land.
7. And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword.
8. And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.
9. For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you.
10. And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new.
11. And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you.
12. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

INTRODUCTION

Obeying God is often hard, because we are human. In order to follow God, we must be willing to lay aside our own desires. As teenagers, you will be faced with many temptations that come your way daily. As you study and discuss this lesson, consider the many blessings one can enjoy, just by being obedient.

OBEDIENCE TO GOD

There will be situations where you cannot obey both God and man. When you must make a choice, trust God and let Him guide you. Obedience begins with humility. When we obey and trust God, He will make a way for us to do His will. Even if obeying God brings scorn from our friends, it is still worth it. Look at Luke 6:22-23, "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward is great in heaven; for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets."

When you are faced with temptations, you must be strong and not give in. We may not understand His ways but by humbly obeying Him, we will receive His blessings. When you are tempted to do things that God wouldn't be happy with, you should stay close to the Lord, in order to keep your faith strong, and have the ability to choose the right way. When we fail to obey Him, we will miss many blessings. We must remember that 1) God's ways are best; 2) God wants our obedience; and 3) God can use us to accomplish His purposes. Sometimes we avoid doing right because of what others might think. We must choose to obey God rather than seek the approval of others.

MOSES OBEYING GOD

God gave Moses the Ten Commandments on two tablets of stone. These were to serve as a standard of moral obligation for mankind. Moses was a good example of being obedient. He had to make many decisions to follow God's way. He turned away from worldly things, but only to receive blessings from God in return. The first commandment is "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all they soul, and with all thy mind." The second commandment is "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Matthew 22:37-39. These are our obligations to God and to our fellow man.

Moses was very strong and willing to trust and follow God's ways. When Moses was born, God had a plan for his life. While he was a shepherd, God was preparing him for the future. When he was the Egyptian prince, he was doing something entirely different from shepherding, but this was preparing Moses to be the Leader he finally became. He learned to trust God and to do His will. When Moses saw the burning bush, he humbled himself and God spoke to him. He could have turned away in disobedience, but he would have missed out on many great blessings. Moses removed his shoes in obedience to God's command, and in so doing showed his humility and the reverence he had for God. Sometimes we miss blessings by not doing what we know God wants us to do. We should come very humbly when approaching God. He is a loving God and wants His children to enjoy His blessings.

CONCLUSION

We should follow God's commandments and the instructions He has given every day of our life. They were given to help us know what sin is and to restrain us from sinning. When we disobey the Ten Commandments, we feel guilty. Our conscience condemns us. This lets us know we have sinned. Without those commandments we would not know right from wrong. Disobeying God's commands is sin. Romans 7:7-13. We must follow God if we want to enjoy the blessings He has in store for us and if we want to see our family and friends get saved. When we as Christians follow God's way, He will bless and we will see lost sinners saved. As teenagers, you will be better able to handle the many temptations you face each day if you walk close to the Lord. If you obey His word and His Spirit, you will be a witness for the Lord and receive many blessings. Obey the Lord and see what a helper you have beside you each step of the way and with His arm around you at all times. This is the best hug you could ever have, and it's ours for only believing and obeying.

QUESTIONS

1. In our daily lives, how can we be obedient to God and still fit in?
2. If you are tempted to do things God would not be happy with how can you overcome the temptations?
3. What do we as Christians receive in return for being obedient to God?

SCRIPTURES FOR STUDY

Exodus 34:28

Deuteronomy 10:4

I John 3:4

James 2:9-10

Exodus 25:16; 21

Matthew 11:13

Luke 16:16

Matthew 22:35-40

Exodus 20:1-17

Hebrews chapters 7-10

2 Corinthians 3:7-14

Romans 7:7-13

Romans 5:12-14

Romans 8:3

Galatians 2:21

Galatians 3:21-26

LESSON TWO

WHY SURRENDER?

