

## LESSON SIXTEEN

### Fairness

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#### REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through FIFTEEN:

We are made in God's image and we are a man because God made us that way. Now, to be an encouragement to others and to be in obedience to God, we need to act like a man and have Compassion on others and show it to them by being a Servant; i.e., trying to help meet their needs, both physical and spiritual. We are to do this out of love. Because love is an action word, many times love must entail forgiveness. And we cannot completely fulfill these things, or any others that God expects of us, without commitment and prayer, and gentleness, shown appropriately of course, patience, and self-control. And to top off the 10 most important character traits, we must be humble.



We carried out a self-examination in lessons 14 and 15 and now we will continue on.

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## LESSON SIXTEEN

### Fairness

**James 1:22 “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”**

We have studied the first 10 character traits of Jesus directly from the Word of God; with which we have explained and verified them. Then we carried out a time of self-examination concerning the first 10 traits. From this point on we will spend a short time each meeting to carry out a self-examination concerning the character trait studied in the previous meeting.

**II Cointhians 13:5a “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; Prove your own selves...”**

If we have struggled with the character trait during that week, we can bring it up at the next meeting if we choose to do so but we do not have to do so. We may want some input from our brothers concerning how to overcome the problem and align our character to be more like Christ; but whether we do so at the meeting or whether we do so privately is up to the individual. However, the opportunity will be afforded should they decide they want to discuss it. Maybe God did something unusual or powerful in helping them overcome the problem and they want to share that to be a blessing to the others. This would be a good reason for briefly discussing it at the next meeting. (Briefly is a key word here- because we need to have time to move on to the next lesson.)

**Before we move on to the next lesson, are there any comments concerning the character traits from the previous lessons? This is your chance to speak up.**

## FAIRNESS

**“Fairness sees a situation from the viewpoint of each person involved and not just ours. It seeks the best, just, equable solution, even if it hurts us.”** (From a lecture by Stephen Pratt)

**Jesus was absolutely fair in ALL of His dealings with ALL people at ALL times!**

And we are to treat ALL people as we would have them treat us. **(Matthew 7:12)**

### Definition

#### *fairness:*

Secular: *noun - conformity with rules or standards; ability to make judgments free from discrimination or dishonesty*

**equable** - *marked by lack of noticeable, unpleasant, or extreme variation or inequality*

Related Bible words and phrases:

*equity; righteousness; without partiality; no respecter of persons;*

Biblical definitions:

**righteousness**, δικαιοσύνη, dik-ah-yos-oo'-nay, **equity** (*of character or act*);

*specifically (Christian) justification: - righteousness*

**(Gen 30:33; Lev 19:15; Mt 5:6; II Tim 3:16; READ Jas 1:18-20)**

**equity**, *conformity with biblical rules or standards*

**without partiality**, ἀδιακρίτος, ad-ee-ak'-ree-tos, *undistinguished, that is, (actively) impartial: - without partiality (I Tim 5:21; Jas 3:17)*

**no respecter of persons**, προσωποληπτης, pros-o-pol-ape'-tace, *an accepter of a face (individual), that is, (specifically) one exhibiting partiality (Acts 10:34)*

### I. Fairness sees a situation from the viewpoint of each person involved and not just ours.

We are to know (not just “state” but biblically “know”) our viewpoint and then seek to understand the other person’s viewpoint. And if it concerns multiple people, then try to understand the viewpoint of each one. In Bible matters, know the Bible’s teachings and seek to bring all parties into line with the Bible. First make sure we know what the Bible teaches and be able to prove our own conformity to it; and **then** try to help the others toward conformity or agreement with us and/or amongst themselves. In essence, we want to bring them into conformity and/or agreement with God’s Word.

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

Once we know the Word of God, then we can convince others.

**I Tim 5:21 “... that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.”**

And when we do try to convince others, or judge between two if we are asked to do so, then we are to exercise complete impartiality in the doing of it from the Word of God.

## **If the Word of God Won't Convince and Convict them then Nothing I Can Say Will Help**

We are to see every situation from the viewpoint of each person involved and not just ours; and then make sure all of us are conformed to God's viewpoint as expressed in His Word.

### **II. Fairness seeks the best, just, equable solution, even if it hurts us.**

#### **A. To be fair, we must seek the best, just, equable solution.**

We need to understand the viewpoints of everyone involved. Then, without any partiality, seek the best, meaning **biblical**, solution. We are not to play favorites, or lean toward a solution favoring someone we like or love, or even play favorites toward ourselves and our own viewpoint, or denigrate (put down) those who disagree with us, or play favorites toward our group, Church, or social circle. We are to find the **“best, just, equable solution”** which will always be the one completely in line with the Word of God.

Remember, those who disagree with our stance do so for a reason. Search out and understand those reasons. When we do that, only then can we be fair to them. We cannot refute what we don't understand. Therefore, to be fair, we must understand why they believe what they believe. Only then can we take them to the Word of God to show them the error of their beliefs and lead them to the Bible's truth in the matter.

**Prov 18:13 “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it,  
it is folly and shame unto him.”**

We cannot show them answers from God's Word until we fully understand what their questions are. To be fair we must **fully** understand **what** they believe and **why**.

#### **B. Be fair even if it hurts us.**

If, when we search out the answers from the Bible, we find that their viewpoint is the correct one (meaning it is more in line with the Bible than ours is), then, to be fair, we need to change our viewpoint to be in line with their viewpoint and encourage everyone else involved to do the same. In other words, we all need to change to be in line with God's Word.

**Fairness seeks the best, just, equable solution, even if it hurts us.**

**For our next meeting:** During the two weeks until our next meeting we will keep track of our responses concerning this trait of **fairness**. If someone struggled with this trait or maybe has some question about it that came up during the two week period, we will take a few minutes to briefly discuss that at the next meeting.



1. How do you feel about you and the character trait of fairness?
2. What do you think about it?

*feel:* \_\_\_\_\_

(For a list of feelings/emotions see page 2 of this study.)

*think:* \_\_\_\_\_

The self-examination score card for the next two week period is below and, if needed, we will briefly discuss the results at the beginning of our next meeting.

Ask your self before God: “Did I show/not show the character trait of Fairness during the 2 week period whenever it was required that I do so?” *(Your emotional and mental state and/or reaction is involved in your self-examination of your character.)*

**How to score yourself:**

If the trait did NOT come up during a particular day, leave that box blank.

For the days that the trait DID come up:

enter a “1” for “absolutely no”

enter a “3” for “sort of”

enter a “5” for “absolutely yes”

*(If you are wavering between 1, 3, or 5 and the number above or below it, then enter the number above or below it that is appropriate to your wavering. If need be, see the last lesson for further explanation.)*

**My self-examination score for the character trait of Fairness for the 2 week period:**

*(Remember, your emotional and mental state or reaction is involved in your self-examination.)*

Mark 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, in each day's box that Fairness was required.

Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr	Sat	Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr

Overall assessment for the 2 week period for the Character Trait of Fairness: (average score)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

## LESSON SEVENTEEN

### Courage

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#### REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through SIXTEEN:

We are made in God's image and we are a man because God made us that way. Now, to be an encouragement to others and to be in obedience to God, we need to act like a man and have Compassion on others and show it to them by being a Servant; i.e., trying to help meet their needs, both physical and spiritual. We are to do this out of love. Because love is an action word, many times love must entail forgiveness. And we cannot completely fulfill these things, or any others that God expects of us, without commitment and prayer, and gentleness, shown appropriately of course, patience, and self-control. And to top off the 10 most important character traits, we must be humble.



We carried out a self-examination in lessons 14 and 15 and then continue on with Fairness in lesson 16.

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#### Self-Examination from the last Lesson's character trait: Fairness

**James 1:22 "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."**

Each week we will spend a short time at the beginning of each meeting to carry out a self-examination concerning the character trait studied in the previous meeting.

**II Cointhians 13:5a "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; Prove your own selves..."**

If we have struggled with the character trait during that week, we can bring it up at the next meeting if we choose to do so but we do not have to do so. We may want some input from our brothers concerning how to overcome the problem and align our character to be more like Christ; but whether we do so at the meeting or whether we do so privately is up to the individual. However, the opportunity will be afforded should they decide they want to discuss it. Maybe God did something unusual or powerful in helping them overcome the problem and they want to share that to be a blessing to the others. This would be a good reason for briefly discussing it at the next meeting. (Briefly is a key word here- because we need to have time to move on to the next lesson.)

**Before we move on to the next lesson, are there any comments concerning the character trait from the previous lesson- Fairness? This is your chance to speak up.**

## LESSON SEVENTEEN COURAGE

**“Courage realizes that God has given us the strength to face any situation, trial, or peril. It is the ability to react, knowing that God is in control, that He who is in me is greater than he who is against me. (Deuteronomy 31:6; 1 John 4:4)”** (From a lecture by Stephen Pratt)

**Jesus showed absolute courage in all situations- even to the death!**

### Definition

#### **courage:**

Secular: *noun* - 1. the ability to do something that frightens one 2. strength in the face of pain or grief, 3. act on one's beliefs despite danger or disapproval

**ORIGIN** *Old French* corage, from Latin cor 'heart'.

Related Bible words and phrases:

*courage, be strong, and of a good courage,*

Biblical definitions:

#### OLD TESTAMENT

**of a good courage** - אָמַץ *aw-mats'* A primitive root; to be alert, physically (on foot) or mentally (in courage): - confirm, be courageous (of good courage, steadfastly minded, strong, stronger), establish, fortify, harden, increase, prevail, strengthen (self), make strong (obstinate, speed).

**be strong** - חָזַק *khaw-zak'* A primitive root; to fasten upon; hence to seize, be strong (figuratively courageous, causatively strengthen, cure, help, repair, fortify), obstinate; to bind, restrain, conquer: - aid, amend, X calker, catch, cleave, confirm, be constant, constrain, continue, be of good (take) courage (-ous, -ly), encourage (self), be established, fasten, force, fortify, make hard, harden, help, (lay) hold (fast), lean, maintain, play the man, mend, become (wax) mighty, prevail, be recovered, repair, retain, seize, be (wax) sore, strengten (self), be stout, be (make, shew, wax) strong (-er), be sure, take (hold), be urgent, behave self valiantly, withstand.

#### NEW TESTAMENT

**Courage** - θάρσος *thar'-sos* Akin (by transposition) to θρασος *thrasos* (daring); boldness (subjectively): - courage.

- 1. Courage is an inward thing- an attitude of the heart that may or may not express itself immediately in boldness of speech and/or action in spite of fear, opposition, or disapproval of men.**
- 2. Courage does not mean lack of fear; it is a determination to act rightly in spite of it.**

## PLUSES AND MINUSES

**+** We are to encourage one another, as brothers in the Lord, to be courageous.

**Isaiah 41:6** “They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage.”

**-** We can, if we don't watch our words, discourage one another.

**Deuteronomy 1:28** “Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there. ”

**+** Courage in our hearts will help us be strong in our actions. And faith in God, and trust in Him will help allay our fears no matter what the circumstances and who the enemy might be.

**Deuteronomy 31:6** “Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.”

**-** Circumstances can rob us of our courage- if we allow them to do so.

**Numbers 21:4** “And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.”

**+** To let circumstances discourage us shows a lack of faith in the Lord. If we let the Lord lead in every challenge, then we can have courage because we know He will strengthen us inwardly. But we must wait on Him and let Him lead!

**Psalm 27:14** “Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.”

**+** If we are to be leaders in our families, in our Churches, and in the Family of God, we must have courage of heart in order to lead with strength in the battles and in the work of God, and to maintain our own obedience to God's commandments so we can encourage others to do the same.

**Deut 31:23** “And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swear unto them: and I will be with thee.”

**Joshuah 1:6** “Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them.”



**Joshuah 1:7 “Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.”**

**+** And we can have the courage to lead if we remember that God is with us everywhere and in all things that He leads us to do.

**Joshuah 1:9 “Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”**

**Philippians 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”**

**+** Our courage, even in the face of death, is to match the courage Christ showed in the face of His death.

**“John 15:12-13 “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. (:13) Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”**

Christ exhibited courage in this statement, which He gave to encourage us, knowing full well of His impending death on the cross. His courage within carried Him through to the fulfillment of what He came to do- die on the cross for sinners like us. He showed courage within during His life and it was manifested in His strength without to carry out His task. With His help we can emulate both His courage and His strength.

**Philippians 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”**



- 1. How do you feel about you and the character trait of courage?**
- 2. What do you think about it?**

*feel:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(For a list of feelings/emotions see page 2 of this study.)

*think:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**For our next meeting:** During the two weeks until our next meeting we will keep track of our responses concerning this trait of **Courage**. If someone struggled with this trait or maybe has some question about it that came up during the two week period, we will take a few minutes to briefly discuss that at the next meeting.

The self-examination score card for the next two week period is below and, if needed, we will briefly discuss the results at the beginning of our next meeting.

**Ask your self before God: "Did I experience the character trait of Courage during the 2 week period whenever it was required that I do so?" Remember, Courage is an attitude of the heart, that may or may not express itself immediately in boldness of action and/or of speech. (Your emotional and mental state and/or reaction is involved in your self-examination of your character.)**

**How to score yourself:**

If the trait did NOT come up during a particular day, leave that box blank.

For the days that the trait DID come up:

enter a "1" for "absolutely no"

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*(If you are wavering between 1, 3, or 5 and the number above or below it, then enter the number above or below it that is appropriate to your wavering. If need be, see the previous lessons for further explanation.)*

**My self-examination score for the character trait of Courage for the 2 week period:**

*(Remember, your emotional and mental state or reaction is involved in your self-examination.)*

Mark 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, in each day's box that Courage was required.

Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr	Sat	Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr

**Overall assessment for the 2 week period for the Character Trait of Courage: (average score)**

1      2      3      4      5

## LESSON EIGHTEEN

### Friendship/Friend

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#### REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through SEVENTEEN:

We are made in God's image and we are a man because God made us that way. Now, to be an encouragement to others and to be in obedience to God, we need to act like a man and have Compassion on others and show it to them by being a Servant; i.e., trying to help meet their needs, both physical and spiritual. We are to do this out of love. Because love is an action word, many times love must entail



forgiveness. And we cannot completely fulfill these things, or any others that God expects of us, without commitment and prayer, and gentleness, shown appropriately of course, patience, and self-control. And to top off the 10 most important character traits, we must be humble.

We carried out a self-examination in lessons 14 and 15 and then continue on with Fairness in lesson 16 and Courage in lesson 17.

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#### SELF-EXAMINATION

**James 1:22 “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”**

We will spend a short time each meeting to carry out a self-examination concerning the character trait studied in the previous meeting. In this case, the trait of Courage.

**II Corinthians 13:5a “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; Prove your own selves...”**

If we have struggled with the character trait during that week, we can bring it up at the next meeting if we choose to do so but we do not have to do so. We may want some input from our brothers concerning how to overcome the problem and align our character to be more like Christ; but whether we do so at the meeting or whether we do so privately is up to the individual. However, the opportunity will be afforded should they decide they want to discuss it. Maybe God did something unusual or powerful in helping them overcome the problem and they want to share that to be a blessing to the others. This would be a good reason for briefly discussing it at the next meeting. (Briefly is a key word here- because we need to have time to move on to the next lesson.)

**Before we move on to the next lesson, are there any comments concerning the character trait from the previous lesson- Courage? This is your chance to speak up.**

## LESSON EIGHTEEN

### Friendship/Friend

**“Friendship is the companionship and closeness we are to have with one another. It is the commitment to help form the character in others. This is not to be feared but embraced, even when it hurts! (Proverbs 27:17)”**

**Proverbs 27:17**

**Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.**

#### Secular Definition

**friend/friendly/friendship**

Secular: *friend* - noun

*a person with whom one has a bond of mutual affection, typically one exclusive of sexual or family relations*

*a person who supports a particular cause or organization.*

-DERIVATIVES *friendless* >adjective, *friendship* >noun

#### Related Bible words and phrases:

**94 times** *friend, friendly, friendship*

#### BIBLICAL DEFINITIONS:

##### OLD TESTAMENT

*friend* - עֵרַי עֵרַי *ray'-ah, ray'-ah* an associate (more or less close): - brother, companion, fellow, friend, husband, lover, neighbour, X (an-) other

*friend* - אָהַב אָהַב *aw-hab', aw-habe'* A primitive root; to have affection for (sexually or otherwise): (be-) love (-d, -ly, -r), like, friend.

##### NEW TESTAMENT

*friend* - φίλος, *fee'-los* properly dear, that is, a friend; actively fond, that is, friendly (still as a noun, an associate, neighbor, etc.): - friend.

#### I. To Have Friends a Man Must Be Friendly.

What is required of a man for him to have friends?

**Prov 18:24 “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly...”**

Friendship is a two-way street. If they are your friend, you must be their friend. It requires reciprocal actions for the friendship to be maintained.

You can love someone without them loving you back. But friendships must be established, maintained, and be reciprocal in actions, in order for there to be a friendship. (We will discuss the exception to this later in this lesson.)

## II. Signs of True Friendship.

### A. A true Friend can be trusted AT ALL TIMES!

Even in times of hurt, a true friend is to be trusted.

**Prov 27:6 “Faithful are the wounds of a friend;  
but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.”**

When a true friend hurts us, it is only because it is necessary. We must keep this in mind when a friend hurts us. True friendship is hard to find. Remember, friendships are shown in actions and must be maintained. Find out WHY he/she did it; don't go off in a huff and foolishly terminate the friendship.

### B. True friendship must be between two people on equal ground.

This is how Christ treats us- on equal ground as His friends, not His servants.

**John 15:15 “Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.”**

### C. Friendship is shown, and proven, by actions.

**John 15:14 “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”**

### D. A true friend will intercede for you even when you do them wrong.

Job's friends had turned on him but he still prayed to God to forgive them their folly.

**Job 42:7 “... the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends...”**

**42:8 “...my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly”**

**42:9-10 “... the LORD also accepted Job. And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends ...”**

If you are a true friend you will forgive your friend's trespasses against you and pray that God will forgive them and restore the friendship. Your forgiveness and actions of true friendship may solidify a lifelong friendship between you and your friend that will surpass what others only dream of.

### E. A true friend will be closer to you than a brother.

**Prov 18:28 “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly:  
and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”**

I have only had two, and now three, friends like that in my entire life.

F. We are to be an encouragement to our friends and, by our actions, help them be better and more godly men or women.

**Prov 27:17 “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. ”**

If we are a true friend we will never “disfigure” or “tear down” the countenance of our friend. We must always build up and strengthen his/her countenance.

**(Matthew Henry’s Commentary) “This intimates both the pleasure and the advantage of conversation. (*Interaction, both verbal and in actions.*) One man is nobody; nor will poring upon a book in a corner accomplish a man as the reading and studying of men will. Wise and profitable discourse sharpens men's wits; and those that have ever so much knowledge may by conference have something added to them. It sharpens men's looks, and, by cheering the spirits, puts a briskness and liveliness into the countenance, and gives a man such an air as shows he is pleased himself and makes him pleasing to those about him. Good men's graces are sharpened by converse with those that are good, and bad men's lusts and passions are sharpened by converse with those that are bad, as iron is sharpened by its like, especially by the file. Men are filed, made smooth, and bright, and fit for business (who were rough, and dull, and inactive), by conversation. (*Interaction, both verbal and in actions.*)”**

**III. The Extent of True Friendship.**

True friendship is an expression of true, godly, love, and is **commanded** by Christ to be shown between brothers and sisters in the Lord. Without bounds!

