

YEAR 3 BOOK 3

JUNIOR 2

Student Workbook

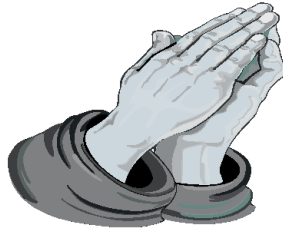


THEME:

Christian Living (3)

Student Devotional—Examine Your Hearts!

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against power, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Eph 6:12)



It's difficult to approach God if you know your heart isn't totally clean before Him. Unconfessed sins are like bricks between us and God. The longer we fail to ask for forgiveness, the more bricks get piled up, until they seem to form a solid wall.

Ask God the following questions:

- 1. Is there anything in my mind that You're not proud of?**
- 2. Have I done or thought anything since the last time I prayed that has dishonored my relationship with You?**

Stand up like a **godly man** or **godly woman** and don't let anything get in the way of you becoming all God wants you to be.

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."
2 Timothy 4:7

CONTENTS

YEAR 3 BOOK 3



BIBLE READING FOR THIS QUARTER

1. Daniel 1–3
2. Daniel 4–6
3. Daniel 7–9
4. Daniel 10–12
5. Hosea 1–3
6. Hosea 4–6
7. Hosea 7–9
8. Hosea 10–12
9. Hosea 13–Joel 1
10. Joel 2–Amos 1
11. Amos 2–4
12. Amos 5–7

Unit 1: Preparing for College

1. Giving Our Hearts a Check-Up 1
2. Preparing for College 3
3. Witnessing in College 8

Unit 2: Communication

4. Communication 15
5. Honor and Obey 18
6. Conflict Management 23
7. Suicide 25

Unit 3: Life Issues

8. Internet Addiction 28
9. Blockbusters 33
10. Loneliness 36
11. Worry 40
12. Hypocrisy 43

Christian Living (3)

UNIT THEMES:

Unit 1: Preparing for College

In this section, students will begin to think about life in college, and how it affects their relationship with God. Through the lessons, they will be reminded of the importance of securing a close relationship with the Lord, and to constantly examine themselves so that they will not fall in their walk of faith.

In addition, they will be reminded of the need to share the gospel of salvation with those around them and the need to continue to shine for the Lord. This is a key component of maintaining their faith.

Unit 2: Communication

The next four lessons deal with the topic of communication—how to communicate well with others and what happens when there is a lack of communication. Students will begin to clearly see the importance of communicating well with the Lord and with others. At this age, J2 students have a tendency to misuse their words, especially towards their parents. They will be prompted to think about how they treat their parents and how to speak wisely.

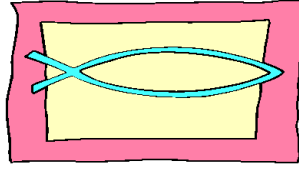
They will also be prompted to think about the importance of maintaining a close relationship with the Lord and with church members. Often, a lack of communication causes conflicts to arise. Students will learn how to manage conflicts as well as how to avoid them.

Unit 3: Life Issues

The underlying message in all of these lessons is that God is with us no matter what problems or issues we may have in life. Sometimes we may think that we are alone in dealing with our problems, and we try to seek out ways to deal with them ourselves. But the Lord promised us that He is always with us, guiding our every way, if we but only turn to Him.

Students will be asked to take a hard look at their lives, to see if there are any areas that they may be sinning against the Lord. They will be prompted to think about their daily actions and what they can do to serve and glorify the Lord instead. They will be guided towards ways in which they can walk with God on a deeper level and to knit their hearts with Him.

MEMORY VERSES FOR MARCH, APRIL, MAY



1. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Rom 12:1-2)
2. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (Mt 6:33)
3. "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8)
4. "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." (Mt 12:36f)
5. "'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with promise: 'that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.'" (Eph 6:2-3)
6. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called Sons of God." (Mt 5:9)
7. "For in You, O Lord, I hope; You will hear, O Lord my God." (Psalm 38:15)
8. "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell." (Mt 5:29)
9. "Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in Your way." (Ps 119:37)
10. "Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you." (Deut 31:6)
11. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." (Phil 4:6)
12. "He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 Jn 2:4)

Bible Study

Life Application

Part 1: Why Check Our Hearts?

- A. To Know the State of Our Hearts
- B. To Prevent Serious Spiritual Damage
- C. To Allow Our Hearts to Bring Forth Rivers of Living Water
- D. To Check Whether We are Bearing Fruits

Part 2: How Do We Check Our Hearts?

- A. Giving Our Hearts a Daily Check-Up



We're now going to check up on ourselves to see how much of a God-fearing life we live. Take a few minutes to fill in the columns for the past three days. Be honest.

Questions to Think About Daily	Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
YES OR NO	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Did I pray before leaving the house to ask for the Lord's guidance?						
Did I read at least one chapter of the Bible?						
Were the words which came out of my mouth wholesome?						
Did I act in a Christian-like manner all day?						
Did I pray before going to bed to thank God for guiding the day?						

- B. Ways to Check Our Hearts

☐ **a. Read the Bible**

We need to take time to ponder, reflect, and focus on God's words. Reading and understanding His word will ensure that we familiarize ourselves with His teachings. When we are in a difficult situation or encounter temptations, the word of God will instruct and guide us on how we should act. It will also enable us to see what state our hearts are in and to help us guard our hearts (Phil 4:7).

Testimony of Transformation

There was a brother, who, once he left for college, felt as free as a bird and invested heavily in alcohol and drugs. Before he knew it, he became addicted. Little did he know the detrimental effect this would have on him.

He began to lose his hair, and later on, he became bald. Turning bald in his twenties pained him, so he continued to turn to alcohol to numb the pain. His family begged him to turn from his ways, but at the time he would have nothing to do with it and his heart was hardened. Everyone in his family felt hopeless. Then one day, out of his hopelessness, this brother began to think that he needed to listen to his grandmother's advice and turn to Lord Jesus.

From that moment on, he began to read the Bible and watch the gospel channel. When he wanted to smoke he would hear the TV evangelist preaching against it. When he loitered on the streets, he would hear voices or messages telling him to go home. When he wanted to read or watch pornography, either he could not reach the magazines under the sofa or the tapes were somehow erased. He often came across Bible verses that urged him not to fall into the traps of the devil. Slowly, he realized that God detested filthy things, so he burned all the pornographic materials he had. He started to pray and asked God to humble him.

Once, his sister was invited to the True Jesus Church where she experienced the power of the Holy Spirit. She came back and asked her brother to go, but he hesitated because of his baldness.

Bible Study

Life Application

Part 2: How Do We Check Our Hearts? *(continued)***b. Pray**

"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (Jas 4:8). Spending time in prayer with God is important for Christians to stay connected with Him. It allows us to speak to God and for Him to speak to us, guiding our paths. We must make sure that we make a daily appointment with the Lord. Prayer is like breathing. Without it, our spiritual lives will eventually die.

c. Listen to Sermons

Another important aspect is to listen to God's words through other members. The Lord uses fellow brothers and sisters to encourage us. Therefore, we should take every opportunity to attend services and to listen to His word.

d. Attend Fellowships

Equally important to our spiritual health is our communal life of worship. God instituted the church ("a called-out assembly") so that we could worship Him together. The community of faith helps us to support each other, just like the apostolic days (Acts 2:44-47; 1 Jn 1:3)

e. Examine Our Daily Conduct and Our Speech

We need to ask ourselves, "Am I reflecting the image of a true Christian?" We must have a walk worthy of God's calling. How can we call ourselves true Christians when, outside of the church, we act in an un-Christian-like manner? We need to "lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save your souls" (Jas 1:21).

**Check for Understanding****QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is it important to constantly check our hearts?
2. What are some of the ways we can check our hearts?

Testimony of Transformation
(continued)

One day a sister called him and persistently invited him to go to church, but he refused. He told her, "Unless God calls me to go, I will not go!" So before she hung up she told him to write down the address of the church: B-a-l-d-w-i-n, Baldwin Park Church. He was stunned when he heard the address. The name struck him – Bald Win? The bald will win? He felt that God wanted him to go to church and that he will overcome his baldness. This brother decided to go and despite the initial fear of embarrassment, he was moved by the sermons and no longer felt uneasy about his appearance. He continued to attend church services and pursue the truth. Eventually he received the Holy Spirit, which has since helped him overcome his desires.

(Adapted version: "In Hopelessness I Met God," Manna, Issue 38, Oct-Dec 2002)

Questions to think about:

1. Why do you think this brother turned to drugs and alcohol in the first place?
2. If we know someone who is falling into this same fate, what could we do to help him/her? How could we advise him/her?
3. How can we be sure that we do not fall into this trap? What preventative measures could we take?
4. How is the Holy Spirit able to help us overcome our desires?

Bible Study

Life Application

Part 1: The Importance of Preparing Ourselves

It seems we are always preparing for something. We prepare for tests, we prepare dinner, we prepare to go to church. Why? What is so important about preparation that everyone needs to do it, especially for Christians? Let's look into the importance of preparation in relation to our spiritual lives.

- A. To be alert
- B. To Understand and Do God's Will
- C. To Be Diligent

Part 2: The Results of a Lack of Preparation

- A. Living Life on the Edge
- B. Feeling Regret
- C. Losing Salvation

Part 3: The Secrets to Being Prepared

- A. Prioritize
- B. Plan Wisely
- C. Use Every Minute Meaningfully

Part 4: How Do We Prepare?**A. Mental Preparation**

The following is a brief list of things you should mentally prepare for before setting foot on the college campus.

■ a. Define Your Plans

Make sure you have a set of well-structured plans before you head off to college. Ask yourself, "What do I want to do/develop/be in college?" Then, ask yourself how you are going to accomplish this. Make sure you think this through and make sure you have it written down somewhere! (Prov 16:3)

■ b. Be Prepared to be Homesick

Homesickness isn't just something that happens to little kids at camp. It's a natural reaction for anyone leaving familiar people and places they love. Instead of focusing on how much you miss your friends and family, think of how God has blessed your life through the people who love you. Write and tell the people you miss how much they mean to you. Homesickness is a sign that you've been given deep, lasting relationships in your life, and they are a precious gift from God.

Making God a 7-Day Thing

The worst time of the school year must be exam time, when tension fills the hallways and elevators. It's the time of year when the library seems to turn itself into the local shopping mall during the holidays: the hours are extended, the crowd triples, and finding a place to sit is almost impossible if you're not one of the first hundred to enter.

In college, I dreaded finals week and found myself nearly becoming a different person when it came around. I would unhook the phone and store up a week's supply of canned and preprocessed foods. Outfitted with my study cap and earplugs, I was set to move into the library. The stress would bring out the worst in me, while everything else in life seemed to be put on hold for a week or two.

I had a friend, however, who was always so calm and cheerful during finals. I figured she was well-disciplined with her work during the school year and did not need to cram during finals. But then I couldn't understand how that could be since she was very involved with church.

On one occasion I asked her how she handled the pressure. She replied by asking me how my time with God was. "Fine," I said to myself. "I keep the Ten Commandments and attend Sabbath service every week. I spend time with God when I'm in church, I say a one-minute bedtime prayer each day, and I do some occasional Bible reading." At the time I thought my faith had a pretty good direction, since at least I kept the Sabbath. "What more can you ask of a college student?" I thought. The problem with this attitude, I realize in retrospect, was that I took God for granted and really neglected my spiritual life. At the time, I went on with life the way I thought it should go

Bible Study

Part 4: How Do We Prepare? *(continued)*■ **c. Prepare to Study**

College is different from high school. Be prepared to take notes in lectures and be prepared to work hard. Do your work well in advance: don't procrastinate!

■ **d. Learn to Live with Others**

College is usually the first time when we have to live with other people for a long period of time who are not part of our family. That means that we will encounter people whose habits may annoy us. We need to learn to be able to deal with such situations: learn to adapt, to talk things through, to share, and to love (2 Cor 2:14f).

■ **e. Handle Your Freedom Responsibly**

No matter how shy or outgoing you are, college presents one challenge every new student faces: dealing with newfound independence. When you're in charge of yourself, everything from laundry to choosing a major becomes your job. Independence, however, also means making choices that will affect the rest of your life. Once you're on your own, it's tempting to do the things you may have said no to in high school. But the consequences of these decisions can result in a loss of your spiritual life. There are, however, things you can do before going to college that can prepare you for independence. For example, if you don't already have your own bank account, ask your parents to help you set one up. Then, see how you can manage your own money for the next few months before you head off to college. Also, help to do the laundry at home. This will prepare you well for doing your own laundry! And learn to cook too. You don't want to starve yourself through college!

Life Application

Making God a 7-Day Thing
(continued)

and stressed and worried about the unknown tomorrow. I tried everything I could to make that unknown tomorrow more manageable, without much success. But God knows my weakness and wanted to help me overcome it.

During my junior year in college, I became roommates with another sister-in-Christ, Terry. My old roommate had graduated and moved out; Terry was moving out of the dorms and looking for a place. Both of us were seriously considering the option of living with non-Christian friends. Although we went to church together every week and met in our campus fellowship once a week, our friendship remained only at that level. We did not know each other beyond the cordial sisterly friendship we shared, so I was somewhat skeptical about becoming roommates. Thank God, however, that someone who had greater conviction than either of us encouraged us to grasp the opportunity. Little did I know how having a roommate of the same faith would help me deal with the stress of school and life's other surprises.

After Terry moved in, we went grocery shopping together, took turns cooking, and went to church together. Above all, though, we decided to set a prayer time. Every night at eleven, I'd hear, "Hey, Trace. Ready?"

"Yeah," I would reply, shut my textbook, and go over to Terry.

We would kneel before an old brown vinyl couch and first share the joys and troubles we had experienced that day. Then we would set an alarm clock and hide it under the couch so that its ring fifteen minutes later would not startle us. After praying, we would chat some

Bible Study

Part 4: How Do We Prepare? *(continued)***B. Spiritual Preparation**

The following is a brief list of things you should spiritually prepare for before setting foot on the college campus.

 a. Let God Guide the Journey

Focusing right away in college on what we want for ourselves is important, but more important is discovering the path that God has in store for us. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11). God wants us to succeed and wants us to be happy. He wants us to have an abundant life. In order for this to happen we need to put all of our trust in God. We don't need to worry because He is in control.

 b. Get Ready to Grow in Our Faith

Attending college is the beginning of newfound independence. It is also the beginning of our own independent faith with our Lord. No longer do we have our parents telling us to go to church anymore. It's up to us. We need to be prepared to go to college with the aim of increasing our faith, not of destroying it. Be prepared to be challenged in your faith and be prepared to discuss your life as a Christian.

 c. Prepare Our Hearts, Souls, and Minds

"But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 20-21). It is important to build ourselves up, particularly before we are left on our own. As Christians living in this world we are constantly bombarded with temptations and tests. Our faith must be strong enough to stand through such tests.

 d. Look for the Mercy of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 21)

Without the mercy of the Lord, it is virtually impossible for us to keep our faith. If it were not for the mercy of the Lord we would not be able to live even for a day. God's mercy is vital to the survival of our faith. We need to look for His mercy until the very day we depart from the world. Hebrews 12:1-3 encourages us to "run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." This means that since the Lord started our race for us, He will also help us to finish it.

