

TEACHER

in faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and agape. The fall comes because he has not been firmed up.

You say you have been effectually summoned by the Holy Spirit because of God's gracious selection of you before the foundation of the world and purified by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, zealously strengthen more and more yourself to a firm steadfastness, which will give an abundance of evidence of your calling and election. Paul the Apostle said: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (II Cor. 13:5)

The cultivation of these attributes has never been said to be easy, at least by those who are indeed knowledgeable on the topic. Rather, it is truly a heavy burden, and one of great sacrifice. This is why Paul wrote: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1)

Remember these words of wisdom?

**You can't wear a crown,
unless you carry a cross;
The heavier the cross,
the brighter the crown!**

Cultivating Christian Faith

prepared by Dr. M. J. Seymour, Sr.

Him that calleth;)" (Rom. 9:11) Also, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." (Rom. 11:5-6) The effectual summons by the Holy Spirit of God is made because God selected out the individual to be the recipient of His sovereign grace. It has nothing to do with the worthiness of the individual. It is all of His Sovereign Grace! If left to ourselves, we would never seek a relationship with God.

The word "sure" means firm or steadfast. Every true believer is to give earnest haste in firming up his calling and election by becoming more and more strengthened by "these things". He is not to be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, and every emotional swing of the human emotions. He is to be fixed confidently and firmly upon the Rock of Ages.

"...for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:" - The word "do" carries with it the idea of constantly and continually doing. The thought is that there is a constant increasing in the believer concerning these things, no rest and no giving up, a continual activity. The promise then comes, that if there is a constant and continual strengthening, the believer will never fall (Gk: not at all will you fall ever). The believer falls into sin when he refuses to constantly strengthen himself

ledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and agape. Not only is the believer to have these things within him, but he is also to be increasing in them. The word “rather” from the Greek carries with it the idea of “more and more strongly”. Thus, the believer is commanded by the Holy Scriptures to increase more and more strongly in these things. There is no perception in the Bible of the believer ever becoming so full that he can hold no more of increasing in these things. In this life and probably in the next he is to be continually increasing in these things.

“...give diligence to make your calling and election sure:...” - Notice the reemphasis on “give diligence”, that is, the believer is to give earnest haste or speed to make his calling and election sure. This task is not to be taken at one’s leisure or when he gets around to it. The believer is to give a zealous effort in making it happen. It is not if you have time, rather, you will make time and however much time is needed to insure that it takes place.

The word “calling” means summons. As it is written, Jesus said: “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:...” (Jn. 6:44) The word “election” means a picking out or selection. As it is written: “(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of

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of any importance. This is one sure evidence of the lack of Christian maturity.

“and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.” - When one is blind, he is not only blind in where he is going, but he is equally blind in where he has been. He can see nothing but his own perception of present self. He cannot see what others see, and certainly not what God and Jesus see. His darkness brings on forgetfulness. It is the presence of these things that gives continual remembrance of the sovereign electing grace of God, the effectual working of the Holy Spirit, and the cleansing and redeeming blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christian maturity remembers what grace it took to purge away the old sins, the high price of the purging, and the eternal sweetness of having been purged. It is not forgetful, no, not for a second. Hence, the mature believer labors and is fruitful in the knowledge of Jesus. Being forgetful of the grace, the price, and the sweetness of the heavenly cleansing can bring on a host of shortcomings. Are you lacking any of these things?

III.

I Peter 1:10 - “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.”

“Wherefore the rather, brethren,...” - Instead of being idle, instead of being fruitless, instead of lacking, instead of being blind, instead of

It is this blindness that causes hatred among the brethren. As it is written: "But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes." (I Jn. 2:11) However, if brotherly kindness is present there would be no occasion for stumbling in the dark.

Jesus told the Laodicean church, which is a type of the majority of the churches in the last dispensation of the church age, "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:." (Rev. 3:16-17) Their spiritual blindness kept them from seeing what Jesus saw, their real state of spiritual sickness. It was enough to make the Lord nauseated. He was even to the point of vomiting them out. When the believer lacks these things, it has a nauseating affect upon the Lord of Glory.

"and cannot see afar off,..." - The lack causes the believer to be self-centered, because he cannot see beyond his darkness. He cannot see the whole picture. He cannot see that the kingdom of God does not evolve around him. He takes on the Pharisee attitude, the "holier than thou" syndrome. He cannot see beyond self, thus, he never is able to lift up his eyes and look upon the harvest ready to be gathered. "Self" is all that is

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"You can't wear a crown
unless you carry a cross;
The heavier the cross,
the brighter the crown."

Word, but He also demands that they soon get off the baby bottle and on to the meat of the Word. The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (1 Cor. 3:1-3) If "these things" be in you and increase, you will be what you ought to be labouring and having fruit in the meat of the clear, exact and participating knowledge of Jesus Christ.

II.

II Peter 1:9 - "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." "he that lacketh these things is blind..." - The believer in whom these things (faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and agape) are not present is spiritually blind. He is as a blind man groping for safe passage in the abyss of darkness, fearing every bump, every step, every move to bring him harm. This is similar to the plight of the believer in whom these things are not present. He fearfully attempts to reach his full and intended end without directions or eyes to see. He cannot see the realities of his inabilities and extreme frailties.

“...they make *you*...” - The word “make” carries with it the idea of to make up or to constitute. In other words, if these things are in you and increasing, they will make you what you ought to be before God. They constitute what a true mature Christian ought to be.

“...*that ye shall neither be barren*” - The word “barren” means not working or idle. Being what you ought to be as a mature Christian causes you to be active in the work of the Kingdom of Heaven. As the old saying is, “Idleness is the devils workshop.” Idle minds and bodies open the doors for multitude of temptations. Jesus said, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” (Jn. 5:17) “I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.” (Jn. 9:4) Brethren we desperately need to be about the Master’s business!

“nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” - Being what you ought to be because of these things being in you and increasing will bring forth fruit in clear, exact and participating knowledge of Jesus. “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, **that ye may grow thereby**: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” (I Peter 2:2-3) However, he never said to remain on the milk. Fleshly speaking, would you expect anyone to remain dependent on baby milk all their life? Of course not, you would expect them to grow up. Likewise, God expects every true believer to grow up on the milk of the

Scripture Text

II Peter 1:5-10

5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

(KJV)

NOTES:

Lesson 19

Conclusion

I.

II Peter 1:8 - "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The word "For" carries with it the weight of expressing the reason of that which has been stated before it. Hence, "The fact is" if faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity, are in you, and abound,...

The question is, Are these things in you? Man can be very presumptuous about his relationship with God, but the proof is in that which is within the individual. The Apostle Peter exhorts the believers to give all diligence in adding to that gift of faith which has been graciously given unto them. These are essential elements in the cultivation of the believer's faith in God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

"and abound" - The word "abound" means to increase. What good is a believer who is stagnant in his faith, forever a babe in Christ? He always has to be cuddled and pacified. He is a drain on other believers and the cause of Christ. God demands of every true believer growth to his fully complete intended end.

VI.

It is written: "...Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity (*agape*), in spirit, in faith, in purity." (I Tim. 4:12) Every true believer has a responsibility and an indebtedness to be a faithful witness of the love, faith and hope that is within them.

Agape, that pure, high and holy love, is the first love and is the last love of the believer. It is the Alpha and the Omega of Christianity. It is God in man, and God expressed through man. Agape is what binds and keeps together all the attributes expected by God of every one born out of His Spirit through the blood of Jesus. It brings to maturity the incorruptible seed that was once a baby in Christ by the gift of faith.

Brethren give "all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." (II Peter 1:5-7) The cultivation of these precepts of God brings one's Christian faith to maturity, where it bears the fruit of the Holy Spirit of God, the full intended end of every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lesson 1

Introduction

I.

After Jesus Christ was crucified, buried, risen and ascended beyond the veil into the Holy of Holies, true believers tagged as Christians have desired to maintain a fellowship and oneness with Him. Sadly, **few have ever possessed the passionate willingness to pay the cost for this oneness.** For many, the price is far greater than they are willing to pay.

Understand, there is indeed a price to be exacted as one seeks to walk upon the spiritual paths of righteousness with the Lord Jesus Christ. If one's desire is to fellowship, or be at one with the Sacrificial Lamb of God, then one must expect sacrifice to become an intrinsic part of his life. To participate with the Lord of Glory is to participate in His suffering as well. It takes unreserved and unconditional commitment.

A true relationship with Jesus does not come by mere chance or by an accidental encounter. It is acquired through much preparation and tremendous personal sacrifice. It is not a stroll in the park; rather it is finding oneself yoked to Jesus and plowing with Jesus. It is a continuous cultivating of the precious faith planted in the believer. One reaps what he is willing to sacrificially cultivate under the yoke with Jesus Christ.

II.

The question is; Are you willing to improve yourself spiritually to obtain the sweet fellowship and oneness with our eternal Saviour? Many are superficially desiring to have a better relationship, but very few are willing to improve themselves to gain this holy position. To participate with the Christ one **must** be willing to deny self, before one may live in Christ Jesus. It is as Paul the Apostle wrote: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." (Phil. 3:7-8)

From the Greek the word "win" means "to acquire as a gain"; this is not "win" as in a game of chance. Oneness with God and Jesus does not come by a winning roll of the dice. It requires willingness, determination, and holy effort. What is the measure of your willingness, determination, and holy effort, that you might gain more of Christ? Are you willing to sacrifice all, everything and everyone? How great is your commitment? The gain is equal to the sacrifice.

III.

In the early years of my ministry I preached in a nursing home. While visiting some of the residents, I came upon a doorway from which I heard a sweet, tender voice singing an old

before he is quickened out of trespasses and sins? Pure, high and holy love in the believer is active towards all men.

Jesus said: "But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. ...For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. ...But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." (Lk. 6:27,28,32,35) Jesus did not say condone or take part in what they are doing. He said to extend outwardly towards them that agape within you. Give witness of the Everlasting God and the Lord Jesus Christ that is within you. To some, it will be all they ever experience of the agape of God which brings salvation.

Paul wrote to Timothy, "Now the end of the commandment is charity (*agape*) out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:". (I Tim. 1:5) The outward unveiling of agape loses self in Jesus, with an unselfish interest in fellow men. It feels and lives in one's obligation to the Saviour. Holy love radiates the very nature of the cross of Calvary. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:". (II Cor. 4:3) Agape will not allow the Gospel to be concealed in the world.

the point of suffering, and at times even unto death, that others may know Christ. Therefore, agape is not an impulsive feeling and does not always follow after natural inclinations, “because as He is, so are we in this world.” (1 Jn. 4:17) If you have not presented yourself before God as a living sacrifice, then you have not yet fulfilled your reasonable service. You are still being unreasonable!

V.

When heaven’s love in the believer extends outwardly towards all mankind, it is not for a love of the world, rather it is for a love of lost souls in the world. Agape does not change or compromise the truth of God’s Holy Word to supposedly win the lost. True agape **CAN NOT** forsake that which is forever settled in the heavens above. Because of its passion for the truth, agape suffers all thing that the truth of the sovereign grace of God through Jesus Christ will be accurately revealed in the world.

Godly love understands man is not perfect and full of sin. Yet, it reaches out, loving not the sin, but the soul of the one sinning. It remembers that “God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom. 5:8) It makes no assumption as to who are the elect; it gives witness to every creature. I’m sure no one would have assumed that Saul of Tarsus was one given to Christ before the foundation of the world. What does an elect look like

As I entered into the room I saw an elderly black lady rocking in a chair. I sat for a moment near her and shortly she stopped. Then without raising her head or opening her eyes she said: **“Preacher, you can’t wear a crown unless you carry a cross; the heavier the cross, the brighter the crown.”** Then, as if I were no longer there, she went back to her singing.

This lady had been placed on the back wing of the nursing home because she was thought to be of no value. Yet, for the last twenty-five years she and her words have been a treasure in my heart. In those simple words is profound Christian wisdom. There is wisdom of purpose and wisdom of cost. Nothing of eternal value is without purpose and cost.

Cultivating one’s Christian Faith to obtain the fruit of spiritual growth begins with a legitimate purpose of the heart, not a whimsical fancy or a passing emotion. Every professing believer wants a crown, but the question is “Why?”. Why do you really want to wear a crown? Do you have a legitimate purpose in your heart that would satisfy the crown giver?

Also, are you willing to pay the price? Will you pick up your cross daily and follow in the steps of the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you willing to sacrifice yourself to gain the crown of being at one with the King of kings, and Lord of lords? Christianity worthy of a crown involves dying to self and living with the mind and heart of the Christ.

IV.

In the book of Hebrews chapter six, the first portion of verse one, it is written: “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection;...”. An expanded translation from the Greek language would be: Therefore, leaving the foundation of the account given of the beginning of the Christ, let us bear the burden along towards completeness, our full and intended end;... .

After one has been “quickened”, *made alive*, in Christ Jesus, he is referred to as a “babe” and “new creature” in Christ. It is a new beginning. However, no one envisions a new baby remaining a baby forever. A new baby is expected to grow and mature. The foundation of the believer’s faith and new birth is in the sacrificial blood of the Lord Jesus. This new life in Jesus is only the beginning, a starting point. From this starting point the believer is to bear the burden of spiritual growth along to a state of completeness, the intended end of every believer. The life of every believer is expected to be a constant cultivating of the faith he has in Jesus. It is striving to bring one’s faith to a completed state of maturity, not by the physical but by the spiritual. With purpose of heart every believer should seek to reap the crown of being at one with Jesus.

Question: Are you willing to bear the burden along the paths of righteousness to gain the completed end in Christ?

before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.” (1 Thess. 3: 12-13)

This agape that is the beginning, the end, the fullness, and the binding factor of all that is contained in Christ-likeness is expected to increase and abound toward the brethren and is to be extended toward all mankind. The reason it is toward the brethren is that we may dwell together in the unity of the Spirit and not be divided because of the sinfulness of the flesh. The purpose of agape being extended toward all men is that the evidence of God may be given in all the world, and the witness of the Gospel of Jesus may be extended to every creature. All of this is with a view to establishing the believer’s heart unblameable in holiness before God. The other side of this is, if the believer does not increase and abound in heaven’s pure, high and holy love, he is with blame outside of holiness before God. His heart is not established, that is, brought to its full completed mature end which the Father has purposed for every true believer. Charity, holy divine love, is out of a pure heart. Heavenly love is a self-sacrificing love, putting self aside that Christ may be magnified by life or by death. As it is written: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” (Rom. 12:1) It is a love that is stretched to

high, holy and pure love of God is worthy of it. As it is written: "...and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." (1 Jn. 4:7-8) Apostle Paul also gives warning, "Let love be without dissimulation." (Rom. 12:9) "Without dissimulation" means without hypocrisy. Honest agape begins with a heaven sent inward manifestation. Then as the new babe in Christ is nourished by agape, it begins to grow in the likeness of it. By its divine nature it naturally extends its light outwardly towards others. Yes, there are many who try to imitate this high, holy and pure love of God. The problem is, how can one imitate that of which he has no knowledge? He can't! At best it could only some ignorant humanistic emotional masquerade.

Play-acting is effective in the theater, but not in the Kingdom of God. The brethren need and deserve real heavenly love, not hypocrisy. By personal experience the Apostle Peter wrote it this way: "And above all things have fervent (*extended out*) charity (*agape*) among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins." (1 Pet. 4:8) Agape by its nature extends out beyond self. How much is extending out through you?

IV.

"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love (*agape*) one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: To the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness

V.

Does your Christian life satisfy the Lord Jesus?

If you are sincere in your desire for a true spiritual walk with the Lord, you must be steadfastly willing to commit yourself to vigorous labor in the cultivating of your faith in Him. **Let me be clear, salvation does not come by any form of works; Biblical salvation is by the sovereign purposed grace of God, that He might receive all the honor and glory in the ages to come.** Once one has been given "like precious faith" and made alive through the regeneration, he is then able by the leadership of the Holy Spirit to begin his labor in spiritual matters. Having sincere desire without salvation will gain you nothing. Ye must be born again.

What is your commitment level? Many love to lay claim to the title of "Christian", yet few have any honest comprehension of the depths of it's implications. Far too many individuals only possess pretentious, intellectual, or emotional salvation. This is, of course, no salvation at all. One cannot cultivate what he does not have. Heaven birthed commitment comes with newness of life.

One who is born out of the Spirit of God through the blood of Jesus has a new nature. This new nature is created in the new birth, making one a partaker of the divine nature of God. It is this spiritual new nature that is able to be spiritually

VI.

Paul the Apostle wrote: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

Christianity is not about living for "self". It is Jesus Christ living in and through the believer. "Self" perishes and Christ shines forth into the world. This is why the believer is called "Christian" meaning "Christ like". The Christ is able to be seen through the professing one's character and manner life before the world.

Let us explore three passages of Scriptures. First, it is written in Matthew 17:2 that Jesus "was **transfigured** before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." The word "transfigured" in the Greek is made up of two words. One of the words means the outward expression one gives to his inmost true nature, and the other implies a change of activity. Thus, Jesus manifested outwardly to Peter, James and John His inmost true nature. As it is written: "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Colossians 2:9)

The second Scripture is II Corinthians 11:13-15: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, **transforming** themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel: for Satan himself is **transformed** into an angel of light. Therefore it

III.

Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth: "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." (II Cor. 12:15)

Agape is above and beyond the ordinary measure of natural humanistic love. This love originating out of the bosom of God caused Paul to joy in the opportunity to be spent out on the behalf of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul's life was consumed with the presentation of the truth concerning the Lord of Glory. There was no cost too high, no distance too far, no suffering too severe, no service too harsh for his Saviour to demand of him. God's implantation of agape never failed him. Agape is the love that is unconditionally and unreservedly spent out on the behalf of others.

