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## RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN

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## THE CHRISTIAN AND HIMSELF (INTRODUCTION)

Someone has said, "If you can't get along with yourself, you won't be able to get along with anyone else." That is quite true, so it is necessary to begin any study of relationships with the one you can never escape. Think about that. Your relationship with yourself is the only one that can never, not even in eternity be done away with. If you are going to spend the rest of your life and eternity with this person wouldn't it be a good idea to become the kind of person that you would like to be around?

What do the following verses teach us about a person's relationship with self?

- 1) Matthew 16:24, Mark 8:34, Luke 9:23 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Matthew 18:4, 23:12; Luke 14:11,18:14; Rom 12:3 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Mark 12:33; Ephesians 5:33 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Luke 9:25 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Luke 10:29 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Luke 12:17-21; Matthew 6:19-20- \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) Luke 12:47 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) Luke 15:17 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) Romans 14:22 ;Titus 3:11 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) 1 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 6:3-4 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 11) 1 Corinthians 11:28-29; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Luke 21:34; 2 John 1:8 - \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 12) 2 Corinthians 10:18 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 13) 2 Timothy 2:4 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 14) 2 Timothy 2:21; James 1:27; 1 John 3:3 ;1 John 5:18; Acts 15:29; Romans 6:11-16; 1 Peter 1:14 - \_\_\_\_\_

15) Matthew 13:21; Jude 1:20-21 - \_\_\_\_\_

16) Mark 9:50 - \_\_\_\_\_

17) Acts 2:40 - \_\_\_\_\_

18) Hebrews 10:34 - \_\_\_\_\_

Now, don't deceive yourself. Be honest and examine yourself in regard to each of these verses and answer the following questions for yourself (no one else can do it for you):

1A) When I want (not need) something, do I tell myself 'no' more often than I give in? \_\_\_\_\_

2A) Not counting the necessities of life, when another and I both want the same thing, do I get it more or do I let the other person have it more? \_\_\_\_\_

3A) Don't confuse this question with self-esteem and whether you like the way you are, but, instead, do I love myself? Do I want what is ultimately best for me even if it means being uncomfortable for a time during the process? \_\_\_\_\_

4A) What would I give (or what am I giving) in exchange for my soul? \_\_\_\_\_

5A) What sinful attitude or action am I trying to excuse or justify? \_\_\_\_\_

6A) Am I more concerned with my money and possessions than with my heavenly treasure? Do I spend more on worldly physical pleasure and luxuries than I use for God? \_\_\_\_\_

7A) Am I preparing for the Judgment? Am I doing the things that I know are God's will? As I learn more of God's will for me do I ignore it or change the areas of my life that are in violation to that part of his will? \_\_\_\_\_

8A) Am I willing to face reality, admit that I need help, and come back home to beg for it or am I starving in my sinful pride and foolishness? \_\_\_\_\_

9A) Have I condemned myself before God by allowing what violates my conscience or causes another to sin? \_\_\_\_\_

10A) Am I outsmarting myself and deceiving myself into thinking I am better than I really am, or am I testing the work that I am doing? \_\_\_\_\_

11A) Do I look at myself critically and objectively or do I gloss over the parts I don't like and excuse them by assuming that others are the problem? \_\_\_\_\_

12A) Do I feel the need to be my own publicist and apologist? Am I constantly tooting my own horn so others will think more highly of me? \_\_\_\_\_

13A) Am I focused on being the best Christian I can be, or am I constantly distracted and ensnared in worldly people, places, and things? \_\_\_\_\_

14A) Is there a desire and effort on my part to rid myself of the corruption and filth of sin or am I satisfied with the level I have already reached 70%, 80%, etc.? Do I consider anything short of perfection as good enough? \_\_\_\_\_

15A) Am I growing deep roots and building a solid foundation, or am I more concerned with what I am wearing Sunday than with whether I have studied the lesson? \_\_\_\_\_

16A) Jesus compared Himself to light and His followers to light and salt. Our light is a reflection of Him in our lives, it is not unreasonable to believe that our saltiness is a result of his influence and teaching as well. With that understood, do I have salt in me? Am I crucified with Christ and allowing Him to live in me?

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17A) There is a song we used to sing that said "If I don't get to heaven it will be nobody's fault, but mine." Have I accepted personal responsibility for my salvation? Am I daily taking the steps necessary to be saved and remain saved? Or am I waiting for God to override my free will and make me do right and go to heaven? \_\_\_\_\_

18A) Do I have a place in heaven? Am I confident that if Jesus came right now He would take me with Him? \_\_\_\_\_

Working on being able to answer these questions honestly and correctly will probably keep us busy the rest of our lives, and won't leave time for condemning others. None of us will ever be everything we ought to be, but that doesn't mean we can't like who we are as we are in the process of becoming even better.

If we truly love ourselves we will not be satisfied with mediocre Christianity. In fact, we will be miserable if we know what we ought to be and are not striving to be what we should be. On the other hand, as long as we are putting out the effort and growing and improving we will find that we like ourselves. There are many parallels throughout life, but one is losing weight. If I know how much I should weigh and am moving toward it, I can be happy with my progress even on the days that I gain a pound. But, if I am not getting any closer I will only become more dissatisfied and frustrated, especially if I know the reason is that I am not doing what will help me reach the goal.

1(Matthew 16:24 KJV) "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Mark 8:34 KJV) "And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Luke 9:23 KJV) "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." When was the last time you told yourself, "no"?

2(Matthew 18:4 KJV) "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 23:12 KJV) "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." (Luke 14:11 KJV) "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke 18:14 KJV) "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Rom 12:3 KJV) "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." When have you put others first and served their interest before your own

3(Mark 12:33 KJV) "And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." (Eph 5:33 KJV) "Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband." While not putting self above others, we must have a love for ourselves before we can have a proper love for others.

4(Luke 9:25 KJV) "For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?" We have to put our soul ahead of material possessions

5(Luke 10:29 KJV) "But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?" Are we trying to justify our shortcomings by pointing toward the faults of others or trying to play semantics?

6(Luke 12:17 KJV) "And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?" (Luke 12:21 KJV) "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Matthew 6:19-20) Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: {20} But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: Do you pamper yourself physically?

7(Luke 12:47 KJV) "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." Are you preparing yourself for the Judgment?

8(Luke 15:17 KJV) "And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" Are we living in a fantasy world or are we facing reality?

9(Rom 14:22 KJV) "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." (Titus 3:11) Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself. Have you condemned yourself by allowing sin in your life?

10(1 Cor 3:18 KJV) "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise." (Gal 6:3-4 KJV) "For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. {4} But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."

How can we be honest with others if we are not honest with ourselves first?

11(1 Cor 11:28-29 KJV) "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. {29} For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." (2 Corinthians 13:5) 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?

(Luke 21:34) And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. (2 John 1:8) Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

Can we examine ourselves objectively, or do we always try to excuse and justify our sins?

12(2 Cor 10:18 KJV) "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth."

Do I feel the need to constantly toot my own horn, and show off how holy and righteous I am?

13(2 Tim 2:4 KJV) "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." Do I have the determination and dedication to stand my ground and remain unaffected by the worldliness around me?

14(2 Tim 2:21) "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." (James 1:27) "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (1 John 3:3) "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 5:18) "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." (Acts 15:29) That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well. (Romans 6:11) Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:13) 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. (Romans 6:16) Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? (1 Peter 1:14) As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: Am I trying to keep myself pure and unspotted by the world?

15(Matthew 13:21 KJV) "Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." (Jude 1:20-21) But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, {21} Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Do I have deep roots or am I shallow and incomplete?

16(Mark 9:50) Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another. Do you have salt, the essence of Christianity, in you or are you depending on others to keep you salty, Christ-like

17(Acts 2:40) And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. There is a song we used to sing that said 'If I don't get to heaven it will be nobody's fault, but mine. Have you accepted personal responsibility for your salvation? We know that we can't save ourselves outside of Christ's plan, but are we trying to save ourselves according to His plan, or are we waiting for God to override our free will and make us go to heaven?

18(Hebrews 10:34) For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Do we have this kind of confidence that we have a home in heaven that is better than anything here? Notice the writer does not say; 'hope, wish, want, or think,' he says; 'knowing'. Do you know in yourself? I don't mean the whole "I know if I am found faithful when I die" thing, I mean deep down right now do you know that there is a 'better, everlasting inheritance in heaven that you have? No "might's" or "maybe's" or "will get". Do you have it or not?

## THE CHRISTIAN AND THE GODHEAD (PART 1)

One of the difficulties that we have when we begin to discuss a relationship with God is the fact that the Godhead consists of three separate individuals. Even though all three share the same essence, the same purpose and the same characteristics; the way that we interact with each is often different. We will deal with the different functions of the Father, Son, and Spirit in part 2. In this lesson we want to just look at the relationship we have with all three as one God.

God, either as one of the individual entities that make up the Godhead or the Godhead as a whole, is mentioned well over 5,000 times in the Bible. We will not have time in this course to do anywhere near a thorough study of our full relationship with God. A Christian can study a lifetime and never fully understand God and the relationship that we have or should have between us. Let's begin to scratch the surface.

As we read scriptures about God look for any of the following words or phrases: God, Lord, Lord God, Lord your God, Father, Spirit, Holy Spirit (Ghost in the King James Version), Son (of God), Jesus, Word of the Lord (or God), or Godhead. Look and see what the relationship is between God and man in each passage.

- 1) Genesis 1:1; Revelation 4:11 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Genesis 1:26-27; Matthew 19:4 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Genesis 1:28; Ephesians 1:3 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Genesis 1:29; James 1:17 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Genesis 2:16-17; 1 Corinthians 7:19 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Genesis 9:12-13, 17:7; Hebrews 8:10 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) Psalm 86:5; Ephesians 4:32 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) Psalm 106:21; Luke 1:47 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) Isaiah 9:6; John 8:41, 20:17 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) Psalm 35:24; Hebrews 12:23 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 11) Psalm 7:10; Romans 8:31-34 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 12) Isaiah 26:21; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 13) 2 Chronicles 20:7; John 15:13-15 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 14) Psalm 47:6-7; 1 Timothy 1:17 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 15) Psalm 35:23; John 13:13 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 16) Genesis 14:22; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - \_\_\_\_\_



The relationship that a person has with God is unlike any other relationship for several reasons. We must take these differences into account as we consider how to improve our relationship with Him. The fact that this relationship will also determine our eternal destination is a powerful reason to make the most of it. Let's look at some of the differences.

The first difference is that God is perfect. You will never have another perfect person in your life. Because He is perfect any problem in your relationship will always be your fault. Most relationship problems have some fault on all sides of the problem, but never with God. In counseling I tell couples that they have to both work on the problems in the relationship for it to get better. God can't work any harder than He already is, so any improvement in the relationship depends on you. With this knowledge you can focus all of your attention on the things that you can do to correct the things you need to correct.

The second is the fact that God does not talk to us except through His word, sometimes using another Christian as an interpreter who may or may not interpret His word to us properly. Since communication is an essential part of every relationship the lack of a simple two way conversation is a complication that some people have difficulty handling. There are actually benefits and problems with this situation. One benefit is that God is a great listener, you can always talk to God without being interrupted, but the negative side is that you will not get to hear the immediate feedback that we are so accustomed to in our human friendships. For example, as you are explaining the struggles that you faced during the day you would expect some sympathetic response ("I'm sorry", or "That must have been hard") from a friend, however, with God you will have only silence. One thing that helps is to pray and read the Bible together. In doing this we will feel the interaction more and be able to get responses through His word to us. We may have to use study tools to find scriptures that fit the subject at hand. Our own limited understanding of His word also causes problems in our relationship because we may think we should do something that we really shouldn't, think we shouldn't do something that we should, or not know about something that we need to know to please Him. God said exactly what He wanted to say in exactly the way He wanted to say it, and it could not have been said better, if we don't understand it is a weakness on our part not His.

