

BE SET FREE

Simple Bible
Studies To
Guarantee
Victory In The
Christian Life

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This booklet is a collection of studies designed to help growing Christians mature in their faith and be built on the solid Word of God.

It is one among a series of study booklets from the publication desk of Christ's Disciples' Missionary Foundation Inc - a missionary organization committed to church planting and discipleship among unreached people groups around the world.

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WHY THIS BOOKLET?

So Jesus said to those Jews who believed in Him, 'If you abide in My word [hold fast to my teachings and live in accordance with them], you are truly my disciples. And you will know the Truth and the Truth will set you free'.

John 8:31-32 [The Amplified Bible]

Why are Christians beset by so many issues in our world today? Why has it become so difficult to live in victory over sin, bad habits, or even over Satan and his agents? Why in our day, do those who claim to be God's children fear demons and agents of darkness, whereas these powers submitted to Christians of the earlier days?

Many people have over the years been unable to have lasting victory in their Christian lives. They have become discouraged because they fall short of even their own expectations and aspirations, in many aspects of the Christian race.

SOME AREAS IN WHICH GROWING CHRISTIANS STRUGGLE

- o Consistent fellowship with God in prayer and in the Word
- o Purity in thoughts and in living
- o Fear free life
- o Witnessing and soul winning
- o Knowing and following the Holy Spirit's guidance
- o Understanding & following God's Purpose for one's life

For every symptom, there is a root cause. Trying to treat the symptoms of a disease or anomaly without dealing with the root cause will result in wasting time and other resources and could lead eventually to death. The Lord Jesus claimed about Himself:

"...I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows] John 10:10b (The Amplified Bible).

Anyone following Christ is not expected to live a life of barely surviving against the odds (opposing forces) of the Christian life. We are meant to live this life in the realm of being in control—that is the 'abundant life' in Christ Jesus. Even when we have to wait for God's timing for our expectations in faith, we are not despairing or hopelessly desperate; rather we joyfully wait with faith and hope. That is the abundant life style.

The solution to lack of victory in a Christian's life has been given by the Lord Himself. Once you accept the salvation in Christ by faith in His death on the cross and His resurrection, God expects you to do what Jesus says in His Word. According to John 8:31-32, power and freedom to live the victorious Christian life begins when you hold fast to the teachings of Jesus and live in accordance to them.

Before you can hold fast to or continue in a person's teaching, it is of necessity that you have gained knowledge of his teachings through some efforts of yours. **It is not possible to hold fast to something you did not have in the first place.** That was why the Lord concluded the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5-7) with a last illustration in Matthew 7:24-27 of two men who built homes, one wise who built his house on the rock and the foolish who built his house on the sand.

The fact that both the wise and the foolish had one thing in common—having heard Christ's teachings—made the real determinant of their success or failure against the odds (issues of life), their obeying the teachings they had received or not obeying them. So in addition to hearing and knowing the teachings of Jesus, you must be; Holding fast to them and living in accordance with them in order to be set free by (the power and revelation in) them, and thereby be able to live the 'abundant life' that Jesus promised anyone who believes. The wide spread lack of victorious Christian experience can be pinned down to this root cause-- those who have heard/know the Lord's teachings are not continuing in them nor living their lives in line with His expectations. No wonder the emphasis again in James 1:25 that:

“But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing”.

The blessedness here is the life that you live abundantly by the power of God which is characterized by dominion over sin, control over your Adamic nature as you continually submit to the Spirit of God, believing you are who God says you are in His Word and always being combat ready to contend with any opposing forces to your faith. James in fact compares a hearer who is not a doer of the Word to a foolish man who sees his face in a mirror but goes away without making corrections on his image. [James 1:22-25]. What an autonomy you've got, when you are completely or totally free! Praise God!

IGNORANCE IS COSTLY

If the case of the hearers who do not act on the knowledge they have is so pathetic, how then do we classify those who either have not heard, refused to hear or still do not learn the teachings of Christ? What shall be said of the person who professes to be a Christian but does not know for himself or herself the fundamental or basic teachings of Jesus Christ?

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge”. Hosea 4:6

“But Jesus replied to them, you are wrong because you know neither the scriptures, nor the power of God”. Matthew 22:29

Lack of knowledge of the Word of God and of the teachings of Christ leads a 'Christian' directly to destruction. He will be in error as to what it takes to live victoriously. Such a person is unable to know the reality of the power of God in his personal life.

