

Lesson Booklet:

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

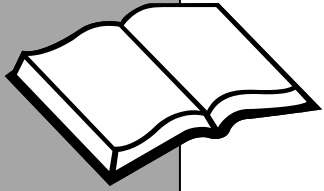
The purpose of this text is to aid the reader in a better understanding of various truths found in the Holy Scriptures and discovering for themselves how the Scriptures apply to their lives. It is the desire of this work that through this study of the Scriptures each learner will be brought closer in their relationship to their Creator as a result of these lessons.

Presented on the following pages is a series of one page lessons prepared as an “*Introduction*” lesson booklet. The lessons contained in this booklet are intended only to introduce the subject at hand; further more in-depth resources are available in the online library where you obtained this booklet. Each lesson has been optimized to work best for use in a small group, but is also appropriate for individual review. In fact, if you plan to meet with others to work through this lesson book, it is highly recommend that you work through the lessons ahead of time to find answers in Scripture, as most lessons welcome discussion. When prompted for discussion, *opinions* should be heard and discussed, of course. However, a Scripture verse or passage should accompany discussions as the foundation for what the belief or opinion is based on. Study tools, such as a printed concordance or searchable Bible software to help you find the location of a Scripture that you may be having a hard time remembering, are encouraged for use with these lessons. Please remember always to study the Scriptures in context of the full passage to ensure that it properly accompanies the topic being discussed.

Co Concerning the source used for these lessons, please note that all Scripture quotations in this book are taken from the Modern King James Version of the Bible. The purpose in using this particular English translation is simply because it is, by name, a modern version of the widely accepted King James Version. From the start, readers are encouraged to have his or her preferred translation of their Bible alongside for reference while reading along.

In addition, traditional Christian terms and names are *intentionally* used throughout this lesson book to reach a larger scope of readers and help those who may be beginners in this knowledge learn with ease. Occasionally, the need to employ the use of a Hebrew term or phrase may present itself for a clearer understanding of Scripture; when this occurs, the corresponding English meaning is always supplied.

Salvation



Scripture Highlight

Matthew 1:21

And she shall bear a son, and you shall call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins.

John 1:29

The next day John sees Jesus coming to him and says, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

1st John 2:2

And He is *the* propitiation concerning our sins, and not concerning ours only, but also concerning *the sins of* all the world.

1st John 3:5

And you know that He was revealed that He might take away our sins, and in Him is no sin.

1st Timothy 1:15

Faithful *is* the Word and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

Hebrews 10:14

For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified.

Ephesians 1:7-9

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which He caused to abound toward us in all wisdom and understanding; having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,

Study

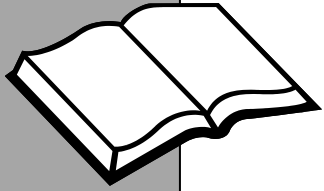
A high price was paid for our Salvation from Sin. Without that price being paid *and* our repentance from sin, the curses spoken of in the Law and by the Prophets caused by sin come upon us (see Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28, Acts 13:37-40). 1st Peter 2:24 reminds us that by our Messiah's stripes, we are healed and should live unto righteousness. Peter is referencing Isaiah Chapter 53. Read this chapter that describes the price that this Lamb of God paid for our redemption from sin.

Discussion

Long before the Messiah was born in Bethlehem, a woman named Ruth made a choice to leave the place and ways that she grew up in and go to Bethlehem and call the God of that land her God (Ruth 1:16-19). In Bethlehem, she found a man who kept the laws written in the Torah (compare Ruth 2:3 & 2:7 to Leviticus 19:9 & 23:22, and Deuteronomy 29:11). In the end, that man redeems Ruth and she becomes his bride (Ruth 4:1-15).

If you have not read the book of Ruth, then put this task on your list of things to do! You will discover many things, such as Ruth being the great grandmother of King David, along with many other details. If you have already read the book of Ruth, plan on reading it again sometime with this discussion point in mind: How does the book of Ruth compare to our own personal lives as we prepare to become the Bride of Christ, and how does/did our Redeemer redeem us?

Faith



Scripture Highlight

James 1:5-6

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, *who* gives to all liberally and with no reproach, and it shall be given to him. But let him ask in faith, doubting nothing. For he who doubts is like a wave of *the* sea, driven by the wind and tossed.

