

Lesson Booklet:

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

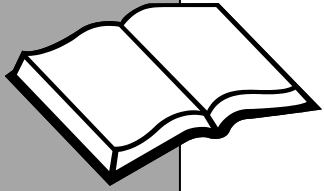
The purpose of this text is to aid the reader in a better understanding of various truths found in the Holy Scriptures and discovering for themselves how the Scriptures apply to their lives. It is the desire of this work that through this study of the Scriptures each learner will be brought closer in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

Concerning the source used for these lessons, please note that all Scripture quotations in this book are taken from the King James Version of the Bible. The purpose in using this particular English translation is simply because of its wide acceptance and the fact that it is public domain in the United States, allowing the text to be freely quoted without copyright restriction. 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 bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

John 1:29

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

1st John 2:2

And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins* of the whole world.

1st John 3:5

And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

1st Timothy 1:15

This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

Hebrews 10:14

For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Ephesians 1:7-9

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

Study

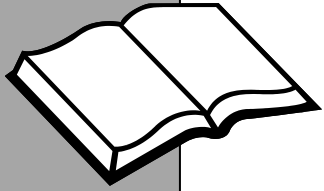
A high price was paid for our Salvation from Sin. Without that price being paid *and* our repentance from sin, the curses spoken of in the Law and by the Prophets caused by sin come upon us (see Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28, Acts 13:37-40). 1st Peter 2:24 reminds us that by our Messiah's stripes, we 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

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

2nd Timothy 2:15

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2nd Timothy 3:14-15

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 3:17-19

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, 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 passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

2nd Corinthians 5:6-11

Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest 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?

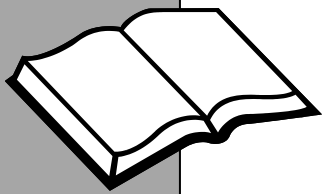
Discussion

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

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 7:24-25

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

John 13:17

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

John 14:23

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

John 15:10

If ye keep my commandments, ye 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 be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

Study

Hebrews 5:9 states that the Christ, our Messiah, became the author of salvation “to them that 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.

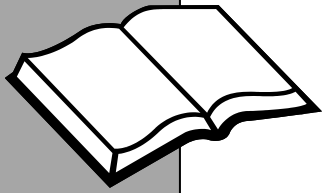
Discussion

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

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

Jeremiah 31:33

But this *shall* be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and 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, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

Romans 6:1-11

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like 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 planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Acts 10:43

To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

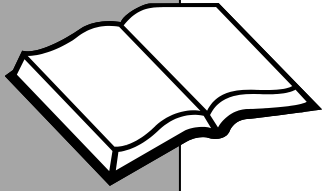
2nd Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are 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 thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Psalms 9:10

And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

Psalms 37:1-6

Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

Psalms 40:4

Blessed *is* that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

Psalms 125:1-5

They that trust in the LORD *shall be* as mount Zion, *which* cannot be removed, *but* abideth for ever. As the mountains *are* round about Jerusalem, so the LORD *is* round about his people from henceforth even for ever. For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity. Do good, O LORD, unto *those that be* good, and *to them that are* upright in their hearts. As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: *but peace shall be* upon Israel.

1st John 4:16-19

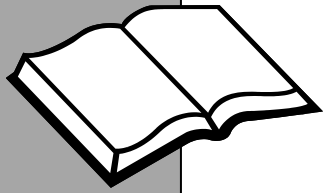
And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect 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 know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand. Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God. They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright.

Psalm 56:3

What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

Jeremiah 17:7-8

Blessed *is* the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. 8 For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and *that* spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

Romans 15:13

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

1st John 4:16-19

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us.

Isaiah 43:1-2

But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called *thee* by thy name; thou *art* mine. When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

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 which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell. It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery. Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

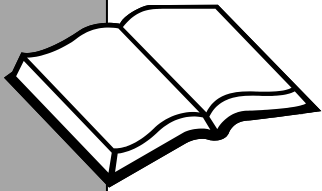
Discussion

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

Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doest *that which* is good and right in the sight of the LORD thy God. When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land; Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

Jeremiah 10:2

Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.

Amos 5:21

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

Matthew 15:3

But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

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

Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept 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.

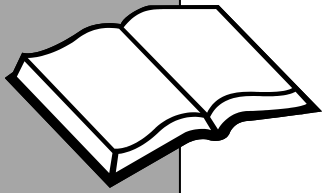
Discussion

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

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

False Worship and The 10 Commandments



Scripture Highlight

Exodus 20:1-17

And God spake all these words, saying, I *am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 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, or that *is* in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates: For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

Psalms 119:18

Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy 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.

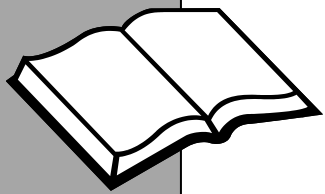
Discuss some examples of actual idolatry (involving actual false gods, physical idols, etc) and paganism (common mention of false gods, holidays rooted in false worship, etc) that is common in your culture, and even in the church.

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

Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

1st Corinthians 10:13

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye 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 that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

2:11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

2:17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth *it*.

2:26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

3:5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; 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 that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him* my new name.

3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

21:7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall 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, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto 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 the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth 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 thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

Hosea 6:1-3

Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, *if* we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter *and* former rain unto the earth.

Proverbs 1:23

Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

1st Timothy 2:3-4

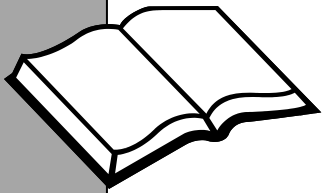
For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

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 for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's *wealth*. Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, *that* eat, asking no question for conscience sake: For the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. If any of them that believe not bid you *to a feast*, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another *man's* conscience? For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking mine own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved.

Titus 2:11-15

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

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 you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Luke 22:16

For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

Revelation 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Revelation 19:6-10

And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that 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 spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

Mark 16:15-16

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Luke 24:45-49

Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Ephesians 2:8-10

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath 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!