

LESSON THIRTY- ONE

Loyalty

REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through TWENTY-NINE:

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. Lesson 29 showed us the benefits of obedience and the dangers of disobedience and Lesson 30 showed us the way of biblical encouragement.

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 THIRTY-ONE

Loyalty

“Loyalty is remaining committed to those whom God has brought into our lives and has called us to serve, even in times of difficulty. (Proverbs 17:17)” Unknown author

Proverbs 17:17 “A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”

Proverbs 18:24 “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother”

SECULAR DEFINITIONS

loyal, *showing firm and constant support or allegiance to a person or institution. unwavering in devotion to a friend or vow or cause. A type of faithful.*

Related terms: *fast (as attached), firm, truehearted, true, true to.*

loyalty, *the quality of being loyal, strong feeling of support or allegiance, the act of binding yourself (intellectually or emotionally) to a course of action*

BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

The word **“loyal(ty)”** is not in the Bible. However, the precept is taught in many places in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

OLD TESTAMENT

sticketh closer, קבד, *daw-bak'* - *adhering*: - cleave, joining, stick closer.

A primitive root; properly *to impinge*, that is, *cling or adhere*; figuratively *to catch by pursuit*: - *abide, fast, cleave (fast together), follow close (hard, after), be joined (together), keep (fast), overtake, pursue hard, stick, take.*

cleave, קבד, *daw-bake'* - *adhering*: - cleave, joining, stick closer.

stedfast and faithful, אמן, *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, stedfast, sure, surely, trusty, verified), nurse, (-ing father), (put), trust, turn to the right.

NOTE: (1) Not all instances of **“stedfast”** in the Old Testament are the word **“aw-man”** The two to which we are referring are in **Psalm 78:8 & 37**. (2) Most uses of **“faithful”** in the OT are the word **“aw-man,”** but not all. Be sure to check each instance of **“faithful”** before using it as a synonym for **“loyalty”**.

And the word “**faithfulness**” is not included. It is from a different word and has a different meaning.

NEW TESTAMENT

The word “**loyal(ity)**” is not in the New Testament. However, there are several words and passages that carry the same or related meaning. And in the New Testament the word “**steadfast**” has no direct relationship to loyalty. However, a similar term, **stand fast**, is there.

faithful, (a related term - but only discernable by context) πιστός, *pis-tos'* - objectively *trustworthy*; subjectively *trustful*: - believe (-ing, -r), faithful (-ly), sure, true.

faith, πίστις *pis'-tis* - *persuasion*, that is, *credence*; moral *conviction* (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher), especially *reliance* upon Christ for salvation; abstractly *constancy* in such profession; **by extension the system of religious (Gospel) truth itself**: - assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity.

cleave, προσκολλάω *pros-kol-lay'-o* - to *glue to*, that is, (figuratively) to *adhere*: - cleave, join (self).

contend (for the faith), ἐπαγωνίζομαι *ep-ag-o-nid'-zom-ahee*

to *struggle* for: - earnestly contend for.

(by context in **Jude 1:3**. That is the sole place where the phrase has to do with loyalty)

stand fast, στήκω *stay'-ko* - to *be stationary*, that is, (figuratively) to *persevere*: - stand (fast). (It is often related by context to loyalty to a person or a cause.)

There are some other words related to loyalty but the ones listed above are the main ones. When we refer to any of the others in this study we will define them as we use them.

A working biblical definition of Loyalty: “To stand by someone or something in continuance, as if inseparable (glued to them), and to do so at all times and in all situations, even in adversity and with strength of force and at risk of our own life if necessary.”

I. Our First Loyalty Is To Be To God

Deut 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.”

Joshua 22:5 “But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

There are a multitude of verses that teach that we are to cleave to, that is, be loyal to God.

A. With willing and complete loyalty; that is, wholeheartedly.

I Sam 12:20 “And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart.”

Deut 11:13 “And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

There are a multitude of verses that teach this willing wholehearted loyalty to God.

B. In what things are we to be loyal to God?

1. Loyal to God and the faith (*system of religious truth*) He has given to us.

I Cor 16:13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

Phil 1:27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

II Thess 2:15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

faith, *pis-tis* - def. by extension *the system of religious (Gospel) truth itself*
tradition, *par-ad'-os-is* - a precept delivered by word or letter,

2. Loyal to God and the liberty He has given us in Christ.

Gal 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

liberty, *el-yoo-ther-ee'-ah* - def. *freedom* - by context, remain loyal to **God**

and His grace given through Christ and stand fast in freedom from The Law; which He had also given to us but from which we are now free.

3. Loyal to God and the Saviour He has given to us.

Phil 4:1 Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

I Thess 3:8 For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

We are to remain loyal to God- Father and Son, always and in all ways.

C. How long and to what extent are we to be loyal to God?

1. Loyal even in suffering.

“I Pet 4:17-19 “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? (:18) And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? (: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.”

2. Loyal even unto death.

Rev 2:10 “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

II. We Are To Be Loyal To Our Kinfolk

We are to be loyal to all of our kinfolk but specially our close family.

A. Loyal to our kinfolk and close family.

I Tim 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.

B. A special loyalty to our wives (if we are married).

1. As loyal to her as we would be to our own selves.

Mt 19:5 “And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?”

2. Loyal to our wives even to the death if necessary.

Eph 5:25 “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;”

III. We Are To Be Loyal To the Authorities That God Places Over Us

A. Loyal to all Leaders.

That includes the leaders of our country, leaders on our jobs, etc. And the loyalty is to be reciprocal. That is, the leaders are to be loyal to them over whom they exercise authority.

I Chron 12:38 “All these men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel: and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king.”

Eph 6:5-9 “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; (:6) Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; (:7) With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: (:8) Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. (:9) And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.”

B. Loyal to Our Pastor and Other Authorities in our Local Church.

We are to be loyal to the pastor, teachers, heads of the various ministries, etc. We are to honour them and take care of them.

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

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

IV. We Are To Be Loyal To Our Church

A. Loyal in our attendance at assembly and to all who assemble with us.

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

We are to be loyal to our Church. Loyal to assemble together with the other members. And that loyalty to our Church is in actuality loyalty to the members (the members are the Church) and we are to encourage them unto love and good works, all of us exhorting one another. And our loyalty is to increase more and more as time goes on.

B. True loyal members are of one mind, one accord, one purpose, and God blesses this loyalty.

1. Truly loyal Church members are all in one accord.

Acts 1:14 “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.”

2. Truly loyal Church members are all of one mind, of one purpose.

Phil 2:2 “Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.”

Acts 11:23 “Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.”

3. These exhibitions of loyalty (one accord, one mind, one purpose, gathered together in praise, prayer, and labor) brings blessings from God upon the Church. The power of the Holy Spirit is manifested and the Church fulfills the Great Commission- preaching, baptizing, and discipling. And it all begins with loyal members being together and in one accord.

Acts 2:1-4 “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. (:2) And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. (:3) And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. (:4) And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (:5) And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. (:6) Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.”

The rest of the book of Acts tells how the Church then spread the gospel across the world through mission works “**unto the uttermost**”. And it all began with loyal Church members meeting in one place, in one accord and of one mind and obeying God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

V. We Are To Be Loyal To Our Friends

- A. Are we the kind of loyal friend that is more loyal than someone's own brother?**

Prov 18:24 “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”

“sticketh closer” daw-bake' - *adhering*: - cleave, joining, stick closer.

If that is not speaking of intense loyalty, then I don't know what would be!

B. The depth of true loyalty.

We are to be loyal even if it hurts. In other words, we are to put the needs of our friend ahead of our own feelings- that is, if we are truly their friend.

Prov 27:6 “Faithful are the wounds of a friend”

We feel bad when we hurt a friend but when we know it is necessary to wound them in order to help or protect them, then as a loyal friend we will put their needs ahead of our own wounding.

Example: Are we willing to wound a snake-bit friend in order to let the poison out of them?

IV. We Are To Be Loyal To Our Brothers and Sisters In the Lord

Our loyalty is to be to all Christians and will be visible for all to see.

A. Loyal in our actions; including our care for one another.

I Jn 3:17 “But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”

If we have the ability to help a friend, to do so and help them shows that we are not only a loyal friend, a true friend, but it also allows the love of God to show forth from us for all to see.

B. Loyal even unto death.

I Jn 3:16 “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

We are to be loyal to the same extent that Christ was loyal to us- to the death if need be.

C. True loyalty to one another will be seen through our actions.

I Jn 3:18 “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”

It is easy to say we will be a loyal friend, to proclaim our loyalty with our tongues, but it is something else to show it by our actions. The latter shows our love and the truth of our proclamations of loyalty.

**“Your talk talks and your walk talks,
but your walk talks louder than your talk talks.”**

John C. Maxwell

SUMMARY:

Loyalty is to be an integral part of our character. Our loyalty is not only to God, to whom our first loyalty must lie, and our own family and friends but must also be to all those in authority over us (this does not include evil authority that leads us away from God). Those to whom we are to exercise loyalty includes our pastors and teachers, our churches, the system of faith delivered to us from God, our brothers and sisters in the Lord, our boss at work, including the company that we work for, and any others whom God has placed over us. Our loyalty should be without bounds or time. It should be to whatever extent is called for. And for a true friend, including our wives, our families, our brothers and sisters in the Lord, it should know no limits- if we are truly loyal to that friend.

Prov 18:24 “There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”

Jn 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.”

We can all easily talk the talk; but we need God’s power to walk the walk.

According to business leaders, loyalty is totally lacking in College graduates today. They complained about its lack in the late nineteen-eighties and it has been that way since then and is getting worse, not better. The sad part is that there was, and is, no difference between the graduates of secular colleges or “Christian” colleges. This is a sad commentary on both the lost and the ones who are supposedly saved!

We must ask ourselves, where do we fit in here? With the secular and the run of the mill supposedly Christian college crowd or apart from them? Did our education teach us loyalty or not? It may have been in college or maybe at home- but we have all been educated. Did that education follow God’s precepts or not? If yes, then follow them- if not, then purpose to rectify the lack.

Loyalty - a character trait much respected but seldom seen today. - Doc Van



1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this trait of loyalty?
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 Loyalty, 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-TWO REVIEW

REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through THIRTY-ONE:

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. Lesson 29 showed us the benefits of obedience and the dangers of disobedience and Lesson 30 showed us the way of biblical encouragement. Thirty-one addressed the much neglected trait of Loyalty.

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 General Review, 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-TWO

Review of Lessons 1-32

Over and over in the Bible we are taught that mere knowledge of God's word is not enough. What God expects of us is to be “doers” if we want to truly advance in our Christian walk.

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

And God also expects us to seriously examine ourselves to see if we truly are “doers” of the Word.

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

SECULAR DEFINITION

do, >verb (does; past did; past part. done) **1** perform or carry out (an action). **2** achieve or complete (a specified target). **3** act or progress in a specified way. **4** work on (something) to bring it to a required state. **5** have a specified result or effect on: *the walk will do me good*. **6** work at for a living or take as one's subject of study: *what does she do?* **7** make or provide. **8** be suitable or acceptable: *he'll do*.

hear, hearer, >verb (past and past part. **heard**) **1** perceive (a sound) with the ear. **2** be told or informed of. **3 (have heard of)** be aware of the existence of. **4 (hear from)** receive a letter or phone call from. **5** listen or pay attention to. **6** Law listen to and judge (a case or plaintiff). -DERIVATIVES **hearable** >adjective **hearer** >noun

examine, >verb **1** inspect closely to determine the nature or condition of. **2** test the knowledge or proficiency of. **3** Law formally question (a defendant or witness) in court. -ORIGIN Latin *examinare* 'weigh, test'.

prove, >verb (past part. **proved** or **proven**) **1** demonstrate by evidence or argument the truth or existence of. **2** show or be seen to be: *the scheme has proved a great success*. **3 (prove oneself)** demonstrate one's abilities or courage.

BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

NEW TESTAMENT

do, doer, ποιηται *poy-ay-tie* ' from ποιητής *poy-ay-tace* ' - a maker,; the maker or author of a song or poem; a performer; specifically a “poet”: - doer, poet.

hearer, ἀκροατής *ak-ro-at-ace* ' From ἀκροάομαι *ak-ro-a-o-mai* (to listen); a hearer (merely): - hearer.

examine, *πειραζετε* *pi-rad'-zeh-teh* From *πειράζω* *pi-rad'-zo*, to *test* (objectively), that is, *endeavor, scrutinize, entice, discipline*: - assay, examine, go about, prove, tempt (-er), try.

prove, *δοκιμάζω* *dok-im-ad'-zo* - to *test* (literally or figuratively); by implication to *approve*: - allow, discern, examine, X like, (ap-) prove, try.

A working biblical explanation of this principle: “We are not to only be a hearer of the Word of God but we are expected to be a performer of what we hear. We are commanded to scrutinize ourselves closely to test and prove ourselves concerning this matter of obedience.”

In our current study of the character of Christ that we are to emulate, that is to follow exactly, we now will take time to scrutinize our behavior to see if we are truly “doers” of what we have learned. In addition, we will examine our attitude as it concerns each of the character traits we are commanded to follow.

As you go through your self-assessment mark **Yes** if you generally have the character trait listed. We all fall short from time to time. This assessment is to see if you are progressing in developing the Character of Christ that God says you can attain. The question is, **are you improving or not?** That is what this self-assessment is for.

List of character traits and our score concerning each one:

(Be honest in our self-examination and include both action and attitude.)

I. Made a man by God.

Do I believe that I am a man because God made me that way? **Yes** **No**

II. Made in the image and likeness of God to show God to the world.

Have I shown to the world, in both action and attitude, that I am what God made me- His representative to show Him to the world **Yes** **No**

III. What is a man?

1. A Man Is Not Defined By What He Does

Being a man is defined by God; not by the actions of the person.