Paul captures the thrust of it when he wrote: "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians (*a term in reference to all foreigners in Paul's time*); both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also, For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;..." (Rom. 1:14-16)

Agape fills every believer with full understanding of the debt we owe all mankind, regardless who they are, what they are, or where they are. This is not because they deserve it; but because the

II.

The high, holy and pure love of Jesus is what moved Him to compassion for the multitude “because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as a sheep having no shepherd.” (Matt. 9:36) It was agape which brought healing to the sick, cleansing to the leper, sight to the blind, the raising of the dead, and the casting out of tormenting demons. Agape for those given to Him before the foundation of the world moved Jesus to yield Himself to be suspended between heaven and earth as the Sacrificial Lamb of God. The height and depth of this great everlasting love has no measure.

It is this high, holy and pure love with which every true believer is flooded in the quickening. Agape is the Alpha and the Omega of all that we are in the mind and bosom of the Father through the blood of the sweet smelling sacrifice of the Kinsman Redeemer. Sovereign agape within the Eternal One pulsated the moving of His grace to predestinate, call, justify, and glorify certain ones according to His purpose. Even when there was no just cause or reason, His love brooded over the dead abyss of their hearts and gave life where there was no hope or deserving of life. The causative force of sovereign grace was not man; it was God’s sovereign agape. It is the fuel that feeds heaven’s eternal flame burning within the heart of every true believer. It is the very presence of God, for God is Agape.

is no great thing if his ministers also be **transformed** as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.” The word “transform” in these verses is a Greek word which is directly opposite the one used in Matthew. This word is the act of changing the outward appearance but inwardly remaining the same. The outward manifestation does not exemplify the inmost true nature. It means to masquerade. Satan masquerades as an angel of light. His ministers masquerade as ministers of righteousness. His children masquerade as Christians, children of God. Churches are full of individuals who pretend to be what they are not.

The third Scripture is in Romans 12:2: “And be not **conformed** to this world: but be ye **transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” The word “conformed” is the Greek word found in II Corinthians 11, and the word “transformed” is the Greek word found in Matthew 17.

The Apostle Paul charges the readers not to be artificial or to masquerade as do the children of the Wicked One. Rather, “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,...”. One who is not born again should not pretend to be. Equally, one who is born again should not act as if he is not. One who is truly born out of the Spirit of God through gift of faith in the blood

of the Lord Jesus Christ ought to show outwardly what he is inwardly, a child of God. He ought to also have a change of activity because of the indwelling Christ.

This active force in the believer is the Christ that dwells within the new creature. This Jesus Christ of the Bible changes the believer inwardly, and thus, by its very nature changes the believer's outward activities. Remember, Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but **Christ liveth in me:...**". If Jesus Christ lives within, there is an inherent passion to be at one with Him and in consecrated fellowship with Him. This requires willingness, determination, effort, and sacrifice in the cultivation of one's gift of faith in Christ.

The question to you is: **Are you willing to pay the full price for this oneness with the Lord of Glory, which is dying to self and living unto God in Jesus, who is the Christ?**

Lesson 18

Add to Brotherly Kindness: Charity Part II

I.

It is written: "Charity (*agape*) suffereth long, and is kind; charity (*agape*) envieth not; charity (*agape*) vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly (*indecently*), seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh not evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity (*agape*) never faileth:..." (1 Cor. 13:4-8)

The above passages are among the many throughout the Bible that give an expressive picture of the life of Jesus Christ. Agape is the very essence of the Lamb of God. Therefore, it is this high, holy and pure love that best binds together all that is imperative to Christian maturity. It is also that which best exhibits to others the reality of the indwelling Christ, and the new divine creation within the believer. It is evidence of God being upon the throne of one's heart and life. Many try, but none can imitate the real high, holy and pure love of the Eternal One.

Agape is spontaneous and instantaneous. Agape is full of life and is a powerhouse of energy. Agape is a fire burning within the bones and a continual warmth to all saints of God.

is a type of the last church dispensation, saying: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue (*vomit*) thee out of My mouth." (Rev. 3:15-16) In essence He is saying, they had dethroned agape and relegated it to a position of less importance. They had not totally disregarded it; it just became less honorable than material gain. Their burning excitement in the love of God and the witness of Christ had cooled to lukewarmness. It was enough to make Jesus sick and made Him want to vomit. They became nauseatingly apathetic in the cause of Christ and the foremost work of the kingdom of God. Strange isn't it? It surly sounds like most of the churches in our day and age! Could this be the Laodicean dispensation to which Jesus was referring? Has the pure, high and holy love in you been chilled by the Laodicean wind?

Remember, Jesus said: "And thou shalt love (*agape*) the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love (*agape*) thy neighbour as thyself. **There is none other commandment greater than these.**" (Mk. 12:30-31) What position of importance and honor does agape have in your life?

Lesson 2

Faith: Part I

"...to them that have obtained like precious faith..."

I.

The epistle of II Peter was written "to them that **have obtained** like precious faith", according to this statement in verse one. It was not written indiscriminately to everyone without exception. Why? Because that which is spiritual only belongs to those who have been born out of the Spirit of God. (God does not cast His pearls before the swine either.) It is as Paul the Apostle wrote to the Corinthians: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (I Cor. 2:14) Since the natural man will not and cannot receive or know the things of the Spirit of God, Peter understood there was no need to write unto the spiritually dead. Only when one is made a partaker of the divine nature will he receive and know that which is spiritually discerned. Therefore, the things contained in Peter's letter are for the instruction of the believers, who will receive because they are of the Spirit.

From the Greek this statement of II Peter 1:1 would more explicitly be: "...to those equally precious with us **having been allotted faith in**

the righteousness of the God of us and Saviour of us, Jesus Christ:”.

Notice the words “have obtained” in our text. There are nine different words in the Greek which are translated as “obtain”. The one used in this passage means to receive by allotment, to be divinely appointed. No where in the word’s meaning is there any self effort in the obtaining. The subject is acted upon. The same word is used in the Gospel according to Luke 1:9 in reference to Zacharias: “According to the custom of the priest’s office, **his lot** was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.” Also, in Acts 1:17 in reference to Judas: “For he was numbered with us, and **had obtained** part of this ministry.”

Zacharias was born into the tribe of Levi, into a priestly family. He did not ask for it and did not choose it. It was **divinely appointed**. The work of his office was also **divinely appointed**.

Also, to the Apostles Jesus said: “Ye have not chosen me, but I **have chosen you**,...” (Jn. 15:16)

Another time, “Jesus answered them, **Have not I chosen you** twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that **should** betray him, being one of the twelve.” (Jn.6:70,71)

Let us consider two facts in these passages. First, Did the twelve call themselves out and appoint themselves? Or, were they divinely called and appointed? Now, if we believe Jesus,

V.

The Apostle Paul wrote: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity (*agape*), I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity (*agape*), I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity (*agape*), it profiteth me nothing.” (I Cor. 13:1-3)

The word “have” means to have and to hold with the idea of continually possessing. One may possess all the saintly attributes of the previous chapters, yet, if they are not sown and cultivated in the ground of pure, high and holy love, they are practiced in vain. Remember, agape is the one element which binds everything together in completeness. This love of God must consume the believer, who expresses this love in all things he says and does. As it is written: “Let all your things be done with charity (*agape*).” (I Cor. 16:14)

In reference to the type of believers living in the last days, Jesus said: “And because iniquity shall abound, the love (*agape*) of many shall wax cold.” (Matt. 24:12) Since believers are the only ones in possession of agape, there is little doubt the passage is warning of their pure, high and holy love waxing (*blowing*) cold.

Jesus also spoke of the Laodicean church,

the work of the church. The pure, high and holy love of God had lost its foremost position of dignity and had been relegated to some obscure position.

The witness of the love of God sent forth in Jesus Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation, was set aside in favor of legalism. If the church at Ephesus did not repent and reinstate the agape of God back into its proper position of dignity, they would be in danger of having the Lampstand (Holy Spirit) removed out of the church. They would no longer constitute a New Testament Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. This would indeed be a very serious and grave course of action by the Master. However, we must understand that removing the witness of the agape of God out of its honored position as the foremost work of the church is an extremely grievous sin against God and the Lord Jesus. No church has the right to degrade the witness of the Redeeming Christ. How dare any believer neglect so great a salvation?

Let no believer be guilty of dethroning His great love. Every believer is to be rooted and grounded in it, know it, wear it, and lift it up for all to see, that honor and glory may be given unto God through the blood of the Lamb. This is the purpose of all the elect of God. This is why Jesus said: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: **and ye shall be witnesses unto me...**". (Acts 1:8) Clear enough?

then it is plainly understood that they were acted upon, divinely called and divinely appointed, including Judas. They did nothing of themselves to be singled out. They did not call themselves and they did not appoint themselves. It was according to the purpose of God that they were acted upon.

Second, notice the word "**should**" in verse 71. From the Greek the word means: that which is about to be done and implies that it will be done by necessity arising out of the nature of things, by divine appointment, thus that which is about to be done must be done because it was foreordained to be so. Why were the twelve chosen? Because they were divinely appointed. Why was Judas chosen? Because he was divinely appointed to betray Jesus. These twelve were **allotted** this destiny of having part in the ministry of the Apostleship spoken of in Acts 1:17,24,25. They did not ask for it. It was divinely appointed by the Eternal Sovereign Creator.

Now, let's return to our text of II Peter 1:1: "...to those equally precious with us **having been allotted faith** in the righteousness of the God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (*literal*) From where did this faith come? It was divinely appointed. It was not and could not have been "obtained" by one's own efforts or merits. They were acted upon; divinely appointed to this saving faith in the righteousness of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

He quickened (*made living*), who were dead in trespasses and sins:.... Even when we were dead in sins, **hath quickened us** together, with Christ, (**by grace ye are saved;**) And **hath raised us** up together, and **made us** sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: (*watch, this is the Why?*) **That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace** in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 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.”

Every detail, every minute portion of this saving faith originates with God. By His divine appointment the receiving one is acted upon by the giving of the gift of faith in the righteousness of God and Jesus. Take notice of the words “**he quickened**”, “**hath quickened us**”, “**hath raised us up**”, and “**made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus**”. Why were we acted upon? Because we were dead in sin, incapable of any spirit life toward God. It took an act of God to give life where there was death, to give light where there was darkness, and to give grace where there was no hope.

God in eternity past decreed that there shall not be one iota of the receiving one’s efforts or merits involved in this gift of faith that brings forth sovereign eternal salvation. Why? “**that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us**”.

you do not have eternal life. Yes, they had their religion, but they were void of God, void of Agape, void of a Saviour, and void of life everlasting. Religion is dreadfully destitute of God’s pure, high and holy love. True Christianity, however, is the very witness of God’s pure, high and holy love. The Emmanuel was God with us. Christ-likeness is the evidence that God is with us. Agape is the fullness of that evidence.

One is only able to share what he has, not what he does not have. The inward working of the love of God brings salvation through the blood of Jesus. When the believer manifests outwardly the Agape within him, it gives convincing evidence that he is a partaker of the divine nature of God, which nature graciously gives birth to salvation and eternal life. It shines light in darkness, crying out Grace, Grace, all of Grace! It acknowledges salvation to be all of God, and void of all religionisms.

IV.

Jesus told the church at Ephesus: “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love (*agape*).” (Rev. 2:4)

The word “left” means to send away or to let go from one’s care. The word “first” carries with it the idea of first in honor and dignity, first in order, or foremost importance. Hence, the church at Ephesus was not careful to maintain agape’s position of importance in church activities. They were too busy doing the work of

What is the “bond of perfectness? Agape! The word “bond” is that which holds it all together. The word “perfectness” is completeness, that which has reached its full intended end. Therefore, the pure, high, and holy love of God is what holds together all the attributes we have studied in previous chapters bringing the believer to his complete and fully intended end, the fullness of God. It is being conformed to the image of Christ, an exhibition of the Heavenly Father. Paul expressed it this way, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet **not I, but Christ liveth in me.**” (Gal. 2:20) Agape empowered in the believer constrains him to self-denial for the sake of the one loved.

III.

Lord Jesus said: “Search the scriptures; for in them **ye think ye have eternal life:** and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. I receive not honour from men. **But I know you, that ye have not the love (agape) of God in you.**” (Jn. 5:39-42)

Jesus told them that they only thought they had eternal life, but He knew the truth about them. They did not have the pure, high and holy love of God in them, which is absolutely essential in heaven originated salvation. Thus, without agape they did not have the Eternal God in them because God is Agape, and Agape is God. It is very simple, if the love of God is not within you, it is due to the fact that God is not within you, and

Even in verse 8 he abundantly clarifies it by saying: “by grace are ye saved through **faith;** and **that not** (*lit.: this here is not*) of yourselves: **it is the gift of God.**” This saving faith is not conjured up by the emotional whims of man, it is the gift of God. Jesus even said, “Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, **except it were given unto him of my Father.**”(Jn.6:65) Will you believe Jesus that saving faith is divinely appointed?

Our forefathers of the Philadelphia Baptist Association wrote:

“The precious grace of faith is a free and sovereign gift of God, conveyed through the power of the Holy Ghost, and the instrumentality of the Word; and is co-existent with regeneration, if not an essential part of it; and as it is not of ourselves, we see that all boasting is excluded, so that we may all say, ‘by the grace of God, we are what we are.’... We know that this doctrine is too humiliating to carnal hearts, but it is as true as if they believed it; and if it was not so, there

Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Assn., 1707 - 1807 pg. 240)

This “precious grace of faith” is what gives one newness of life out of the Holy Spirit through the redeeming blood of Jesus, and is the essential

element which brings one into fellowship with God and the Lord Jesus. It is upon this foundation, the grace of faith, that all other graces are built and strengthened.

II.

V.5: “And beside this giving all diligence add to your faith...”

The word “diligence” means haste through earnestness and zeal. The word “add” means to furnish abundantly or overflowing. Therefore, the Apostle Peter instructs those possessing that divinely appointed grace of faith to give all earnest haste to furnish overflowing to it. What is to be furnished overflowing to the gift of faith will be discussed in future lessons. Let us understand better this grace of faith before we begin adding anything to it. Then we will be able to add more effectively.

From a Biblical perspective, when one receives the gift of faith which saves to the uttermost, his desires and passions conform to the new divine nature. A true believer is overwhelmed with a passionate desire to know more of the God Who brought them out of darkness into a marvelous light. There is an urgent need to know more of the One whose blood broke the bondage of sin and purchased everlasting life for them. Religionist of today would have man to believe salvation is an emotional starry eyed high, strolling through La-La Land, while beating a tambourine and singing “Tip Toe Through The Tulips”.

plant taking root unto life. The word “grounded” carries the idea of a foundation upon which a building constructed. Thus, the believer is rooted unto life in the pure, high and holy love of God; and it is the same love upon which his future life and eternity is built. Therefore, the believer is thoroughly and perfectly “able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height” of the sovereignly pure and holy loving grace of God, “and to know the love (*agape*) of Christ”.

Indeed, this is truly far beyond the comprehension of fleshly man. Yet, this heavenly gifted understanding and powerful working is essential to being filled with all the fullness of God. No believer is complete or fully mature without the comprehension and the mighty working of this *agape* in the inner man by the Holy Spirit. This is not a knowing about *agape*; rather, it is having a personal interrelationship with the One Who is Pure and Holy Love, *Agape*. This is the crown in the cultivation of the believer’s faith, being filled with the fullness of God.

Paul also wrote: “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. **And above all these things put on charity (*agape*), which is the bond of perfectness.**” (Col.

Agape (*noun*) and agapao (*verb*) are purely biblical words. This is a high and holy love which is God, which has its origin in God, which can only come from God, and exists only for the purposes for which God has ordained and decreed. One can only possess this love when God dwells within because of the new heavenly birth through the blood of the heavenly Redeemer, Lord Jesus. Many pretend to give exhibition of it; but it does not co-exist with falsehood. This high and holy love can only live in the midst of truth. It can not be contaminated, because it is the very essence and expression of its originator, our Eternally Pure and Holy God. Anything less is a counterfeiting sham.

This love is also permeated with such values as self-denial, compassionate devotedness, goodwill, benevolence, and faithfulness. Its substance is purely heaven's spirituality and does not ever suffer infectious fleshliness. It is God, and the evidence of the pure and holy God manifested through the life of a mature believer.

II.

Paul the Apostle wrote: "...that ye, being rooted and grounded in love (*agape*), May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love (*agape*) of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." (Eph. 3:17-19)

The words "being rooted" carry the thought of a

The great theologian John Gill, who pastored in London, England in the 1700's, wrote:

"Where there is no faith there is no desire after God, nor after Christ, nor after salvation by him, and communion with him; such neither desire him nor the knowledge of his ways; but **where there is ever so small a degree of faith there is a panting after God, a desire to see Jesus, and to have fellowship with him, and a view of interest in him:** where there is no faith there is no sense of want of it, nor complaint of it, nor desire of it, and an increase; but where there is faith, though of the least degree, the soul is sensible of the deficiency of it, and complains of its unbelief, and prays for an increase of faith; as the poor man did, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief, Mark ix.24*" (Body of Divinity, pg.741)

If you find no passionate "panting after God" within your bosom, it is because you have not experienced even the smallest degree of the grace of faith. If you have no interest or desire to see and to fellowship with Jesus, it is because you have not received from God the gift of saving faith. Therefore, without heaven wrought faith, you have nothing to build upon, and nothing to which to add. "Ye must be born

If, however, you find within your bosom an unquenchable panting for even the smallest glimpse of God and Jesus, then you must with great zeal and haste begin a cultivation of that so precious faith. In newness of life there is a hungering and thirsting for the righteousness of God. There is also an eagerness to furnish overflowing God breathed precepts of spiritual growth to His gift of faith.