**John 15:12 “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.”**

**John 15:13 “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”**

**John 15:14 “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”**

**Are we true friends one to another as Christ commanded us to be?**



- 1. How do you feel about you and the character trait of Friendship/Friend?
- 2. What do you think about it?

*feel:* \_\_\_\_\_

(For a list of feelings/emotions see page 2 of this study.)

*think:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**For our next meeting:** During the two weeks until our next meeting we will keep track of our responses concerning this trait of **Friendship/Friend**. If someone struggled with this trait or maybe has some question about it that came up during the two week period, we will take a few minutes to briefly discuss that at the next meeting.

The self-examination score card for the next two week period is below and, if needed, we will briefly discuss the results at the beginning of our next meeting.

**Ask your self before God: “Did I show/not show the character trait of Friendship, was I a true Friend, without bounds, during the 2 week period, whenever it was required that I do so, to my brothers and sisters in the Lord?”** *(Your emotional and mental state and/or reaction is involved in your self-examination of your character.)*

**How to score yourself:**

If the trait did NOT come up during a particular day, leave that box blank.

For the days that the trait DID come up:

enter a “1” for “absolutely no”

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**My self-examination score for the character trait of Friendship/Friend for the 2 week period:**  
*(Remember, your emotional and mental state or reaction is involved in your self-examination.)*

Mark 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, in each day’s box that Friendship/Friend was required.

Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr	Sat	Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr

**Overall assessment for the 2 week period for the Character Trait of Friendship/Friend:**  
 (average score)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

## LESSON NINETEEN

### Honesty/Truthfulness

#### REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through EIGHTEEN:

We are made in God's image and we are a man because God made us that way. Now, to be an encouragement to others and to be in obedience to God, we need to act like a man and have Compassion on others and show it to them by being a Servant; i.e., trying to help meet their needs, both physical and spiritual. We are to do this out of love. Because love is an action word, many times love must entail



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We carried out a self-examination in lessons 14 and 15 and then continue on with Fairness in lesson 16, Courage in lesson 17, and Friendship/Friend in lesson 18.

### SELF-EXAMINATION

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**Before we move on to the next lesson, are there any comments concerning the character trait from the previous lesson- Friendship/Friend? This is your chance to speak up.**



## LESSON NINETEEN

### Honesty/Truthfulness

**“Honesty & Truthfulness mean being straight and honest with others and doing what is right. This trait will allow us to earn trust by being accurate with facts and situations. (II Cor 8:21; Eph 4:25)”**

**II Cor 8:21 “Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.”**

**Eph 4:25 “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.”**

#### SECULAR DEFINITIONS

**honesty**, *the trait of being honest*

**honest**, *free of deceit, truthful and sincere*

#### BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

##### OLD TESTAMENT

**“honest”** *is not in the Old Testament*

equivalent word is יָשָׁר *yosher - straightness, uprightness*

**negative usage - “dishonest gain”** בֶּחֻצָה *beh-tsah - plunder, coveteousness*

##### NEW TESTAMENT

**honest** - καλῆν, *ka-lain from καλός, ka-los, of uncertain affinity; properly beautiful, but chiefly (figuratively) good (literally or morally), that is, valuable or virtuous (for appearance or use) of good quality or disposition (virtuous - of moral excellence, morally pure)*

**honest** - σεμνός *sem-nos', venerable, that is, honorable*

*(venerable - accorded great respect because of age, wisdom, or character)*

**honest** - ευσχημονως *yoo-skhay-mon'-oce, decorously: - decently, honestly*

*(decorous - characterized by propriety and dignity and good taste in manners and conduct)*

**honest report**, μαρτυρομενους *mar-tur-oo-men-ous,*

*from μαρτυρέω mar-too-reh'-o, to testify, depose (to testify to or give evidence on oath)*

**Useable meaning:** Honest means straight and upright in speech, actions toward others and self (including morality), and thought. Honesty is beautiful/pleasing (decorous) morally and spiritually, and virtuous in appearance to others.

### **I. Being Honest and Truthful Brings Glory To God.**

God spoke these words to the Jewish Christians, which was the bulk of the early Church; but by application they are to all believers concerning the reaction of the lost to our behavior.

**I Peter 2:12 “Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.”**

#### **A. On the positive side.**

“honest” here means “beautiful, morally and spiritually virtuous,” in “**conversation**”, that is, in our relations to others (including both speech and deportment). Here it is specifically concerning our relation to the lost.

#### **B. On the negative side.**

If we, the people of God, are not honest, it not only brings shame to us but it also brings shame to God. God addresses the dishonesty of the Jews in Romans chapter 2 and culminates with the following two verses. And as Christians, the adopted people of God, the precept taught is as applicable to us as it was to the Jews of Paul's time and the Jews down to today.

**Romans 2:23 “Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?”**

**Romans 2:24 “For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. ”**

The dishonesty of the Jews brought dishonor to God. In addition, God's name was blasphemed among the Gentiles; that is, among those who were not of the people of God. The application for us today is that, as Christians, the adopted people of God, when we are dishonest, the lost, who are not people of God, see our dishonesty and that brings dishonor to God. In addition, for the Jews and by application to us, our dishonesty, while claiming God as our God and then not living as Christians ought to live, is, on our part, blaspheming the name of God. **“For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. ”**

### **II. Honesty Should Be Seen In Both the Spiritual and the Physical Realms.**

It should be apparent to both God and man.

**II Corinthians 8:21 “Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. ”**

It is not something hidden; but open for all to see.

### III. God Commands Us to Train Our Minds to Think On True and Honest Things.

We must train our minds ahead of time to be honest and true because the temptation to be dishonest and a liar will come. We need to have our minds prepared, not for if evil will come, but when it will come to tempt us and lead us away into all kinds of sin.

**“Philippians 4:8 “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”**

Because the evil will come!

**Romans 7:21 “I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.”**

We are not to let our minds be focused on lies and dishonest things; but on true and honest things. If our thinking is occupied with dwelling on honest things, then when the temptation to be dishonest assails us, it will feel foreign to us. Likewise, if our thinking is occupied with dwelling on the truth, then when the temptation to lie assails us, it too will feel foreign to us. If our thinking is flowing strongly in the channels of truth and honesty, then we will naturally veer away from the side channels of lying and dishonesty when they appear. And they will appear!

**To go one step better:** If our thinking is trained to be consumed with honesty and truth, then lying and dishonesty will actually feel repugnant to us and we will not fall for those sins. We will remain unwaiveringly honest and truthful to everyone; Christian or lost.

**If Your Mind Is Right  
then  
Your Actions Will Be Right  
so  
Get Your Mind Right**



1. How do you feel about you and the character trait of Honesty/Truthfulness?
2. What do you think about it?

*feel:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(For a list of feelings/emotions see page 2 of this study.)

*think:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**For our next meeting:** During the two weeks until our next meeting we will keep track of our responses concerning this trait of **Honesty/Truthfulness**. If someone struggled with this trait or maybe has some question about it that came up during the two week period, we will take a few minutes to briefly discuss that at the next meeting.

The self-examination score card for the next two week period is below and, if needed, we will briefly discuss the results at the beginning of our next meeting.

Ask your self before God: “Did I show/not show the character trait of **Honesty/Truthfulness**, without bounds, during the 2 week period, whenever it was required that I do so?” (Your emotional and mental state and/or reaction is involved in your self-examination of your character.)

**How to score yourself:**

If the trait did NOT come up during a particular day, leave that box blank.

For the days that the trait DID come up:

enter a “1” for “absolutely no”

enter a “3” for “sort of”

enter a “5” for “absolutely yes”

(If you are wavering between 1, 3, or 5 and the number above or below it, then enter the number above or below it that is appropriate to your wavering up or down.)

**My self-examination score for the character trait of Honesty/Truthfulness for the 2 week period:** (Remember, your emotional and mental state or reaction is involved in your self-examination.)

Mark 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, in each day's box that Honesty/Truthfulness was required.

Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr	Sat	Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr

**Overall assessment for the 2 week period for the Character Trait of Honesty/Truthfulness:**  
(average score)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

## LESSON TWENTY

### Responsible/Responsibility

#### REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through NINETEEN:

We are made in God's image and we are a man because God made us that way. Now, to be an encouragement to others and to be in obedience to God, we need to act like a man and have Compassion on others and show it to them by being a Servant; i.e., trying to help meet their needs, both physical and spiritual. We are to do this out of love. Because love is an action word, many times love must entail forgiveness. And we cannot completely fulfill these things, or any others that God expects of us, without commitment and prayer, and gentleness, shown appropriately of course, patience, and self-control. And to top off the 10 most important character traits, we must be humble.



We carried out a self-examination in lessons 14 and 15 and then continue on with the character traits of Fairness in lesson 16, Courage in lesson 17, Friendship/Friend in lesson 18, and Honesty/Truthfulness in lesson 19.

### SELF-EXAMINATION

**James 1:22 “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”**

We will spend a short time each meeting to carry out a self-examination concerning the character trait studied in the previous meeting. In this case, the trait of Honesty/Truthfulness.

**II Cointhians 13:5a “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; Prove your own selves...”**

If we have struggled with the character trait during that week, we can bring it up at the next meeting if we choose to do so but we do not have to do so. We may want some input from our brothers concerning how to overcome the problem and align our character to be more like Christ; but whether we do so at the meeting or whether we do so privately is up to the individual. However, the opportunity will be afforded should they decide they want to discuss it. Maybe God did something unusual or powerful in helping them overcome the problem and they want to share that to be a blessing to the others. This would be a good reason for briefly discussing it at the next meeting. (Briefly is a key word here- because we need to have time to move on to the next lesson.)

**Before we move on to the next lesson, are there any comments concerning the character trait from the previous lesson- Honesty/Truthfulness? This is your chance to speak up.**

## LESSON TWENTY

### Responsible/Responsibility

**“Responsibility is to know and do what God and others expect. (Romans 14:12)”**

**Romans 4:12 “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”**

#### SECULAR DEFINITIONS

**responsible**, *worthy of or requiring responsibility or trust*

**responsibility**, *1) the social force that binds you to your obligations and the courses of action demanded by that force; the proper sphere or extent of your activities;*

*2) ability or necessity to answer for or be responsible for one's conduct*

**“... every right implies a responsibility; every opportunity, an obligation; every possession, a duty” (John D. Rockefeller Jr.)**

#### BIBLE VERSES having to do with RESPONSIBILITY

We are to be responsible in EVERY area of our life. Some simply refuse to do so; but others don't because they don't know what their responsibilities are. Therefore, we will cover some verses to get us started on the road of knowledge. Once we know what they are, then we must give an account to God for how, or if, we carried out all of these responsibilities.

**Galatians 6:5 - For every man shall bear his own burden.**

Responsible to carry our own load.

**I Corinthians 3:8 - Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.**

We shall receive a reward for being responsible to do our part in the ministry of the Church.

**I Timothy 5:8 - But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.**

Responsible to provide for our own family- spirit, soul, and body. We are to be the provider, and the leader, in all areas of our family's lives.

**Romans 12:6-8 - Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of faith; (Read More...)**

We are held responsible concerning our use of the gifts that God gave us; and to use them fully and appropriately in our local Church.

**Luke 12:47-48 - And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not [himself], neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. (Read More...)**

We are held responsible to do all of the things that we know that God wants.

**Proverbs 22:6 - Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.**

We are held responsible for the proper training of our children in the ways revealed to us by God.

**Matthew 12:37 - For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.**

We are held responsible for every word that comes out of our mouths.

**Ezekiel 18:20 - The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.**

**II Corinthians 5:10 - For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things [done] in [his] body, according to that he hath done, whether [it be] good or bad.**

We are held personally responsible for all of our actions- whether they be good or evil. No one else, not even our father or our sons, will give an account for us; nor will they suffer the consequences for us. We alone will be judged for our actions; and we alone will suffer the consequences- whether they are good or bad ones.

**James 4:7 - Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**

We are held responsible concerning both our submission to God and our resistance to the devil.

**Luke 16:10 - He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.**

We are held responsible concerning our faithfulness in the use of that which God has entrusted to us. Whether it be much or little should not dictate our level of faithfulness; but our faithfulness in the one surely indicates how faithful we will be in the other. And in context it is teaching us that if we are not responsible to be faithful in the things of this world, which are temporary, then why would we expect to be given stewardship of the eternal things in the next?



**Luke 19:12-27 - He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. (This is the story of the steward that hoarded what was entrusted to him.)**

We are held responsible concerning the wise use of what God entrusts to us; including wisdom to use what He gives us in a way to effect an increase instead of a fearful hoarding of the riches of God.

**John 15:22-24 - If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.**

We are held responsible for what we do with any hidden sin that God reveals to us. Once it is revealed to us, which God says He will do, clearly and definitively, then we will have no excuse whatsoever for not dealing with it. We will be held responsible for our response following His revealing of it.

**Proverbs 28:13 - He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh [them] shall have mercy.**

We are held responsible for how we handle our sins. Do we deny them and try to cover them with some type of self-justification? Or do we confess them and forsake them? How we handle sin makes us responsible for God's actions toward us concerning those particular sins. In essence, He reacts to our actions; which places the responsibility totally upon us and not upon God!

**I Corinthians 13:11 - When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.**

We are held responsible for how we mature in the Lord. How we grow both spiritually and mentally and how that growth then is reflected in our actions and attitudes toward our self and others.

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

In context this is telling us that we are responsible to be and act like what we are, children of God- Christians. Not only in actions (escaping the lusts of the flesh); but showing faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity, and **“fruitfulness in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”** (verse :8)

**Luke 10:30-37 - And Jesus answering said, A certain [man] went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded [him], and departed, leaving [him] half dead. (The story of the good Samaritan.)**

We are held responsible concerning how we treat the wounded and hurting, no matter who they are- saved or lost. Even if it costs us.

**Colossians 3:23 - And whatsoever ye do, do [it] heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;**

We are even held responsible for our attitude. We are to do all things, no matter what or to whom, heartily and not grudgingly, remembering who we really serve. And that is Christ! We are held responsible to do all things accordingly and with the right attitude.

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

We are held responsible for how we handle “**afflictions of the gospel**” (verse :8). Whether we have an attitude of fear and defeat or an attitude of power, love and soundness of mind.

**Luke 12:48 - But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few [stripes]. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.**

It is not a suggestion that we use to the fullest all that God has given to us; it is required of us! We will be held responsible and will give an account to God for our use of everything, whether of time, talent, or treasure, that He has given to us.

**Luke 10:27 - And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.**

We are held responsible for the fulness of our love, and the expression of it, to both God and man.

**Ezra 10:4 - Arise; for [this] matter [belongeth] unto thee: we also [will be] with thee: be of good courage, and do [it].**

We are held responsible to do whatever God tells us to do. Not fearfully, but with courage. As the saying goes, we need to “**man up**” instead of run away in fear.

**Genesis 4:6-7 - And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? (The story of Cain and his reaction to God's rejection of his offering.)**

We are held responsible to do things God's way and not our own. And we are also held responsible for how we handle God's rejection of us doing things our own way instead of His way. Do we lash out in anger or do we change? We are held responsible for our reaction, and our attitude, toward God and toward others. Do we take it out on others or do we rectify our problem?

**II Thessalonians 3:11-18 - For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. (Read More...)**

We are held responsible for whether we do our own part in the work of the Lord instead of sticking our noses into the business of others (gossiping and complaining about them) and whether or not we try to restore others who fail to meet their responsibilities in the work. We are responsible to treat them as a brother and try to restore them. Not company with them in their error but admonish them by the Word of God to do their part in the work and quit their gossiping and complaining about others.

**Deuteronomy 28:1-68 - And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe [and] to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: (Read More...)"**

If we listen to God, obey Him and follow His Commandments and fulfill all of our responsibilities, many of which have been scripturally laid out for us here, toward God, family, the Lord's work (including the Church), our selves and mankind in general, then we will be rewarded. And how fully we meet our responsibilities, including our attitude while doing so, will dictate how great our reward shall be in the Kingdom.



1. How do you feel about you and the character trait of Responsible/Responsibility?
2. What do you think about it?

*feel:* \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

(For a list of feelings/emotions see page 2 of this study.)

*think:* \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**For our next meeting:** During the two weeks until our next meeting we will keep track of our responses concerning this trait of **Responsible/Responsibility**. If someone struggled with this trait or maybe has some question about it that came up during the two week period, we will take a few minutes to briefly discuss that at the next meeting.

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**My self-examination score for the character trait of Responsible/Responsibility for the 2 week period:** (Remember, your emotional and mental state or reaction is involved in your self-examination.)

Mark 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, in each day's box that Responsible/Responsibility was required.

Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr	Sat	Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr

**Overall assessment for the 2 week period for the Character Trait of Responsible/Responsibility:**  
(average score)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

## LESSON TWENTY-ONE

### Content/Contentment

#### REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through TWENTY:

We are made in God's image and we are a man because God made us that way. Now, to be an encouragement to others and to be in obedience to God, we need to act like a man and have Compassion on others and show it to them by being a Servant; i.e., trying to help meet their needs, both physical and spiritual. We are to do this out of love. Because love is an action word, many times love must entail forgiveness. And we cannot completely fulfill these things, or any others that God expects of us, without commitment and prayer, and gentleness, shown appropriately of course, patience, and self-control. And to top off the 10 most important character traits, we must be humble.



We carried out a self-examination in lessons 14 and 15 and then continue on with Fairness in lesson 16, Courage in lesson 17, Friendship/Friend in lesson 18; Honesty/Truthfulness in lesson 19, and a study in Christian Responsibility in lesson 20.

### SELF-EXAMINATION

**James 1:22 “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”**

We will spend a short time each meeting to carry out a self-examination concerning the character trait studied in the previous meeting. In this case, the trait of Responsible/Responsibility.

**II Cointhians 13:5a “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; Prove your own selves...”**

If we have struggled with the character trait since studying it, we can bring it up at the next meeting if we choose to do so but we do not have to do so. We may want some input from our brothers concerning how to overcome the problem and align our character to be more like Christ; but whether we do so at the meeting or whether we do so privately is up to the individual. However, the opportunity will be afforded should they decide they want to discuss it. Maybe God did something unusual or powerful in helping them overcome the problem and they want to share that to be a blessing to the others. This would be a good reason for briefly discussing it at the next meeting. (Briefly is a key word here- because we need to have time to move on to the next lesson.)