2nd Timothy 2:15

Study earnestly to present yourself approved to God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

2nd Timothy 3:14-15

But continue in the things that you have learned and have been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, and that from a babe you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 3:17-19

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.

2nd Corinthians 5:6-11

Then being always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are away from home from the Lord; for we walk by faith, not by sight; then we are confident and we are pleased rather to go away from home out of the body, and to come home to the Lord. Therefore we are also laboring to be well-pleasing to Him, whether at home or away from home. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive the things *done* through the body, according to that which he has done, whether good or bad. Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men. But we are revealed to God, and I trust also that we are revealed in your consciences.

Study

Read the famous chapter on faith in the New Testament: Hebrews 11. Choose a person from the long list presented in this chapter, and study how their faith was fulfilled (paying particular attention to their attitude, obedience, diligence, and other important attributes of faith). Now, do a closer examination on yourself and begin to read the first two verses of the next chapter, Hebrews 12:1-2. Who is the finisher of our faith, and *what* must we lay aside to run the race that is set before us?

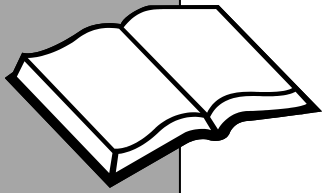
Discussion

In the *Scripture Highlight* above, Timothy is told to study the Scriptures and then reminded that he had studied the Scriptures since childhood. *What* did this make Timothy wise towards?

If your personal “testimony” (the story of your Salvation) is one of knowing Christ since childhood, share this testimony with others and the faith and wisdom that it has brought you... and some of the troubles that you have been able to avoid.

If you have not had the blessing of studying the Scriptures from childhood, this may explain some of the frustrations that you may have had finding such wisdom over the years. From the *Scripture Highlights* above, what action can you (and others) begin doing from this day forward to correct this problem?

Results of Obedience



Scripture Highlight

Matthew 5:17-19

Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to destroy but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, Till the heaven and the earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle shall in any way pass from the law until all is fulfilled. Therefore whoever shall break one of these commandments, the least, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven. But whoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven.

Matthew 7:24-25

Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on a rock. And the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house. And it did not fall, for it was founded on a rock.

John 13:17

If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

John 14:23

Jesus answered and said to him, If a man loves Me, he will keep My Word. And My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.

John 15:10

If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love, even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

James 1:22-25 (see also Roman 2:13)

But become doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if anyone is a hearer of *the* Word and not a doer, he is like a man studying his natural face in a mirror. For he studied himself and went his way, and immediately *he* forgot what he was like. But whoever looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, he is not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of *the* work. This one shall be blessed in his doing.

Study

Hebrews 5:9 states that the Christ, our Messiah, became the author of salvation “to all those who obey Him.” Obedience was also of key importance for the children of Israel as they left Egypt for the Promised Land. Study the following verses from the book of Deuteronomy alone:

Deuteronomy 5:29, 6:3, 6:18, 7:12, 29:9, 30:15-16

Some might try to argue that this concept of obedience is an “Old Testament” only idea. However, that argument is simply wrong. Compare Hebrews 5:9, mentioned above, with other famous verses in the “New Testament” such as Hebrews 13:8, Matthew 7:21, and John 8:51.

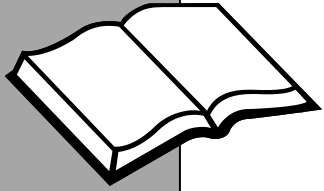
Discussion

Matthew 6:9-13 gives us an example of how we should pray. The religious world gives us many others. However, the question sometimes comes up: How do we know that our Heavenly Father hears and answers our prayers; also what are the results of obedience?

Proverbs 10:24, 12:2, 13:21, 15:29
Psalm 5:12, 34:17, 91:14-16, 106:3
John 15:7, 1st John 3:22, James 1:25, 2:14-26, 5:16

Read together the Scripture verses above and discuss: Is there a connection between living an obedient righteous life and having our prayers answered?

Salvation



Scripture Highlight

Ezekiel 36:25-26

And I will sprinkle clean waters on you, and you shall be clean. I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from your idols. And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.