Is there even the smallest degree of faith with in your bosom? Is there even a hint of an honest “panting after God”?

Lesson 17

Add to Brotherly Kindness: Charity Part I

I.

It is written: “The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: **And thou shalt love the Lord thy God** with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, *namely* this, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour** as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.” (Mk. 12:29-31)

God is simply amazing in all His ways, to the praise of His holy name! He never asks nor commands where He doesn't supply.

The word “charity” from our text of II Peter 1:7 is the same word used in the above text. The only difference is that in II Peter's it is the noun form and in Mark's it is the verb form. Yet, it is still the same word.

The uniqueness is that it was a word unknown to writers outside of the New Testament. The highest word used by the Greeks was an extremely lower form of love than the one under consideration in our texts. This makes perfect sense when we understand that the love which has its origin in the bosom of God is not known or comprehended by the secular world, nor indeed can be.

forgiveness God gave you when you were dead in trespasses and sin? The Holy Spirit is grieved when the essence of that same grace is not exercised among those who have received and continuously enjoy the fruits of it.

Salvation does not place the flesh in a state of perfection. Brotherly love acknowledges the interference of the flesh and quickly forgives, looking to the Christ that dwells within the brethren.

Jesus said: "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." (Lk. 17:3-4) Jesus also said: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Mt. 6:14-15)

Apostle Paul wrote: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." (Gal. 6:1) Every believer is vulnerable to sin! Then, why do some stand as if they have no sin? How can brotherly love be manifested in a "holier than thou" attitude? True forgiveness is not stained with self-righteous piety. Are you spiritual enough to forgive and to restore?

Jesus: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (Jn.13:35)

Lesson 3

Faith: Part II

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for,
the evidence of things not seen."

(Hebrews 11:1)

I.

The nature of the word "Now" as used in the Greek causes that which is about to be written to refer back to what has been previously stated. This passage refers back to 10:35-37: "Cast not away therefore your confidence (*literally: boldness of speech*), which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, **after ye have done the will of God**, ye might receive the promise. **For yet a little while**, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

When persecution and ridicule come because of one's **witnessing of Jesus Christ**, he is not to cast away his boldness of speech, for he will abundantly receive his reward. Thus, the believer needs to have patience in doing the will of God, for he will receive the promise in due season. Remember, the promises of God are not earthly, the King of kings will bring heavens rewards in the day He gathers His elect out of the dead and the living in the first resurrection. The God Who cannot lie **will fulfill** all His blessed promises. But for now "**faith**" (*that firm confidence in the promises of God and in the*

Jesus Christ) **“Is the substance** of things hoped for,....”.

The word “substance” literally is “firm foundation”. That precious grace of faith, which has been divinely bestowed upon the believer, is the believer’s firm foundation upon which is fixed all his well-grounded expectations. When Jesus asked his disciples, **“But whom say ye that I am?”** Peter’s answer was **“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”** To which Jesus explains to him **“...flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”** Further, Jesus reveals that **“upon this rock”,** that is, the divinely bestowed faith in Jesus being the Christ, the Son of the living God, is and will be the firm foundation upon which **“I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”** Why? Because hell cannot overcome or vanquished the fact that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God. People will die, buildings will deteriorate, congregations will break up, but Jesus will forever be the Christ. God’s bestowed eternal faith cannot be shaken. It is fixed firmly with all anticipation and expectation in the “Rock of Ages”. The anchor of the soul is eternally secure in Jesus. Yet, without this faith you have no security in a firm foundation, hell will have victory over you.

II.

Jesus said, “Except a man be born again, he

V.

It is written: “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” (Eph. 4:30-32) *[Note: Until when are you sealed in your salvation?]*

It brings grief to the Holy Spirit of God when the brethren are found in any form of evil towards each other. The word “bitterness” carries with its meaning from the Greek the idea of acting with a snake’s venom. When brethren lash out towards each other in an attempt to poison or kill the spiritual well being or ministry of another, it inflicts tremendous grief in the heart of the Spirit of God. It tears at the unity of the Spirit among the saints. The word “clamour” means screaming or shouting, an angry raising of the voice. The words “all malice” mean every form of evil. Thus, there is no justification to direct any form of evil towards a brother or sister in Christ. Rather, brethren are to be “kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you”. Now, has God for Christ’s sake forgiven you? Is it not reasonable then for Him to expect you “for Christ’s sake” to forgive your brethren born out of the blood of Christ? Can you remember the grace of

love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” (I Jn. 3:16) It is dying to self and Christ living through your life. It is loving not in word, but in deed and in truth. “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.” (I Jn. 3:14)

Jesus said: “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.” (Jn. 15:12-14) The question is: Do you have a friendship with Jesus? If you do, then you will love the brethren as He loves you! You also stand ready to lay your life down for the brethren.

Loyalty does not make a spectacle of the shortcomings of others or ridicule them for their weaknesses. Loyalty finds itself in prayer with and for one another in love. It does not seek the destruction of a brother; rather it strives to build him up. Loyalty is found in an unpretended love out of a pure heart. Paul wrote: “Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.” (Gal. 5:13) If your service to the brethren is a reflection of your loyalty, what kind of loyalty do you have?

How is your loyalty to Christ and His church?
How is your loyalty to the salvation of the lost?

cannot **see** the kingdom of God.” (Jn. 3:3) Perhaps, this is because faith is said to be the eye of the spirit of man through which he is enabled to see the spiritual. Through faith man sees the Sacrificial Lamb of God hanging upon the cross of Calvary paying the price for the redemption of his eternal spirit. He sees the Sacrifice buried as if defeated, yet, he sees and is elated as He rises Victor over death, the grave, and hell. He sees the Bridegroom ascending to go prepare a place for those given to Him before the foundation of the world. He see Him sitting next to the Father on High as the Mediator, Advocate, and High Priest. He sees Him as the Promise Keeper as He gathers His elect, for they have the promise of eternal life. He sees Him Who is called Faithful and True tearing the clouds back violently as He charges forth upon His white horse with the armies of heaven to bring judgment and war upon the ungodly. He sees him as He is proclaimed King of kings and Lord of lords. The eye of faith sees Jesus as the One who was, and is and ever shall be the Messiah. This faith is the foundation, the title deed, to all that is hoped for in Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the living God. If you have not received the birth which is from above out of the Spirit of God you cannot **SEE**.

Every individual who has believed God from Adam and Eve to this generation has been fully persuaded that the promises of God were not for

not having received the promises, but **having seen them afar off**, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that **they seek a country.**” ... **“But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly;** wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: **for he hath prepared for them a city.**” ... **“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”** (Hebrews 11:13-14,16,39-40)

The eye of faith sees the kingdom of God and believes the promise of God that he shall be joint heir with the Lord of Glory. Therefore, he is not satisfied with this world and admits this is only a temporary pilgrimage with ambassadorship.

Arising out of this grace of faith comes a panting after God. There is a hungering and thirsting for the knowledge of God and the Lord Jesus. No surer foundation will ever be discovered upon which to build and cultivate steadfast godly men and women of the Gospel, for His name's sake.

III.

Not only is faith the foundation and the title deed to all for which we hope, it is also **“the evidence of things not see.”** The word “evidence” from the Greek means to give

given by the Father for one brother to be a blessing to another brother.

Peter strives to strengthen unity with the bonds of love for the brethren. Unfortunately, too often the love of self hinders the binding together. It is extremely difficult to be “knit together in love” when there is no knitting in progress. Love for the brethren is the golden link that joins and binds true Christians together at the Cross of Calvary. It is love out of a pure heart.

IV.

Brotherly love means LOYALTY - loyalty to Christ, loyalty to the salvation of souls, loyalty to those in the faith. It is inconceivable to be a verifiable Christian without having loyalty to Christ. In the mind of Christ, it is equally inconceivable that the brethren cannot dwell together in loyal unity, loyal fellowship, and loyal love. If the Christ dwells in you and the same Christ dwells in the brethren, how can there not be loyalty when Christ is to Christ?

Are we not kinsmen with Christ? Are we not fellow citizens of the same Heavenly Jerusalem? Are we not fellow countrymen and ambassadors of the heavenlies? Are we not companions in Christ's sufferings? Then should we not also be loyal to Christ, to the work of Christ, to the witness of Christ, and loyal to those who are joint heirs in Christ?

Christlike loyalty has an unselfish interest in the brethren. It is written: “Hereby perceive we the

III.

The Apostle Peter wrote to the elect: “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.” (1 Peter 3:8-9)

Being all of one mind does not mean all the brethren are to conform to your mind. It means every believer is to be of one mind in Jesus Christ and like Jesus Christ. Jesus had compassion for the brethren and gave Himself for the brethren. The mind of Christ is to sacrifice self for the sake of others.

The words “be pitiful” expandedly mean to be full of tenderheartedness towards fellow brethren. Yet, we are witnessing in this generation a cancerous plague of coldheartedness eating at the very core of the brotherhood. “Self” gratification and spotlighting has become more fashionable than the love of the brethren. Lifting one’s self up at the expense and degradation of others has become the mindset, rather than lifting Christ up and giving honor to the brethren. Courtesy has become an antiquated virtue.

From a Biblical perspective, every child of God is expected to be a blessing to his heaven born siblings. The elect are called to be a blessing as well as to inherit a blessing. Personally, I believe the greatest blessing is the gracious opportunity

or a convincing argument. You say you have received the gift of faith which brings forth repentance, where is the demonstration of it? Where is the proof of it? Where is the argument on your behalf that is able to convince the believer and the unbeliever? John the Baptist told the Pharisees and Sadducees that came to him to be baptized: “Bring forth therefore (*ripe*) fruits meet for (*worthy of*) repentance:”. (Matt.3:8) You say you are saved by the blood of the Lamb, where are the fruits that are fully ripe and worthy of having been “granted repentance unto life”?

The grace of faith by its very nature cannot remain alone and idle. It is a living, growing and producing faith. This growing and fruit producing give an abundance of evidence that the faith of God and Jesus is present. The faith that gives salvation is only the foundation and beginning of spiritual life. This faith has two sides to it. One side is the believing side which is the inner working of the Holy Spirit. The other side is the performing side which is the outward working of the Holy Spirit. This is the evidence side.

If the branch is truly abiding in the vine, it will bear fruit. Jesus said: “As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: **He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much**

ture flowing through the Vine flows into the branch causing it to produce fruit. This is evidence of life, because we have been given a living faith not a dead faith.

Jesus said: “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it **seeth him not**, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for **he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.** ... But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, **he shall teach you all things**, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” (Jn. 14:16,17,26)

Notice that the unbelieving blind world **cannot see** the Holy Spirit **and they do not know** Him. Yet, He surly dwells with and in every believer, the ones possessing by grace the gift of faith. Well, if the Spirit can not be seen, how does one give proof of His indwelling and His teachings as Jesus had promised? Truly, you can not see the Holy Spirit, but the results of His teachings will give an extremely convincing argument of His presence. However, if He is not present, there will be an extreme lack of evidence. Since the Holy Spirit is the only one who knows the things of God and the mind of God, He is the only one who can instruct and bring ripe fruit through one’s gifted holy faith. It is written in I Corinthians

brethren to study, or more pointedly from the Greek, to make it an issue of honor to be quiet and to mind their own business. The true believers are not to be busy bodies, which is void of all honor. Every believer, *including preachers*, are to make it a matter of holy honor to mind their own business and not plunder into the affairs of other brethren. To put in the words of Jesus to the Apostle Peter, “...what is that to thee?” (Jn. 21:21) Brethren, keep your nose out of other brethren’s affairs, for this is honorable before God!

Paul also commands the brethren to work with their own hands. It is Scriptural to eagerly and quickly come to the aid of a fellow brother in need. However, it is not Scriptural to be the local hand-me-out center for every lazy bum who doesn’t want to work and provide for his family. It is written: “...if any would not work, neither should he eat.” (II Thess. 3:10) Again, it is written: “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” (I Tim. 5:8) Brotherly love excites in the opportunity to help those who honestly need help. Because of brotherly love, help is withheld from those who deny the faith by not working, that they may learn to work with their hands which gives honor to the faith. Love among the brethren is absolutely essential, but to remain within the will of God, sometimes love has to say NO.

forgive as graciously as forgiveness was received by the Lord Jesus Christ. These are all garments of extreme importance, yet, there is one more virtuous garments of even greater importance - love. It is this love that is the binding element of the complete wardrobe of the elect. It makes the elect completely clothed in his fellowshiping with the holy brethren. Are you fully clothed?

II.

Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: “But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; and that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;” (1 Thess. 4:9-11)

The indwelling Spirit of God naturally teaches every believer to love the brethren. Paul gives acknowledgment of the Thessalonians love for the brethren in the province of Macedonia, however, he did not want their love to be restricted to the home folk. Paul tells them that the love of the brethren must extend beyond their local boundaries to all the holy brethren, elect, and partakers of the same heavenly calling. It is imperative in the cause of Christ for the love of the brethren to increase more and more.

2:10-14:

“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are

As the Holy Spirit teaches that which is of God to the new spiritual “babe” within, a holy growth begins to take place. As this new growth fills up the inner man, it begins to perform outwardly the things that are within. Thus, it gives convincing evidence of the spiritual indwelling of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity are evi-

dences, or demonstrations of God's grace of faith. By the cultivation of these we are able to give the convincing argument that we have faith in Jesus and we believe God. The unbeliever cannot see what the believer sees, but he cannot overcome the abundance of evidence produced by faith.

You say you have faith, Where is the evidence of it?

Lesson 16

Add to Godliness: Brotherly Kindness Part II

I.

It is written: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." (Col. 3:12-14)

The Apostle Paul encourages the brethren, as the elect of God which are holy and having been loved, to clothe themselves in the virtuous garments which are characteristic of the divine nature. These include putting on "bowels of mercies", or in other words, to have one's affections saddened because of the misfortunes and calamities of the brethren. The elect are to be clothed with kindness, not fault finding bitterness. They are to be adorned with meekness, that is, not to be full of self, rather to be tender of spirit and gentle towards one's brother or sister in Christ. It includes being longsuffering, or enduring with patience the weaknesses of the brethren. It means forbearing, or holding up one another during the ruff times. It stands ready to

V.

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us.” (1 Jn. 4:11-12)

Has God loved you unto life eternal? Do you honestly love the holy brethren? Does God dwell in you? Is God’s love made complete in you? Do the brethren experience the living God from their acquaintance with you?

If the love of God was judged by the evidence you bear in love for the brethren, what verdict would the jury pronounce? Would there be enough evidence to convict you of harboring God in your heart? Are you guilty of being one of the “holy brethren”, a partaker of the heavenly calling?

O what force could be brought to bear by the kingdom of God upon the wickedness of this world if the brethren could dwell together in love and unity! We could turn the world upside down with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ! The world would soon be persuaded that we fully believe and trust in the Sovereignty of the one and only Eternal God, Creator of the heavens and the earth. Are they persuaded by you?

Lesson 4

Faith: Part III

I.

“of little faith”

In the Gospels we find four times where Jesus uses the term “O ye of little faith”. With this term Jesus rebukes four particular states of mind. They are negative qualities which hinder the spiritual cultivation of one’s faith in God and Jesus.

1. In Matthew 6:30, **Jesus rebukes worry and apprehension**: “Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, **shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?**”

This verse is situated in the mist of verses 25-34 which teach the believer to place his trust (faith) in the heavenly Father’s ability to care for His own. In these verses is the Greek word “merimnao”, translated in it’s various forms as “take thought”. (see verses 25,27,28,31,34) This word means to be disturbed, distressed, fretful or apprehensive, to the point of being distracted by the cares of this world.

When a believer becomes filled with anxiety and apprehension over his daily needs, he is doubting the ability of the Father to wholly provide for him and, in reality, he has little faith in God’s sovereign rule over all His creations and His ability to sustain them. Either God rules

and chance rule. Jesus encourages us to place full confidence in the Father and to stop being distracted in our duties by the cares of this world.

The Apostle Paul wrote: “But my God shall supply (*make full*) all your need according to his riches in glory by (*in*) Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 4:19) **Where** are all our needs made full? **In Christ Jesus!** If you are not in Christ Jesus all your needs will not be filled up.

This is why Jesus instructs the believer to “**seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness**; and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matt. 6:33) If believers would spend less time fretting over the things of this world and more time upon the things of God, individual, family and church spirituality would soar to loftier heights.

The Scriptures teach the believers to have a child like faith in the Father. That is, they are to have an unconditional and unquestioning faith in God’s faithfulness to never leave them, never forsake them and to forever fill up their needs. He did not say their wants. Have faith in God!

2. In Matthew 8:25-26, **Jesus rebukes fear**: “And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us; we perish. And he saith unto them, **Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?** Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.”

Paul the Apostle wrote to young Timothy: “For

If there can be no binding together of true believers in brotherly love, the Lord’s churches and fellowships will continue to split and splinter obscuring the Light. Jesus said: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand;” (Matt. 12:25) For the brethren to be divided is to give Satan the victory, and to permit such an atrocity is to play the part of a fool.