He can easily be deceived by every kind of teaching, since he does not know the teachings of the Lord Jesus. He cannot hold fast to the true teachings because he has not acquired them.

WHY DO PEOPLE CONTINUE IN IGNORANCE OF THE WORD OF GOD?

1. PHYSICAL LAZINESS: Laziness to put in time and effort to

- listen to the Word of God read or taught
- read the Bible
- study the Bible

2. MENTAL LAZINESS: Laziness to meditate on, memorize and apply the word to their life (and daily activities)

3. SPIRITUAL LAZINESS: Laziness to believe, stand upon and use the Word of God as spiritual sword for battles (Ephesians 6:13).

FOR PERSONS WHO ARE NOT LITERATE --CANNOT READ OR WRITE

- Failure to be where you can hear the Word being read, taught or discussed.
- Inability to recall the Bible story or the teachings heard, to reflect on it and think through how to apply the lessons to your life.
- Failure to believe the teachings, live by them and tell others about them. The more you share the teachings of Christ, the more you understand more of God

Laziness is responsible for all kinds of procrastination, wrong use of time and wrongly set priorities. You must pray away and drive away from your life the spirit of laziness.

You may be a hard worker in areas that bring you financial or material gain, but to be truly set free to live victoriously as a Christian, you must deal with the root causes of all the bad symptoms listed earlier on. Deal with all forms of laziness. Demonstrate diligence by working hard to increase your knowledge of Christ and His teachings.

WHAT THIS BOOKLET IS

The set of Basic Bible Studies in this booklet are an aid to help you to know some of the teachings of Christ so that you can have what to 'hold fast to' and 'live in accordance with'.

They are well suited for:

- o Private or individual study for building up your spiritual life
- o Small group studies by friends, colleagues or family members
- o Bible Study/Teaching in Churches.

TIPS FOR GROUP STUDY

It is advisable to give room for contributions and questions by participants and to be as practical as possible when answering questions. These studies should also be done in bits and not rushed, so that you can have time for adequate discussions.

STUDY ONE

RECONCILING WITH GOD

Introduction:

The word reconciliation presupposes that there was once a relationship between two parties which went bad. Reconciling them is simply the process or act of putting an end to the separation and thereby restoring their relationship to the former state. This is the situation between Man and God--Romans 3:23 says '...for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God'. Sin caused the separation between God and men.

I. What went wrong? Read Genesis 3:1-24

Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, and this led to their relationship being broken with the Lord God. The consequences of their disobedience include the following:

a) Spiritually, man was separated from God. As Adam sinned and died spiritually, all his descendants came under the same power of sin and its consequences.

Read and discuss: Romans 5:12-14, 7:15, Genesis 4:8, Genesis 6:5-7.

b) Physically, man was driven out of the Garden of Eden, his provision was cut short, and he was to begin to struggle to provide for himself.

Compare these verses: Genesis 2:15; 3:17-19; 3:22-24.

c) Loss of right to perfect health (Genesis 3:16-19) and he got physical death at last. Sin brought in the existence of pain, sorrow, sickness, misery, hardship, famine, condemnation, death etc.

d) Loss of God's glory that gave man dominion over all creation (Genesis 1:26-28; Romans 3:23). As a result, man also lost control over Satan and his demons and has become subject to Satan's control instead (men began to worship Satan and his demons as gods).

II. God made a way to restore man to his former state: To reconcile man to Himself

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring: he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel". Genesis 3:15

a) God promised a future redemption. Right from the day Adam and Eve sinned, God planned for man to have another chance to be restored to Him. What a great love!

Read: 1 John 3:8; John 3:16-17; Romans 5: 15-17.

God sent His son to redeem mankind by His death on the cross and His resurrection.

b) The blood shed by the Lord Jesus Christ is the atonement for all sin.

Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Peter 1:18-21; 1 John 1:7; Hebrews 9:14

Technically sin is atoned for and covered by the blood of Christ.

III. What Man must do to be reconciled to God.

Mark 16:16; John 1:12

a) Man must come to God by faith in His Son Jesus Christ. Romans 4:23-25. Believe that He died for your sins and was raised for your justification.

b) Acknowledge that you are a sinner; confess your sins and ask God to forgive you of your sins. Ask Him to wash away your sins with the blood of Jesus Christ.