Most importantly, we need to keep our spiritual life strong. Develop habits for prayer and Bible study we can take with us to college. And ask family and friends to pray for us as we take this next step in life.

**Check for Understanding****QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is it important to be prepared?
2. What are the drawbacks of a lack of preparation? In your opinion, what do you foresee as the most dangerous result of a lack of preparation? Why?

Life Application

Making God a 7-Day Thing
(continued)

more about our prayers or concerns before turning in.

It had been so easy to just thank God quickly for a smooth day and fall into bed, or just feel too tired to pray. Because I would give in to this battle between flesh and spirit without a fight, God had been a part of my life only in situations directly concerned with him. That is, for me school had been school and church had been church – two separate worlds. I did not even realize that I was living in two different worlds until my life at school and my life as a Christian began to merge.

With more consistent time devoted to God, He gradually became a part of my everyday life. When I rushed from class to class, I'd stop to take a deep breath and thank God for a beautiful day. When I bumped into a friend on the street, I'd thank God for such wonderful friends. When I walked home, I'd find myself humming hymns. And when exams came, I wasn't as stressed about getting good grades because I had something far better. All I had to do was my part, study, and not worry about the result. I felt God's "goodness and mercy" (Psalm 23:6) every day; I began to feel what it means to say to God in prayer, "Hallowed be thy name." Feeling God's grace upon me, I naturally praised and gave glory to His name.

Moreover, keeping the Sabbath became more enjoyable. I wanted to listen to sermons and attend senior class because I was learning so much about God. I then realized that this was what my calm, Christian friend tried to tell me when I asked her how she so gracefully handled stress and pressure. The key was spending time with God consistently!

Life Application

Making God a Part of Our Life

The following are excerpts from brothers and sisters talking about their faith experiences while in college. (Their names have been changed.)

Case 1: Ashley

I believe I received many blessings from God during the four years of college. The greatest blessing of all was to grow and to be rooted in faith during those years. I was also wonderfully blessed with brothers and sisters from whom I learned a great deal and through whom I saw the kindness, gentleness, acceptance and love of God. I will just tell you a few examples of how my four years of college were not wasted away.

Before going to college, I had heard of the many attractions and temptations that may draw someone away from God. At the time my faith was simple. I fasted and prayed at the NYTS about it. God's blessing was truly wonderful.

Another blessing is honoring the Sabbath. I had the simple belief that I would not do work on the Sabbath, regardless of how much work had to be done. If a friend requested to meet on the Sabbath, I would decline. If there were a club activity, I would request for an alternate day, even though I was usually quite accommodating and seldom spoke up to request for personal convenience. God had truly blessed me beyond my expectations. Even though I gave up opportunities for activities that may strengthen my resume, God blessed me so that those opportunities eventually became inconsequential.

I believe many of us who have gone through those years have all come to the same conclusion – that is, to have faith in God and entrust our worries to Him. From our experience we have come to know God as a faithful God. He will lead His children on the right path as long as they follow Him and listen. We also know from experience that although difficult the times may be, there are always lessons to learn from each struggle. God wants us to be perfect like He is. He will not let us down.

Finally, having spiritual friends and a strong fellowship allowed me to experience the sweetness in the word of God. I can never forget the joy of sitting around the small coffee table simply speaking about the grace of God and the word of God. The wonderful thing is, even though we all had very dissimilar backgrounds, we were able to come together, share a common belief and rejoice in the pure word of God, simply because we have the spiritual brotherhood as our common bond. This experience has not only helped my faith, it has also helped keep me rooted and allowed me to continue growing even after college, simply by remembering those times of joy.

Case 2: Kelly

Well, college was really where my spirituality started to grow. My parents were no longer always there and when I realized that they were gone, I also realized how dependent I was. I mean, no longer could I look in the mirror and be that arrogant girl who thought she knew so much. I was scared and that's really why I started to pray and read the Bible. In a foreign place, God was the only one really familiar and I saw that He was the one who could calm my fears. It began little by little... praying 15 minutes a day developed into 20 and so forth. I think God helps us along when we start trying. You sort of realize, hey, 15 minutes isn't bad. In fact, sometimes it's too soon. Let's try 20. Here are some other ways I kept my faith going.

Life Application

Making God a 7-Day Thing
(continued)

These changes did not come easily, even with a Christian roommate. We really had to make an effort in the beginning. We tried praying in the morning, but with different schedules, we woke up at different times. We tried praying individually, but without the accountability it was hard for us to keep meaningful prayers each day. After trying different times we decided that 11pm was the most feasible.

At first using the alarm clock seemed silly. But we wanted to make sure that we prayed at least the length of time we set for ourselves, so that we spent at least fifteen uninterrupted minutes with God. Sometimes it was hard for me to do; when my mind wandered, I would force myself to kneel there until the alarm rang. After a while, however, meaningful and regular prayer became easier. This was how I began to experience God outside of church.

Don't get me wrong—prayer never comes easy. Even now I often struggle to put aside my work and kneel down. After I kneel down to pray, I still struggle to focus my wandering thoughts and communicate with God. I always tell myself, however, that time belongs to God, and no matter how hard it is, I have to try to devote it to Him. Just as Exodus 23:19 tells us to offer up the first fruits to God, we must offer up our best time to God and cultivate a daily relationship with Him.

A consistent communion with God will help us bring God out of the church service setting and into our everyday lives. We have to keep trying to maintain it until we develop the habit of talking to God regularly, then daily, then with increasing duration. We want to keep this relationship because we need it. It brings joy to living in this world. It helps us bounce back from low points in life. It helps us withstand the temptations from Satan, who encircles us.

Life Application

Case 2: Kelly (continue)

Singing hymns—always having one in my head and singing them while I walked to school. It made me feel God walking next to me and once, I literally felt Him walking me home from class!

Keeping verses in your head—memorizing them at night and reciting them when you go to sleep. Then, when you wake up, it's still there and it's as if you've woken up in the arms of God!

Brothers and sisters—what would I have done without them?

But keeping God always permeated throughout my day was tough. Once the honeymoon stage was gone, it was hard work trying to keep the desire for God strong.

Case 3: Fred

Problems I have encountered mostly deal with self-control. I remember freshman year I got really carried away with video games and the high-speed internet ... sometimes staying up until 6 am even though it was so empty. I guess slowly it occurred to me that a lot of things that I indulged in do not satisfy at all ... most just leave me more and more empty. It seems so obvious now, but truly Jesus is the only one who can satisfy.

I remember my freshman year. I do not think I was very prepared for college. Even though I was a counselor at the SSC just before, when exposed to the environment, mostly your lusts take over, especially without parents to keep you in check.

I think the hardest thing for me was prayer my freshman year. I had a stranger for a roommate, I was ashamed of the Holy Spirit, and prayed secretly and quietly, as if I was doing something wrong. So my habits I had established my senior year in high school for spiritual cultivation slowly crumbled, and I was often feeling very hypocritical.

My routine today is a culmination of learning things the hard way. Nowadays, after I brush my teeth, the first thing I do is to kneel down and pray. I feel it is important to pray long enough to really feel God's spirit moving, or the whole day will go awry. At night I also calm my heart, read a chapter of the Bible, and pray an extended time. This is usually right before I sleep, like 12am or 1am. I am also currently feeling the necessity to pray in the afternoons after classes, because so many things, so many temptations can grab you in a couple of hours of time. So I am starting to pray three times a day now.

I think the most important thing in college is to be grounded in Bible reading and prayer. This especially helps when you have a roommate of the same faith. It is also important to have a good support group like a campus fellowship where we can meet and share our experiences and struggles. Truly, Christians will have the BEST Bible studies in college. Everyone is close to each other, knows each other, knows where each other comes from, because age is such a powerful commonality.

Questions to think about:

1. What were the common struggles that Ashley, Kelly and Fred encountered? Do you think these are the common struggles that Christians face in college? (Maintaining one's faith, praying, reading the Bible, keeping one's integrity.)
2. Make a list of areas that you think cause you problems in college. For each one, write down a solution on how you could overcome it. What do you foresee to be your biggest struggle?

Life Application

Making God a 7-Day Thing
(continued)

It helps us be more sensitive to the instruction of the Holy Spirit and the will of God. Finally, we will experience what it means for the "God of hope to fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit [we] may abound in hope" (Rom 15:13).

(Higher Ground, Fall 1997, True Jesus Church, U.S.A.)

Questions to think about:

1. What do you think was the key in helping this sister establish her relationship with God?
2. "Don't get me wrong—prayer never comes easy. Even now I often struggle to put aside my work and kneel down." Do you come across this same struggle? How can you overcome it?
3. It is not always feasible for us to be able to have a Christian roommate. What other methods could we employ to help guard our faith?

Bible Study

Part 1: Sharing Your Faith

Evangelism is the act of sharing the Lord Jesus with people who don't know Him. It is spreading the gospel—the good news of life.

*"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me,
Because the Lord has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.
And the day of vengeance of our God;
To comfort all who mourn." (Isaiah 61:1-2)*

When the Lord Jesus first came out to preach the gospel, He went to His home synagogue to proclaim the gospel of salvation. In Isaiah 61:1-2 He briefly explained the purpose of His mission and the message of His salvation.

- A. To Carry Out the Commission of our Lord Jesus
- B. To Be Freed From the Bondage of Sin
- C. To Be Released from Sorrow
- D. To Establish a Correct Concept of Life
- E. To Be Renewed by the Holy Spirit
- F. To Grow in Faith

Part 2: Secrets to Evangelism

Many people often ask what the secrets to evangelism are. What must we do to be able to preach? The only secret way to evangelism is to pray and share the word of God. For it is only in sharing that people hear, and it is only in hearing that they will be able to partake of salvation. Below is a 5-step way to evangelism.

■ a. Cast Our Nets (Lk 5:4f; Mt 4:18)

Casting out our nets is to evangelize. The more we cast out our nets, the more fish we will get. Whether or not we are victorious, we must preach the gospel. There is a testimony of how a pastor decided to preach to the person next to him on the plane. At first, the pastor was hesitant in talking to that person, but he felt that it was his duty to share the wonderful gospel with anyone who would listen. Consequently, the person to whom this pastor preached ended up bringing 250 people in two years to the truth. Praise God! If the pastor never opened his mouth to preach, that person would not have been able to hear the truth, nor bring others to believe.

Life Application

Part A: Testimonies of Evangelism

Here are some testimonies of how some believers shared the gospel with those around them.

Case 1: God's Love

"When we have the love of God in us, we must know to pass it on" (1 Jn 4:16). During her internship, one sister saw a Bible on her director's desk and asked him to attend a Bible study. The director thought he had nothing to lose by coming. At the end of the Bible study, when they knelt down to pray, the director was afraid and vowed never to come back again. However, the sister prayed for him and the next week, the director couldn't wait to attend Bible study and church services. He felt that God was in their midst and he started to pray sincerely every night. Not long after, this director received the Holy Spirit and was later baptized into the church. He has now dedicated his life to serving God.

Case 2: God's Timing

God works in miraculous ways. Sometimes, it may not be the right time. But if we entrust everything to the Lord, He will bring His sheep to Him according to His own timing. One sister tried to preach to a classmate during her freshman year in college. However, this classmate didn't want anything to do with religion, so this sister decided not to pursue it. A few years later, after graduation, this sister met up with this classmate again. The classmate had been going through a difficult period, and was encountering a lot of personal problems. During the summer, she stayed with this sister who counseled her every day. Eventually, this classmate was touched by the love of this sister and started to attend Bible study. The Lord moved this classmate and she later became a member of our church. Praise God!

Bible Study

Part 2: Secrets to Evangelism *(continued)*

b. Mend Our Nets (Mt 4:21)

Mending our nets is to have spiritual cultivation. The net refers to our deeds and our faith. The word of God is complete. We are imperfect but preach the perfect gospel. We need to, therefore, fill ourselves with the Holy Spirit so that we will exhibit Christ-like behavior. We need to display the good and perfect image of Jesus Christ so that all those who see us will want to come to know the Lord.

c. Wash our Nets (Lk 5:2; Eph 5:26; Ps 119:105)

Washing our nets signifies the need to cleanse and purify our hearts and souls with the word of God. While living in this world, our minds and thoughts will often be tainted. We need to renew our minds daily through meditating on God's word. Our inner being needs to be transformed so that we are clean and pure to be able to present ourselves to the world. We must resort to winning others with our conduct, which is the character and conduct of Jesus Christ.

d. Sun-dry our Nets (Ez 26:5)

Drying our nets out in the sun shows that we need to have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit so that we can shine the light of God. We need to allow God's spirit to live and work in us so that other people can see the glory and power of God. We are the light of the world. We need to let our light shine before men, that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven (Mt 5:14-16; 6:22f).

e. Pull our Nets (Lk 5:6f)

When they caught a great number of fish, the disciples had to signal to their partners in the other boat to help them as they were unable to pull the nets themselves. In the same manner, we need help from others to save souls. We need the strength to pull together so that we can win more souls. Unity, after all, is strength (Eph 4:1-3; Ps 133:1).



Check for Understanding

QUESTIONS:

1. Out of the 5 steps (Secrets to Evangelism), is there one which you think is the most important? Why?
2. Which part of the above 5-step plan to evangelism do you need to work on the most? Why?

Part 3: Evangelism: Just do it!

Can you think of some practical ways to evangelize? Discuss with a partner some effective ways that you and the church could implement to spread the gospel. Write them down and share them with the class.

1. Ways to evangelize
2. How am I going to carry this out?

Life Application

Part A: Testimonies of Evangelism *(continued)*

Case 3: God's Providence

It is sometimes through the interactions we have with others that give us the opportunity to bring them to Christ. God always provides for His people, as the following testimony shows. A brother was introduced to his classmate's friend during his first year in college. They sat together in the same math class that first quarter and soon became friends. However, after that first quarter, they did not have a class together. It was not until the end of their second year that they met up again. The brother needed a roommate for next year, and the friend also thought he might need accommodation, since his original plans had fallen through. They exchanged numbers and went their separate ways. Late in August, this brother called the friend, saying that he was going to live with another brother and needed a third roommate. This friend decided to move in with them. It was hard for this friend to avoid the topic of God or church as weekly campus fellowships were held in their apartment. He began to learn about God, salvation, and the Holy Spirit. Every week, he learned a little more about God and through the help of the brothers and sisters, he went from doubt to praying fervently for the Holy Spirit. This friend was eventually baptized and is now a fervent worker of God.

Questions to think about:

1. Can you think of any other testimonies of evangelism? Share them with the class.
2. Write your own testimony of evangelism and be prepared to share it with the rest of the class.

Life Application

Part B: “Behold, Now is the Accepted Time...”

You and a partner have just finished working on a class presentation, and you think about how nice it would be if he could come to church. You suddenly remember that there’s an evangelical service at church this weekend. What do you do? A million thoughts run through your head—most of them a series of “what if’s.” What if he thinks I’m weird? What if he’s already a Christian? What if this puts a strain on our “working relationship”? What if people at church think he’s my boyfriend? What if he’s scared by the way we pray? Within seconds, the train of doubt-ridden questions gives way to more definite assumptions. He’s probably not interested anyway. He’s probably an atheist, and he’s probably busy, too—it is Friday night after all. Do you:

- a) Silently pack up your books as you internally lament the tragedy of the situation, tell your classmate you’ll see him in class next week, and head back to your dorm; or
 - b) Swallow your nervousness, nonchalantly ask your classmate what his plans are for the weekend, and prepare to turn the conversation into an invitation to Bible study?
- For many of us, it’s probably less of a hassle to pick a).