2. What A Man Does Is (or should be) Defined By What He Is

The way we act is, or should be, defined by what we are. Unfortunately, deviant behaviour is becoming accepted by society, which is causing the problem to worsen. Therefore, I had to add “should be” to the statement.

3. What A Man Does Defines Our Perception Of Him As A Man

Do I act like the man that God made me so as to be an encouragement to other men to do the same? **Yes** **No**

IV. Do I exhibit the character trait of Compassion exactly as Jesus did?

Include both action and attitude in your assessment. Yes No

V. Do I have a Servant's heart?

("as Jesus did" will be assumed from here on out.) Yes No

VI. Am I Loving in attitude and do I show it in my actions? Yes No

VII. Am I Forgiving in attitude and do I show it in my actions. Yes No

VIII. Am I Committed to both God and Man in attitude and do I show it in my actions?

Yes No

IX. Am I constant in my use of Prayer; am I Prayerful in both praise and asking?

Yes No

X. Do I practice Gentleness in both thoughts/attitude and actions? Yes No

XI. Do I practice God-given Patience in both thoughts/attitude and actions?

Yes No

XII. Do I practice Self-Control in both thoughts/attitude and actions? Yes No

XIII. Am I Humble in both thoughts/attitude and actions? Yes No

XIV. Do I practice Fairness in both my thoughts/attitude and actions? Yes No

XV. Do I practice Courage in both my thoughts/attitude and actions? Yes No

XVI. Do I have the character trait of Friendship/Friend in thoughts/attitude and actions?

Yes No

XVII. Do I practice Honesty/Truthfulness in thoughts/attitude, speech, and actions?

Yes No

XVIII. Do I have the character trait of Responsible/Responsibility and do I practice it in both my thoughts/attitude and in my actions? Yes No

XIX. Do I practice the character trait of Content/Contentment no matter what the circumstances? Yes No

XX. Do I practice in thought/attitude the character trait of God-centered and God-given Confident/Confidence and do I show it in my actions? Yes No

XXI. Do I practice Forgiveness in my thoughts/attitude and actions- no matter the circumstances? Yes No

XXII. Do I practice Meekness in both thoughts/attitude and actions? Yes No

XXIII. Do I practice Gratitude in both thoughts/attitude and actions? Yes No

XXIV. Do I have and show Peace in my thoughts/attitude and actions? Yes No

XXV. Do I have and show God-given Joy? Yes No

XXVI. Do I have and show Integrity to both God and Man? Yes No

XXVII. Do I practice Obedience to both God and all earthly authorities that He has placed over me; and do I do so in both thoughts/attitude and actions? Yes No

XXVIII. Am I a godly Encouragement/Encourager to both others and to my self in thoughts/attitude as well as in my actions? Yes No

XXIX. Do I practice Loyalty to both God and Man and do I do so in both my thoughts/attitude and my actions? Yes No

SELF-ASSESSMENT:

1. Give yourself one point for each "Yes" and subtract one point for each "No" and write your total on this line. _____

2. Don't show anyone else your total; it is between you and God!

If you have a real friend that you know will help you improve, you may show your total to that person if you choose to do so at some later time. It is up to you.

3. Where would you rate your progress thus far concerning your development of godly character? (Be honest with yourself and God!)

- 1. Satisfied 2. Needs a lot more work 3. Needs some more work
- 4. Need help 5. Dissatisfied

4. Will you commit to be here for the next meeting, if possible, to further develop your Character? Yes No



1. How do you feel about yourself concerning your progress thus far?

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 to this self-examination. If someone is struggling with character development 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 but only if they request that we do so.

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 an improvement in my Character during the 2 week period, and carried out any biblical 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 testing of your Character did NOT happen during a particular day, enter NA in that box.

For the days that your Character WAS TESTED- did you respond appropriately:

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 testing of my Character 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 Character was tested or NA if not tested that day.

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

Overall assessment of your response to testing of your Character for the 2 week period: (average score)

1 2 3 4 5

LESSON THIRTY-THREE

Faithful/Faithfulness

REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through THIRTY-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 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. Lesson 29 showed us the benefits of obedience and the dangers of disobedience and Lesson 30 showed us the way of biblical encouragement. Thirty-one addressed the much neglected trait of Loyalty. And lesson 32 was a Review of Lessons One through Thirty-One.

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 any of the character traits thus far 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 any of the character traits from the previous lessons? This is your chance to speak up if you want to do so.**

LESSON THIRTY-THREE

Faithful/Faithfulness

“Faithfulness is the "gluing" fruit that will preserve our faith and the other characters of the Spirit as well as identify God's Will so we can be dependable and trusting to God and others. (Matthew 25:21; 1 Thes 5:24)” Unknown author

Matthew 25:21 “His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. ”

I Thess 5:24 “Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”

I Cor 4:2 “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”

SECULAR DEFINITIONS

faithful, faithfulness, *1 remaining loyal and steadfast. 2 remaining sexually loyal to a lover or spouse. 3 true to the facts or the original. >noun (the faithful) the believers in a particular religion. -DERIVATIVES faithfulness >noun..*

BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

OLD TESTAMENT

faithful, אָמַן 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, stedfast, sure, surely, trusty, verified), nurse, (-ing father), (put), trust, turn to the right.

faithful, אֱמֻנָה eh'-meth - *stability*; figuratively *certainty, truth, trustworthiness*: - assured (-ly), establishment, faithful, right, sure, true (-ly, -th), verity.

faithful, faithfulness, faithfully, אֱמֻנָה אֱמֻנָה em-oo-naw', em-oo-naw' - literally *firmness*; figuratively *security*; moral *fidelity*: - faith (-ful, -ly, -ness, [man]), set office, stability, steady, truly, truth, verily.

faithful, אֱמֻנָה ay-moon' - *established*, that is, (figuratively) *trusty*; also (abstractly) *trustworthiness*: - faith (-ful), truth.

faithful, אָמַן am-an' - (Chaldee) - believe, faithful, sure.

faithfulness, אָמַן koon - A primitive root; properly to *be erect* (that is, stand

perpendicular); hence (causatively) to *set up*, in a great variety of applications, whether literal (*establish, fix, prepare, apply*), or figurative (*appoint, render sure, proper* or *prosperous*): - certain (-ty), confirm, direct, faithfulness, fashion, fasten, firm, be fitted, be fixed, frame, be meet, ordain, order, perfect, (make) preparation, prepare (self), provide, make provision, (be, make) ready, right, set (aright, fast, forth), be stable, (e-) stablish, stand, tarry, X very deed.

unfaithfully, בָּאֵרֶץ *baw-gad'* - A primitive root; to *cover* (with a garment); figuratively to *act covertly*; by implication to *pillage*: - deal deceitfully (treacherously, unfaithfully), offend, transgress (-or), (depart), treacherous (dealer, -ly, man), unfaithful (-ly, man), X very.

NEW TESTAMENT

faithful, faithfully, πιστός, *pis-tos'* - objectively *trustworthy*; subjectively *trustful*: - believe (-ing, -r), faithful (-ly), sure, true.

A working biblical definition of Faithful: “To be trustworthy and loyal; to stand fast in all circumstances; to be true and sure to both God and man.”

I. God Is Faithful To Us

Deut 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”

A. God is faithful to save us, keep us saved, and to raise us in the Resurrection.

1Th 5:9-10 “For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

I Thess 5:24 “Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”

Once we are saved He is faithful to keep us saved.

John 6:37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

:38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

:39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

He will be faithful to raise us in the Resurrection.

:40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth

the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

B. God is faithful to keep His covenant with us.

Deut 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”

However, there is a warning. God is faithful to keep both possibilities of His Covenant with us- the positive and the negative. There are positive consequences for us being faithful to fulfil our responsibilities under the covenant and negative consequences for our not fulfilling our responsibilities under it. It is up to us which possibility is to come to pass; i.e., our faithfulness decides which way God is going to be faithful to us.

Neh 1:5 “And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:”

If we love Him and keep His commandments then He will be faithful to give us blessings; if not, then He will be faithful to withdraw His blessings. Whichever He does, as dictated by our faithfulness, it is always the best for us. His faithfulness to keep the negative parts of His covenant are necessary to prevent us from taking advantage of His mercy- which would be enabling us to continue in our sin. And for us to continue in our sin, God will not allow.

C. The depth and breadth of God's faithfulness.

Psalms 89:1 “I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.”

II. We Are To Be Faithful To God and Man

We are to have faithfulness as an integral part of our character. For this to be true, we need to be faithful to God first and then also faithful to man.

A. Faithful to God.

We are stewards of God's Creation, stewards of His Word, His Church, His name, and the name and Gospel of His Only Begotten Son. We are commanded to be faithful to Him; to be wise in our stewardship of all that He has entrusted to us.

I Cor 4:2 “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”

This is not a suggestion; faithfulness to God and showing it by being faithful in our stewardship of all that He has entrusted to us is “**required**” of us!

B. We are to be faithful to our kinfolk and especially to our close family.

I Tim 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.”

1. We are to be faithful to provide for our “own”.
2. Especially to our immediate family, “those of his own house”
3. If we are not faithful to our family, both extended and immediate family, then we are “worse than an infidel”.

infidel, *απιστου*, *a-pis-too*, from *a-pis-toss*, without faith, an unbeliever. violating your faith- “worse than an infidel”, worse than a lost person.

Why would we be considered worse than a lost person if we are not faithful to take care of our family? Because even lost people are faithful to take care of their family; both extended and, especially, immediate. So if we are not faithful, as Christians, to our family, then we are acting worse than the non-Christians.

4. Our faithfulness to our wives is a striking indicator of our faithfulness to our immediate family.

Eph 5:25 “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it”

We are to be faithful to our wives even to the point of giving up our very lives for her if necessary. That is godly faithfulness without human bounds!

C. Faithful to our friends.

1. We are commanded to love one another, showing our faithfulness by doing so and continuing to do so, as much as Christ loved us. Showing the greatest depth of it by being faithful in love even to the death- as He showed us by dying for us.

Joh 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.”

2. We are to be faithful to our friends even when it hurts us.

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

We are to be faithful to our friends even when it hurts us to hurt them to help them. If we are their true and faithful friend then they will know that our only intention is to help them; not degrade or demean them but to help them. Even if what we do or say hurts them they will **know** that we only do it to help them. To guide them into the right (godly) way- to spare them a greater hurt (either physically, emotionally, or spiritually); that is, to spare them from hurt

of body, soul, or spirit. And if this costs us their friendship, then we are to accept that and not let that possibility prevent us from doing what is best for them. If they turn on us because we faithfully hurt them, then we must continue being their friend even though they have turned on us.

3. We are to be faithful to help them up when they fall. Not just sometimes but every time they fall.

Gal 6:1-2 “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. (:2) Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

This shows not only our faithfulness to our Christian brothers and sisters, our friends, but it also shows our faithfulness to Christ because by restoring our Christian brother or sister we “**fulfill the law of Christ.**”

D. Faithful to our Local Church.

It is not our Church; it is Christ's Church. We are only stewards of it. Therefore, we are commanded to be faithful to take care of it. It is “**required**” of us.

I Cor 4:2 “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”

1. We are to be faithful in attendance.

And we are to be faithful to encourage all of the members of Christ's Church. This we cannot do unless we regularly assemble with them as God commanded us to do.

Heb 10:23-25 “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) (:24) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: (:25) Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

2. Unfaithfulness to Christ's Church and departing from the Faith, of which the former is a prelude and an indicator, will increase more and more as the end approaches.

I Tim 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

We see that very thing happening today. And it is increasing exponentially as time goes on and the generations come and go.

III. Unfaithfulness Is Common Today

Unfaithfulness is so very common today. People are not faithful to God; nor are they

faithful to man. The secular philosophers, business men, psychologists and counselors, and many others, lament that loyalty, a component of and even a sister to faithfulness, is sadly lacking today. God warned us that it would be that way- even among God's People. And we are surely seeing that today.

A. Unfaithfulness in the general population:

Psalm 12:1-5 “**Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men. (:2) They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak. (:3) The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things: (:4) Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us? (:5) For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.”**

A faithful person has always been hard to find.

Prov 20:6 “**Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?”**

B. Unfaithfulness in God's People:

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

The only faithful one among all of God's People back then was Moses and it is no better today.

God warns that in the last days it would increase greatly. And we see that process taking place before our eyes.

II Thess 2:3-15 “**Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; (:4) Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. (:5) Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? (:6) And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. (:7) For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. (:8) And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: (:9) Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, (:10) And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (:11) And for this cause God shall send them strong**

delusion, that they should believe a lie: (:12) That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (:13) But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: (:14) Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (:15) Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.”

We are warned it is coming. But when the unfaithfulness abounds, not a falling away from Salvation but a falling away from religion, abounding rejection of His truth by the world at large, we are commanded to **“stand fast”** that is, remain faithful in the midst of the unfaithful multitude- the widespread **“falling away”**.