Read: Acts 2:38; 1 John 1:19; Romans 10:9-11

Question: What is true repentance?

Luke 3:7-9; Acts 19:18-20

- Live a life that shows you are sorry for your past sins. (Give examples)
- Denounce all works of darkness.
- Part with Satan's properties in which you trusted before.

c) We are reconciled to God through the death of Christ. 1 John 5:11-12.

ETERNAL LIFE IS AVAILABLE THROUGH FAITH IN THE SON OF GOD!

Action: Acknowledge that Jesus can save and give you a new beginning. You need to take time now to be reconciled with God. Talk with Him now!!!

STUDY TWO (Part 1)

THE BENEFITS OF RECONCILING WITH GOD

Introduction:

When Jesus Christ the Lamb of God (John 1:29) took upon Himself to be the sacrifice of the sin of all mankind, He was well aware that there would be a conflict with Satan (Revelations 5:1-10). He knew also that once he paid with His righteous blood, the dominion and blessing which man lost to Satan at the Garden of Eden would be restored; that all men would have the privilege to be reconciled back to God.

A lot of people do not know that there are more benefits in the Lord than in the world. When you truly repent of your sins and accept Jesus as your savior and Lord of your life, these benefits are yours:

- a) Your sins are forgiven. You will not need to stand in judgment for them again because God has pardoned you.
1 John 1:9; 1 John 2:1-2. Jesus is your advocate (lawyer) before the Father.
- b) You now have peace with God- Romans 5:1. God is happy to be related to you. Ephesians 2:13-14.
- c) You are a new creation in Christ. God considers all old things as past in your life. He has given you a new beginning 2Corinthians 5:17
- d) You are a child of God, a member of God's family and an heir through Christ. John 1:12 Galatians 4:4-7; Romans 8:17
- e) Your name is written in God's book of life; an assurance that heaven reckons with you as your name has been registered there. Revelations 21:22-27
- f) You have a new spiritual life. Ephesians 2:6 ; 1:20-23: You have been made to sit with Christ in Heavenly places (place of power and authority)
- g) You have authority and dominion over all satanic power in Christ Jesus. You no longer need to fear the devil, demons and all agents of darkness. In fact if you know your right they will be afraid of you. Luke 10:19; Matthew 28:18.

STUDY TWO (Part 2)
HOW AM I SURE I AM TRULY SAVED
(Reconciled with God)

INTRODUCTION

The benefits of being reconciled with God are so wonderful that the devil will most certainly bring doubts about their reality to the heart of every new believer in Christ. The joy accompanying salvation will be tested by the enemy of your soul, mostly by trying to work on your emotions. However, this battle is easily won when you remind yourself of these;

a) Salvation is by faith in Christ. It is by the Grace of God; we did not merit it but it is a gift of God as we put our faith in Christ's sacrifice for our sins.
Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 4:3, 23-25.

Our moods do not determine whether we are saved or not. We like Abraham, the father of faith must believe what God says in His word (that Jesus died and rose to take away our sins and to justify us); and it will be credited to us as righteousness.

b) The witness of God's Spirit in our hearts that we are His.
Romans 8:16: the inner peace you have with God after truly repenting and forsaking your sins assures you of His salvation.

c) Do you have the evidence of a new heart and a new life? That is 2 Corinthians 5:17 demonstrated in your life; that the power of sin is broken and that you now have a desire for God.

d) You must depend on the evidence of the Bible. And use it to silence every doubt or argument that comes to you. Hear, Read, Study, Meditate on, Memorize, Believe and Speak the Word of God. And of course obey it. Jesus also used it to defeat Satan in the wilderness.

Luke 4:3-13, Colossians 1:13-14. You are now a member of the kingdom of Christ the Son of God.

You must be bold about your new life. II Timothy 1:7 *"for God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love and of a sound mind"*

STUDY THREE

GROWING IN GRACE

Introduction

For everyone who has truly repented of his sins and accepted God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ's blood, a new life has begun, now that you are born again. (1 Peter 2:2; 1:18-19). To grow in the grace of God in this new life, you must establish constant fellowship with God your Father.