WHAT’S HOLDING US BACK?

When I was little, I would occasionally read those choose-your-own-adventure books where you could pick to read from a number of different scenarios. Depending upon your choices, you could wind up with a completely different story and ending than someone else who read the same book. Admittedly, I always cheated whenever I read those books. If it seemed like the story was heading in a bad direction, I would go back and carefully re-read as many different choices as I could until I ended on a brighter note.

When it comes to spreading the gospel, we don’t always have the luxury of being able to sit back and debate the pros and cons of a certain situation, or the ins and outs of how to go about preaching. A lot of times, we need to make decisions on the spot, which we, more often than not, have no way of reversing.

Of course, we can try to comfort ourselves after missed preaching opportunities with the thought that there’s always the possibility of a second chance. For instance, you might run into an acquaintance you weren’t able to preach to before and whom you never thought you would see again.

However, instead of consoling ourselves for bygones, it’s better to remind ourselves that we must make the most of our present opportunities. So if hesitation is preventing us from spreading the precious gospel, we should try to think in terms of what we are going to do in the here and now. As 2 Corinthians 6:2 states, “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

If we dwell in the past while neglecting the urgency of the present—if only I had done this, tomorrow I’m going to do that—no action occurs. We must also be honest with ourselves, since excuses often unconsciously masquerade as legitimate reasons. For example, we could and should try to use judgment and discretion when it comes to finding an opportune time to share the gospel.

Life Application

Part C: Be a Prayer Warrior!

Prayer is an integral part of serving God. We cannot live without it, nor can we serve our Heavenly Father without seeking out His will. Apostle Paul was a praying apostle. He would constantly pray for others and would ask others to remember him and the work of evangelism in their prayers (Col 4:3f; 2 Thess 3:1; 1 Thess 1:2; 2 Cor 12:8f).

One sister testified of how during one NYTS, she went through the names of all the members in her campus fellowship and asked God to help them in some way or another. When she went through her list again, she decided to thank God for that particular individual. When she started to pray in this way, she noticed that her tongue changed and she literally entered into a deeper level of prayer. From this incident, she learned that God not only wants us to pray for our members, but also to give thanks for them.

Let’s become prayer warriors, developing a life of prayer and thanksgiving while at college. Choose a brother or sister whom you would like to be paired with as your prayer partner. Your task is to pray for each other every day this week, and to contact each other either by phone, email, or in person sometime this week to ask how your prayer lives are going. Encourage each other. Ask each other what he/she would like you to pray for. If possible, try to get together to pray sometime during the week. If not, set up a time when you’ll be able to pray at the same time. You’ll notice a difference!

Life Application

“Behold, Now is the Accepted Time...” *(continued)*

But we must also be careful that the desire to come across a better moment isn’t just an excuse not to preach. If we keep waiting for the “ideal” preaching conditions, odds are we’ll end up waiting forever. Distinguishing between reason and excuse takes a hearty amount of self-reflection and the spiritual wisdom that comes from none other than God.

GO FOR IT WITH GOD’S SPIRIT

If there’s one thing I’ve learned over the years in terms of trying to preach to classmates, it’s that no matter how hard I try, I can never predict God.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ says the Lord” (Isa 55:8). Knowing God’s sovereignty, it seems almost shockingly irreverent that one would dare to predict or second-guess the thoughts and plans of the Creator of the entire universe.

Yet, we do it all the time. Oftentimes, before we’ve even spoken a word of God’s grace and salvation aloud, we’ve already said something in our hearts like, “Oh, she’d never accept the truth” or “Why bother, no one ever believes anyway.” Such defeating assumptions not only place doubt on God’s power to make possible the impossible, but also place human logic above God’s. Whether we mean to or not, we are sending God the message: I know better than You do.

Once, in my freshman year of college, I was eating in the dining hall with two other classmates, and they started talking about their plans for the coming weekend. Since it was the beginning of the school year, none of us knew each other very well, and I wasn’t sure what they thought of Christianity, let alone whether they’d be interested in coming to church with me. I mentioned how I was planning to go to Bible study and church that Friday and Saturday. I hesitated for a split-second before I went on, and then I decided just to go for it.

“You’re both more than welcome to come with me,” I continued. Then, I gave a brief spiel about how our services are usually run. Neither of them was scared off by my proposal, but they didn’t seem particularly interested either. Oh well, I thought, maybe some other time—at least I tried. To my surprise though, as we were leaving the cafeteria, one of my classmates suddenly turned to me and asked, “Hey, can I come with you to Bible study this weekend?”

FOLLOW HIS LEAD

Preaching about God to others helped me to learn more about Him myself. The more I tried to invite my friends and classmates to church, the more I realized that God indeed works in mysterious ways and often in ways that are contrary to what human reasoning would prescribe.



Life Application

“Behold, Now is the Accepted Time...” *(continued)*

For instance, last semester, a church worker from out of town was scheduled to give a sermon during one of our Sabbath services. Hoping to use this “special” occasion as a means to plug our church, I decided to email some of my classmates with an invite. However, there were a few people on my email list I wasn’t sure about. Two of the girls had been unable to come to Bible study several times, and eventually I assumed that their busyness was a polite way of saying, thanks, but no thanks. Another potential prospect was a classmate whose email address I so happened to have, but whom I had just recently met.

As I was debating about whether or not I should include them as part of the informal list I had drawn up, it occurred to me that maybe I should kneel down and pray. My first thought, though, was whether I should bother praying about something so seemingly trivial as sending out a few emails. Why not just boldly shoot those invites out across the waves of the internet and not look back? Right away though, I realized that I should put my trust in Him even with the “little” things, since anything we do for God is never really trivial to begin with. Freshly humbled, I knelt down and prayed for God to let His spirit work in the hearts of those who had not yet received the true gospel. I also prayed that I could remember my own role—as an unworthy vessel merely planting the seeds of the gospel. Without God, those seeds could never grow.

Interestingly enough, the only ones who were able to make it to service were the ones I had been most unsure of. What’s more, the classmate I had been almost positive wouldn’t be interested actually brought a friend with her as well!

BE BOLD

Just as much as we need God to help us overcome our timidity, we also need God when we are feeling bold. Being a person who’s usually not too afraid of coming across as “different” in the eyes of my peers doesn’t make me any less in need of God’s assistance. As Paul writes in his epistle to the Romans, “So as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (Rom 1:15-16).

Paul was obviously an apostle who preached the gospel without fear or shame, yet he was careful to recognize that spreading the news of salvation was possible not because of his own courage but because of the power and mercy of God. Furthermore, I’ve learned that regardless of the outcome and whether or not any friends or classmates ended up visiting or joining our church, I should still continue to do my part.

If there are times when I feel discouraged and it seems like no one is interested in the gospel, I think of Daniel’s three friends before they were thrown into the fiery furnace. They were able to proclaim that they could accept whatever fate God had in store for them. Regardless of whether this meant their deliverance or their death, their faith never wavered. How much more, then, should we be relentless to proclaim the truth no matter what the possible return or lack thereof!



Life Application

“Behold, Now is the Accepted Time...” *(continued)*

TELL OF THE WONDERFUL THINGS HE’S DONE

When we’re under potentially nerve-racking or pressure-inducing circumstances, clinging onto our own logic often gives us a momentary, if not false, sense of safety amidst confusion. Yet, God wants us to do just the opposite. He wants us to take that leap into the unknown, so long as we don’t forget another crucial step—trusting in and asking for His guidance along the way. In other words, we must have faith. Although easier said than done, preaching shouldn’t be a high-anxiety experience. Just as with other types of holy work, sharing God’s words with others should be a natural and pleasant extension of our genuine desire to repay His love. Just as with serving God and others, spreading the gospel should not feel like something we do because we have to, but something we do because we want to.

What’s usually our first instinct after, say, hearing something interesting on the news? Witnessing something during the day that was absolutely hysterical? Experiencing a random and unusual act of kindness? Most of us would probably go and tell someone. Awe, laughter, thanksgiving, and other forms of joy are often best when they are shared. In the words of Jesus, who lights a lamp to put it under a basket? Doesn’t it make more sense to put it on a lampstand so all can benefit from its light?

Let’s say a complete stranger saved you from an awful death by pushing you out of the way of a moving train but, in doing so, lost her own life. I’m sure we would not only feel indebted to this individual for the rest of our lives, but we would also be singing her praises to anyone within earshot.

COMPELLED AND CONVICTED

Now consider the gospel, which literally means “good news” and is actually the greatest news in the world: that we have been saved from the most horrible of deaths—eternal suffering in hell. Shouldn’t we not only feel grateful but also compelled to proclaim the news of Jesus Christ our Savior to anyone and everyone?

I must admit, there have been times when an opportunity to share God’s message has come up and I didn’t act, not out of fear but because I was spiritually weak. Worse yet is talking about God while feeling low in spirit and in heart. Each word sounds more and more hollow as the minutes drag by, and you think, this must be what God hears when we pray to Him half-heartedly. On the flip side, there are the times when I reflect upon all the blessings in my life, when I feel that closeness to Him in prayer, when I experience the joy of fellowship, and I cannot help but wish that others could taste that same sweetness.

This must be what David felt when he wrote Psalm 9:1, “I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works.” Not only is testifying of God’s grace a way of preaching, but it is also a way of praising Him.



Life Application

“Behold, Now is the Accepted Time...” *(continued)*

We need many things when we preach the words of God, from a sound understanding of the truth and the knowledge that we are merely God’s instruments to the boldness to speak out. However, all these qualities are useless if we do not also speak with true conviction. As Paul states in 1 Thessalonians 1:5, “For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance.”

We can have all the biblical knowledge in the world, and maybe insults harmlessly roll off our backs like water, but if we do not possess that full assurance of what Jesus has done and will continue to do in our lives, our words may have about as much impact as silence. Spreading the gospel is not an easy task, as even the most seasoned of evangelists will attest. And no matter how hard we may try to find one, there is no exact formula we can use to ensure the best results. Yet, it can be made a less stressful and more pleasant experience when we try to reflect upon not only how we preach but also why we preach. Surely, the sound of such heartfelt testaments of God’s grace must be music to His ears.

(Manna, The Lord’s Teachings, Issue 44 Apr-Jun 2004)

Questions to think about:

1. Have you ever struggled to preach the gospel? What were the reasons behind those struggles? Did you manage to overcome them? How?
2. The author relates to us how she knelt down to pray for God’s spirit to work, before she sent out her email invitations. Have you ever prayed for a particular friend so that the Lord will open his/her heart? Relate your experiences to the class.
3. What do you see as your biggest obstacle to preaching the gospel? How do you think you can overcome this?



Bible Study

“Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!” (Jas 3:5) Our speech is vitally important in our relationships with both God and people. What comes out of our mouth can either bring benefit to ourselves and others, or it could have the adverse effect and destroy ourselves and others. Let’s look into the importance of being vigilant with our words.

Part 1: Careful or Careless Communication?**A. Careful Communication**

- ☐ a. Words Can Act as Medicine for the Sick (Prov 12:18; 12:25; 16:24)
- ☐ b. The Pronouncement of Life or Death is by the Tongue (Prov 18:21)
- ☐ c. A Word Can Make or Break a Nation

B. Careless Communication

- ☐ a. Idle Talk and Gossip (Prov 14:23)
- ☐ b. Falsehood and Lies (Prov 30:8)
- ☐ c. Angry Words (Tit 3:9; Mt 5:22)
- ☐ d. Boasting (Jas 4:16)
- ☐ e. Cursing and Slandering (Eph 4:31)
- ☐ f. Obscene Language (Eph 5:4)

Part 2: The Art of Careful Communication

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold, in settings of silver.” (Proverbs 25:11) Having looked into how to communicate correctly, let us now look into when and how we should communicate.

- ☐ a. Speak in the Right Setting and at the Right Time (Prov 15:23)
- ☐ b. Say Good Words to Edify Others (Prov 16:24)
- ☐ c. Speak Words to Preach the Gospel (Tit 2:7-15)
- ☐ d. Speak with Care and Sincerity (Jas 3:6-8)

Life Application

Part A: When Words Hurt

The following are some case studies of how members have been hurt because of people’s words. Read each case carefully and then answer the questions that follow. Give advice to the people involved.

Case 1:

Kylie was a warm, friendly and sociable youth. She was actively involved in church work, including teaching religious education classes. Very sadly, something unpleasant happened in her private life which involved a few church members as well. Soon after, she began to complain that gossip about her was going around in church. Even long after the event, she continued to think others were still talking about it. One day, she decided that enough was enough. She no longer comes to church. It has been more than three years.

Questions to think about:

1. Why do you think that Kylie thinks that members were gossiping about her?
2. What do you think would be the best methods to counsel Kylie?

Bible Study

Life Application

Part 3: Do not Gossip

Proverbs 18:8 also says, "The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body." When we say mean things about others, we're inflicting emotional pain on them. As Christians, we're supposed to honor God in all areas of our lives. Talking negatively about friends or strangers does not show Christ's unconditional love. So, what should we do when we encounter gossip? Here are three suggestions.

A. Pssst...Did you know...?**■ a. Speak Out**

Kindly but firmly tell your friends gossip is hurtful and that no one benefits from it. Speak to them out of truth and love (Eph 4:15; 2 Cor 1:18f), not as if you are telling them off, but admonish them with the words of God. You will be pleasantly surprised by their reaction!

■ b. Be Positive

Turn the conversation around by saying something nice about the person being talked about. Or perhaps you could say, "Well, we don't know if this is true. Let's not talk about it because it's unfair to that person." Then change the subject completely. Your positive outlook and wise words will have a positive impact on those who are speaking negatively.

■ c. Walk Away

Don't be part of the problem by sticking around to listen. If they are unwilling to change the subject after you have gently reminded them, then walk away from it. Don't be involved in non-edifying conversations. Remember the Lord's command, "You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people" (Lev 19:16) and "Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles" (Prov 21:23; 6:16-19; 20:19).

B. Can You Keep a Secret?

What happens when a friend tells you something and you are just dying to share it with others? What should you do then?

■ a. Resist the Urge

Your friend confided in you, not the entire church congregation. Don't break his/her trust, even if it's for something as apparently good as a prayer request. Remember, "In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise" (Prov 10:19). Also, "A talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter" (Prov 11:13).

■ b. Pray

Get on your knees and do as your friend asked—talk to God. Tell Him the situation. Then let God deal with it: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Phil 4:6).

Part A: When Words Hurt
(continued)**Case 2**

Although Terry and Adam were never the best of friends, they had never had any serious arguments with each other after many years together in church. On one occasion, Terry said something, intending it as a joke. Adam, however, did not see it as a joke. A great misunderstanding ensued. Later, they talked the matter over and reconciled. However, their relationship became strained. Both felt they had better talk less to one another for fear of any future misunderstanding.