Holy brethren of necessity must band together. There is an enormous task before the saints of God in the struggle to preach the Gospel to every creature upon the face of the earth. This means the Gospel must go around the world at least once in every generation. It is written: “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?” (Rom. 10:14-15)

Fellowship is sharing and partaking in the burden and suffering of others. Does it break your heart to look upon the multitudes of the condemned? What do you do to ease the heavy burden of your kinsmen struggling in the fields white unto harvest? Do you share in the suffering of their tormented hearts for lost souls? Do you participate in their cries before the throne of God? Do you hold up your brother’s hands in the heat of the battle? (Ex. 17:8-16) What

to his brother. He does not wait to see what the other will do. He gives honor even when there is no just cause to do so, because of who his brother is, not what he does. He takes the lead in giving honor understanding there is nothing more important than the blood of Jesus which makes them holy brethren.

IV.

Fellowship is not one-sided. It is not just all the brethren sharing in your problems, but like Christ, it is their suffering overshadowing your little burdens. If you are to have real fellowship with brotherly love, then you must first give brotherly love in fellowship. The right of passage is through the valley of heavy hearts to the mountain tops of peace in the heart of the kinsman Redeemer. It is repeatedly going back into the valley to walk hand in hand with another beloved to the place of sweet rest.

In the Apostle Paul's exhortation to the Philippians in 2:1-3, he wrote: "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." It was Paul's desire for the brethren to bind together in the one common cause of spreading the Good News of the Messiah with one mind and will in Christ.

God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (II Tim.1:7) Well, if God has not given us the spirit of fear, why are we so fearful in our daily walk? If God is our Protector, what is there to fear? God told Abraham: "Fear not Abraham: **I am thy shield**,". (Gen. 15:1) And Paul to the Ephesians wrote: "Above all, taking **the shield of (the) faith**, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." (Eph. 6:16) True saints believe God as Abraham did. God is our shield. When the Wicked One shoots his fiery darts at the elect of God, the darts are extinguished by the breath of God. If the darts could forcibly penetrate through God, the believer would have something to fear, but they cannot rip through the Shield, praise be unto His holy name. The precious elect of God are safe and secure because God is our shield, what is there to fear? Satan cannot over power God and neither can man. "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us". (Rom. 8:31)

The notable English preacher of the late 1800's, Charles Hadden Spurgeon, said that we are immortal until God's will for us is done, then nothing could hinder death's door from swinging open. Perhaps, believers spend far too much time gazing behind rocks and into shadows looking for the boogie man. Have no fear of what is in the shadows, have faith in God!

3. In Matthew 14:29-31, Jesus rebukes doubt:

“And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, **O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?**”

God is still God in every situation, and He sovereignly rules in the storms of life. The believer is overcome by the boisterous gales of dilemma when he removes his eyes off of the Lord and begins to doubt God. Absolutely nothing transpires in His creation without the consenting of His will. Either God is sovereign in all things or He is not the omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent God of the Bible, and we are adrift on the sea of Chaos. Therefore, if it is by His consent, it is for our good. It is written: “...that **all things work together for good** to them that love God, to them who are the called **according to his purpose**”. (Rom. 8:28) If the ultimate outcome of every situation and circumstance will be good and according to His purpose, why do we sling doubt into the face of God despairing all is gloom and doom of ill fated winds? When the believer is full of faith there will be no space for doubt to dwell.

4. In Matthew 16:7-10, **Jesus rebukes forgetfulness**: “And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread.

fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” (1 Jn. 1:3-7)

Fellowship is the act of mutual sharing, partaking, and participating. Fellowship is the cost and blessing of brotherly love. It actively gets involved. It cares about the brethren and cares with the brethren. It is found in ministering to the saints, in the suffering of the saints, in the work of the saints, in the joy of the saints, in the reaping of the saints, and in the rewards and glory of the saints. It denies self for the sake of others. It entails bearing one another's burdens by assisting, sympathizing, and weeping.

Paul the Apostle wrote: “ Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;”. (Rom. 12:10) The words “kindly affectioned” are from a Greek word meaning to love in tender affection, which is naturally enjoyed between kindred. All the elect are born of the same Father, therefore, they are united in heavenly birth, and are to extend to each other natural brotherly love.

The word “preferring” means to take the lead. In other words, each believer is to take the lead in rendering honor to his holy brethren who are partakers of the same heavenly calling. He naturally and instinctively favors the brethren over self. He is not self-centered. He does not demand or expect all the kindred to bow toward the big “I”. He takes the lead in giving respect

God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” (1 Jn. 4:7-8)

This brotherly love, which is a manifestation of the believer’s spiritual birth from above, cannot be learned, nor can it be purchased. It is a heavenly grace gifted by the Holy Spirit out of the bosom of the Father. Only those of the heavenly birth genuinely experience and manifest authentic brotherly love. It would be easier for an eggplant seed planted in the garden to produce a great whale in the sea than for a seed of the devil to produce an honest love for the children of the Eternal God.

III.

Who are the brethren? Are they not those referred to as “holy brethren” in Hebrews 3:1 who are partakers of the same heavenly calling? Are they not those who walk in the light and fellowship of God?

It is written: “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

Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, **O ye of little faith, why reason ye** among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, **neither remember** the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?”

Far too often believers forget the blessings, mercies and commands of God. As the disciples walking with Jesus were quick to forget what He had done, so are we today. This forgetfulness is rebuked by Jesus, for in forgetting we find ourselves disadvantaged and weak in His service.

God has commanded to “**remember** the sabbath day, to keep it holy.” Yet, many have become preoccupied with “self” and have forgotten “holy things”. This forgetfulness has plunged them into the depths of spiritual destitution. It is hard to walk with God when you have forgotten where the path is. Remembering the eternal command of the sabbath day with holy action could aid in locating this pathway of righteousness where God walks.

The children of Israel were told to put “blue ribband” upon the fringe of the borders of their garments that when they looked upon it they would “**remember** all the commandments of the LORD, **and do** them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go whoring: That ye may **remember, and do** all my commandments, and be holy unto your God”. (Num. 15:39-40)

“remember and do” provokes the anger of God; “remembering and doing” provokes the blessings of God. Which would you prefer?

The Apostle Paul encourages the Gentiles to “remember” that in times past they were without Jesus Christ and “strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: **But now** in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ”. (Eph. 2:12-13) Forgetting one’s calling and election by the sovereign grace of God has a tendency to create the cancer of self-righteousness.

Jesus told the church at Ephesus in Revelation 2:5: “**Remember** therefore from whence thou art fallen, **and repent, and do** the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick (*lampstand*) out of his place, except thou repent.” These are strong words for the church against their forgetfulness. The first love of every church of the Lord Jesus is witnessing of Jesus being the Christ the Son of the living God. To forget this is to forget the very foundation of the church’s purpose for existing. Without the first work being done there is no need for the church, and the Lampstand is removed. Therefore, the church is called upon to repent of forgetting the first love of witnessing and to return to the active witnessing of Jesus. As it is written: “...**ye shall be my witnesses...**”.

(Acts 1:8)

Cultivating Christian faith involves weeding out

creates heavenly brethren who instinctively love each other, even when there is no just cause for that love to exist. It is a natural thing for believers to love other believers unconditionally. To do contrary is unnatural or out of character for the divine nature. Equally, the absence of brotherly kindness is natural and in character for the children of the darkness masquerading as the children of the Light. The root of bitterness will produce bitter fruit; it is its nature.

There are three primary reasons for problems in a church: 1) ignorance of the Word of God; 2) stagnant babies in Christ; 3) and the most damaging - masqueraders, empty professors, false brethren. The children of the Light and the children of the darkness have no common ground for brotherhood. They are naturally at odds with each other being void of a natural instinctive unconditional love for each other. One is life from an incorruptible seed and the other is death from a corruptible seed, natural enemies. Pretense deceives for a time, but eventually the mask comes off and the ugliness of spiritual death is unveiled.

It is written: “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.” (1 Jn.3:10-11) Also, “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of

The word translated “hateth” in this passage of text carries with it the idea that there is an active ill-will in spirit, speech, and one’s character towards another. Therefore, one who presumptuously declares he loves God, yet, continually harbors and indulges in ill-will towards a brother or sister in Christ is not in reality a true child of God. The liar is only giving a false witness and a deceptive profession of the heavenly birth and sonship.

The charge and precept we have from God our heavenly Father is, “That he who loveth God loveth his brother also.” It is not up for debate or discussion. It is forever settled in heaven - if you love God, you will by the divine nature very naturally love everyone who is of the divine nature. The inability to love them exhibits the non-existence of the nature of God, (Father, Son, Spirit). If you do not love the brethren, you have not yet loved God, nor have you been engulfed by the love of God. How is your love?

II.

In the ongoing text of II Peter 1, brotherly kindness is to be added to godliness. The words “brotherly kindness” is translated from the Greek word “philadelphia”. This is made up of two words, “phileo” (a natural instinctive unconditional love) and “adelphos” (brother or near kinsman). Biblically, it means to cling to and to hold dear by natural instinct every true believer. The new birth through the blood of Jesus Christ

anxiety, fear, doubt and forgetfulness, “for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” (Rom. 14:23) These four things Jesus rebuked directly oppose faith in God. One must continually dethrone self-dependency and place full trust in God and Jesus. Paul wrote, “...the life which I now live in the flesh I live **by the faith of the Son of God...**”. (Gal. 2:20) Notice not by any fleshly faith he could conjure up, rather “**by the faith of the Son of God**”. This faith by which the believer walks is not of earthly origin it is of the Lord Jesus, hence, the true believer is sincere in faith, abounds in faith, is strong in faith, is rich in faith, is with a full assurance of faith and is praying for an increase in faith that he not be found “of little faith”.

II.

“faithless”

Jesus said, “O **faithless** generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?” (Mk. 9:19) To Thomas Jesus said, “...**be not faithless**, but believing.” (Jn. 20:27) The word “faithless” from the Greek is used of one not being worthy of confidence, or being untrustworthy because he will not receive the teaching, the power and evidences of the grace of God. The disciple Thomas would not receive the witness that Jesus had truly risen from the dead, having power and victory over death, hell and the grave. This is the very foundation upon which the evidence, that God is able to redeem unto eternal life by His sovereign grace, is

doubted it, which caused him to be unworthy of confidence and trust.

If you will not believe God, you are not worthy of any confidence or trust. Paul said, "...I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able..." (II Tim. 1:12) "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." (Rom. 4:3) It is also written: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6)

True faith is an unquestioning faith. It answers to the will of God with "here am I" and responds to His will with "send me". Living faith places full confidence and trust in the abilities and purposes of God. By Faith the believers of old obtained a good report. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice...By faith Enoch was translated...By faith Noah...prepared and ark...By faith Abraham...went out, not knowing whither he went...By faith Isaac...By faith Jacob...By faith Joseph...By faith Moses...By faith Joshua...By faith Rahab...Gedeon... Barak... Samson... Jephthae... David... Samuel... These all died in faith,..." (Heb. 11)

Spiritual cultivation has its beginning and ending in faith. Faith in God and the Lord Jesus must exist before cultivation can begin. Do you have an honest, true and real faith? If not, **BELIEVE GOD!**

Lesson 15

Add to Godliness: Brotherly Kindness Part I

I.

"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God loveth his brother also." (I Jn. 4:20,21)

Spiritually speaking, Who are my brothers and sisters? They are those who are truly born out of the sovereign will and grace of the Father, out of the bowels and power of the Holy Spirit, and out of the sacrificial blood of the Lord Jesus, raised out of the dead by His power into newness of life, partakers of the divine nature of the Everlasting God of the heavens and earth. God never refers to all mankind being the believers' brothers unless it is in reference to his Adamic nature. There is no brotherhood between the Divine nature and the Adamic nature. Their fathers are different. The father of every unbeliever is Satan, the father of the dead. The Father of every believer is God, the Father of the living. Context demands that the "brother" is in reference to those whose Father is God, the brotherhood of the redeemed. In truth, who is your father?

be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,”. (II Pet. 3:10-11)

This is an excellent question! What sort of person should every believer be in holy behavior and correct worship?

If **only** “correct worship” is acceptable to God, Why would any true believer desire anything else?

Are you earnestly cultivating godliness (*correct worship*) in your Christian faith?

Lesson 5

Add to your faith: Virtue Part I

I.

In examining the steps of Christian growth in II Peter 1, it is evident that all of the separate and distinct points of growth, (knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity), are indeed virtues in themselves. This prompts the question: If all these are virtues in themselves, why is “virtue” placed at the head of the list? The answer is in the fact that since this word is not used in the plural but in the singular, there is and must be a logical reason for it being the first addition to one’s faith. Thus, an examination of “virtue” bears evidence that there is a rudimental essence within the word “virtue” which is of value to faith. God does not just use words to fill up space. There is a purpose of God in all His words.

By God’s design, virtue is the first tool to be used in the cultivation of one’s grace of faith, that faith might be brought to full maturity. It is logical and reasonable for each tool to be used in it’s own order and at the proper time, yet, the tool must never be discarded or cast away. Each tool must be kept at ready because there is a continuous use for every tool. Just as a farmer does not use the harvester unless there

sowing and the cultivating process bringing the crops to the point of harvesting, there must also be first things first for faith to grow to spiritual maturity. The process has been designed and decreed by God; it will not be altered by man. The use of one tool makes preparation for the use of the next.

The Greek word translated as “**virtue**” in this passage of Scripture is best described as **power, vigor, manliness, active courage, and energy mixed with moral excellence** and contains a sense of the impression this makes on others.

The Biblical understanding of virtue is not weakness but power, energy, and strength. The saints of God are in the heat of a raging spiritual warfare which has a tremendous demand upon the grace of faith. Weak faith produces casualties while strong faith produces old soldiers. One must endure the hardness to qualify as a good soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not a passive cowering down in a fox hole, rather it is an active boldness standing fast in the face of the enemy.

Young David when facing Goliath was not weak, passive, or tame. He was full of power, energy, and manliness in the strength of his faith in God. David had virtue! Notice what David said to Goliath: “...I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the LORD

pretenders. Every believer feels securely at home in godliness.

V.

Godliness is also fighting the good fight of faith. The Apostle Paul wrote: “...be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Eph. 6:10-12)

Worshipping God correctly means taking a stand on the side of God and in God. Godliness does not compromise the Word of God, and does not associate in self-willed incorrect worship. It is faithful unto God in every respect. When the battle rages, godliness does not cowardly seek to retreat; rather it picks up the Sword of the Spirit and with the power of God courageously charges into the battle.

Martin Luther said, “If we are correct and right in our Christian life at ever point, but refuse to stand for the truth at a particular point where the battle rages, then we are traitors to Christ.”

The Apostle Peter wrote: “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall

conformed to the image of His Son,”. (Rom. 8:29)
Jesus said, “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.” (Lk. 9:24) In other words, if the big “I” is of more importance than Jesus Christ, then it is evident you do not have Him within you; you are still in your sins, still dead in trespasses and sin, lost. One is not saved to do the will of self, but to do the will of the Father. True believers acknowledge they are only clay in the Potter’s hand, that He may make of them whatever He wills. Absolute surrender is godliness. In the state of godliness, the believer is totally and instantly available for any task the Master assigns. Godliness concedes to God, His Lordship, and is pleased and at home in His will. Godliness flourishes in the midst of godly elements.

No one is godly by accident. The natural flesh born man is by nature sinful and spiritually dead, because he is not of God. He is of the sin plagued nature of Adam. When God quickens the spirit of man, he comes forth in newness of life out of God with a new nature that is spiritually alive. Now, this which is born of the Spirit is compatible with God and is able to have a correct relationship with Him. The authentic believer unreservedly purposes to honor the Father, yield to the teaching of the Spirit, and to be the light and witness of Christ in the world. Genuine godliness separates a true believer from masking

thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.” (I Sam. 17:45,46) Was he a whimpering, keep you mouth shut, believer? **A thousand times, NO!** David possessed God given virtue, which definitely made an impression.

The Apostles and the church in Jerusalem were horridly hated, not because they were meek and mild; but because they with great courage and boldness turned Jerusalem upside down and filled it with the doctrines of the Lord Jesus. The impression they made using the tool of virtue remains even to this day. How long will the impression we make remain?

II.

Virtue is **firmness** and **steadfastness**. The believers are instructed to be steadfast in the faith and not to be “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;...” (Eph. 4:14)

True Christians do not compromise the doctrines (*teachings*) and commands of the sovereign God, Who has forever settled His word in the Heavens. They are not swayed by emotional deceptions, but are grounded, steadfast, anchored firmly in the foundation of the faith once delivered to the saints of old.

to the left or to the right but planted their feet firmly in the paths of righteousness for His name sake. They have a steadfast resolve to put self into the work and the raging battle with a firm grip on the reality of its eternal importance. They are careful with whom they associate and the places they go, abstaining from all appearances of evil for fear of a wrong impression being made.

Virtue does not turn from, change or compromise the doctrines set forth in the Word of God. It is not tossed to and fro by the great swelling words of crafty men.

III.

The tool of virtue is also made of **mental fortitude**. It is being fixed firmly in one's mind to not be swayed away or distracted from the purpose and will of God. It has a resolve that "by the grace of God I will follow Jesus, I will do what God bids me to do, and no one or nothing will hinder me from my task". It is having an unshrinking courage while faced with the wiles of the Devil. It embodies a sturdy and noble spirit for the presentation and witness of the Word of God. It is standing as a fortress in the midst of the battle "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 6:12) Without this mental fortitude the believer would crumble like the walls of Jericho.