**Before we move on to the next lesson, are there any comments concerning the character trait from the previous lesson- Responsible/Responsibility? This is your chance to speak up.**

## LESSON TWENTY-ONE

### Content/Contentment

**“Contentment is the attitude of accepting whatever God provides for us, and being happy with it. It does not seek what we do not need for gratification, and does not find happiness in the shallow things of life. (Rom. 9:19–21; Philippians 4:10–13; I Timothy 6:6–9)”**

Jesus' sermon on contentment is found in the book of Luke:

**Luke 12:22-31 “And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. (:23) The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. (:24) Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? (:25) And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? (:26) If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? (:27) Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (:28) If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? (:29) And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. (:30) For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. (:31) But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. ”**

#### SECULAR DEFINITIONS

**content**, *in a state of peaceful happiness or satisfaction, accept (something) as adequate despite wanting something more or better, **noun** a state of happiness or satisfaction*

**contentment**, *the quality or state of being contented, a state of happiness and satisfaction,*

#### BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

##### OLD TESTAMENT

**אָזַן** *yaw-al' properly to yield, especially assent; hence (positively) to undertake as an act of volition: - assay, begin, be content, please, take upon, X willingly, would.*

Also, several other words that add the meaning of *to be acquiescent*  
**acquiescent**, *accept or consent to something without protest.*

## NEW TESTAMENT

*content* - αυταρκης, ow-tar'-kace, *self complacent (smug and uncritically satisfied with oneself or one's achievements), that is contented*

αρκεισθε, ar-kehs-thay, *content (satisfied)*

αρκεω ar-keh'-o, *Apparently a primary verb; properly to ward off, that is, (by implication) to avail (figuratively be satisfactory): - be content, be enough, suffice, be sufficient.*

*contentment* - αυτάρκεια, ow-tar'-ki-ah, *self satisfaction, that is, (abstractly) contentedness, or (concretely) a competence: - contentment, sufficiency.*

**Useable meaning:** *To satisfy someone (“content the people” in Mark 15:15), to be satisfied, to have enough, sufficient, to be pleased with self or others, to completely accept without complaint, hard feelings or protest, the opposite of anxious.*

### I. Paul under inspiration of the Holy Spirit gives us a formula for contentment.

#### Philippians 4:10-13

(:10) **“But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.”**

(:11) **“Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.”**

(:12) **“I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.”**

(:13) **“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”**

#### A. Contentment has to be learned.

**4:11 “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.”**

Human beings are born discontented. A baby does not have to be taught to take, they do that naturally; they have to be taught to give, because that goes against their inborn nature. They just naturally take to satisfy their needs and wants. Failure of self and others to satisfy the wants and needs of their flesh and mind leads to discontentment. As they mature, that inborn desire to only take must be tempered by teaching them that there are times when they must give; or that they should at least be accepting of a lack of their needs or wants being met without throwing a tantrum and exacting retribution. After acceptance has been learned, they then have to be taught to be content. If they do not take that next step, from acceptance to contentment, they will



be miserably discontented for their entire life. Things will never seem to “go right” for them. They will always feel that there is something lacking in their life. They will begin to feel that people, or God, is “working against them;” trying to hinder them, and they will never experience complete happiness with their life as it is. Oh, they may be happy in certain areas and at certain times, of course those times will be when they feel that their needs and wants are being met in a way that is acceptable to them, but they will not have be happy with their lives in general. They will always feel that too much is lacking overall. Discontentment will be the overriding emotion in their lives.

Society has degenerated to the point where children are not being taught to give, but to take. The last few generations have been totally given over to self-gratification and have been taught, and are teaching their children, that they are “entitled” to have whatever they may want. This, of course, is not going to happen in their lives because others believe they are “entitled” to whatever they themselves want. If those other’s entitlement happens to be what the first person believes should be theirs, then the other is going to keep it or get it for themselves and leave the first person without. And they are not going to feel guilty about not supplying the first persons’s needs or wants because they truly believe that they are justified in keeping it for themselves because the were the ones who were truly “entitled” to it in the first place. This “Me first” attitude has become the norm today.

As Christians we need to overcome what we have been taught and “**learn to be content.**” It is something that does not come naturally. It is something that must be learned. I know of many Christians who are not contented with their lot; generally they are miserable. They are onery with those around them and don’t even know why they are that way. I’ll go even further and say that most don’t even know that they are being “onery.” They think that is the way they are supposed to be. According to their way of thinking, “I’m just being me and if you don’t like it, tough! God says you are not supposed to judge me. So just accept me the way I am.” Those types of Christians have not learned to be content; not with themselves nor with others. Their contentment depends on others and, thus, it is destroyed when others don’t treat them the way they want to be treated. They are self-centered and any temporary contentment dissapates quickly depending on the actions of others, or the lack thereof, toward them and their needs and wants.

#### **B. Being content should not be based on the actions of others; or the lack thereof.**

**4:10 “But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.”**

**4:11 “Not that I speak in respect of want...”**

Be happy when others meet your needs, but do not let your contentment be based on their actions, or the lack thereof. God is telling us exactly that here through Paul.

It is not a matter of “need” or, as the scripture puts it, “**want**”, it is simply rejoicing that others are willingly helping you. The Greek word translated “**want**” in verse fourteen means “*penury*” which is defined as *extreme want*. God is telling us through Paul that when we rejoice we should do so solely because we love and appreciate the fact that they are blessing us; not because we need what they give to us. The opposite is, then, also true. We should not be discontented because they do not help us. Our sufficiency should be in God. (We will address that issue later when we discuss the last verse of this current passage of scripture.) But notice here that our rejoicing is “**in the Lord**” and not in the people.

### **C. Our contentment should not be based upon our external conditions.**

**:11 “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.”**

**:12 “I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.”**

Whether we are laid low or lifted up, humbled or exalted, we are to be content. Whether we are full or hungry, we are to be content. Whether we have a superabundance, with much more than enough, or whether we are in abject need (“dirt poor”) we can be contented knowing that God will supply our need somehow, from somewhere, and by someone. Therefore, we should not become discontented when someone whom we know could help us doesn't! This is because our contentment should be in God, not in anyone else. He may chose to use the one whom we think should, and could, help. But He may choose to use someone else. And even if He does choose the one we think should help, they may not yield to Him and help us. But that should be irrelevant to our contentment because He will then use someone else. And that one whom He chose that would not yield to Him and help us- leave them to God for they have only cheated themselves out of the blessing that He had ready to give them for helping us. And also, God has said they will reap what they sow. But that is a matter between them and God and not our concern.

**“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” (Galatians 6:7)**

Because God will supply, then our contentment has no connection whatsoever with the actions, or lack thereof, of any human being. God will supply through someone who will yield to Him. Therefore, we can be content because the action or inaction of others is irrelevant.

### **II. Our contentment should be based only upon our sufficiency in Christ.**

God gives us a promise and the power to overcome all obstacles through Christ.

**Philippians 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”**

It is through Christ that we overcome. Therefore our contentment must lie only with Him.

**A. His promise.**

**“... Christ which strengtheneth me.”**

Remember Christ's sermon on contentment that we read earlier in **Luke 12:22-31**?

**“And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought (*be not anxious*) for your life... what ye shall eat... what ye shall put on... or what ye shall drink... neither be ye of doubtful mind (*doubtful and anxious*). For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.”**

Because God has promised to supply both the needs of the body as well as the strength to overcome, then we can contentedly rest in Him.

**B. His power is given to us to overcome all things.**

**Philippians 4:13 “I can do all things...”**

He has fulfilled His promise, in Christ our strength, and has given us the power to overcome; not some things but all things!

Concerning this character trait of contentment, the externals mean nothing- unless we let them. When we know, and believe, that God knows exactly what we need and promises to supply all, then that will leave us contented. He is telling us that externals mean nothing- IF we yield to Him and trust Him and seek first the Kingdom of God. We need to trust not in the Creation, that is, people or things, we need to trust only in the Creator. When we learn to do that, then we will be contented.

**We now know how to be contented. We must learn to trust not in the Creation but in the Creator! Now, it is up to us to learn to put trust in God into practice in our lives- only then we can say “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.”**



- 1. How do you feel about you and the character trait of Contentment?**
- 2. What do you think about it?**

*feel:* \_\_\_\_\_

(For a list of feelings/emotions see page 2 of this study.)

*think:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**For our next meeting:** During the two weeks until our next meeting we will keep track of our responses concerning this trait of **Contentment**. If someone struggled with this trait or maybe has some question about it that came up during the two week period, we will take a few minutes to briefly discuss that at the next meeting.

The self-examination score card for the next two week period is below and, if needed, we will briefly discuss the results at the beginning of our next meeting.

**Ask your self before God:** “Did I show/not show the character trait of Contentment, without bounds, during the 2 week period, whenever my contentment was tested?” (Your emotional and mental state and/or reaction is involved in your self-examination of your character.)

**How to score yourself:**

If the trait did NOT come up during a particular day, leave that box blank.

For the days that the trait DID come up:

enter a “1” for “absolutely no”

enter a “3” for “sort of”

enter a “5” for “absolutely yes”

(If you are wavering between 1, 3, or 5 and the number above or below it, then enter the number above or below it that is appropriate to your wavering up or down.)

**My self-examination score for the character trait of Contentment for the 2 week period:** (Remember, your emotional and mental state or reaction is involved in your self-examination.)

Mark 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, in each day's box that your Contentment was tested.

Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr	Sat	Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr

**Overall assessment for the 2 week period for the Character Trait of Contentment:**  
(average score)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

## LESSON TWENTY-TWO

### Confident/Confidence

#### REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through TWENTY-TWO:

We are made in God's image and we are a man because God made us that way. Now, to be an encouragement to others and to be in obedience to God, we need to act like a man and have Compassion on others and show it to them by being a Servant; i.e., trying to help meet their needs, both physical and spiritual. We are to do this out of love. Because love is an action word, many times love must entail



forgiveness. And we cannot completely fulfill these things, or any others that God expects of us, without commitment and prayer, and gentleness, shown appropriately of course, patience, and self-control. And to top off the 10 most important character traits, we must be humble.

We carried out a self-examination in lessons 14 and 15 and then continue on with Fairness in lesson 16, Courage in lesson 17, Friendship/Friend in lesson 18; Honesty/Truthfulness in lesson 19, and a study in Christian Responsibility in lesson 20. Last week we studied how to be contented in lesson 21.

### SELF-EXAMINATION

**James 1:22 “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”**

We will spend a short time each meeting to carry out a self-examination concerning the character trait studied in the previous meeting. In this case, the trait of Responsible/Responsibility.

**II Corinthians 13:5a “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; Prove your own selves...”**

If we have struggled with the character trait since studying it, we can bring it up at the next meeting if we choose to do so but we do not have to do so. We may want some input from our brothers concerning how to overcome the problem and align our character to be more like Christ; but whether we do so at the meeting or whether we do so privately is up to the individual. However, the opportunity will be afforded should they decide they want to discuss it. Maybe God did something unusual or powerful in helping them overcome the problem and they want to share that to be a blessing to the others. This would be a good reason for briefly discussing it at the next meeting. (Briefly is a key word here- because we need to have time to move on to the next lesson.)

**Before we move on to the next lesson, are there any comments concerning the character trait from the previous lesson- Content/Contentment? This is your chance to speak up.**

## LESSON TWENTY-TWO

### Confident/Confidence

**“Confidence helps us rely on the Lord for all things in our life. It will enable us to push forward in the direction that we are called because He is governing. It makes us realize we are not responsible for the results—only the obedience. (Philippians 4:13)”** Unknown author

**Philippians 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”**

#### SECULAR DEFINITIONS

**confident**, (1) *feeling confidence in oneself* (2) *feeling certainty about something*

**confidence**, (1) *the belief that one can have faith in or rely on someone or something.* (2) *Self-assurance arising from an appreciation of one's abilities*

#### BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

##### OLD TESTAMENT

**confidence** - בָּטַח *baw-takh'* a primitive root; properly to hie (go quickly) for refuge; figuratively to trust, be confident or sure: - be bold (confident, secure, sure), careless (one, woman), put confidence, (make to) hope, (put, make to) trust.

##### derivatives of *baw-takh*

בְּטָחוֹן, *bit-taw-khone'*, trust: - confidence, hope

**confident** - מִבְּטָחַי *mib-tawkh'* a, properly a refuge, that is, (objectively) security, or (subjectively) assurance: - confidence, hope, sure, trust.

In general these, and several other words translated **confidence** or **confident**, all have meanings relating to **assurance, security, boldness, hope, trust, to go quickly for refuge**, concerning oneself, others, or things. With the overwhelming majority of words coming from the root word, *baw-takh'*.

##### NEW TESTAMENT

**confidence** - παρρησιας *par-rhay-see'-ahs* from παρρησια, *par-rhay-see' ah* all out spokenness, that is, frankness, bluntness, publicity; by implication assurance: - bold (X -ly, -ness, -ness of speech), confidence, X freely, X openly, X plainly (-ness).

**confident** - πείθω, *pay-tho* “A primary verb; to convince (by argument, true or false); by analogy to pacify or conciliate (by other fair means); reflexively or passively to assent (to evidence or authority), to rely (by inward certainty): - agree, assure, believe, have confidence, be (wax) content, make friend, obey, persuade, trust, yield.

Several other Greek words are also translated confidence or confident and add to the definition further meanings, *reliance*, and, *to exercise courage*.

**A working biblical definition for confident/confidence:** *to assent to, to agree, to believe. To trust in self or someone else or something, to have complete assurance in or of, reliance, to exercise courage and boldness; and, in speech, boldness in assuring or persuading someone of something.*

## **I. Paul under inspiration of the Holy Spirit gives us a formula for Confident/Confidence.**

### **Philippians 4:10-13**

**“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”**

## **CONFIDENCE IS BORN IN FAITH AND BOLSTERED BY EXPERIENCE**

### **A. Confidence is born in faith.**

The question we must ask ourselves is, “Do we trust God?” If we do, then we are exhibiting faith in Him.

1. The first use of the word “faith” in the Bible is in Deuteronomy.

**Deuteronomy 32:20** “**And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.**”

The word translated **faith** in this verse is the word *ay-moon*’ - *established, that is, (figuratively) trusty; also (abstractly) trustworthiness: - faith (-ful), truth.*

2. The word **faithful** is first found in **Numbers** and then again in **Deuteronomy**.

**Numbers 12:7** “**My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house.**”

This first use of the word is concerning a man, Moses.

**Deuteronomy 7:9** “**Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; ”**

This second use of the word faithful is concerning God.

Both of those are from the word *aw-man*’ - *A primitive root; properly to build up or support; to foster as a parent or nurse; figuratively to render (or be) firm or faithful, to trust or believe, to be permanent or quiet; morally to be true or certain; once (in Isa\_30:21; by interchange for H541) to go to the right hand: - hence assurance, believe, bring up, establish, + fail, be faithful (of long continuance, steadfast, sure, surely, trusty, verified), nurse, (-ing father), (put), trust, turn to the right.*



**Faithfulness**, in the Old Testament, is generally from the word *em-oo-naw'* literally *firmness; figuratively security; moral fidelity*:

- Trust** is often translated from the same word as *faith* and *faithful* in the Old Testament and other times it is translated from *khah-saw'* *A primitive root; to flee for protection (compare H982); figuratively to confide in: - have hope, make refuge, (put) trust.*

And also from *baw-tahk'* *A primitive root; properly to hie for refuge (but not so precipitately as H2620); figuratively to trust, be confident or sure: - be bold (confident, secure, sure), careless (one, woman), put confidence, (make to) hope, (put, make to) trust.*

- In the New Testament, *faith*, *believe*, and *trust* are from πίστις, (*pistis - faith*) πιστεύω, (*pis-teu-oh - believe*) and πείθω (*pay-tho - trust*) and *trust* is also translated from ἐλπίζω (*el-pid'-zo*) and πεποίθησις (*pep-oy'-thay-sis* translated as *reliance: - confidence, trust*). All of these words, in one way or another, are related to **confidence** as is shown by their definitions and applications.
- It is easy to see from these definitions that **faith/belief**, and **trust** are intimately related; and oft times interchangeable. It is a simple conclusion to draw from the definitions that if we have faith in God we will trust Him.
- It is also easy to see that, from the definitions, trust and confidence are interrelated; in that if we trust someone or something, it gives us confidence in that person or thing. Even if the someone is ourselves. If we have faith in them, we will trust them; that means that we have confidence in them.
- Therefore, confidence springs from the roots of faith/trust; i.e., “**confidence is born in faith.**”

**When applied to our key scripture:**

**Philippians 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”**

It is very apparent that faith and trust is to be placed in Christ for strength “**Christ which strengtheneth me.**” And when we do so, that then shows we have confidence in Christ and that gives us confidence in ourselves that we can “**do all things**” as is confidently stated in that scripture, by His power working through us.

## **B. Confidence is bolstered by experience.**

When the confidence of the children of Israel faltered, which happened so many times (just like it does with us Christians) God would remind them of their experiences with Him. He would begin by reminding them that He was the one who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, which was the most powerful Kingdom on earth at that time. He would also remind them that He had driven out many nations more powerful than them to give them the land of Canaan. And He had done so, with only a few

exceptions, by giving them victory over their enemies in battle. Battles that they fought with His power and promises. This reminded them that it was by His power working through them that these victories were won; or, alternatively, the battles were won by Him without them having to fight. This then gave them remembrance of the confidence they had before, which was based in His strength, that had allowed them to go forward from victory to victory. And this remembrance of past confidence and victories encouraged them to have confidence again. It bolstered their waning confidence so that they could advanced once again in the work of the Lord.

This same principle that worked in the lives of the children of Israel also works in our lives. As we go from day to day, we see (if we are looking) God working in us and the things around us. After awhile we begin to have confidence in God's providence and power in our lives. We can see it. That confidence in God then gives us confidence in ourselves as we follow His leading in our lives. Remember we talked about faith earlier? As we see God working in our lives it increases our faith in Him; and our trust (which is intimately related to faith) in Him grows. And that faith and trust brings confidence in Him and our ability to do **“all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”** See how our confidence is born in faith; and how it is bolstered by experience?

## II. Summary

We have to have confidence in our power source, (**“through Christ”**) before we will live and serve in a way that is pleasing to God; and as we do, God enables us to succeed from challenge to challenge. Each of those successes bolsters our confidence a bit more each time.

Maturity is when we quit losing faith in Christ's ability, quite losing confidence in Him and letting doubts prevent us from serving and living for God; and have confidence in ourselves to do so, in Christ. Our confidence in our selves reflects our confidence in Christ. Conversely, if we are following the leading of God and are living, serving, and are depending on His power (**“through Christ which strengtheneth me”**), if we are doing those things, then when we lack confidence in ourselves we are essentially lacking confidence in Christ. Do we want to be guilty of that? We need to check ourselves for obedience to God and then check our confidence quotient. **Philippians 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”**



1. How do you feel about you and the character trait of Confidence?
2. What do you think about it?

*feel:* \_\_\_\_\_

(For a list of feelings/emotions see page 2 of this study.)

*think:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**For our next meeting: During the two weeks until our next meeting we will keep track of our responses concerning this trait of Confidence. If someone struggled with this trait or maybe has some question about it that came up during the two week period, we will take a few minutes to briefly discuss that at the next meeting.**

The self-examination score card for the next two week period is below and, if needed, we will briefly discuss the results at the beginning of our next meeting.

**Ask your self before God: “Did I show/not show the character trait of Confidence, without bounds, during the 2 week period, whenever my confidence was tested?” (Your emotional and mental state and/or reaction is involved in your self-examination of your character.)**

**How to score yourself:**

If the trait did NOT come up during a particular day, leave that box blank.

For the days that the trait DID come up:

enter a “1” for “absolutely no”

enter a “3” for “sort of”

enter a “5” for “absolutely yes”

(If you are wavering between 1, 3, or 5 and the number above or below it, then enter the number above or below it that is appropriate to your wavering up or down.)