A third unique quality to our relationship with God is His omniscience. God's knowledge is a factor in our relationship because there are no secrets and nothing unknown about us. Man's knowledge is limited and you can have what you think is a good relationship with someone who doesn't really like you because you don't know what he is thinking. Some people try to build relationships on deception and secrets, but that never works with God because He sees through the show to the inner man. We can't slack off through life and act like we have really worked hard and fool God. We all know a person who is always busy but never gets anything done. There is an old cartoon that shows two religious people and one says "Jesus is coming. What should we do?" The other wittily replies, "Quick, look busy." That is the kind of thing kids do to fool their teachers or parents, workers do to fool their employers, and spouses or friends do to fool each other, but God won't allow.

There are probably some other special circumstances with how we relate to God, but the fourth and final one that we want to focus on is the three-in-one nature of God. Even though we serve one God there are three persons with three different functions and that can be somewhat confusing to us at times. It is impossible for us to fully understand God as a being, and people make a big deal out of that. The truth is we never fully understand anyone including our selves, haven't you ever said, "I don't know why I just did or said that". Having said that, God's nature is very different from ours and that makes it more difficult. Sometimes we may be confused about which part of the Godhead we are dealing with in a given situation. Even though we don't understand everything about God, we can still have a wonderful relationship with Him mind to Mind because we are created in His image. Some say since you can't know everything, you can't know anything. The truth is you can know what God wants without knowing everything about Him.

17) What are some ways that a relationship with God is unique? \_\_\_\_\_

When we consider the attributes of God and how they affect our relationship, we need to realize that we can count on the fact that God will not change (Malachi 3:6). The fact that God is unchanging should make some aspects of our interaction easier. How many times have we had problems with others because they changed their minds about something. We can be confident that God will not do that to us. Once we have learned what will please God we will always know how to please Him even if we are not always successful. We can also be assured that He will always be there and that He will always love us despite our human shortcomings. However, we must understand that God's love for us is not enough to maintain a good relationship. We must return that love with more than just lip-service. A one-sided relationship never works, so we have to pull our own weight to make things work.

18) What does James say must happen if we want God to be closer to us than He is now, according to James 4:8? \_\_\_\_\_

Another factor that should simplify the way we relate to God is that He is the absolute authority. There should never be any arguments or even discussions about the changes that He says should be made to make things better. In fact, if we are arguing, it isn't with Him because He doesn't waste His time arguing. We need to get used to that since in the relationships that we have with other authorities we can usually work out a compromise under certain circumstances or appeal an unfair rule to get it changed. We do that with government, parents, bosses, teachers, etc. Some people try to do that with God, and it is tempting to try to do that because it works with our other relationships. We have to understand that God does not compromise on anything. Even though we are taught that compromising is what makes relationships work, trying to compromise with God will destroy any chance of having a good relationship with Him.

19) Who learned the hard way that God doesn't give in, according to 1 Samuel 15:3-29? \_\_\_\_\_

20) How did God react to this attempt to please Him by compromising in this same passage? \_\_\_\_\_

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The most difficult thing about keeping our relationship moving down the right track goes back to the way that God communicates with us. If I do something that upsets my wife she will let me know in some way. She may say something, give me a look, pout, go slam pots and pans around, give me the silent treatment, or any number of other actions. When I have done something to offend God, on the other hand, I may not realize it for some time. He won't yell, or pout, and I wouldn't be able to see a look if He gave me one. God communicates through His Word, and indirectly through fellow Christians, His providence and His chastising. If I don't study, don't pay attention to His efforts to warn me through others, and fail to understand His attempts to discipline me, then I may go through my whole life believing that things are fine between God and me. I may feel like I am right with God even if I am not.

21) How did God let Saul (Paul) know that he was doing the wrong thing in Acts 9:3-6? \_\_\_\_\_

22) Have you ever wished God communicated that clearly with us today? \_\_\_\_\_

23) What did Jesus say could happen to people who wrongly believed they were right with God according to Matthew 7:21-23? \_\_\_\_\_

24) Have you ever thought and felt you were OK with God only to learn later you were not? \_\_\_\_\_

1. (Gen 1:1 KJV) "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Rev 4:11 KJV) "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." CREATOR

2. (Gen 1:26-27 KJV) "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. {27} So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Mat 19:4 KJV) "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female," MAKER

3. (Gen 1:28 KJV) "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." (Eph 1:3 KJV) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:" BLESSER

4. (Gen 1:29 KJV) "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." (James 1:17 KJV) "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." GIVER

5. (Gen 2:16-17 KJV) "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: {17} But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (1 Cor 7:19 KJV) "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God." COMMANDER

6. (Gen 9:12-13 KJV) "And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: {13} I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth." (Gen 17:7 KJV) "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." (Heb 8:10 KJV) "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:" COVENANT-MAKER

7. (Psa 86:5 KJV) "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee." (Eph 4:32 KJV) "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." FORGIVER

8. (Psa 106:21 KJV) "They forgot God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt;" (Luke 1:47 KJV) "And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." SAVIOR

9. (Isa 9:6 KJV) "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (John 8:41 KJV) "Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God." (John 20:17 KJV) "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." FATHER

10. (Psa 35:24 KJV) "Judge me, O LORD my God, according to thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me." (Heb 12:23 KJV) "To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect," JUDGE

11. (Psa 7:10 KJV) "My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart." (Rom 8:31-34 KJV) "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? {32} He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? {33} Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. {34} Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." DEFENDER, JUSTIFIER

12. (Gen 6:13 KJV) "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." (1 Cor 3:17 KJV) "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (Isa 26:21 KJV) "For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." (Isa 27:1 KJV) "In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea."

(2 Th 1:6-9 KJV) "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; {7} And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, {8} In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: {9} Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;" EXECUTIONER, PUNISHER, DESTROYER

13. (John 15:13-15 KJV) "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. {14} Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. {15} Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." (2 Chr 20:7 KJV) "Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?" (Exo 33:11 KJV) "And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle." (James 2:23 KJV) "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God." (James 4:4 KJV) "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, 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." (Gen 5:24 KJV) "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." FRIEND

14. (Psa 5:2 KJV) "Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray." (Psa 47:6-7 KJV) "Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises. {7} For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding." (Rev 15:3 KJV) "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." (1 Tim 1:17 KJV) "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." ABSOLUTE RULER, KING

15. (Col 4:1 KJV) "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven." (Rom 14:4 KJV) "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand." (Luke 16:13 KJV) "No servant 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." (John 13:13 KJV) "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." LORD, MASTER

(Dan 9:4 KJV) "And I prayed unto the **LORD** my **God**, and made my confession, and said, O **Lord**, the great and dreadful **God**, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;" 4 . . palal:H6419 . . **yehovah**:H3068 . '**elohiym**:H430 . . . yadah:H3034 . 'amar:H559 . '**adonay**:H136 . gadowl:H1419 . yare':H3372 '**el**:H410 shamar:H8104 . beriyth:H1285 . checed:H2617 . . . 'ahab:H157 . . . . shamar:H8104 . mitsvah:H4687

(Ezek 28:2 KJV) "Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the **Lord GOD**; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a **God**, I sit in the seat of **God**, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not **God**, though thou set thine heart as the heart of **God**:" 2 ben:H1121 . 'adam:H120 'amar:H559 . . nagiyd:H5057 . tsor:H6865 koh:H3541 'amar:H559 . '**adonay**:H136 **yehovih**:H3069 ya'an:H3282 . leb:H3820 . gabahh:H1361 . . . . 'amar:H559 . . '**el**:H410 . yashab:H3427 . . mowshab:H4186 . '**elohiym**:H430 . . leb:H3820 . . yam:H3220 . . . . 'adam:H120 . . '**el**:H410 . . nathan:H5414 . leb:H3820 . . leb:H3820 . '**elohiym**:H430

(Psa 35:23 KJV) "Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, even unto my cause, my God and my

**Lord."** 23 'uwr:H5782 . . . quwts:H6974 . . mishpat:H4941 . . . riyb:H7379 . 'elohiym:H430 .  
 . 'adonay:H136

16. (Gen 14:22 KJV) "And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth," (1 Cor 6:19-20 KJV) "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? {20} For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." OWNER, POSSESSOR

## THE CHRISTIAN AND THE GODHEAD (PART 2)

God loves us and definitely wants to have a relationship with us. We would not have been created otherwise. What we have to understand is that God must determine the boundaries and the terms of the relationship. God will not compromise on the requirements for a relationship with Him.

- 1) Of the 16 things that we looked at back in part 1 on page 4, How many of them involve a relationship where the authority is totally on God's side of the relationship? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) How many involve a relationship where we have the authority? \_\_\_\_\_

As our Creator God knows how we work, and He knows what is best for our relationships, especially our relationship with Him. The source of the problems mankind has had in our relationships with God began as a result of Adam and Eve thinking they knew better than God did what was good for them. Since that time God has been doing everything Divinely possible to restore that relationship and the level of fellowship that God and man originally had. Even though we will not reach that until we get to Heaven, we can have a partially restored relationship here on earth as Christians.

God has already shown that He wants a relationship with us, but He won't force, trick, or manipulate us. So, there is really only one decision we have to make and everything else will follow that decision: Do I want a relationship with God or not? If we do we must be unwavering in that decision. God doesn't do anything part-way, consequently, God despises partial obedience.

- 3) What does God say will be done with those who are half-way Christians in Revelation 3:15-16? \_\_\_\_\_
- 

God's reaction to this shouldn't surprise us it is like the response we have toward others who won't fulfill their part of a relationship with us. Sometimes we are surprised by God's actions because we don't know Him like we should. If we aren't careful we may find ourselves worshiping an unknown God like the Athenians in Acts 17. When Paul preached about the 'Unknown God' to them, he taught them some things that it would be good for us to remember and think about.

- 4a) In verse 24 what do we learn about where God lives? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4b) According to 2 Corinthians 6:16, where does God dwell? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5a) What does verse 25 say about how God is worshiped and served? \_\_\_\_\_

The word for worship that is used here refers to the idea of a servant caring for the needs and illnesses of his master. In idol worship, even today, people wash their god, bring food and leave it for their god, give their god time to sleep, and provide other types of activities as well. This is probably what Elijah was mocking on Mount Carmel in 1 Kings 18:27.

- 5b) How is this type of worship or service different from the meat and grain offerings that God required of the Israelites in the Old Testament? \_\_\_\_\_
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5c) How is it different from our worship now? \_\_\_\_\_

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5d) Does God have any needs that we have to take care of for Him? \_\_\_\_\_

6) In Verse 27 what three things does Paul say God expects us to do? \_\_\_\_\_

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7) In verse 28 Paul says we “live, move, and have our being” in God; how does that relate to what the Psalmist says in Psalm 139:7-12? \_\_\_\_\_

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8) How are people related to God according to verses 28-29? \_\_\_\_\_

9) Will God judge us more mercifully if we don’t know about Him?(verses 30-31, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9)

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God created this world with certain immutable natural and spiritual laws that affect us regardless of our knowledge or understanding of them. We know this to be true in the natural world, but somehow think we can ignore it in the spiritual world.

In *Boundaries*, a book about relationships, Authors Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend share the following as an explanation of the way we often live our spiritual lives:

Imagine for a moment that you live on another planet operating under different principles. Suppose your planet has no gravity and no need for a medium of exchange such as money. You get your energy and fuel from osmosis, instead of eating and drinking. Suddenly, without warning, you find yourself transported to Earth.

When you awake from your trip, you step out of your hovering spacecraft and fall abruptly to the ground. “Ouch!” you say, not knowing exactly why you fell. After regaining your composure, you decide to travel around a bit, but are unable to fly, because of this new phenomenon called gravity. So you start walking.

After a while, you notice that, strangely, you feel hungry and thirsty. You wonder why. Where you come from, the galactic system rejuvenates your body automatically. Luckily, you run across an earthling who diagnoses your problem and tells you that you need food. Better yet, he recommends a place where you can eat, called Jack’s Diner.

You follow his directions, go into the restaurant, and manage to order some of this Earth food that contains all the nutrients you need. You immediately feel better. But then, the man who gave you the food wants “seven dollars” for what he gave you. You have no idea what he’s talking about. After quite an argument, some men

in uniforms come and take you away and put you in a small room with bars. *What in the world is going on*, you wonder.