LESSON TEXT
ISAIAH 55:6-9

WRITTEN BY
RONICA SHUFFITT

6. Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:
7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
8. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.
9. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

INTRODUCTION

Each of you have played the game "mercy." In this game one person tries to get the other to surrender or say "mercy." We are also familiar with surrendering when two countries are at war and one has defeated the other. Police ask those whom they have caught to surrender. When we think about these examples of surrender, they do not have a positive or good meaning to us. None of us want to be thought of as weak or unable to defend ourselves. Even the dictionary definition of surrender goes against what we, as humans, like to think of ourselves. Surrender as defined in the dictionary means to relinquish possession or control to another because of demand or compulsion; to give up in favor of another; to give up ones self. When we think about the examples of surrendering that were given earlier, we realize that these are not situations in which we would like to find ourselves.

However, there is a type of surrender that has some very precious promises with it. In verse 7 of our lesson text we are told "Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God for he will abundantly pardon." The promise is that when we surrender to the Lord in repentance and faith we will receive eternal life. If we do not forsake our own ways and return to the Lord (this is necessary for salvation) we will never be saved. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. (Matthew 16:24-26) On the other hand, if we choose not to surrender to the Lord, then we will spend eternity in Hell.

AN EXAMPLE OF COMPLETE SURRENDER

When we meet Saul (Paul) in the Bible, he is one of the most violent persecutors of Christians. Paul was a good Pharisee and knew his Bible well. He sincerely believed that the Christian movement was dangerous to Judaism. Because of this Paul hated the Christian faith and persecuted Christians without mercy.

Saul (Paul) had received permission to go to Damascus to capture Christians and bring them back to Jerusalem. As he was traveling to Damascus he took every chance to persecute the Christians. One of the Christians that he was responsible for persecuting was Stephen. Stephen had been addressing the Sanhedrin and telling them about Jesus. His teachings angered the Jews so much that they stoned him. As Stephen was dying he was allowed to see into heaven and see the glory of God and Jesus standing on

the right hand of God (Acts 7:54-58). Those who stoned Stephen laid down their clothes at a young man's feet whose name was Saul (Acts 7:58).

Paul continued to persecute Christians as he journeyed to Damascus. On the road to Damascus a great light shined round about him (Acts 9:3) and Saul fell to the ground. He heard a voice saying unto him, "Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me?" Saul said, "Who art thou Lord?" The answer came, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Saul's answer to this was to ask, trembling, "What wilt thou have me to do?" (Act 9:5-6)

Paul (Saul was his name until he was saved) surrendered his life to the Lord. You can read about Paul's conversion in Acts 9:3-19. No person, apart from Jesus himself, shaped the history of Christianity like the apostle Paul. Until his conversion little had been done about carrying the Gospel to non-Jews. Paul worked hard to convince the Jews that Gentiles were acceptable to God and even more time convincing the Gentiles that they were acceptable to God. Each life that Paul touched was changed by meeting Christ through Paul.

When Paul surrendered his life to Jesus, he found the one reason for living and dying. He became totally sold out for Christ. His whole life was dedicated to the cause of Christ - to spreading the Gospel. Paul said that for him to live was Christ but to die is gain. (Phillipians 1:21) We can learn many lessons from Paul's life but one of the greatest is to surrender our life completely to God and His will. We all would be able to say, with Paul, for me to live is Christ but to die is gain.

WHY SURRENDER

When I think of surrender I think of two kinds (1) surrendering over principles or beliefs and (2) surrendering our life to the Lord. The first type of surrender is a negative type of surrender. The beliefs and practices of old time missionary Baptist are precious. They are the standards that have identified us throughout history. Their beliefs and practices are the same ones that were held by the church that Jesus established here on earth. We are admonished to keep these... See and ask for old paths and walk therein (John 6:16). To surrender these beliefs and principles would be letting God down.

Surrender is necessary in order to become a Christian. This is the reason Christ came and died for us; and the most important thing you will ever do in your life. Since we are all sinners and have come short of the glory of God it was necessary for Jesus, God's only Son who knew no sin, to pay the price for our sins by his death on the cross. In order to receive salvation we must trust in the Lord with all our heart. In order to get to this point of surrender a godly sorrow is produced in the heart (2 Corinthians 7:10). When we put our whole trust and faith in God and surrender to Him completely, then he will save us. Salvation has a promise of eternal life with our Lord. What a blessed surrender.