**My self-examination score for the character trait of Confidence for the 2 week period:**  
(Remember, your emotional and mental state or reaction is involved in your self-examination.)

Mark 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, in each day’s box that your Confidence was tested.

Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr	Sat	Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr

**Overall assessment for the 2 week period for the Character Trait of Confidence:**  
(average score)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

## LESSON TWENTY-THREE

### Forgiveness

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#### REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through TWENTY-TWO:

We are made in God's image and we are a man because God made us that way. Now, to be an encouragement to others and to be in obedience to God, we need to act like a man and have Compassion on others and show it to them by being a Servant; i.e., trying to help meet their needs, both physical and spiritual. We are to do this out of love. Because love is an action word, many times love must entail



forgiveness. And we cannot completely fulfill these things, or any others that God expects of us, without commitment and prayer, and gentleness, shown appropriately of course, patience, and self-control. And to top off the 10 most important character traits, we must be humble.

We carried out a self-examination in lessons 14 and 15 and then continue on with Fairness in lesson 16, Courage in lesson 17, Friendship/Friend in lesson 18; Honesty/Truthfulness in lesson 19, and a study in Christian Responsibility in lesson 20. We studied how to be contented in lesson 21 and then, last time, we studied about Christian Confidence.

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### SELF-EXAMINATION

**James 1:22 “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”**

We will spend a short time each meeting to carry out a self-examination concerning the character trait studied in the previous meeting. In this case, the trait of Christian Confidence.

**II Corinthians 13:5a “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; Prove your own selves...”**

If we have struggled with the character trait since studying it, we can bring it up at the next meeting if we choose to do so but we do not have to do so. We may want some input from our brothers concerning how to overcome the problem and align our character to be more like Christ; but whether we do so at the meeting or whether we do so privately is up to the individual. However, the opportunity will be afforded should they decide they want to discuss it. Maybe God did something unusual or powerful in helping them overcome the problem and they want to share that to be a blessing to the others. This would be a good reason for briefly discussing it at the next meeting. (Briefly is a key word here- because we need to have time to move on to the next lesson.)

**Before we move on to the next lesson, are there any comments concerning the character trait from the previous lesson- Christian Confidence? This is your chance to speak up.**

## LESSON TWENTY-THREE

### Forgiveness

**“Forgiving is the realization of how much we have been forgiven by Christ. This enables us to forgive the insignificant things that are done to us. It involves not being resentful to others, and ignoring the wrongs that we have received so we can heal relationships by expressing Christ's love. (Luke 23:33-34; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13)”** Unknown author

**Luke 23:33-34 “And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.”**

#### SECULAR DEFINITIONS

**forgive**, verb (*past forgave; past part. forgiven*)

1 stop feeling angry or resentful towards (someone) for an offense or mistake.

2 excuse (an offense, flaw, or mistake).

DERIVATIVES *forgivable* >adjective *forgiver* >noun *forgiving* >adjective.

**forgiveness**, noun *the action or process of forgiving or being forgiven.*

#### BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

##### OLD TESTAMENT

**forgive, forgiveness, forgiving, forgavest** - אָשַׁן הָסִן naw-saw' , to lift

**forgiven**, סָלַח saw-lakh' A primitive root; to *forgive*: - forgive, pardon, spare.

Also כָּפַר kaw-far' A primitive root; to *cover* (specifically with bitumen);

*figuratively to expiate or condone (condone is not biblical), to placate or cancel*

##### NEW TESTAMENT

**forgive, forgiven, forgave** - ἀφίημι *af-ee'-ay-mee* (this is the most common NT Greek word translated as forgive and its derivatives.) (*to send; an intensive form of eimi (to go)*); *to send forth, in various applications: - cry, forgive, forsake, lay aside, leave, let (alone, be, go, have), omit, put (send) away, remit, suffer, yield up.*

**forgive** - ἀπολύω, *ap-o-loo'o*, *to free fully, that is, (literally) relieve, release, dismiss (reflexively depart), or (figuratively) let die, pardon, or (specifically) divorce: - (let) depart, dismiss, divorce, forgive, let go, loose, put (send) away, release, set at liberty.*

**frankly forgave** - χαρίζομαι - *khar-id'-zom-ah-ee*, *to grant as a favor, that is, gratuitously, in kindness, pardon or rescue: - deliver, (frankly) forgive, (freely) give, grant.*

*forgiveness* - ἀφ' εἰς *af'-es-is*, *freedom*; (figuratively) *pardon*: - deliverance, forgiveness, liberty, remission.

**A working biblical definition for forgive/forgiveness, etc.:** *to lift up, to pardon, to send, forsake, lay aside offenses, as a kindness and not necessarily because they deserve it.*

## I. Forgiveness Equality.

### A. Forgiveness “equality” before God.

If we do not forgive others when they trespass against us, then God will not forgive us when we trespass against Him. This is not talking about salvation but concerns our suffering earthly consequences for our sin.

**Matthew 6:12-15** “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses”

**Mark 11:25-26** “And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.”

**Luke 6:37** “Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:”

### B. Forgiveness and sowing and reaping.

This precept of forgiveness equality before God is an extension of the precept of sowing and reaping.

**Galatians 6:7** “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

“**whatsoever**” means any particular thing that is sown.

“**that shall he also reap**” the thing reaped is whatsoever has been sown.

If corn is sown then corn is reaped. If wheat is sown then wheat is reaped. If **forgiveness** is sown then **forgiveness** is reaped. If **unforgiveness** is sown then **unforgiveness** is reaped. This should be a warning to us all. And remember, God will not go against His own Word. This promise is immutable!

## II. The Measure Of Forgiveness.

### A. How far should we forgive?

If necessary, even to death.

**Jesus taught this precept at His crucifixion:**

**Luke 23:33-34** “And when they were come to the place, which is called

**Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”**

In practical terms, nothing is so bad that it should not be forgiven.

### **B. How many times should we forgive?**

As often as is needed.

**Matthew 18:21-22** “Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.”

**Luke 17:4** “And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.”

No matter how often a brother offends, IF they repent we must forgive them.

### **C. Forgiveness must be followed by action.**

**Galatians 6:1** “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”

In this case, the fault is their offense against you. Your reaction to their offense, and upon their repentance, should be immediate forgiveness followed by helping in their restoration.

In the case of an offense against you where they do NOT repent and come to you, your reaction is covered in the preceding and following verses.

**1.** In the preceding verse, **Galatians 6:1**, the person overtaken in a fault is any person, saved or lost, friend or not.

definition of “**man**”: **Gk** ἀνθρώπος,, *anth-ro-pos*, *human being*

This means that we are to seek the restoration of anyone who we see overtaken in a fault; brother, sister, or anyone else. Including (for our purposes in this study) when the fault is against us personally.

**a.** If the person is lost, lead them to the Lord so they have the power of the Holy Spirit to help them overcome their fault.

**b.** If the person is a brother, then restore them. (See the next section.)

**2.** Concerning a brother (in spirit or in the flesh). In the following verses we are commanded to seek out reconciliation and restoration no matter who is at fault.

*If you are at fault:*

**Matthew 5:23-24** “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”

*If they are at fault:*

**Matthew 18:15** “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.”

The essence of the matter, as taught in these verses, is that forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration, are commanded of us no matter who is at fault and no matter if the other person is a brother or sister in the Lord or even if they are a lost person. This is carried out from us to the lost by winning them to the Lord; and from us to the saved, a brother or sister in the Lord, by forgiving them and then going to them and initiating reconciliation and restoration.

**II. The Limits of Forgiveness.**

As I have said before, anything carried to extremes becomes destructive. This includes forgiveness. When forgiveness reaches the point where continuing in it crosses the line into condoning, then God gives us instructions concerning our necessary course of action. Our forgiveness continues but our actions must change course.

**A. What if our attempts at reconciliation and restoration are refused?**

Let's compare the teaching in Luke with the teaching in Matthew.

**Luke 17:4** “And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.”

**Matthew 18:15** “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. (:16) But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. (:17) And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”

1. If the brother (or sister) in the Lord repents, then we are to forgive them and reconciliation and restoration have taken place.

**Luke 17:4** If they “turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.”

**Matthew 18:15** “if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.”

2. But if they reject your offer of reconciliation and restoration and those are not allowed to take place, then what? We still must forgive them but our course of action must change; and that change is, in the end, for the offender's ultimate good.

**Matthew 18:16-17** “... if he will not hear thee... take one or two more... and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church... if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”

What is the purpose of all of this? It is for the benefit of the erring one. We now go to First and Second Corinthians to see this course of action played out and its end result.



## B. The means of reconciliation and restoration changes.

The following concerns anyone who is in unrepentant sin. For our purposes, this would include the brother or sister that rejects your efforts for reconciliation and restoration; which are actions you are commanded to carry out as part of your forgiveness.

**I Corinthians 5:4-5 “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, (:5) to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”**

We call this process Church Discipline. The erring one doesn't repent and they are put out of the Church. They are turned over to the devil who can do whatever he wants to them, including killing them. Their flesh is corrupting them so the devil is allowed to destroy that corrupting flesh. However, he cannot do anything to them concerning their Salvation. He is only allowed to go as far as- **“the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”** Only the corrupting flesh can be attacked.

Then, after the devil has punished them in the flesh, assuming he hasn't killed them, we are commanded, if, as a result of that punishment, they then repent and want to come back and are seeking reconciliation and restoration, we are to show them our love and forgiveness and comfort them.

**II Corinthians 2:6-7 “Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. (:7) So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. (:8) Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him.”**

The intended result is still the same, reconciliation and restoration. The only difference is the actions carried out to bring about the desired result.

1. The original means were: (1) they repent and come to you, and you forgive them; (2) or you go to them and they repent and you have gained your brother; (3) or you go to them with several witnesses and they hear and repent; (4) or you take it to the Church and they hear them and repent. And, through one of those 4 means, reconciliation and restoration come about; thus completing your forgiveness and the actions commanded concerning it.
2. Harsher means are then commanded if those first four are rejected by the erring one. **“to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh”**
3. But the intended end result is still the same- reconciliation and restoration. **“forgive him... comfort him... confirm your love toward him.”**

So, in the end, the harsher means were only to effect what was wanted in the first place, reconciliation and restoration, the actions we are commanded to pursue as part of our forgiveness; with only the best interest of the erring one as our sole intention.

### III. Summary

*God's command and instructions to us are quite clear:*

**Matthew 6:12-15** “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors... For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses”

**Mark 11:25-26** “And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.”

**Luke 6:37** “Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:”

**Galatians 6:7** “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

We are always to forgive, no matter what they do against us. However, we must never allow our forgiveness to become condoning. If they are willingly unrepentant, then we are still to forgive; but our course of action must change accordingly. And the sole purpose of that change of action is to encourage and direct the offender into a more positive direction. That being, toward eventual repentance, reconciliation, and restoration back into fellowship.

**Warning:** Forgiveness, and the actions we are to pursue as part of it, are not merely suggestions from God; they are commands from Him. The scriptures given in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Galatians, clearly show this and give us an unmistakable warning.

**(Matthew)** “... forgive us... as *(in exactly the same manner)* we forgive...”

**(Mark)** “... if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses.”

**(Luke)** “forgive, and ye shall be forgiven”

The command to forgive is given over and over in the Scriptures. So too is the warning of negative consequences if we disobey. It is guaranteed that we will reap what we sow.

**Galatians 6:7** “... whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

**Which do we want to reap from God: forgiveness or unforgiveness?** (Not concerning Salvation but earthly consequences.) **It is, as always, completely up to us!**



**1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this character trait?**

**2. What do you think about the trait?**

*feel:* \_\_\_\_\_

(For a list of feelings/emotions see page 2 of this study.)

*think:* \_\_\_\_\_

**For our next meeting:**

During the two weeks until our next meeting we will keep track of our responses concerning this trait of Forgiveness. If someone struggled with this trait or maybe has some question about it that came up during the two week period, we will take a few minutes to briefly discuss that at the next meeting.

The self-examination score card for the next two week period is below and, if needed, we will briefly discuss the results at the beginning of our next meeting.

Ask your self before God: "Did I show/not show the character trait of Forgiveness, without bounds, during the 2 week period, and carried out the commanded actions concerning it whenever I was tested?" (Your emotional and mental state and/or reaction is involved in your self-examination of your character.)

**How to score yourself:**

If the trait did NOT come up during a particular day, leave that box blank.

For the days that the trait DID come up:

enter a "1" for "absolutely no"

enter a "3" for "sort of"

enter a "5" for "absolutely yes"

(If you are wavering between 1, 3, or 5 and the number above or below it, then enter the number above or below it that is appropriate to your wavering up or down.)

**My self-examination score for this character trait for the 2 week period:** (Remember, your emotional and mental state or reaction is involved in your self-examination.)

Mark 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, in each day's box that your Forgiveness was tested.

Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr	Sat	Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr

**Overall assessment for the 2 week period for the Character Trait of Forgiveness:**  
(average score)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

## LESSON TWENTY-FOUR

### Meekness

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#### REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through TWENTY-THREE:

We are made in God's image and we are a man because God made us that way. Now, to be an encouragement to others and to be in obedience to God, we need to act like a man and have Compassion on others and show it to them by being a Servant; i.e., trying to help meet their needs, both physical and spiritual. We are to do this out of love. Because love is an action word, many times love must entail



forgiveness. And we cannot completely fulfill these things, or any others that God expects of us, without commitment and prayer, and gentleness, shown appropriately of course, patience, and self-control. And to top off the 10 most important character traits, we must be humble.

We carried out a self-examination in lessons 14 and 15 and then continue on with Fairness in lesson 16, Courage in lesson 17, Friendship/Friend in lesson 18; Honesty/Truthfulness in lesson 19, and a study in Christian Responsibility in lesson 20. We studied how to be contented in lesson 21 and Christian Confidence in 22 and then, last time, we studied about Forgiveness.

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### SELF-EXAMINATION

**James 1:22 “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”**

We will spend a short time each meeting to carry out a self-examination concerning the character trait studied in the previous meeting. In this case, the trait of Forgiveness.

**II Corinthians 13:5a “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; Prove your own selves...”**

If we have struggled with the character trait since studying it, we can bring it up at the next meeting if we choose to do so but we do not have to do so. We may want some input from our brothers concerning how to overcome the problem and align our character to be more like Christ; but whether we do so at the meeting or whether we do so privately is up to the individual. However, the opportunity will be afforded should they decide they want to discuss it. Maybe God did something unusual or powerful in helping them overcome the problem and they want to share that to be a blessing to the others. This would be a good reason for briefly discussing it at the next meeting. (Briefly is a key word here- because we need to have time to move on to the next lesson.)

**Before we move on to the next lesson, are there any comments concerning the character trait from the previous lesson- Forgiveness? This is your chance to speak up.**

## LESSON TWENTY-FOUR

### Meekness

**“Meekness is not about being weak! It is strength under control.”** Unknown author

**Matthew 11:29** “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

#### SECULAR DEFINITIONS

**meek**, *quiet, gentle, and submissive*. ORIGIN: Old Norse, *soft, gentle*

#### BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

##### OLD TESTAMENT

**meek**- עָנָו עָנָו aw-nawv', aw-nawv', - depressed (figuratively), in mind (gentle) or circumstances (needy, especially saintly): - humble, lowly, meek, poor

##### NEW TESTAMENT

**meek** - πραύς praus πραός *prah-os*, Apparently a primary word; *mild*, that is, (by implication) *humble, gentle, - meek*

**meekness** - πραοτης *prah-ot'-ace*, *gentleness*; by implication *humility: meekness*

### I. Two Men In the Bible Are Presented As the Epitome of Meek.

#### A. Old Testament Meek Man - Moses

**Numbers 12:1** “And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. (:2) And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it. (:3) (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.) (:4) And the LORD spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out. (:5) And the LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth. (:6) And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. (:7) My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. (:8) With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? (:9) And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them;

and he departed. (:10) And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous. (:11) And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned. (:12) Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb. (:13) And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee.”

There are several things we learn from this story.

1. God watches over the meek.

(:2) And the LORD heard it. (:8)... wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? (:9) And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them... (:10) ... Miriam became leprous, white as snow...”

- a. He takes notice when the meek are attacked. (:2)
- b. He disapproves of those who attack the meek. (:8-9)
- c. He exacts retribution against those who attack the meek. (:10)

2. Attacks against the meek can be motivated by hidden reasons which they then veil in spiritual accusations.

(:1) “And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married...”

This is the real reason they spoke against Moses.

(:2) “Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us”

This is the spiritual veil used for the attack against him.

3. How should the meek respond to attacks?

(:13) “And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee.”

Even though the one that attacks them deserves God's righteous anger and retribution, the truly meek person will forgive the attacker and pray for God to also forgive them and spare them His just retribution.

**B. New Testament Meek Man - Jesus**

**Mat 11:28** “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (:29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (:30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

### Several things we learn from this passage of Scripture.

#### 1. Meekness will give you rest in heavy labour.

a. First, we must go to Christ. (:28)

b. Second, we must yoke ourselves together with Christ. (:29)

This means we should labor/serve in the way He does; but it also means we do not have to do so alone but we will labour/serve with Him in the yoke with us.

c. (:29) “... ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

This is not talking about your eternal “souls” but about your “life force.”

“souls” - Gk ψυχή *psoo-khay'* breath, that is, (by implication) *spirit*, abstractly or concretely (the animal sentient principle only; thus distinguished on the one hand from *panyoo'-mah*, which is the rational and immortal soul; and on the other from *dzo-ay*, which is mere vitality, even of plants

God used that particular Greek word here to clarify that He will give physical “rest” to “all ye that labour and are heavy laden”; that is, to all who get physically weary in the work of the ministry. The prerequisite to receiving that “rest”, however, is first, we must go to Christ to obtain this rest and, second, we must labor not in our own physical strength alone but labor in the “yoke” with Him! And the only way to do that second one is to labor with Him, and in the way that He labors. In essence, we do not ask Him to labor with us as we lead the way, but, rather, we ask Him to lead and we then get in the yoke with Him and follow His lead. That way, we take His “yoke” upon us rather than have Him take our “yoke” upon Him.

Jesus said,

“take my yoke upon you”; and not “I will take your yoke upon me.”

This results in a totally new level of meekness on our part when we learn His meekness from Him. We take upon us His meekness, which makes available to us His unlimited power under the unlimited control which He exercises. This can be contrasted with our own “meekness;” which is our humanly limited power under our humanly limited control. My question is, which one will better give us “rest” when we are weary; our meekness or His meekness; His power or our power?

## II. How Does Learning Christ's Meekness Benefit Us?

- A. No benefit unless we not only learn His meekness but make it ours. That is, incorporate it into our own character, and practice it.
- B. One benefit is that, if we learn it and make it our own, it will offset our natural human sinful pride. I say this because taking His meekness and making it our own will help us realize that it is His leading that we must follow to know the correct way of service

and knowing that it is, as we serve, His power alone that enables us to succeed. This leaves no room for our sinful pride because it all starts and ends with Him and not us. God tells us through Paul in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians:

**II Corinthians 10:1 “Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ...”**

**10:17 “... he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”**

Of all the people who could have boasted in their own accomplishments, Paul chose rather to tell us, in the “**meekness and gentleness of Christ**”, that all glorying in accomplishments must be “**in the Lord**” and not in ourselves.