Jeremiah 31:33

But this *shall* be the covenant that I will cut with the house of Israel: After those days, says the LORD, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Hebrews 8:10

"For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their mind and write them in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Romans 6:1-11

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound? Let it not be! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised up from *the* dead by the glory of the Father; even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been joined together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *Him* in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, that from now on we should not serve sin. For he who died has been justified from sin. But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that when Christ was raised from *the* dead, He dies no more; death no longer has dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died to sin once; but in that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise count yourselves also to be truly dead to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Acts 10:43

All the prophets give witness to Him, *that* through His name whoever believes in Him *shall* receive remission of sins.

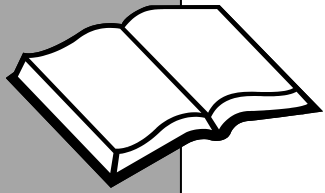
2nd Corinthians 5:17

So that if any one *is* in Christ, *that one is* a new creature; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Study & Discussion

The grace of God brings us salvation and teaches us not to sin (see Titus 2:11-12)! Does not our salvation reside firmly on this grace and obedience to His teachings? Matthew 7:13-14 compares a narrow way and a broad way – what does this mean? Read and discuss. For a more in-depth discussion, read Chapter 18 of the book of Ezekiel and discuss. What does it mean to be made a new creation in Christ? Does it affect our lifestyle, or is it *just a belief* that we claim?

The Conditions of Trust



Scripture Highlight

Proverbs 3:1-6

My son, forget not My law; but let your heart keep My commandments; for they shall add length of days, and long life, and peace, to you. Let not mercy and truth forsake you; tie them around your neck; write them upon the tablet of your heart; and you shall find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Psalms 9:10

And those who know Your name will put their trust in You; for You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.

Psalms 37:1-6

Do not fret yourself with evil doers; and do not be envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon wither like the grass; and fade as the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; you shall dwell in the land, and you shall be fed on truth. Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Roll your way on the LORD; trust also in Him, and He will work. And He shall bring forth your righteousness like the light, and your judgment like the noonday.

Psalms 40:4

Blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust and does not turn to the proud, nor to those who turn aside to a lie.

Psalms 125:1-5

They who trust in the LORD *shall be* like Mount Zion; it is not shaken, but remains forever. As the mountains *are* all around Jerusalem, so the LORD *is* all around His people from this time and forever. For the rod of the wicked shall not rest on the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands to iniquity. Do good, O LORD, to the good, and to the upright in their hearts. And those who turn aside to their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity; peace *shall be* on Israel.

1st John 4:16-19

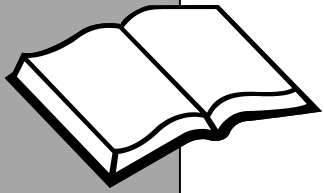
And we have known and believed the love that God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. In this is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, that as He is, so also we are in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear has torment. He who fears has not been perfected in love. We love Him because He first loved us.

Group Study & Discussion

There is much talk these days about the tribulation hardships that are to come; they will be bad times... the worst of times (see 2nd Timothy 3:1, Amos 5:18, Matthew 24, Luke 21), and will require a great deal of trust. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were righteous men who trusted their God, even unto death. But, their God in whom they trusted delivered them from that fiery furnace into which they had been thrown – if you are not familiar with this account, read Daniel Chapter 3, paying close attention to verses 17-18 and 25. Also read Hebrews 13:6, Matthew 10:28, and Luke 12:4-5.

Obviously, we should trust in God, but does our trust in Him have conditions? Or, can we blindly trust in Him regardless of our own actions? Read the first chapter of both Psalms & Proverbs, and discuss any conditions contained therein.

Trusting in His Protection



Scripture Highlight

Psalm 9:9

The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

Psalm 20:6-8

Now I know that the LORD saves His anointed; He will hear him from His holy Heaven with the saving strengths of His right hand. Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the LORD our God. They have bowed down and fallen; but we have risen and stand upright.

Psalm 56:3

When I am afraid I will trust in You.

Jeremiah 17:7-8

Blessed *is* the man who trusts in the LORD, and Jehovah is his trust. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters; *it* sends out its roots by the river, and *it* shall not fear when the heat comes, but its foliage shall be green; and he is not worried in the year of drought, nor will it cease from yielding fruit.

Romans 15:13

And may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of *the* Holy Spirit.