WHO SHOULD SURRENDER

We are told in Isaiah 53:6 "all we like sheep have gone astray; God has commanded all men everywhere to repent." Repentance is the act of the will in which one surrenders himself/herself to God. Therefore we see that everyone must repent (surrender) in order to be saved.

After you have been saved each new day brings opportunities to trust the Lord and surrender your life to His will. When we know Christ (He alone hold the answers to the true meaning of life) we do not need to seek God through cults or unbiblical philosophies. No Christian needs anything else other than what He has provided to be saved. We are complete in Him (Colossians 2:10). The Lord has promised to never leave us nor forsake us.

SUMMARY

Surrender can have a negative meaning but surrendering your life to the Lord is the only way to have eternal life. The life that a Christian has is one in which the Lord is the Head.

continued

(Colossians 1:15-18) James said, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil." James 4:7. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord." James 4:10. That's surrender. When we have this type of surrender we can truly say with Paul, "for me to live is Christ, but to die is gain."

QUESTIONS

1. What is the definition of surrender?
2. What are the promises that are attached when we surrender to the Lord?
3. Why is Paul an example of complete surrender?
4. What do we, as Gentiles, owe to the journeys of the apostle Paul?
5. Who should surrender?
6. How does our topic, surrender, relate to your (our) life today?
7. Discuss the life of the apostle Paul and how it shows surrender.

LESSON THREE

WHY PRAY?

LESSON TEXT
NEHEMIAH 1:4-11

WRITTEN BY
SEROBA HARDCASTLE

4. And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,
5. And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:
6. Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned.
7. We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses.
8. Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations:
9. But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.
10. Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand.
11. O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

INTRODUCTION

Prayer is humbly speaking to God as often as someone feels the need. The Bible teaches us to pray earnestly in order for our prayers to be answered. Luke 18:1 states "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Do you pray to God regularly? In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 we found the message "Pray without Ceasing."

When we pray, we must pray in earnest from deep within our hearts, for Jesus warned us of "vain repetitions" in Matthew 6:7. "Your father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." Our prayers should not be selfish. We should only pray for things that harmonize with God's will, as stated in 1 John 5:14: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us."

MEANING OF PRAYER

Prayer is one of the most important means of spiritual communication with God. Jesus, the son of God and Lord of all things, spent whole nights in prayer while He lived on earth. His prayers were not just petitions to get something. Too often we think of prayer as a way to get God to do things for us or for others, but the highest purpose of prayer is to deepen our relationship and draw closer to Him. Romans 8:26 reads "We do not know what we should pray for as we ought:

continued

but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us."

Prayer does involve petition and intercession, but it also includes communion. In petition, God does something for us; in intercession, He does something through us; and in communion, He does something in us. Communication with the Lord involves much more than prayer. Mark 4:9 states "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" We should listen carefully to him in his Word.

WHY PRAY?

1. Because there is a devil, and prayer is a God-appointed way to resist Him (Eph. 6:12-13, 18).
2. Because prayer is God's way for us to obtain what we need from Him (Lk 11:3-13; Jas 4:2).
3. Because prayer is the means God has appointed for us to find "grace to help in time of need" (Heb 4:16).
4. Because prayer with thanksgiving is God's way for us to obtain freedom from anxiety and to receive "the peace of God" (Phil 4:6-7).

When we seek God's face in prayer, we strengthen our relationship with Him. That's the most important reason to pray. Colossians 4:2 reads "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving."

PRAYER - THANKSGIVING

How often do you thank God for all your blessings? Do you think it is selfish to thank God for special blessings? The Psalmist said in Psalm 92:1, "It is good to give thanks to the Lord." We should praise God for all the blessings we have in life, such as good health, food, and clothing; most of all, as Christians, we should praise Him for our salvation and dying on the cross, so we could have eternal life. It would be selfish of us if we don't praise Him for all He has done for us.

PRAYER - SINNER'S

To a lost soul, a prayer is a cry for help to God for Salvation. We are told that God will save us when we come to Him with a broken heart, sorry for our sins, trusting Him and Him only—then we would be saved. The Lord heard and answered David's prayer, "I found trouble and sorrow. Then I called upon the name of the Lord; O, Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul" (Psalms 116).