He reinforces this point in the epistle to the Galatians:

**Galatians 6:1 “... God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

- C. Another benefit of incorporating the meekness of Christ into our own character is that it will make us more sympathetic rather than accusative toward a brother or sister who has fallen into sin. That will, in turn, motivate us to help in their restoration; considering that we could just as easily be the one who has been tempted and fallen into the trap of temptation and need help up and out of our sin.

**Galatians 6:1 “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. ”**

The spirit of meekness being commanded here is not our natural, human, meekness, which has limits in both extent and power, but that of Christ who always seeks restoration and who always empowers us beyond our own natural limits to effect complete and effectual restoration no matter what the sin of the fallen one.

**Ephesians 4:2 “With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.”**

**II Timothy 2:25 “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth”**

- D. Another benefit is that we will be in the will of God because meekness is commanded of us as Christians, toward both Christians and the lost, and is pleasing to God.

**Colossians 3:12 “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; (:13) “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even**



as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. ”

**I Timothy 6:11 “But thou, O man of God... follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.”**

**Titus 3:2 “To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.”**

**James 1:21 “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.**

**James 3:13 “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.”**

**I Peter 3:4 “But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.**

**I Peter 3:15 “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.”**

- E. And finally, incorporating Christ's meekness into our own character will give us the power to not only overcome spiritual frailties and faults, as in the previous section concerning restoration (in meekness) of a fallen brother or sister (**Galatians 6:1**), but also the power to overcome physical weariness.

**Matthew 11:28 "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (:29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (:30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."**

**There are several reasons why this is so:**

1. When His meekness becomes our meekness, then we will take Christ's yoke upon us and, when doing so, we then know that we are going in a direction that is pleasing to God. Thus, we have access to God's blessings upon the service that we perform- which is now strictly the service that Christ leads us to perform and nothing of our own concoction. As we saw earlier. Christ said, **“Take my yoke upon you”** and NOT **“I will take your yoke upon me.”**
2. Secondly, we have the promise that He will give us **“rest unto your souls”** as we learned earlier, meaning relief of the heavy burdens of labor upon our physical vitality. And rest from the heavy burdens will restore our physical vitality.
3. Finally, we will have rest from physical burdens and have the power to overcome the weariness experienced in them, because Christ's **“yoke is easy”** and His **“burden is light.”**


How can this be so? Because we are in the “yoke” with the one who has the limitless power of the Holy Spirit within Him, and that without measure. We have the power of the Holy Spirit within earthen vessels. Our sin, which we all commit from time to time because we are human (being human is a reason not an excuse) blocks the free flow of the power of the Holy Ghost within us. But for Christ, there is no such blocking of the power because there is no sin to do so. (He is “**without sin**” **Hebrews 4:15**) Therefore, His power becomes our power, in full measure and without obstacle, to be used with His measure of Meekness to carry out His will in our lives- both spiritually and physically.

**SUMMARY**

It is obvious that there are many benefits to learning and adopting the meekness of Christ into our own character. First and foremost, it is pleasing to God and He considers it something of “**great price**” and it is commanded for all Christians. He even says that it is so commendable that “**The meek shall inherit the earth**” (**Psalm 37:11 & Matthew 5:5**). In addition it makes us more godly in our dealings with fallen brothers and sisters as well as in our dealings with the lost who may offend us “**shewing all meekness unto all men**”. It also gives us direction because when we adopt Christ’s meekness we are, thereby, allowing Christ to lead us instead of our asking Christ to come with us in a direction we may chose. And in our human frailties and tiredness under heavy burdens of service, it gives us physical “**rest**” because we are no longer laboring in our own power but in the limitless power of the very Son of God with whom we are willingly in the “yoke” who can then help us labor in His power and not ours.

**Matthew 11:28 "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (:29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (:30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."**

This character trait of meekness is just one more step toward Chistian maturity. There are more to follow in future lessons.



**1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this character trait?**

**2. What do you think about the trait?**

*feel:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(For a list of feelings/emotions see page 2 of this study.)

*think:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**For our next meeting:**

**During the two weeks until our next meeting we will keep track of our responses concerning this trait of Meekness. If someone struggled with this trait or maybe has some question about it that came up during the two week period, we will take a few minutes to briefly discuss that at the next meeting.**

**The self-examination score card for the next two week period is below and, if needed, we will briefly discuss the results at the beginning of our next meeting.**

**Ask your self before God: “Did I show/not show the character trait of Meekness, without bounds, during the 2 week period, and carried out the commanded actions concerning it whenever I was tested?” (Your emotional and mental state and/or reaction is involved in your self-examination of your character.)**

**How to score yourself:**

**If the trait did NOT come up during a particular day, leave that box blank.**

**For the days that the trait DID come up:**

**enter a “1” for “absolutely no”**

**enter a “3” for “sort of”**

**enter a “5” for “absolutely yes”**

**(If you are wavering between 1, 3, or 5 and the number above or below it, then enter the number above or below it that is appropriate to your wavering up or down.)**

**My self-examination score for this character trait for the 2 week period: (Remember, your emotional and mental state or reaction is involved in your self-examination.)**

**Mark 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, in each day's box that this character trait was tested.**

Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr	Sat	Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr

**Overall assessment for the 2 week period for this character trait:  
(average score)**

**1                      2                      3                      4                      5**

## LESSON TWENTY-FIVE

### Gratitude

#### REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through TWENTY-FOUR:

We are made in God's image and we are a man because God made us that way. Now, to be an encouragement to others and to be in obedience to God, we need to act like a man and have Compassion on others and show it to them by being a Servant; i.e., trying to help meet their needs, both physical and spiritual. We are to do this out of love. Because love is an action word, many times love must entail



forgiveness. And we cannot completely fulfill these things, or any others that God expects of us, without commitment and prayer, and gentleness, shown appropriately of course, patience, and self-control. And to top off the 10 most important character traits, we must be humble.

We carried out a self-examination in lessons 14 and 15 and then continue on with Fairness in lesson 16, Courage in lesson 17, Friendship/Friend in lesson 18; Honesty/Truthfulness in lesson 19, and a study in Christian Responsibility in lesson 20. We studied how to be contented in lesson 21 and Christian Confidence in 22, Forgiveness in 23 and the strength of Meekness in lesson 24.

### SELF-EXAMINATION

**James 1:22 “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”**

We will spend a short time each meeting to carry out a self-examination concerning the character trait studied in the previous meeting- Meekness.

**II Corinthians 13:5a “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; Prove your own selves...”**

If we have struggled with the character trait since studying it, we can bring it up at the next meeting if we choose to do so but we do not have to do so. We may want some input from our brothers concerning how to overcome the problem and align our character to be more like Christ; but whether we do so at the meeting or whether we do so privately is up to the individual. However, the opportunity will be afforded should they decide they want to discuss it. Maybe God did something unusual or powerful in helping them overcome the problem and they want to share that to be a blessing to the others. This would be a good reason for briefly discussing it at the next meeting. (Briefly is a key word here- because we need to have time to move on to the next lesson.)

**Before we move on to the next lesson, are there any comments concerning the character trait from the previous lesson? This is your chance to speak up.**

## LESSON TWENTY-FIVE

### Gratitude

**“Gratitude is an attitude of being thankful, even when we do not see what we have. This is an aspect of worship, expressing to God and others how they have benefitted our lives by showing their support and benevolence. (I Corinthians 4:7; I Thess 5:18)”** Unknown author

**I Corinthians 4:7 “For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?”**

**I Thessalonians 5:18 “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”**

One of my teachers in Bible College told us to always **“Maintain an attitude of gratitude”**

#### SECULAR DEFINITIONS

**gratitude**, *thankfulness; appreciation of kindness*

**thankful** *1. pleased and relieved. 2. expressing gratitude*

#### BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

##### OLD TESTAMENT

**give thanks** - יָדָה yaw-daw' *A primitive root; literally to use (that is, hold out) the hand; physically to throw (a stone, an arrow) at or away; (for our purposes) especially to revere or worship (with extended hands); (give) thank (-ful, -s, -sgiving).*

*Yaw-daw' is also translated **praise** in dozens of places.*

##### NEW TESTAMENT

**give thanks** - εὐχαριστέω yoo-khar-is-teh'-o, *to be grateful, that is, (actually) to express gratitude (towards); specifically to say grace at a meal: - (give) thank (-ful, -s).*

This word is used in the New Testament concerning the instituting of the Lord's Supper in **I Corinthians**.

**I Corinthians 11:23-24 “ For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks (εὐχαριστήσας yoo-khar-is-teh'-sas, which is a derivative of εὐχαριστέω yoo-khar-is-teh'-o), he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.”**

**praise** - αἰ'vov *ah'-ee-non* and αἰνεῖν *ah'-ee-nay-in*, *to praise God.*

The act of gratitude, expressed as **giving thanks** to God, is mentioned 80 times in 39 verses in the Bible; **thanksgiving** is found 28 times in 27 verses; **giving of thanks** is found 3 times in 3 verses; **thanked** is found 3 times in 3 verses; and **thankful** 6 time in 6 verses, for a total of 120 mentions. In addition there are 10 times where **thanks** and **praise** are mentioned together and many times where **praise**, translated from the Hebrew word, yaw-daw', and the Greek words, *ah'-ee-non* and *ah'-ee-nay-in* is mentioned by itself.

All of these are expressions of gratitude to God for a multitude of things.

## I. For What Are We To Be Grateful?

We will mention just a few of the multitude.

### A. Food, clothing, the Universe and all that is in it.

#### 1. Grateful for the food in our bellies.

**Mark 8:6** “**And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, (ευχαριστησας yoo-khar-is-teh'-sas) and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people.**”

#### 2. Grateful for the clothing that we wear.

**Matthew 6:28-30** “**And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: (:29) And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (:30) Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?**”

#### 3. Grateful for the Universe and all that is in it.

**I Chronicles 16:29-35** “**Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness. Fear before him, all the earth: the world also shall be stable, that it be not moved. Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let men say among the nations, The LORD reigneth. Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof: let the fields rejoice, and all that is therein. Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the LORD, because he cometh to judge the earth. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever. And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and glory in thy praise.**”

**B. Grateful for victory over our enemies.**

**II Samuel 22:48-50** “It is God that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the people under me, and that bringeth me forth from mine enemies: thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent man. Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name.”

**C. Grateful for our health.**

**Jeremiah 17:14** “Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise.”

**D. Grateful for His supply of all of our needs and protection from evil, as His annointed, for all of our life. (Psalm 23)**

**Those are just some of the good things we should be grateful for.**

**II. Are We To Be Grateful For the Bad As Well As The Good? Yes!**

**Nothing happens in our lives but God brings it or allows it; and somehow it is always the best thing for us at that particular time in our lives.**

**A. Gratitude for chastisement.**

1. It proves we are His child. **(Hebrews 12:6-8)**
2. It helps us to be holy as God is holy. **(Hebrews 12:9-10)**
3. It's result is the “**peacable fruit of righteousness**” in us. **(Hebrews 12:11)**
4. It directs our paths into the right way and gives us strength and prevents us from going the wrong way. **(Hebrews 12:12-13)**

**B. Gratitude even when we suffer.**

1. When we suffer with Christ we shall be glorified with Him. **(Romans 8:17-18)**
2. When we live godly lives we “**shall suffer persecution**”. **(II Timothy 3:12)**
3. When we suffer for well doing, for doing righteously, it is pleasing to God. **(I Peter 2:19-20; 3:14-17)**

**I Peter 4:13** “But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”

**I Peter 4:16** “Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.”

When we suffer this way, the suffering is according to the will of God!

**I Peter 4:19** “Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”

4. Gratitude in ALL THINGS that come upon us! Because we know they are working the purpose of God in, on, and through us. And the purpose of God is always best!

**Romans 8:28** “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

**Therefore, we should be grateful for all things; the bad as well as the good!**

C. Gratitude even in the midst of the worst of times in our lives.

(This next part is of very personal experience.)

When my wife Bonnie (now in Heaven) came down with cancer I experienced the worst time in my life. We had been married for 32 years when the cancer was discovered and she fought it for 2 more years and went home in our 34<sup>th</sup> year of marriage. Frustration, anger, helplessness, all of these and more were experienced during those two years of battle with the disease. At times I would be bent over holding my stomach as though someone had punched me in the gut, completely frustrated and helpless, and begging the Lord to show me “**what can I do!**” Then He told me, “**There is nothing you can do!**” We had taken every step possible with man's medicine and prayed over and over that God would heal her, and still we knew that it was only a matter of time before she went on home to Heaven. It was at that time that God told me “**There is nothing you can do**” and brought the scripture to mind, “**In whose hand (*God's hand*) is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.**” Bonnie's breath was in God's hand, not mine or hers. (**Job 12:10**)

The last year she was pretty much an invalid. She had to be helped out of bed into her wheelchair to take her to her doctors appointments and lifted out of bed onto a potty to take care of her bathroom needs. She could not feed herself the last 6 or 8 months so she had to be spoonfed by hand. The battle was wearying for both of us. Many times she would recite her favorite prayer facing death as she had done going through life's trials as a Christian, “**I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.**” (**Phil 4:13**) and that helped both of us through some of the toughest times.

Now I will get to the point. The toll was wearying on her some months before she died and because of my past (a whoremongering musician) one day, in tears, she asked me, “**You wouldn't leave me for another woman, would you?**” And with tears I answered her, “**No, you stuck by me through years of hell on earth and what kind of a dog would I be to abandon you now? I love you!**” Then I told her, “**Besides, you are God's child and God has trusted me enough to place the care of one of His**



**children into my hands! How could I leave you now?"** This was not only God's way of giving her complete assurance when she needed it, but it also was an expression of gratitude from me toward God for the trust He was placing in me to take care of His sweet child until He decided it was time for her to go home. I can never be grateful enough that He would trust me to take care of one of His precious children in their time of need. Later, I would not allow anyone else to do Bonnie's funeral. I did it myself because His trust in me had to be honored to the end of the task. And that task was not over until we placed her remains in the ground.

The day before Bonnie's funeral I was at the grave site looking down into the hole where she was to be buried the next day. The open grave was covered by a sheet of plywood but the grave was longer than eight feet so I was looking down into the foot or more that was uncovered. Rejoicing because Bonnie was in Heaven and then alternating with tears because I missed her, I was talking with the Lord and I said, **"Well Lord, that's where were going to put Bonnie tomorrow."** Then the Lord said to my mind, **"Hey, she's already with me; all you're putting in the ground is her broken-down, worn out body!"** That, of course, made me rejoice in the midst of tears and sorrow. There is a reason I tell you this story.

The next day, at the end of Bonnie's funeral, my daughter came up to me and told me that mine and Bonnie's grandson had asked her a question that she couldn't answer and would I talk to him about it and try to answer his question. I said **"sure, I'll try."** He then asked me this question, **"If grandma's in Heaven then why are we putting her in the ground."** I was a bit taken aback by that and at first didn't know quite what to say. Then the Lord brought to mind what He had told me the previous day, **"she's already with me; all you're putting in the ground is her broken body."** So I then told my grandson this story. **"When you have a favorite toy and you play with it and play with it and then it gets broken and you can't use it any more and you go to mommy and she gets you a new toy, what do you do with the broken one?"** He then said, **"We throw the old one away."** I then answered his question this way, **"That's what happened to grandma. Her old body was broken and wouldn't work any more. So now she's with Jesus but her old broken body is still here and we can't let it just lie around so we are putting it in the ground. She will get a brand new one later and she doesn't need the broken one any more so we are just burying it."** And looking up at me he said, **"Oh, okay."** And that completely satisfied him.

You may ask, what do these things have to do with gratitude? Simple. Even in the midst of the worst time of my life God was there. He trusted me to take care of His child, Bonnie, and for that trust I will always be grateful. And with my grandson, God gave me the answer to the child's question even before it was asked. More than that, the answer he gave me not only set my grandson's mind at ease, but it also set my mind at ease knowing she was with the Lord and we were not putting her in the ground; we were only burying her broken-down body in full assurance that she would get a brand

new one in the resurrection. One that would never wear out and break down again.

My gratitude for what God did, even in the midst of oppressive sorrow, will always be there to teach me that He always shined a light in the darkness. And for that I will ever be grateful; in the bad times as well as the good.

**SUMMARY:**

God assures us that “... **all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.**” (Romans 8:28) We should always be grateful that whatever comes, either He brings it or He allows it; and, somehow, it is always the best thing for us at that particular time in our lives. It is easy to be grateful in the good times. But to be grateful in the bad times we must step out of the flesh and see things in the spirit. Let God show us why things are happening the way that He brings or allows. Sometimes, as in the case of Bonnie’s life and death and the question from my grandson, it takes a while for us to know the “how and why” of things. It took me only a short time to realize the gratitude that I had toward God for giving me the answer to my grandson’s question and setting my mind at ease; but it took a couple of years for me to realize the depth of the gratitude I felt toward God for entrusting Bonnie’s care to me. Oh, I was grateful at the time I told Bonnie that God entrusted her care to me, but I did not realize the depth of the gratitude that I felt for His trust until a few years later. I still have trouble expressing to others my gratitude to Him- the depth of that gratitude can hardly be expressed in words to people but as long as He knows, then I am happy.

**The final word is: We are to be grateful to God for everything that happens in our lives; the good and the bad! Yes, the good are pleasant and easy to accept and gratitude for them comes easy. (Even though most do not show it nor even allow it to be felt.) But the bad are not pleasant; God never says that they are. He tells us they are profitable but He never says they are pleasant. But regardless of whether they are good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant, we still need to be grateful to God that He is working in our lives. Grateful that He is working out “his purpose” for our lives. Realizing that whatever comes, it is always the best for us or He would not bring it or allow it to happen to us. For that we should ever be grateful and express our gratitude to Him! And for our fellow human beings, we need to treat them as we are to treat God. That is, express gratitude for them and the good that they do in our lives. (To people- forgive the bad and express gratitude for the good. But remember, even the bad teaches us something; so be grateful for that.)**



1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this character trait?
2. What do you think about the trait?

*feel:* \_\_\_\_\_

(For a list of feelings/emotions see page 2 of this study.)

*think:* \_\_\_\_\_

**For our next meeting:**

During the two weeks until our next meeting we will keep track of our responses concerning this trait of Gratitude. If someone struggled with this trait or maybe has some question about it that came up during the two week period, we will take a few minutes to briefly discuss that at the next meeting.

The self-examination score card for the next two week period is below and, if needed, we will briefly discuss the results at the beginning of our next meeting.

Ask your self before God: "Did I show/not show the character trait of Gratitude, without bounds, during the 2 week period, and carried out the commanded actions concerning it whenever I was tested?" (Your emotional and mental state and/or reaction is involved in your self-examination of your character.)

**How to score yourself:**

If the trait did NOT come up during a particular day, leave that box blank.

For the days that the trait DID come up:

- enter a "1" for "absolutely no"
- enter a "3" for "sort of"
- enter a "5" for "absolutely yes"

(If you are wavering between 1, 3, or 5 and the number above or below it, then enter the number above or below it that is appropriate to your wavering up or down.)