Two major components of fellowship are:

1. The Word of God – The Holy Bible
2. Prayer

Part 1: The Bible

a) This is the inspired Word of God. 2Timothy 3:16-17. It is God's tool to teach you; reprove you, correct you, and train you in righteousness; so that you will be complete and well prepared for every good work. The Bible is God's voice speaking to us. As a new born Christian you need to strongly desire the sincere milk of the Word of God so that may grow to completed salvation. A baby does not grow unless it feeds on milk, and gradually matures to take stronger meals (cereals, solid food etc.). In fact it will die within the first week if it gets no milk at all.

b) How do I begin to feed on the Word of God?

- Begin to read in the New Testament, the Gospels. You may start with Luke and John and then proceed to the Acts of the Apostles and the rest of the New Testament.
- Always ask the Spirit of God to speak to you before you read from the Bible. This is very important. You can be sure that the Holy Spirit will be just right there with you.
- Read at least a chapter daily for a start. Read the chapter over again, and think of the message to you in it. (Meditation/reflection).
- Take note of what you need to change in your life or new things you have learned as a result of the message and write them down.
- Pray that you will be obedient to God in the area He has spoken to you as you read and meditated on his word for that day.
- Share what God is teaching you from the Bible with another person.
- Choose and memorize a verse that speaks specially to you about God or the Christian life.

c) What of those who cannot read or write? How can they also feed on the sincere milk of the Word of God?

- Be regular at places where the Word of God is being read, preached and taught. If it is possible, organize with others a Bible story telling group with a literate person. A child in the family who is a student can be very helpful to fulfill this role in family and neighborhood.

- Oral bible can be listened to if available.
- When you listen to the Word of God, try to re-tell the story or the lesson among yourselves or by yourself if you are alone to gain understanding.
- Then ask and answer these questions to yourself or among yourselves as the case may be
 - o What character or attributes of God are in this passage or story?
 - o What lessons do you learn from other persons in the story or passage?
 - o What will change in your life as a result of the lesson?
 - o What would you wish to practice from the lesson learnt?
- Resolve to tell at least 3 persons what you have learnt- the story & the lessons.

Part 2: PRAYER

Talking to God is the second component of growing in grace. It is as important as hearing from God in His word.

a) Why should I pray?

- God desires to commune with His children. He commands that we pray. Luke 11:9-13; Matthew 7:7
- Prayer is a way to tell God about our needs and to get His intervention and His peace. Philippians 4:6-7; John 15:7
- Not to fall into temptation. Luke 22:40, 46

b) How should I pray? What should I say when I go to pray? From Luke 11:1-4, Jesus taught us disciples to pray bearing these in mind:

- **Adoration:** We start by praising and worshiping Him. We enter His presence with praise.
- **Confession:** We acknowledge and confess all known and unknown sins. Whether those we committed or those things He expected of us but which we could not do.
- **Thanking God** for all His mercies and past answers to our prayers.
- **Supplications:** Praying primarily for God's will to be done earth, secondly for various needs of ourselves, others, our church, our nation. Acknowledge that He is able to do these.

c) How to pray.

- Pray in faith and in the name of Jesus. John 14:13-14; Hebrews 4:16; Mark 11:22-24.

d) How often should I pray?

- All the time. 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 18:1; Colossians 4:2
- Have set time for prayer. Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; Daniel 6:10

e) How not to pray.

- To gain attention of men. Matthew 6:5-8
- For selfish reasons- James 4:3-4
- With un-forgiveness. Mark 11:25
- With un-confessed sins. Psalms 66:18
- With pride. Luke 18:9-14.

STUDY FOUR

FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER BELIEVERS

INTRODUCTION

One of the ways to continue to grow in grace (apart from and studying the Word of God and prayer) is to have regular fellowship with other believers. These other believers need to be people who are also reconciled with God, who regard the Bible as God's inspired Word, and who have the desire to obey God in all aspects of their lives. 1 Corinthians 1:12.

a) Why do I need to fellowship with other believers?

- God commands us to: Hebrews 10:25.
- It was the practice of the early Church. Acts 1:14; Acts 2:41-42. The early believers often met together.
- For mutual encouragement and strength. Proverbs 27:17; Hebrews 10:25.
- It is unsafe and unwise to stand alone. Ecclesiastes 4:9-13.

b) What do believers do when they come together in fellowship?

Read Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35.

- Teaching and learning the Word of God.
- Praying together for one another and for various other needs. 1 Timothy 2:1-2.
- Breaking of bread (the Lord's supper) Luke 22:17-20
- Loving and encouraging one another
- Sharing their material belongings with the needy among them.
- Praising and worshipping God.
- Preaching the gospel.
- Experiencing the power of God.

c) What can hinder a Christian from fellowshiping with others?