1st John 4:16-19

And we have known and believed the love that God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. In this is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, that as He is, so also we are in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, because fear has torment. He who fears has not been perfected in love. We love Him because He first loved us.

Isaiah 43:1-2

But now so says the LORD who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel; Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called *you* by your name; you *are* Mine. When you pass through the waters, I *will be* with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned; nor shall the flame kindle on you.

Study

Isaiah 43:1-2 above reminds us that we have a Redeemer who has redeemed us from sin (see also Titus 2:11-15). He calls us His own and is with us through baptism, and He will be with us through any fiery trial ahead.

Read and study Psalm Chapter 91 which tells how our God, in whom we trust, is a refuge and fortress. Be sure to make note of the many things that He will protect us from. Also note that He will show us Salvation!

As a bonus, also read Psalm 34:22.

Discussion

In your study of Psalm 91, you made note of the many things that our God protects us from. Compare your notes to the curses described in Leviticus 26. Is there a pattern? Is there a condition to our trusting in Him?

Jeremiah 16:19 also calls our God a fortress and refuge, but also adds that the Gentiles will come and say *something* about what their fathers have taught them. Read this verse in Jeremiah, and also a warning given to us in Deuteronomy 12:28-32, then discuss.

Top Priority Sermon

Scripture Highlight

Matthew 5:16-48



Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in Heaven. Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to destroy but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, Till the heaven and the earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle shall in any way pass from the law until all is fulfilled. Therefore whoever shall break one of these commandments, the least, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven. But whoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven. For I say to you that unless your righteousness shall exceed *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven. You have heard that it was said to the ancients, "You shall not kill" --and, "Whoever shall kill shall be liable to the judgment." But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be liable to the judgment. And whoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be liable to the sanhedrin; but whoever shall say, Fool! shall be liable *to be thrown* into the fire of hell. Therefore if you offer your gift on the altar, and there remember that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are in the way with him; that the opponent not deliver you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Truly I say to you, You shall by no means come out from there until you have paid the last kodrantes. You have heard that it was said to the ancients, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. And if your right eye offends you, pluck it out and throw *it* from you. For it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish, and not *that* your whole body should be thrown into hell. And if your right hand offends you, cut it off and throw *it* from you. For it is profitable for you *that* one of your members should perish, and not that your whole body should be thrown into hell. It was also said, Whoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a bill of divorce. But I say to you that whoever shall put away his wife, except for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery. And whoever shall marry her who is put away commits adultery. Again, you have heard that it has been said to the ancients, "You shall not swear falsely, but you shall perform your oaths to the Lord." But I say to you, Do not swear at all! Not by Heaven, because it is God's throne; not by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet; not by Jerusalem, because it is *the* city of the great King; nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your word be, Yes, yes; No, no. For whatever is more than these comes from evil. You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." But I say to you, Do not resist evil. But whoever shall strike you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. And to him desiring to sue you, and to take away your tunic, let him have *your* coat also. And whoever shall compel you to go a mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and you shall not turn away from him who would borrow from you. You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, so that you may become sons of your Father in Heaven. For He makes His sun to rise on *the* evil and on *the* good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax-collectors do so? Therefore be perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.

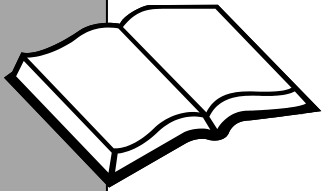
Discussion

One major theme of the Scriptures is simply: Do not sin. Some believe, and even teach, that salvation brings grace that allows us to sin (see Titus 2:11-12, which clarifies what grace teaches us). The *Scripture Highlight* above is taken from the famous "Sermon on the Mount" which is the first and longest recorded words of our Messiah. Did Christ "destroy the law" that teaches us what sin is (so that we have life and avoid sin which brings death, see Romans 6:23 & 7:7-12)? Or, did Christ raise the standards and tell us to aim for perfection? Explain.