Unfaithfulness and a lack of one of its key components, loyalty, is not only common in business (employers complain there is no loyalty, no faithfulness, in their employees and employees complain about the bosses lack of faithfulness toward them) but it is also common in unfaithful dealings with neighbors and strangers by both the lost and the Christians. Families turn against families, children against parents and siblings, spouses turning against spouses, parents turning against their children, and even nations being unfaithful to their own citizens as well as having unfaithful dealings with other nations. In every sphere, personal, family, religious, business, and nationality, it is obvious that unfaithfulness has become commonplace today. And being unfaithful to God has become just as commonplace. And both are seen just as much in the Christians as in the lost. We can easily see the unfaithfulness in the public lives of God's people, both Jew and Christian, as well as in the number of Christians that are turning against other Christians and their falling away from Church attendance. As I said, unfaithfulness has become just as commonplace in God's People as it is in the lost. Our prayer ought to be, **“God, with your help, let that never be said of us!”**

IV. The Rewards Of Faithfulness

Mat 25:21 “His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”

Mat 25:23 “His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”

God tells us that our reward for being a faithful servant is to enter into the **“joy thy lord.”** We should all strive toward the greatest reward of both time and eternity- to hear Christ say:

“Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

SUMMARY:

Faithfulness is to be seen in us by all; saved and lost, God and man. They should see it in our actions toward other Christians; toward ALL of God's Children. Do we put them down because they belong to a different Church, or a denomination with which we doctrinally disagree? If they are saved, they are our brothers and sisters no matter what other label they may carry. Do the lost, and other Christians, and yes, God, see our faithfulness in our actions and words toward the lost and toward other Christians? Do they see our faithfulness to God and the Church for which He shed His own blood? On Sunday morning and every other time that the Church assembles for worship, do they see us leaving for Church or do they see us heading to the lake to fish, or the park for a picnic, or to the mountains to hunt or hike? Or to stay home and sleep in? Is our faithfulness to God manifested to them by both our actions and our speech?

How about our faithfulness toward our family and neighbors? Do our actions give credence to our faithfulness or do they show it to be a lie? How do we treat our family, friends, and neighbors? Are we faithful to meet our obligations to family, friends, neighbors, bosses, and yes, to our debtors?

**Our faithfulness should be plain for all to see,
to both God and man and to self,
in everything we say and do!**



1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this trait of faithfulness?
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 Faithfulness, 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-FOUR

Sincere/Sincerity

REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through THIRTY-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, 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. Lesson 29 showed us the benefits of obedience and the dangers of disobedience and Lesson 30 showed us the way of biblical encouragement. Thirty-one addressed the much neglected trait of Loyalty. Lesson 32 was a Review and 33 addressed faithfulness to God and man.

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 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-FOUR

Sincere/Sincerity

“Sincerity is earnest honesty that is readily doing what is right, with pure and loving intention. (Joshua 24:14; I Peter 1:22)” Unknown author

Joshua 24:14 “Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. ”

Joshua 24:24 “And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.”

I Peter 1:22 “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:”

SECULAR DEFINITIONS

sincere, *proceeding from or characterized by genuine feelings; free from deceit*
sincerity, *the quality of being free from pretense, deceit, or hypocrisy.*

truth, (we need to define this word also because it is german to our study) **1** the quality or state of being true. **2** (also **the truth**) that which is true as opposed to false. **3** a fact or belief that is accepted as true.

BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

OLD TESTAMENT

sincerity, sincerely, תָּמִים *taw-meem'* - *entire* (literally, figuratively or morally); also (as noun) *integrity, truth*: - without blemish, complete, full, perfect, sincerely (-ity), sound, without spot, undefiled, upright (-ly), whole.

truth, (we need to define this word also because it is german to our study) אֱמֻנָה *eh'-meth* - *stability*; figuratively *certainty, truth, trustworthiness*: - assured (-ly), establishment, faithful, right, sure, true (-ly, -th), verity.

NEW TESTAMENT

sincerity, εὐλικρίνεια *i-lik-ree'-ni-ah* - *clearness*, that is, (by implication) *purity* (figuratively): - sincerity.

sincerity, ἀφθαρσί *af-thar-see'-ah* - *incorruptibility*; generally *unending existence*;

(figuratively) *genuineness*: - immortality, incorruption, sincerity.

sincerity, γνήσιος *gnay'-see-os* - *legitimate* (of birth), that is, *genuine*: - own, sincerity, true.

sincerely, αγνωσ *hag-noce'* - *purely*, that is, *honestly*: - sincerely.

sincere, άδολος *ad'-ol-os* - *undecitful*, that is, (figuratively) *unadulterated*: - sincere.

truth, (we need to define this word also because it is german to our study)

truth, αλήθεια *al-ay'-thi-a* - *truth*: - true, X truly, truth, verity.

truth, αληθως *al-ay-thoce'* - *truly*: - indeed, surely, of a surety, truly, of a (in) truth, verily, very.

truth, αληθής *al-ay-thace'* - *true* (as *not concealing*): - true, truly, truth.

A working biblical definition of Sincere/Sincerity:

“Purely honest and genuine; that is, completely without guile.”

A working biblical definition of Truth:

“The opposite of false; a fact or belief which is accepted as true.”

WARNING: Many times God uses the word “sincerity” and the word “truth” in the same verse in such a way that it is obvious that He is referring to two different things. Why is that? Is this only by chance or is He trying to tell us something?

We teach the students in the Critical Thinking class at the college, maxims that the Lord gives me from His Word. One of them is:

**Sincerity does not denote truth,
it merely denotes a lack of guile
on the part of the one who is
sincere, but wrong.**

Many times in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, we see where God's people, Israel, were very sincere and believed that what they were saying was true. Unfortunately, they would then fail to follow through with what they said and subsequently suffered God's righteous judgment upon them. This showed, in the end, that the statement they made was not true.

A good example is when Joshua was ready to lead The People into the Promised Land. God had given them everything and at the very edge of the Promised Land He even gave them a

warning. In spite of that warning, they did not follow through with what they had sincerely promised.

I. Their Sincere Promise

Joshua 24:24 “And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.”

A. What they believed to be true.

At the time they made that statement, they believed it to be true.

B. But their sincere promise did not and could not make it true.

Their later actions, that is, their failure to follow through, caused that statement not to be true in the end. Their sincerity at the time was very obvious; but their heart-felt sincerity could not make that statement true. Only their subsequent actions could make that statement be true but their sincerity at the time could not do so.

II. Sincerity Is Current- Truth Is Not Limited In That Way

A. Sincerity is current only.

A person can sincerely make a statement that they believe to be true. And it may be “true” at that particular time. But, perhaps, a better and more accurate word would be “factual” instead of “true.” In our example in **Joshua 24:24** it was “factual” that the Children of Israel would obey God- at that time. However, the connotation was that they would continue to obey God. They were sincere in their statement that they would do so but I don't think they thought through their promise. They were projecting their sincerity into the future, over future generations, which turned out to be an erroneous thing to do. They assumed that future generations would continue to “sincerely” obey God. It is possible that they assumed that if they taught their children to do right that their children would not only do so but would subsequently teach their children to do the same. When we continue studying the history of Israel after they entered the Promised Land we find that this simply did not happen.

B. How can sincerity be coupled with truth in the way that God obviously wants it to be?

1. Do not mistake “factual” for “true”- “fact” with “truth.”
2. Do not presume that what you currently believe, with all sincerity, to be “true” is actually “truth” and will continue to be so into the future. (Because you have mistaken “fact” for “truth.”)
3. Realize that there is only one real “truth” and that is God's Word.

John 17:17 “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”

C. Therefore, sincerity must be coupled with God's Word in order for it to be coupled with “truth.”

Only then can our sincerity be effective and be coupled with real “truth.”

D. But we must be sincere in following The Word- each day- every day- all day.

Remember, your sincerity is limited to a particular time- the current time that you are feeling it and even meaning it. Therefore, we must renew that sincerity constantly.

III. In What Areas Are We To Be Sincere?**A. Sincere in our service to God.**

Joshua 24:14 “Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth:”

1. We must be completely sincere, that is, open and guileless in our dealings with God.
2. And for our sincerity to be effective it must always be coupled with truth- God's Word.
3. Only through the Word of God can we grow into mature Christians.

God has been gracious to give us the “sincere,” that is, unadulterated, spiritual milk to help us grow. And that “milk” is the Word of God.

I Peter 2:1-3 “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, (:2) As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: (:3) If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.”

sincere, ἀδόλος *ad'-ol-os - undeceitful*, that is, (figuratively) *unadulterated*: - sincere.

And our sincerity must be renewed every day because it is limited to the current time. Circumstances can come about that can change our minds and our sincerity can easily change accordingly. Therefore, constant renewal is necessary and for that to happen it must be coupled, constantly, with the truth of The Word of God.

B. Sincere in our faith toward God.

II Tim 1:5 “When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.”

C. Sincere in our love for our Christian brothers and sisters.

I Peter 1:22 “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:”

“unfeigned” ανυπόκριτος *an-oo-pok'-ree-tos - undissembled*, that is, *sincere*:

1. Two things are necessary for our sincerity to be real:

- a. We have to **obey the truth** (which we have learned is the Word of God).
 - b. We have to do so **“through the Spirit.”**
2. Only through the power of the Spirit can we **purify our souls** so that our sincerity is actual; that is, **“unfeigned.”**
 3. Once again God couples “sincerity” with “truth,” which is the eternal Word of God.

I Peter 1:23-25 “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

(:24) For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

(:25) But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

4. The truth of the Word of God to which this sincerity of love must be coupled in order to continue is found in the book of John and various other places.

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

This “truth” of the Word of God, which Christ gave as a “commandment” is so strong that it is repeated three times in these two verses and an additional eleven times elsewhere. These are found in **John 15:12 & 17; Ro 13:8; I Thess 4:9; I Pet 1:22; I John 3:11 & 23; 4:11 & 12; II John 1:5.**

If we couple our sincerity of love for the brethren with this adamantly strong truth from the Word of God, and do so daily, then our sincerity will not only be strengthened but it will be renewed constantly. And the strength of necessity of our daily renewal of our sincerity is to be equal to the strength of the “truth,” the **“commandment,”** that we find in the Word of God.

D. Sincere in our love for all people.

In context, the following verse is speaking of **“love unfeigned”** to everyone so that **“the ministry be not blamed” (:6)** And remember, every Christian is a minister of God.

II Cor 6:6-7 “By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, (:7) By the word of truth...”

Again, **“unfeigned”** is the Greek word meaning **“sincere.”** And, as we have already seen, this sincerity of love must be renewed constantly and that can only happen by attaching it to the truth of the Word of God. In this particular case, the truth to which it must be attached is that found in the book of John.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

The love spoken of here is God's love, the love that was not only shown to us but given to us to show toward all others.

SUMMARY:

We are to be sincere in our faith toward God, in our service to God, and in our love for the brethren and for all people.

However, we are to be aware that sincerity itself is only current. We can be completely sincere at that moment but for it to be biblical it must be coupled with the “**truth**” of the Word of God and must be renewed constantly by the truth of God's Word and the power of the Holy Spirit. That is the only way it can continue into the future.

Finally, we must heed the warning in order to ward off the convincing words of the false prophets:

**Sincerity does not denote truth,
it merely denotes a lack of guile
on the part of the one who is
sincere, but wrong.**



- 1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this trait of sincerity?**
- 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 sincerity, 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-FIVE

Dependable

REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through THIRTY-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. 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. Lesson 29 showed us the benefits of obedience and the dangers of disobedience and Lesson 30 showed us the way of biblical encouragement. Thirty-one addressed the much neglected trait of Loyalty. Lesson 32 was a Review and 33 addressed faithfulness to God and man. Lesson 34 showed us the absolute necessity of being completely and openly sincere.

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 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-FIVE

Dependable

“Dependable is being constantly reliable and trustworthy. It will allow us to continue in our commitments even if it means personal sacrifice. (1 Corinthians 4:2; Colossians 1:10)” Unknown author

I Cor 4:2 “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”

Colossians 1:10 “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;”

SECULAR DEFINITIONS

dependable, trustworthy and reliable.

BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

OLD TESTAMENT

dependable, The word is not in the Old Testament but the principle is taught throughout it with the same meaning as the Secular Definition.

NEW TESTAMENT

dependable, The word is not in the New Testament but the principle is taught throughout it with the same meaning as the Secular Definition.

A working biblical definition of Dependable:

“Someone who is trustworthy and reliable in all things; to both God and Man.”

I. True Dependability Is Not In Word But In Continuing Action

Joshua 24:24 “And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.”

A. They promised to serve and obey God.

This statement was a sincere promise of dependability.

B. But their future actions showed they were not dependable.

1. They, their children, and their future generations disobeyed God and served false gods rather than the true God that had brought them out of bondage and gave them the Promised Land. Thus, their actions showed that they were not dependable.
2. As we saw in our previous study on Sincerity, merely saying something does not bring it to pass- that is, does not make it true. Only continuance in our actions can do so. And this is true in many things, including the previous and current study of character- the traits of Sincerity and Dependability.

II. God Is Dependable In All Things

Isaiah 14:24 “The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:”

Numbers 23:19 “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”

God is dependable to do whatever He says He will do- always and no matter what it may be- both positive and negative.

III. We Are To Be Dependable To God In All Things

A. Dependable to maintain a godly testimony.

Always remember that,

Nothing happens in our lives, but what God brings it or He allows it, and we can be sure that somehow it is always the best thing for us!

1. We need to be dependable to live godly and according to His teachings no matter what He brings or allows in our lives.

Job 13:15 “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.”

2. Notice that we are the ones that must maintain our dependability.

Job 13:15 “... but I will maintain mine own ways before him.”

God will give us the power and grace to be dependable, as He does for all things in our lives, but we are responsible to use that power to maintain a godly testimony and follow Him.

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

He empowers us to be dependable but He will not force us to be that way.

B. Dependable in our service to God.

1. No matter what the world and the Devil may offer, and no matter what the draw of the flesh may be, we need to hold to and love God and serve Him only! The draw of those three may be strong but we must be dependable to let God alone be the master of our lives.

Romans 6:16 “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”

Luke 16:13 “No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

We alone decide who will be our master!

2. There are positive consequences if we are dependable in our service to God and there are negative consequences if we are not. It was the same in the Old Testament under Law as it is in the New Testament under grace. And God deals with us as we are right now.

(OT) Ezekiel 33:18-19 “When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby. (:19) But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby.”

(NT) Heb 12:25 “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:”

Mat 25:20-23 “And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. (:21) His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. (:22) He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. (:23) His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”

We alone decide which way we will go. Thus, we decide what consequences we will experience- positive or negative. Again, we alone decide if we are going to be dependable to follow God and serve Him or not. Thus, we alone decide which consequences we will receive- positive or negative.