**My self-examination score for this character trait for the 2 week period:** (Remember, your emotional and mental state or reaction is involved in your self-examination.)

Mark 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, in each day's box that this character trait was tested or NA if not tested that day.

Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr	Sat	Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr

**Overall assessment for the 2 week period for this character trait:**  
(average score)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

## LESSON TWENTY-SIX

### Peace

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#### REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through TWENTY-FIVE:

We are made in God's image and we are a man because God made us that way. Now, to be an encouragement to others and to be in obedience to God, we need to act like a man and have Compassion on others and show it to them by being a Servant; i.e., trying to help meet their needs, both physical and spiritual. We are to do this out of love. Because love is an action word, many times love must entail forgiveness. And we cannot completely fulfill these things, or any others that God expects of us, without commitment and prayer, and gentleness, shown appropriately of course, patience, and self-control. And to top off the 10 most important character traits, we must be humble.



We carried out a self-examination in lessons 14 and 15 and then continue on with Fairness in lesson 16, Courage in lesson 17, Friendship/Friend in lesson 18; Honesty/Truthfulness in lesson 19, and a study in Christian Responsibility in lesson 20. We studied how to be contented in lesson 21 and Christian Confidence in 22, Forgiveness in 23 and the strength of Meekness in lesson 24. In lesson 25 we learned the difficult lesson of the how and why of feeling, and expressing, Gratitude in both the good and the bad.

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### SELF-EXAMINATION

**James 1:22 “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”**

We will spend a short time each meeting to carry out a self-examination concerning the character trait studied in the previous meeting- Gratitude.

**II Corinthians 13:5a “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; Prove your own selves...”**

If we have struggled with the character trait since studying it, we can bring it up at the next meeting if we choose to do so but we do not have to do so. We may want some input from our brothers concerning how to overcome the problem and align our character to be more like Christ; but whether we do so at the meeting or whether we do so privately is up to the individual. However, the opportunity will be afforded should they decide they want to discuss it. Maybe God did something unusual or powerful in helping them overcome the problem and they want to share that to be a blessing to the others. This would be a good reason for briefly discussing it at the next meeting. (Briefly is a key word here- because we need to have time to move on to the next lesson.)

**Before we move on to the next lesson, are there any comments concerning the character trait from the previous lesson? This is your chance to speak up.**

## LESSON TWENTY-SIX

### Peace

**“Peace is surrendering and yielding to the Lord's control, for He is our ultimate peace! It is allowing tranquility to be our tone and to control our equanimity. This will be fueled by our harmonious relationship with God so we can hand over control of our heart, will, and mind to Him. Once we make real peace with God, we will be able to make and maintain peace with others. (Matthew 5:9; Colossians 3:15; Philippians 4:7)”** Unknown author

**Matthew 5:9 “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.”**

**Colossians 3:15 “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”**

**Philippians 4:7 “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”**

From time immemorial mankind has sought for “**peace**” between the nations of this world and within those nations for their own citizens. What they could not figure out is that there will never be peace in the world, nor in the hearts of man, without God's intervention. And since He will not force anything upon mankind, then the only way they can get it is that they have to ask for His peace. The problem is that the majority of the world refuses to do that. Therefore, the only alternative is for individuals to ask for **peace** from God and then try to spread that peace to all those with whom they come in contact. If enough would do that, then peace could spread across the world. Obviously we do not see this happening; in fact, the opposite is true. Wars, torture, famine, disease, these are spreading, but peace is not. Why? Because not enough individuals are seeking God's peace; they are trying to do it on their own. God has already told us in the Bible that peace would not happen through the efforts of mankind. He also has told us that the opposite would actually accelerate, that things would get worse and worse, more war, famine and disease, until the end is reached and Christ comes back to enforce God's will and with a “**rod of iron**” keep the enemies of God, the enemies of peace, under control for a thousand years. (**Revelation 2:27; 12:5; 19:15**) Then, after that thousand years has expired, He tells us that the enemies will once again take peace from the world until God finally will subdue them and peace shall reign for eternity.

Therefore, we can turn our attention from “**peace**” in the nations, which only God can bring about, and concentrate on the one thing that God says we can have some control over. Which is to seek God's promised peace as individuals, right now, and then try to spread that peace to as many as we can within our sphere of influence. In doing so we will be recipients of the blessing of God promised in **Matthew 5:9**,

**“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.”**

**SECULAR DEFINITIONS**

**peace**, 1. *freedom from disturbance, tranquility* 2. *freedom from or the ending of war*  
**tranquility**, *the state of being free from disturbance, calm*

**BIBLE DEFINITIONS:****OLD TESTAMENT**

**peace**, שָׁלוֹם *shaw-lome'*, *safe*, that is, (figuratively) *well, happy, friendly*;  
 also (abstractly) *welfare*

**peace offering** - שְׁלֵמִים *sheh'-lem*, properly *requital*, that is, *a (voluntary) sacrifice in thanks*: - *peace offering*.

**peace** - שָׁלוֹם *shaw-lam'* A primitive root; *to be safe* (in mind, body or estate); figuratively *to be* (causatively *make*) *completed*; by implication *to be friendly*  
 This word would be used to indicate “making peace with someone, or a nation.”

**NEW TESTAMENT**

**peace** - εἰρήνη *i-rah'-nay* (*to join*); *peace* (literally or figuratively); by implication *prosperity*: - *one, peace, quietness, rest, + set at one again*.

**peacemaker(s)** - εἰρηνοποιός *i-ray-nop-oy-os*, *pacificatory*, that is, (subjectively) *peaceable*: - *peacemaker*.

**pacificatory** - *tending to promote peace*

**I. Christ Is the Prince of Peace**

**Isaiah 9:6** “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called **Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.**”

All peace begins with Christ who is the Prince of Peace.

**prince** - Hebrew שָׂרָר *sar* - a head person (of any rank or class): - captain (that had rule), chief (captain), general, governor, keeper, lord, ([-task-]) master, prince (-ipal), ruler, steward.

**II. Two Types of Peace Concerning God and Mankind****A. Peace with God.**

1. **Peace with God is available for all people.**

**Colossians 1:20-21** “And, having made peace through the blood of his

**cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. (:21) And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled”**

**Romans 5:1 “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”**

**Romans 3:11 “There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.”**

Not one person seeks after God; for peace or for any other reason. It was God who took the initiative and came to us and made peace with us. It was through Christ that God reconciled us to Himself. And we who were once God's enemies now have peace with Him; but only through Christ, the Saviour.

## **B. The peace of God.**

**Colossians 3:15 “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”**

1. We only have this peace, to which we are called, if we let it rule.

a. And we are to be thankful that it is there to be used.

b. But we have to let it rule.

**rule** - **βραβεύω** *brab-yoo'-o*, to arbitrate, that is, (generally) to govern (figuratively prevail): - rule.

2. If we let it rule then we have a two-fold peace from God.

a. This is not the peace that the world gives; it is God's peace.

**John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”**

**John 16:33 “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”**

To understand exactly what “**these things**” are that Christ is referring to, read the entire 16<sup>th</sup> chapter.

b. God's peace takes away agitation and fear.

“**heart**” - that is, (figuratively) the thoughts or feelings (mind); also (by analogy) the middle

**“not ... troubled”** - *to stir or agitate (roil water): - trouble.*

**“neither ... afraid”** - *be timid: be afraid*

**Philippians 4:6 “Be careful for nothing**

**“careful”** - *to be anxious about*

**“nothing”** - *not even one (man, woman, thing)*

There is absolutely nothing we are to be agitated about or fearful of, if we have the peace of God and let it rule within us.

c. This peace is only found in Christ. Not in the world.

**“in me ye might have peace”**

**“In the world ye shall have tribulation”**

d. The two-fold peace of God.

**Philippians 4:7 “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”**

i. **“hearts”** - *emotions; feelings*

ii. **“minds”** - *intellect*

Through Christ we can have both emotional and intellectual peace.

### III. How Do We Get This Peace of God?

**Philippians 4:6 “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.**

#### A. Pray about every situation and turn it over to God.

But not with a “Now I lay me down to sleep” or “Bless this food” flippant kind of prayer, which we should never do when praying about anything, but with true, heartfelt, prayer.

1. **“prayer”** *prayer (worship); by implication an oratory (chapel)*
2. **“supplication”** *a petition: - prayer, request, supplication*
3. **“with thanksgiving”** *gratitude; actually grateful language (to God, as an act of worship)*
4. **“requests”** *a thing asked, an asking (Be specific.)*
5. **“made known unto God”** *to be made known (Give them to God.)*

We must turn to God and worship Him and make our requests known; and do so with an attitude of gratitude.

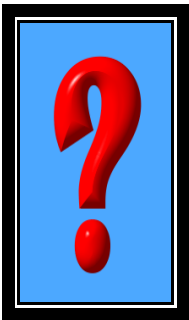


**B. Then the peace of God will be ours to use.**

1. When we truly give our challenges to God: with worship, then asking and being specific, and with thanksgiving, then God's peace is ours to use.
2. But we must let it rule in our hearts.
3. And with gratitude thank Him.
4. Only then will we experience the peace of God both emotionally and intellectually.

**SUMMARY:**

- A. It is one thing to have peace with God, through Christ, but it is another to have the peace of God. We need both. Peace with God is ours when we get saved. The peace of God is then automatically available to us.**
- B. It is one thing to have the peace of God available to us but it is another to experience it emotionally (heart) and intellectually (mind).**
- C. To do the latter, that is, experience it, we must let it rule (*govern, arbitrate*) within us. We must take our requests to God in prayer with worship, specific asking, and thanksgiving, and then yield to it; let it rule, rather than try to run our own course in the flesh and in our prideful minds.**
- D. If we do use it properly, then we will have complete, godly peace, in both heart and mind in every situation.**



1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this character trait?
2. What do you think about the trait?

*feel:* \_\_\_\_\_

(For a list of feelings/emotions see page 2 of this study.)

*think:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**For our next meeting:**

During the two weeks until our next meeting we will keep track of our responses concerning this trait of Peace. If someone struggled with this trait or maybe has some question about it that came up during the two week period, we will take a few minutes to briefly discuss that at the next meeting.

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Ask your self before God: “Did I show/not show the character trait of Peace, without bounds, during the 2 week period, and carried out the commanded actions concerning it whenever I was tested?” (Your emotional and mental state and/or reaction is involved in your self-examination of your character.)

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**My self-examination score for this character trait for the 2 week period:** (Remember, your emotional and mental state or reaction is involved in your self-examination.)

Mark 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, in each day's box that this character trait was tested or NA if not tested that day.

Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr	Sat	Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr

**Overall assessment for the 2 week period for this character trait:**  
(average score)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

## LESSON TWENTY-SEVEN

### Joy

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#### REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through TWENTY-SIX:

We are made in God's image and we are a man because God made us that way. Now, to be an encouragement to others and to be in obedience to God, we need to act like a man and have Compassion on others and show it to them by being a Servant; i.e., trying to help meet their needs, both physical and spiritual. We are to do this out of love. Because love is an action word, many times love must entail



forgiveness. And we cannot completely fulfill these things, or any others that God expects of us, without commitment and prayer, and gentleness, shown appropriately of course, patience, and self-control. And to top off the 10 most important character traits, we must be humble.

We carried out a self-examination in lessons 14 and 15 and then continue on with Fairness in lesson 16, Courage in lesson 17, Friendship/Friend in lesson 18; Honesty/Truthfulness in lesson 19, and a study in Christian Responsibility in lesson 20. We studied how to be contented in lesson 21 and Christian Confidence in 22, Forgiveness in 23 and the strength of Meekness in lesson 24. In lesson 25 we learned the difficult lesson of the how and why of feeling, and expressing, Gratitude in both the good and the bad and 26 taught us how to have peace with God and the peace of God in our lives.

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#### SELF-EXAMINATION

**James 1:22 “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”**

**II Corinthians 13:5a “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; Prove your own selves...”**

If we have struggled with the last character trait since studying it, we can bring it up now, if we choose to do so, but we do not have to do so. We may want some input from our brothers concerning how to overcome the problem and align our character to be more like Christ; but whether we do so at the meeting or whether we do so privately is up to the individual. However, the opportunity is afforded should they decide they want to discuss it now. Maybe God did something unusual or powerful in helping them overcome the problem and they want to share that to be a blessing to the others. This would be a good reason for briefly discussing it now. (Briefly is a key word here- because we need to have time to move on to the next lesson.)

**Before we move on to the next lesson, are there any comments concerning the character trait from the previous lesson? This is your chance to speak up if you want to do so.**

## LESSON TWENTY-SEVEN

### Joy

**“Joy will allow us to enjoy His creation, others, and our circumstances with an expression of delight and real, authentic happiness from and with harmony with God and others. (Proverbs 15:13; John 15:11; John 17:13)”** Unknown author

**Proverbs 15:13** “A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.”

**John 15:11** “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”

**John 17:13** “And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.”

#### SECULAR DEFINITIONS

**joy**, 1. *feel happiness*, 2. *make glad*, 3. *the emotion of great happiness*,

#### BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

##### OLD TESTAMENT

**joy**, שמחה sim-khaw' - *blithesomeness or glee, (religious or festival): - X exceeding (-ly), gladness, joy (-fulness), mirth, pleasure, rejoice (-ing).*

**blithesomeness**, *the state of being happy and without a care in the world.*

**joy**, קודקוד khed-vaw' - *rejoicing: - gladness, joy.*

There are several other OT words for *joy* (*clamor, that is, acclamation of joy, split the ears - shout*) and for *rejoice* (*to jump for joy, to spin around, delight, cheerfulness specifically welcome*), and for *joyful, etc.* but they all are in the same vein.

##### NEW TESTAMENT

**joy** - χαρως *khar- as, cheerfulness, that is, calm delight: - gladness, X greatly, (X be exceeding) joy (-ful, -fully, -fulness, -ous).*

**joy** - ἀγαλλίασις *ag-al-lee'-as-is, exultation; specifically welcome: - gladness, (exceeding) joy.*

**joy** - καυχάομαι *kow-khah'-om-ahee (to boast), to vaunt (in a good or a bad sense): - (make) boast, glory, joy, rejoice.*

**joy** - οἰνισμός *on-in'-ay-mee, to gratify, that is, (middle voice) to derive pleasure or*

*advantage* from: - have joy.

**rejoice, rejoiceth, joyed** - χαίρω *khah'ee-ro*, a primary verb; to be full of “cheer”, that is, calmly *happy* or *well off*; impersonal especially as a salutation (on meeting or parting), *be well*: - *farewell, be glad, God speed, greeting, hail, joy (-fully), rejoice.*

**leap for joy** - σκιρτάω *skeer-tah'-o*, to jump, that is, sympathetically *move* (as the quickening of a fetus): - *leap (for joy).*

**joy** - ἀγαλλιάω *ag-al-lee-ah'-o*, properly to jump for joy, that is, *exult*: - *be (exceeding) glad, with exceeding joy, rejoice (greatly).*

**A working biblical definition:** a feeling of cheer and well being, great gladness and happiness, generally coupled with a physical manifestation and/or verbal expression of it.

## I. Lasting Joy Is A Spiritual Thing - Not Of The Flesh Or Of The Carnal Mind

### A. It is a fruit of the Spirit of God.

**Galatians 5:22-23** “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

### B. It can be experienced in spite of physical hardship.

**II Corinthians 8:2** “How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.”

**I Peter 4:12-13** “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”

Joy in the creation is fleeting and comes and goes with circumstances. Lasting joy is based in God and is permanent- if we let it be. Suffering and hardship are external, of the flesh, and mental anguish (emotional hardship) is of the carnal mind. True and lasting joy is of the Spirit and can be experienced in spite of fleshly hardship or mental hardship. But this is true only if one lives in the spirit.

## II. Joy Is An Emotional Experience Generally Coupled With Physical and/or Verbal Expression

### A. Joy is an emotional experience.

**Joy defined:** a feeling of cheer and well being, great gladness and happiness.

**B. It is generally coupled with physical and/or verbal expression.**

**I Chronicles 15:16 “And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of musick, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy.”**

**Psalm 5:11 “But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee. ”**

We that trust in God should make it known with a cheerful countenance and expressions of joy.

**III. Joy In God Gives Us Strength**

**Nehemiah 8:10 “Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”**

**IV. How Do We Receive This Joy?****A. Realize.**

Realize that in the Lord, all things have a positive purpose. We can rejoice in knowing that whatever the circumstances, they are always best for us. We have to realize that God is working His purpose in our lives- no matter if circumstances are good or evil- and He only brings or allows what is beneficial to bring about His purpose in our lives.

**Romans 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”**

**B. Live in the spirit.**

We must live in the spirit, not the flesh, and allow the fruit of the Holy Spirit to manifest itself in us. Then we can have God-given joy no matter what circumstances surround us.

**Galatians 5:22-25 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”**

**SUMMARY:**

**We can only have joy if we deny the flesh and not let circumstances dictate our**

feelings. Once we realize that all things work together for good to bring about God's will in our lives and we yield to Him and allow Him to work out His purpose in our lives, then we can have true and lasting joy and rejoice knowing that He loves us and is in control at all times. But this will be true only if we let Him be in control. Joy is a choice that we must make. The flesh and the carnal mind will rob us of that joy if we dwell on them and allow them to control our feelings. They are creation bound and pay attention only to the creation. They revel in it; or, I should say, wallow in it. But we have the power and the promise of God to overcome them and live in the spirit. When we do, then we are guaranteed by God Himself to have the fruit of the Spirit available to us. In this case, the fruit of the Spirit called "joy." But it is our choice. It is always our choice! Which will we choose? Tribulation of mind and spirit or Joy in the Lord. The first robs us of strength- the second gives us strength. Therefore, the choice comes down to this: (1) we can choose to live in the flesh and the carnal mind and be weak and depressed; or (2) we can choose to live in the spirit and be strong and joyful. It is up to us. Which will we choose?


Remember, we can only be truly joyful through the power of God that He has made available to us as His children; regardless of the circumstances in our lives that may try to rob us of our joy.

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

Nehemiah 8:10 "... for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

Once we let the joy of the LORD show forth, it becomes self-sustaining and self-perpetuating and strengthens us to continue on and to grow in joy!

As it is in all things, it is strictly our choice whether we want to have and show this character trait in our lives.



**1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this character trait?**

**2. What do you think about the trait?**

*feel:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(For a list of feelings/emotions see page 2 of this study.)

*think:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**For our next meeting:**

During the two weeks until our next meeting we will keep track of our responses concerning this trait. If someone struggled with this trait or maybe has some question about it that came up during the two week period, we will take a few minutes to briefly discuss that at the next meeting.

The self-examination score card for the next two week period is below and, if needed, we will briefly discuss the results at the beginning of our next meeting.

Ask your self before God: “Did I have and show/not show the character trait of Joy, without bounds, during the 2 week period, and carried out any commanded actions concerning it whenever I was tested?” (Your emotional and mental state and/or reaction is involved in your self-examination of your character.)

**How to score yourself:**

If the trait did NOT come up during a particular day, leave that box blank.

For the days that the trait DID come up:

enter a “1” for “absolutely no”

enter a “3” for “sort of”

enter a “5” for “absolutely yes”

(If you are wavering between 1, 3, or 5 and the number above or below it, then enter the number above or below it that is appropriate to your wavering up or down.)