- Ignorance of the benefits of fellowship. Many have not understood that when you join other believers in fellowship, you are also directly fellowshiping with God. 1 John 1:3.
- Not planning your activities and time to be available at fellowship times.
- Keeping company with people who do not value your time with God.
- Satan brings distractions to make you do other things at the stipulated fellowship times. 2 Corinthians 10:3-6.

STUDY FIVE LIVING FOR CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

In your new life in Christ, the main thing you have to focus on is Christ Himself (Heb 12:2). That is His character, His teachings, His expectations from you. Living for Christ is the least you can do to appreciate that He died and was raised for your sake (2 Corinthians 5:15).

What does it mean to live for Christ?

(a) Galatians 2:20: Jesus becomes the centre of your life.

Read John 15:4-8; Colossians 1:27. You realize that your life comes from Him and is by His power; you therefore abide (remain) in Him and keep His word in you. You spend time with Him in personal fellowship.

(b) You deliberately become His follower. This means that you study His life style and then pattern your lifestyle to be like Him. Romans 8:29; Matthew 11:28-30; 1 Pet 2:21.

(c) You enthrone Him Lord of your life (submit under his Lordship) and do only those things that please Him.

(d) Exercise: From the list of verses below, what are Jesus Christ's requirements for those who will be His disciples?

Luke 14:25-33; Matthew 10:24-25; Luke 9:57-62; Matthew 28:19-20; 2Tim 2:2.

Becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ is a life time project.

- Choosing to love Him above all else
- Learning about Him, adopting His values and His lifestyle; copying (being like) Him in all things
- Readiness to endure hardship
- Obeying him totally
- Calling others to also follow Him

(e) What if I do not wish to be His disciple?

Today many try to pay lip service to Christ by church attendance and membership. No matter how you qualify yourself, Christ has His own standard for those He calls His followers. Matthew 7:13-14; Luke 13:23-30.

You need to understand that The way to life is a narrow one. The crowds are not on the narrow way. Christ will deny on the last day, all who choose not to take up their cross and follow Him.

STUDY SIX

SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD

INTRODUCTION

The Lord prayed for all those who would ever follow Him. He said in John 17:14-16, "I have given them Your word and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world. I do not ask that You take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one..."

The purpose for which children of God are in the world even though they are not of the world is so that through them, the world might know the love of God and be won to God .Math5:13-16

(a)What is the world?

The systems and values of doing things that are not in line with the way Christ would want them done.

Jesus said "...for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on Me, but I do as the Father commanded Me, so that the world may know that I love the Father..."John 14:30-31. The world's ways are opposed to God's ways. Jesus could boldly declare that the ruler of this world has no claim on Him because He was doing what the Father commanded. From Eph 2:1-3; we deduce that the world is controlled by a spirit that is not of God and worldly ways are manifested as: trespasses and sins, values and beliefs influenced by Satan, all forms of immorality (desires of the body and mind) that displease God. The bottom line is that, these are commonly accepted by people.

The summary: Desire of the flesh, desire of the eyes, pride of life—1 John 2:15-17.

In group study, discuss how these are expressed in your culture and environment.

(b) Christian attitude to the world

Read and discuss 1 John 2:15-17; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; James 4:4

- Do not love the world or the things in it.
- Do not be a friend of the world.
- Separate yourself from the world.
- Be salt to the people of the world, do good to them.
- Be light to the world, show them the way.
- Keep yourself holy.
- As you live in the world, do not be defiled in body or spirit by it, 2Cor7:1

STUDY SEVEN

WITNESSING CHRIST TO OTHERS

INTRODUCTION

Telling others about your new life in Christ should come naturally to you. **This is one of the best gifts you could give to other people around you; sharing the love of Christ.** The joy of having your sins forgiven and your hope of eternal life in Christ move you to have compassion on those who are still under the bondage of sin and Satan. More so, the Lord Himself asks us to go out and bring others to the way by telling them about the love of God. Mark 5:19-20; Acts 1:8-

There are two basic ways to help another person to understand and accept the love of God, and to be saved (reconciled to God).

a) Your good life which they observe Matthew 5:13-16. This includes

- Your speech---Colossians 4:6.
- Behaviour, attitudes---Colossians 3:12-14—(holy life, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, love).