IV. We Are To Be Dependable To Men And In The Things Of This World

We have already seen that we are to be dependable to God and the things of God. Now we will bring our dependability down to earth. We will also see that the two, dependability in the physical and dependability to God are intimately connected.

A. Dependable toward men.

If we are not dependable in our use of the things of others, others will not be dependable to give us those things which are ours; i.e., if we are unrighteous toward them, they will be unrighteous toward us.

Luke 16:12 “And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?”

B. Dependable in our use of the things of this world?

If we are not dependable to be righteous in the things of this world, we will not be

dependable in the things of God.

Luke 16:11 “If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?”

V. Warning!

The current plight, and the future, of our country and the world does not depend on the lost. It depends solely on us, God’s children. Only we can make a difference concerning whether God will or will not heal our land. And our dependability toward God is one of the determining factors.

II Chron 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.”

SUMMARY:

We are to be dependable toward God and toward men, and also in our use of the things of this world. If we are dependable toward those three, then we will experience positive consequences. If we are not dependable toward them, then we will experience negative consequences. (As is true concerning all of the character traits we have studied thus far.)

Caution: Remember, however, that God rules this universe by general rules. There is still the matter of Free Will, which God has given to mankind. Therefore, do not be surprised when you are careful to maintain your dependability toward other people, if they are not dependable to you in return. God will not force them to have current this character trait, dependability, nor any other one either. They must choose whether to have it or not. But WE must do the same!

Remember this:

**True character DOES NOT depend on the actions of others.
It is solely your own responsibility.**

God holds you alone responsible to be obedient to Him and have true character at all times. Which includes this current trait of dependability. And remember, all of the traits, including dependability, must be maintained, by us alone, into the future in order to be seen and experienced as true character. Otherwise their uncontinuing manifestation is nothing more than “Just a flash in the pan.”



1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this trait of dependability?
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.

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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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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-SIX

Purity and Holiness

REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through THIRTY-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.



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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 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-SIX

Purity and Holiness

“Purity & Holiness is being set apart for God's use, which is holiness in action. It does not allow us to be contaminated nor interfere with others in our growth and relationship in Christ. (Matt. 5:8; Philippians 4:8; I Tim. 1:5; 5:22; James 4:8) ” Unknown author

Rom 12:1 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

I Tim 1:5 “Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:”

I Tim 5:22 “Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.”

SECULAR DEFINITIONS

pure, *1. not mixed or adulterated with any other substance or material. 2. free of impurities. 3. innocent or morally good. 4. complete;*

holy, *1. dedicated to God or a religious purpose. 2. morally and spiritually excellent and to be revered.*

BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

OLD TESTAMENT

holy, holiness, קדש, ko'-desh - a sacred place or thing; rarely abstractly *sanctity*: - consecrated (thing), dedicated (thing), hallowed (thing), holiness, (X most) holy (X day, portion, thing), saint, sanctuary.

sanctify, קדש, kaw-dash' - A primitive root; to *be* (causatively *make, pronounce or observe as*) *clean* (ceremonially or morally): - appoint, bid, consecrate, dedicate, defile, hallow, (be, keep) holy (-er, place), keep, prepare, proclaim, purify, sanctify (-ied one, self), X wholly.

pure, טהור, haw-hore', tah-hore' - *pure* (in a physical, chemical, ceremonial or moral sense): - clean, fair, pure (-ness).

pure, ררך, baw-rar' - A primitive root; to *clarify* (that is, *brighten*), *examine, select*: - make bright, choice, chosen, cleanse (be clean), clearly, polished, (shew self) pure (-ify), purge (out).

pure, זק, zak - *clear*: - clean, pure.

purified, טָהַר, *taw-hare'* - A primitive root; properly to *be bright*; that is, (by implication) to *be pure* (physically *sound, clear, unadulterated*; Levitically *uncontaminated*; morally *innocent or holy*): - be (make, make self, pronounce) clean, cleanse (self), purge, purify (-ier, self).

NEW TESTAMENT

holy, ἅγιος *hag'-ee-os* - From ἅγιος *hagos* (an *awful* thing) *sacred* (physically *pure, morally blameless or religious, ceremonially consecrated*): - (most) holy (one, thing), saint.

holiest of all, ἁγίον - *hag'-ee-on* - a *sacred* thing (that is, spot): - holiest (of all), holy place, sanctuary.

pure, ἁγνός - *hag-nos'* - *properly clean, that is, (figuratively) innocent, modest, perfect*: - chaste, clean, pure.

purity, ἁγνεία - *hag-ni'-ah* - *cleanliness* (the quality), that is, (specifically) *chastity*: - purity.

sanctify, ἁγιάζω - *hag-ee-ad'-zo* - to *make holy*, that is, (ceremonially) *purify* or *consecrate*; (mentally) to *venerate*: - hallow, be holy, sanctify.

A working biblical definition of Purity and Holiness:

“The state of being pure in spirit, soul, and body, and set aside for God’s use.”

I. To Be Holy Is A Command Of God

I Pet 1:15-16 “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; (:16) Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”

A. How to be holy

To be holy, we must first be in Christ.

Eph 1:4 “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:”

B. God is holy.

This statement is without question because it is impossible for God to be anything else than holy!

C. But we must choose to be holy.

Rom 12:1 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

God will empower us to carry out this command; but we must decide to do so.

II. To Be Holy We Must Be Pure

Anything presented to God must be without spot or blemish.

A. Under the Law, the sacrifices had to be ceremonially clean; that is, pure.

(Num 19:2; 28:3, 9, 11; 29:17, 26)

B. In the NT the application of the principal is to the believers individually as well as to the believers corporately, the Church. **(Eph 5:27; I Tim 6:14; II Pet 3:14)**

III. In What Ways Are We To Be Holy and Pure?

In order to be biblically Holy and Pure, we must be so in every part of our being!

A. Holy and Pure in spirit.

To be spiritually holy and pure we must be **“in him”** that is, in Christ; which means we must be saved.

Eph 1:4 “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:”

Only in Christ can we be holy and without blame; that is, holy and pure.

B. Holy and Pure in soul.

I Pet 1:22 “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit ...”

Obviously the way to this purity and holiness of our souls is **“obeying the truth.”** And the channel by which they are attained is **“through the Spirit”** of God.

And along with this holiness and purity comes the peace of God- a lack of worry by means of prayer.

Phil 4:6-7 “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. (:7) And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

This holiness and purity of our soul must be down to our very thoughts!

II Cor 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; ”

C. Holy and Pure in body.

Rom 12:1 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

This purity and holiness is strictly by our choice and action. When we present our bodies as a sacrifice, then our bodies must be without spot. And as we saw earlier, that means without sin; i.e., pure as was required of the sacrifices under the Law in the Old Testament and applied in the New Testament to the believers, both individually and corporately as the Church.

V. To What Extent Must We be Holy and Pure?


To be biblically holy and pure we must be so completely, that is, 100% pure and 100% holy.

Jas 2:10 “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”

One sin makes us impure and to be impure prevents us from being holy- set aside to God.

SUMMARY:

We are commanded of God to be pure and holy. To fully carry out that command we must keep our whole spirit, soul, and body, 100% pure and holy. From our spirit, which can only be holy and pure through Christ (we must be saved) to our soul and body we must consciously, and completely, refrain from sin and purposefully set ourselves apart to God for His use and purpose. No transgressions allowed, not even one because that one impurity, that one sin in spirit, soul, or body, defiles us and makes us guilty of all. That in turn, the defilement of sin in our actions or our thoughts, makes us unpure and negates any possibility of being wholly set aside unto God. We must be wholly holy or we are not holy at all. Therefore, pure and holy are all or nothing character traits.



1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this trait of pure and holy?

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 pure and holy, 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-SEVEN

Wisdom

REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through THIRTY-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. 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. Lesson 29 showed us the benefits of obedience and the dangers of disobedience and Lesson 30 showed us the way of biblical encouragement. Thirty-one addressed the much neglected trait of Loyalty. Lesson 32 was a Review and 33 addressed faithfulness to God and man. Lesson 34 showed us the absolute necessity of being completely and openly sincere and 35 taught us the necessity of being dependable in all things. Purity and Holiness were the topic of lesson 36.

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 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-SEVEN

Wisdom

“Wisdom truly desires the knowledge of God's Word and the proper application to our life. This will enable us to make good judgments and decisions. (I Kings 3:9; Psalm 119:97–98)” Unknown author

I Kings 3:9-12 “Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? (:10) And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. (:11) And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; (:12) Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.”

Psalm 119:97-98 “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. (:98) Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.”

SECULAR DEFINITIONS

wise, *having or showing experience, knowledge, and good judgement.*

wisdom, *1. the quality of being wise. 2. the body of knowledge and experience that develops within a specified society or period.*

BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

OLD TESTAMENT

wise, שָׂדָה, *saw-kal'* - A primitive root; to *be* (causeatively *make* or *act*) *circumspect* and hence *intelligent*: - consider, expert, instruct, prosper, (deal) prudent (-ly), (give) skill (-ful), have good success, teach, (have, make to) understand (-ing), wisdom, (be, behave self, consider, make) wise (-ly), guide wittingly.

circumspect, *cautious or prudent*

prudent, *acting with or showing care and thought for the future*

wise, wise man/men, wisdom, חָכָם, *khaw-kawm'* - *wise*, (that is, intelligent, skilful or artful): - cunning (man), subtil, ([un-]), wise ([hearted], man).

wise, פִּיקָה, *pik-kay'-akh* - *clear sighted*; figuratively *intelligent*: - seeing, wise.

wisdom, חכמה, *khok-maw'* - *wisdom* (in a good sense): - skillful, wisdom, wisely, wit.

NEW TESTAMENT

wise, μάγος, *mag'-os* - Of foreign origin - a *Magian*, that is, Oriental *scientist*; by implication a *magician*: - sorcerer, wise man.

wise, wisely, φρόνιμος, *fron'-ee-mos* - *thoughtful*, that is, *sagacious* or *discreet* (implying a *cautious* character; while [G4680](#) denotes *practical* skill or acumen; and [G4908](#) indicates rather *intelligence* or mental acquirement); in a bad sense *conceited* (also in the comparative): - wise (-r).

sagacious, *having or showing good judgement*

wise, σοφός, *sof-os'* - Akin to σαφής *saph-ays* (*clear*); *wise* (in a most general application): - wise.

wisdom. σοφία, *sof-ee'-ah* - *wisdom* (higher or lower, worldly or spiritual): - wisdom.

unwise, ανόητος, *an-o'-ay-tos* - From [G1](#) (as a negative particle) and a derivative of [G3539](#); *unintelligent*; by implication *sensual*: - fool (-ish), unwise.

unwise, άφρων, *af'-rone* - From [G1](#) (as a negative particle) and [G5424](#); properly *mindless*, that is, *stupid*, (by implication) *ignorant*, (specifically) *egotistic*, (practically) *rash*, or (morally) *unbelieving*: - fool (-ish), unwise.

make thee wise, σοφίζω, *sof-id'-zo* - to *render wise*; in a sinister acceptance, to *form* "sophisms", that is, *continue plausible error*: - cunningly devised, make wise.

A working biblical definition of Wisdom:

"Intelligent, skilful use of the physical abilities that God has given us and intelligent, skilful use of the Word of God in our lives and in our relations to and edification of others."

I. Where Does Wisdom Come From

A. It is found in the Word of God.

Psalm 119:97-98 "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.
(:98) Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me."

B. It must be gained through study.

Ps 119:97 "... it is my meditation all the day."

Through study and meditation in the Word of God we can become wise. But true

wisdom is manifested by how we use the knowledge we learn from The Word.

II. Where Do We Get Wisdom

There are two possible sources of Wisdom.

A. We can get our wisdom from people.

The problem with getting our wisdom from people is that human wisdom is just as prone to fallibility as the givers of it- fallible human beings. True, they can teach us wisdom from the Word of God; and that would be acceptable. However, when they do so, are we not really getting the wisdom from God? They are just the transmitters of it. Therefore, in that particular case we are not really getting wisdom from people. The only problem here, though, is the danger of the wisdom being diluted, polluted, or in some measure corrupted in transmission. If we are going to go this route, going through a person, then we need to be careful to consider the person only as a guide to direct us to the Word of God, the source of all true wisdom.

B. We can get our wisdom directly from God.

Jas 1:5 “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

Seeking wisdom from God guarantees we will be given it, and given it liberally.

1. We are guaranteed wisdom will be given to us.

“... let him ask of God, that giveth to all... it shall be given him.”

2. Wisdom will be given to us liberally.

“... giveth to all men liberally...”

C. All true wisdom is from God.

Whether we gain it from His Word directly or we gain it from His Word through the guidance of a person directing us to His Word, all true wisdom is from God.

III. A Warning

A distinction is made in the Bible between natural, fleshly, wisdom and spiritual wisdom- that is, the wisdom that comes down from God.

Jas 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. (:14) But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. (:15) This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. (:16) For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. (:17) But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

A. True wisdom is seen in our actions.

1. A truly wise person shows their wisdom, and their intelligence, in good works, good behavior.

"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge (intelligence) among you? let him shew out of a good conversation (good behavior) his works..."

2. A truly wise person shows their wisdom in a humble manner.

"... shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness (*mildness*, that is, (by implication) *humility*) of wisdom."

A wise person does not show their wisdom in a dictatorial manner; but rather in a humble, meek, manner.

3. Why is that so?

I Cor 4:6 "that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. (: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?"

Since all that we have as Christians, including wisdom, is not of ourselves but is received from God, when why should we be puffed up and try to take the glory for ourselves? We should humbly direct others to the source of our wisdom and acknowledge Him as the glorious God, the giver of all true wisdom. We should impart the wisdom that we received from Him in a humble manner, directing others to Him, the one from whom we received our wisdom which He has imparted to us through His Word.