Questions to think about:

1. Do you think that they had both truly forgiven one another?
2. How could their relationship be repaired?
3. What advice would you give to both of them?

Case 3

Amanda was among a group of church friends whom she had not seen for almost a year. They were all gathered together at Lucy's house to eat, chat, and have fellowship. As they chatted, Amanda noticed that the conversation was beginning to turn into gossiping. Lucy started to talk about one sister in church who, she had heard, was dating a gentile. Amanda was feeling very uncomfortable and wasn't sure how to react.

Questions to think about:

1. What could Amanda do in this situation?
2. How could she tell Lucy not to spread rumors?

Bible Study

☐ c. Talk to Your Friend

Ask your friend if he/she would like you to share his/her prayer concern with anyone else, and if so, who? Talk to him/her before you disclose any personal information. He/She will greatly appreciate it. Moreover, if he/she gave you the go-ahead to share it with others, you will feel more comfortable about sharing it.

C. When You've Been Hurt

Unfortunately, we've all been guilty of gossip at one time or another—intentional or not. And we've all been victims of it too. But how should we react when we discover that someone, whether a trusted friend or not, has been saying mean things about us? Yes, it hurts, but have hope. There are several things we can do.

☐ a. Go to God

Talk, cry, scream—whatever it takes to resolve your hurt. Just hand it over to Him. Let God know how you feel, how much you're hurting. He understands and He listens (Ps 56:8). Entrust everything to Him, and He will bring it to pass according to His will and time (Prov 20:22).

☐ b. Forgive

This is not easy to do, but it is vital that you do it. You can only do this by the grace of God (Mt 6:14-15). First, forgive in your heart whoever has hurt you. If you find this hard to do, ask God to instill in you a heart of forgiveness. Then ask God for guidance and healing.

☐ c. Confront

When your emotions are under control, tell the person or people who hurt you how their words made you feel. If necessary, rehearse what you'd like to say beforehand. If you think you might lose your cool, express your feelings in a note or e-mail. Then tell them you forgive them. Hopefully, this will help you move on with your friendship. But remember not to be harsh with your words. Be gentle as a dove. And don't forget to pray before you approach them!

**Check for Understanding****QUESTIONS:**

1. What are the benefits of careful communication?
2. Out of the six points under "Careless Communication," is there one which you think is the most harmful? Why or why not?
3. Why do we need to speak good words to others?
4. How do we learn to speak with care and sincerity?

Life Application

Part A: When Words Hurt
*(continued)***Case 4**

Jeannette was quite upset! She felt that her mother wasn't encouraging at all. Each time she phoned home from college, her mother never had anything encouraging to say at all. She would always scold her, or tell her to watch how much she's spending. Even if she didn't think she was doing anything wrong, her mother always seemed to manage to belittle her. Jeannette felt both sad and angry. She feels that because of her mom's attitude she can't share anything with her.

Questions to think about:

1. What advice would you offer to Jeannette to help improve her relationship with her mother?
2. What advice would you offer to Jeannette's mother?

Part B: Wise Words

Under what circumstances and in what situations might you tend to be rather abrupt with your speech? Write down the circumstance or situation, think of some concrete ways you could tackle it, and provide some Bible verses to help act as a reminder.

Part C: Words of Advice

We have looked into how the Scriptures offer great words of wisdom regarding how we should communicate. In the Bible study section, we looked in detail as to how we can avoid gossiping or what we should do when we become the victim of gossip. Now it's your turn!

The book of Proverbs has many great wise sayings. Your task is to prepare some advice (1-2 minutes) to share with the class. With a partner, choose a topic regarding speech and offer some solid biblical advice from the book of Proverbs.

Bible Study

Part 1: First Commandment with a promise

Ephesians 6:1-3 tells us that honoring our father and mother is the first commandment with promise. Have you ever wondered why is this so? Why is it "right" for us to obey our parents? Let us look into this.

- A. To Repay Their Love for Us
- B. To Obey the Lord's Commandment (Eph 6:1-3)
- C. To Be Blessed (Eph 6:1-3; Deut 5:16)

Part 2: Learning to show piety

"But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God." (1 Tim 5:4) Have you ever actually thought about how we honor our parents? What does it mean to show filial piety? In this section we will be looking at the fundamentals of learning to show filial piety.

- A. To Take Care of Our Parents (Mk 7:10-13)
- B. To Obey Our Parents
- C. To Allow Our Parents to Share in Our Accomplishments
- D. To Bring Our Parents to the Lord

**Check for Understanding****QUESTIONS:**

1. Why do we need to obey our parents?
2. How can we demonstrate filial piety?



Part A: A Step Closer to Honoring Our Parents

With a partner, brainstorm some specific ways you could honor your parents. How might you go about doing this? Be prepared to share with the rest of the class.

1. How I Can Better Honor My Parents
2. Ways I Am Going To Do This

Remember: When you're away at college, make sure you telephone your parents at least once a week, just to let them know how you're doing—they'll appreciate it!

Part B: Growing Together With My Parents—How College Improved Our Relationship

A strange thing happened to me after I left home and went to college—I started getting along better with my parents.

Not to say that I had a horrible relationship with them to begin with, but over the course of my college years, I definitely noticed a change in both the quality and the content of our interactions.

Even funnier still, I found that the freedom I had once fought so hard for in high school was no longer the hard-earned result of parent-child warfare. Rather, by the time I graduated from college, my wish to be treated as a mature adult gradually and naturally came true as I learned to behave like one.

What brought about these differences in the way I treated my parents and the way my parents treated me? A number of reasons can be identified, but most noticeable among them is the fact that, as my relationship with God improved, so too did my relationship with my parents, especially with my mother.

SOMEWHERE FAR FROM HOME

During my adolescence, I used to assume that beneath my parents' setting of rules and limits and behind their demands to know my every whereabouts was their actual intention to demonstrate control.

Never one who liked being told what to do, and never one to give up without a fight, you might guess that arguing with my parents was not an uncommon occurrence throughout my adolescent years.

Regardless of whether or to what extent they were trying to make clear their authority over me, I was known for firing back full force with a "you can't tell me what to do" attitude.

Thank God that halfway into my junior year of high school I received the Holy Spirit during a student spiritual convocation. But by that time, I still had not developed a consistent or lengthy prayer habit.

Yet with God's Spirit living in me, I was able to receive the strength to gradually tone down my behavior, which, truth be told, had long ago crossed over the border of proper Christian living into rebellion and sin.

As my senior year of high school and the prospect of college neared, I formed several ideas of what I was looking for in a university: somewhere near a True Jesus Church, somewhere near a city, and somewhere far from home.

While I was definitely drawn toward the thought of a fast-paced, crowded city life, I recognized that I was also pushed toward that direction by what I saw as my oppressive home environment.

After I had been accepted into a couple of schools and debated over which one to attend, thankfully, God helped me to realize that choosing the school closest to my home would be best for me because it would allow me to attend the youth Bible study nearby.

While that university also met my requirement of being located near a large city, my dream of moving far from home turned into the reality of a fifty-minute commute from my parents' home.

PROVIDING FOR ONE ANOTHER

While away at school, my parents would call me every few days to see how I was doing. Since they usually worried if we hadn't spoken for over a week, I was obligated to call and check in with them as well.

Because my dad isn't much of a phone person, my mom and I usually did most of the talking. While my father and I were by far not the best of friends, putting my mom and I in the same room could be the most deadly of combinations.

Throughout my teenage years, my mother and I fought often, and we fought hard. Shouting matches that resulted in tears and slamming doors were a painful but common occurrence.

Needless to say, I hardly ever spoke to my parents about personal problems. Therefore, topics such as feelings and frustrations, faith and friends, were strictly off limits.

Regardless, the phone calls to and from home continued. At first, the conversations between my mom and I consisted mostly of what we had done that day, but they eventually evolved into discussions of how we had been feeling that particular day.

After a while, I found that I missed our talks if we hadn't had the chance to speak to each other. After a few semesters of living in the dorms, I realized with some shock that my mother and I had begun to communicate with and depend on each other as (gasp) friends.

My faith during this time was slowly building up with the help of attending the youth Bible studies and my own spiritual cultivation. It dawned on me that the fledgling friendship between my mother and I was also helping to strengthen my faith.

What's more, my mom's spirituality was improving as well. While we weren't necessarily always discussing specific Bible passages as such, we did start to speak openly about our own problems.

For the first time, my mother shared with me the many struggles and trials she encountered in marriage, church, and work life. No longer was she just filling the role of my mother; I came to see her as a person, complete with human needs, weaknesses, and emotions.

As we began to discuss our problems openly, we also began to address these problems through prayer. Oftentimes we would end our long-distance talks by praying together afterwards.

On some mornings or before I would go to bed, I would make a quick call home and ask my mom to pray with me, and she often did the same.

Curiously enough, it often wound up that when my faith was weak, my mother's was strong, and vice versa. Consequently, there would be weeks when my mother would be the one lifting up my spirits, and the next month, I would find myself trying to encourage her.

In this manner, God miraculously provided a way for each of us to receive spiritual support by having us provide for each other.

Our prayers and makeshift testimonies helped me not only to see my mother as an individual, but also as a fellow sister-in-Christ. As stated in James 5:16, "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed."

Helping to bear one another's burdens through sharing and prayer strengthened our relationship with each other and our individual relationships with God.

ACCEPTING DISCIPLINE

Of course, my parents and I still engage in the occasional argument. After all, perfect endings and perfect people are only the works of fiction, and I was reminded of this sobering truth on many weekends or school breaks spent at home.

During those not-so-pleasant instances, the makings of an argument usually went something like this:

Scenario One: Parent asks daughter in a stern tone of voice to do something. Interpreting this as an attack on her newfound adulthood and independence, daughter responds back with an irritated tone of voice. Fight ensues.

Scenario Two: Daughter makes known her frustration with parent's seeming ineptitude. Taking this as an assault on parental authority and ability, parent responds back in frustration. Fight ensues.

The possibilities are endless.

Usually, what sets off an argument is not so much what is said but the way it is said. King Solomon was right on the mark when he wrote in Proverbs 15:1 that "a soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

Yes, sometimes our parents may be wrong, but many times, they are in the right. And when our emotions get the better of us in an argument, it's hard for us to tell who's right and who's wrong.

What's more, no matter what the situation, we still should not act disrespectfully towards our parents. If we cannot even treat our earthly parents properly, how can we expect to please our heavenly Father? As written in Hebrews 12:9, "Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?"

The same chapter of Hebrews also teaches us that God disciplines those He loves. Verses 6 and 7 read, "For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives."

If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?

God sometimes trains us in painful ways. Likewise, we may think that parental discipline is too strict at times, but it is usually for our own benefit.

And if parental efforts seem less than perfect to us, we need to remember that our parents are, after all, only human. They are not God, but they are trying. Therefore, we must also try our best to repay their efforts with obedience and respect. Patience helps, too. Finally, we need to examine the reasons why we're so offended by our parents' comments in the first place.

Most people don't like being told what to do, and most people dislike criticism even more. Unfortunately for them, our parents are the ones stuck with the job of having to dole out the bulk of these hard-to-give and hard-to-receive comments.

When we do hear these types of remarks, we must ask ourselves if our desire to retaliate against our parents is actually a result of wounded pride. Proverbs 13:1 tells us that, "A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke."

Let us not be foolish, but wise children.

ALWAYS A CHILD IN THEIR EYES

Despite the fact that I'm now a college graduate and supposedly all grown up, I've realized that I'll always be a child in my parents' eyes.

No matter how old we are, whether we're working or starting families of our own, our parents will always be our parents. As a result, regardless of age or abilities, we will always be their children.

In Paul's epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians concerning how to treat parents, he addressed the believers as "children." For example, in Ephesians 6:1, Paul writes, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

While Paul's letters apply to believers of all ages, he probably wasn't directing this message solely toward toddlers and teenagers. As the apostle who guided them into God's truth and the one who nurtured their spiritual growth, these believers would always be Paul's spiritual children.

In the same way, God gave our parents their status as caregivers and guardians. And according to His will and the measure of love He has put in our hearts, we must strive to honor our parents throughout our lives. This is also how we are to honor God.

Four years of living on campus also showed me that the longer I lived away from home, the more I looked forward to going home. Yes, absence does make the heart grow fonder, and I've found truth in the saying that we often don't appreciate what we have until it's gone.

However, the fact that I no longer minded but enjoyed going back home was also because my home was no longer the same as it was when I had left it. My lifestyle has calmed down considerably since my high school days, and I did some necessary maturing in terms of my behavior, my emotions, and my faith.

My parents saw these changes and did some adjusting of their own. Ironically, my parents actually encourage me to get out of the house more, whereas in high school, they seemed to be doing everything in their power to keep me at home.

During these four years, you might say that we all grew up together. Now that I've graduated and am living at home again, I really thank God for the changes that He has made in my life and in my relationship with my parents.

At the same time, my parents definitely still do treat me like a child in some ways, but I've learned that that's not necessarily a bad thing. While parents sometimes do need to ease their grip a bit, we shouldn't expect them to completely let go, either.

Sometimes, it feels good to be held onto.

(Manna. *"The End Times"*, Issue 41 Jul-Sept 2003)

Questions to think about:

1. "As my relationship with God improved, so too did my relationship with my parents ..." How can our relationship with God help our relationship with our parents? Have you had any experiences of this? Share them with the class.
2. This sister would often call home every few days to check in with her family. Consequently, her phone conversations resulted in a closer and deeper emotional and spiritual link with her mother. What ways do you think you could devise in order to have closer ties with your parents?
3. "Despite the fact that I'm now a college graduate and supposedly all grown up, I've realized that I'll always be a child in my parents' eyes." It often seems that the older you get, the harder it is to honor your parents. How do you think you can continue to honor your parents as you grow older?



Bible Study

Part 1: Conflict

As human beings we like to argue. We argue from young to old and we argue with many different people. We even argue with God, questioning Him why certain things may be. A sister once testified how she held a grudge against the Lord for an entire year, during which she didn't go to church. Later she returned to the Lord. Inevitably, as humans we will always end up in conflicting situations. But the way we deal with it or our outlook on it could be the difference in whether we are successful or not.

A: "What are the causes of conflict?"

- ☐ a. Discontent (Acts 6:1; Judg 8:1)
- ☐ b. Doubt and Fear (Acts 15:39)
- ☐ c. Sin (Rom 7:10-17)

B: "What type of person do we want to be?"

- ☐ a. Those Who Are Defeated by Strife
- ☐ b. Those Who Overcome Strife

Part 2: Who are the culprits of conflicts?

- A. Those Who Are Quick Tempered (Prov 29:22; 30:33)
- B. Those Who Have a Contentious Heart (Prov 26:21)
- C. Those Who Have a Proud Heart (Prov 22:10)
- D. Those Who Gossip (Prov 16:28; 26:20)

Part 3: How do we overcome strife?

- A. To Have a Gentle and Quiet Spirit (1 Sam 1:7)
- B. To Believe in the Lord and to Inquire Help from Him (1 Sam 1:9-12)
- C. To Entrust Everything to God (1 Sam 1:13-18)

Part 4: How do we manage conflicts?