You didn't mean anyone harm, yet you are in "jail," whatever that is. You can no longer move about as you want, and you resent it. You only tried to be about your own business, and now you have a sore leg, fatigue from your long walk, and a stomachache from eating too much. Nice place, this Earth.

Just as we cannot ignore gravity, the tides, the Sun, disease, and other natural laws without facing the consequences; we can't ignore God's spiritual laws without consequence. Let's look at some of these laws.

10) What spiritual law does God warn us about in Galatians 6:7-9? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11) What spiritual law are we told of in Philippians 2:12-13 and Ezekiel 18:4-24? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12) What law do 2 Timothy 1:7 and Philipians 4:13 teach us about? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13) How does Matthew 7:1-2,12 relate to the spiritual law of respect? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14) Another law is that of motivation. Nothing is done without some motivation, what are some motivations that push us to do some things?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15) What law does Jesus appeal to in Luke 14:28? \_\_\_\_\_

16) How can parents suffer from the law of reaction according to Ephesians 6:4? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

17) Galatians 6:4 warns us of the same dangers as James 4:2, what law is it? \_\_\_\_\_

18) In the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) how is the law of activity described?

\_\_\_\_\_

19) The hardest law to deal with is the law of unintended consequences. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



(Galatians 6:7-9) Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. {8} For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. {9} And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

(Philippians 2:12-13) Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. {13} For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

(Ezekiel 18:4-24) Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. {5} But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, {6} And hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman, {7} And hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; {8} He that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man, {9} Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD. {10} If he beget a son that is a robber, a shedder of blood, and that doeth the like to any one of these things, {11} And that doeth not any of those duties, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife, {12} Hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination, {13} Hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: shall he then live? he shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him. {14} Now, lo, if he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like, {15} That hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, hath not defiled his neighbour's wife, {16} Neither hath oppressed any, hath not withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment, {17} That hath taken off his hand from the poor, that hath not received usury nor increase, hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live. {18} As for his father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did that which is not good among his people, lo, even he shall die in his iniquity. {19} Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. {20} The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. {21} But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. {22} All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. {23} Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? {24} But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

(2 Timothy 1:7) For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

(Philippians 4:13) I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

(Matthew 7:1-2) Judge not, that ye be not judged. {2} For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

(Matthew 7:12) Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

(Luke 14:28) For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

(Ephesians 6:4) And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

(Galatians 6:4) But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

(James 4:2) Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

(Matthew 25:14-30) For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. {15} And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. {16} Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. {17} And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. {18} But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. {19} After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. {20} And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. {21} His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. {22} He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. {23} His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. {24} Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strowed: {25} And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. {26} His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strowed: {27} Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. {28} Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. {29} For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. {30} And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

## THE CHRISTIAN AND OTHER FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS

To begin we need to define 'faithful Christian'. That in and of itself may cause some conflict with some. Some say that anyone who believes in Jesus is a faithful Christian, but it is not true (Matthew 7:21). On the other extreme are those that would place so many restrictions that they feel sure that they are alone like Elijah in 1 Kings 19:9-18.

1A) Why do you think Elijah thought he was alone? \_\_\_\_\_

1B) Have you ever felt alone like that? \_\_\_\_\_

Some will say that attending all of the assemblies makes one a faithful Christian, but that is not the case.

2) Who was active in attendance, but not faithful according to 1 Corinthians 5:1-2? \_\_\_\_\_

Surely the teachers in the church are the faithful ones. While that certainly should be a goal for every congregation, sadly, that is not always the case.

3) In Revelation 2:20, who was the teacher that was not faithful? \_\_\_\_\_

What about the leaders in a congregation? Those who are held up by others as examples are certain to be faithful, aren't they? Are the ones who are well-known and have preeminence in the church locally and more widely always faithful?

4) What do Philemon 1:24 and 2 Timothy 4:10 say about someone who was one of Paul's right hand men? \_\_\_\_\_

5) What prominent leader is condemned by the apostle John in 3 John 1:9-11? \_\_\_\_\_

6) What warning does Paul give the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:28-31? \_\_\_\_\_

How can we know who is a faithful Christian then? We know that one must be a member of the body of Christ. This means that a starting point is obedience to the gospel. We are not dealing in this lesson with anyone who has not heard, believed, repented, confessed, and been baptized. Though that narrows our range some, we may notice that the same could be said for all of those in the New Testament verses above. Here are some guidelines to help us.

1. Not indulging in sin. That is different from being sinless, we all sin, but we are not to live in sin.
2. A desire to learn more, meet with the saints, and fellowship with the saints.
3. Showing fruits of repentance. Becoming a Christian doesn't magically make sinful habits disappear, but repentance will cause them to shrivel and eventually die.

4. Showing fruits of the Spirit. Growth involves not only the getting rid of the bad, but also the addition of the good.

5. A desire to share the gospel with others.

6. A desire to become more involved in the work of the church.

7. A willingness to financially support the work of the church.

8. A willingness to sacrifice for the good of the gospel.

9. Remaining steadfast during times of trials, tribulation, or persecution.

10. A willingness to confess and correct what is wrong in life.

11. Imitating Christ in thought, word, and deed.

Of all of our human relationships the relationships that faithful Christians have with one another should be the easiest. Unlike those that we live with, we only see our fellow Christians occasionally and when we are on our best behavior. Unlike those in the world, we are supposed to be living by the same principles; which should cause less strife. Unfortunately, things are not always what they should be. It doesn't take long for us to realize that the church may be perfect in design and plan, but that in practice we have problems with one another.

There are many sources of problems among Christians, but one source of solutions.

5) What are some of the sources of problems that arise between faithful Christians? \_\_\_\_\_

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If we can first and foremost agree that the answers are in the scriptures that came from the Godhead, then we can workout the problems that we have with one another. Many of the disagreements that we have with faithful Christians are over problems of communication. Words do not always mean the same thing to different people. For example: 'Baptism' is a word that means many things to different people. Even though there is only one Biblical baptism in effect now, our religious world practices many different things in many different ways that are all called baptism. So when we use the word 'baptism' and assume that others are picturing a believer who has repented and confessed being immersed in water for the forgiveness of his/her sins so God will add him/her to the church, we may soon be involved in confusion because the other person may be picturing a baby having water sprinkled on his/her head.

This specific example should not be a problem for faithful Christians, but there may be any number of other things that may cause us confusion. The easiest way to solve a problem of miscommunication is to go back to the beginning and make sure we agree on the meaning of the words we are using.

6) Have you ever had confusion over the meaning of a word, or even a Bible verse? \_\_\_\_\_

7) How can we work out disagreements about the meaning of a verse? \_\_\_\_\_

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8) In 1 Corinthians 1:10 Paul writes, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." Does this verse mean that if Christians disagree about anything, then at least one of them is in sin? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or why not?

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9) Read Acts 15:35-41. Is there any indication in these verses that either Paul or Barnabas sinned in their disagreement? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_

10) How did they resolve their disagreement? \_\_\_\_\_

11) Do you think they will both be in Heaven? \_\_\_\_\_

12) Who did the brethren of the church support? \_\_\_\_\_

13) What two good things came as a result of the way Paul and Barnabas handled their disagreement? \_\_\_\_\_

There are several things that we can learn from this single example of conflict. Let's notice a few of them:

- 1) Don't quit serving God because of problems with another Christian.
- 2) Don't hinder the work of God because of ego or pride.
- 3) Be willing to accept things changing.
- 4) Don't bad mouth others because of disagreements.
- 5) If two men who had the miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit leading them could disagree and go their separate ways, then we should not be surprised when it happens to us today.

Let's observe some other passages that will help us have a good relationship with our fellow Christians. What does each of the following teach us about what we should do in our relationships with the faithful.

14) John 13:34 - \_\_\_\_\_

15) Romans 12:10 - \_\_\_\_\_

16) Romans 15:7 - \_\_\_\_\_

17) Galatians 5:13 - \_\_\_\_\_

18) Ephesians 4:32 - \_\_\_\_\_

19) Colossians 3:13,16 - \_\_\_\_\_

20) 1 Thessalonians 5:11 - \_\_\_\_\_

21) Hebrews 10:24-25 - \_\_\_\_\_

What do these verses teach that we should not do to one another?

22) Matthew 24:10 - \_\_\_\_\_

23) Romans 14:13 - \_\_\_\_\_

24) Galatians 5:15,26 - \_\_\_\_\_

25) Titus 3:3 - \_\_\_\_\_

(1 Kings 19:9-18) And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? {10} And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. {11} And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: {12} And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. {13} And it was so, when Elijah heard it that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? {14} And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. {15} And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: {16} And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. {17} And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. {18} Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

(1 Corinthians 5:1-2) It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. {2} And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.

(Revelation 2:20) Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

(Philemon 1:23-24) There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus; {24} Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.

(2 Timothy 4:10) For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

(3 John 1:9-11) I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. {10} Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. {11} Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

(Acts 20:28-31) Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. {29} For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. {30} Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. {31} Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

(1 Corinthians 1:10) Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

(Acts 15:35-41) Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also. {36} And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. {37} And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. {38} But Paul thought not

good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. {39} And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; {40} And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. {41} And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

(2 Timothy 4:11) Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

(John 13:34) A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

(Romans 12:10) Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

(Romans 15:7) Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

(Galatians 5:13) For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

(Ephesians 4:32) And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

(Colossians 3:13) Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

(Colossians 3:16) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

(1 Thessalonians 5:11) Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

(Hebrews 10:24-25) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: {25} Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

(Matthew 24:10) And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

(Romans 14:13) Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

(Galatians 5:15) But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

(Galatians 5:26) Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

(Titus 3:3) For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

## THE CHRISTIAN AND THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CONGREGATION

First let's be reminded of how God has established the leadership of the congregation. We understand from the scriptures that there is a chain of command that God set up to keep things running smoothly. The Father is over all, and He has given Christ all authority(power - KJV) in Heaven and on Earth (Matthew 28:18). Christ is the head of the church(Colossians 1:18), and no man or woman or group of men and women can change what He has decreed without facing the consequences. Christ delegated to the apostles the task of leading the whole church worldwide and gave them the baptism of the Holy Spirit with its blessings and miraculous gifts to help them accomplish the task. He also gave them authority in matters that would arise in the infant church (Matthew 16:19). The apostles and prophets of the first century through the inspiration of God wrote the New Testament which is the guidebook for all Christians of all time.

This chain of command brings us then to the local congregation which is under this universal authority, but needs organization on the local level to keep it moving properly. God's desire is for there to be qualified elders over each local congregation with deacons, preachers, teachers, evangelists, and members under their authority. In the absence of men qualified to be elders congregations are led by the men of the congregation, but a congregation will neither reach maturity nor its potential without reaching this level of organization. There will be something lacking (Titus 1:5). Under extreme circumstances like those described in Acts 20:30 and 1 Timothy 5:19-20 the preacher or another member of the congregation may be forced to use the authority of the scriptures along with witnesses to confront an elder or elders who are either in sin personally or doctrinally. Paul was forced to confront Peter who was both an apostle and an elder (Galatians 2:11-14). Remember that the scriptures are higher on the chain of command than the elders that lead the local congregation, or any other man on Earth.

1) List the following in order of authority within the chain of command for a local church today: Class Teacher, God the Holy Spirit, Preacher, Apostles and Prophets, The Elders, God the Father, The Deacons, The Preacher when He is Preaching False Doctrine, One Elder, Jesus(God the Son), A New Convert, The New Testament, The Students of a Bible Class, The Song Leader, The One Leading Prayer, The Preacher when He is Preaching Truth, One Deacon, An Eldership that Appoints a Woman Song Leader, A Christian of 40 Years Living in Sin, The Old Testament, A Man Who Claims to be an Apostle. Have Fun!!

The preacher is not the leader of the congregation, but he may often speak to the congregation for the eldership. He also speaks and teaches the Word of God and as long as that is accurately done he is doing so with "all authority" (Titus 2:15). In this circumstance the authority is not his, but rather it is the authority of the scriptures.