B. A warning against fleshly (worldly) wisdom.

Jas 3:14-16 "(:14) But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. (:15) This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish."

This wisdom, delivered out of and steeped in "**envy and strife**" is not of God but is "**earthly** (physically and/or morally worldly), **sensual** (that is, from the senses, natural and not spiritual), **devilish** (demon-like, destructive not constructive)" Obviously this is not wisdom from God and is not to be desired or used!

C. A description of true, Godly wisdom.

(:17) But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

1. This wisdom is from God. "**wisdom that is from above**".

2. It is "**pure**"; that is, unadulterated by any spot of the flesh or the world.

pure, ἀγνός, *hag-nos* - properly *clean*, that is, (figuratively) *innocent, modest, perfect*: - chaste, clean, pure.

3. It is “**peaceable**”, that is salutary.

salutary, 1. *beneficial in providing an opportunity for learning from experience*
2. *(archaic) health-giving*

Godly wisdom is conducive to peaceful learning, not dictatorial. It affords an opportunity for learning for edification (building up) rather than being forcefully coercive.

4. It is “**gentle**”, (*appropriate*, that is, (by implication) *mild*: - gentle, moderation, patient.) A continuation of the thought conveyed by the previous word. It is gentle and appropriate. Not forcefully dictatorial.

5. It is “**easy to be intreated**”. (*good for persuasion*, that is, (intransitively) *compliant*)

This wisdom is effective and persuasive. Instead of forcing the hearers to agree and accept, it simply gives them the necessary information to come to the proper (biblical) conclusion. It is persuasive not coercive.

6. It is “**full of mercy**”. (*compassion*)

This wisdom is compassionate; that is, not accusative but compassionately instructive.

7. It also is “**full of ... good fruits**” (fruit, as plucked)

This wisdom, if followed by the hearers, produces beneficial results in them. Not only in thoughts (belief) but also in godly actions (plucked fruit).

8. It is “**without partiality**”.

It is good for all people. Impartial concerning the person as well as who they are or their station in life. Male, female, young, old, rich, poor, important and powerful or common and impotent; none of these matter. Godly wisdom is good for all people at all times.

9. It is “**without hypocrisy**”.

It is sincere. It does not teach “**believe this and do something else.**” It is not given in pretense and is not coercive. It is given for instruction and edification; not as a pretense to bring glory to the giver. Unfeigned, that is, genuine and for one purpose, to instruct the hearers in wisdom from God, given through His Word, and for the sole purpose of helping the hearer to willingly align their thoughts and actions with God's Word.

Knowledge is what we know

Wisdom is knowing what to do with that knowledge

SUMMARY:

If we are to have true wisdom, it must come from the Word of God. People can be useful as guides to direct us to the Word of God and godly wisdom but we must not base our wisdom upon them but on that which they direct us to- God and His Word.

If we are to properly use true wisdom, then we must learn to do so according to the instructions given to us by the giver of it- God. We must use it to instruct, not to coerce. We must use it to peacefully persuade in order to edify the listener and not as a hammer to break and beat down the listener. Yes, the Word of God is sometimes a hammer but it is only to break the stiffened heart and remold the pieces, not to destroy the individual. Deliver to them the wisdom given to you from God through His Word and let the Word do its work. When you do, then it is God who decides if His Word is to be a hammer to break and remold; you deliver it peaceably and let it do its work to bring peace in the remolding of the broken individual.

Be sure the wisdom that you have gained from God's Word is given humbly, bringing glory to the source, God, and not taking His glory for yourself.

If you want godly wisdom, then ask God and He will give it to you in abundance.

James 1:5 "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

If you ask for it, God has guaranteed He will give you the wisdom you seek; and He will give it to you in abundant measure. But He will only give it to you if you ask Him for it!



- 1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this trait of Wisdom?**
- 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.

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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-EIGHT

Enthusiasm

REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through THIRTY-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 and 28 showed us the trait that encompasses all of our character and binds us to it- Integrity. Lesson 29 showed us the benefits of obedience and the dangers of disobedience and Lesson 30 showed us the way of biblical encouragement. Thirty-one addressed the much neglected trait of Loyalty. Lesson 32 was a Review and 33 addressed faithfulness to God and man. Lesson 34 showed us the absolute necessity of being completely and openly sincere and 35 taught us the necessity of being dependable in all things. Purity and Holiness were the topic of lesson 36 and 37 addressed Wisdom.

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 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-EIGHT

Enthusiasm

“Enthusiasm will enable us to overcome disappointments and setbacks, so we can be positive, optimistic, and keep up our interest, attitude, and zeal, even when things are harsh. (Matt. 5:16; Rom. 12:11; Gal. 6:9; Col. 3:23)” Unknown author

Mat 5:16 “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Romans 12:11 “Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;”

Gal 6:9 “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

Col 3:23 “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;”

SECULAR DEFINITIONS

enthusiasm, *intense enjoyment, interest, or approval.*

zeal, *great energy or enthusiasm for a cause or objective.*

zealous, *great energy or enthusiasm for a cause or objective.*

fervent, *intensely passionate.* (from Latin *fervere* “boil”)

BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

OLD TESTAMENT

zeal, קִנְיָהּ *kin-aw'* - *jealousy or envy*: - envy (-ied), jealousy, X sake, zeal.

NEW TESTAMENT

heartily, ψυχῆ *psoo-khay'* - *breath*, that is, (by implication) *spirit*, abstractly or concretely (the *animal* sentient principle only; thus distinguished on the one hand from [G4151](#), which is the rational and immortal *soul*; and on the other from [G2222](#), which is mere *vitality*, even of plants: heart (+ -ily), life, mind, soul, + us, + you.

“fervent in spirit”

fervent, ζέω *dzeh'-o* - A primary verb; to *be hot* (*boil*, of liquids; or *glow*, of solids), that is, (figuratively) *be fervid (earnest)*: - be fervent.

spirit, πνευμα *pnwoo'-mah* - a *current* of air, that is, *breath (blast)* or a *breeze*; by analogy or figuratively a *spirit*, that is, (human) the rational *soul*, (by implication) *vital principle*, mental *disposition*, etc., or (superhuman) an *angel*, *daemon*, or (divine) God, Christ's *spirit*, the Holy *spirit*: - ghost, life, spirit (-ual, -ually), mind.

zeal, also “**fervent in mind**,” ζηλος *dzay'-los* - properly *heat*, that is, (figuratively) “zeal” (in a favorable sense, *ardor*; in an unfavorable one, *jealousy*, as of a husband [figuratively of God], or an enemy, *malice*): - emulation, envy (-ing), fervent mind, indignation, jealousy, zeal.

fervent, εκτενής *ek-ten-ace'* - *intent*: - without ceasing, fervent.

fervent, ενεργέω *en-erg-eh'-o* - *to be active, efficient*: - do, (be) effectual (fervent), be mighty in, shew forth self, work (effectually in).

zealous, ζηλωτής *dzay-lo-tace'* - a “zealot”: - zealous.

A working biblical definition of Enthusiasm: “To always be expressively on fire for God.”

Introduction: Christ expressed enthusiasm. It was a part of His character.

John 2:15-17 “And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; (:16) And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. (:17) And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.”

I. In What Spheres Are We To Be Enthusiastic

A. In Spirit/Soul (Acts 18:25)

B. In mind. (II Cor 7:7)

C. In body. (Col 3:23)

Col 3:23 “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;”

D. Completely

We are to be enthusiastic with our entire being- Spirit, Soul, and Body.

II. In What Things Are We To Be Enthusiastic

A. Enthusiastic in teaching the things of God.

Acts 18:25 “This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.”

We are to be enthusiastically diligent while teaching God's Word and Ways.

B. Enthusiastic toward God

Ro 10:2 “For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God...”

C. Enthusiastic toward the Man of God.

I Cor 7:7 “And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.”

D. Enthusiastic in every Word, Deed, and Thought. (Colossians chap. 3)

Col 3:23 “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;”

E. Enthusiastic in the ministry to the Saints. (I Cor 16:15-19)

I Cor 16:15 “I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)”

II. How Do We Remain Enthusiastic

Many times we fail in our own power in various endeavors. However, God tells us that we can do **anything** that He asks us to do. Therefore, we can, in His power, enthusiastically forge ahead without fear of lack of ability or failure.

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

All we need to do is be sure that it is God asking us to do something; when we are sure it is from Him, then we forge ahead, with enthusiasm, no matter what obstacles or setbacks may come. We can do this with the assurance that even if the day to day events don't go the way we think they should, in the end we will accomplish the task God has set before us.

III. Enthusiasm Is Infectious

It is a common reaction that when we are around an enthusiastic person that their enthusiasm generally will rub off on us. And the opposite is also true; no one ever successfully promoted a cause by being bored and boring about it.

Hag 1:14 “And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God,

Summary

In our world today people think that it is okay to be enthusiastic about a sports team or any type of secular activity we want to be involved in. However, when we are enthusiastic about God, His Word, His Church, or any of the things of God, they want to call us a “fanatic.” Well, the word “fan” is just a shortened form of the word “fanatic.” Therefore, if it is okay to be a “fan” of the things of the world then it is okay to be a “fan” of God and the things of God!

Enthusiasm for the things of God is quite acceptable. It is better to be called an enthusiast, a “fan” of God, than to be called a “hypocrite.” They will call you one or the other. You choose which it will be that they call you.

Our biggest problem in our Churches today is apathy. As one of my teachers in Bible College used to say, “They just sit and soak and sour.” And that was 35 years ago (1985). Today, in 2019, it is even worse. It is almost impossible to get members to be actively involved in God’s local church. It’s hard enough just to get them to come to Church services more than once a week. We commonly refer to them as “Sunday morning only Christians.” You can forget Sunday night and Wednesday night. And Sunday School isn’t even on their radar. As hard as that is, getting them to go on to actually be involved in any of the ministries of the Church, teach a Sunday School class, go visiting, Rescue Mission ministry, etc., (you can put anything else you want into that list) is pretty much impossible. The root of the problem is simple- APATHY! This is the opposite pole from enthusiasm. In many Churches the lack of enthusiasm is from the top to the bottom. God gives us physical examples of spiritual principles and one of those physical principles is that “Water cannot rise higher than its source.” The spiritual application is that if the pastor and staff are apathetic about the work of God, then the members can rise no higher than apathy. Another obstacle is older members who have become apathetic. New members that come into the Church look to the old members for guidance; and apathetic old members can only lead the new ones into apathy. Dropping Sunday night and Wednesday night services because of lack of participation by the members only exacerbates the problem. It only adds more stagnant water to the existing lake of apathy. And maintaining the status quo is just as bad. It is like treading water. You can only do that just so long and then you start to sink. It also is a guarantee that you eventually will sink!

The Only Cure For Apathy Is Enthusiasm

Since apathy is the problem and enthusiasm the solution, you decide if you want to be part of the problem or part of the solution. You decide if you want to be apathetic or if you want to develop Christlike enthusiasm as part of your character. It will not happen automatically. It is something one must strive for.

Enthusiasm Must Be Enthusiastically Sought.



- 1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this trait of Enthusiasm?**
- 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 Enthusiasm, 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)

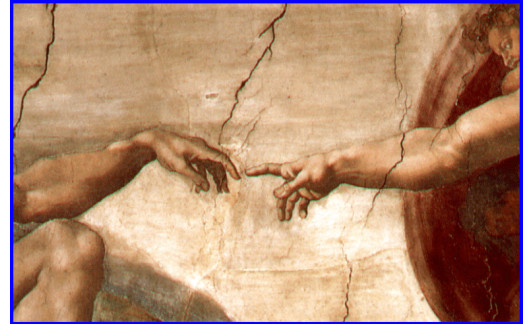
1 2 3 4 5

LESSON THIRTY-NINE

Kindness

REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through THIRTY-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. Lesson 29 showed us the benefits of obedience and the dangers of disobedience and Lesson 30 showed us the way of biblical encouragement. Thirty-one addressed the much neglected trait of Loyalty. Lesson 32 was a Review and 33 addressed faithfulness to God and man. Lesson 34 showed us the absolute necessity of being completely and openly sincere and 35 taught us the necessity of being dependable in all things. Purity and Holiness were the topic of lesson 36 and 37 addressed Wisdom. Lesson 38 showed the importance of Enthusiasm in all that we do.

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 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-EIGHT

Kindness

“Kindness is practicing benevolence and a loving attitude towards others. (Eph 4:32)”

Unknown author

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

SECULAR DEFINITIONS

kind, *1. considerate and generous. 2. archaic affectionate, loving*

kindness, *the quality of being kind.*

considerate, *careful not to harm or inconvenience others*

generous, *1. freely giving more than is necessary or expected. 2. kind towards others. 3. larger or more plentiful than is usual.*

affectionate, *readily showing affection*

affection, *a feeling of fondness or liking*

benevolence, benevolent, *well meaning and kindly*

BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

OLD TESTAMENT

kindness, כֶּסֶד *kheh'-sed* from **kind** כָּסַד *khaw-sad'* A primitive root; properly perhaps to *bow* (the neck only in courtesy to an equal), that is, to *be kind*;

kindness, טוֹב *tobe - good* (as an adjective) in the widest sense; used likewise as a noun, both in the masculine and the feminine, the singular and the plural (*good, a good or good thing, a good man or woman; the good, goods or good things, good men or women*), also as an adverb (*well*): - beautiful, best, better, bountiful, cheerful, at ease, X fair (word), (be in) favour, fine, glad, good (deed, -lier, liest, -ly, -ness, -s), graciously, joyful, kindly, kindness, liketh (best), loving, merry, X most, pleasant, + pleaseth, pleasure, precious, prosperity, ready, sweet, wealth, welfare, (be) well ([favour]).