Romans 10:13 states "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Have you asked Jesus to save you? If not, do it now! Having Salvation is the most important thing in our life.

PRAYER - GOD LISTENS

"The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry" (Psalm 34:15). As His children we can lift our voices at anytime and any place to our Lord with full assurance that He hears us and receive our requests. Jesus gave us faith as an act of prayer. In Matthew 7:7-8 He tells us "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Our prayers will only be answered if it is God's will. He knows what is best for us. So, Pray. God Listens!

SUMMARY

Prayer is just a little talk with the Lord. It can be out loud or silent, but it should be from the heart. Just remember the Lord is always there to listen, and chapter 11 of Luke teaches us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. The Lord states unto them, When ye pray, say: *"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us*

from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."

In Psalm 23, we read David's Prayer of Trust: *"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters; He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies; Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. Amen.*

READING REFERENCES

Prayers of Praise:
Psalm 52:9, 2 Samuel 7:22

Prayers of Confession:
Jeremiah 14:7, Luke 11:4

Prayers of Thanksgiving:
Psalm 118:28, Jonah 2:9, Revelation 11:17

Prayers of Joy:
Psalm 71:23, Psalm 16:9,11

Prayers of Longing:
Psalm 42:1-2, Psalm 88:1-2,9

Prayers for Healing:
Psalm 30:2, Isaiah 38:16

Prayers for Guidance:
Psalm 86:11, 2 Samuel 22:29

Prayers for Str ength:
Psalm 71:4-5, Isaiah 35:3

Prayers When in T rouble:
Psalm 109:21-22, Psalm 79:9

Prayers When Afraid:
Psalm 69:14, Psalm 23:4

QUESTIONS

1. Why do you pray?
2. What is the name of Jesus's prayer stated in Luke Chapter 11?
3. Who was the sinner that asked God to "deliver his soul"? (Answer Psalms 116)

LESSON FOUR

WHY GIVE?

LESSON TEXT
2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-8

WRITTEN BY
PAULITA HAYES

6. But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.
7. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver.
8. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work:

LIVING—OUR GIVING

Does that sound a tad crazy? It may not be an easy title to say. But learning to be a giver, in all the ways that God would have us to give, isn't easy. Today we are going to do a spiritual medical examination of our own hearts. This examination is not meant for you to do on any other person. It is a top secret mission for you to open your heart up to God. Let Him show you if you are a wholesome, healthy giver. Are you ready to get focused on yourself? Let's jump into our surgical garb. You will need your Bible, clean paper, and a good pencil.

First, we need to discuss the attending Physician. Who do you think that is? You're right. It's Jesus. He is the ultimate healer and the greatest giver ever known by humanity. Open your Bible to the book of John 10:28-30, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." We can have confidence that our Physician knows everything about giving. We are now ready to proceed with our examination.

WHY WE SHOULD GIVE OUR MONEY TO GOD'S WORK

When we think back on one of the first lessons we were taught about giving, it was probably about giving money to the church. This is a vital exercise to begin a healthy giving heart. We were taught the story of the "Widow's Mite." Let's turn over to Luke 21:1-4, "And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, " Of truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had." We know from this that it isn't important how much we are able to give but the condition of our giving heart. If our "giving" is healthy , we will want to give as much as we are able to give. The poor woman in this true account had two mites (about 50 cents). Jesus said that the woman gave all that she had. Jesus knew her heart as she gave, and he found it acceptable. Reread the scripture text to find out what is the key to healthy giving to our church? It is the condition of our heart when we give. Let's make it clearer. Giving is all about—showing love.

SPECIFIC REASONS FOR US TO GIVE MONEY TO GOD'S CHURCH

Our pastor should be able to freely work for the church without financial burdens to distract him. Otherwise, our pastor would have to get a second job. This would hinder his work for the congregation and his time to study on God's Word. We would have an exhausted and less prepared pastor. Paul gives a great talk about this in 1 Corinthians 9:9-14. Turn and read.