A deacon is not the leader of the congregation, but he may have a great deal of authority and responsibility delegated to him by the Elders (especially in large congregations - see Acts 6). Under some circumstances the Eldership may give authority to a deacon in such a way that an individual elder is under his authority for a time. However, the Elders as a ruling body are the final say in the local congregation on all matters that are not specifically addressed in the scriptures. They do not ever have the authority to violate the scriptures. In fact, a 12-year-old babe in Christ with the scriptures behind her has more Godly authority than an eldership of fifteen 70-year-olds who have been Christians a combined 750 years, but are trying to make decisions that violate the Word of God.

2) What is the source for all religious authority in the church today? \_\_\_\_\_



church, let's examine some scriptures to see what they teach.

3a) According to Matthew 20:25-28 are leaders in the church supposed to lead the same way that people in the world lead? \_\_\_\_\_

3b) Do they have the right to make the others in the congregation do what they would not be willing to do themselves? \_\_\_\_\_

3c) Do they have the right to make decisions that are to be followed by the rest of the church? \_\_\_\_\_

3d) Who is pointed to as a good example in these verses? \_\_\_\_\_

3e) If the leadership of the church is not setting the proper example, but the things they are telling us to do are right; do we have a right to disobey? (Notice Matthew 23:1-3) \_\_\_\_\_

God has high standards for those who desire to lead His people (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-11). God expects the leaders to be the best of the group so that they can be followed safely, and so that they can be pointed to as examples for the non-Christian to see the results of Christianity in action. Notice the following:

4) What word (KJV) do both 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6 & 7 use to describe the man who can be a bishop or elder in the church? \_\_\_\_\_

5) What does 1 Timothy 3:7 say he must have? \_\_\_\_\_

6) According to Titus 1:9-11, why does an elder need to hold 'fast the faithful word as he hath been taught'? \_\_\_\_\_

Along with the higher expectations comes more responsibility. The Bible tells us that "... unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:48). This is true with all positions of authority and leadership whether it is in the physical realm or the spiritual one. How do the following address the connection between leadership and responsibility?

7) James 3:1 - \_\_\_\_\_

8) Matthew 24:45-51 - \_\_\_\_\_

9) Hebrews 13:17 - \_\_\_\_\_

Let's turn our attention now to what attitudes and actions all members of the congregation are to have toward their leadership. Good attitudes and actions that we should have in regard to our leaders

include: Respect, Honor, Submission, Loyalty, Obedience, Love, Appreciation / Thanks, Prayer on their behalf, Patience, Forgiveness and Support(emotional, physical, and financial).

For lack of a better analogy, imagine the church as an army with the elders being the commanders and the rest of the members being the enlisted men. The things listed above are all helpful to the smooth operation of the church, but as we go into battle against the forces of evil some are indispensable.

10a) Which of the attributes above do you think would cause the most damage if it were missing? \_\_\_\_\_

10b) How many members with bad attitudes and the actions that followed do you think it would take to disrupt the work of the church? \_\_\_\_\_

What aspect of our relationship with the leaders of the church do each of the following verses deal with?

11) Acts 11:29-30 - \_\_\_\_\_

12) Acts 15:2,6 - \_\_\_\_\_

13) 1 Timothy 5:1 - \_\_\_\_\_

14) 1 Timothy 5:17-18 - \_\_\_\_\_

15) 1 Timothy 5:19-20 - \_\_\_\_\_

16) Acts 23:2-5 (Exodus 22:28)- \_\_\_\_\_

17) 1 Timothy 2:1-2 - \_\_\_\_\_

18) Hebrews 13:7 - \_\_\_\_\_

19) Hebrews 13:17 - \_\_\_\_\_

20) Hebrews 13:24 - \_\_\_\_\_

We need to remember that leading a congregation is a difficult task with great responsibility. We can best help by praying for them, doing what we know is right in our own individual lives, encouraging rather than nagging, suggesting any good ideas we have, being an active part of those things that have been decided even if they were not decided the way we wanted, refusing to speak or listen to others speak evil of them, and expecting great things from them. We can quickly destroy the church by doing the opposite.

21) How did Paul deal with an awkward situation in Acts 21:18-26? \_\_\_\_\_

God the Father,  
Jesus(God the Son),  
God the Holy Spirit,  
Apostles and Prophets,  
The New Testament,  
The Elders,  
C lass Teacher, The Song Leader, The One Leading Prayer, The Preacher when He is Preaching  
Truth,  
One Deacon, Preacher, The Deacons, One Elder, A New Convert, The Students of a Bible Class,  
  
The Old Testament,  
An Eldership that Appoints a Woman Song Leader,  
The Preacher when He is Preaching False Doctrine,  
A Christian of 40 Years Living in Sin,  
A Man Who Claims to be an Apostle.

(Titus 2:15) These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

(Matthew 20:25-28) But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. {26} But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; {27} And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: {28} Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

(Matthew 23:1-3) Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, {2} Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: {3} All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

(1 Timothy 3:1-7) This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. {2} A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; {3} Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; {4} One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; {5} (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) {6} Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. {7} Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

(Titus 1:5-11) For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: {6} If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. {7} For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; {8} But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; {9} Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. {10} For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: {11} Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

(James 3:1) My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

(Matthew 24:45-51) Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? {46} Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. {47} Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. {48} But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; {49} And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; {50} The lord of that servant shall come in a day

when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, {51} And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

(Hebrews 13:17) Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

(Acts 11:29-30) Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: {30} Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

(Acts 15:2) When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. (Acts 15:6) And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

(1 Timothy 5:1) Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;

(1 Timothy 5:17-18) Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. {18} For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

(1 Timothy 5:19-20) Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. {20} Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

(Acts 23:2-5) And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. {3} Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? {4} And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? {5} Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people. (Exodus 22:28) Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people.

(1 Timothy 2:1-2) I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; {2} For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

(Hebrews 13:7) Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

(Hebrews 13:24) Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

(Acts 21:18-26) And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. {19} And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. {20} And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: {21} And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. {22} What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. {23} Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; {24} Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. {25} As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. {26} Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

(Isaiah 9:15-16) The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail. {16} For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed.

(Matthew 15:14) Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

(Leviticus 4:22-24) When a ruler hath sinned, and done somewhat through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD his God concerning things which should not be done, and is guilty; {23} Or if his sin, wherein he hath sinned, come to his knowledge; he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without blemish: {24} And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before the LORD: it is a sin offering.

(Deuteronomy 1:13) Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you.

(Judges 15:11) Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? what is this that thou hast done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them.

(Ecclesiastes 10:5-7) There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error which proceedeth from the ruler: {6} Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low place. {7} I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.

(Matthew 24:45-51) Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? {46} Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. {47} Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. {48} But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; {49} And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; {50} The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, {51} And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

(Mark 13:9) But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.

(John 12:42-43) Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: {43} For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

(Romans 13:1-7) Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. {2} Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. {3} For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: {4} For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. {5} Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. {6} For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. {7} Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

(Matthew 21:23-24) And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? {24} And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

(Mark 13:34-37) For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. {35} Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: {36} Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. {37} And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

(John 5:26-27) For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; {27} And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

(Acts 9:14) And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

(1 Corinthians 15:24-28) Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. {25} For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. {26} The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. {27} For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. {28} And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

(2 Corinthians 10:8-13) For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed: {9} That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters. {10} For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible. {11} Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present. {12} For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. {13} But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.

(1 Timothy 2:12) But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

(Romans 12:8) Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

(Ephesians 6:12) 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.

(1 Timothy 3:4-5) One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; {5} (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

## THE CHRISTIAN AND UNFAITHFUL CHRISTIANS

We discussed in a previous lesson the difficulty in always knowing how to define faithful versus unfaithful Christians and looked at some guidelines, so review the lesson on faithful Christians if you need to refresh your understanding. One thing that we must realize is that faithfulness is more like a dimmer switch than a simple on/off type switch. There are many who have a level of faith, but not enough to light the room. There are some who are faithless entirely and some whose faith fluctuates up and down from time to time. We must realize that all of us are going to have some ups and downs, and we must be careful when we are up and burning brightly not to unjustly accuse someone who is suffering through a slump. Instead, we should use our current strength to bolster them and encourage them to continue burning and burn brighter, so that their flame is not extinguished.

1a) When there is a fire that is about to go out what can you do to get it going again? \_\_\_\_\_

1b) What kinds of things that we can do would put the fire out? \_\_\_\_\_

2) How can those things mentioned in '1a' and '1b' be applied to us as Christians when we are struggling to keep being the light of the world? \_\_\_\_\_

When we look at the parable of the sower (Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8) and see that two of the four soils heard the word and received it only to fall away later for various reasons, we should realize that the Christian life is not easy. We should also understand that when we talk about unfaithful Christians there is not one solution for all of them because they are unfaithful for a variety of reasons. The Word of God is the source for all the solutions, but each individual must be dealt with according to their differing levels of knowledge, understanding, age, maturity, attitudes, etc. Jesus showed this in the different ways that he dealt with people. We will not always say or do the right thing to bring someone back, in fact, sometimes there may not be anything that we could say or do to bring certain ones back. We must, first and foremost, remain faithful ourselves so that we can be the proper example, and so that our hypocrisy cannot be used against us.

3) Has there been a time in your life when you were weak in faith or unfaithful for a period of time? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, what caused it? \_\_\_\_\_

What brought you back? \_\_\_\_\_

It is certainly easier to keep a fire going than it is to relight one that has gone out.

4) What does Revelation 3:2 tell the Sardis church to do? \_\_\_\_\_

There will always be some who become unfaithful, but that doesn't mean that we do not have any responsibility to try to stop their apostasy or to try to bring them back after they are gone. We must look for the warning signs of unfaithfulness and be prepared to intervene whenever possible.

5) What are some signs that indicate someone is falling away? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6a) Think of some people in the Bible who were once faithful and became unfaithful. Name four and tell what caused their unfaithfulness (if known), whether they became faithful again (if known), and what brought them back (if known).

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

In Luke 15, Jesus tells three parables about being 'lost and found'. Read that chapter and then think about the following things.

7a) Were all three lost the same way? \_\_\_\_\_ Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7b) Were all three found the same way? \_\_\_\_\_ Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7c) Was the end result the same in all three cases? \_\_\_\_\_ Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7d) Who was to blame for the loss in each case? 1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

7e) Who was responsible for the recovery/ return in each case? 1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

When someone does fall away we have to do something because we know that their state is worse than before they obeyed (2 Peter 2:20). Knowing more about the individual will help us to better know how to reach out to them. An approach that works with one person may be counter-productive with another.

8) Notice Jude 1:21-25. What two approaches are taught here? \_\_\_\_\_



Okay, we know we have to do something, but what do we do? Let's look at some guidelines to help us. There are three stages or degrees of unfaithfulness that we need to consider. First, there is the person who is weak and struggling. This person wants to do right, but is either a young Christian, not well grounded, recently returned, or fighting to overcome some kind of addiction.

9) What do the following scriptures tell us to do with someone who is weak?

- A) Acts 20:34-35 - \_\_\_\_\_
- B) Romans 14:1-3 - \_\_\_\_\_
- C) Romans 15:1 - \_\_\_\_\_
- D) 1 Corinthians 8:7-12 - \_\_\_\_\_
- E) 1 Corinthians 9:22 - \_\_\_\_\_
- F) 2 Corinthians 11:29 - \_\_\_\_\_
- G) 1 Thessalonians 5:14 - \_\_\_\_\_
- H) Galatians 6:2 - \_\_\_\_\_

The second group is made up of those who have recently become unfaithful. Maybe they were weak for a while, or maybe they were going like gang-busters just last week. The fire is out, but the ember is still warm and might be kindled again. This person may have just been withdrawn from, or perhaps the process is not yet complete.

10) What do the following scriptures indicate we are to do in this situation?