NEW TESTAMENT

kindness, φιλανθρωπία *fil-an-thro-pee'-ah* - *fondness of mankind*, that is, *benevolence* (“philanthropy”): - kindness, love towards man.

kindness, χρηστότης *khray-stot'-ace* - *usefulness*, that is, *moral excellence* (in character or demeanor): - gentleness, good (-ness), kindness.

brotherly kindness, φιλαδελφία *fil-ad-el-fee'-ah* - *fraternal affection*: - brotherly love (kindness), love of the brethren.

A working biblical definition of Kindness: “Practicing benevolence and a loving attitude toward others.”

I. God Showed Kindness To Us

Eph 2:4-7 “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

(:5) Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

(:6) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

(:7) That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”

A. We did not deserve it; neither did we earn it. (:5& 7)

B. It is an expression of love (:4), grace (:5 &7) and mercy (:4)

It is an expression of God's benevolence. He wants to treat us lovingly and kind.

C. It is shown to us in Christ. (:7)

D. It knows no bounds.

It is heavenly in scope and forever in continuance.

(:6) “And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places...”

(:7) “... in the ages to come...”

“ages” αἰῶν *ahee-ohn* - properly an age, by extension *perpetuity*

E. It is shown to us ONLY in Christ.

God's kindness has limits. It will not be stretched to condonment. His kindness is shown to us ONLY through Christ; which means we need to accept it that way, through Christ.

:7 “...in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”

II. We Are To Show Kindness To Others

God showed kindness to us to teach us it needs to be a part of our Christian Character. As it is with everything that God gives to us- it is to be:

From Him to us and from us to others!

A. We are to be enthusiastic in our kindness to others.

God was not grudging in His show of kindness to us; His was boundless.

Therefore, we are not to be grudging in our kindness to others.

Col 3:23 “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;”

B. We are to show our kindness by extending love, mercy, and grace to others.

This is the way God showed His kindness to us. Therefore, this is the way we are to show kindness to others. **(Eph 2:4-7)**

C. We are to be boundless in our kindness to others.

This is the way God showed His kindness to us. Therefore, we should do the same to others.

III. Adding Kindness To Our Character Will Help Us To Be Fruitful

When we add this character trait to the others that we need we will be better equipped to be fruitful.

II Peter 1:3 “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

(:4) Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

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

(:6) And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

(:7) And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

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

IV. God Will Give Us The Strength To Show Kindness To Others

As He does with all things that He requires of us, He will give us the strength to be kind to others, and to do so exactly with the same scope and depth that He is kind to us.

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

V. Warning

As with many of the other character traits we are to develop and exhibit, we are not to allow this one to be stretched to condonment. We are to be long-suffering but there are limits beyond which we cannot go because to do so would be to bring damage to the other person by condoning their ungodly behaviour.

Summary

If we are to develop this character trait in ourselves, it will take much effort. Those to

whom we are to be kind will many times be undeserving of our kindness. However, we must remember that we were undeserving when God showed kindness to us. Therefore, it often will take much effort to be kind to them when they are undeserving, as we were.

Love, mercy and grace (unmerited favor) are inextricably bound up with kindness and with each other. Therefore, it will take exhibition of all of these together to be effective. When we are kind to the undeserving, we are showing love, mercy, and grace to be a part of our character. We are giving them what God gave to us- kindness with love, mercy and grace.

From Him to us and from us to others!

Remember though, never extend kindness to the point where it becomes condoning. To do so is to do damage to the recipient. Keep bringing them back to the Scriptures and to Christ. Encourage them and, if need be because their ungodly behaviour continues, give them Scriptures to rebuke them; but let the scriptures do the rebuking. You show them kindness and let God do the rebuking through His Word.



1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this trait of Kindness?
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.

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LESSON FORTY

Generosity

REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through THIRTY-NINE:

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.



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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...”**

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LESSON FORTY

Generosity

“Generosity allows us to give to others because God has given abundantly to us. It is the wise use of stewardship and the attitude that all I have belongs to God and knowing we are the caretakers for His purpose.” (Deut. 16:17; Matthew 10:8) Unknown author

Deut 16:17 “Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee.”

Mt 10:8 “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.”

SECULAR DEFINITIONS

generous, 1. freely giving more than is necessary or expected. 2. kind towards others. 3. larger or more plentiful than is usual.

BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

OLD TESTAMENT

dealt bountifully, לָמַלְךְ *gaw-mal'* - A primitive root; to *treat* a person (well or ill), that is, *benefit or requite*; by implication (of *toil*) to *ripen*, that is, (specifically) to *wean*: - bestow on, deal bountifully, do (good), recompense, requite, reward, ripen, + serve, wean, yield.

bountiful eye, טוֹבָה *tobe* - *good* (as an adjective) in the widest sense; used likewise as a noun, both in the masculine and the feminine, the singular and the plural (*good, a good or good thing, a good man or woman; the good, goods or good things, good men or women*), also as an adverb (*well*): - beautiful, best, better, bountiful, cheerful, at ease, X fair (word), (be in) favour, fine, glad, good (deed, -lier, liest, -ly, -ness, -s), graciously, joyful, kindly, kindness, liketh (best), loving, merry, X most, pleasant, + pleaseth, pleasure, precious, prosperity, ready, sweet, wealth, welfare, (be) well ([-favoured]).

NEW TESTAMENT

bountifully, liberal, liberality, ἀπλότης *hap-lot'-ace* - *singleness*, that is, (subjectively) *sincerity (without dissimulation or self seeking)*, or (objectively) *generosity (copious bestowal)*: - bountifulness, liberal (-ity), simplicity, singleness.

A working biblical definition of Generosity: “Giving with sincerity and liberality to others in need- in all three spheres, spirit, soul, and body.”

I. God Is Generous To Us In All Things

He is generous to us in all three spheres of our tri-partite being.

A. He is generous to us spiritually. (spirit)

1. This generous pouring out upon us of His Spirit was prophesied by Joel.

Joel 2:28 “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: (:29) And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.”

2. It came to pass at Pentecost.

Act 2:16 “But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; (:17) And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: (:18) And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:”

B. He is generous to us mentally. (soul)

1. If we ask for wisdom He is generous to give it to us copiously.

Jas 1:5 “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

2. He gives us peace of mind in all circumstances in generous measure.

Num 6:24 “The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: (:25) The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: (:26) The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.”

Phil 4:6 “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. (:7) And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

The copiousness of the peace He gives us is beyond understanding. He is truly generous to our souls.

C. He gives us an abundant life. (Including concerning the Body)

John 10:10 “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

He generously meets the needs of our body in abundant measure.

D. It is clear that God is generous to us in all ways- spirit, soul, and body.

II. Our Attitude While Showing Generosity

Be cheerful while being generous to others.

II Cor 9:6 “But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. (:7) Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

A. If we are generous to others, God will be generous to us. (:6)

B. Because our generosity pleases Him. (:7)

III. Be Especially Generous To The Brethren (fellow Christians)

God has blessed you; now you need to bless the brethren.

A. God commands it.

1. He commands that we be generous to the brethren.

Deut 15:7 “If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother:

Deu 15:8 But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth.

2. To not be generous to the needy brethren is wickedness (sin).

Deu 15:9 Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee.”

3. Being generous to them brings blessings from God.

Deu 15:10 Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.

4. Don't just help them; help them generously.

Deu 15:11 For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.”

B. We are to be enthusiastic in our generosity to others.

Col 3:23 “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;”

We need to keep the word “heartily” in mind in all things that we do (meaning, from

the heart, full spirited, generously) as if we are doing them to the Lord Himself.

III. Adding Generosity To Our Character Will Help Us To Be Fruitful

In the same way that we found in the previous lesson on the trait of Kindness, when we add the trait of Generosity (inferred in the following scriptures- see **“kindness”** plus **“charity”**) to the other traits that we need we will be better equipped to be fruitful.

II Peter 1:3 “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: (:4) Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. (:5) And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; (:6) And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; (:7) And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. (:8) For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

IV. Warning

As with many of the other character traits we are to develop and exhibit, we are not to allow this one to be stretched to condonment. We are to be generous in all things, spirit, soul and body, but there are limits beyond which we cannot go because to do so would be to bring damage to the other person by condoning their ungodly behaviour.

Summary

God has been more than generous to us, **“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness”** for our spirit, soul, and body. Therefore, we need to be generous to others with what He has given to us. Through Christ we can be generous to them in all three of those spheres. **“I can do all things through Christ...”**



1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this trait of Generosity?
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 Generosity, 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"

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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 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 FORTY-ONE

Availability

REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through FORTY:

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. Lesson 29 showed us the benefits of obedience and the dangers of disobedience and Lesson 30 showed us the way of biblical encouragement. Thirty-one addressed the much neglected trait of Loyalty. Lesson 32 was a Review and 33 addressed faithfulness to God and man. Lesson 34 showed us the absolute necessity of being completely and openly sincere and 35 taught us the necessity of being dependable in all things. Purity and Holiness were the topic of lesson 36 and 37 addressed Wisdom. Lesson 38 showed the importance of Enthusiasm in all that we do and 39 addressed Kindness and then Generosity in Lesson 40.

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 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 FORTY-ONE

Availability

“Availability is being willing to adjust our own schedule, agenda, and plans to fit the right desires of God and others. It makes personal priorities secondary to the needs of God and others. It is to reflect God's priorities so we are always available to Him and others when we are serving.” (Mark 1:17–18; Acts 16:10) Unknown author

Mar 1:17 “And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. (:18) And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.”

Acts 16:10 “And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.”

SECULAR DEFINITIONS

available, availability, 1 able to be used or obtained. 2 not otherwise occupied.
-DERIVATIVES availability >noun.

BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

OLD TESTAMENT & NEW TESTAMENT

available, availability These words are not found in the Bible. However, the precept is plainly taught in both the Old and the New Testaments.

A. Available as a group:

II Sam 15:15 “And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.”

I Chron 12:23 “And these are the numbers of the bands that were ready armed to the war, and came to David to Hebron, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the LORD.”

B. Available as individuals:

Mark 14:38 “Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.”

Luk 22:33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.

Acts 21:13 “Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Rom 1:15 “So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. ”

ready, GK πρόθυμος *proth'-oo-mos*, forward in spirit, that is, predisposed; neuter (as noun) *alacrity*: - ready, willing.

II Cor 8:19 “And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind: ”

ready mind, GK προθυμία *proth-oo-mee'-ah*, predisposition, that is, *alacrity* (brisk eagerness or enthusiasm): - forwardness of mind, readiness (of mind), ready (willing) mind.

Also translated as “forwardness of your mind,” in **II Cor 9:2**

Paul was available, willing, and prepared to preach the Gospel in these places.

A working biblical definition of Availability: “Being willing to adjust our own schedule, agenda, and plans to fit the right desires of God and others.”

I. Preparation For Availability

We must prepare in all three spheres of our tri-partite being.

A. We must prepare spiritually to be available for use. (spirit)

1. To be available we must prepare our spirit with the power of the Spirit of God.

Joel 2:28 “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: (:29) And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.”

Act 2:16 “But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; (:17) And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: (:18) And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:”

Acts 1:4 “And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.”

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

2. To be available we must be willing to yield to the Holy Spirit's guiding.

We need to set our wants second and God's wants first and then follow Him.

"Luk 22:42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."

B. We must prepare emotionally to be available for use. (soul)

Col 3:23 "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;"

Phil 2:4 "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

Phil 4:6 "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. (:7) And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (: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. "

Col 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. (:14) And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."

We must have our hearts and minds right in order to be available.

C. We must prepare our bodies so we will be available when needed.

To be ready, we must keep ourselves from sin; especially our bodies.

II Tim 2:21 "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

Our bodies must be kept clean from sin, vessels fit for God's use; physically prepared and kept available.

II. The Consumation Of Our Availability

Phil 4:9 “Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.”

A byproduct of this preparation for availability- spirit, soul, and body- is peace when we “do” what is needed. When our “availability” is consummated in “doing” then the peace of God comes with the doing.

Summary

Once we have accepted Christ, God has saved us; that is an accomplished fact. However, the kindest thing He could have done to us at that point would have been to kill us and take us to Heaven. That way we would be spared the toil and struggles, heartbreak and disappointment, all of the things we must live through in this fallen creation. But He did not do that- Why! The answer is simple. He left us here to propagate the Gospel both as individuals and corporately through our Local Church. In order to please God we need to be vessels fit for His use; prepared spirit, soul, and body and always available. Ready at all times and on a minute's notice to follow His leading. Available for His use towards our fellow human beings. Willing to be like Christ and, even in times of intense turmoil, say:

Luke 22:42

“... not my will, but thine, be done.”



1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this trait of Availability?
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 Availability, 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.)

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

1 2 3 4 5

LESSON FORTY-TWO

Initiative

REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through FORTY-ONE:

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. Lesson 29 showed us the benefits of obedience and the dangers of disobedience and Lesson 30 showed us the way of biblical encouragement. Thirty-one addressed the much neglected trait of Loyalty. Lesson 32 was a Review and 33 addressed faithfulness to God and man. Lesson 34 showed us the absolute necessity of being completely and openly sincere and 35 taught us the necessity of being dependable in all things. Purity and Holiness were the topic of lesson 36 and 37 addressed Wisdom. Lesson 38 showed the importance of Enthusiasm in all that we do and 39 addressed Kindness and then Generosity in Lesson 40. Of course, to get anything done we must be available; which was addressed in Lesson 41 on Availability.

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 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 FORTY-TWO

Initiative

“ Initiative will take the front position to recognize and do what needs to be done before being asked to do it.” (Prov. 22:29; Phil 3:14; 4:13–15) Unknown author

Prov 22:29 “Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.”

Phil 3:14 “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

Phil 4:13-15 “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. (:14) Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. (:15) Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.”