- A. Talk it Out
- B. Seek Help (Mt 18:15-17)
- C. Ignore It

Life Application

Part A: Resolving Conflicts

Please read the following case studies carefully and provide a solution for each one. Try to back up your solutions with some Bible verses.

Case A

A group of youths like to have their fellowship service on Friday night, but some adult members have commented negatively about it since it dramatically reduces the number of people attending the regular service.

1. What advice/solution would you give to these youths?

Case B

Rose and Tracy are roommates. Rose is our church sister, but Tracy isn't. Rose is a very organized and clean individual. Tracy is the opposite. Whereas Rose would put her dirty laundry into the laundry basket, Tracy would spread hers in little piles all over the room. Tracy hardly ever takes out the garbage, let alone deals with the boxed remains of five-day old pizza! Because of their different ideas about what cleanliness means, it led to a fair share of arguments and conflicts. Rose is unsure of how to deal with this situation. How can you help her?

1. What advice/tips can you offer to Rose in order to improve the state of her dorm room and to improve relations with her roommate?
2. How should she approach Tracy about this?

Case C

James is rather hesitant and feels uncomfortable about doing cleaning work around the church. He thinks that the church can afford to hire professionals to do a much better job than he can. He'd rather serve the Lord in other areas. Because of his reluctance and unwillingness to do this work, his relationship with certain church members has become strained.

1. What advice would you offer James?

Bible Study



Check for Understanding

QUESTIONS:

1. Looking at the causes of conflict, which one do you think causes people to encounter conflict the most?
2. What are the four kinds of people who cause conflict?
3. Is there a category which you think you would be most susceptible to? How could you deal with it?
4. What are the three ways of overcoming strife? Which one is the most difficult for you to do? Why?
5. What is the three-step approach recorded in Matthew when dealing with conflicts?
6. In your opinion, which of the three effective remedies to dealing with conflict would you have a tendency to use? Why?

Life Application

Case D

Mary doesn't like the idea that her daughter is dating a brother. She thinks at 19, she's too young to be dating. Her daughter refuses to listen to her.

1. How would you advise Mary and her daughter?

Case E

Jake and Phil live in the same neighborhood and go to the same local church. They spend much of their free time together. However, all that changed after Jake returned the DVD player he had borrowed from Phil. The DVD player was damaged! Furious, Phil called Jake who confessed he had dropped it accidentally. Phil asked Jake to get him a new one, but he refused. They had a heated argument and they refuse to talk to each other. Eventually Jake came around and bought a new DVD player for Phil. Phil, however, simply snatched the DVD player from Jake's hand and said, "It's about time!" They do not talk to each other anymore.

1. What problems do you see in this case?
2. How would you advise both Jake and Phil?

(Adapted version from A New Life in Christ, A Workbook for New Believers, 9: Repentance, True Jesus Church, 2000)

Part B: Conflicting Situations

There are many types of conflict that can arise among family members, friends, co-workers, and church brothers and sisters. For each category, think of a conflict that may arise and think of specific steps that can be taken to manage it.

Category	Conflict	Resolution
Family		
Friends		
Co-workers in church		
Brothers and sisters in Christ		

Bible Study

Part 1: What does the Bible teach about suicide?

A. It Breaks the Sixth Commandment

Exodus 20:13 states, "You shall not murder." Note that this commandment does not say, "You shall not murder someone," but rather, "You shall not murder," which includes our own life. Human life is sacred. We must cherish it. The Bible records how, on a few occasions, some people did commit suicide. Interestingly enough though, those that who commit suicide were not good men. Every biblical account of suicide reveals an individual whose lifestyle was not honoring God. All were living outside the sphere of the standards of God. These were:

- ☐ a. King Saul and his armor bearer. They killed themselves by falling on their swords because they refused to be killed by their enemies (1 Sam 31:3-5). Saul had walked in his own ways, and was forsaken by the Lord when he turned to witchcraft.
- ☐ b. Ahithophel had devised a plan for Absalom to kill King David. But Absalom did not follow his counsel. Consequently, he went home and hung himself (2 Sam 17:1-4, 23).
- ☐ c. Zimri, military commander of half the chariots in the army of Israel, conspired against the king, struck him and killed him and declared himself king. He killed all the household of Basha, not leaving him any heirs. When the people found out what had happened, they appointed Omri, military commander, as king. The army marched on and besieged Tirzah and defeated the soldiers loyal to Zimri. When Zimri saw that the city was taken he went into the citadel of the king's house and burned the king's house down upon himself with fire (1 Kgs 16:8-20).
- ☐ d. Judas Iscariot, who betrayed the Lord, hung himself by thrusting himself on a pointed beam causing his insides to gush out (Mt 27:3-5; Acts 1:18).

From these four examples, it is quite evident that those who walk in the paths of sin find themselves at a dead end. Therefore, in order for us not to break the sixth commandment, we need to learn to keep our paths in the way of the Lord.

B. It Deprives Us of the Opportunity to Live for the Lord

C. It is Selfish

D. It is Rebellion Against God

E. It is Playing into Satan's Hands

Life Application

A. "Casting All Your Cares Upon Him, For He Cares For You" (1 Pet 5: 7)

In the Bible study section we looked into different biblical characters who asked for death. Many of their reasons were similar: hopelessness, feeling unloved, weariness, Satan's deception, over-burdened. Satan's trap is to deceive people into thinking that there is no hope, that no one loves them. This results in people becoming withdrawn and feeling a sense of hopelessness. But the Lord promised us that He will constantly take care of us as long as we look to Him for help.

Here are the lyrics to a much-loved hymn entitled "God Will Make a Way":

*God will make a way where there
seems to be no way,
He works in ways we cannot see,
He will make a way for me,
He will be my guide,
hold me closely to His side,
With love and strength for
each new day,
He will make a way,
He will make a way.*

Think about the lyrics. Have there been times in your life where you felt there was no way out? How did you manage to cope with the demands of school, family and church? How has the Lord provided a way for you? Share your thoughts with the class. Please also share some Bible verses which helped you in your darkest moments and that you think would help others too. (The following are some verses, but students can come up with their own.)

- a. "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." (Jn 14:18)
- b. "Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." (Is 41:10)
- c. "My soul melts from heaviness; Strengthen me according to Your word." (Ps 119:28)
- d. "I will lift up my eyes to the hills - From whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber ... The Lord is your keeper; The Lord is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, Nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore." (Ps 121:1-8)

Bible Study

Part 2: Why do people ask for death?

- A. No hope
- B. Satan's trap (2 Cor 2:11; 1 Tim 3:7)
- C. Frustrated (Num 11)
- D. Overburdened and Lonely
- E. Mindset

Part 3: What should we do if we have suicidal thoughts?

- A. Tell it to the Lord
- B. Entrust it to the Lord
- C. Allow the power of the spirit to strengthen us

**Check for Understanding****QUESTIONS:**

1. How does committing suicide break the sixth commandment?
2. What are the main reasons why people commit suicide?
3. How is committing suicide a trap from Satan?
4. What should we do if we have suicidal thoughts?



Part B: Case Studies

Below are some real life stories of young Christians who have contemplated suicide. Read and discuss them with the rest of the class. Try to identify the reasons why the person wants to attempt suicide, and think of ways you could encourage him or her.

Case 1: I feel like God has abandoned me and I don't know why!

I believe in God. Yes, I pray and I ask for His guidance. I remember that not long after my conversion, I truly felt God's presence in my life. I felt He was guiding my every step and answered all my questions. But now, I feel that God doesn't seem to be listening to me anymore. My questions are unanswered. I pray to Him, to ask Him to help me, but I feel He has abandoned me. I haven't committed any great sin or anything. Just perhaps the usual ... a white lie here and there. Nothing mortal though. So why do I feel God is not with me? Why do I feel all alone? I just want to quit this world now.

Case 2: I am a Christian, but suicidal too.

Where is God? I feel really down. Things aren't going great at home. Since dad passed away, mom's been shutting herself indoors all the time. She doesn't communicate much with us. I miss dad! There's no one really to talk to here. I don't seem to have the energy or the stamina to do anything anymore. Even attending R.E. classes has become a struggle for me. I know my teachers care, but I just don't want to face people. I'd rather stay in and be on my own. I don't even feel like going out with my friends anymore. I just feel there's no meaning to anything. Sometimes I just want to ask God to take away my life so I can be with dad. I really miss him!

Case 3: I can't bear it anymore!

Everything seems to be going wrong. I studied hard to go to college, yet did not get the grades I needed. At church everyone is giving me a lot of church work to do – teach choir, lead Bible studies, play the piano, teach R.E. I feel overburdened and overwhelmed. Why doesn't someone help me? At home, family life seems unbearable. My sister doesn't come to church anymore. She's hanging out with a bad crowd. Nothing I say or do seems to change her. Mom is worried and dad's no help either. I feel no joy at school, church or home. Where is God? Where is the joy I'm supposed to feel as a Christian? Wouldn't it be better to leave all this behind and go to heaven? Why all this suffering? It's just not worth it!

Case 4: Help!

I started getting involved with a bad crowd a few months back. I experimented with many things. Yes, even alcohol and drugs. I was lucky to be able to get out of it though. No, it wasn't luck. It was definitely God's guidance and I am really thankful to Him for that. But I still feel so sinful. I feel so unworthy to be called His child anymore. I don't know. The sins I committed in the past—I just don't think God would forgive me. I'm so unworthy to be His child. There's just no hope anymore.

Part C: Look to the Cross!

This is a story of how the Lord Jesus gives the little boy a cross to hold until He comes back again. The boy agrees and holds this cross. He waits and waits, but the Lord Jesus still hasn't returned. The boy begins to get very tired and weary. It begins to rain, then storms come and the rain becomes heavier. The boy becomes weak and is unable to bear this cross anymore. Eventually the cross becomes too heavy. The environment seems to be against him too. He falls down and gives up. But then, at that moment, he remembers the promise that he had made to the Lord Jesus: he will carry the cross for Him until the Lord returns. On remembering this, the boy gets up and picks up the cross again. No matter how hard it is he continues to hold the cross because the Lord promised He would return. In the end, the Lord comes back and the boy is rewarded. The boy is extremely joyful and he forgets all the pain he endured. The storms and the rain cease and in their place is sunshine!

After you have viewed this flash with your students, discuss it with them.
(<http://www.donghaeng.net/english/duty.htm>)

Questions to think about:

1. Why do you think this boy was able to hold the cross for so long?
2. What do you think were the reasons behind his fall? Why was he unable to bear the cross anymore? What parallels can you draw between his reasons and your own reasons?
3. In the end, what helped him get back on his feet and bear the cross again? How can this help you?

Bible Study

Part 1 : Internet Addiction: The Facts

A. What is Addiction?

“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach him to use the net ... and he won’t bother you for weeks.”

An addiction is defined as a behavior that:

- provides a feeling of an intoxicating “high” or “rush”
- escalates and becomes habitual
- requires increasing quantities for satisfaction
- continues even in the face of great personal consequences
- displays symptoms of withdrawal when attempting to stop

Is the Internet really a credible form of addiction? According to research, yes it is. Professionals have now termed those who spend hours online or who show characteristics of withdrawal symptoms as having Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD).

B. What Causes Internet Addiction?

The roots of addiction can usually be traced to a wish to suppress or avoid some kind of emotional pain. Addiction is a way to escape from reality, from something that is either too full of sadness or too devoid of joy, which is evident among alcohol and drug addicts. Internet addiction offers a fantasy world where the addict comes into denial and believes that the people he or she meets online are more real than his or her actual friends.

C. What Are They Addicted To?

Research has shown that over 10 percent of students have an Internet dependency problem. Unfortunately, many are usually unaware of this until it becomes serious. In actuality there are many different areas of the Internet that people become addicted to ranging from online multi-user games to online chat rooms. The four main categories of activities that people become hooked on are:

☐ a. Sex

This ranges from pornographic sites to cybersex and encourages such things as flirting to masturbation. Easy access, anonymity, and affordability have all made Internet porn more attractive and seemingly less dangerous. This addiction becomes very dangerous as it could lead to actual meetings with online contacts for in-person sex.

Life Application

Part A: Case Studies

Case 1

As a junior in high school, I got hooked on the Internet. It started out just as chatting in the chat rooms. Slowly, I became addicted to these chat rooms. I even developed a few online penpal relationships. It was harmless, or so I thought. When I think back now, I think I was just fooling myself. There was an appeal to it, somehow. Later, I even met people I came to know from the chat rooms. Some were only a little over four hours away from where I lived. Sometimes, we would get together with each other and hang out. Some days I stayed on the Internet for over twenty hours. Right after class, I would head home and log on. I started failing school, and my relationships with my family members were horrible. It took me over two years to get back to reality again.

Questions to think about:

1. What do you think got this person hooked on the Internet in the first place?
2. What do you think was the appeal in chat rooms?
3. How do you think this person got back to reality?

Case 2

Tony, a 14 year old, rushes home every night to go online to play games, most of which are violent. “By day, I look as if I’m a mild mannered guy, and a hard-working student. People at church think that I’m a good kid,” Tony said. “But by night, with a click of the button, I turn into the most aggressive person that you could imagine. And no one knows it’s me doing this. It’s scary. I need help with it.”

Questions to think about:

1. What do you think causes this aggressiveness in Tony?
2. How can you help him with his addiction?

Bible Study

C. What Are They Addicted To? (*continued*)**■ b. Money**

Gambling, online auctions, day trading and shopping all fall under this category. Such addictions can cause conflict in families when the addict loses or spends a significant portion of the family income.

■ c. Chat Rooms

This also includes instant messaging and is a problem in its own right. Unlike e-mail, chat servers allow for “real-time” interaction. In addition to keeping in touch with loved ones, such technologies allow the user to “meet” and make friends with people from all over the world. They can take on an anonymous new identity and forge new friendships. In some cases these computer-based interactions take the place of real physical human contact, thus leading the person to live in a virtual world.

■ d. Surfing

This is perhaps the only form of Internet addiction whereby the addict can truly be said to be addicted, with the exception of online chatting. Surfing addicts or “Internet vampires” (because they surf all night) thrive on seeing what’s out there. They waste a lot of precious time trying to find if there’s anything interesting. Their quest is not finding specific bits of information but about finding any information, about anything, anywhere.

D. What Are the Effects of Internet Addiction?

Like most other addictions, Internet addiction disrupts relationships with family and friends and has a tendency to replace school and other positive activities. When students get hooked and stay up late every night online, they lose sleep, fail at school, withdraw socially, and lie to their parents about what’s happening. In the most extreme of cases, Internet addiction, particularly pornography, could lead to rape or sexual abuse.

Life Application

Part A: Case Studies
(*continued*)**Case 3**

Stacy gained Internet access as part of her job as an administrative assistant in a busy real estate office. But instead of streamlining her work communication, she cruised the singles ads of cyberspace and met a guy she liked. They typed love messages back and forth throughout the work day. When Stacy’s boss caught on, he cut off her Internet privileges at work and gave her an official warning. “So I begged a friend at work to let me borrow her Internet account,” she confessed. “When my boss found out, he fired me on the spot.”