Noah, a preacher of righteousness, possessed

perfect will of God?

IV.

Godliness is being Christ-absorbed inwardly and outwardly. It is the branch giving evidence of its vine, (see John 15:1-8). Godliness is even the attempt to bring every thought under control, because it is written that as a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he." (Prov. 23:7) It is also written: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." (Prov. 4:23) Also, "The thought of foolishness is sin:". (Prov. 24:9) The Scriptures also teach that part of the saint's warfare is "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;". (II Cor. 10:5) If evil thoughts are permitted to habitually abide, sin will give forth its fruits. This is true in the individual, in the family, and in the church. There is no correct worship among evil thoughts.

Possessing godliness and outward walking in godliness unveils the believer as a vessel of righteousness. However, if there is no Godward spirit, there can be no Godward action. A holy vessel of righteousness is one through whom the light of God shines forth in the darkness. Any percentage of self-will in the believer tends to dim or hinder the heavenly light shining through him. To be Christ-like is to yield to "not my will, but Thine, be done." (Lk. 22:42) It is written: "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be

exactly, being obedient to God, living with God, having power with God, giving witness of God, and rejoicing over the inward devotion of the spirit towards God. It is placing one's self at God's disposal.

The Apostle Paul put it this way: "I beseech you therefore, **brethren**, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is **your reasonable service**. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, **that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.**" (Rom. 12:1-2)

Using the term "brethren" gives acknowledgment that he is writing to the saved. One does not become a living sacrifice in order to be saved, rather, salvation places one in the position to be "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God". Fulfilling this position is only the believer's "reasonable service". Not doing so means the believer is not being reasonable. By evidence of the Scriptures, in the mind of God it is not reasonable for one, who has been transferred out of darkness into His glorious light by the new birth through the blood of Jesus, to not give full evidence of the grace that has been bestowed upon him. It is reasonable to acknowledge and give knowledge of God's everlasting grace. The question is, Are you being reasonable or unreasonable in your relationship with God? Are you proving "what is that good, and acceptable, and

condemned world. Moses, the great deliver of Israel, possessed it in the face of Egypt's evil Pharaoh. Elijah, the prophet of God, possessed it in the face of pagan prophets on Mt Carmel. John the Baptist, the preparer of Messiah's path, possessed it in the face of Herod. The Apostles and saints of old possessed it in the face of persecutions and death. It is written: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (II Tim. 1:7)

Fortifying the mind is an absolute necessity for Christian growth. The mind must be fortified against the wiles of the Devil, who seeks to create doubt, fear, and confusion in an attempt to disable the children of God. It is essential for the Christian mind to be found sound, firmly fixed, absolute, and fortified in the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is built up in the assurance that God is faithful in all His promises and decrees; that Jesus is faithful to never leave nor forsake; that the Holy Spirit is faithful to comfort and keep sealed the believer until the day of redemption. **The mind is fortified by believing God.**

After the victory at Gibeon, Joshua called for all the men of Israel and commanded the captains of the men of war to put their feet on the necks of the five kings that had been defeated in battle. Then Joshua said, "**Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight.**" (Joshua 10:25) Now, what was Joshua's

purpose in this performance? It was to give the men of war, especially the leaders, mental fortitude — “virtue”. It was not to give them pride in self-ability, rather it was to impress upon them to trust in the ability of God to deliver the victory. The saints have no authority or power over the rulers of darkness; but Jesus, the Captain of hosts, places His foot upon their necks and by the power and faithfulness of Jesus the saints are promised a sure glorious victory.

IV.

Virtue is **courage**. God said, “**Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the LORD thy God is with thee withersoever thou goest.**” (Joshua 1:9) Is not the God of Joshua the God of all the redeemed? Is not the God of Joshua the same yesterday, today and forever? Has He not promised to be with and to indwell every individual believing Him? Is it not reasonable, therefore, to understand that where God is He equally issues the command to “be strong and of a good courage” because He is with thee?

It is written: “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can *be* against us?” (Rom. 8:31) The words “*be* against” are translated from the word “kata” which means “down”. Literally, “If God be for us, who can down us?” When one stands in good courage for the will and purposes of God, he cannot be

the Greek is “Ye must receive birth from above”. (Jn. 3:7) Without this new birth from above it is impossible to see and enter into correct worship. All heavenly and eternal things begin with heavenly and eternal life.

To be godly is to mind the things of the Spirit. It is hungering and thirsting for honest spiritual teachings, spiritual lives, spiritual graces, spiritual gifts, and spiritual blessings, which are God administered through His Spirit. These have no relationship with the modern pep rallies stirring the crowds into emotional, sensational, and theatrical performances. God is not the author of confusion, neither is He the God of the ones turning the grace of God into lasciviousness.

Godliness is not erratic emotionalized self-righteous piousness; it is a loyal devout disposition of the inner spirit of the believer towards God and to His service. Godliness means to eagerly and correctly pursue a closer fellowship and communion with God. Godliness is a burning desire, a fire, within every fiber of the believer to live in the likeness of Christ. Godliness can not be of just mediocre importance. It by nature must be the whole substance of the possessor, consuming all his heart, mind, soul and strength. Godliness is an absolute, unconditional, unreserved surrender to the correct worship and to the outward manifestation of the only true and living God that dwells within. It is not just words coming out of

tendency. The heaven and the heavens of heavens cannot contain God. God is the Creator, not the created. Is any upon the earth, under the earth, or above the earth equal or superior to the Eternal Living God?

The bona fide child of God possess the seeking of knowledge which grows to a clear, exact, and participating knowledge of and with the One True God. Without such knowledge of God, there can be no true and correct worship of Him, godliness. For it is written: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him **must** worship Him in spirit and in truth." (Jn. 4:24) Yet, as the Scriptures teach, the natural spiritually dead state of man is not endowed with the ability to correctly worship, in spirit and in truth, God. Man desires to worship something, and as Cain in his own way, but it cannot be correct worship. However, when God makes Himself known unto man, man is taught by the Holy Spirit to worship correctly in spirit and in truth, again, this is godliness.

For this reason Jesus told Nicodemus, "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (Jn. 3:5,6) By the textual setting, it is understood abundantly that being born of water is the fleshly birth, which is a water birth. Being born of the Spirit is the heavenly birth out of the Spirit of God into the kingdom of God. "Ye must be born again" more

because God is his shield, Jesus his foundation, and the Holy Spirit his power.

The Apostle Paul told Timothy, "...be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ...endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." (1 Tim. 2:1,3) Beyond all doubt, the saints are upon a raging battle field against unnumbered foe from the powers of darkness. There are many refusing to fight because of their wounds and many cowering in fox holes; but thanks be unto God, there are many strong and of good courage enduring the hardness of the battle. They believe God and cannot be cast down from the side of the King of kings.

As Satan terrifyingly views the approaching last days, he and his powers of darkness strive to the utmost to destroy the witness of God and the Lord Jesus Christ in every generation. The deceiving Serpent is attacking with tremendous power and vigor. He is attacking the minds and spirits of men. He is attacking the families of men. The enemies of God have sounded the bugle charge and are surging into the battle like a forest fire's burning indignation. They have only two objectives, to victimize the unbelieving unto the everlasting damnation of their eternal spirits, and to victimize the believing by casting them down unfit for the battle. There are only victims and victors in the heat of the battle.

Yes, true believers are assured of having the

ultimate victory through the blood of Jesus unto eternal life; but in this life which we now live, will we be among the victims cast down unfit, or will we hold His banner high as we march dauntlessly forward in daily victory to Zion? Of necessity, it requires adding virtue to faith.

In Ephesians 6:11, the believer is encouraged to “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” Then in verses 14-17, there is a list of the armor needed to go into battle. Notice, there is not one thing listed for the protection of the back. Why? Because God has not given the saints the spirit of fear. They are not to turn and run in retreat. The march must ever be onward and upward unto “the prize of the high (*lit. upward*) calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:14) The “upward calling” is the Resurrection; it is the redemption of the saints.

Jesus, our Captain, said: “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” (Lk. 9:62)

The Apostle Paul wrote: “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit (*behave*) you like men, be strong.” (I Cor. 16:13)

It is time for every believer to set himself to the battle, diligently adding virtue to the grace of faith. Do not become a victim; but believe God! Be strong and of good courage with all power, vigor, manliness, and energy being mindful of the impression made upon the bystanders.

III.

Paul wrote to the saints: “That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; 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.” (Eph. 3:16-19)

Paul, knowing Jesus is already within every believer, prays that the Christ may “dwell”, or more precise, “feel at home” in them. Jesus was not, is not, and will not be at home in the world. He is at home in heavenly or holy surroundings. This condition in the believer requires a constant Godward life, godliness. How is this possible? It is possible as God graciously grants to the believer a strengthening with might by His Spirit in the inner man. The Holy Spirit strengthens the new creature within, enabling him to be holy as He is holy, thus providing holy surrounding that Jesus the Christ may feel at home. Does the Christ feel at home in you and in your daily life?

God was not created by man and for man; man was created by God and for God. Yet, man in his depravity seek to bring God down to his level, and with humanistic limitations. This ignorant attempt is not even in the realm of possibilities, and believers must guard against

reserved people for the purpose of manifesting to the world His praises, that is, His virtues or holy character. Making one's self odd, strange or weird does not make one godly, nor does it exhibit the virtues of God. The believer is to unveil the righteousness of the indwelling Lord, Master, and Redeemer.

Grant it, to the lost the life devoted to true godliness (not religion) is not understandable or acceptable. Jesus said of the redeemed, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (Jn. 17:16) The Apostle Paul wrote: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." (Rom. 8:5-9) The unbelieving are of the world and in their darkness seek only to please the Prince of Darkness being true to their animalistic nature, fleshly. However, the ones receiving the heavenly birth out of the Spirit are no longer citizens of this world; rather they are citizens of the origin of their new birth, heavenly Jerusalem, and in the light seek to please their heavenly Father, The Eternal God.

Lesson 6

Add to your faith: Virtue Part II

I.

Virtue also bears the ideas of justice, truth, faithfulness, loyalty, an unwavering fidelity, wisdom, and mercy. Therefore, the saints of God are to be just in all their dealings, truthful in all their words, faithful to the worship and purpose of God, loyal to the Word of God and the cause of Christ, unwavering in their devotion to duty and reliability, wise in the counsel of God, and full of compassion exhibiting the mercy of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Virtue is not a cold-blooded, cold-hearted act of religionism. It is unwaveringly fixed firmly upon the things of God, yet, it is equally warm in compassion for the redemption of the souls of men. One trapped in a burning house is not saved by giving him comfort while sitting in the house with him. He must be transported to safer ground. Neither is a drowning man, fighting the one who would rescue him, brought to safety by being dragged down with him. Virtue stands safe and secure upon the Rock of Ages while risking life and limb to rescue the perishing.

Virtue is not just an outward show before mankind. It has a stouthearted influence upon

the inner spirit of the believer. It is not putting paint on an old barn. It is a continuous strengthening of the new creature which shows outwardly the true strength of its Creator and Builder. With true virtue there is a spiritual and mental transformation which blossoms in an outward manifestation to man because of what is on the inside of the one who believes God.

When virtue is yoked up with faith, they have an united singular purpose. There is not a division in their efforts. They work together, pull together, walk together, and participate together. The believer's will conforms to the will of God and wills only one thing — God's will. The true believer with great devotion and faithfulness to duty works with God, pulls with God, walks with God, and participates with God. He has virtue.

II.

Biblical virtue does not have a split personality. As it is written: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matt. 2:24) When a believer has virtue he will not be torn between God and the things or individuals of this world. He will be fixed firmly with only one mind - to do the will of God.

The Apostle James put it this way: "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." (James

II.

One is non-hypocritical when manifesting outwardly what he is inwardly. If there is a new creature born of God inwardly, by its divine nature and deign, it forcibly gushes outwardly the living water springing up within. A true believer can not and desires not to suppress the outward exhibition of this heavenly birth. Where God dwells He will make Himself known, and O what a glorious everlasting experience and joy it is to know God and to know that He knows you. The joy of the presence of God is so overwhelming that the believer naturally seeks to know more of his God and to worship Him correctly. There must be an inward attitude Godward before there can be an authentic outward attitude Godward. Any act of masquerading hypocrisy fools no one but self, and most assuredly not the omniscient God of the heavens.

When the Scriptures reveal that Jesus gave Himself for us that He might "purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works", it did not mean that they were going to be strange or weird. It meant that they were a purchased and reserved people resulting in them be zealous of good works. (Titus 2:14) It is also written: "ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light:". (1 Peter 2:9) It means, His believing ones are a purchased

Are you masquerading behind a mask of outward religion? Are you just being religious, or is true godliness springing forth out of the new heavenly born creature within you?

The Apostle Paul, in writing to Timothy, warned of the masquerading hypocrites “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away.” (II Tim. 3:5) The power to which Paul refers is the superior power of God by which He sovereignly and forcefully thrusts eternal light into eternal darkness expelling the authority of darkness, and commands the birth eternal life into that which was by nature already condemned in eternal death and unbelief. By this power He graciously grants repentance unto life eternal. By this power the believer is made a witness of the indwelling Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in a devotion to correct worship and the outward manifestation of the only true and living God within.

There is no eternal profit or acceptable worship before God in darkness and death. No matter how perfect the pretentious outward show may be, it is still nothing more than pretence. “Ye must be born again.” This is why the saints are exhorted to turn away from any display of hypocrisy. The light has no fellowship with darkness. Every form of religious worship, regardless how sincere, that is not correct and acceptable to God **is not of God**, but of the Prince of the Darkness and must be cast away.

The word “doubled minded” literally means “two-souled”. James is saying that a person whose soul is torn towards two different directions is in a state of confusion and unable to find stability in his spiritual life. The two directions to which James is referring is the direction of fleshly desires and the other is the direction of spiritual desires. One who staggers relentlessly between his desires for the world and his desires for the things of God are of no value to God or the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ. One cannot wear the yoke of Jesus and the yoke of Satan at the same time and expect to cultivate in the fields of righteousness. Your soul either belongs to God or to Satan; it is either a redeemed soul or a condemned soul. A true believer must have his mind and soul firmly anchored only in one place.

Half-hearted followers are an embarrassment to the Lamb of God, the kingdom of God, and the churches of the Lord Jesus. What good does half-heartedness produce? God demands of the saints a 100% commitment. What commitment did Jesus have when He came to seek and to save that which was lost? What level of commitment did Jesus have upon the cross? What level of commitment did Jesus have when He rose in victory over the grave and death? What level of commitment does Jesus have at the right hand of the Father? The same level of commitment is demanded of all who are

and made partakers of the Divine nature. In the newness of life the believer is made one souled, single minded. He whole heartedly desires to do the will of God and to be found pleasing in His sight. Within this thing called virtue is a total surrender of the will, emotions, mind, and spirit to God and for the purposes of God. It is total availability with courage, steadfastness, power, and fortitude of mind and heart. As it is written: “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, **as those that are alive from the dead**, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” (Rom. 6:13) If you have been made alive by the grace of God through the blood of the Lord Jesus, show that you are alive.

III.

John the Baptist said: “He (*Jesus*) must increase, but I must decrease.” (John 3:30) Now, this is one of the clues to understanding the essence and beginning of virtue. One cannot be conformed to the image of Christ if self is in the way. Each individual is important, but no person should be esteemed of greater value than Jesus Christ. Self esteem is good only if it is buried in the blood of the Lord Jesus. When looking through the blood of the Saviour, the believer perceives himself differently. An honest believer desires the Christ to be completely unveiled as the source and purpose of his existence. As self

Lesson 14

Add to Patience: Godliness Part II

I.

Authentic godliness springs forth from the incorruptible seed within every believer, having been birthed from above by the sovereign will of God out of the Spirit through the purifying blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, with hypocrites (false professors, pretenders of the heavenly birth) there is a pretentious masquerading. Their lives are as a masquerade party in which they disguise themselves with masks, but behind their radiant masks they are still natural brute beasts dead in trespasses and sin.

Our Lord Jesus said: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and

drum and tooting its own horn, making loud proclamations and show of its “look at me self-righteousness”. Genuine godliness finds itself in silence before the glorious throne of the only Eternal Holy God. It finds more importance in humble obedience to His commands than strutting about like a peacock. **If you have to grandstand your godliness, then you are the object of your worship and not God.** Correct worship finds itself with head upon the bosom of the Father listening for the words of His heart. It is **“Here am I Lord, what would You have of me that I might be found pleasing in Your sight.”**

Godliness is God-willed worship, not self-willed worship. Are you experiencing true godliness?

engulfed by the blood, it sinks or decreases out of sight, and the light and witness of the Redeemer begins to increase giving the Light of the Gospel in this world of darkness.

The Apostle Paul said: **“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:** and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for Me.” (Gal. 2:20) His power becomes our power, His steadfastness our steadfastness, His courage our courage, His fortitude our fortitude. True virtue is in and of Jesus Christ. The cultivating of virtue is the increase of Jesus and the decrease of self.

Unfortunately, it takes some of us a lifetime to realize that inner virtue comes not from outward activities, rather it comes from the inward activities of the Holy Spirit positioning Jesus upon the throne of the heart. As it is written: **“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”** (Matt. 6:21) Also, the Scriptures teach that as a man **“thinketh in his heart, so is he.”** (Prov. 23:7) The more Jesus becomes the preeminent One in the inner man, the more He is the focus of the thoughts, then the more He is revealed in the actions. If Jesus does not rule the inner man, He cannot rule the outer man, and there is not a witness of the Light in darkness. If you are what you think, what are you thinking about? Is Jesus comfortable with your thoughts and actions?