Study

In Matthew 22:36-40, Our Messiah was asked by His disciples to *summarize* the Ten Commandments. In the book of John, Chapter 14, much discussion takes place about keeping the commandments and *knowing* who He is: Verse 15 explains to what we should do, if we love Him and verses 21-24 explain His response. Read this discussion keeping the thought in mind that you, too, desire to be one of His disciples who loves Him very much. (Bonus reading: Matthew 19:25-26)

How Not to Worship



Scripture Highlight

Deuteronomy 12:28-32

Be careful to hear all these words which I command you, so that it may go well with you and with your sons after you forever, when you do the good and right in the sight of the LORD your God. When the LORD your God shall cut off the nations before you, where you go to possess them, and you take their place and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that you do not become snared by following them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not ask about their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods that I too may do likewise? You shall not do so to the LORD your God. For every abomination to the LORD, which He hates, they have done to their gods; even their sons and their daughters they have burned in the fire to their gods. All the things I command you, be careful to do it. You shall not add to it, nor take away from it.

Jeremiah 10:2

So says the LORD, Do not learn the way of the nations, and do not be terrified at the signs of the heavens; for the nations are terrified at them.

Amos 5:21

I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not delight in your solemn assemblies.

Matthew 15:3

But He answered and said to them, Why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

Isaiah 29:13 (see also Matthew 15:9 & Mark 7:7)

And the LORD said, Because this people draw near *Me* with their mouth, and with their lips honor *Me*, but have removed their heart far from *Me*, and their fear toward *Me* is taught by the command of men;

Study

Many modern day religious people may be making the same mistakes that the Samaritans made years ago. Study 2nd Kings 17:22-41 and try to figure out what that mistake is. Consider also the prophecies of Jeremiah 16:9 and Zechariah 8:23.

Amos 5:21 above is not talking negatively about the good feast days, summarized in Leviticus 23, which our Heavenly Father loves – but rather, it is speaking about added holidays that are often very pagan in their origins and very nature. Many scriptures tell us to be holy (1st Peter 1:16, Leviticus 19:2, Leviticus 20:7-8, Leviticus 20:26). However, some may find it offending to suggest that people should avoid some traditions and follow Scripture instead.

Read Matthew 11:6 and Hebrews 10:26 and consider how these scriptures might apply to this study.

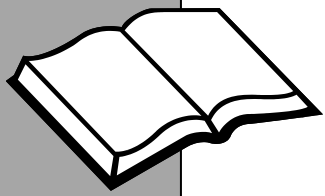
Discussion

When the Samaritan woman at the well was told that she once had five husbands, but now has none. Discuss the concept that the Samaritans once had the five books of the Torah (the first five books of the bible), but at some point decided not to follow the commandments in those books.

References

2 nd Kings 17:24-41	<i>The settling of the Samaritans in Israel</i>
Luke 10:25-37	<i>The parable of the good Samaritan</i>
John 4:7-44	<i>The Samaritan woman at the well</i>
Luke 9:51-56	<i>The Samaritans reject the Savior</i>

False Worship and The 10 Commandments



Scripture Highlight

Exodus 20:1-17

And God spoke all these words, saying, I *am* the LORD your God, who has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make to yourselves any graven image, or any likeness of *anything* that *is* in the heavens above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth. You shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them. For I the LORD your God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons to the third and fourth *generation* of those that hate me, and showing mercy to thousands of those that love Me and keep My commandments. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain. For the LORD will not hold him guiltless that takes His name in vain. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. You shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger within your gates. For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and sanctified it. Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God gives you. You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that *is* your neighbor's.

Psalms 119:18

Open my eyes, so that I may behold wonderful things out of Your law.

Discussion

Often when the topic of idolatry comes up in our modern society, it is discussed as a “Time Management Issue” rather than, well, an idolatry issue. For example, one might be led to think that because they enjoy a particular entertainment, such as sports, that they are spending way too much time doing that one thing... and, thus, some teach that such a time consuming activity has become an Idol to that individual. Is this really how the Scriptures defines idolatry?

Now, let us take another completely different view of idolatry and the violation of the first few commandments... Consider the practice of people attributing changes in the weather to “*Mother Nature*” as a common saying. It is rare that a weather report on television or radio does not mention *Mother Nature* in their broadcast. *Mother Nature* is a false god, often referred to in the Scriptures as *The Queen of Heaven* – an abomination. Is this closer to how the Scriptures defines idolatry and putting other gods before the One True God than the first example above?

The sad truth is that cultures around the world are entrenched with idolatry and false gods. The first few commandments of the Ten Commandments, found in Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:4-21, are very clear. Other instructions, such as Exodus 23:13, define the error of the *Mother Nature* habit without question. However, this sin is very common.