Questions to think about:

1. What do you think Stacy’s problem is?
2. What does she need to do to stop her from getting into more trouble?

Case 4

I was once addicted to the Internet so much at times I barely even slept. I hardly ever ate, and subsequently lost many, many pounds. It was a blessing and curse all rolled into one. I am thankful that the words of God pulled me out of the chat rooms and made me realize how sinful my mind can be. I have to give thanks to the Spiritual Convocation that I went to. Yes, the internet is very addictive. Be very alert that God is watching every single thing that you do. I vowed to never enter chat rooms anymore. It can lure you into doing many things that are against God’s will, especially sexual sins.

Questions to think about:

1. Do you think it was only the words of God that helped pull this person back? What else helped?
2. Why do people still go and do things they shouldn’t do, knowing that “God is watching every single thing that they do”?

Bible Study

Life Application

Part 2: What are the signs of Internet Addiction?

A. Are we an Internet addict? For each question, put a check in the box that you feel relates to you the best. Then add the numbers you selected for each response to obtain a final score.

QUESTION	Rarely (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Often (4)	Always (5)
1. How often do you find that you stay online longer than you intended?					
2. How often do you neglect your work to spend more time online?					
3. How often do you form new relationships with fellow online users?					
4. How often do others in your life complain to you about the amount of time you spend online?					
5. How often do your grades or school work suffer because of the amount of time you spend online?					
6. How often do you check your email before something else that you need to do?					
7. How often do you become defensive or secretive when anyone asks you what you do online?					
8. How often do you find yourself seeking more stimulating material on the Internet and have experienced guilt or shame about your relationship with God?					
9. How often do you snap, yell, or act annoyed if someone bothers you while you are online?					
10. How often do you lose sleep due to late-night log-ins?					

Part A: Case Studies
(*continued*)

Study the following case studies carefully and answer the questions that follow.

Case 5

Let me describe my tragic story to you. When my parents bought a computer for me, I learned quickly that I could meet friends online. I realized that it didn't matter to my cyberfriends that I was overweight and insecure. The chat room was a place of promise and acceptance. This was a place where I could be myself without being physically seen. Life began to take on more excitement and promise. I spent so many hours online that I didn't even mind if I lost some sleep. What got me more excited was that what started out as friendly chat room conversation soon became cybersex. Cybersex is consensual sex practiced by typing descriptions of sexual acts and exchanging in verbal dialogue via e-mail or instant messaging. Cybersex contains a lot of fantasy and I was thrilled by it. It was soon followed by telephone sex. From there, it didn't take very long to reach the inevitable hotel meeting for "real-time" sex. I was so crazy to meet this woman that it didn't even matter that she was a stranger, except for the time we spent "together" online. Because of my curiosity, I found myself meeting her in the hotel room many times after that. Six months later, I found that I had contracted HIV. It had a shocking impact and it caused so much pain physically and emotionally that it brought me back to reality. I had become addicted to the Internet without realizing it and the disease I tragically contracted was far from virtual.

Questions to think about:

1. Do you think that such a situation could happen in the church? Why or why not?
2. What could have been done to prevent this from happening? When should the person have realized his problem?

Bible Study

Life Application

Part 2: What are the signs of Internet Addiction?

QUESTION	Rarely (1)	Sometimes (2)	Frequently (3)	Often (4)	Always (5)
11. How often do you feel preoccupied with the Internet when offline, or fantasize about being online?					
12. How often do you try to cut down the amount of time you spend online and fail?					
13. How often do you try to hide how long you've been online?					
14. How often do you choose to spend more time online over going out with others?					
15. How often do you feel depressed, moody, or nervous when you are offline, which goes away once you are back online?					

The higher your score, the greater your level of addiction and the problems your Internet usage causes. Here's a general scale to help measure your score:

Total Score**Level of Addiction****15-34 points**

You are an average online user. You may surf the Web a bit too long at times, but you have control over your usage. Try to cut down a bit on your usage.

35-54 points

You are experiencing occasional or frequent problems because of the Internet. You should consider its full impact on your life. You also need to cut down on your usage and try to find other things to fill your life instead.

55-75 points

Your Internet usage is causing significant problems in your life. You should evaluate the impact of the Internet on your life and address the problems directly caused by your Internet usage. You need help. Talk to someone you can trust about your problem.

Adapted from "The Internet Addiction Survey," Dr. Kimberley Young.

Part B: Internet Ministry

Society today is filled with good and evil. The Internet is a reflection of that, offering a wealth of resources, some of which are good and some of which are evil. As Christians, the Lord commanded us to "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Mt 5:16). We need to go out and shine our light on the Internet. We need to use the Internet as a medium for presenting the good news of Jesus Christ and as a tool for ministering to today's youth.

In groups of three or four, think of some ways you could use the Internet to serve God. For example, you could set up a prayer network over the Internet. You could build your own website and have a prayer forum where people can enter prayer requests which will be delivered to you by email. Or you could set up a web log (blog) and post your favorite verses or share your thoughts with other Christians. An excellent web site for this is from some brothers and sisters of our church. The website is www.renewed.nu. Another good website where brothers and sisters can share their thoughts, testimonies, questions or ideas is <http://forum.tjc.ca/portal.php>. Before you do this though, keep the following blog from www.renewed.nu, in mind:

May 17, 2002

For the record, this is written in all sincerity and love. In no way do I want to come off seeming unconstructively critical.

I was awakened this morning with pain in my teeth—I had attempted to wear the retainers I haven't worn for about a year. So six o'clock in the morning I'm lying in bed and, being a thinker/dreamer, something came to mind:

The Internet presents the wonderful opportunity to publish anything you want. You are your own publishing company. With recent user-friendly content management (journal) systems, such as blogger, livejournal, xanga, publishing one's own ideas is even easier. However all of us must realize the very fact that publishing means making public. Hence, the same word root "pub." As followers of Christ we cannot merely follow what everyone else is doing, posting all of our feelings and actions without any concern for our readership. Who is our readership? The

Bible Study

B. Signs of Internet Addiction

Here are some signs of an Internet addict. Are you one of them? Is the amount of time you spend on the Internet having a negative effect on your social, personal, and school lives, and possibly your relationship with God?

- ☐ 1. You can't stop logging on to the Internet on a regular and daily basis.
- ☐ 2. You spend an excessive amount of time in chat rooms.
- ☐ 3. You spend more time online than with friends and loved ones.
- ☐ 4. You are dishonest about the amount of time you spend online.
- ☐ 5. You become defensive and secretive when people ask you what you do online.
- ☐ 6. You are over-dependent on the computer. You spend a lot of time online often overtaking other things in your life like school and God.
- ☐ 7. You're using the Internet as a way of escaping your problems.
- ☐ 8. Your loved ones are concerned about your absence because of the time you spend on the Internet.
- ☐ 9. You demonstrate a loss of control when trying to stop or limit the amount of time on the computer.
- ☐ 10. You feel restless, irritable, depressed, or anxious when someone or something shortens your time or interrupts your plans to use the computer.
- ☐ 11. You find yourself seeking more stimulating material on the Internet and you have experienced guilt or shame about your relationship with God.
- ☐ 12. You find yourself using the computer at times when you are feeling uncomfortable, irritated, or sad about something happening in your life.
- ☐ 13. You find yourself preoccupied with the computer when you are not using the computer.
- ☐ 14. You lose sleep due to staying up late frequently to be online.
- ☐ 15. Your grades and school work are suffering because of the amount of time you spend online.

Part 3: Overcoming Addiction

- A. Repent and Confess to God (Ps 51:17)
- B. Seek Spiritual Support (Jas 5:16)
- C. Practice Self-Discipline (Gal 5:22f)
- D. Establish Intimacy with God (1 Thess 4:3f)
- E. Renew Your Mind (Rom 12:1f)
- F. Find Other Interests

Life Application

Part B: Internet Ministry

PUBLIC, meaning anyone, including your next door neighbor, our school mates, some stranger searching the Internet, your little sister, mother, pastor, or perhaps younger believers in Christ who cannot discern yet what is right or wrong. The latter is my main concern.

An owner of a blog must question the purpose of his/her blog. What's its point? A place to encourage, exhort, edify? To entertain, to vent, rant, and rave? Or just a place to let folks know what's going on?

My main point is, if you have a blog, or are planning on creating a weblog, consider your readership and the point of your blog. I believe most intend their readership to be other TJC friends. In that case, please watch what you write—there are younger ones (physically or spiritually) that will not benefit from certain types of posts. Those go in your own personal journal, not on the Internet. If we are going to be a generation that simply follows trends without foresight, we are in some deep trouble. We ought to use technology to our advantage.

I am happy to say that the guest writers on this site have exemplified this, and in fact, at times, write too little! If we could only have more of their learning experiences and acquired wisdom! Our guest writers, including myself, go through the same deal most people go through—fun, laughter, sadness, spirituality struggles, and personal problems. But a PUBLIC blog, especially from a TJC believer, should follow the teachings of Ephesians 4:29, "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your [fingers], but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the [readers]." Therefore, blog in moderation with nothing excessive, avoid unnecessary posts, and privatize in your own handwritten journal.

Remember: you must critically examine your motive and the way you use the Internet. "Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thess 5:21f).

Bible Study

Part 1 : What's the Big Deal About Watching Movies?

From their inception, motion pictures and television have pushed the boundaries of morality in society farther from the standard of God's word. Nowadays many movies, even PG-13 ones, contain nudity, immorality, violence, and foul language. From the standpoint of a Christian who wants to obey the Lord's call to holiness, there is no real difference. Immodesty is immodesty. Cursing is cursing. Blasphemy is blasphemy. Extramarital sex is extramarital sex. If one movie contains a little less of these things than another movie, that does not make either movie acceptable before God.

It is crucial that we make wise choices regarding entertainment so that we will not stumble. The moral stances and opinions of the film industry, particularly Hollywood, are very different to, and often contradict, God's standards. If we want to be godly and innocent, then we must show it with our actions. If we say we want to be holy and set apart for God, then we must be careful what we ingest into our lives. As apostle Paul reminds us, "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim 2:22).

When it comes to choosing movies, we must be wise in our decisions. Many movies today are filled with things that can be destructive to our resolve and convictions. Have we ever sat through a movie that made us cringe? Have we ever seen something on the screen that we wished we could erase from our memory? We must know our convictions and live with them. Don't let movies be the cause of our downfall! The following are four areas which we need to be aware of when watching movies.

- A. Sexual Content (1 Thess 4:1-8)
- B. Negative and Cynical Views of God
- C. Violence and Anger (Rom 1:28-32)
- D. Occult Movies

Part 2: What Are Our Motives?

- A. Boredom
- B. Stimulation



Life Application

Part A: The Brownie Story

A father of two teenagers had a rule in the house that no one could watch R rated movies. One time, a really popular movie came out that all the youths were raving about. Even youths at church were talking about it. The teens really wanted to watch the movie, but it was rated R so they knew their father would not readily permit them to see the movie. To make a case, they decided to research and list all of the pros and cons of watching that movie. The pros were that it was a quality film made by a famous producer, it starred famous actors, had a good storyline, etc. The cons were that it had some foul language, violence, and one sex scene (but mostly implied sex, which we see on regular TV). The teens presented their case to the father. To their delight, he said that he would think about it and let them know that evening.

That evening, the father called his kids downstairs to his study to hear the verdict. The kids came down and were pleasantly surprised to see their father with a plate of brownies. The father said to the kids, "I thought through your request to see the movie and I will allow you to watch the movie if you will simply eat a brownie." The kids jumped with glee. "But before you try the brownie, I'd like you to know that I made these from scratch, following a famous cookbook recipe and using the finest ingredients. The only thing is that I added a little bit of dog poop. I mixed it thoroughly into the batch, so you probably won't even taste it." The kids were grossed out with the thought of eating dog poop and would not dare to eat the brownie.

Questions to think about:

1. What case was the father trying to make with the brownies?
2. Do you think the kids went to see the movie? If not, what prevented them from going?
3. What does this tell us about watching certain movies, especially R rated ones?

Part B: Case Studies**Case 1**

Brock, a church brother, confides that he has been watching adult movies on cable television late at night. Recently, he has had difficulty praying because scenes from the movies flash in his mind every time he closes his eyes. He has completely stopped reading the Bible and has lost interest in attending church services. He knows what he is doing is wrong, but he lacks the strength or the will to stop. ("Overcoming Temptations and Sin," *A New Life in Christ, Workbook for New Believers*, True Jesus Church, 2000)

Questions to think about:

1. What practical advice could you give him? What could you share from personal or others' experience that could help him?
2. What other action might you take?

Case 2

Olivia loves to watch movies. Every opportunity she gets, she will try to get other people to watch movies with her. She likes all kinds of movies. However, Olivia also loves to come to church to worship God, pray, and study the Bible. Recently, Olivia was put in charge of the Religious Education department at her local church. She has been doing an excellent job. In fact, Olivia is one of the most respected teachers among her R.E. students.

One Sabbath Day, following church services, Olivia took all the children from her class to see a very sexually explicit and violent blockbuster movie. There, she reminded the children that they should not use movie stars or the plots in the movies as models for their spiritual life.

But over time, one of her students, a young sister in the eighth grade, decides that it would be a good idea to get a boyfriend. The young sister recalls how the good-looking hero in the movie had intimate relationships with a number of beautiful women. The young sister is excited about experiencing what it's like to have a boyfriend. So the young sister decides to start chasing one of the best-looking guys at her school. Eventually, this young sister gets this popular guy at her school to go out on a date. As time goes on, this guy wants to spend more and more time with the young sister. In fact, he wants to spend so much time that this young sister can no longer come to church on the Sabbath.

Olivia, her R.E. teacher is concerned about this young sister's faith. She calls her student and asks her if she wants to go see a movie with her on Saturday night. The young sister accepts Olivia's invitation and they go see a popular romantic comedy. ("Repentance," *A New Life in Christ, Workbook for New Believers*, True Jesus Church, 2000)

Questions to think about:

1. What problems can you see in this story?
2. Can you find any biblically-based sin in this story?
3. What needs to be done to rectify the situation?

Part C: The 23rd Channel

The TV is my shepherd. I shall not want;

It makes me lie down on the sofa;

It leads me away from the faith; It destroys my soul.

It leads me in the paths of sex and violence for the sponsor's sake.

Yea, though I walk in the shadow of Christian responsibilities, there will be no interruption for the TV is with me;

Its cable and remote control, they comfort me.

It prepares a commercial for me in the presence of my worldliness;

It anoints my head with humanism and consumerism, my coveting runneth over.

Surely, laziness and ignorance shall follow me all the days of my life;

and I shall dwell in the house watching TV forever.

Questions to think about:

1. How does this contrast with Psalms 23?
2. What message is the author trying to get across with this poem?
3. Do you agree with this psalm?

Bible Study

Part 3: Pursue Spiritual Sensitivity

Many Christians have allowed themselves to become desensitized to sin. They have become like a frog. If we drop a frog into a pot of boiling hot water it would immediately try to jump out, but if we put the frog in the pot and gradually increase the heat, we can eventually boil it because it does not recognize what is happening to it. This is what has happened to the average Christian in today's wicked society. They have been influenced by the society around them. Instead of setting themselves apart from society, they have in turn lowered their Christian standards and morals to fit in with the world. This should not be the case.