- A) John 20:25-28 - \_\_\_\_\_
- B) Galatians 6:1 - \_\_\_\_\_
- C) Matthew 18:12-17 - \_\_\_\_\_
- D) 2 Peter 3:17 - \_\_\_\_\_
- E) Acts 8:18-24 - \_\_\_\_\_
- F) James 5:19-20 - \_\_\_\_\_
- G) Luke 17:3-4 - \_\_\_\_\_
- H) 2 Corinthians 7:8-12 - \_\_\_\_\_
- I) Revelation 2:21 - \_\_\_\_\_
- J) Galatians 2:11-14 - \_\_\_\_\_

K) 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15 - \_\_\_\_\_

L) 2 Thessalonians 3:6 - \_\_\_\_\_

The third group includes those who have become belligerent and/or rebellious, those who have grown extremely cold, and those who are no longer show any interest. Some of the rebellious or belligerent may be attending quite regularly, and are by far the most dangerous spiritually to the body as a whole. Even though those in both of the previous groups may be lost and may cause others to be lost, that is not their goal.

What do the following scriptures teach about how we should deal with these individuals?

A) Hebrews 6:4-6 - \_\_\_\_\_

B) 1 Timothy 6:3-5 - \_\_\_\_\_

C) 1 Corinthians 5:2-5 and 1 Timothy 1:18-20 - \_\_\_\_\_

D) Romans 16:17-18 - \_\_\_\_\_

E) 2 Timothy 2:16-18 - \_\_\_\_\_

F) Titus 3:10-11 - \_\_\_\_\_

G) Ephesians 5:11-12 - \_\_\_\_\_

H) Matthew 7:15-16 & Philippians 3:2 - \_\_\_\_\_

I) Jude 1:3-4 - \_\_\_\_\_

J) Acts 20:30-31 - \_\_\_\_\_

What would happen if we were as concerned with not hurting Christ as we are with not hurting someone's feelings by telling them of their sin? What if we were as afraid of eternity in Hell as we are of losing a friend? What would happen if we were as vocal about God's team as we are about our favorite sports team? What if we were as concerned about the purity of the church's doctrine as we are about our drinking water or our air? What if we ate as much physical food as we do spiritual food? What if we were as interested in doing the right thing as we are in wearing the right thing? What if we updated our Bible knowledge like we do our knowledge of our favorite television series? What if we spent as much time caring for our spiritual bodies as we do for our physical ones? What if we were honest with our fellow Christians when we knew they were in sin, instead of hoping they will come around on their own? What if God judged us the way we judge our weak brothers and sisters? What if you were the one slipping away and everyone acted like there was no problem? What if the church, like a chain, was only as strong as its weakest member? What if we really lived like we say we believe? What if we quit playing games with our souls and start acting like this is really a war that we are fighting? What if Jesus returns to find us in the state we are in right now? Jesus wondered if He would even find faith on the earth when He returns (Luke 18:8), but the question for each of us is will He find me faithful. Don't let the problems of relationships with other Christians (faithful or unfaithful) keep you from being found faithful.

(Matthew 13:3-9) And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; {4} And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: {5} Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: {6} And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. {7} And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: {8} But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. {9} Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

(Matthew 13:18-23) Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. {19} When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. {20} But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; {21} Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. {22} He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. {23} But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

(Revelation 3:1-4) And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. {2} Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. {3} Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. {4} Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

(2 Peter 2:20-22) For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. {21} For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. {22} But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

(Jude 1:21-25) Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. {22} And of some have compassion, making a difference: {23} And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. {24} Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, {25} To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.

(Acts 20:34-35) Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. {35} I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

(Romans 14:1-3) Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. {2} For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. {3} Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

(Romans 15:1) We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

(1 Corinthians 8:7-12) Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. {8} But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. {9} But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. {10} For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; {11} And

through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? {12} But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

(1 Corinthians 9:22) To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

(2 Corinthians 11:29) Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

(1 Thessalonians 5:14) Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

(Galatians 6:1) 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.

(Galatians 6:2) Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

(John 20:25-28) The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. {26} And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. {27} Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. {28} And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

(Matthew 18:12-17) How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? {13} And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. {14} Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish. {15} Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. {16} But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. {17} And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.

(2 Peter 3:17) Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

(Acts 8:18-24) And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, {19} Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. {20} But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. {21} Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. {22} Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. {23} For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. {24} Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

(James 5:19-20) Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; {20} Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

(Luke 17:3-4) Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. {4} 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.

(2 Corinthians 7:8-12) For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. {9} Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. {10} For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. {11} For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what

revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. {12} Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.

(Revelation 2:21) And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

(Galatians 2:11-14) But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. {12} For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. {13} And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. {14} But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

(2 Thessalonians 3:14-15) And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. {15} Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

(2 Thessalonians 3:6) Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

(Hebrews 6:4-6) For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, {5} And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, {6} If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

(1 Timothy 6:3-5) If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; {4} He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, {5} Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

(1 Corinthians 5:2-5) And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. {3} For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, {4} In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, {5} To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

(1 Timothy 1:18-20) This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; {19} Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: {20} Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

(Romans 16:17-18) Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. {18} For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

(2 Timothy 2:16-18) But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. {17} And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; {18} Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

(Titus 3:10-11) A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; {11} Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

(Ephesians 5:11-12) And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. {12} For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

(Matthew 7:15-16) Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. {16} Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

(Philippians 3:2) Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

(Jude 1:3-4) Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. {4} For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Acts 20:30-31) Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. {31} Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

## THE CHRISTIAN AND PEOPLE IN THE DENOMINATIONAL WORLD

This is an extremely difficult study because there were no denominations in the first century. There were faithful, weak, and unfaithful Christians. There were atheists and agnostics and people from various religions from Judaism to every form of idolatry. We can just barely see the beginnings of some of the false teachings and practices that would lead to many being led astray as we read the letters to the early churches. To begin let us notice and discuss two seemingly contradictory statements that Jesus made. Note what each says.

1a) Mark 9:40 & Luke 9:50 - \_\_\_\_\_

1b) How can we apply these passages to our religious neighbors in the denominational world? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2a) Matthew 12:30 - \_\_\_\_\_

2b) How can we apply this passage to our religious neighbors in the denominational world? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) Do you believe there is a difference in a partnership and an alliance? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

4a) What does 2 John 1:9-11 say about differing doctrines? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4b) What does John say that we become if we support a person like this? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5) Does this mean that if we see a person we know is a false teacher and that person is sick, injured,

or in some other physical peril we should not help them? (Galatians 6:10 and James 2:8-9): \_\_\_\_\_

Why or Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

6) Does John mean that if someone who is in error religiously comes to our door we should not invite them in and study the Bible with them or try to correct them? (Titus 1:9, James 5:19-20, Acts

18:26, Matthew 15:13-14): \_\_\_\_\_ Why or Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

We certainly need wisdom to know where to draw the line in each situation, don't we? Not every person is the same and not every circumstance is the same. We often think we would like it to always be simple 'yes' or 'no', 'right' or 'wrong', 'good' or 'bad', and while there is a right and wrong in every situation there are some situations that certainly are not simple.

When it comes to our denominational friends and neighbors we may agree about some of the moral teachings of the Bible and some spiritual and religious teachings, but not all the moral, spiritual and religious teachings. We can often use the areas of common ground as a foundation for reaching them in the areas where we disagree. We must be cautious of being influenced by false teaching, and must keep ourselves anchored in the word to avoid being swept away.

7a) In Matthew 16:5-12, what does Jesus warn the disciples to beware of? \_\_\_\_\_

7b) Why did they think He said that? \_\_\_\_\_

7c) What was He really warning them about? \_\_\_\_\_

8a) According to John 7:16-17, where did Jesus get his doctrine? \_\_\_\_\_

8b) Was Jesus' doctrine the same as God's? \_\_\_\_\_

9a) How should we continue in the apostles' doctrine? (Acts 2:42) \_\_\_\_\_

9b) Is the apostles' doctrine different than Jesus' or God's? \_\_\_\_\_

10a) Does Hebrews 6:1-3 teach us that it is okay to leave the doctrine of Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

10b) Does Hebrews 6:1-3 teach that we should 'quit making a big deal' about baptism? \_\_\_\_\_

11) Can we have God without the doctrine of Christ (2 John 1:9)? \_\_\_\_\_

12) Who gets carried away by every new doctrine that comes along according to Ephesians

4:11-16? \_\_\_\_\_ How can it be avoided? \_\_\_\_\_

13) How does Romans 16:17-19 tell us to treat those who do things contrary to the doctrine (of Christ)? \_\_\_\_\_

13) What does 1 Timothy 6:3-5 tell us to do to those who won't listen to sound doctrine? \_\_\_\_\_

15) Read Revelation 2:12-16 and answer the following questions.

A) Does Jesus hold false doctrines against those who hold and allow them? \_\_\_\_\_

B) Does Jesus hate and teach us to hate: false doctrines? \_\_\_\_\_ People involved? \_\_\_\_\_

C) Should we use real (physical) weapons to fight false doctrine? \_\_\_\_\_



(Mark 9:40) For he that is not against us is on our part.

(Luke 9:50) And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.

(Acts 23:6-8) But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. {7} And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. {8} For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

(Matthew 12:30) He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

(2 John 1:9-11) Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. {10} If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: {11} For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

(Galatians 6:10) As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

(James 2:8-9) If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: {9} But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

(Titus 1:9) Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

(James 5:19-20) Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; {20} Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

(Acts 18:26) And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

(Matthew 15:13-14) But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. {14} Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

(Matthew 16:5-12) And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. {6} Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. {7} And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. {8} Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? {9} Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? {10} Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? {11} How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? {12} Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

(John 7:16-17) Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. {17} If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

(Acts 2:42) And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

(Ephesians 4:11-16) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; {12} For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: {13} 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: {14} 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; {15} But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: {16} From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working

in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

(Romans 16:17-19) Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. {18} For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. {19} For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

(1 Timothy 6:3-5) If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; {4} He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, {5} Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

(Hebrews 6:1-3) Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, {2} Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. {3} And this will we do, if God permit.

(2 John 1:9) Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

(Revelation 2:12-16) And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; {13} I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. {14} But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. {15} So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. {16} Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

## THE CHRISTIAN AND PEOPLE OF OTHER RELIGIONS

It is safe to say that most of us in the United States grew up in a home and a culture that professed itself to be Christian, even if they were not true to the New Testament. Many of us have come out of false denominational teaching to become New Testament Christians, but most of us have probably never considered or studied about the other kinds of religion in the world. Before we can have an impact on others it is helpful to know what they believe. However, it is essential to know not only what we believe, but also why we believe it. That brings us to our first question.

1) Why are you a Christian and not Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, etc? \_\_\_\_\_

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2) How can you convince someone else they need to leave what they have grown up with and become a Christian if you don't know why Christianity is a better choice than their religion? \_\_\_\_\_

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There is a great deal of hypocrisy throughout the religious world, yes, even in the church. It is imperative that we live what we say we believe as Christians. Paul dealt with this problem with those who claimed to be Jews, but wouldn't live by the commands of God in Romans 2:21-24.

3) How does Romans 2:21-24 apply to us as Christians dealing with those of other religions? \_\_\_\_\_

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Jesus prayed in John 17:20-23 for unity among His followers. In John 13:34-35 He said people would know His followers by their love for one another. Today the once pure and singular church has been corrupted and divided into hundreds of denominations that are full of political power plays and infighting.

4a) How does the lack of love and unity among those claiming to follow Christ influence the rest of the religious world? \_\_\_\_\_

4b) What can we do about it? \_\_\_\_\_

5) Do you think that Matthew 7:3-5 has any application to us in our attempts to bring the world to Christ? \_\_\_\_\_ Why? or Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

6) If we want to make the world better where do we need to start? \_\_\_\_\_

Because of our sheltered lives many of us have had little or no contact with someone who is truly devoted to another religion. We have had relationships with devout people in the denominational world, unfaithful members of the church or some denomination, and others who are not really devoted to anything except their own physical life and pleasure. Someone who has been raised or taught in another world religion will be very different and may hold beliefs that are diametrically opposed to those we hold as Christians. It is far different discussing with someone what the Bible teaches about women leading in the

worship of the church, than discussing whether there is one God or many gods. When we discuss the church with the denominational world we point back to the founding in Jerusalem, and the fact that the church began before any of their denominations. However, which came first is not a valid argument to make with people from religions that were already in existence when Jesus came to Earth. What a difference between arguing about the meaning of a passage of scripture, and arguing the inspiration of the scriptures.