IV.

The nature of Biblical virtue requires that it be founded upon and anchored in God and the Lord Jesus Christ. If the attempt is made to build it upon a church organization, a pastor, an individual, some item or thought it will surely crumble and be left desolate. The arm of flesh cannot aid one in the spiritual things of God, the arm of flesh will surely fail. Virtue that will stand the test of time sprouts out of faith in God and Jesus.

Christian fortitude is concerned about things which are apparently the will of God, and is exercised in obedience to it; for the sake of a man doing his duty, and with a pure view to the honor and glory of God; trusting in and depending upon His power, strength and grace, to carry him through whatever he is called to do or suffer in the performance of it; and from which he is not to be deterred by any difficulties that occur, or dangers he may be exposed unto therein: this is fortitude becoming

John Gill wrote:

with God. He walks and meditates with God. Hence, God makes Himself manifested in the believer's attitude, conduct, conversation, and existence. The believer wills only one thing: the fullness of God in his life now and in eternity.

IV.

However, let it not be insinuated that salvation and godliness eradicate the carnal nature, for they most assuredly do not. Rather, it is because of regeneration and godliness the believing one seeks to fulfill the desires of the spirit, and not the desires of the sinful flesh. The new heavenly born creature earnestly strives to worship correctly; but there will always be battles betwixt the flesh and the spirit. As long as God is pleased to permit the divine nature of man to dwell in the sinful nature of man, sin will fight to rule.

It is written: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Yet, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and 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." (I Jn. 1:8-10) Correct worship requires acknowledgment of sin, confession to God of sin, repentance of sin, and God's forgiveness of sin. One cannot walk in the light of God while wallowing in the darkness of sin. Authentic godliness casts off all works of darkness, that it may stroll at peace in the light of His wondrous glory. Correct and honest worship is not found

mercy of His sovereign grace. It believes, "All that the Father giveth me (*Jesus*) shall come to me;". It believes, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." It believes, "Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. It believes, "that no man can come unto me (*Jesus*), except it were given unto him of my Father." It believes, "He that believeth on me (*Jesus*) hath everlasting life." (Jn. 6:37,44,45,65,47) It believes all of the sacred teachings of the Holy Word of God, without deceiving, twisting, perverting, distorting, or compromising with the humanistic traditions of men. Godliness believes with Abel, that the only correct worship of the Eternal God is through the remission of sins in the blood of the Lamb by grace, grace, all of grace, His sovereign grace. It believes the Holy Writ revealing "after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." (Eph. 1:13-14) Godliness truthfully believes God, which causes the believing one to devoutly worship correctly. It is through the knowledge of this mysterious foundation and manifestations of God upon the heart and spirit that one seeks the face of God and maintains a Godward attitude. In godliness the believer is engulfed with holy affections and dispositions. He has a conscious communion

perseverance. Outward virtue exposes the inner virtue in the obedience to God's will without regard to self. Not only is virtue in the sense of moral excellence, but also it is in the energy which Christians are to exhibit, as God discharges His energy upon them.

V.

It is written in I Peter 2:9, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the **praises** of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light."

The word "**praises**" in this passage of Scripture is the same Greek word translated virtue in our primary text of II Peter. Therefore, it is understood that the believer is to show forth the power, courage, steadfastness, fortitude and energy of Him who has called us out of the darkness of this world, the abyss of sin, into His marvelous light. The saints are to express outwardly the virtues of Jesus by the exercising of faith with vigorous actions. It is written: "Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogance come out of your mouth: for **the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed.**" (I Sam. 2:3) God does not need lip service, He requires actions that bear witness of His virtues to the praise of His Holy Name and the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the active giving of self, not just a simple showing

up for church service.

When Joshua said, “As for me and my house, we will **serve** the Lord.”, he meant an active steadfast participation with loyal faithful devotion to **duty**. It is being actively involved in the cause of Christ. When the principalities of darkness rage in spiritual battle, faith centered virtue will display itself with honor, courage, loyalty and an unquenchable devotion to duty. As Paul the Apostle wrote: “According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.” (Phil. 1:20) **Biblical virtue added to faith magnifies God and the Lord Jesus. What and who does the virtue in you magnify?**

righteousness of God can not be killed. Acceptable worship before God requires correct worship, which is godliness.

E.W. Bullinger in defining godliness states that godliness “relates to real, true, vital, and spiritual relations with God”, while religion “relates to the outward acts of religious observances or ceremonies, which can be performed by the flesh. Our English word ‘religion’ was never used in the sense of true godliness. It always meant the outward forms of worship.” (Zondervan 1979 pg.335)

John Gill in referring to godliness wrote: “This is none other than the inward devotion of the mind, and fervency of the spirit in serving the Lord; it is a holy disposition of the soul towards God.”

We may thus conclude that godliness, true godliness has for its foundation a firm faith in the one and only Eternal God, Creator of the heavens and the earth; and believes God in His manifestations and works upon the soul. This firm persuasion gives birth to “real, true, vital, and spiritual relations with God.” With holy disposition the believer naturally with devotion of mind and fervency of spirit passionately worships correctly before the Everlasting Father.

III.

Godliness believes the inspired, manifested Word of God! It believes God created the heavens and the earth. It believes God created man, not evolution. It believes God is the only Hope, Saviour, and Justifier of quickened souls

first understand that there is ONLY ONE GOD, and this God has purposed to reveal Himself to man in various ways and for various purposes. Yet, He is eternal and sovereign in all of His ways, to the praise, glory and honor of His Holy Name.

II.

Let us now turn our attention to the meaning of “godliness”. If we are to cultivate godliness in our Christian faith, we must of necessity understand what it is Biblically.

The word godliness comes from the Greek word “*eusebeia*”, which itself is composed of two words: “eu”, meaning “well or aright”, and “sebomaie”, meaning “to worship”. Therefore, godliness is to worship well or correctly. One is said to possess godliness when he worships God well and in the correct manner as set forth in the Holy Scriptures. It is **not** following the dictates of one’s own heart and conscience, rather it is following the dictates of the Holy Word of God which is forever settled in heaven. It needs no emotionalizing, sensationalizing, mystifying, or modernizing.

When Cain and Able worshipped before God, Cain worshipped incorrectly and Able worshipped correctly. God accepted Abel’s worship, but rejected Cain’s because Cain did not obey His divine decrees for correct worship. In retaliation unrighteousness attempted to kill righteousness. One may kill the righteous man, but the

Lesson 7

Add to Virtue: Knowledge

Part I

I.

It is written: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Prov. 1:7) It is simply amazing how the Eternal One is able to separate in one simple statement the pretentious believers from the genuine believers. Honest reverential fear of God promotes a hungering and a thirsting for holy knowledge. Pretentious hearts have no hungering and thirsting for the knowledge of God, and cannot for they neither know nor fear the sovereign God of all creation. The fool may have had an experience of religion, but has not experienced the new birth. If there is no regeneration there is no fear of God; and holy knowledge has no meaning without the fear of God.

The indwelling Spirit of God enables the believer to recognize that “...out of His (*God’s*) mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.” (Prov. 2:6) From this enabling a quest begins to acquire as much knowledge as possible out of the mouth of God concerning Him, the Messiah, the Holy Spirit, and the Kingdom. It is written: “The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge.” (Prov. 18:15) There is

a passionate desire to sit in school before heaven's throne, to absorb all that comes into the ears of the spirit from the bosom of the Father. It is not only a hearing, but equally a receiving and an acting upon what has been instructed from heaven's throne. Fear of the LORD is only the beginning of the quest and adventures in the knowledge which is eternal, holy, righteous and of a divine purpose. It is a holy precious gift when God unveils Himself in the minds and hearts of His children.

II.

The word "knowledge" is vividly brought to life in the two Greek words "gnosis" and "epignosis". The fundamental or root meaning of the word "gnosis" is a seeking to know. That is, it is a knowledge which continually seeks to understand the subjects it encounters and its conduct is determined by what it discovers. This is the one used in our text of II Peter 1:5.

Therefore, the knowledge that is to be added upon faith and virtue is one which seeks constantly to know. Then, as the truth is manifested and the understanding is enlightened by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, the believer being mindful of the will and purposes of God changes his conduct to conform to the righteousness of His dear Son, Jesus. This continual seeking, knowing, and changing is what cultivates the believer to a mature state in the faith. It

believer worships ONLY ONE GOD. There is much complexity in this for the human mind, yet completely logical and simplistic in the mind and purpose of God.

The word **justify** signifies to be set forth as righteous. When the Word was made flesh, it was examined by the unrighteous and found to be truly righteous having no fault. Nevertheless, the jealousy of unrighteousness by divine purpose crucified the righteous for the unrighteous. Now the Spirit of righteousness pierces the heart of the unrighteous convicting of sin, of righteousness, and of the judgment to come. By His Spirit He makes known His righteousness and reveals man's desperately wicked unrighteousness.

The word **trinity** is not found in the Holy Word of God, and for good reason. **Trinity** is a pagan polytheistic doctrine. Its origin is ancient Babylonian worship of Nimrod, his wife, and Nimrod reincarnated (the baby in the woman's arm). **We worship only one God, not three.** The Word is not "a god", rather "God is the Word". The Holy Spirit is not "a spirit", rather "God is Spirit". Does a spirit have a spirit? When we say God the Creator, does that mean we believe in a fourth God? Of course not! When I talk to some folks they refer to me as the preacher, some as their pastor, my wife refers to me as her husband, my children as their father. Are there four individuals? No, just one person, four manifestation. To understand the mystery of

Genuine godliness is indeed a great mystery to the world. According to the Holy Scriptures, one cannot see or enter into this realm of godliness unless they are born into it. Jesus said, “ Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot **see** the kingdom of God. Also, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot **enter** into the kingdom of God.” (Jn. 3:3,5)

If one is unable to see the kingdom of God, how can he be expected to see the God of the kingdom? Therefore, to understand this great mystery, one must be a part of the mystery, which comes by the heavenly Spirit birth. Being made a partaker of the divine nature of God enables one to understand more of the nature of God. A mystery is only a mystery if there is no revelation of the truth. When the light overtakes the darkness, everything that dwells in that darkness is revealed and everyone having light sees what is revealed. It is written: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” (Ps. 119:105) “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.” (Ps. 119:130)

The word **manifest** means to make openly known. God made Himself openly known for it is written, “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us”, “and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” Jesus the Christ is God manifesting Himself to man. There remains ONLY ONE GOD, and a

forever seeks to know and to understand more and more abundantly the Great I AM and the Lord of Glory. One’s conduct exhibits his knowledge of God.

III.

When “epi-” is added as a prefix to the word “gnosis”, it becomes more absolute. There is a clearer and more exact understanding because the seeker begins to participate, or interact with the subject being studied. Hence, one obtains a more precise and fuller knowledge by participating. For example, it is one type of knowledge to watch bear hunting on television in the safety and comfort of your home and quite another knowledge to meet him face to face in his wilderness. The level of knowledge changes with the level of participation. Epignosis is that knowledge which is so clearly precise because it is a knowledge of interactive participation with the subject. The more you interact and participate with God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit the more you are overwhelmed with a clearer knowledge. Jump into the arms of a Grizzly and see how quickly in that participation you get a new found respect for his power. Now, jump in the arms of God!

In II Peter 1:2 we read: “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through (*in*) the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.” The word knowledge is “epignosis”. Thus, in a fuller and more exact knowledge drawn from an interactive

ticipation with God and the Lord Jesus, grace and peace is multiplied.

In II Peter 1:3 we read: "According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through *(in)* the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue,..." Again, this knowledge is "epignosis" and is used to bring to the believer's attention the fact that in a clear and exact knowledge obtained through interaction and participation, he has been given all things that pertain unto life and godliness. However, the lack of this epignosis hinders one from participating in the things pertaining to eternal life and godliness. How does one store up treasures in heaven if he never participates in the storing up process? Many are deficient in their service for the Lord because they have never come to a clear, exact, participating knowledge in God and Jesus. Correct participation requires correct knowledge.

Epignosis is not instantaneous. It comes through great endeavor, seeking truth and understanding in God's Holy Word and participating in prayer before the throne of the Eternal One. It is throwing self into the arms of God interactively participating and thinking with Him. It disciplines itself in "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the

Lesson 13

Add to Patience: Godliness

Part I

I.

It is written: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (I Tim. 3:16)

"the mystery of godliness"

1. God - Only One God - Isaiah 43:10-11
2. God was manifest in flesh - Jn. 1:1, Rev. 19:11-16, Jn. 1:14, Matt. 1:23, Is. 7:14
3. God - was justified in the Spirit -Matt. 1:18, 3:16-17, Is. 50:6-10, Jn. 4:24, Lk. 4:1,14, Rom. 8 1-39
4. God - was seen of angels - Lk. 2:7-15, Matt. 4:11, 28:1-7, Acts 1:10-11
5. God - was preached unto the Gentiles Acts 13:46-49, 10:1- 11:18
6. God - was believed on in the world - Jn. 3:16, Rom. 4:9-25, Rev. 7:9-

17

Acts

7. God - was received up into glory - 1:8-11, Heb. 1:1-14, 4:14, Rev. 1:10-18, 5:1-14, 19:16, 21:1-4, 22

-

hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” ***Active Patience!*** Like in Nehemiah 4, the saints desperately need to be actively building, having the Sword of the Spirit by our side and listening for the trumpet sound from the heavenlies. Wait but do something while waiting.

VI.

Patience, passive and active, reflects genuine Christian character. When the believer is passively and actively purified in the fires, he identifies with the words of Job: “But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” (Job 23:10) God knows exactly where we are and what we are going through. The realization of this truth enables us to bear-up under and hold out tenaciously until the fullness of time. It is written: “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” (Heb 10:35-37) Also, “And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” (Heb. 6:11-12)

There shall always be trials and tribulation, and holy work to do, requiring patience. However, “In your patience possess ye your souls.” (Lk.

shew itself “approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (II Tim. 2:15)

IV.

The knowledge which is to be added to virtue is the seeking to know. If it is cultivated correctly it will bring the believer to a clearer and exact knowledge through interacting and participation with God and the Lord Jesus. The Apostle Peter charges the saints to cultivate a seeking knowledge of God and Jesus, that each of them might come to a joyously fuller interactive participating knowledge. Spiritual growth brings participation.

The Apostle Paul wrote: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!” (Rom. 11:33) This knowledge is also the one used in our text, a seeking knowledge. As one seeks to know God he will encounter an overwhelming wealth of wisdom and knowledge. Sadly, few ever strive to seek these treasures of knowledge. Most believers are content in their poverty, when they ought to be as Paul in exclaiming, “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:8) What are you willing to give up to acquire more knowledge of God and Jesus? True spiritual knowledge requires sacrifice. The more you would know means the more you must give. How far into the depths of the riches of knowledge are you willing to swim? Your

in direct proportion to your honest sacrificial seeking.

Paul also wrote in reference to Christ: "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. 2:3) Since the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Christ, it is reasonable to understand that if one is not indwelt by Jesus Christ, it would be impossible to acquire the hidden treasures. In short, no salvation - no treasures. Also, if a believer is seeking knowledge, he must look in Jesus to find it. The world has no knowledge of the eternal treasures. Unfortunately, as it has been said, few students of the Bible ever go to the well of knowledge to drink of its living waters; most go only to rinse their mouths. They do not wish to live by it, they just desire to experience it in their filthy mouths then spit it out.

Before one can drink of the spiritual knowledge of God and Jesus, he must be born out of the Spirit of God and then nurtured by the Spirit of God. As it is written in I Corinthians 2:10-14:

"But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God

V.

Fourthly, active patience is waiting. King David wrote: "Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD." (Ps. 27:14) "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him:". (Ps. 37:7) "I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry." (Ps. 40:1)

Cultivating patient waiting is a burdensome task. Too many of us act like little children wanting to run ahead rather than walk alongside. As a result, the impatient children do much damage and miss many blessings. Determination to wait for God's direction is active patience.

Waiting for the trumpet sound of the First Resurrection and to see the Lord of glory is active patience. Paul wrote: "...how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." (I Thess. 1:9-10) Also, "And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." (II Thess. 3:5) Again, "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body, For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet

IV.

Thirdly, active patience is exemplified in running the Christian race. It is written: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12:1-2) The words "the race" reveal the test or trial of endurance set before every believer. The words "let us run" reveal the option. Therefore, the willingness to run the race which tries the endurance or persistence of the believer is active patience. The believer thus endures all, that he might victoriously finish the course set before him by the providential decree of God.

Jesus voluntarily endured the cross of Calvary that the Father's will be "finished". Because of His persistence in doing the Father's will, Jesus with perseverance accomplished it in the "fullness of time". This is active patience because it was not an unavoidable circumstance. Jesus said: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt. 26:53) Christ of His own volition suffered as the Scarificial Lamb to redeem those given to Him before the foundation of the world -

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither

If the Spirit of God is not dwelling within the individual, he will never come to the knowledge of the truth concerning God and Jesus. The natural, or fleshly man cannot by nature interact and participate with God. When one receives birth out of the Holy Spirit through the blood of Jesus by the will of God, the new creature of that heavenly birth is a partaker of the divine nature of God. The new inner divine nature is then in the right relationship to receive the nurturing of the Spirit of God, and desperately hungers and thirsts to feed upon heaven's righteousness.

William Shakespeare wrote: "Go to your bosom, knock there and ask your heart, What it doth know." You say you are "born again", what does your heart honestly know of the things of God? Is there a seeking to know? Inactivity towards God shows inactivity in the heart from God.