We need to have spiritual sensitivity. Spiritual sensitivity is the ability to perceive and respond, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to God's will, His love, and our wrongdoings. To be spiritually sensitive is to be alert. This comes about through prayer and through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Here are some tips on pursuing spiritual sensitivity.

- A. Listen Carefully to the Lord's Instructions (Jas 1:21)
- B. Knit Our Hearts to the Heart of God (Ps 73:28)
- C. Open Our Eyes (Ps 101:3)

**Check for Understanding****QUESTIONS:**

1. What are the four areas we need to be aware of when making entertainment choices?
2. What are the two main motives for watching movies?
3. What should we do to pursue spiritual sensitivity?
4. How does the word of God act as a sword?



Life Application

Part D: TV or Not TV

Fill in the questionnaire below with members of your group. Be ready to share your completed questionnaire with the rest of the class.

1. **How many hours a week do you watch TV? (average of each member of the group)**
2. **What one program is each member of the group most likely to watch each week? (list one for each member)**
3. **In what area of your life has TV most affected you?**
4. **If there were no TV, how would your life be different? What would you do without TV?**
5. **Can you think of any instruction given in the Bible that applies to your television viewing? Try to come up with several.**
6. **Could watching TV ever be considered a sin? When?**
7. **How can a person set guidelines for his own viewing? Write three rules that you think would be generally helpful for everyone.**
8. **Think of some better ways you could use your time and money. For example, instead of going to the movies, you could set aside the money for the churches in Africa.**

Bible Study

Life Application

Part 1: What does the Bible say about loneliness?

Loneliness is a painful awareness that we lack close and meaningful contact with others. When we are lonely, we have a feeling of inner emptiness, isolation, and intense longing. Even when surrounded by others, lonely people often feel left out, unwanted, rejected, or misunderstood. They will feel frustrated, a sense of hopelessness and are unable to initiate, continue, or experience a close relationship.

In addition, loneliness is a feeling of alienation—alienation from God and alienation from other people. It can be defined on two levels:

- 1. Human or Emotional Level—This is between you and others.*
- 2. Spiritual Level—This is between you and God. Sometimes when you try to pursue spiritual advancement and the people who surround you are not spiritual, then you will spiritually feel very lonely. Often this sense of isolation is felt when the person is separated from God and feels that life has no meaning or purpose. You need encouragement but no one can encourage you. You feel spiritually alone and no one understands you. That type of spiritual loneliness is not good and may eventually lead to the backsliding of your faith.*

In our spiritual lives, we can be alone, but we should not have the feeling of loneliness. Jesus Christ mingled with a lot of people during the day, but in the evening, He withdrew Himself to be alone to communicate with God (Lk 5:15f). When He withdrew, He was alone, but not lonely.

Feelings of loneliness were also evident in the lives of Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Job, Nehemiah, Elijah, and Jeremiah. In Psalm 142 King David wrote about his loneliness in the cave. However, instead of just talking about it, he used it to connect to God. He also mentioned, “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me” (Ps 27:10).

Likewise, our Lord Jesus also experienced loneliness in the Garden of Gethsemane. The pain and anguish He suffered was evident through His earnest prayers. He was only able to overcome this pain and loneliness through the Father’s help—an angel appeared and strengthened Him (Lk 22:41-44; Mt 26:36-45).

The solution for loneliness as seen from the Scriptures is to have a growing relationship with God and with others. That is, loneliness will only disappear when we have communion with God and we learn to love, help, care, forgive and encourage one another. In actuality the two sides of loneliness—emotional and spiritual—are interrelated. If we have a good relationship with God, we will naturally have good relationships with others and will not emotionally feel lonely. When we feel lonely it is often a reflection of our interpersonal relationship problems as well as problems in our relationship with God. Remember that God will never forget us (Is 49:15f).

Part A: On Loneliness

The following is a brother’s web log on the subject of loneliness. Read through it and then think about the questions that follow.

To my younger brother, my brethren-in-Christ at schools away from church, my friends who are without their parents, and all who are lonely:

For the last seven weeks or so, I’ve lived alone with my older brother; of which one week I was left completely alone since he went to NYTS. Normally, I thrive on these times—I have always valued independence, autonomy, and self-reliance. They are often very good learning experiences.

But during that week, while I did learn and experience much, on an emotional level, more often than expected, I have found myself lonely and longing for companionship. Actually, it’s a feeling that sometimes also occurs even when surrounded by oodles of friends.

Sometimes we feel alone because of the problems we face, what lies ahead of us, and what we feel. But most often we feel left alone, ostracized, and cast away when there are no close friends nearby.

One thing that occurred to me in prayer in the last week is that Jesus Christ truly can sympathize and relate with loneliness; more than you can even imagine. After all, look at what is written:

“When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping ...” (Lk 22:41).

No one comforted Him in his pain, His anguish, and His agony. No shoulder to cry on. No friend to hug and squeeze tight. No one to pray with Him to share mutual woes and flow the sympathizing tear. He was left alone to pray.

“Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled” (Mt 26:55).

Bible Study

Part 2: Causes of Loneliness

- A. Lack of Friendship and Support (Ecc 4:9-12)
- B. Missing Someone
- C. Feeling Rejected or Abused
- D. Separation From Our Heavenly Father

Part 3: The Effects of Loneliness

A. Low Self-Esteem

When we are lonely, we will experience feelings of worthlessness and the inability to relate to others. It may also result in withdrawal into a self-centered thinking, a belief that nobody understands us. This in turn will result in complete withdrawal and cutting oneself off from society. This is dangerous.

There was a youth who did not go to school for a few months. He felt extremely lonely so he started to play games on the Internet until 4 a.m., as a way to numb the pain of loneliness. Because of his addiction, he was unable to get himself up in time for school. And because he could not go to school, he did not have any friends. So he withdrew himself and played on the Internet all day. He could not get himself out of this vicious cycle.

Low self-esteem arises as a result of not being in touch with others or with God. We must remember that withdrawing into ourselves will only increase our feelings of low self-esteem. Instead, we must remain positive and remember that "our sufficiency is from God" (2 Cor 3:5). Don't forget that we are not alone, for the Scriptures advise us that the Lord understands our sorrow and our heartache. We must trust and believe in Him, pour out our hearts to Him for He has "put [your] tears into [His] bottle" (Ps 56:8).

B. Depression

Lonely people sometimes have a hopelessness that can lead to despair and even thoughts of suicide. When loneliness is too great, it leads to depression and suicide becomes a way out.

In the United States, children are experiencing high levels of loneliness. Many of their parents are devoted to their careers and their children have no one to relate to. Consequently, they turn to TV, and are obsessed with entertainment and the Internet. But deep down in their hearts, they are very lonely and depressed.

Life Application

Part A: On Loneliness *(continued)*

Not one was willing to stand up for Jesus, after all He had done for them. He had given all; no one showed appreciation. He was left alone to die.

"Then he began to curse and swear, saying, 'I do not know the Man!'" (Mt 26:74).

Of all people, Peter, his closest disciple and friend, not only denied discipleship and friendship with Him, but denied relations with him. He was left alone to suffer.

"But they shouted, saying, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him!'" (Lk 23:21).

The very people He loved, healed, exorcized, and fed, betrayed him. The people He came to save rejected Him, choosing a convict's life rather than the innocent, evil rather than grace, crimes rather than miracles. He was left alone to be despised.

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?'" (Mt 27:46).

Of all the sinners deserving to be forsaken by God, God forsook His innocent Son. Jesus Christ was cast away from the presence of the living God. Of all beings, Lord Jesus was left alone by the One who shuns no one.

In utter opprobrium, Lord Jesus was left alone to suffer, bleed, and die.

You are not alone. Lord Jesus' heart goes out to all of you. He will be Your guide and stay if you let Him. And He is just a prayer away.

(www.renewed.nu)

Questions to think about:

1. How is Christ able to understand our loneliness?
2. How will the Lord Jesus "not leave [us] orphans"?

Bible Study

Part 3: The Effect of Loneliness (*continued*)

It seems that we are living in a generation of loneliness and of famine. “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord God, “That I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord” (Amos 8:11). Here, the Lord states the signs of loneliness. The famine on the land—bread and water—refer to material satisfaction. In this generation we have a lot of material enjoyment but our inner hearts are not fulfilled. When we watch too much TV, it is difficult to develop a proper interpersonal relationship because we are waiting for the stimulation to come in order for us to react. Once we watch TV for too long it becomes a pattern and will become passive. If we cultivate a habit of relating to TV, we will find it difficult to relate to God or to others. That is why in Amos it says that the famine is coming to the world. It is not because of entertainment but because we are lonely and are not satisfied. We lack interpersonal relationships between God and men.

C. Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (Prov 20:1; 23:29-33; Is 5:11; 28:7)

Alcohol and drugs are commonly used by many as a means to escape. Some turn to these in an attempt to find friends or to numb the pain of being alone. The Bible clearly tells us that turning to such substances is wrong: “Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts” (Rom 13:14; Eph 5:18).

D. Sex and Violence (Gal 5:19-21; Prov 6:16; 16:29; 1 Cor 16:15f)

Others express their frustration of loneliness through forging sexual relationships with others or displaying violent outbursts. Remember this: “The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; he who keeps his ways preserves his soul” (Prov 16:17).

Part 4: Overcoming Loneliness

A. Reach Our Hand to Love Someone (1 Jn 4:7-13)

B. Communicate (Phil 2:1f)

C. Have Fellowship with God (1 Jn 1:3-7)



Check for Understanding

QUESTIONS:

1. What is loneliness?
2. What are the two levels of loneliness?
3. What are the causes of loneliness and how can they be overcome?
4. How does sin cause us to be lonely?
5. What are the common effects of loneliness?
6. How can people overcome it?
7. What is the real secret in dealing with loneliness?

Part C: Reach Out!

We've already learned that everyone faces loneliness at some time or other. But we also studied that even though loneliness strikes, we can be assured that if we turn to Christ and walk with Him, we never need to be alone. Having been helped by Christ to overcome our loneliness, it's our turn to help others overcome theirs!

There was a woman who lived in a large apartment and worked in a shop with many people. Even though she knew a lot of people, every evening she would tune into the "sign off" statement of a radio station just to hear a voice saying, "We wish you a very pleasant good-night." She imagined that this person was just speaking to her! She hungered for a personal greeting even though she met hundreds of people every day.

Do you feel this hunger? Or do you know of someone who also feels this way? Why not reach out to someone and give that person a personal call or send them an Email? Or think of other ways that you could reach out to someone so that they will experience the joy of feeling wanted and loved.

Here are some ideas that your class could do:

1. Put together a care package for those who have not been to church for a while, or who study away from home.
2. Call a friend and visit a member together.
3. Run an errand for a neighbor.

What other ideas can you come up with?

Part B: All I Ever Do Is Love You

The following are the lyrics from the hymn: "All I Ever Do Is Love You."

"When you're feeling lonely, when your heart is aching, when something happens that makes you doubt my love. Then my child, come close to me, just be still and listen. I long to comfort you and renew you in my love.

Don't let your heart be troubled, just take my hand, it doesn't matter if you can't understand; don't be afraid, trust in my love, for I will never, ever fail you, I'll never forsake or let you down. All I ever do is love you, yes, you are always in my thoughts, you are always in my care; my arms of love are all you need, so learn to trust in me completely, for I will not forsake or let you go.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my word goes on forever, My word lives on forever. I will not forsake you, I will never leave you alone."

Questions to think about:

1. How do you feel when you read these lyrics?
2. "I'll never forsake or let you down." How does the Lord never forsake us nor let us down?
3. During your times of loneliness, what did you do to help yourself overcome it? How did the Lord help you? Be prepared to share with the class.

Bible Study

Part 1: What Does the Bible Say About Anxiety?

“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” (Mt 6:34)

Worry is practically an epidemic in modern society. The medical word for worry is anxiety, and every year, Americans spend millions of dollars on tranquilizers and nerve relaxers to conquer anxiety. Worry is anxiety over circumstances beyond our control. According to *Webster's New World Dictionary* anxiety is “a state of being uneasy, apprehensive, or worried about what may happen; concern about a possible future event.”

In the Bible, anxiety is described in two ways—as healthy concern and as fret or worry.

■ a. Anxiety in the Form of Concern

This is not wrong, nor is it forbidden. In fact, this is a type of healthy concern, just like what apostle Paul wrote, “Besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches” (2 Cor 11:28).

■ b. Anxiety in the Form of Fret and Worry

This is when our problems overtake us. We become burdened and worry unnecessarily about things that may or may not happen.

Anxiety has been around for a long time. Even in Jesus' day, anxiety was everywhere. The people standing on the mountainside when He delivered the Sermon on the Mount were no different than us. What did the Lord Jesus say to them to help them deal with the pressures and fears of living? He gave them a cure for anxiety. He dealt directly with the cause and had a cure for the worried, anxious heart. He taught them that they should not worry about the future or about life's basic needs because the Lord knows and understands all this. “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; not about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Mt 6:25-34). In other words, anxiety is futile because life is more than things. It is more than the material. It is more than the physical. It has an eternal dimension to it that is beyond us.

Apostle Paul also echoes this by telling us to “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:6f).

Life Application

Part A: Anxieties? No Worries!

What are some things you worry about? List some of the things you worry about and share them with the class. Once you have shared your worry, the class will advise you on how to overcome it.

- My Worries
- How Should I Overcome Them?

Part B: Share Your Advice

“A problem shared is a problem halved.” The following are some worries that some people are having. Can you advise them?

Case 1

Dear Abby,

I'm all stressed out! It's my last year of high school and I've got way too much on my plate. I'm on the football team, student council, National Honor Society, plus I've got responsibilities towards friends, family, school and church. AAARRGGH!!! It seems like I have a paper to write every day. I'm rushing around all the time, cramming things in last minute. I don't even have time to eat properly. I'm spread really thin. What should I do? I don't want to repeat all this when I go to college next year. Can you help?

Yours,
Senior in Distress

*(Dear Senior in Distress,
You need to allow God to direct your steps, like it says in Jeremiah 10:23, you don't have to sign up for every worth while activity. Ask God to guide you so that you can stay in line with His plans for you (Jer 29:11). You will have to prioritize your activities and you may have to drop once which you really don't have time for. What do you see as the most important? Remember to leave room for God in your life. Yours, Abby)*

Bible Study

Part 1: What Does the Bible Say About Anxiety?
(*continued*)

When we turn ourselves away from God and shift the burdens and responsibilities of life onto ourselves, this will cause us great anxiety and stress (Prov 12:25). By doing so, we will slip into self-reliance and preoccupation with our own life pressures. The Bible does not say that there is anything wrong with facing and dealing with the problems of life. But it is wrong, and unhealthy, to be consumed by excessive worry. Of course, it is not easy to banish anxiety and completely cast all our cares on the Lord Jesus (1 Pet 5:7). But what we do need help in is how to handle pressures realistically and within God's perfect time.

Part 2: What are the Causes of Anxiety?

- A. Guilt (Rom 5:12-14; 3:23)
- B. Fear (1 Jn 4:18)
- C. Lack of Interaction
- D. Lack of Meaning (Phil 1:21)

Part 3: God's Plan to Conquer Worry

What should we do when we are worried? Philippians 4:4-9 gives us five specific steps for conquering the problem. Let's look into these steps to see how we can overcome it.