7) Have you ever had a religious discussion with someone who did not claim to believe in God or the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_ How did it go? \_\_\_\_\_

8) What do you think would be the hardest part about converting someone from a different religion?

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Even though all of the apostles taught and converted people to Christianity, Paul was the first to actually make an effort to go to the Gentile heathen that did not believe in God in one of his most famous sermons he preaches to the idolatrous people on Mars' Hill in Acts 17:22-31. In this sermon he has to teach them about a god, the true God, that they knew nothing about. We will increasingly find ourselves needing to perform the same task and we desperately need to equip ourselves to be able to do so, because our present knowledge is woefully inadequate to that task. Our nation is already filling with people from other places that do not know the Bible or God, and young people who have never been to any so-called 'Christian' church even though their parents may still call themselves Christians. Unless we do something to turn things around, in another generation (about 30 years) our country will find that those who claim Christianity as their religion will be in the minority. Here in what is called the Bible belt, in our county of 16,000 souls there are about 50 different churches. The largest church has less than 200 in attendance on most Sundays, and most have less than half that many. If the average of all is about 100 (It is probably more like 50.), then about 5000 people go to church any given Sunday. That means that at least twice as many are not going. Even those who are going don't learn much truth about the Bible or God. Where will that leave us in another 30 years.

9a) How does Paul's sermon on Mars' Hill differ from Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost? \_\_\_\_\_

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9b) How do you think Paul's sermon on Mars' Hill would have differed from the way he disputed with the Jews in the synagogue in verse 17? \_\_\_\_\_

10) Can you use the Bible to teach someone who doesn't believe in the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_ Why? or Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

11) Did Paul do any miracles according to Acts 17:22-31? \_\_\_\_\_

12) What happened in verses 32-33? \_\_\_\_\_

13) Did Paul preach enough in verses 22-31 for someone to know how to become a Christian? \_\_\_\_\_

14) How do we know he had done other teaching? \_\_\_\_\_

15a) If we went to a heathen land and preached what Paul preached in verses 22-31 would it be possible that some would be interested in hearing more about it? \_\_\_\_\_ Why? or Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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15b) Would any say 'I want to be baptized'? \_\_\_\_\_ Why? or Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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15c) Did Paul 'offer the invitation'? \_\_\_\_\_ Why? or Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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16) What could happen if we tried to teach someone everything we have learned about the Bible and Christianity in one study? \_\_\_\_\_

17) What is your natural reaction the first time you hear something radically different from what you have always believed? \_\_\_\_\_

18) How many times did someone have to study with you before you were ready to obey the gospel? \_\_\_\_\_ Did you know everything then that you do now? \_\_\_\_\_

19) How would you have felt if someone had tried to teach you everything in one sitting? \_\_\_\_\_

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20) In Acts 8:26-40 Philip met the Ethiopian Eunuch for the first time and taught and converted him in one session. Would that have been possible if the Eunuch had not already studied the Old Testament and learned about God? \_\_\_\_\_ Would the Eunuch have known to ask about the prophecy of Isaiah? \_\_\_\_\_

21) What happens in other areas of study when someone is faced with information that is far beyond what they have studied (for example: someone being expected to multiply or divide before they have learned to count, add, and subtract)? \_\_\_\_\_

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As we are faced more and more often with people who have little or no knowledge of the Bible and Christian teaching, we are going to be forced to go back to the basics more than ever before and we need to develop patience as we try to help people learn things that we might think they should already know. It is easy to get frustrated and give up when someone is moving slowly, but it can be useless to overload them with information that they are not ready to handle. If one soul is worth more than the whole material world, then it is certainly worth some extra hours of our time.

But what about our relationships with those who are of a different religion and are determined to remain that way? Some will refuse to listen and some will even become antagonistic when they feel their beliefs are being questioned. How should we react and act toward these people? There certainly are guidelines for us in the scriptures if we will read and hear what God says.

22) What do the following passages teach us about how to handle those situations?

A. Mark 6:11-12; Acts 13:51: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Matthew 5:39: \_\_\_\_\_

C. Romans 12:18:

D. Jude 1:3-4: \_\_\_\_\_

E. Acts 13:44-50: \_\_\_\_\_

F. Matthew 15:12-14: \_\_\_\_\_

G. Acts 28:23-31: \_\_\_\_\_

Sometimes despite your best efforts people may become your enemies as a result of conflict over the gospel of Jesus Christ. We will deal more fully with our relationship with enemies in another lesson, however, here are a couple of verses to remember if that does occur. What do we learn from each?

23a) Matthew 5:44-45: \_\_\_\_\_

23b) Romans 12:17-21: \_\_\_\_\_

One of the hardest things to avoid is nagging, but it desperately needs to be rejected. Nagging will almost always be destructive to the goal we have and often to the relationship itself. We must be sure that we don't give someone the impression that we are harassing them or bugging them. There is not a single positive example of nagging bringing someone to Christ. While it is important to avoid nagging we must continue to keep in touch with those that we want to study with, invite to worship, or develop a better relationship with to make them more receptive to a study or to make a study more profitable. There is a thin line sometimes between checking on someone and checking 'up' on someone or between showing concern for them and worrying or bothering them.

24) How do you know when enough is enough with someone and they are bothered by you? \_\_\_\_\_

As with any relationship, we must keep in mind that "the only person I can change is me." We often spend the vast majority of our effort on trying to change others, which is mostly wasted, and almost no effort at all on the one person we can actually make adjustments to. The gospel certainly can change lives, but it is only effective when it gets inside; and no matter how we try it cannot be driven into another's heart and mind by a hammer, neither can it be forced inside against their will.



(Romans 2:21-24) Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? {22} Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? {23} Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? {24} For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

(John 17:20-23) Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; {21} That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. {22} And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: {23} I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

(John 13:34-35) A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. {35} By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

(Matthew 7:3-5) And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? {4} Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? {5} Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

(Acts 17:16-34) Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. {17} Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. {18} Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babblers say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. {19} And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? {20} For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. {21} (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.) {22} Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. {23} For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. {24} God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; {25} Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; {26} And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; {27} That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: {28} For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. {29} Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. {30} And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: {31} Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. {32} And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. {33} So Paul departed from among them. {34} Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.



(Acts 8:26-40) Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. {27} So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, {28} was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. {29} Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot." {30} So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" {31} And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. {32} The place in the Scripture which he read was this: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. {33} In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth." {34} So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" {35} Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. {36} Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" {37} Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." {38} So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. {39} Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. {40} But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.

(Mark 6:11-12) And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city. {12} And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

(Matthew 5:44-45) But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; {45} That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

(Matthew 5:39-41) But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. {40} And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. {41} And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

(Romans 12:17-21) Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. {18} If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. {19} Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. {20} Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. {21} Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

(Jude 1:3-4) Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. {4} For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Acts 13:44-51) And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. {45} But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. {46} Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. {47} For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. {48} And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. {49} And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. {50} But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. {51}

But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

(Matthew 15:12-14) Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? {13} But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. {14} Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

(Acts 28:23-31) And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. {24} And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. {25} And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, {26} Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: {27} For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. {28} Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. {29} And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves. {30} And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, {31} Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

## THE CHRISTIAN AND THE NON-RELIGIOUS

First, let's define 'non-religious'. In this lesson we will be using this term to describe anyone who is not dedicated to their religion. This may be someone who used to be active in some group and has quit, one who was taken to a church as a child and then left, someone who has never been part of a church, someone who is doubting and seeking truth, or someone who is opposed to organized religion. Whatever the circumstances these are people who have not seen Christianity or any other religion as something necessary in their life. This person may even attend a church service occasionally with someone, but would not take the initiative to go on their own. The non-religious generally have one of two attitudes toward the religious: either they take the attitude that 'religion works for some people, but it is just not for me' and 'I just don't see what all the fuss is about, but it's your life'; or they take the position that 'religion is just a sham' and 'religion is for the weak' and 'it is all just a bunch of stories that people are using to make money off the gullible'.

1) What things similar to those in the previous paragraph have people said to you about being religious? \_\_\_\_\_

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Discovering which of the two types of irreligious person you are dealing with is important because his background will help determine the direction to take with him. If we are going to bring non-religious people to Christ, we must give them something that they have never seen before in religion or the religious people they know.

2. What do we need to offer that is different from other religious groups and people? \_\_\_\_\_

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There must also be a difference in the way we approach the two different types of individuals. People come from different backgrounds and will react differently because of that history. For example, a person who has been scammed or mistreated by someone claiming to be a pastor or teacher, or even a parent who was a hypocrite may be very cautious and distrustful, or even resentful and angry toward all who claim to be Christians, especially, those in positions of authority and leadership. They may be desperate for companionship, leadership, and spiritual direction, but so afraid of being taken advantage of that they refuse to risk it again.

3. How can we learn what a person's background and needs are? \_\_\_\_\_

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4) How could we apply James 1:19 to these relationships? \_\_\_\_\_

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5) According to John 2:24-25, Why didn't Jesus need to listen to people tell Him things? \_\_\_\_\_

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6) Why do we need to listen? \_\_\_\_\_

7) What does Proverbs 1:5 say we will do if we are wise? \_\_\_\_\_

8) What does Proverbs 18:13 say about not listening and learning about a situation before making a judgment about it? \_\_\_\_\_

9) Can we expect people to listen to us if we won't listen to them? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10) Proverbs 25:11 speaks of the value of "a word fitly spoken". What are some ways to be sure that our words are fitly spoken and therefore valuable (remember James 1:19)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11) Under most circumstances when two people are talking would the first person prefer to talk about his own life, thoughts, opinions, feelings, etc. or would he prefer to talk about the other persons' life, thoughts, opinions, feelings, etc.? \_\_\_\_\_ Which would the second prefer talking about? \_\_\_\_\_

12a) Have you ever seen a conversation where neither person was listening to the other talk? \_\_\_\_\_

12b) Have you ever spoken to someone who was not paying attention to you as you talked about something important? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, how did that make you feel toward that person? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12c) Have you ever spoken to someone who was listening attentively to you as you talked about something that was not especially important? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, how did that make you feel about that person? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12d) Which of those two kinds of people would you be more likely to want to listen to? \_\_\_\_\_

12e) Which of those two do we need to be more like? \_\_\_\_\_

13) How can we use the teaching in Philippians 2:3-4 to help us develop relationships with others that will help bring them to Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

14) How many religious people take the time to listen to others? \_\_\_\_\_

(James 1:19) Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

(John 2:24-25) But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, {25} And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

(Luke 6:8) But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.

(Matthew 12:25) And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:

(Proverbs 1:5) A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

(Proverbs 18:13) He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.

(Proverbs 25:11) A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

(Philippians 2:3-4) Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. {4} Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

(1 Timothy 4:16) Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

## THE CHRISTIAN AND OUR FRIENDS

Companionship and friendship can be wonderful things, but they can also be the cause of some of the greatest tragedies if they are poorly chosen or poorly established relationships. There are several different kinds of friendships, some good and some bad, and we need to be cautious as we travel the road of friendship to beware of the hazards along the way. Let us look at some verses and see what we can learn about friends from them.

1) Who were some good friends in the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) Who were some evil or worthless friends in the Bible? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) For each of the following verses: Tell who the friends are, What you learn about friendship and Whether the friendship was good for one, both, or not good at all.

A) Exodus 33:11 - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

B) Deuteronomy 13:6-9 - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

C) 1 Samuel 30:26-31 - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

D) 2 Samuel 13:3-5 - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E) 2 Samuel 15:32-37; 16:16-17; 17:14-16 - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

F) 2 Samuel 19:5-8 - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

G) 2 Chronicles 20:7-9 - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

H) Esther 5:10-14 - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I) 2 Kings 5:9-15 - \_\_\_\_\_

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J) 1 Samuel 18:1-4; 19:1-7; 20:1-5, 13-15, 32-34, 42; 2 Samuel 9:6-10 - \_\_\_\_\_

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K) 2 Chronicles 18:1-3, 19:1-2 - \_\_\_\_\_

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L) 2 Chronicles 20:35-37 - \_\_\_\_\_

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M) 2 Chronicles 21:6 - \_\_\_\_\_

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N) 2 Chronicles 22:4-9 - \_\_\_\_\_

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O) John 3:26-31 - \_\_\_\_\_

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P) John 15:13-16; Luke 12:4-5 - \_\_\_\_\_

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Q) Mark 3:20-21 - \_\_\_\_\_

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R) Matthew 26:23-24, 47-50; Psalms 41:9 - \_\_\_\_\_

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S) Acts 10:24-27 - \_\_\_\_\_

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We could find many more examples of friendship from scripture or even our own experiences, and like these we would see that some friendships are good, some are bad, and some are one-sided. Some friends may seem good for a time before turning, and others may be slow to do their share in the friendship. Our friends often have more influence on us than anyone else, even our families, and often influence us more than we realize. We must also remember that we may influence them more than we imagine as well.