V.

Today's society places great emphasis on higher education; yet, when it comes to the Holy Word of God there is an ever-growing prevalence of ignorance. The temporal things of the world have become of greater importance than the eternal things of God. This neglect of the Bible has resulted in a decreasing interactive participation with the God of heaven and little spiritual cultivation and growth. The Prophet Amos forewarned of this time as he wrote:

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it. (Amos 8:11-12)

That day of which Amos spoke is now upon the world. There is a famine of the Word of God. Many are searching but cannot find, because they will not go to the source. They are "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." (II Tim. 3:7) Many are like those on Mars Hill worshipping the UNKNOWN GOD. The fear of God is the beginning of a seeking to know which is the beginning of an active participating knowledge. To virtue add knowledge!

and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." (Lk. 8:15) The believer understands that God will do His work, the Holy Spirit will do His work, and the Lord Jesus will do His work upon the hearts and souls of men. He also understands that he has a work to which he is called and must be doing. The time of the harvest is upon us and we must be with active patience labouring in the fields. It is His harvest but He has chosen us and created us to be doers in His field. He commissioned us to be gatherers not scarecrows.

Jesus taught, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." (Jn. 15:4-5) Abiding in Jesus until and during fruit bearing time is active patience - stamina and stick-to-itiveness. The amount of fruit is relative to the level of activity the branch patiently (*persistently*) interacts with the vine. The branch recognizes that the living strength to endure the load comes from actively abiding in the vine.

Jesus also said: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." (Jn. 15:8) The Father is glorified when the believer flourishing in the Vine brings forth much fruit, and in His strength endures the load of the fruit until the harvest. Are you truly His

“For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.” (I Peter 3:17) And, “Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful creator.” (I Peter 4:19) Also, “But ye brethren, be not weary in well doing.” (II Thess. 3:13) Let God guard your eternal soul, you keep working! Can your eternal soul be plucked out of the hand of God? If God is not faithful, you do not have to be faithful! Is God faithful?

The believer is expected to be persistent and tireless in well doing. The saints of God have not been saved to remain idle or just to warm a pew and sing “I shall not be moved”. As it is written: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Eph. 2:10) Well doing means to be “doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” (James 1:22) This stick-to-itiveness in doing the Word of God is active patience in the performance of the will of God. God is a living God, therefore, He is active. Hence, that which is begotten of Him unto a lively hope would by nature be found active as He is active. How is your activity?

III.

Next, it may be said that active patience is exercised in bringing forth fruit. It is written: “But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest

Lesson 8

Add to Virtue: Knowledge Part II

I.

It is written: “Whom shall He teach knowledge? and **whom** shall He make to understand doctrine? **them** that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept **must** be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.” (Isaiah 28:9-10) The prophet Isaiah presents two excellent questions, then follows them with the answers by the inspiration of God.

God does not and is not obligated to teach knowledge to everyone without exception. The Eternal One is sovereign in **all** His ways. This passage goes hand in hand with the verses of First Corinthians 2:10-14, used in the previous lesson. The knowledge of God is reserved for those born out of the Holy Spirit through the blood of Jesus, and who are taught by the Spirit of God. Even the unweaned babies in Christ, those reluctant to leave the milk of the Word, are not taught His knowledge, or made to know His doctrines. Proper cultivation weans a believer off the milk, causing a hungering and thirsting after the righteousness of God. The maturing enables him to correctly handle the knowledge and doc-

trines of God. Then the Spirit guides him into building precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little. Each building block, or precept, must be accurately placed upon the corresponding precept that the Word of God be rightly divided and learned. Biblical Christian zeal is always according to knowledge.

There is a common thought in these days that we do not need to concern ourselves with doctrine; we just need to tear down all walls and love everybody. To the humanistic ear it may sound good, but to the ear taught by the Spirit it is an absurd abomination. The Word of God is doctrine, and to say we do not need doctrine is to say we do not need the Word of God. To not need the Word of God is a doctrine of that Wicked One, the deceiving Serpent of damnation. The word "doctrine" means teaching, and God teaches His children truth - doctrine.

Jesus said: "If ye love me, **keep** my commandments." (Jn 14:15) "He that hath my commandments, and **keepeth** them, he it is that loveth me:" (Jn 14:21) "If ye **keep** my commandments, ye shall abide in my love;" (Jn 15:10) How can one keep what he does not have? The Greek word translated "keep" in these verses means to "devoutly comply with". If evidence of one's love for Jesus is expressed in devoutly complying with His commands, is it not reasonable that an accurate knowledge of

II.

Actively, patience is found in the company of such attributes as persistence, stamina, stick-to-itiveness, tenacity, perseverance, and tirelessness. Patience in the active sense persistently seeks to fulfill the will of God in every respect without quitting. Jesus said, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Lk. 9:62) The believer is to set himself to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ and stick to it, persistently overcoming until called upward to meet the Lord in the air. The disciple is to have an active Christianity in his waiting for the Savior to return. One may have to change his course of action from time to time but he is ever to be looking and going forward. Even Paul the Apostle sometimes had to leave quickly and the Holy Spirit also hindered him from going into Asia Minor, thus he was forced to change his course of action. Yet, it did not stop his determination to go forward in actions for the witness of the Lord Jesus and to the saving of souls.

It is written in the Holy Bible that God "will render to ever man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath." (Rom. 2:6-8) Also, "For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of

the event as an opportunity of destiny. As Arnold G. Kuntz stated: "We are not in this world simply to enjoy God's gifts. We are here to use them in the building of His kingdom, which calls for some kind of sufferings."

In the previous lesson we saw the Greek word "hupomone" translated as patience. There are two passages where the word is translated as "suffer" in the sense of a patient bearing-up under or a patient steadfast enduring. In II Timothy 2:12 it is written: "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: If we deny Him, He also will deny us." Also, in II Timothy 3:12 it is written: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." When a true believer purposes to live godly, he will purifyingly be acted upon, nevertheless, he will steadfastly endure for the Lord's name's sake.

It is in this suffering, or bearing-up under, that faith is tried. Faith is immersed in the fiery trials that it may come forth as pure gold. The Apostle Peter wrote: "Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (I Peter 1:6-7) A purified faith is more precious than gold because it brings to Him praise and honour and glory. **What does your faith bring to Jesus when acted upon?**

II.

The Apostle Paul revealed that the purpose of God in gifting teaching pastors unto the churches was "**For the perfecting (*maturing*) of the saints**, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; **But speaking truth in love,...**" (Eph. 4:12-15) A pastor may say he loves his flock, but only when he is willing to risk everything to teach them the knowledge of the truth does he really love them. He knows, if they are to participate with God in righteousness, they must have a clear and exact knowledge of Him. Therefore, the pastor must teach his people to passionately seek the knowledge and doctrines of God and Jesus.

Remember, "There is a way which seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. 14:12) Religion is plagued with those who prefer "this is what I believe". Yet, the source of truth is not in what one chooses to believe, rather the eternal source of truth is in "Thus saith the LORD God". Cultist and religionist are destitute of the saving knowledge of God and Jesus, deceiving themselves, having

Many have in their possession and in their assemblies the Blessed Holy Word of God; but their eyes are blinded against the knowledge of God for they love darkness rather than light. Ungodly men and women, who were before of old ordained to condemnation, thrill in “turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Jude 4) Lasciviousness denotes undisciplined, unmanageable, given to luxury, extravagant, wasteful, emotionalism, sensationalism, and exciting lustful desires. When these change the sovereign grace of God into animalistic and humanistic reasoning, they are denying God and Jesus unto eternal condemnation. Yet, **Jesus said**, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (Jn. 8:31-32)

Man does not have the right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience or heart. Man is not judged by “what I feel”; but by “it is written”. Far too often, folks are looking for a “feel good feeling” in the house of God when they should be seeking to know more of God and Jesus, growing to an interaction and a participation with Them. When assemblies think revival is slap-happy animalistic howling, barking, laughing and falling in the floor, it is because their consciences are “seared with a hot iron”. They prefer self approval over studying to show themselves approved unto

Lesson 12

Add to Temperance: Patience Part II

I.

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified.” (I Peter 4:12-14)

Notice the believer is being acted upon which places him in the passive position. The fiery trials will come as part of that purifying process of the believer’s faith. They are not to be considered as some strange or unusual event in the life of a believer. The believer is to bear-up under the testing placed upon him with rejoicing having been allowed to be a partaker of Christ’s sufferings; in other words - passive patience.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow once wrote: “Know how sublime a thing it is to suffer and be strong.” The sadness of it is that all too often we suffer and cry “Woe is me!” as if some strange thing did come upon us. We should, however, recognize

Jesus, speaking to His Apostles, said: “These things I have spoken unto you, that **in me** ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” (Jn. 16:33) Here we have the clear words of our Master, that His disciples will have tribulations. It is not “may have” or “could have”; it is “shall have”. Knowledge is power. Knowing we “shall have” tribulations enables us to prepare for the trying of our faith, much like an athlete prepares for testing on the field of challenge. Jesus exhorts His disciples to “be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” All the Apostles were acted upon and endured. Paul and Silas were acted upon and with calmness were able to bear-up under. Stephen suffered being stoned to death with remarkable patience. As we are challenged on every side in the valley of temptations, by faith we shall emerge victoriously with the grace of godly patience. Even the Apostle Paul implores the saints to be “patient in tribulation.” (Rom. 12:12) Understand this, God has never had any children who did not suffer in some manner or another. Since Cain and Able the righteous have always suffered, including our Lord and Saviour. Are we **LESS WORTHY** than all who have ever gone before us to suffer shame for His name? If so, than we are **WORTHLESS** ! This passive patience will be continued in the next lesson, as well as the active patience.

III.

It is written: “**Keep** thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and **be more ready to hear**, than to give sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil.” (Eccl. 5:1) The word “keep” in this verse from the Hebrew means to guard. Going to the House of God is a sacred privilege and not to be taken lightly. There are severe consequences upon the wicked who bring their foolishness into the House of God. (Not every assembly is a House of God) It is said that birds of a feather flock together. Fools flock with fools and the righteous flock with the righteous, and each are uncomfortable flocking with the opposite. God given knowledge makes the difference.

While it is true “much study is a weariness of the flesh”, there are no shortcuts or instantaneous knowledge workshops. Seeking the knowledge of God and Jesus is a life long endeavor, but with eternal rewards. As the believer grows in the knowledge of God and Jesus, he is overwhelmed by the joys of interacting and participating with the God of all creation. The earnest searching of the Scriptures triumphs over ignorance and foolishness. The sweet victory of knowledge is sweeter than honey to the mouth. “Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of

IV.

There are those who prefer to dwell in the land of willful ignorance, which results in being excluded from the graces and blessings of God. God said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou has rejected knowledge, I will reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou has forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." (Hosea 4:6) Why was the kingdom of Israel destroyed? Because they rejected the knowledge of God. According to Hosea in 4:1, there was "no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land." These were suppose to be God's people, but they had no time for Him, choosing rather to be willfully ignorant of His Words. Notice, it not only had an effect on their generation, it also caused God to forget their children. What about our generation?

Multitudes have a form of godliness, but reject the true knowledge of God, cherishing instead their animalistic passions. Thanks be unto God, there are a few remaining faithful to the knowledge forever settled in heaven. Some are daring to walk the narrow path of righteousness, while the multitudes dance to the music upon Baal's broad highway to everlasting destruction.

The wise hear God saying, "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings." (Hosea 6:6) They seek a clear, exact and participating knowledge of

while continuing steadfastly under injuries, insults, distress, fatigue, trials, and temptations. Christian patience acknowledges that God is sovereign in all His ways, therefore, it maintains victoriously its composure in the confrontation of such afflictions. It is written: "But we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Rom. 5:3-5)

As the faithful Apostles were filling Jerusalem with the doctrine that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah, the religious rulers had them arrested. They were acted upon. Then after they had "beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go." Then the Apostles "departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." (Acts 1:40,41) They were acted upon, nevertheless, they were able to bear-up under with rejoicing that Jesus "counted them **worthy to suffer** shame for His name." Real faith in Christ passively endures and shares the sufferings of Christ in this present world with undisturbed calmness. It finds reassurance in the knowledge "that all things work together **for good** to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." (Rom. 8:28)

and tenaciously the Word of His patience, ensuring a pure and truthful witness of it in the darkness of this world, holding forth the light of the hope of salvation. The saints are to steadfastly endure all things that they might faithfully convey to mankind that the long-suffering of God has brought forth His sovereign grace in undeserved redemption through the blood of the Lord Jesus.

They are to occupy with patience.

The trying or proving of the faith of the saints as revealed in Scriptures “worketh patience”. That is to say, that by enduring faithfully the trials, tribulations, afflictions, heartaches, and other misfortunes surrounding the pathway of the righteous, patience is cultivated. Bearing-up under each progressively intense trial gives strength to overcome the next. The Bible encourages “That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” (Heb. 6:12) The promises are received at the end of our journey, not at the beginning.

IV.

In the analysis of patience, there is found an active and a passive patience. Passive refers to that which is being acted upon, while active refers to that which is doing the acting.

Passively, patience engulfs such attributes as endurance, long-suffering, forbearance, sufferance, imperturbability, equanimity, uncomplainingness, and fortitude. Passive

V.

Paul wrote: “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; **That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.**” (Col. 1:9-10)

It is one thing to be a hearer of the Word and another to be a doer of the Word. Unfortunately, too many have “a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God”. (Rom. 10:2-3) If the believer is to “walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing”, he must be a doer of the Word which requires knowledge of the Word. For example, Abel offered the perfect sacrifice because of his desire to be a doer of the clear and exact knowledge he had of God’s will. Cain did not offer that which was pleasing to God because he went about to establish his own righteousness, having no desire to fulfill the will of God. As a result, Cain’s righteousness was rejected by God. Accurate knowledge of God’s will, in a true believer, establishes proper fruits of righteousness, which pleases Him.

It is written: “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom. 10:17) It is

the knowledge of God that brings faith, and faith brings “victory that overcometh the world.” (I Jn. 5:4) With the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, Biblical heroes and saints of the past “through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of aliens.” (Heb. 11:33-34) Faith according to knowledge generates overwhelming victory.

Consider these verses:

“Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed.” (I Sam. 2:3)

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (II Peter 3:18)

“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame” (I Cor. 15:34)

It is an exciting thing to know Jesus Christ and to know that He knows you. Greater still, as the believer searches the Holy Scriptures in learning more of God and Jesus, the excitement of the grace of faith is cultivated into rejoicing “with joy unspeakable and full of glory”. Seek to know and rejoice!

III.

Patience is not a restrictive trait of individual saints; it is also to be a collective quality of every true New Testament Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is written of the churches of Ephesus and Thyatira: “I know...thy patience.” (Rev. 2:2; 2:19) As the Lord Jesus knew the patience of these, He knows the patience or lack of patience of all His churches throughout every generation. Every called out assembly of the Lord’s is expected to cultivate the grace of patience as they are tried in the valley of temptations. Satanic forces will entice them to depart from the faith and compromise all, in exchange for the luxury of wallowing in the ungodly filth of the world.

It is written of the church of Philadelphia, “Because thou hast kept the word of My patience...”. (Rev.3:10) The Greek word translated “thou hast kept” supports the idea of guarding or watching over protectively. “The word of My patience” refers to Holy Scriptures which give witness to the long-suffering of God towards man. The local church in Philadelphia carefully guarded those sacred writings which contained the records of the patience of God. No other writings under heaven have so authoritatively recorded in witness to man the continuous sovereign patience of the Living God, the patient determination of the Lamb of God, and the patient persistence of the convicting and indwelling Holy Spirit. The local church is to

Therefore, the true believers remain unswerving in their hope of the Messiah's redemption and return in glory — patient in their faith. This brief time in the valley of the Wicked One's evil temptations is the worst; the best is yet to come. Thanks be unto His Holy Name!!

We all know, however, that nothing of value is achieved or fashioned in an instant. It requires time. As the giant redwood trees do not obtain their immense strength and stature in a moment, so it is with the grace of patience. The noble qualities of Christian growth emerge only through years of weathering through the storms. The precious pearls are only brought forth by much agitation to the oyster. If you want the precious pearl, you must endure the agitations!

A word of caution, do not mistake the lack of purpose, liveliness, and enthusiasm for patience. It is not patience it is laziness and apathy. Far too many vocalizing claim to the title "Christian" are indifferent, unconcerned, uninterested, unresponsive, unmoved, uncommitted, unemotional to the Gospel message and its need to be preached to every creature. This is not patience; it is ungodly gross laziness and putrefying apathy. Many want the honors of patience; but few want to engage in it. Laziness and apathy engage in nothing but self pity and excuses. If you would have the Biblical precept of patience, you must bear-up under the proving of your faith as you step lively along with enthusiastic purpose.

Lesson 9

Add to Knowledge: Temperance Part I

I.

Biblically speaking, every sin can be categorized under three basic headings: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. These are the three categories of sin which are the embodiment of Lucifer's sin of "self" above God. It is the sin of all the condemned, "I am above the need of God", failure to believe God. It is from these three categories that every sin is rooted and springs forth as weeds and tares against even the believers. Why does one sin ignoring the consequences? **Self gratification!!**

In the cultivation of Christian faith, every weed and tare must be rooted out, or else they will grow in strength, choking and hindering the believer's maturing in Christ. Temperance is an indispensable instrument in up-rooting and casting out that which would prevent one's healthy grow in Christ. Temperance is the arch enemy of "self gratification". It encourages death to self and life unto God and Jesus Christ.