- A. Rejoice in the Lord Always (Phil 4:4; 1 Thess 5:16)
- B. Learn to Cope Through Gentleness (Phil 4:5)
- C. Be Anxious for Nothing. Pray! (Phil 4:6f)
- D. Think – Look at the Matter with God's Vision (Phil 4:8)
- E. Learn to Live Right (Phil 4:9)

Life Application

Part B: Share Your Advice (*continued*)**Case 2**

Dear Abby,

I can't cope! Mom's at work all the time so it's up to me to look after my younger brothers and sisters. But she forgets that I'm still at school too and I need my own space and time. Plus church work is piling up. I have to teach R.E., choir, plus help our class organize our quarterly activities. It's all getting too much. I'm worried that I may break down soon under all this pressure.

Yours,
Worried in Wichita

(Dear Worried in Wichita,
You need to have a serious talk with your mom. Let her know that you can't cope, that you need help. Let her know how much stress you're under too. She'll understand. You also need to talk to some brothers and sisters in church about your situation. Let them know that you're under a lot of stress. They'll be most willing to help you in whatever way possible. Above all, learn to rely on God. Tell Him your problems. Remember, He will never give you more than you can handle (1 Cor 10:13). Yours, Abby)

Case 3

Dear Abby,

Personally when it comes to exams I just can't stop worrying! I do my best. I try to take deep breaths before and after each exam. But when it comes to putting pen to paper, everything seems to go out the window. I can't seem to sleep well at night. I feel lethargic all the time. How do I overcome my exam anxiety?

Yours,
Exam Worrier

(Dear Exam Worrier,
You really do have anxiety over your exams. First, you must learn to delete the causes. What causes you anxiety when you are studying? Too much noise? Procrastination? Second, you need to displace thoughts. If you get up at all hours in the night, then perhaps you can do something productive to allow you to sleep better when you finally do go back to bed. Try to pray to ask God to let you go back to sleep. It's a great cure for insomnia! Another way to displace any negative thoughts is to get physical. Take on some form of exercise like walking or running. Third, treat the symptoms. Keep things in perspective. If you put in your best effort and entrust all to God, you have nothing to worry about. Go in and take the exam with peace in your heart knowing that God is looking out for you! Yours, Abby)

Bible Study

Part 4: Pursue Spiritual Maturity

Spiritual maturity is the antidote to worry. It is something that every Christian needs to pursue. The problems we encounter in life, whether big or small, will bring us towards spiritual maturity.

When we encounter difficulties in life, we must never give up! Our spiritual journey is like a marathon. The last hill always seems like the toughest. We can't win the race in the first mile. We have to keep running until we're finally home. We need to pace ourselves and be prepared for the detours and hills. When they come along, don't give up the race. Remember, when the going gets tough, the tough get going: "Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved" (Ps 55:22). All the problems we encounter now are there to strengthen and shape us.

Whatever our problems may be, they pale in comparison to the light of eternity. No matter how great our failures, God's grace is greater still, for "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9). Lift up our hearts and eyes. Do not avoid our problems and do not worry. Tackle each one directly, knowing that God will help us through. The tougher the problem, the greater His grace will be.

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day" (2 Cor 4:16). This is the Christian spirit and attitude that we all need to pursue in order to be spiritually mature. May the Lord guide us in all your endeavors to become spiritually mature Christians so that we can freely give over all our worries and burdens to Him.

**Check for Understanding****QUESTIONS:**

1. What does the Bible teach us about anxiety?
2. What are the causes of anxiety?
3. How does a lack of meaning in our lives bring about anxiety?
4. What are the five steps we should take to conquer worry?
5. What is the cure for anxiety?
6. How does spiritual maturity enable us to give over our worries?

Life Application

Part B: Share Your Advice
(continued)**Case 4**

Dear _____,
I'm having problems with feeling anxious about everything. I think I have too much on my plate. What do you think are the causes of my anxiousness and how can I overcome them?

Yours,
Anxious Amy

(Dear Anxious Amy,
Your anxiety could come from stress. Here are a few ways to deal with it.

1. Admit you're stressed.
2. Make a list. Write down every single activity you're involved in and the time you spend in it.
3. Take your list to someone you trust. This should preferably be someone who has a high level of spirituality. Have this person go over the list with you. Talk about why each item is important to you. Discuss your priorities.
4. Prioritize your list. Determine what you need to cut out of your life and what should take precedence.
5. Practice saying no. If you want to become less anxious you must learn to say no.
6. Think about your use of time. Ask for tips on how to manage your time better.
7. Keep God first. Place your hope and trust in God. Make Him your first priority and everything else will fall neatly into place.

These are just a few tips. You can think of other tangible ways too. I pray that the Lord will guide you and give you the peace you need! Remember, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:6f). God bless you! Yours, Abby)

Bible Study

Part 1: Who Are Hypocrites?

According to the Merriam Webster online dictionary, hypocrisy is defined as:

1. a feigning to be what one is not or to believe what one does not; especially: the false assumption of an appearance of virtue or religion
2. an act or instance of hypocrisy

The word derives from the Greek *hypokrisis*, an act of playing a part on the stage.

Thus, according to the above description, a hypocrite is someone who pretends. He is a person who does not act his real self but disguises himself to be another. Let's look into what the Scriptures say about hypocrites and how our Lord Jesus refers to them.

"Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do." (Mt 23:3)

The Pharisees and Scribes were meticulous in obeying the Law. They devised many of their own laws, which were supposed to help them better obey God's laws. However, when they lost the true spirit of the Law they became an organized group of hypocrites. Let's see what their problem was and find what we can do to check ourselves.

A. Those Who Are Proud (Mt 23:1-12)

B. Those Who Put on a Religious Show (Mt 23:23f; 6:1-4)

C. Those Who Act Holy (Mt 23: 25-28)

Life Application

Part A: Testimonies of Wholeheartedness

Testimony 1

Two sisters were praying, when suddenly, both cried out aloud. After the prayer, they both asked each other why the other suddenly cried out. One sister said that she heard a voice saying, "You are not serving me with your whole heart." The other sister said she heard the same voice. They decided there and then that they needed to serve and worship the Lord God with their whole hearts.

Testimony 2

Two brothers had the same dream. Both saw an angel coming to them. The angel displayed two books before them, one with brother X's name and the other with brother Y's name. The angel opened up brother X's book: on one side was a record of all the things he had done, with a list of all the holy work he had carried out. On the other side was a check mark against each work carried out. When the brother saw this, he was very joyful. Next the angel turned to brother Y and opened up his book. In his book, it also noted the works he had done, but against nearly every single one were crosses rather than check marks. He only had a few check marks against his works. Both brothers knew in their hearts what this meant. Brother Y, not surprisingly, was not very happy with his book. The angel told them that they are both working very hard, but one was using his whole heart to serve God, while the other one wasn't.

Questions to think about:

1. What do the two testimonies tell us about our attitude in worshiping and serving God?
2. Why is it important to serve with our whole heart? (Ps 9:1; 138:1; 111:1; 119:2; 34:10,69,143)

Bible Study

Part 2: You, Hypocrite!

Are you playing the part of a hypocrite? Do you teach or advocate one thing while doing the complete opposite when no one is looking? Take the following quiz to find out.

Do you... Sometimes(3 (2 pts)...Rarely(1pt)...Never(0pt)

- ☐ 1. emphasize to others how important the Bible is, but seldom read it?
- ☐ 2. insist prayer is your link to God, but only make time for one-liners to the Lord during your busy day?
- ☐ 3. promise you'll pray for someone in need, but never remember to do it?
- ☐ 4. express your respect for church leaders, but bad-mouth the pastor if he preaches too long or points out something you don't want to hear?
- ☐ 5. talk about your concern for people who don't know Jesus, but make little effort to share your faith?
- ☐ 6. state how crucial honesty is, but spit out a white lie if it'll help you in a sticky situation?
- ☐ 7. tell others you obey your parents, but fuss when they want you to clean the kitchen?
- ☐ 8. say how important it is to hang out with other believers, but choose to spend more time with your non-Christian friends than your Christian ones?
- ☐ 9. announce that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, but abuse it with tobacco, drugs, alcohol or extreme amounts of food?
- ☐ 10. preach that tithing is biblical, as well as important, but spend your money on CDs, movies and clothes before you give God His portion?
- ☐ 11. maintain that you want your thoughts to always please Jesus, but fill your mind with books, movies, TV shows and magazines that are anything but godly?
- ☐ 12. vow to do anything for the Lord, but say you're too busy when asked to do something for the church?
- ☐ 13. make it clear you believe in abstinence, but spend time alone with your boyfriend or girlfriend doing things you know are wrong?
- ☐ 14. say you don't curse, but let out a few choice words if you get cut off in traffic or slam the door on your finger?
- ☐ 15. say that cheating is wrong, but tell your friend about some of the questions on the history test you took the period before his/her class?

Life Application

Part B: Hell is Real

I went into my classroom
Ready for another year at school.
I didn't want the work,
Just wanted to hang and be cool.
I had on new clothes,
New sneakers on my feet.
I was there for class on time
Went to the back and took my seat.
Yeah, I'm moving up.
I'm already grown.
Soon I'll be graduating
And out on my own.
I talked to some of my friends.
We were all having fun.
Said some things I shouldn't have said,
Did stuff I shouldn't have done.
I knew I was different.
I felt God touch my heart.
I knew I should set a standard,
But then I'd be set apart.
Walking to the bus,
I was not looking for strength.
I heard the car tires screeching,
But now it's too late.
I'm standing in this room
And I can see the heavenly gate.
Oh no! I never prayed.
I thought I had time to get it straight.
An angel walked to me.
He had a book in his hand.
I knew it was the Book of Life.
When would this dream end?
I told him my name
And he began to look.
Then he looked at me sadly and said
Your name is not in this book.
Angel, this is a dream.
No, I can't be dead!
He closed the book and turned away.
He whispered-You cannot proceed ahead.
No ... no this can't be real.
Angel, you can't turn me away.
Let me talk to God.

Bible Study

Part 2: You, Hypocrite! *(continued)*

Scoring

Give yourself three points for every “never” answer, two points for every “rarely” answer, one point for “sometimes” and zero for “often.”

Score 40-45 points

You usually do what you say you believe. That’s great! Only by living the godly life that the Bible teaches are you going to have true contentment. But remember hypocrisy is subtle and can easily creep in when you’re least expecting it. So keep on evaluating yourself to make sure you’re avoiding it.

Score 25-39 points

You’ve got some problem areas, but they’re nothing that God and you can’t handle. Take a closer look at the specific areas in which you’re being a hypocrite. Is it your devotional life? Or maybe it’s at school or on the job. Start confessing your sin and praying for strength to make wise choices. Consider asking a trusted Christian friend to pray with you, too. You can become more of the person the Lord wants you to be.

Score Below 24 points

If you don’t want to hang out with the scribes and Pharisees whom Jesus condemned for hypocrisy, you need a major overhaul. The good news is that God is more than happy to do it, if you’re willing to cooperate. Begin by telling Him you’re sorry for the way you’ve said the right things, but done the wrong ones. Seek advice and help from a Christian adult who’d be willing to meet with you on a regular basis for prayer and accountability. You don’t have to wallow in hypocrisy!

Adapted version from <http://www.briomag.com/briomagazine/quizzes/a0005401.html>

Life Application

Part B: Hell is Real

Maybe He’ll let me stay.
 He led me to the gate.
 Jesus came to me,
 He did not let me in but said,
 Beloved what is your need?
 Jesus, I cried, please
 Don’t cast me away from you.
 Tears ran down His face as He said,
 You knew what you needed to do.
 Lord, please I’m young.
 I never thought I would die.
 I thought I’d have plenty of time.
 Death caught me by surprise.
 Lord, I went to church.
 Please Jesus, I believe.
 He said you would not accept me.
 My love you would not receive.
 Lord, there were too many hypocrites.
 They weren’t being true.
 He took a step back and asked
 What does that have to do with you?
 Lord, my family claimed to be saved,
 They weren’t real. You know.
 He said, I died for you.
 Now I have to go.
 I fell to my knees crying to Him.
 Lord, I planned to be real tomorrow.
 I couldn’t make Him understand.
 I had never felt such sorrow.
 Then it hit me hard, I said
 Lord, where will I go?
 He looked into my eyes and said,
 My child you already know.
 Please Jesus, I begged
 The place is so hot.
 It seemed to trouble and grieve Him.
 He whispered, DEPART FROM ME, I
 KNOW YOU NOT.

Bible Study

Part 3: Be a True Christian

In the end, no one is immune to hypocrisy. Every Christian must fight daily to practice what he preaches. If we find ourselves engaging in any type of sinful activities, then either stop the sin or refrain from teaching against the sin until we are ready to change.

Wisely, King David wrote, "I have not sat with idolatrous mortals, nor will I go in with hypocrites" (Ps 26:4). If we want to please God and be a true Christian, practice what we preach and preach what we practice.

- A. Give Him Our Heart (Col 3:23; Mt 15:8f)
- B. Give Him Our All (1 Cor 13:3)
- C. Give Him Our Very Best (Lev 23:9-14)
- D. Worship Him in Spirit and Truth (Jn 4:24)



Check for Understanding

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the tell-tale signs of a hypocrite?
2. How can we check ourselves to see if we are true Christians?
3. In order to be true Christians, what does the Lord require of us? (cf. Mic 6:8)

Life Application

Part B: Hell is Real

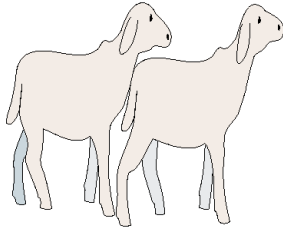
Lord, you're supposed to be love.
 How can you send me to damnation?
 He replied, With your mouth you said you loved me,
 But each day you rejected my salvation.
 With that in an instant,
 Day turned into night.
 I never knew such torture could be.
 Now too late, I know the Bible is right.
 If I can tell you anything,
 Hell has no age.
 It is a place of torture,
 Separated from God and full of rage.
 You know I thought it was funny — a joke,
 But this one thing is true.
 If you never accept Jesus Christ
HELL IS WAITING FOR YOU!

By Unknown

Questions to think about:

1. How do you think this poem targets Christians who are Christians by name only?
2. What is the author's point?
3. As a Christian, how can you make sure that the inside of your cup is clean?
4. How can you spend as much time working on the inside as you do on the outside?
5. How can you become more honest with yourself and with God?

● God promises to fill you if you will just ***hunger*** and ***thirst*** for righteousness!



- 1.** Pray a prayer of repentance to get all the garbage out of your life that has been filling your mind and your heart—like secular music, entertainment, video games, internet, pornography, etc.
- 2.** Next, start reading the word of God and asking God to fill you with His word.
- 3.** Make a commitment to turn to God every time you are tempted to sin.
- 4.** Read more than one, two, or three chapters a day from the word of God. You will see how God helps you to have victories in your life!

"Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

(Matthew 6:33)

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking,
correcting and training in righteousness."

● 2 Timothy 3:16

YEAR 3 BOOK 3

General Assembly of the True Jesus Church

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