(Exodus 33:11) And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

(Deuteronomy 13:6-9) If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; {7} Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; {8} Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: {9} But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.

(1 Samuel 30:26-31) And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the LORD; {27} To them which were in Bethel, and to them which were in south Ramoth, and to them which were in Jattir, {28} And to them which were in Aroer, and to them which were in Siphmoth, and to them which were in Eshtemoa, {29} And to them which were in Rachal, and to them which were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to them which were in the cities of the Kenites, {30} And to them which were in Hormah, and to them which were in Chorashan, and to them which were in Athach, {31} And to them which were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt.

(2 Samuel 13:3-5) But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother: and Jonadab was a very subtle man. {4} And he said unto him, Why art thou, being the king's son, lean from day to day? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister. {5} And Jonadab said unto him, Lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick: and when thy father cometh to see thee, say unto him, I pray thee, let my sister Tamar come, and give me meat, and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see it, and eat it at her hand.

(2 Samuel 15:32-37) And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the mount, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head: {33} Unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me: {34} But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. {35} And hast thou not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, that what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. {36} Behold, they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear. {37} So Hushai David's friend came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem. (2 Samuel 16:16-17) And it came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king, God save the king. {17} And Absalom said to Hushai, Is this thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not with thy friend? (2 Samuel 17:14-16) And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom. {15} Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus and thus have I counselled. {16} Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him.

(2 Samuel 19:5-8) And Joab came into the house to the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines; {6} In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants: for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well. {7} Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants: for I swear by the LORD, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night: and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that



befell thee from thy youth until now. {8} Then the king arose, and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate. And all the people came before the king: for Israel had fled every man to his tent.

(2 Chronicles 20:7-9) Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever? {8} And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, {9} If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.

(Esther 5:10-14) Nevertheless Haman refrained himself: and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife. {11} And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. {12} Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to morrow am I invited unto her also with the king. {13} Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate. {14} Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made.

(2 Kings 5:9-15) So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. {10} And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. {11} But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. {12} Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. {13} And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? {14} Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. {15} And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.

(1 Samuel 18:1-4) And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. {2} And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. {3} Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. {4} And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

\*(1 Samuel 19:1-7) And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David. {2} But Jonathan Saul's son delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself: {3} And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see, that I will tell thee. {4} And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good: {5} For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause? {6} And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, As the LORD liveth, he shall not be slain. {7} And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan showed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as in times past.

(1 Samuel 20:1-5) And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life? {2} And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will show it me: and why

should my father hide this thing from me? it is not so. {3} And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death. {4} Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee. {5} And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third day at even. (1 Samuel 20:13-15) The LORD do so and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father to do thee evil, then I will show it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father. {14} And thou shalt not only while yet I live show me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not: {15} But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth. (1 Samuel 20:32-34) And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done? {33} And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David. {34} So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame. (1 Samuel 20:42) And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city. (2 Samuel 9:6-10) Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant! {7} And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually. {8} And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am? {9} Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house. {10} Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

(2 Chronicles 18:1-3) Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab. {2} And after certain years he went down to Ahab to Samaria. And Ahab killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance, and for the people that he had with him, and persuaded him to go up with him to Ramothgilead. {3} And Ahab king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat king of Judah, Wilt thou go with me to Ramothgilead? And he answered him, I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war. (2 Chronicles 19:1-2) And Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem. {2} And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD.

(2 Chronicles 20:35-37) And after this did Jehoshaphat king of Judah join himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who did very wickedly: {36} And he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish: and they made the ships in Eziongaber. {37} Then Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the LORD hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

(2 Chronicles 21:6) And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab: for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: and he wrought that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD.

(2 Chronicles 22:4-9) Wherefore he did evil in the sight of the LORD like the house of Ahab: for they were his counsellors after the death of his father to his destruction. {5} He walked also after their counsel, and went with Jehoram the son of Ahab king of Israel to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramothgilead: and the Syrians smote Joram. {6} And he returned to be healed in Jezreel because of the wounds which were given him at Ramah, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria. And Azariah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab at Jezreel, because he was sick. {7} And the destruction of Ahaziah was of God by coming to Joram: for when he was come, he went out with

Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab. {8} And it came to pass, that, when Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah, and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah, that ministered to Ahaziah, he slew them. {9} And he sought Ahaziah: and they caught him, (for he was hid in Samaria,) and brought him to Jehu: and when they had slain him, they buried him: Because, said they, he is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart. So the house of Ahaziah had no power to keep still the kingdom.

(John 3:26-31) And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. {27} John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. {28} Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. {29} He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. {30} He must increase, but I must decrease. {31} He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

(John 15:13-16) Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. {14} Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. {15} Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. {16} Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. (Luke 12:4-5) And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. {5} But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

(Matthew 26:23-24) And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. {24} The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. (Mark 14:18-21) And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me. {19} And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I? {20} And he answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish. {21} The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born. (Luke 22:21-22) But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. {22} And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed! (Psalms 41:9) Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me. (Matthew 26:47-50) And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. {48} Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. {49} And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him. {50} And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

(Mark 3:20-21) And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. {21} And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.

(Acts 10:24-27) And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends. {25} And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. {26} But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. {27} And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.

## THE CHRISTIAN AND GOVERNMENT

One of the most difficult relationships for a Christian is his relationship with the human government that he is under. Whether it is local, state or national the same principles apply. This relationship differs to some degree depending on what nation one lives in, but it always boils down to a matter of a proper understanding of authority.

There is government and law in the spiritual realm just as there is in the physical realm and those who struggle with understanding or accepting their places in respect to those laws and those in authority will never have a good relationship with any kind of government. Those who learn proper humility and submission toward authority will be much more likely to have peace in both the physical and spiritual realm. We must keep in mind that the spiritual realm is always of greater importance than the physical realm, and at the same time remember that we cannot have the right relationship with God in the spiritual arena if we do not have the proper relationship with human governments in the physical arena. The opposite is not true. There may be some who get along with human government without ever having any problem, but who have no relationship with God.

Let's begin by observing some verses that govern our relationship with physical government. See what the following verses teach about those who have the rule over us?

1a) According to 1 Kings 21, will human rulers always do right? \_\_\_\_\_

1b) What did those in government do in this chapter? \_\_\_\_\_

1c) What responsibility do we have in situations similar to this one? \_\_\_\_\_

1d) What did God do in this situation? \_\_\_\_\_

2) In Matthew 10:17-18, What did Jesus say would happen to his followers? \_\_\_\_\_

3) According to 1 Peter 2:13-17, What should our relationship to the law of the land and the rulers of that land be? \_\_\_\_\_

4a) What does Paul say in Romans 13:1-10 about who we should be subject to? \_\_\_\_\_

4b) According to Paul, should we pay taxes? \_\_\_\_\_

4c) What kind of government was the Roman Empire? \_\_\_\_\_

4d) What is the role of the government? \_\_\_\_\_

- 4e) What should we do if a government is not fulfilling its role, or exceeding its role? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) What does Peter say will happen to those who do not respect the authorities in 2 Peter 2:9-12? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) In Matthew 10:23 How did Jesus tell his disciples to respond to persecution? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ What kind of reaction did He not recommend or command? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- 7a) In Acts 4:17-21, did the apostles obey the rulers? \_\_\_\_\_ What did the apostles say? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- 7b) After being released what 3 things did the Christians do in verse 23 and following? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- What was the result of each of these actions? \_\_\_\_\_
- How does this differ from the way we respond to insignificant criticism from people who are not in authority? \_\_\_\_\_
- 8a) In Acts 5:17-19, what happened to the apostles because of their actions following the events in chapter 4? \_\_\_\_\_
- 8b) Did that stop them from teaching(vs.25)? \_\_\_\_\_ What happened next? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- 8c) In Acts 5:27-29, how did the apostles answer? \_\_\_\_\_
- 8d) How did the rulers respond to this answer in verse 40? \_\_\_\_\_
- 8e) Did that stop their teaching (vs. 42)? \_\_\_\_\_ How did they feel when they were released in verse 41? \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) Read Matthew 2:16. If you were a soldier / government official / law enforcement officer under circumstances like those described what would you do? \_\_\_\_\_

One of the biggest problems that many face is that we receive a number of benefits as a result of the government on both individual and collective levels, and those benefits could be taken away if we don't do as the government commands. Christians in India face this kind of discrimination. India has their own version of what we call Social Security and Medicare, but if someone in India converts to Christianity the government will not give them care when they are old. Many thousands in India are brave enough to become Christians anyway. Here in the U.S. churches have a special status as non-profit organizations. A church does not have to pay taxes of any kind, does not have to comply with many of the laws for businesses, and is not bound by some of the regulations regarding hiring, firing, etc. Individually, many in our own congregation receive Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Food Stamp EBT cards, Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credits, Disability, WIC, help with electric/gas bills, subsidized housing, jobs, etc.

10a) What would happen to the church if those things were taken away?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10b) What would you do if you had the choice between leaving, renouncing and denouncing the church or losing your source of income, housing, retirement, and/or medical care? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11) What would the effects be if the church had its non-profit status revoked? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Some may accuse me of fear-mongering, but I am not saying these things are happening or that they will happen to us, only that similar things have happened and currently are happening around the world. The government should be an ally to those who do good and an adversary to those who are wicked, but government is not always what it should be. A great problem arises when someone depends upon government more than on God. The same thing could be said of someone who depends too much on parents, children, spouses, etc. This is not to say that God doesn't use others to help meet his children's needs, but we must always remember the source of those blessings and never put government or anyone else in the place of God.

12) For what percentage of your needs are you dependent upon government? \_\_\_\_\_ What if the government were not there? \_\_\_\_\_

13) What could the consequences be if we put government first rather than God? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14a) What group of people put government before God in John 19:15? \_\_\_\_\_

14b) What was the result of this action on their part? \_\_\_\_\_

15) What are some issues where Christians and the Church might be forced to choose between obeying God or obeying man? \_\_\_\_\_

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These things are not intended to promote the idea that we should not have anything to do with the government or that we shouldn't take advantage of the opportunities, programs, benefits, or jobs offered by the government. The purpose is to draw our attention to the danger of putting our faith and trust in anyone or anything other than God and His Word.

There is a story of a Christian widow who was in need and prayed for God to help her have food for the month because she couldn't afford enough. Her atheist neighbor heard her praying and thought he would teach her not to trust in God. He went to the store, bought some groceries, left them on her doorstep, rang the doorbell, and hid himself to see her come out the door. She came to the door and upon seeing the groceries she said, "Thank you, Lord!"

The man quickly jumped out from his hiding place and said, "The 'Lord' didn't give you that food, I did." The woman immediately praised and thanked God even more than when she had first seen the grocery bags. The atheist was furious and yelled at her, "Don't you get it lady? You would have starved if I hadn't brought you that food. How can you still be thanking 'God' when you know I did it."

He The widow replied, "I knew that God would provide me with my needs, I just never imagined that would make the Devil pay for it."

When we 'legally' receive from the government and use what we have received to the glory of God we please Him. If we were to receive those things illegally or through lies and deceit we bring shame on the church and the Lord. As Christians we should know the laws and how to use them lawfully. Paul addresses this idea in regard to spiritual law (1 Timothy 1:8), but the same holds true for man's law. Paul was adept at knowing the law and how to use it to his advantage.

16a) How did Paul deal with a situation where his legal rights had been violated in Acts 16:19-24,35-40?