SECULAR DEFINITIONS

initiative, *1 the ability to act independently and with a fresh approach. 2 the power or opportunity to act before others do. 3 a new development or fresh approach to a problem.*

BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

OLD TESTAMENT & NEW TESTAMENT

initiative, This word is not found in the Bible. However, the precept is plainly taught in both the Old and the New Testaments.

OLD TESTAMENT

diligent, רַחֵם רַחֵם, *maw-here', maw-here'* - *quick*; hence *skilful*: - diligent, hasty, ready.

NEW TESTAMENT

more forward, σπουδαιότερος *spoo-dah-yot'-er-os* - *more prompt, more earnest*: - more diligent (forward).

diligent, σπουδαιότερον, *spoo-dah-yot'-er-on* - *more earnestly* than others), that is, very *promptly*: - very diligently.

of his own accord, αυθαίρετος *ow-thah'ee-ret-os* *self chosen*, that is, (by implication) *voluntary*: - of own accord, willing of self.

A working biblical definition of initiative: “Taking it upon yourself to willingly do what is necessary and right without waiting for someone to order you to do it.”

I. Initiative and God

A. God took the initiative and created the Universe and Man.

Gen 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

Gen 1:27 “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”

Christ, God the Son, was active in the Creation initiative.

John 1:1-3 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (:2) The same was in the beginning with God. (:3) All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

B. God then took the initiative and took on a robe of flesh and came to us.

John 1:14 “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

II. Initiative and Man

A. Initiative requires a particular state of mind.

ready, GK προθύμος *proth'-oo-mos*, *forward in spirit*, that is, *predisposed*; neuter (as noun) *alacrity*: - ready, willing.

ready mind, GK προθυμία *proth-oo-mee'-ah*, *predisposition*, that is, *alacrity* (brisk eagerness or enthusiasm): - forwardness of mind, readiness (of mind), ready (willing) mind.

II Cor 8:19 “And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind:”

II Cor 9:1 “For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: (:2) For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.”

B. Taking the initiative encourages others to do the same.

II Cor 9:2 “... your zeal hath provoked very many.”

As with many of the traits we have been studying, other Christians are effected when they observe our manifestation of them, including the current trait of Initiative, and are encouraged to emulate our behavior.

C. Man Taking the Initiative in Spiritual matters.

Heb 4:16 “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

In spiritual matters we do not need to wait for an invitation from God to come to Him. We can take the initiative and come **boldly** to Him. In Christ we have this right!

The key here is “**in Christ**”, that is we who are saved. The lost have this right only in a limited sense. They can come boldly to ask for God's mercy so they can be saved. We Christians, on the other hand, have this right in unlimited measure.

III. Initiative Can Be Individual Or As A Group

A. Initiative as an individual thing.

II Cor 8:17 “For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you.”

Here an individual, “**he... his own accord**”, took the initiative.

B. Initiative as a group.

Num 14:44 “But they presumed to go up...”

As a group, the Hebrews took the initiative to “**go up.**” (Unfortunately, this time it was to do something that was NOT according to the will of God! We will address this in more detail in the next section.)

IV. Initiative Can Be Constructive Or Destructive

Be sure that it is the Lord's will when you take the initiative. If it is to do something according to His Will, it will be constructive. But if contrary to His Will, then it will be destructive to you.

A. Constructive Initiative.

Phil 4:14-15 “Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. (:15) Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.”

The Philippian Christians had taken the initiative right from “**the beginning**” to help Paul by giving to further his missionary activity. And that was something approved of by God. Giving to help in God's work is always a positive thing. God is pleased when we take the initiative in giving or in any other godly endeavor.

II Cor 9:7 “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

We give out of love, not out of law. When the Jew gave out of fear of the Law, that was simply obedience. For us, we are to purpose in our heart and take the initiative and give out of love as the Philippians did, cheerfully and from the heart; giving out of love and not out of fear. That kind of initiative is **always** pleasing to God because it is according to His Will!

B. Destructive Initiative.

Taking the initiative and doing something contrary to the Will of God is carrying the trait of Initiative too far. Yes, it is a manifestation of our Free Will but we must never forget that Free Will carried to an extreme, that is, doing something contrary to God's revealed will, results in negative consequences because of our negative actions. The same is true with Initiative. Taking the initiative and doing something negative (that is, against the Will of God) will likewise result in negative consequences.

Num 14:40 “And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the LORD hath promised: for we have sinned. (:41) And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the LORD? but it shall not prosper. (:42) Go not up, for the LORD is not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies.”

Num 14:44 “But they presumed to go up unto the hill top: nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and Moses, departed not out of the camp. (:45) Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah.”

As with any of the traits we have studied thus far, anything carried to an extreme will become destructive. So with the trait of Initiative. If we take the initiative and do something that is contrary to the will of God, we then are taking the initiative to our own hurt as the Hebrews did to theirs.

V. We Must Take The Initiative In All Things That We Know Are Good.

Once we understand that something is good, whether it is giving, living, or thinking, then to not take the initiative and do that “**good**” thing is to commit a sin of **omission**.

James 4:17

**“... to him that knoweth to do good,
and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”**

Summary

God took the initiative and created this Universe, including us, Mankind. God also took the initiative and came as Christ to save us from our sin; that is, essentially, to save us from ourselves and our natural tendencies. As Christians, we are commanded to emulate Christ and take the initiative in all good things; and to do so in all areas, giving, living, and thinking. If we do not do so, then we are sinning and will reap negative consequences for our negative behavior. That is, God will withdraw His blessings from our lives and we are then on our own to live in this cursed world. We have learned that there are rewards for taking the initiative in all good things, God's blessings rest upon us, and also that there negative consequences for not taking the initiative in good things or for taking the initiative in things that are contrary to God's revealed Will. Positive consequences for positive actions - negative consequences for negative ones.

It's Our Choice:

Once again, we have a choice concerning whether we **will** develop and exercise this trait of taking the Initiative; but we have no choice concerning whether we **should** develop it! Likewise, we have a choice concerning whether we **will** take the initiative and do the good or the bad, that is, the good that is according to the Will of God or the bad that is contrary to it, but we have no choice concerning whether we **should** take the initiative in the good and not in the bad.

Luke 22:42

“... not my will, but thine, be done.”



1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this trait of Initiative?

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:

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

1 2 3 4 5

LESSON FORTY-THREE

Efficient

REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through FORTY-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.



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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...”**

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LESSON FORTY-THREE

Efficient

“Efficient is being well organized, competent, and resourceful so we can make the most of every situation, doing our best and seeking better ways.” (Psalm 90:12; Ephesians 4:23; Ephesians 5:15– 16; I Peter 4:10) Unknown author

Psalm 90:12 “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”

Eph 4:23 “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;”

Eph 5:15-16 “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, (:16) Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”

I Peter 4:10 “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

II Tim 4:5 “But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”

SECULAR DEFINITIONS

efficient, *working productively with minimum wasted effort or expense*

BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

OLD TESTAMENT & NEW TESTAMENT

efficient, This word is not found in the Bible. However, the precept is plainly taught in both the Old and the New Testaments.

OT - “number our days” מָנַן, *maw-naw'* - properly to *weigh* out; by implication to *allot* or constitute officially; also to *enumerate* or enroll: - appoint, count, number, prepare, set, tell. **“that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”**

“the work of our hands establish thou it” If we allow God to establish the work of our hands, then it is obvious that He will do so in the best way. Inefficiency is not establishing it in the best way; therefore, we ask that God establish our work in the most productive way. And that denotes efficiency.

Although the word “efficient” is not in the OT; these phrases are just a few of the many that show that the precept is taught in the OT.

NT - “make full proof” πληροφωρέω, *play-rof-or-eh'-o* - to *carry out fully* (in evidence), that is, *completely assure* (or *convince*), *entirely accomplish*: - most surely believe, fully know (persuade), make full proof of.

A working biblical definition of efficient: “Optimum productivity with the gifts and talents that God has given you.”

I. Efficiency and God

A. God was completely efficient when He created the Universe and Man.

God created everything from nothing. From that raw material He formed a Universe, including the earth, that was supremely fitted for habitation by man. Everything optimally arranged to be the most efficient sustainer of life: human, animal, fish, fowl, insect, fruit and vegetable, mold, spores and bacteria. In addition He placed within each of those the most efficient mechanism for procreation of each of them to insure the continuance of each one. Knowing that mankind would sin (I said "knowing" not "causing") He set in motion the most efficient way of remedying that flaw in mankind, caused by man's misuse of "free will" by which he willfully chose to sin, and redeem not only man but also the fallen universe. That being the sacrifice of Christ to redeem us by the shedding of His blood on Calvary, His burial, and His resurrection. This to be followed by the most efficient cleansing and remaking of the fallen universe in which will dwell only "righteousness" after the eradication of all sin and the imperfections caused by it.

1. Efficient Creation.

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Gen 1:31 "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."

John 1:1-3 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (:2) The same was in the beginning with God. (:3) All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

2. Efficient Cleansing and Re-Creation.

II Pet 3:10-13 "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. (:11) Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, (:12) Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? (:13) Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

It is quite obvious that God, The Trinity, (**Gen 1:1 "God" *elohim, el-oh-heem***, is a plural noun) was totally efficient in the Creation and will be as totally efficient in the cleansing and the Re-Creation.

II. Efficiency and Man - Specifically, the Christians.

A. Command from God to His children- the Christians.

I Peter 4:10 “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

I Peter 4:11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth:

“every man” GK ἑκάστος, *hek'-as-tos* - each or every: - any, both, each (one), every (man, one, woman), particularly.

This tells us that every (each, every, particular) Christian has received the gift, and is to use it efficiently one toward another.

“if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth”

And this use of God's gift is to be **“as of the ability which God giveth.”** Did God give the **“ability”** to each particular one of His children (in this case, the ability to minister) in an inefficient scope or did He give it totally- that is, completely, efficiently? If it was given in an efficient manner, then it is to be used in an efficient manner - **“as of the ability which God giveth.”**

It is obvious that God is totally “efficient” in giving gifts to us to use for ministry; and, likewise, it is just as obvious that He expects us to use those gifts in as “efficient” a manner as they were given to us. This is not a suggestion, it is a command from God.

B. How to become efficient.

1. To be efficient we must depend on God. (I Peter 4:11)

Believe that God has given you the ability to minister efficiently.

2. To be efficient we must determine to be a good steward of this grace from God. (I Peter 4:10)

I Cor 4:2 “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. ”

God has given you this ability; and to be a faithful steward in its use we must use it completely, that is, to the full extent that God has given it to us. And to use it completely we must use it efficiently.

3. To be efficient we must do all things in the power of God.

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

Eph 3:20 “Now unto him (*God*) that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us”

The power of God that **“worketh in us”** is power to do **“do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think”** and is available to us **“through**

Christ.” And if we yield to God and exercise this “**power**” in its fullness it will always allow us to carry out the work of God in the most efficient manner rather than in an inefficient manner.

Inefficiency Is Imperfection and Imperfection Is Akin to Confusion

I Cor 14:33 “... God is not the author of confusion...”

4. To be efficient we must operate in the spirit.

To do all things in an “efficient” way, in the fullness of the power that God gives us through Christ, we must operate “in the spirit” and NOT “in the flesh.” The simple act of using the power of God to do all things through Christ indicates that we are doing so “in the spirit” and NOT “in the flesh” because the power of God and receiving through Christ are spiritual acts. And operating “in the spirit” is pleasing to God while doing so “in the flesh” is not.

Ro 8:8 “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”

5. To be efficient we must operate by Faith and not by Sight.

Heb 11:1 “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

Heb 11:6a “But without faith it is impossible to please him: ”

To receive and use the power of God and be efficient in its use is only possible through Faith and not Sight.

6. To be efficient we must operate with a renewed mind.

This world is a fallen world, that is, a world of inefficiency and chaos brought to that state by the sin of man. Only through the transformation brought about when God renews our mind can we operate efficiently in this inefficient world.

Ro 12:2 “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. ”

C. The extent of our efficiency.

1. We are to be efficient in spiritual matters and serving the Lord.

We have already discussed that in the previous section.

2. We are to be efficient in business matters.

We are to be efficient in our handling of business matters.

Ro12:11 “Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord”

3. We are to be efficient in our relationships with all people.

Not in a partial manner but in fullness. And to do that requires efficiency.

Ro 13:7 “Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.”

Eph 6:5-7 “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; (:6) Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; (:7) With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:”

Col 3:22-23 “Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: (:23) And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;”

Titus 3:8 “This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”

If we are to be obedient to God in our relationships with and service to all people, then we must do so in a thorough, complete, or as pertaining to our current topic, an efficient manner.

SUMMARY

It is obvious that efficiency is required of us in all areas of our life: in spiritual matters, serving the Lord, and in earthly matters, business and in all relationships with all people. In earthly matters we are to operate in our works and service to people as though serving the Lord Himself. We are to be efficient in ALL MATTERS- both heavenly and earthly- and at ALL TIMES.



1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this trait of efficiency?

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 Efficiency, 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 FORTY-FOUR

Optimism

REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through FORTY-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, 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. Lesson 29 showed us the benefits of obedience and the dangers of disobedience and Lesson 30 showed us the way of biblical encouragement. Thirty-one addressed the much neglected trait of Loyalty. Lesson 32 was a Review and 33 addressed faithfulness to God and man. Lesson 34 showed us the absolute necessity of being completely and openly sincere and 35 taught us the necessity of being dependable in all things. Purity and Holiness were the topic of lesson 36 and 37 addressed Wisdom. Lesson 38 showed the importance of Enthusiasm in all that we do and 39 addressed Kindness and then Generosity in Lesson 40. Of course, to get anything done we must be available; which was addressed in Lesson 41 on Availability. Initiative was Lesson 42 and Efficient was 43.