**My self-examination score for this character trait for the 2 week period:** (Remember, your emotional and mental state or reaction is involved in your self-examination.)

Mark 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, in each day's box that this character trait was tested or NA if not tested that day.

Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr	Sat	Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr

**Overall assessment for the 2 week period for this character trait:**  
(average score)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5



## LESSON TWENTY-EIGHT

### Integrity

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#### REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through TWENTY-SEVEN:

We are made in God's image and we are a man because God made us that way. Now, to be an encouragement to others and to be in obedience to God, we need to act like a man and have Compassion on others and show it to them by being a Servant; i.e., trying to help meet their needs, both physical and spiritual. We are to do this out of love. Because love is an action word, many times love must entail



forgiveness. And we cannot completely fulfill these things, or any others that God expects of us, without commitment and prayer, and gentleness, shown appropriately of course, patience, and self-control. And to top off the 10 most important character traits, we must be humble.

We carried out a self-examination in lessons 14 and 15 and then continue on with Fairness in lesson 16, Courage in lesson 17, Friendship/Friend in lesson 18; Honesty/Truthfulness in lesson 19, and a study in Christian Responsibility in lesson 20. We studied how to be contented in lesson 21 and Christian Confidence in 22, Forgiveness in 23 and the strength of Meekness in lesson 24. In lesson 25 we learned the difficult lesson of the how and why of feeling, and expressing, Gratitude in both the good and the bad and 26 taught us how to have peace with God and the peace of God in our lives. Lesson 27 taught us that true joy is possible at all times.

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### SELF-EXAMINATION

**James 1:22 “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only,  
deceiving your own selves.”**

**II Corinthians 13:5a “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith;  
Prove your own selves...”**

If we have struggled with the last character trait since studying it, Joy, we can bring it up now, if we choose to do so, but we do not have to do so. We may want some input from our brothers concerning how to overcome the problem and align our character to be more like Christ; but whether we do so at the meeting or whether we do so privately is up to the individual. However, the opportunity is afforded should they decide they want to discuss it now. Maybe God did something unusual or powerful in helping them overcome the problem and they want to share that to be a blessing to the others. This would be a good reason for briefly discussing it now. (Briefly is a key word here- because we need to have time to move on to the next lesson.)

**Before we move on to the next lesson, are there any comments concerning the character trait from the previous lesson? This is your chance to speak up if you want to do so.**

## LESSON TWENTY-EIGHT

### Integrity

**“Integrity is the obedience to a moral code of values that have honor, truth, and reliability. It will allow one to keep his word and do his best even when no one else is looking. (Psalm 78:72)”** Unknown author

**Psalm 78:72 “So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.”**

**I Kings 9:4 “And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments:”**

**Job 2:3 “And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.”**

#### SECULAR DEFINITIONS

**integrity**, 1 the quality of being honest and morally upright. 2 the state of being whole or unified. 3 soundness of construction. 4 moral soundness  
-ORIGIN Latin *integritas*, from *integer* 'intact, whole'

#### BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

##### OLD TESTAMENT

**integrity**, תָּמַחַם tome - completeness; figuratively prosperity; usually (morally) innocence: - full, integrity, perfect (-ion), simplicity, upright (-ly, -ness), at a venture.

**integrity**, תָּמַחַם toom-maw (feminine of “tome”)- innocence: - integrity

**A working biblical definition:** moral uprightness, innocence, perfect (complete and full) and righteous in heart and actions. A man who has Integrity is a “full/complete” man.

#### I. Integrity Is a Virtue Because It Is Pleasing To God.

##### A. It encompasses many other characteristics we have studied.

**Just a few are:**

##### 1. Honesty

**Job 27:3-5 “All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils; (:4) My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter**

deceit. (:5) ... till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me."

## 2. Innocence

Genesis 20:5-6 "Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this. (:6) And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her."

## 3. Steadfastness

Job 27:3-6 "All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils; (:4) My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit. (:5) God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. (:6) My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live."

## 4. Obedient (to all of the commandments of God)

1 Kings 9:4 "And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments:"

### B. It is pleasing to God and brings blessings.

1 Kings 9:4 "And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: (:5) Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever,"

## II. Integrity Is Something We Must Maintain.

God has given us Free Will and it is up to us to exercise that gift in all matters concerning our hearts and our behavior; including our integrity. So in the end, it is completely up to us to decide whether we will think, and walk, in integrity of both heart and actions- or not.

### A. We are in charge of our integrity- to hold it fast or to let it go.

Job 27:5-6 "... I will not remove mine integrity from me. (:6) My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go..."

### B. If we hold our integrity fast, then God will help us to do right.

Genesis 20:6 "... I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her."

Pharaoh had taken the woman to wife not knowing she was Abraham's wife. Because of Abraham's deception, agreed upon by his (Abraham's) wife who was willing partner to the deception, the Pharaoh had innocently taken her as a wife. God knew the integrity of Pharaoh, his innocency in the matter, and because of that God did not allow him to sin. God helped him to do right. This shows us that if we decide to maintain our integrity, and WE must make that decision, then God will empower us to do right even in bad circumstances. And many times those circumstances are caused by the lies and deceptions of others. It is our heart condition that matters to God. He deals with us according to our heart; not according to the hearts and actions of others. He will deal with them according to their integrity and He will judge us according to our integrity. If our heart is right, if we maintain our integrity in everything we purpose to do, then He will help us through, no matter what the actions of others. He will empower us to walk uprightly IF we do all things in integrity of heart. In the end, we alone decide how God will deal with us.

**Psalm 41:12 “And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.”**

God is always there to help once we have chosen the path of integrity.

### **C. Under what circumstances are we to maintain our Integrity?**

**Job 2:3 “And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.”**

It must be maintained through all circumstances; even direct attacks by the devil and testing by God.

### **D. How long are we to maintain our integrity?**

God always shows us the time frame in which we are to maintain all of the biblical Characteristics He teaches us to follow. And it is always to be in the same way, and for as long, as Christ followed them. Integrity is no exception. God is very specific concerning how long we are to maintain it.

**Job 27:5-6 “... till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. (:6) My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.”**

As long as there is breath in our body we are to maintain our integrity. Christ showed us this on Calvary. All of the things that He came to do, all of the things that He showed us and did for us, He held until the very end.

Only in death was there a finish to His work and an end to the expression of His character given to us as an example for our lives. Only in death are we released from our integrity and all other things pertaining to this life. Until then we must maintain our integrity in both heart and action. Only then, when **“it is finished”** and all things of this world are at an end for us concerning this life, as it was for Christ, will we be released from all things of this world and our responsibilities in it.

**“John 19:28-30 “After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.**

**(:29) Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.**

**(:30) When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.”**

When life is at an end we will finally be released from our struggles to maintain our integrity. From that point on it will come “natural” to us. We won't have to maintain it, it will just be a fact of our makeup from then on through eternity. The flesh and the old nature will no longer have any hold upon us. Thus, integrity will be just one facet of our nature, our new nature which we received at Salvation, which will then be freed from the old nature which will be gone. From then on integrity, as with all of the other characteristics of Christ, will be an integral part of our nature to the exact extent that it is part of His. Our integrity will not need to be maintained; it just simply will be.

**I John 3:2 “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”**

### **III. Our Integrity Will Guide Us Through To A Successful Life**

Successful, that is, according to God's definition of success; which is a godly life.

**Pro 11:3 The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.**

#### **SUMMARY:**

**Integrity is to be maintained in the heart and shown in our actions. It cannot be forced; it must be developed. As with all of the other characteristics of Christ that we have studied, integrity is not part of our old nature. The old nature sways with every wind of doctrine and always tends to gravitate toward thoughts and actions that will fulfill its own desires.**

**Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”**

**Integrity cannot be found somewhere in us, it must be adopted from outside. Many parents try to teach integrity to their children but the tendency of the lost man is to fall away from the good teachings of their parents and revert to the “take and use to fulfill our baser instincts” mentality of the fallen nature. Therefore, the simple knowledge of integrity is not enough. The average man not only must learn of integrity, but he must wilfully adopt it as a character trait that he wants to have as a part of his heart and life. Unfortunately in his lost condition most men will put on integrity as a coat which he will proudly wear when it is convenient but when it becomes inconvenient he will take off the coat and show his true character- which is take and use.**

**However, for Christians, for the saved, we have access to the power of God in our lives. If we adopt the character trait of Integrity, which is taught and commended in the Bible from which we must learn it, and which may or may not agree with what we were taught or not taught by our parents, then we do so wilfully and in the full assurance that God will help us develop this trait as He does all others that He commands us to have. With His help we can not only have a coat of Integrity, which can be put on or taken off at our will, but we can have an implantation of it in our hearts. Which is where integrity must start. It is not just a set of actions or reactions that we show and which are prompted by external circumstances. For it to be biblical it must be an internal force in our character. Yes, it will show forth in our actions but it is not composed of our actions. It is to be part of our essence, our new nature, which will show forth in our actions but is not dictated by them. For our integrity to be dictated by our actions or reactions is to place it under the control of those actions or reactions. This must not be so for the Christian. The reverse must be so- our integrity must dictate our actions; which puts integrity where it belongs in the cause and effect cycle. Integrity must be the cause of our actions, the driving force for them, not an effect from them.**

**As always, our Free Will is also in the mix. Although our integrity is to be part of us, we decide whether it will be adopted and developed or not. And even when we do adopt it, we do work assiduously to develop it in us, we will always be the one making the decisions concerning whether it grows or atrophies. Even further, only we can decide whether it is used or suppressed, shown or withheld, both in our hearts and in our actions. And we will be in control of these things until the day we die.**

**It will be a struggle but God is with us- if we let Him be- and He can empower us to succeed in adopting, developing, and maintaining our Integrity as well as the many other character traits of Christ that are expected in us.**

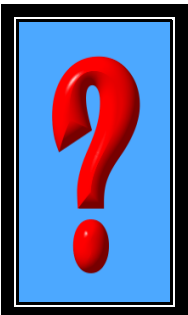
**Philippians 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”**

**Psalm 41:12 “And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.”**

**Romans 8:31-39 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? (:32) He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (:33) Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. (:34) Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. (:35) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (:36) As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. (:37) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. (:38) For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, (:39) Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

**All of these things will test our Integrity. But God loves us and nothing, not even ourselves, can separate us from that love and the power to conquer that comes with it. And that includes the ability to even conquer our own baser selves and live a godly life in the Integrity of both our hearts and our actions.**

**That power is ours to use to overcome all things and live with Integrity for the rest of our lives; but only IF WE CHOSE to use that power!**



- 1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this character trait?**
- 2. What do you think about the trait?**

*feel:* \_\_\_\_\_

(For a list of feelings/emotions see page 2 of this study.)

*think:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**For our next meeting:**

During the two weeks until our next meeting we will keep track of our responses concerning this trait. If someone struggled with this trait or maybe has some question about it that came up during the two week period, we will take a few minutes to briefly discuss that at the next meeting.

The self-examination score card for the next two week period is below and, if needed, we will briefly discuss the results at the beginning of our next meeting.

Ask your self before God: "Did I have and show/not show the character trait of Integrity, without bounds, during the 2 week period, and carried out any commanded actions concerning it whenever I was tested?" (Your emotional and mental state and/or reaction is involved in your self-examination of your character.)

**How to score yourself:**

If the trait did NOT come up during a particular day, leave that box blank.

For the days that the trait DID come up:

enter a "1" for "absolutely no"

enter a "3" for "sort of"

enter a "5" for "absolutely yes"

(If you are wavering between 1, 3, or 5 and the number above or below it, then enter the number above or below it that is appropriate to your wavering up or down.)

**My self-examination score for this character trait for the 2 week period:** (Remember, your emotional and mental state or reaction is involved in your self-examination.)

Mark 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, in each day's box that this character trait was tested or NA if not tested that day.

Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr	Sat	Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr

**Overall assessment for the 2 week period for this character trait:**  
(average score)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5



## LESSON TWENTY-NINE

### Obedience

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#### REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through TWENTY-EIGHT:

We are made in God's image and we are a man because God made us that way. Now, to be an encouragement to others and to be in obedience to God, we need to act like a man and have Compassion on others and show it to them by being a Servant; i.e., trying to help meet their needs, both physical and spiritual. We are to do this out of love. Because love is an action word, many times love must entail



forgiveness. And we cannot completely fulfill these things, or any others that God expects of us, without commitment and prayer, and gentleness, shown appropriately of course, patience, and self-control. And to top off the 10 most important character traits, we must be humble.

We carried out a self-examination in lessons 14 and 15 and then continue on with Fairness in lesson 16, Courage in lesson 17, Friendship/Friend in lesson 18; Honesty/Truthfulness in lesson 19, and a study in Christian Responsibility in lesson 20. We studied how to be contented in lesson 21 and Christian Confidence in 22, Forgiveness in 23 and the strength of Meekness in lesson 24. In lesson 25 we learned the difficult lesson of the how and why of feeling, and expressing, Gratitude in both the good and the bad and 26 taught us how to have peace with God and the peace of God in our lives. Lesson 27 taught us that true joy is possible at all times and 28 showed us the trait that encompasses all of our character and binds us to it- Integrity.

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### SELF-EXAMINATION

**James 1:22 “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”**

**II Corinthians 13:5a “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; Prove your own selves...”**

If we have struggled with the last character trait since studying it we can bring it up now, if we choose to do so, but we do not have to do so. We may want some input from our brothers concerning how to overcome the problem and align our character to be more like Christ; but whether we do so at the meeting or whether we do so privately is up to the individual. However, the opportunity is afforded should they decide they want to discuss it now. Maybe God did something unusual or powerful in helping them overcome the problem and they want to share that to be a blessing to the others. This would be a good reason for briefly discussing it now. (Briefly is a key word here- because we need to have time to move on to the next lesson.)

**Before we move on to the next lesson, are there any comments concerning the character trait from the previous lesson? This is your chance to speak up if you want to do so.**

## LESSON TWENTY-NINE

### Obedience

**“Obedience is submitting to do what God requires of us. It is also recognizing the authority and direction from others, such as the pastor and church, so we can create winning situations. (Deut. 13:4 ; Prov. 19:16; John 15:14; II Corinthians 10:5)”** Unknown author

#### SECULAR DEFINITIONS

**obedience**, *Compliance with an order, request, or law or submission to another's authority.*

**obedience**, a: *an act or instance of obeying* b: *the quality or state of being obedient*

**obey**, 1: *to follow the commands or guidance of* 2: *to conform to or comply with*

#### BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

##### OLD TESTAMENT

**obey, obeyed, obeying, obedient**, שָׁמַע shaw-mah' - A primitive root; *to hear intelligently* (often with implication of *attention, obedience, etc.*; causatively *to tell, etc.*): - *X attentively, call (gather) together, X carefully, X certainly, consent, consider, be content, declare, X diligently, discern, give ear, (cause to, let, make to) hear (-ken, tell), X indeed, listen, make (a) noise, (be) obedient, obey, perceive, (make a) proclaim (-ation), publish, regard, report, shew (forth), (make a) sound, X surely, tell, understand, whosoever [heareth], witness.*

##### NEW TESTAMENT

**obedience**, υπακοή hoop-ack-o-ay' - *attentive hearkening, that is, (by implication) compliance or submission: - obedience, (make) obedient, obey (-ing).*

**A working biblical definition:** obedience is to intelligently hear the voice/word of God and to pay attention to it and obey it. To obey someone in authority over us.

#### I. Our First Area of Obedience Is to God.

##### A. Obey

**Deuteronomy 13:4** “Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.”

##### B. Spheres of Obedience to God

###### 1. “Keep his commandments” (Deuteronomy 13:4)

We are to keep all of the commandments of God. However, there is one commandment that I see disobeyed over and over amongst Christians of every stripe.

**John 15:12-14** “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. (:13) Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. (:14) Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”

This is one area where I see the greatest lack of obedience in Christians. Christ commands us to love one another; and, if necessary, even unto the death. He loved us unto death and we are commanded to love one another exactly as He loved us. But through the years I have observed that there is so much sectarian animosity that “love” as Christ commands us to have from Christian to Christian somehow gets lost in the fighting. Just because someone is not of my “group” is not sufficient reason to disobey Christ’s command that I love them. In fact, nothing is sufficient reason to disobey Christ in this or any other commandment that He gave to us.

We are to love every Christian no matter what “group” he or she may belong to. That does not mean that we have to agree with everything they believe or teach; but we do have to love them unreservedly- as Christ loves us. And to obey in this particular commandment exactly as we are to do in all commandments proves that we truly are Christ’s “**friends**” in deed, not just in word. (Also see **I John ch. 1**)

## **2. Even our thoughts are to be brought into obedience.**

**II Corinthians 10:5** “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ”

## **3. To what extent are we to be Obedient in deed and mind?**

Which of the Commandments are we to Obey?

**I Kings 9:4-5** “And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: (:5) Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel.”

God expects complete obedience- we are to obey all of His commandments.

## **C. Obedience is not only pleasing to God but it also brings many blessings from Him.**

**I Kings 9:4-5** “... do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt

**keep my statutes and my judgments: (:5) Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel.””**

As God promised blessings upon David and his family “for ever” if he obeyed, so God will give us and our posterity blessings “for ever” for our obedience.

## **II. The Dangers of Disobedience**

Only complete obedience is acceptable to God. Partial obedience is disobedience and causes the blessings of God to depart from whom ever is disobedient.

### **A. Partial obedience is disobedience.**

**1Samuel 15:18-26 “And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. (:19) Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD? (:20) And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. (:21) But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. (:22) And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”**

### **B. No excuses will be accepted.**

People just naturally try to make excuses for their behaviour; but God will accept no excuses for their disobedience. No matter what kind of excuses they may give.

**(:22) “And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. (:23) For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. (:24) And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. (:25) Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD. (:26) And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return**

**with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.”**

Disobedience cost Saul the Kingdom and loss of the presence of the Lord. We will find out shortly that as he compounds his sin, so the judgement of the Lord upon Saul will be compounded accordingly.

**God will allow no excuses of any kind!**

### 1. Not fear.

**(:24) “And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.”**

### 2. Not religious excuses.

It does no good to give a “religious” excuse as Saul did for his disobedience.

**(:21) “But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. (:22) And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken\* than the fat of rams.”**

**\* hearken, כַּשֵׁב** kaw-shab' - A primitive root; *to prick up the ears*, that is, *hearken*: - *attend, (cause to) hear (-ken), give heed, incline, mark (well), regard.*

God will reject all of our religious excuses. No religious observance (attending Church, praying, preaching, soul-winning, teaching a Sunday School class, tithing, or any other religious work or observance) can make up for disobedience. It didn't work for Saul, given as an example to us, and it won't work for us. There is no excuse for disobedience nor is there one for partial obedience because **partial obedience is disobedience**. And to obey we must “**hearken**” unto the voice of the Lord- that is listen attentively to it with a full intention of obeying it. Trying to hide our disobedience with religious excuses will not work any better than any other excuses we may concoct in the deceit of our hearts. In fact, such deceit only compounds our sin; and compounding our sin only compounds the consequences.