\_\_\_\_\_

16b) Did Paul sneak quietly out of town on this occasion? \_\_\_\_\_ Did he run away with his tail between his legs in shame? \_\_\_\_\_ What did he do after being asked to leave town?

\_\_\_\_\_

17a) How did Paul use the law to his advantage in Acts 22:24-29? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

17b) Was Paul able to avoid harm? \_\_\_\_\_ Who was afraid after this event? \_\_\_\_\_

17c) Does it seem like Paul may have learned how to use the law better after the events in chapter 16 and

before the events in chapter 22? \_\_\_\_\_ What should we learn from his example? \_\_\_\_\_

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How does Matthew 10:16 apply to your relationship with the government? \_\_\_\_\_

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(Matthew 10:17-23) But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; {18} And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. {19} But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. {20} For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. {21} And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. {22} And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. {23} But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

(1 Peter 2:13-17) Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; {14} Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. {15} For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: {16} As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. {17} Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

(Romans 13:1-10) Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. {2} Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. {3} For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: {4} For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. {5} Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. {6} For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. {7} Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. {8} Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. {9} For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. {10} Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

(2 Peter 2:9-12) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: {10} But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. {11} Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. {12} But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

(Matthew 2:16) Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

(Acts 4:17-21) But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. {18} And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. {19} But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. {20} For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. {21} So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.

(Acts 4:23-32) And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. {24} And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: {25} Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? {26} The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the

Lord, and against his Christ. {27} For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, {28} For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. {29} And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, {30} By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. {31} And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. {32} And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

(Acts 5:17-19) Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, {18} And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. {19} But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,

(Acts 5:27-29) And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, {28} Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. {29} Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

(Acts 5:40-42) And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. {41} And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. {42} And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

(John 19:15) But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priest answered, We have no king but Caesar.

(1 Timothy 1:8) But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully;

(Acts 16:19-24) And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers, {20} And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, {21} And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. {22} And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. {23} And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: {24} Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

(Acts 16:35-40) And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go. {36} And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace. {37} But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out. {38} And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans. {39} And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city. {40} And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

Acts 22:24-29 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him. {25} And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? {26} When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. {27} Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. {28} And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born. {29} Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

Matthew 10:16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

## THE CHRISTIAN AND OUR FAMILY

It has often, and quite truthfully, been said that you can choose your friends, but you can't choose your family. This fact is one of many factors that can work together to make our relationships with family some of the most difficult in our lives. If we get tired of our friends we can break it off. Trouble with neighbors has encouraged many people to move. Problems with co-workers has been a reason for many people to quit a job. Some are so fed up with a government that they escape their country for another. Family is often not so easy to escape.

There are several different relationships within a family and the way they work together can make things even more complicated. A relationship between a father and daughter is different than the relationship between a mother and son. A brother treats his little sister differently than he does his older brother. When we consider stepchildren, half-siblings, live in romantic partners, cousins and grandchildren who sometimes all live in the same house we can imagine how complicated some families can become. In every family we have someone that we get along with best, and someone that we have the most trouble with and interestingly enough we probably think we should get credit for the good relationship and that the other person in the problem relationship is to blame. It is possible that this is an accurate assessment, but we should not assume that it is. Whatever the relationship is, we should first examine ourselves to see if we are the cause of the problem, contributing to the problem or helping make things better (Remember the lesson on your relationship with yourself). One way to do a self check is to consider not only the relationship others have with you, but also how they get along with each other. We must always honestly ask the question, "How much am I a part of the problem?" If I (as a male) am in a family of five siblings and I get along great with my brother, but have varying degrees of problems with my three sisters, I need to examine their relationships to gauge what response I should have. Thinking about this example consider what some of the possible PROBLEMS and SOLUTIONS could be if the information in the following questions is applied to the situation.

1. Given the above situation what if my brother gets along great with all three sisters? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What if the sister I have the most trouble with is older than me and the others are younger? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What if the brother makes less money than I do, but all my sisters make more?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What if I think the sister I have the most trouble with was/is my parents' favorite? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What if my brother and parents have problems getting along with the same sister as me? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What if I am the oldest and there was no father in the home and the youngest sister (15 years younger than me) is the one I have the most trouble with? \_\_\_\_\_

We can see from this short example (there could have easily been 60 instead of 6) that there are a multitude of possibilities for relationship problems in even normal families. We didn't even look at the more serious issues that arise when there are problems of alcohol and drug use; physical, emotional, or sexual abuse; theft, infidelity, patterns of deceit, or other addictions or pathological conditions. In many of these cases it takes years of counseling and support to turn lives around and even then some problems are never eliminated. Since we don't have years, let's look at some principles that will help us move in the right direction. Notice the following:

1. We must believe the Bible has the solutions to our problems.
  2. We must take the time to discover the root of each problem.
  3. We must take the time to find the answers that apply to our specific problems.
  4. We must put forth the effort to make the appropriate changes in our behavior, speech, attitudes, thoughts, etc.
  5. We must accept the fact that we can't force anyone else to change.
  6. We must allow time for old wounds to heal.
7. Can you think of a principle to add to the 6 listed above? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, what is it? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
8. Which of these is most difficult for you personally to do? \_\_\_\_\_ Why?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 

Since we probably will not find our exact difficulties in the Bible, we need to find some things that will be generally helpful and then learn to apply them specifically to our problems. Remember, we learn from the scriptures by direct commands (positive- do X or negative- don't do X), examples (So-n-so did X and this is what happened, sometimes good and sometimes bad), and implication (many commands imply the opposites of what is directly stated, i.e.- 'Love your neighbor' implies don't steal from, kill, commit adultery with, kidnap, lie about, etc.) In this way we can often learn more from an account than just what is written. So, let's begin. And where better to begin than with Jesus:

- 9a. Did Jesus ever commit a sin? \_\_\_\_
- 9b. Did Jesus have problems in His family relationships? \_\_\_\_
- 9c. Be careful with this one! Was there ever a time when Jesus could have done something different that might have prevented a problem with His family? \_\_\_\_ If so, explain.  
\_\_\_\_\_
-

9d. If the perfect Son of God had family problems, is any family exempt from problems? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or why not. \_\_\_\_\_

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While it is true that many of our relationship problems are the result of sin in our lives and the lives of others, some problems result from other factors some of which are outside our control. How we address the problem when it arises will determine whether or not it becomes a sin. Miscommunication, forgetfulness, misunderstandings, financial difficulties, others' advice, car trouble, differences in rates of maturity, differences of opinion, different tastes and preferences, personality differences, cultural differences, etc. can all cause problems in a family relationship. One of the greatest challenges in overcoming those problems is being able to put ourselves in the other person's place and consider his or her point of view. We must accept the possibility that there is another solution that we have not considered, and even the dreadful possibility that our thoughts, feelings, and ideas may not be the best or could even be (gasp) wrong in a given situation.

The good news is that since we could not have become Christians without accepting that we were wrong about some pretty major beliefs in our lives, and since we have become Christians, then we have accomplished this difficult task in the past and can do it again if we will make the effort. Put simply: we must keep an open mind and give others the benefit of the doubt to make relationships work.

Let's look at some family problems in the Bible and find the root cause and what could have been done better. Read the following verses and see what the problem was, what caused it, what resulted, and what could have been improved. You will find in most cases that there is sin at the root of most of these cases, and plenty of blame to go around.

10) Genesis 4:1-11, Cain & Abel - \_\_\_\_\_

11) Genesis 9:20-27, Noah & Ham - \_\_\_\_\_

12) Genesis 13:5-12, Abram & Lot - \_\_\_\_\_

13) Genesis 16:1-16; 21:8-14; Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, & Isaac - \_\_\_\_\_

14) Genesis 19:30-38, Lot & his daughters - \_\_\_\_\_

15) Genesis 25:27-34; 26:7-10; 27:1-28:9, Isaac, Rebekah, Esau, & Jacob - \_\_\_\_\_

16) Genesis 29:15-30; 30:1-4,9,25-35; 31:1-7,14-20, 36-38, 55, Jacob, his wives, & Father-in-law/Uncle

Laban - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

17) Genesis 37:1-36; 42:1- 45:28 - Joseph and his brothers - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

18) Numbers 12:1-15 - Moses, Aaron, and Miriam - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

19) Numbers 16:1-35 - Moses, Aaron, and their cousin Korah - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

20) 1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22-31; 3:10-4:22 - Eli and his sons - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

21) 1 Samuel 8:1-5 - Samuel and his sons - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

22) 1 Samuel 14:24-45; 19:1-7; 20:27-34 - Saul and Jonathan - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

23) 2 Samuel 13:1-19:7 - David, Amnon, and Absalom - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

24) 1 Samuel 18:20-29; 19:11-18; 25:44; 2 Samuel 3:13-16; 6:16, 20-23 - Saul, Michal and David - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

25) 2 Kings 11:1-21; 2 Chronicles 22:10-23:21 - Queen Athaliah and her family - \_\_\_\_\_

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## THE CHRISTIAN AND OUR ENEMIES

Anyone who has been a Christian for very long has heard that we are supposed to love our enemies, but few of us actually put this into practice. One reason we do not practice love for our enemies is that we don't really understand what it means from a practical standpoint and, therefore, do not know how to do it. We sometimes (mistakenly) believe that if we are good Christian people we will not have any enemies. This idea is ridiculously naive and goes against the teachings and examples in the New Testament. Every godly person will have those who hate him/her for one reason or another. Often these people will make up lies in order to spread their hatred. What can we do?

The story is told of a preacher who was preaching on this topic and asked if any in the gathering were free of enemies. One man raised his hand, so the preacher asked him directly if it was true that he did not have any enemies. The answered that it was true. The preacher then asked him to share with the others the wisdom of how he had accomplished this amazing feat. The man answered that he was ninety-five years old and had outlived all of his enemies. While that is somewhat amusing it does beg the question: Is there anything I can do about those who hate me.

We could do as some dictators do and try to kill everyone who opposed us, but that only succeeds in multiplying the numbers of enemies one has. There certainly is no solution that will eliminate our enemies, or Christ surely would have had none and would have taught us the secret. We can only do the best we can to do right and make sure that we have the right enemies. What does that mean? Simply this: Who a persons enemies are says much about that person. Is your enemy God or Satan? Are your enemies those who respect, support, and enforce law and order, or those who are lawbreakers? Are your enemies those who put their trust in money, government, and themselves, or those with faith in God, His Word and His Son? Or are you in the worst position of all: the one who tries to be friends with all on both sides and becomes the enemy of everyone in the battle? You must choose a side(James 4:4).

During the times of the Old Testament it was authorized and often commanded by God for His people to go to war literally against their enemies and take their lives even to the point of killing little children. Those times are past and now our battles are not with flesh and blood, but spiritually fought(Ephesians 6:12). Even though our enemies might use physical force against the church and her members, God has not authorized us to return violence for violence or evil for evil. There is no command, example, or implication in the New Testament that gives us as Christians the right to retaliate against our enemies in any violent or even wicked non-violent ways(Hebrews 10:30).

We can certainly try to "Win Friends and Influence People" as a popular Dale Carnegie book suggested years ago, but not at the expense of our relationship with God. Paul certainly said that he became all things to all men so that he could win some (1 Corinthians 9:22), but that does not mean that he became a drunk to win the drunks, an adulterer to win the adulterers, or an idolater to win the idolaters. When you stoop to joining the sins of those you are trying to save you will lose yourself and them. This same Paul warned Timothy not to be a partaker of other men's sins(1 Timothy 5:22). Our ability to turn our enemies into friends (which is an admirable goal) is limited by the law of Christ. What are some things that the Bible teaches regarding how to treat our enemies? Let's look at a few of the verses that deal with this subject and see what they teach.

1) Luke 6:27 - \_\_\_\_\_

2) Acts 13:10 - \_\_\_\_\_

3) Romans 12:19-21 - \_\_\_\_\_

4) 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15 - \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 6:27 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,

Acts 13:10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

Romans 12:19-21 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. (20) Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. (21) Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

2 Thessalonians 3:14-15 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. (15) Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.