Secondly, we need to take care of the building God gave us to work and worship HIM within. We honor Him by how well we take care of it. We know that God doesn't care if we worship Him in a cathedral palace or in a tiny, wooden church in the country. But God does expect us to give Him the best we can offer. After all He is GOD. That means taking care of the sanctuary we are blessed to have as a way of giving our Lord honor and thanksgiving. (Ezra 3: focus on vs.10-11).

Thirdly, we are a people who have the responsibility to support our missionaries as they work on the mission fields. We should have a deep compassion for those around us who have never heard about Jesus. Can you imagine not ever having been told that Jesus loves you? It may not be us that God calls to be a missionary in a faraway land or even nearby. But our way of being a part of missions is to provide for our missionaries so they can be free to teach the lost about Jesus. We can read about this in Romans 15: 22-33. Paul talks about a mission journey into Jerusalem. People from the churches at Macedonia and Achaia made contributions for the "poor saints" in Jerusalem.

Last, and just as importantly, we are to help those in need. Meeting all of these requirements helps us to have a more effective, efficient church to serve God.

All of these requirements are supported by scripture. If you would like to read more about this on your own, refer to: 2 Cor. 8, Luke 6:38, Rom. 15:25-27, Hebrews 7, 1 Cor. 9:9-14. These are just a few references. You can find more if you study and search. In fact, you can begin by reading about the earliest recorded offerings. These were sacrificial offerings given to God. Offerings were given by Cain and Able (Gen. 4:34); Noah (Gen. 8:20); Job (1:5) and the Patriarchs of Israel (Gen. 12:7; 26:25 and 34:20).

WHY WE SHOULD GIVE GOD OUR ATTENTION AND HONOR

It is time to move into another area of giving, the ATTENTION ZONE. When this part of our "giving anatomy" isn't healthy, we begin to lose our ability to honor God the way that He deserves to be honored. Because of this, we will no longer properly give our time, work, and service to the church. Healthy, alert attention is the key to having a healthy spiritual heart that is willing to give. The Bible is full of words that tell us about God wanting His people to pay attention to Him. All He really asks from us is that we give Him —RESPECT. God told Moses in Exodus 3:5 "...Draw not nigh thither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." God wants you to feel safe and happy to be his child. But He wants you to give Him the respect He deserves.

Here are more scripture that refer to giving respect to God: Joshua 5:13-15, Psalm 4 (notice vs. 4), Psalm 33:8, Psalm 111:9, Habakkuk 2:18-20.

ARE YOU PAYING ATTENTION TO JESUS?

"Are you paying attention?" means the same thing as "Are you GIVING your attention?" Did you know Jesus and his disciples wanted people to GIVE them their attention. Jesus and his followers had a life-changing, lifesaving message to share with everyone. Jesus is still trying to get our attention. He wants us to give Him the time He is due to receive. We are supposed to go to God's house of worship with a giving attitude.

continued

When we go to church eager to give our attention to our friends or to other distractions, then we can't GIVE God our heartfelt focus. Then we become the losers. We become the ones at risk of developing an unhealthy ability to grow spiritually. The great thing about giving God our complete attention is He always has something to give us. He has a message to give us through our pastor (Acts 8:26-39). We may be able to share that message with someone else later. He has a lesson to teach us if we listen to our Sunday School teachers. He has a word in a song that we sing that will touch us and lift us closer to Him. He wants us to give Him our full attention when we pray to Him. He wants us to have an opportunity to draw closer to Him. We can learn from our pastor and those appointed to teach us in our churches how to be a better follower of Christ. Who gives you spiritual instruction? Listen to them carefully.

HERE ARE SOME PEOPLE WHO LISTENED TO JESUS AND BECAME WINNERS:

Mary (this was not Mary, Jesus' mother) gave Jesus her gift of precious ointment and poured it on Jesus' head to show him her devotion. In return, Jesus said that the whole world would hear of this great deed. Here we are a couple of thousand years later and we are still talking about Mary and her love for her Lord. (Matthew 26:6-13) (John 12:1-7).

The woman, who had the issue of the blood for twelve years, gave Jesus every ounce of faith she had. She believed in Jesus. In return, Jesus made her completely well. (Mark 5: 25-34).