When the Apostle Paul stood before Felix, Paul spoke to him concerning his faith in Christ, "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, **Felix trembled**, and ans-

were, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.” (Acts 24:25) Literally, Felix became afraid and fearful. Paul’s reasoning scared Felix to trembling.

Now, what was in Paul’s message to bring such fear upon Felix until he shook uncontrollably? Yes, Paul did tell him of the righteousness of God and man’s need of that righteousness through the sovereign grace of God and the blood of the Lord Jesus. Yes, Paul also told him of the coming judgment, when every individual will not only stand before God but every knee will bow and every tongue confess the deeds done in this life. Yet, there was one more thing contained in Paul reasoning unto Felix - **temperance**. Why would Felix tremble at temperance?

Why would anyone tremble over temperance? Is temperance so essential to eternity as to be ranked with the righteousness of God through the blood of Jesus, and the coming eternal judgment before a holy God? The answer is yes, a million times yes! It is upon this attribute of temperance that we find suspended the eternal balances of righteousness and coming judgment. Righteousness requires temperance, and the coming judgment will reflect one’s temperance. Therefore, temperance is of paramount importance, because it will have a tremendous impact on one’s eternity. Every believer, especially, should be made aware that

to bear-up under, to endure under. It also carries with it the idea of steadfastness, constancy, and unswerving from purpose. Webster defines patience as “the will or ability to wait or endure without complaint; steadiness, endurance, or perseverance in performing a task. Patience implies the bearing of suffering, provocation, delay, tediousness, etc., with calmness and self-control.”

Therefore, we may say that patience is that grace which, when permitted to reach its full and intended end, enables the child of God to wait steadfastly for the coming Christ. It is also that attribute by which the saints through calmness and self-control endure suffering and provocation. It is the power to hold out, without being annoyed or disturbed, until the will of God be accomplished. It is one of the essential contributors to the obtaining of all the graces of Christian maturity. However, by divine design it can only be cultivated through the fiery testing of one’s faith. **Will the faith we say we possess really stand through the test?**

II.

It has been said that the life through which the believers now pass is the worst life they shall ever know; yet, it is the best life the lost (the children of eternal damnation) will ever know. For every true believer, the trials and sufferings of this present world are for a relatively short span of time. Eternity, to praise His Name, has no end.

Being surrounded by temptations is to be esteemed with all joy because this is the time God tests the pureness of one's belief in Him. This process of purifying one's faith brings forth patience. Therefore, the Apostle James instructs the believers to not hinder but allow the birth pains that bring forth patience. He states the reason why is that the believer may be brought to maturity and wholeness, that he be not lacking in anything. The word perfect means to be brought to the completed and intended end. One of the places the believer's faith is going to be put to the test is in the valley of temptations. The birth and maturing of patience in the midst of the valley helps to bring the believer along the pathway to God's purposed complete and intended end, Christian wholeness.

Patience in the Word of God is ranked with such marvelous graces as righteousness, godliness, faith, love, meekness, longsuffering, soberness, temperance, soundness in faith, brotherly love, and holiness. Yet, it is one of the essential makeup's of all these graces. This cultivation of patience is of grave importance in every believer.

In our text of II Peter 1:6, the word "patience" is from the Greek word "hupomone" which is composed of two words, "hupo-" and "-mone". "Hupo-" indicates "under" and "-mone" signifies "to remain, to abide, to bear-up, to endure".

secured preservation do not diminish the elects' responsibility to temperance.

II.

The word "temperance" in our text of II Peter 1:6, "And to knowledge temperance," originates from the Greek word which refers to the grace by which the flesh of the believer is restrained. It is, by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, a mastery over evil inclinations, passions, desires, conduct, expressions, and appetites, including all the variations sprouting out of each. Temperance is that essential element in Christian cultivation by which one is, by the grace of God, in control over "self".

Paul the Apostle wrote: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and **the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God**, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20) Paul express the very essence of temperance. It is the mastery over "fleshly self" that Christ may glory through the "spiritual self". The reason onlookers referred to real believers as "Christians" was because their lives mirrored Christ. The fleshly self was restrained and their faith in Jesus was revealed as a shining light in the darkness of the unbelieving world. As Jesus said to the Father "not my will, but thy will", so is the passionate desire of everyone born out of the Spirit and through the blood of Jesus by the sovereign grace of God. Honest believers seek

to gain mastery over self desire and self will, and to immerse the total self in the likeness of Christ.

III.

The Biblical expectation of self mastery, or restraint over the animalistic nature, is an impossible task without the power of the Holy Spirit. By sovereign design, temperance is not an instantaneous victory. It remains a lifelong ongoing process. It requires constant attention through cultivation and years of trials, temptations, and tribulations in the believers quest to be Christlike.

When an unbeliever encounters authentic Christianity, he is bewildered and perplexed; but those who pass through the portals of the new birth experience it with enormous adoration and astonishment. It truly is an awesome thing to be a partaker of the divine nature of God, and experience the heavenly holiness and righteousness of the Eternal One. The inner knowledge that you are a purchased possession bought with the blood of the Christ on Calvary's cross creates a passionate desire to be like Him. It is saying with John the Baptist, "He must increase, but I must decrease". (Jn. 3:30)

Life, as mankind understands it, imparts only two alternatives - to be crucified with Christ, or to be destroyed without Him. One cannot truly enjoy the self indulgent pleasures of this world and the Christ centered pleasures of authentic Christianity, because they war one against the other. Religionist are flaunting about in their

Lesson 11

Add to Temperance: Patience Part I

I.

It is written: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (James 1:2-4)

Now, it would seem impossible for the believers to find any joy when they "fall into", or literally "are surrounded by", various types of temptations. However, put this in context with all we have passed through to this point. Beginning with faith in God and Jesus Christ, we add upon this faith virtue (fortitude), upon it we add knowledge of God and His Word, then temperance, which is knowledge in action, gaining control over fleshly self. Therefore, when the believer is surrounded by temptation, he is not hungry for it because he has already been filled with the righteousness of God; and thus he is not taken in by the temptation. There is joy when one can stare temptation in the face, fully acknowledging its presence, yet, because of the filling of the righteousness of God, he is not tempted by the bait. Temperance resists the lure of Satan's devices; and the joy of sweet

believer on the pathway of righteousness; then holds his hand through the valley of temperance.

Paul wrote: "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (1 Cor. 9:25-27) The word "castaway" from the Greek means unapproved or disapproved. Paul's desire was to keep in restraint his body that it sin not, lest he be disapproved by God and by those to whom he preached. Too often, a believer loses his witness for the Lord Jesus because he refuses to bring his body into subjection, to keep it from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - "self gratification". As a result, what they do speaks louder than the message they bear.

One final observation: "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." (1 Jn. 1:8-10) **BE ON GUARD - SIN CROUCHES AT THE DOOR READY TO DEVOUR THOSE WITHOUT THE GRACE OF**

worldliness; but the Holy Scriptures teach: "know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4) It is true that the flesh does constantly wars against the spirit for control. However, it is also true that honest Spirit-filled Christianity is not lacking in courage, but is victorious by the power of God.

Please understand, the bona fide child of God does not just wake up one day and arbitrarily decide to take a stroll into sin. He does not whimsically decide to be a drunkard, an adulterer, a liar, a lover of this world, or whatever. He does, however, in the likeness of the guilt of Lot, pitch his tent toward Sodom, the city of burning. Then because he has placed himself in the direction of sin, Satan with all his luring powers overtakes and engulfs him in the deception of sin. Understand also, the believer purchased by the blood of Jesus is free from the bondage of sin, but a willful surrender to the deception causes one to perceive he is in bondage with no way of escape. Remember Samson? His yielding to the lust of the flesh caused him to be deceived by sin, and resulted in lost sight, lost freedom, and bondage to a cruel taskmaster. The believer cannot flirt with sin and win. A vigilant and constant guard must be set against the lion crouching at the door.

The Apostle James wrote, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for

not be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But **every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.**" (James 1:13-15) How is one drawn out of the way of righteousness? ...by his own lust, desire for self gratification.

Have you ever tried to catch fish when they were not hungry? It does not matter what variety of bait is used; they will not bite. Jesus said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." (Matt. 5:6) Therefore, if the believer has been feeding on the righteousness of God, he is not tempted by any bait, because he is not hungry. He is satisfied and filled up with the righteousness of God. God may permit Satan to dangle the bait, but he does not catch those who are filled.

IV.

It is also written: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for **when he is tried**, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." (James 1:12) It is not a question of "if" you will be tried, rather of "**when**" you are tried. It is a guaranteed fact that every believer will encounter Satan's endless dangling of the bait. By God's sovereign decree all those inheriting everlasting life must have their faith (trust in Him) purified through the fires of trials and temptations. Faith satisfied in the right-

sions. It has been said that in mankind "illicit sex is the effort of the flesh to rape the spirit" and "only spiritual strength can successfully resist this attack." This perhaps is one of the most notable and most commonly used weapons in Satan's armory. The Bible gives ample examples of the destruction it causes, yet, it is still a lesson hard learned. Ask King David, a man after God's own heart. Ask Samson, a man of great physical strength. Ask Solomon, whose gift was wisdom from God. These all learned, the hard way, the tough lesson of the necessity of controlling one's sexual passions.

The wagging tongue can also be a tremendous enemy of the cause of Christ, as it is written: "it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." (Read James 3:7-10) Oh, that the believer may learn to control his tongue that reproach be not brought upon the precious work of the Lord Jesus Christ. So much useless destruction has been wrought in the Lord's churches by those who are unable to tame their tongues. Even so, the Scriptures teach, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." (James 3:2) What a glorious day it will be in the churches when the believers begin to cultivate tame tongues!!

Temperance is knowledge in action. It is applying the Holy Scriptures to one's walk in life. Knowledge induced by the Holy Spirit sets the

The Word of God teaches as a man “thinketh in his heart, so is he.” (Prov. 23:7) It also instructs each believer: “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;**” (II Cor. 10:3-5)

There is much merit in the old saying “an idle mind is the devil’s workshop”. If one’s mind is not being cultivated in the Word of God and the will of God, Satan moves in to create havoc, giving birth to wicked imaginations. As the believer ponders the wicked imaginations, his tent is pitched towards Sodom and Gomorrah. Satan then begins to manipulate and shape the thoughts of the mind. Consequently, before he realizes, the believer is committing that which the wicked imagination has conceived and brings forth sin. **TAKE ALARM!** - It is of the utmost importance that the believers relentlessly pursue, dwell, and meditate upon the Word of God. Do as King David said: “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” (Ps. 119:11) Every thought must be brought into captivity creating an acceptable obedience unto God, a Christlike obedience.

Temperance is also self-mastery over sexual pas

eousness of God overcomes all the bait Satan offers in this world. This is sweet victory!

Understand this, too: “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.” (I Cor.10:13) Every conceivable and even inconceivable temptation that could ever confront a believer is only the same old bait always used by Satan, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. God, however, is faithful not to permit the Tempter to dangle more before each saint than he is able to endure. The saint’s level of temperance over the animalistic self determines the outcome of the encounter. One without temperance yields to the temptation; but the one having that mastery over self finds the way to escape.

V.

There is, however, a warning to those who think too highly of themselves. It is written: “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” (I Cor. 10:12) Far too often, the self-righteous Pharisees around us bring railing accusations upon those babes in Christ who have sadly been overcome by sin. They are ignorant in the blindness of their own sins. They know not that only by the grace of God they are not guilty of the same sin as the one they look down upon. Only **by the grace of temperance** is

resist and escape from the Evil One. Perhaps, with proper knowledge, each believer would possess Christlike compassion for the weaker vessels. Is it not written?: “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” (Gal. 6:1) The problem in most settings is finding “ye which are spiritual”, but there seems to be no shortage of the self-righteous.

Every believer is capable of sinning at any given time, and only by the grace of God through the grace of temperance is it hindered from happening. One filled with the righteousness of God understands the spiritual warfare raging against the saints of God. Therefore, he has Christlike compassion for the lambs, and seeks to restore and strengthen them. The spiritual do not bring railing condemnations, rather in meekness they encourage the malnourished babes in Christ to hunger and thirst after righteousness, where they will find strength to restrain the animalistic nature. They will also find satisfaction for their souls, having been filled with heavenly righteousness.

If a man sent from God was to stand before you this day and reason before you of righteousness, temperance, and the coming judgment, would you tremble with fear, or rejoice in gladness?

III.

Being born again does not mean the opportunity to sin has been eliminated by the indwelling Christ. It does mean, however, that Jesus, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, removes from that “born again” spirit in man the bondage and motivation of sin. It is as God speaks to Israel through Ezekiel: “**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. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.**” (Ez. 36:26-27)

In the cultivation of Christian faith there are many stones in the field of life which must be removed by tremendous effort, much tribulation, earnest diligence, and sincere faithfulness. Preoccupation with the cares of this world impairs the believer in his efforts to remove the stones of sin. Instead of freedom, he finds self subjected to a most grievous bondage, as if the stones were anchored about his neck. To subdue “self” is to engage in the severest conflict, yet, to master one’s “self” is to be honored in the most noble of all masteries. Is it not written in the Scriptures: “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.” (Prov.16:32)

Even every mental thought is to be captivated.

The wickedness of sin jealously casts forth desperate attempts of deceptions. With great passions it strives to lure the redeemed away from the light of the righteousness of God. Sin launches a battle that rages within each believer for the control and usage of the body. Temperance controls this rage and uses the body through the power and leadership of the Holy Spirit. Be not deceived, this is a fierce battle until the believer is thoroughly convinced by God's Holy Spirit of the wickedness and deadliness of sin. In the light of the unveiling, the believer abhors sin and detests "fleshly self" for having yielded his members unto the service

o f There is a war that wages within, sin.

Whose height and depth seems to have no end.
The casualties are none to few,
Yet, I seem to be the only one it pursues.
The battle field is not wide but slim,
It lies raging only in my heart within.

I cannot express the pain I feel,
It seems, there is only I upon this battle field.
Even if I win I lose, you see,
For the battle is betwixt the flesh and spirit of me.
The flesh mournfully cries its desire to live,
But the spirit desires its praises to Jesus give.

How long must this war within destroy,
Before this flesh be mortified and the spirit life enjoy?
How long must I suffer this torment within,
Before my Jesus gloriously returns again?
How long, O Lord, must this battle of life be waged,
Before I with Thee march in that victory parade?

Read what Paul the Apostle wrote concerning

Lesson 10

Add to Knowledge: Temperance Part II

I.

Temperance is not the refusal of temporal honors and riches bestowed upon the believer in the providence of God. Many of the Biblical patriarchs, including Abraham the father of the faithful, were substantially blessed by the purpose of God. Neither does temperance deny oneself of life and health as did the false prophets on Mt. Carmel in the sight of Israel and Elijah. Temperance does not abuse the body, because every believer's body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit.

Temperance does, however, renounce or postpone anything or anyone that may be in competition with one's love for God and Jesus Christ. It resists everything and everyone that hinders one's total yielding to the commands of God. God must be the preeminence in every believer's life, for it is written: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment." (Matt. 22:37-38) Anything or anyone that would dethrone God as the King of kings and Lord of lords over the believer's physical, spiritual or mental life must be restrained and resisted for they are the enemies

extremely dangerous to the to the spiritual well-being of the child of God. The Everlasting Father reigning steadfastly over the believer's whole being brings sweet lasting victory.

The Apostle Paul wrote: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, **as those that are alive from the dead**, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but **UNDER GRACE.**" (Rom. 6:12-14) Also, "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us (*made us alive*) together with Christ, (**by grace ye are saved;**)". (Eph. 2:5)

When we were dead in trespasses and sins, bound by unbreakable chains of the condemned and ruled over by a cruel taskmaster, God out of His sovereign grace broke the bonds of our eternal death with the blood of the Lord Jesus, giving everlasting and abundant life out of death. The Eternal One by the power of His might did cast out the cruel Serpent of Hell and set Himself upon a new and living throne full of life, love, and free from the bondage of sin and unrighteousness. God made us alive and free by **His** grace! Therefore, the believer is expected to exhibit in his mind, body, and spirit this God given freedom from

Temperance is denying ungodliness and worldly lusts: Romans 6:12, Titus 2:12. It is controlling one's appetite as not to overindulge in eating: Romans 16:18, Philippians 3:19. Temperance abstains from "fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.": I Peter 2:11; and does not live to the lusts of men: I Peter 4:2. It mortifies sinful lusts and deeds of the body: Mark 9:43, Colossians 3:5-10, Romans 8:13. It seeks not to please self, but crucifies the flesh and is crucified unto the world: Romans 15:1-3, Galatians 5:24, 6:14. Temperance also prefers Christ to all earthly relations: Matthew 8:21-22, Luke 14:26. It does not seek external honors from mankind, only that honor which comes from the Heavenly Master: Acts 4:19-20, 5:29, Galatians 1:10. Self-mastery expresses itself in contentment even to the loss of all (name, worldly profit, employment, credit among men, friends, relatives, etc.) for Christ's sake: Philippians 3:7-10, 4:5-13.

II.

One of the most difficult lessons to learn in faithful Christianity is to part with "sinful self". The fleshly or natural man has been conceived in sin; and from his very birth comes forth sinning, habitually and willfully walking in the darkness and death of sin. Thus, this life long companion of sin strenuously opposes the spirit of man being ripped from the claws of the dark abyss of everlasting death. This enemy of the soul resents the life giving light of the redeemed.