## C. Disobedience is Rebellion and Rebellion is as the sin of Witchcraft.

**(:23) “For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.”**

There are two problem areas mentioned in this verse concerning disobedience:

### 1. Disobedience is Rebellion which is “as the sin of witchcraft”.

2. Disobedience is coupled with Stubbornness, which **“is as iniquity and idolatry”**.

Any one of those **“is as”** sins, **“witchcraft... iniquity... idolatry”** brought severe judgement; up to and including death. Therefore, disobedience is worthy of the same severity. Praise God we are under Grace and not Law or we all would be dead. However, that does not mean we escape the Judgement of God. The penalty of death demanded under The Law for our disobedience was suffered by Christ for us; still, we must suffer the consequences of our disobedience **“here and now”** as well as **“there and later.”** The consequence for **“here and now”** is the loss of God's blessings upon us while we are living in this cursed Creation. In other words, we are **“on our own”** living in this cursed world. No blessings of God to offset the obstacles and evil that is all around us. And the consequence **“there and later”** will be the loss of rewards once we die and advance on to Heaven.

#### **D. Our Disobedience Affects All Of Those Around Us**

**I Samuel 28:17-19 “And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David: (:18) because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day. (:19) Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.”**

God had given Saul authority over Israel and, as father, authority over his own sons. All of those were in Saul's immediate sphere of influence. Upon examination of the Scriptures just given, we see that God's pronouncement of judgement on Saul for his disobedience was increased because of his previous attempts at religious **“excuse”** making and his current attempt at **“religious”** manipulation through a witch. The original pronouncement was that the kingdom and the presence of God would be taken from him. That pronouncement is now expanded to include Saul's death; the price God required for anyone who consorted with and/or exercised or utilized the powers of a witch. **(Exodus 22:18; Deuteronomy 18:9+; Nahum ch. 4)** Now we see that the judgement pronounced upon Saul, including its increase because of his descent into deeper sin, was extended to all of those within Saul's sphere of influence.

Through the story of Saul God is telling us that all of those in our sphere of influence will suffer, in greater or lesser extent, because of our disobedience and to the greater or lesser extent of it. This would include members of our family, both immediate and distant as well as generations to come, and those over whom God has given us authority ecclesiastically (church members and students to whom we teach or preach, etc.) or secularly, those over whom we exercise authority or influence at work or play. In addition it would include all of the lost who surround us closely and all of

the lost who are networked with them. What befell Saul, his sons, and Israel affected, in one way or another, all of the members of the families involved with the soldiers of Israel who would die or be defeated by the Philistines, the Philistines and all of the nations around them, and through those people and nations, the world at large.

### **III. It Is Never Too Late to Turn From Disobedience to Obedience.**

No matter how far we may have fallen into disobedience, we, like Israel, can turn back to God and He will accept us and restore us to His favor. But it must be a true turning, from the heart, and become complete obedience in all things.

**Deuteronomy 30:2-5 “And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; (:3) That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. (:4) If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: (:5) And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.”**

God is a God of forgiveness. For Israel, under The Law of Moses, God exacted retribution by sending them into exile and captivity by the various nations. We are under Grace not under The Law, therefore, when we are disobedient He is forced, by our disobedience, to withdraw His blessings; which leaves us at the mercy of the curse upon this universe in which we live. But, when we turn from our disobedience, wholeheartedly, and obey His voice, obey His commands, then He will treat us accordingly and restore His blessings to us.

**II Chronicles 7:14 “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”**

**Ezekiel 33:12-16 “Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth. (:13) When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it. (:14) Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die;**

**if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; (:15) If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. (:16) None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.**

**Psalms 13:5-6 “But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. (:6) I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.”**

**Psalms 51:1 “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.”**

**Psalms 86:5 “For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.”**

## **SUMMARY:**

Yes, God is a God of commandments; which He has given for our benefit. He will reward us amply for our obedience; both in this world and in the next. However, He is also a God of righteous judgement and, therefore, cannot condone any disobedience. God has given us Free Will. But along with that gift comes responsibility; the responsibility to use it rightly. As I have said many times before, we have absolute freedom of choice in our actions but zero choice in the consequences. Concerning obedience this simply means that when we exercise our Free Will and obey God, there are positive consequences. God sheds blessings upon us. However, when we use our Free Will and disobey God, there are negative consequences. God withdraws His blessings from us and we have to live in this cursed universe on our own and in our own power.

But there is hope even in our disobedience. If, when the blessings of God are withdrawn and we are battered about by people and circumstances like a ship in heavy wind-torn seas and we are driven to the rocks of despair- when our troubles cause us to realize our condition and know that it is brought about by our own disobedience, God is always there ready to forgive and restore. His arms are always extended in mercy to the truly repentant soul. When our heart turns back to God and we throw our disobedience into the abyss where it belongs and give our body and soul back to God in complete surrender and once again hearken to His voice and obey His commands, completely and totally, then in His mercy God forgives us and welcomes us back into fellowship with Him. Never to mention our disobedience again.

This does not give us license to disobey and repent only to disobey again. God knows our hearts and He knows if our repentance is only shallow and without substance; and if it



is He will leave us right where we are in the midst of our troubles. Oh, we may truly repent and then later start to backslide, but if we do He will remind us of our previous condition as He reminded Israel of theirs. He will remind us of the captivity of "Egypt" the captivity of depression, oppression, and slavery we experienced when at the mercy of this cursed universe without His blessings and power to overcome it. Prayerfully that reminder will turn us from our slide back into disobedience and keep us on the road of obedience. But if it doesn't, if we harden our heart once again, if we again insist on disobedience, then God will deal with us accordingly. And generally that dealing is harsher than it was the first time. This fact is taught to us by the example of His dealing with Israel in their repeated backslidings.

Obviously, obedience and its positive consequences are much preferable. Let us hearken to the voice of God and obey His commands. They are not suggestions, they are commands. Remember though, we have the final say in this matter. In our Free Will we can obey and in our Free Will we can disobey. We have complete choice in our actions but we have no choice in the consequences. As always, it is up to us.

**Joshua 24:15 "... as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."**

**Joshua 24:24 "And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey."**

**FOOTNOTE:** God also expects us to obey those whom He has placed in authority over us. He has placed them in that position for our benefit. If they follow the Word of God, we know that He has put them in that place of authority; if they do not, He has not put them there. Because of time we cannot discuss God's command of obedience to God-given earthly authorities, it would take another study as long as the current one. (We possibly may be able to study the point sometime in the future when we study human relationships.) However, I suggest strongly that you study that point on your own right now. (Suggested scriptures: **Ephesians 4:11-12; Romans 13:1-7; Hebrews 13:17; Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13-14; I Peter 5:5**)



1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this trait of obedience?
2. What do you think about it?

*feel:* \_\_\_\_\_

(For a list of feelings/emotions see page 2 of this study.)

*think:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**For our next meeting:**

During the two weeks until our next meeting we will keep track of our responses concerning this trait. If someone struggled with this trait or maybe has some question about it that came up during the two week period, we will take a few minutes to briefly discuss that at the next meeting.

The self-examination score card for the next two week period is below and, if needed, we will briefly discuss the results at the beginning of our next meeting.

Ask your self before God: “Did I have and show/not show the character trait of Obedience, without bounds, during the 2 week period, and carried out any commanded actions concerning it whenever I was tested?” (Your emotional and mental state and/or reaction is involved in your self-examination of your character.)

**How to score yourself:**

If the trait did NOT come up during a particular day, leave that box blank.

For the days that the trait DID come up:

enter a “1” for “absolutely no”

enter a “3” for “sort of”

enter a “5” for “absolutely yes”

(If you are wavering between 1, 3, or 5 and the number above or below it, then enter the number above or below it that is appropriate to your wavering up or down.)

**My self-examination score for this character trait for the 2 week period:** (Remember, your emotional and mental state or reaction is involved in your self-examination.)

Mark 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, in each day's box that this character trait was tested or NA if not tested that day.

Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr	Sat	Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr

**Overall assessment for the 2 week period for this character trait:**  
(average score)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

## LESSON THIRTY

### Encouragement

#### REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through TWENTY-NINE:

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### SELF-EXAMINATION

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deceiving your own selves.”**

**II Corinthians 13:5a “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith;  
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If we have struggled with the last character trait since studying it we can bring it up now, if we choose to do so, but we do not have to do so. We may want some input from our brothers concerning how to overcome the problem and align our character to be more like Christ; but whether we do so at the meeting or whether we do so privately is up to the individual. However, the opportunity is afforded should they decide they want to discuss it now. Maybe God did something unusual or powerful in helping them overcome the problem and they want to share that to be a blessing to the others. This would be a good reason for briefly discussing it now. (Briefly is a key word here- because we need to have time to move on to the next lesson.) **Before we move on to the next lesson, are there any comments concerning the character trait from the previous lesson? This is your chance to speak up if you want to do so.**

## LESSON THIRTY

### Encouragement

**“Encouragement will lift, support, and help others up through difficult circumstances, all from God's perspective. (Psalm 119:28; 143:3; John 14:1; I Thess 5:11–14)”** Unknown author

**Psalm 119:28** “My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word.”

**John 14:1** “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.”

**I Thess 5:12-14** “And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.”

**Hebrews 10:24** “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:”

#### SECULAR DEFINITIONS

**encourage**, *1. give support, confidence, or hope to. 2. help or stimulate the development of.*

**encouragement**, *1. the action of giving someone support, confidence, or hope.*

*2. persuasion to do or to continue something.*

*3. the act of trying to stimulate the development of an activity, state, or belief.*

**synonyms:** *heartening, cheering, cheering up, buoying up, peppering up, uplifting, inspiration, rallying, motivation, incitement, stimulation, animation, invigoration, invigorating, emboldening, fortification;*

#### BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

##### OLD TESTAMENT

**encourage, encouraged,** קָזַק *khaw-zak'*

A primitive root; to *fasten* upon; hence to *seize, be strong* (figuratively *courageous, causatively strengthen, cure, help, repair, fortify*), *obstinate*; to *bind, restrain, conquer*: - aid, amend, X calker, catch, cleave, confirm, be constant, constrain, continue, be of good (take) courage (-ous, -ly), encourage (self), be established, fasten, force, fortify, make hard, harden, help, (lay) hold (fast), lean, maintain, play the man, mend, become (wax) mighty, prevail, be recovered, repair, retain, seize, be (wax) sore, strengthen (self), be stout, be (make, shew, wax) strong (-er), be sure, take (hold), be urgent, behave self valiantly, withstand.

**NEW TESTAMENT**

The word “**encourage**” is not in the New Testament. However, there are several words that carry the same meaning.

**exhort**, παρακαλέω, *par-ak-al-eh'-o*, to *call near*, that is, *invite, invoke* (by *implication, hortation* or *consolation*): - beseech, call for, (be of good) comfort, desire, (give) exhort (-ation), intreat, pray.

**exhorting**, προτρέπομαι *prot-rep'-om-ahee*, to *turn forward* for oneself, that is, *encourage*: - exhort.

**comfort**, παραμυθέομαι *par-am-oo-theh'-om-ahee*, to *relate near*, that is, (by *implication*) *encourage, console*: - comfort.

**NOTE: Comforter**, παρακλητος (ον), *para-clay-tos / para-clay-ton*, *one present to render various beneficial services; whose influence and operation were to compensate for the departure of Christ himself.*

This term is used for the Holy Ghost, known as the **Paraclete**, who is called the Comforter in **John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7**. He is the one sent to stand alongside the Apostles, and us, after Christ's ascension. He is, of course, our greatest comforter/ encourager!

**consolation**, παράκλησις, *par-ak'-lay-sis*, *implication, hortation, solace*: - comfort, consolation, exhortation, intreaty.

**A working biblical definition:** encouragement is to strengthen and/or comfort someone. To stand alongside and persuade them to continue on. Especially in the Lord and in the Lord's work.

**I. Our First Encourager Is God.****A. All good things, including comfort/encouragement, come from God.**

**II Cor 1:2-6** “Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.”

God is the God of all comfort (:4a) and His comfort encourages us so we can encourage others.

1. He comforts us.
2. We can then encourage others with the comfort we have received. (:4b)
3. When we do suffer, we know that we can then encourage others because the God that consoles us will also give them consolation. (:4-6)

**Ro 8:28** “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

## B. The Holy Ghost's Job Is To Comfort Us

**John 14:16** “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

**John 16:13** “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:”

These verses, and the following ones, are verses of total encouragement. I say this because they are a guarantee that we will be free. This passage encourages me to the utmost. They are a guarantee of the guiding of the Holy Spirit into all truth. And then next verses encourage me because they say I will know the truth and it will make me free. Not “set” me free but “make” me free.

**John 8:31** “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; (:32) and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (:33) They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? (:34) Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. (:35) And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. (:36) If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

This passage encourages all who believe. And it gives us the first precept—they must be believers. God uses this passage to encourage us; and in the next segment we will see the process that we can use to encourage others.

## II. We Are To Encourage Others

### A. The process.

1. They must be believers. (**John 8:31a**)  
 “... to those Jews which believed on him”  
 Therefore the first encouragement we are to give them is to accept Christ.
2. They need to continue in Christ's word and become His disciples. (**:31b**)  
 “... then are ye my disciples indeed”

**disciple**, μαθητής, *math-ay-teys*, a learner, that is, pupil

Although disciples are called out from among the believers, disciples and believers are not the same thing. A believer is anyone who has believed on Christ; that is, one who has accepted Him as their Saviour. A disciple, on the other hand, is a believer who wants to be more. He or she wants to learn all about Christ and His word. Thus, the next step of encouragement, after becoming a believer, is to become a disciple, a learner, of Christ and all that He taught about the Father, the Word of God, and how to live life to the fullest for God.

To continue in Christ's word is an indication of and a requisite for true discipleship.

a. The requisite for discipleship.

**“If ye continue in my word,**

b. The indication of a true disciple.

**“then are ye my disciples indeed”**

3. Only then can they know “the truth.” (:32)

**“and ye shall know the truth”**

We are to encourage them with this fact- that they will know the truth; if, that is, they continue in Christ's word and be a true disciple of Christ.

4. We are to encourage them to (A) be a believer and (B) continue in Christ's word and (C) be a true disciple of Christ. Only then can they know the truth.

5. If they continue in those things, then they shall be **“free indeed” (:32)**

Don't forget that God has given us Free Will. We can have the truth offered and available to us but we can refuse it- that is, refuse to know it. Therefore, we need to encourage them (exhort them) to continue as a true disciple and accept the truth when it is offered to them.

a. If they continue in sin, continue defying God's Word and rejecting the wooing the Holy Spirit and rejecting the instructions of Christ, then they are once again willingly becoming slaves to sin.

b. If, on the other hand, they accept the truth when it is offered to them, continue in Christ's word as true disciples, only then can they be **“free indeed.” (:32)**

c. And this is ONLY POSSIBLE through the Holy Spirit because ONLY HE can guide us into all truth.

**John 14:16 “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”**

**John 16:13 “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:”**

6. Therefore we need to encourage them into following the Holy Spirit.

7. Only then will they be free.

## **B. How often should we encourage one another?**

1. We are to exhort one another every day.

**Heb 3:13 “But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”**

Life is tough and as brothers and sisters in the Lord we can help one another to continue living righteously. We do this by daily exhorting one another; that is, encouraging one another to live godly lives.

2. And when we gather in Church, it is to be a time of encouragement/exhortation.

**Heb 10:24-25 “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”**

3. The amount of encouraging should increase more and more.

We should be encouraging one another more and more as time goes on and we get closer to the end.

**:25 “... so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”**

It seems today that people, that is, Christians, are becoming more and more discouraged. It is as if the devil has completely taken over the minds of those in government, in entertainment, and those in positions of influence in our schools, the populace in general, and, unfortunately, he has even swayed the minds of those who profess Christ as Saviour. This should not be surprising to us- God foretold it.

**Mark 13:22 “For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.”**

God wants to use us to encourage one another to resist the deception and the deceivers and continue living godly lives and doing the work of the Lord. However, we have to want to let Him use us. He will not force us- it is always our choice.

4. Only then will we be truly free.

God wants us to encourage one another daily and to see that when we meet as the Lord's Church we always have a spirit of exhortation, that is, encouragement, one toward another. Church meetings should always encourage the members, not bore and discourage them. It should be an encouragement in the truth and freedom.

## **III. The Tools of Encouragement?**

Like any other task, encouragement can only be effective if we have the right tools and use them in the right way.



**A. The first tool of encouragement is the Gospel.**

Encourage them to accept Christ and be a believer. **(John 8:31a)**

**B. The second tool of encouragement is Discipleship.**

Encourage them to go beyond Salvation and be a dedicated learner, studying and continuing in His Word and thus become a disciple of Christ. **(John 8:31b)**

**C. The third tool of encouragement is their Acceptance.**

Encourage them to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit as He leads them into all truth. We cannot utilize this tool for them, they must do it themselves. All we can do is encourage them to follow and to continue following the Holy Spirit and accept the truth that He reveals to them and follow that truth no matter where it leads. It is their choice whether they want to be truly free. **(John 8:31-36; 14:16; 16:13)**

**D. The final tool of encouragement is perseverance.**

We are to encourage one another daily, including in Church when we meet together, and increase our encouragement as time goes on and we get closer and closer to the end. **(Heb 3:13; 10:24-25)**

**SUMMARY:**

God has not given us a suggestion to be an encourager; He has given us a commandment to do so. In addition He has given us the process by which we can encourage both the lost as well as fellow Christians. It is simple, encourage the lost to become believers and encourage the Saved to become Disciples. He then tells us to encourage one another in The Word of God and in the work of Christ- personally follow His Word and live godly and be an encouragement to one another to do likewise. And we are to do so daily as well as when we meet in Church and to increase our encouragement more and more as time goes by.

**We can only be one of two things: we will be an  
ENCOURAGER or a DISCOURAGER  
as always, the choice is up to us!**

The first is pleasing to God because it is in obedience to Him. The second is displeasing to God because it is rebellion against His command. Decide which group you want to be in.



**1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this trait of Encouragement?**

**2. What do you think about it?**

*feel:* \_\_\_\_\_

(For a list of feelings/emotions see page 2 of this study.)

*think:* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**For our next meeting:**

During the two weeks until our next meeting we will keep track of our responses concerning this trait. If someone struggled with this trait or maybe has some question about it that came up during the two week period, we will take a few minutes to briefly discuss that at the next meeting.

The self-examination score card for the next two week period is below and, if needed, we will briefly discuss the results at the beginning of our next meeting.

Ask your self before God: “Did I have and show/not show the character trait of Encouragement, without bounds, during the 2 week period, and carried out any commanded actions concerning it whenever I was tested?” (Your emotional and mental state and/or reaction is involved in your self-examination of your character.)

**How to score yourself:**

If the trait did NOT come up during a particular day, leave that box blank.

For the days that the trait DID come up:

enter a “1” for “absolutely no”

enter a “3” for “sort of”

enter a “5” for “absolutely yes”

(If you are wavering between 1, 3, or 5 and the number above or below it, then enter the number above or below it that is appropriate to your wavering up or down.)

**My self-examination score for this character trait for the 2 week period:** (Remember, your emotional and mental state or reaction is involved in your self-examination.)

Mark 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, in each day's box that this character trait was tested or NA if not tested that day.

Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr	Sat	Sun	M	T	W	Th	Fr

**Overall assessment for the 2 week period for this character trait:**  
(average score)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5