The Samaritan woman at the well gave a drink of water and her complete attention to Jesus' words. In return, Jesus gave her living water. He gave her a life-changing experience (John 4:6-26).

SCRIPTURE READING:

Here are some scriptures that talk about the Lord's teachers and those who listened to them: Acts 8:35, Acts 18:26, Acts 28:23. Now, turn your Bibles to Luke 24:25-32. Read this scripture out loud. When you are finished, read verse 32 again: "And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" What did these people give Jesus? Correct!... Their undivided attention. What was their reward? Their hearts burned within them. Of course, that doesn't mean they were in need of a fire extinguisher. Very seriously, their souls were drawn closer to heaven by having listened to their Lord's teachings. Most of you come to church ready to learn and anxious to give your time to God. That is terrific!

THE POSSIBLE OUTCOME OF NOT GIVING YOUR ATTENTION:

How does not giving your eager attention to your pastor and church teachers affect the service and the classes we attend? You could be the very person that the devil uses to distract one of your lost friends from hearing the words that will draw them closer to God's saving grace. If you are saved, you should be very concerned about your lost friends. And if you think because you sit in the back and you are very quiet that is okay, think again. You are cheating yourself out of a blessing. Besides, God sees everything and you would be surprised at what your pastor sees, too.

If you are lost, you are treading on the dangerous side when you come to church unwilling to give God your attention. It is that simple.

INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS:

Let's stop. Ask yourself these questions privately and write your answers down on paper:

- Do I go to church because I want to go or because someone makes me go?
- Do I go to church for the right reasons?
- Do I have a healthy attitude about giving in my church?
- Is my spiritual heart in good condition?
- What else can I GIVE that will draw me closer to God and closer to my church family?
- What can I do to prepare myself to GIVE to those in need out in the world?

Keep this paper in your Bible. Try to read it each Sunday morning before you begin to worship for the next few weeks. It will remind you of your goal to be a giver in your church.

GROUP QUESTIONS:

- What are some ways that we can give to our church as a youth group?
- What are some activities that we can do that would help those in need in our church and community?
- In what way can you let your parents and church leaders know that you are attending church for the correct reasons?
- How can you let your pastor know you are giving him your attention?
- How can you show those around you each day that you give Jesus honor and respect? We are sure you came up with some great answers.

Now, try planning a GIVING activity at and/or for your church. Have a great time.

SUMMARY:

Today we have only touched the tip of the "GIVING" iceberg. We hope that you have begun to think about what part you can play in giving in your church, at home, in school, and in your personal time with Jesus. We hope that you will open your Bibles and let God show you about what He has to give to you. In return, you will find that you'll want to give HIM more—because giving is about loving. And you haven't really lived until you have lived to GIVE!

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you mete withal it shall be measured to you again." Luke 6:38

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Romans Chapter 12; Matthew 19: 16-26 (vs. 21).

LESSON FIVE

WHY WORSHIP?

LESSON TEXT
JOHN 4:19-24

WRITTEN BY
JANET CARLOCK

19. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.
20. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.
21. Jesus saith unto her, woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.
22. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.
23. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.
24. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

INTRODUCTION

In our lesson text, Jesus is speaking to the woman at the well. The woman is a Samaritan and was known to be living in sin. Jesus was teaching the woman about the need for "living water." The water received at the well satisfies our physical needs for only a short time. But, the "living water" received from God when He saves us will satisfy our spiritual needs forever and ever.

The woman asked Jesus a very important question concerning the correct place to worship. Jesus answered by saying in verse 24: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Worshiping God is a privilege of every Christian. It must be done spiritually and reverently so that God will receive all the glory and honor.

"WHY SHOULD WE WORSHIP?"

The objective of this lesson is to answer that question: "Why should we worship?" First, let's look at the word *worship*. Worship means "to bow down before with reverence" and "to do obeisance." In order to bow down with reverence, there must be an object to bow down before.

Then, "Why should we worship?" Look at Psalms 95:6-7: "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today if ye will hear his voice," When we are saved, we become one of God's people. Therefore, the answer is: Because we are His people.

"WHOM DO WE WORSHIP?"