A Christian becomes salt to the lives of unbelievers and light that gives them direction as his or her life radiates these Christ-like character qualities.

b) Tell them about the Lord (Proclaim the gospel)

- Romans 1:16-17: The power of God to save the sinner is released when a child of God preaches the gospel. Do not be ashamed to tell your family members and friends about your new faith and life in Jesus Christ.
- Luke 8:1-3: Jesus and His disciples, both male and female went through cities and villages preaching the good news about the kingdom of God (gospel).
- Luke 15:7,10: There is rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents. When souls come to reconcile with the Lord through our lives and preaching, there is joy in heaven.

SHARE YOUR FAITH WITH OTHERS

1. Give your personal testimony of salvation. Tell what your life was before you repented of your sins and invited Jesus Christ into your life; how He forgave you, cleansed you by His blood and made you a child of God (John 1:12; Acts 2:38). Add also the benefits you now have as a child of God and a changed person (2 Corinthians 5:17). Tell them of your hope of eternal life in heaven in heaven (John 14:1-3)

2. John 3:16: The love of God is a theme with which to begin to share the gospel with people you are in contact with. Remind them that no one is set free from the power of sin, until they are (indeed) set free by Christ—Romans 3:23; 6:23.

3. John 14:6; 1 John 5:11-12—Salvation is only found in Christ. There is no other way to heaven except by Jesus.

4. As the Spirit of God guides you into other scriptures, prayerfully urge them to open their hearts to the Lord (Revelation 3:20).

As you join others in evangelism and as you pray and study more of the Bible, the Lord will increase you in the ability to preach the gospel. However, you need to take note of the following for effectiveness:

- Pray before you go out to witness to others about Christ.
- Prepare your relevant Bible verses—2 Timothy 2:15
- Be bold. Do not be afraid of their faces—Jeremiah 1:7-8.
- Do not be ashamed of the gospel—Romans 1:16.
- Be wise and careful with all especially with the opposite sex
Matthew 10:16.
- Do not engage in arguments.
You can never achieve your goal by arguing. 2 Timothy 2:16
- Dress responsibly and be respectful.
- Preach Christ, not religion or Church denomination.
- Do not condemn anyone; it is not in your right or duty to condemn.
- Show sincere love for the people

STUDY EIGHT

LIFE CHOICES

As human beings, each one of us must make choices as we progress in life. These include the choice of our friends, career or vocation, whom to marry, where to live etc. However, as a believer in Christ, one who is reconciled with God, a child of God, there are rules that should guide you as you seek to decide what to do in all of these instances.

The Bible as the major guide for the Christian has enough instructions for us as we see in 2 Timothy 3:16-17. It provides basic guidelines and sign posts that are meant to help us make the right decisions that we shall not regret in the future.

The Holy Spirit of God is given to the believer to be his or her guide. Read the following Bible passages and discuss the type of help the believers can get from the Holy Spirit as it pertains to guidance. Psalm 32:8-9; Psalm 25:8-9; John 14:26; 16:13.

The Lord has not left us alone without His help for guidance. Therefore we should not choose as others choose; we should depend on God's Word and His Spirit.

1. CHOOSING OUR FRIENDS

Read Proverbs 27:17; 1 Corinthians 15:33.

The type of people a person keeps as friends will definitely impact his life, whether for good or for bad. A child of God needs to associate closely only with people who can build him in character, and whom he can do the same for.

Example of bad friends: 2 Kings 1-7, 30-33—Bad friends are those who teach or encourage you to disobey God. They teach you to do one or more of these:

- To tell lies/ cheat
- To steal or defraud
- To practice Immorality—fornication, adultery
- To disobey or disrespect elders and authorities
- To serve other gods apart from the living God
- To spend money carelessly, etc.

Bad friends also plan your down fall if you are not wise enough to obey Gods Word.

Example of good friends:

From these passages, list some qualities that a good friend has.

- a. David and Jonathan. 1 Samuel 18:1-4; 19:1-7; 20:12-17; 2 Samuel 9:6-13.
- b. Jonathan and his armour bearer: 1 Samuel 14:1, 6, 10-15.

2. CHOOSING CAREER, TRADE OR VOCATION

Proverbs 16:8 –Principles of honesty, hard work, contentment in God and the fear of God, will guide the child of God in choosing what to do for a living and how to pursue his/her vocation and career.