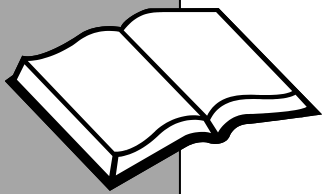
Discuss some examples of actual idolatry (involving actual false gods, physical idols, etc) and paganism (common mention of false gods, holidays rooted in false worship, etc) that is common in your culture, and even in the church.

Study, Prayer and Preparation

Easter, another name for *The Queen of Heaven*, is a false goddess whose child was *Tammuz*. Each year, people can be found doing forty days of weeping for *Tammuz* during a time of lent. Read about this abominable practice in Ezekiel 8:13-17 (Bonus: Jeremiah also wrote about *The Queen of Heaven* in Jeremiah 7:17 -25). This *Easter* goddess is the basis of the modern holiday of the same name commonly accepted and practiced by many. Note that this is mentioned in this lesson briefly only as an example. However this celebration of *Easter*, like other holidays, is a violation of the commandments!

These lessons that you are studying will tackle many topics like this one very directly. The commandments and instructions of our God will be taken very seriously and examined in various ways. For some, this may be uncomfortable. Others may be fervently eager to dive into lessons like these. Read together 1st Corinthians Chapter 13 concerning the charitable gift of love, then pray that our Heavenly Father – the One True God – prepare your hearts as you study, learn, and grow together.

Overcoming Temptation & Sin



Scripture Highlight

1st John 2:15-17

Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him, because all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust of it, but he who does the will of God abides forever.

1st Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has taken you but *what is* common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able, but with the temptation also will make a way to escape, so that you may be able to bear *it*.

Revelation 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:26, 3:5, 3:12, 3:21, & 21:7

2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

2:11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.

2:17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give to him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knows except he who receives it.

2:26 And he who overcomes and keeps My works to the end, to him I will give power over the nations.

3:5 The one who overcomes, this one will be clothed in white clothing. And I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

3:12 Him who overcomes I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will go out no more. And I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of Heaven from My God, and My new name.

3:21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and have sat down with My Father in His throne.

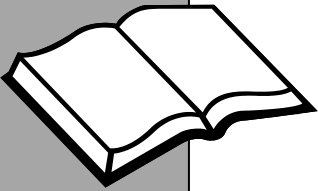
21:7 He who overcomes will inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he will be My son.

Study

The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life: every sin we commit will involve at least one of these three. For an example of what these are, examine Galatians 5:19-21, 2nd Samuel 11:2, and Isaiah 14:12-15 respectively.

Now consider the first sin, which is recorded in Genesis 3:6. Examine this verse and identify where the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life were all involved in the sin that was committed. Next, read the account in Matthew 4:3-10 where our Messiah was tempted. Identify where our Messiah overcame all three of these aspects of sin in this situation. Now Read Romans 8:35-39 together and see what, because of Him, we can now proclaim!

Repentance



Scripture Highlight

1st John 1:1-10

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life, (for the Life was revealed, and we have seen *it* and bear witness, and show to you the everlasting Life, who was with the Father and was revealed to us), that which we have seen and heard we declare unto you, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And we write these things to you so that your joy may be full. And this is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.

Hosea 4:6

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you from being priest to Me. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I will also forget your sons, even I.

Hosea 6:1-3

Come and let us return to the LORD. For He has torn, and He will heal us; He has stricken, and He will bind us up. After two days He will bring us to life; in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. Then we shall know, *if* we follow on to know the LORD. His going out is prepared as the morning; and He shall come to us as the rain, as the latter *and* former rain to the earth.

Proverbs 1:23

Turn at my warning; behold, I will pour out my Spirit to you; I will make my words known to you.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow concerning His promise, as some count slowness, but is long-suffering toward us, not purposing that any *of us* should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

1st Timothy 2:3-4

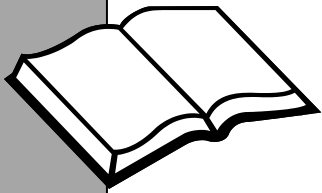
For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Study and Discussion

If you have been studying these lessons and found yourself falling short (see Romans 3:23 – you are not alone), know that your God desires and will accept your repentance. You are not the first one to realize this (see Jeremiah 31:19). Our God desires that none perish, but that all come to repentance (2nd Peter 3:9). In repentance rests your salvation (see also Isaiah 30:15)!