Let's look at Matthew 4:10. It states, "...Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." The Lord God is to be the object of our worship.

"Why should we worship God?" Look at Revelations 4:11. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." All Christians in heaven and on earth should praise and honor God, for He is the Creator and Sustainer of everything. Everything we have has been given to us by God. God is the Creator, not the creation.

God is worthy of our worship. Read through Acts 17:24-28. "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with

men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; ...For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."

Read Exodus 20:1-5. This chapter of the Bible contains the Ten Commandments. In the first commandment, Exodus 20:3, God said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." The Israelites had to learn that it was God who led them out of Egypt, and that He was the one and only true God. God placed an emphasis on this first commandment when He continued His instructions in verses 4 and 5 of Exodus chapter 20: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath,... Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them..." People today have a tendency to create "images" or "gods" of things such as money, fame, work, or pleasures. When that occurs and we concentrate too much on those things, sin enters our lives and we stray away from God. We must always put God in the center of our lives!

Therefore, the answer to our question, "Whom do we worship?" is: God, because He is worthy of our worship. God is the one who gave us everlasting life when He saved us.

"HOW DO WE WORSHIP?"

There are two kinds of worship. One is internal worship and the other is external worship.

Let's discuss internal worship first. Internal worship involves worshiping from the heart. Saved individuals have a personal relationship with God. From the time you are saved, God is there for you in good and bad times. As a born-again Christian, you have a responsibility to God. That responsibility involves living your life for Him. One way is through worship. Internal worship should be an on-going, daily activity and not limited to Sundays and Wednesday night services. In addition, worship must be sincere and heartfelt in order to truly honor God for all that He has done for you.

Many people go to church regularly, but a great number fail to worship God the way they should. Many times people go to church out of habit. And they walk out of church wondering what the sermon was about and feeling no change or uplifting in their heart. In other words, as if they were never in church.

Christians should approach each worship service with a heart filled with reverence and a prayerful attitude. Christians should pray regularly. You should also pray for a spirit-filled service each and every time that the doors of the church are open. When God's people are themselves in the right place, the Holy Spirit fills the service and God is honored.

In Matthew 15:8-9, Jesus referred to the people as hypocrites in saying, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

The other type of worship is external worship. External worship is important because this is the way that Christians can witness to others around them. In Matthew 5:16 Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Most people today live two lives. One is what other people see on the outside, and the other is what is really going on inside. In school we learn what outward signs of attention will please the teacher or get us into the "popular group" of our peers. Our outside appearance is very important. We want to look "great" on the "outside" even though our "insides" may be full of trouble and turmoil. God is not fooled by appearances. We cannot fake behavior to impress Him. He knows what is on the "inside" of each of us.

continued

If you are reading this lesson and you are a young Christian, then you should start thinking about witnessing for God. You might say, "That's tough!" But you talk to your friends all the time. Why not share with them what God has done for you? Begin by talking to other young Christians in your church and other sister churches. Plan regular get-togethers with other young Christians and share what God has done for you and the blessings you have received. Be a light for Jesus! Let your light shine so that others may see what God has done for you! When Christians make sincere efforts to share their spiritual experiences with others, then Christians are of great value to God.

SUMMARY

Worshiping God is a very important part of a Christian's life. That worship should include internal and external honor and praise to God. God must come first in our lives, and his Word must shape all our actions and attitudes. Make regular worship a part of your life!

QUESTIONS

1. Why should we worship?
2. Whom do we worship?
3. How do we worship?

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IN THIS SITUATION?

Some of your friends come to church with you. How would you explain the worship service to your friends? (Pray about this answer. You never know when you may need the answer to this question.)

SCRIPTURES FOR STUDY

Matthew 4:10

Exodus 20:1-5

Matthew 15:8-9

Hebrews 10:1-25

John 4:23

2Timothy 3:5

Revelations 4:11

Acts 17:24-28

Psalms 95:6-7

Hebrews 1:3

Hebrews 9:28

Judges 7:15

Thessalonians 4:13-18

Numbers 29:1-2

Psalms 68:24

I Chronicles 6:31

I Chronicles 25:1-7

I Corinthians 14:26

Numbers 29:1-2