- Make sure you do not involve yourself in a business or career that is against the law of God and of the nation (Romans 13:1-7). Mention some examples of such in your group study.

- God expects you to put His glory first, before the desire for riches as you choose. Be righteous in your behaviour at work. Leviticus 19:36; Proverbs 11:1; 28:22.

Proverbs 16:3—pray for divine guidance on what to choose and wait for the Lord's leading. Present the options you have before God in your prayers.

3. CHOOSING WHOM TO MARRY

As a child of God, you must realize that it is God's plan for you to marry (Genesis 2:24). However, you may not marry just anyone you like. God's Word has instructions as to the things to consider as you choose who you will spend your life with in the marriage union.

- Choose someone who has your type of faith in God:

Amos 3:3; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

- Choose a man or woman who is committed to holiness and purity before and during marriage: Hebrews 13:4.

- Choose a partner with whom you can cooperate on life issues and in serving God. You must be able to agree on values that matter to you.

STUDY NINE

PERSECUTION

Persecution entails being subjected to cruel or unfair treatment because of our faith in Christ. Persecution is to be expected by every believer because, the Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples that it will certainly come. In short, the Bible teaches us to expect persecution and also counsels us on the right attitude to have when we are persecuted.

1. Certainty of Persecution

Read these verses and discuss what the Bible says we should expect.

John 15:20; John 16:33; 2Timothy 3:12; Mathew 10:16-17; 35-36; Mark 10:30

2. Common Forms of Persecution

- Verbal: slander, lies, defaming—Mathew 5:11; Luke 22:63-65; Luke 11:53-54; 2 Timothy 2:8, 9; Acts 6:11-13
- Denial of rights: Acts 8:3;
- Physical attacks which may include killing of Christians—Luke 4:28-29; Acts 7:54-60; Acts 16:22-24;

3. Attitude to have when Persecuted

- Be joyful: Mathew 5:12; Acts 5:40-41; Romans 5:3; 1 Peter 4:12-14.
- Commit your life to God's care and continue to pray for grace: 1 Peter 4:19; Psalm 31:5; 2 Timothy 1:12.
- Pray for those who persecute you: Romans 12:14.
- Dwell on God's promises in the Bible: Psalm 46:1; Psalm 37:32-33; Mathew 10:18-20; Romans 8:35-39
- Be bold and fearless: Mathew 10:28; Acts 20:24; 1 Thessalonians 3:3-4.
- Do not be ashamed: Isaiah 50:7; 1 Peter 4:16.

4. Rewards for courageously enduring persecution

- The Kingdom of God: Mathew 5:10; Revelation 21:3-4.
- We shall reign with Christ: 2Timothy 2:12; 2Corinthians 4:17.

STUDY TEN

LOVE

The word 'love' is one of the most misunderstood words that we humans use. People call any desire they have for anything or anyone love, even when they are only pursuing their own selfish interests.

God is love and He commands His children to love. 1 John 4:7-8.

In this short study on love, we will focus only on God's expectation from us and what true love is.

God's Love demonstrated

- He created man as an object of His love: Psalm 8:3-6.
- He sent His Son to pay the price for the salvation of mankind, when we did not know Him: John 3:16; Romans 5:7-8; John 10:11.
- He has given us the privilege to be called His children: 1 John 3:1.
- He has given us the ability to love by His Spirit which lives in us: Romans 5:5; 2 Timothy 1:7; Galatians 5:22, 23.

God commands all to love

- o First to love the Lord our God above all else: Deuteronomy 6:5; Mark 12:29-30.
- o To love our neighbour as we love ourselves: Mark 12:31; 1 John 3:11
- o That we should remain (abide) in His love: Jude 21b; John 14:23; 1 John 4:19-21. We show that we love God when we obey His commands and follow His teachings.
- o Love is the mark of true followers of Christ: John 13:34-35; Acts 4:32.

What is Love?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. Discuss these qualities of love.

- o Patience (verse 4)
- o Kindness
- o Is not envious or jealous
- o Is not proud or boastful
- o Is not rude or disrespectful (verse 5)
- o Does not insist on having it's own way; considers the opinions of others; is not selfish
- o Is not easily made angry
- o Does not think evil of others or rejoice when evil befalls others (verse 6)
- o Loyal and dependable (verse 7)
- o Spirituality without love is empty and lacks reward before God (1-3)
- o God is love and anyone who loves has God living in him/her.

NOTES

NOTES

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