Bonus Scriptures: Luke 5:32-32, Luke 15:7, Acts 3:19, Acts 5:31, Acts 17:30, Romans 2:4-5, 2nd Corinthians 7:9-10, 2 Chronicles 30:9, Ezekiel 18:32, Proverbs 1:23, Proverbs 28:13

A Starting Point



Scripture Highlight

1st Corinthians 10:23-33

All things are lawful to me, but not all things profit. All things are lawful to me, but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own, but each one another's. Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no question for conscience' sake; "for the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fullness of it." If any of those who do not believe invite you *to a feast*, and if you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no questions for conscience' sake. But if anyone says to you, This is slain in sacrifice to idols, do not eat for the sake of him who showed *it*, and for conscience' sake; "for the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fullness of it"; conscience, I say, not your own, but the other's. For why is my liberty judged by another's conscience? For if I by grace am a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that *for* which I give thanks? Therefore whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense, either to the Jews, or to the Greeks or to the church of God; even as I please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking my own profit, but the *profit* of the many, so that they may be saved.

Titus 2:11-15

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that having denied ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live discreetly, righteously and godly, in this present world, looking for the blessed hope, and the appearance of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify to Himself a special people, zealous of good works. Speak these things, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

Discussion

John 8:1-11 describes an incident of woman who was caught violating a commandment. She was guilty... but, she was shown compassion. Why?

Read this account and discuss.

It is wrong when people sin. And, it is frustrating to others: In what is known as the Parable of the Lost/Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32), one son stays home and does well while the other leaves home, only to shamefully return. The father is overjoyed to see his son return home, but the other son, having followed the commandments and stayed near his father, feels the need to point out his frustration.

Romans 3:10 and 3:23 reminds us that all have sinned. The Apostle Paul's account of going to Athens can be found in Acts 17:16-34. Paul is clearly distressed by all of idolatry and false god worship, but Paul seemed to be a pretty gentle teacher who was careful with his words. In the end, *some* of the people in Athens became followers and believed. Discuss the Apostle Paul's approach and success in spreading the wondrous news of our Messiah.

Study

In the Scripture Highlight above, the apostle Paul explains in a matter of speaking that our actions have consequences not only to ourselves but to others. He also mentions some of the limits that we must have when dealing with others and why. Go back a chapter and read 1st Corinthians 9:18-23 for a greater understanding of Paul's compassionate approach.

It is a goal of a good teacher that every student learn the Scriptures and follow them. But, learning takes time. Everyone has their own starting point, letting grace teach them how to follow the Scriptures better.

Read and study Acts Chapter 15 to find the starting point that was given to new believers at that time.

Extra

If time permits, talk about your spiritual growth as a believer. What was your starting point, and where are you now? This is your testimony to share with others.

Salvation

Scripture Highlight

Matthew 7:7-8 (also Luke 11:9-10)

Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you. For each one who asks receives; and he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened.

Luke 22:16

For I say to you, I will not any more eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

Revelation 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him and he with Me.

Revelation 19:6-10

And I heard as the sound of a great multitude, and as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of strong thunders, saying, Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and we will give glory to Him. For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has prepared herself. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. For the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. And he said to me, Write, Blessed *are* those who have been called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said to me, These are the true sayings of God. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said to me, See, do not *do it!* I am your fellow servant, and of your brothers who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God, for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority is given to Me in Heaven and in earth. Therefore go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things, whatever I commanded you. And, behold, I am with you all the days until the end of the world. Amen.

Mark 16:15-16

And He said to them, Go into all the world, proclaim the gospel to all the creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned.

Luke 24:45-49

And He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures. And He said to them, So it is written, and so it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be proclaimed in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of My father on you. But you sit in the city of Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high.

Ephesians 2:8-10

For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are *His* workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.

A Call To Prayer

In these lessons, not only are you learning about the wonderful gift of salvation, but also about the responsibilities that are expected of us. Although we all strive diligently towards righteous obedience, as we learn the wondrous things in the Scriptures, we have no reason to boast. *He* paid the price for us, and is making us into a new being. We are given the mighty mission to spread this message. Pray that we are able. Pray that we will be with our Bridegroom at that Wedding Supper of the Lamb!