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 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 FORTY-FOUR

Optimism

“Optimism will think the best of and be positive with people and all situations, even if later proven wrong.” (Luke 21:18; John 16:33; Romans 8:25; Romans 28) Unknown author

Luke 21:18 “But there shall not an hair of your head perish.”

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.”

Ro 8:25 “But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”

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. ”

SECULAR DEFINITIONS

optimism, hopefulness and confidence about the future or success of something

BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

OLD TESTAMENT & NEW TESTAMENT

confident, This word is not found in the Bible. However, the precept is plainly taught in both the Old and the New Testaments. The following are definitions of intimately related terms.

OT - “confident” בָּטַח *baw-takh'* - figuratively to *trust*, be *confident* or *sure*: - be bold (confident, secure, sure), careless (one, woman), put confidence, (make to) hope, (put, make to) trust.

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

“trust, hope” כָּחַס *khaw-saw'* - A primitive root; to *flee* for protection figuratively to *confide* in: - have hope, make refuge, (put) trust.

NT - “hope, trust” ἐλπίζω *el-pid'-zo* - to *expect* or *confide*: - (have, thing) hope (-d) (for), trust.

“trust” πείθω *pey'-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.

“hope, faith” ἐλπίς *el-pece'* - From ἐλπῶ which is a primary word (to *anticipate*, usually with pleasure); *expectation* (abstract or concrete) or *confidence*: - faith, hope.

A working biblical definition of Optimism: “To have faith, trust, and confidence at all times and in all matters- positive in outlook.”

I. The Origin Of Our Optimism.

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

God has given us strength, through Christ, to do all things. This, if we truly believe it, creates optimism in us. Thus, our optimism is from God.

II. The Extent Of Our Optimism

A. In what matters are we to be optimistic?

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

There is nothing I cannot do through Christ. Therefore, my optimism has no bounds concerning accomplishment of tasks. **(Also see Ro 8:38-39)**

B. Temporal extent of our optimism.

We are to be optimistic about the past, the present, and the future.

Ro 8:38-39 “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.

I cannot be separated from God's love **“which is in Christ Jesus”** and this is true of **“things present”** as well as **“things to come.”** Therefore, our optimism should know no temporal bounds. We will address the future next.

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.”

Since **“all things”** encompasses past, present, and future, then we can be optimistic that God will bring good from whatever has happened, whatever is happening, and whatever may happen to us.

III. Our Ability To Be Optimistic

A. God gives faith to everyone.

Ro 12:3 “... God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”

God has given faith to every one of us. Thus everyone has a choice concerning optimism.

B. Optimism is born in Faith.

If we exercise our faith in God's ability then that gives birth to optimism in us that all things will be as they should be. This is so because no matter what has happened to us, is happening to us, or will happen to us, it will always, in the end, work out to be the best for us.

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.”

But when I say “**the best for us**” that does not necessarily mean what **we think** is the best; but rather, the best “**according to his purpose.**”

C. Prerequisite to gaining and maintaining Optimism.

Luke 22:42 “... Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.”

In order to gain and maintain Optimism we must want God's will to be done in all things and at all times. We must yield our will to His will. When we do, then we know that “**all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.**”

When we accept His will, and want it to be, then we have His guarantee that His will, His purpose, will come about and it will bring forth good in the end. This will gender optimism in us- optimism in events, in relationships with other people, “**all things**” will come about and will give positive results. Once we accept His will then we can be optimistic about all things and the results that come about from them. We not only gain optimism but continued acceptance of His will will maintain our optimism. It all comes back to Faith in God.

Remember:

**Nothing Happens But God Brings it Or God Allows It
and
Somehow It Will Always Be The Best For Us**

But we can only gain and maintain our optimism IF we want His Will, His purpose, to be accomplished in our lives.

IV. Our Optimism Is Pleasing To God

Since optimism is born in faith then using that faith to gain and maintain our optimism is as pleasing to God as the faith in which optimism is born.

Heb 11:6 “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

SUMMARY

Faith, Trust, Hope, these are all intimately related. Some causitory, some as a result, some working in conjunction with one or more of the others, but all working together as a whole to help us gain and maintain Optimism as one of our character traits. This trait, Optimism, is one that Christ exhibited and which we also, then, must develop within us and exhibit to the world without in order to accomplish the perfect will of God toward us- which is for us to be **“conformed to the image of his Son.”**

“Rom 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.

Rom 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

But it is up to us whether we want to yield to the will of God or not. We can yield and be Optimistic or we can resist and wind up Pesimistic. The choice is, as in all other things, totally up to us. We have absolute **freedom of choice** in this matter, but, remember, we have **NO CHOICE** in the consequences. Optimism or Pesimism, to be conformed or not conformed to the image of Christ in the matter of Optimism is completely up to us.



1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this trait of Optimism?

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.

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How to score yourself:

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

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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 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 FORTY-FIVE

Diligence

REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through FORTY-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.



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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 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 FORTY-FIVE

Diligence

“Diligence allows us to operate with our best for His highest with excitement and passion in order to complete our work and call from the Lord.” (Prov. 10:4; Rom. 12:11; Colossians 3:23) Unknown author

Prov 10:4 “He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.”

Ro 12:11 “Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord”

Col 3:23 “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.”

SECULAR DEFINITIONS

diligence, *care and conscientiousness in one's work.*

BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

OLD TESTAMENT

“diligently hearken” 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.

“diligently sought” דָּרַשׁ *daw-rash'* - A primitive root; properly to *tread* or *frequent*; usually to *follow* (for pursuit or search); by implication to *seek* or *ask*; specifically to *worship*: - ask, X at all, care for, X diligently, inquire, make inquisition, [necro-]mancer, question, require, search, seek [for, out], X surely.

“(keep thy soul) diligently” מְהֵרָה *meh-ode'* - properly *vehemence*, that is, (with or without preposition) *vehemently*; by implication *wholly*, *speedily*, etc. (often with other words as an intensive or superlative; especially when repeated): - diligently, especially, exceeding (-ly), far, fast, good, great (-ly), X louder and louder, might (-ily, -y), (so) much, quickly, (so) sore, utterly, very (+ much, sore), well.

“(teach them) diligently” שָׁנַן *shaw-nan'* - A primitive root; to *point* (transitively or intransitively); intensively to *pierce*; figuratively to *inculcate*: - prick, sharp (-en), teach diligently, whet.

diligently (observe)” נָחַשׁ *naw-khash'* A primitive root; properly to *hiss*, that is,

whisper a (magic) spell; generally to *prognosticate*: - X certainly, divine, enchanter, (use) X enchantment, learn by experience, X indeed, diligently observe.

“**diligent**” חרץ חרץ *khaw-roots', khaw-roots'* - Passive participle of [H2782](#); properly *incised* or (active) *incisive*; hence (as noun masculine or feminine) a *trench* (as dug), *gold* (as mined), a *threshing sledge* (having sharp teeth); (figuratively) *determination*; also *eager*: - decision, diligent, (fine) gold, pointed things, sharp, threshing instrument, wall.

“**diligently seeketh**” שׁוֹחֵר שׁוֹחֵר *shaw-khar'* - A primitive root; properly to *dawn*, that is, (figuratively) *be* (up) *early* at any task (with the implication of earnestness); by extension to *search* for (with painstaking): - [do something] betimes, enquire early, rise (seek) betimes, seek (diligently) early, in the morning).

“**diligent**” מַהֵר מַהֵר *maw-here', maw-here'* - *quick*; hence *skilful*: - diligent, hasty, ready

“**diligence**” Heb. *mish-mawr'* - a *guard* (the man, the post, or the *prison*); figuratively a *deposit*; also (as observed) a *usage* (abstractly), or an *example* (concretely): - diligence, guard, office, prison, ward, watch.

NEW TESTAMENT

“diligently” επιμελώς *ep-ee-mel-ocē'* - *carefully*: - diligently.

“**diligently**” ακριβώς *ak-ree-boce'* - *exactly*: - circumspectly, diligently, perfect (-ly).

“**diligence**” σπουδή *spoo-day'* - “speed”, that is, (by implication) *despatch*, *eagerness*, *earnestness*: - business, (earnest) care (-fulness), diligence forwardness, haste.

“**diligence**” σπουδάζω *spoo-dad'-zo* to *use speed*, that is, to *make effort*, *be prompt* or *earnest*: - do (give) diligence, be diligent (forward), endeavour, labour, study.

“**searched diligently**” ἐξερευνάω *ex-er-yoo-nah'-o* - to *explore* (figuratively): - search diligently.

A working biblical definition of diligent: “care and conscientiousness in one's work, in all realms of life.”

I. Diligence In All Things

Col 3:23 “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.”

We are to be diligent in ALL THINGS- both physical and spiritual.

“heartily” def. *without reservation*

A. Physical diligence.

1. New Testament.

a. Diligence in all personal things.

Context: verses :17-23

We are to be diligent in ALL THINGS that we do or say.

Col 3:17 “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

b. Diligent in business.

Ro 12:11 “Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord”

2. Old Testament.

The blessings of God are promised for diligent hearkening unto His Commandments; that is, to obey them!

Deut 6:17-19 “Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee. (:18) and thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, (:19) To cast out all thine enemies from before thee, as the LORD hath spoken.”

Deut 11:13-15 “And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, (:14) That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. (:15) And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full.”

B. Spiritual diligence.

Exodus 15:26 “And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God...”

We need to be diligent in our communion with God to keep us spiritually straight. We need to not only hear him but we need to hearken to what He tells us- and diligently so.

II. The Extent Of Our Diligence

Prov 4:23 “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”

“**diligence**” Heb. *mish-mawr'* - a *guard* (the man, the post, or the *prison*); figuratively a *deposit*; also (as observed) a *usage* (abstractly), or an *example* (concretely): - diligence, guard, office, prison, ward, watch

“**heart**” *labe* - the *heart*; also used (figuratively) very widely for the feelings, the will and even the intellect

A “**person**” is defined as composed of “**emotion, intellect, and will.**” Therefore, we are to guard our entire person against error; that is, guard against sin- which is always disobedience to God and His commandments as set forth in His Word. Picture posting an armed guard at the doorway to our heart- ready to fight off any attacker against it! (“**diligence**” Heb. *mish-mawr'* - a *guard*)

B. Our diligence determines how God deals with us.

What we do and think determines what happens to us. Therefore, we are to be diligent at all times in all that we do and think.

Prov 11:27 “He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.”

**Positive actions bring positive consequences!
Negative actions bring negative consequences!**

This falls under the biblical precept of sowing and reaping.

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

Therefore we better be very diligent in what we sow because we have no control over the consequences!

III. A Warning - Evil Will Be Diligent To Seek Us Out

A. In General

I Pet 5:8 “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:”

B. Specific diligence in the evil that so easily besets men- illicit sex!

Prov 7:4-27 “Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding

thy kinswoman: (:5) That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words. (:6) For at the window of my house I looked through my casement, (:7) And beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, (:8) Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house, (:9) In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night: (:10) And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart. (:11) (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: (:12) Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.) (:13) So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, (:14) I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows. (:15) Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee. (:16) I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. (:17) I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. (:18) Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves. (:19) For the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey: (:20) He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed. (:21) With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. (:22) He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; (:23) Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life. (:24) Harken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. (:25) Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. (:26) For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. (:27) Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.”

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

Our constant diligence is necessary because evil workers will diligently seek us out! Either by the hand of the Devil and his fallen angels seeking us out or by the hand of those who are led by him to diligently seeks us out.

1. Our only protection is in submission to God;

Jas 4:7 “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

2. And walking in the spirit, not in the flesh.

Ro 5:8 “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in

Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

SUMMARY

As in all things, it is up to us. We can be diligent or we can be slack. Whether concerning personal matters, including our relationship with God, or in our relations with other people, as in business, remember, that consequences always follow on the heels of actions and thoughts.

We are also given a warning: Because evil is diligent in seeking us out, we are to be diligent in all things- both spiritual (attacks from the Devil to get us to sin) and physical (attacks from people who try to get us to sin) as well as from our own flesh that wants to be unbound and natural. Remember always that the attacks can and will be in every area of our lives.



- 1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this trait of Diligence?**
- 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 Diligence, 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 FORTY-SIX

Thoughtfulness

REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through FORTY-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 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. Lesson 29 showed us the benefits of obedience and the dangers of disobedience and Lesson 30 showed us the way of biblical encouragement. Thirty-one addressed the much neglected trait of Loyalty. Lesson 32 was a Review and 33 addressed faithfulness to God and man. Lesson 34 showed us the absolute necessity of being completely and openly sincere and 35 taught us the necessity of being dependable in all things. Purity and Holiness were the topic of lesson 36 and 37 addressed Wisdom. Lesson 38 showed the importance of Enthusiasm in all that we do and 39 addressed Kindness and then Generosity in Lesson 40. Of course, to get anything done we must be available; which was addressed in Lesson 41 on Availability. Initiative was Lesson 42 and Efficient was 43. Lesson 44 was Optimism and 45 taught us that we are to be Diligent in all that we do.

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 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 FORTY-SIX

Thoughtfulness

**“Thoughtfulness considers and gives attention and care to others and their feelings first.”
(Philippians 2:4) Unknown author**

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

SECULAR DEFINITIONS

thoughtful, thoughtfulness, thoughtful > *adjective* 1 *absorbed in or involving thought.*
2 *showing careful consideration or attention* 3 *showing regard for other people.*
-DERIVATIVES **thoughtfully** > *adverb* **thoughtfulness** > *noun*.

BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

The words **thoughtful** and **thoughtfulness** are not in the Bible. However, the precept is clearly taught there.

OLD TESTAMENT

The following scriptures will help establish the precept of being thoughtful of others in the Old Testament- meaning thoughtfulness toward both God and Man.

Exodus 23:9 “Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

Deut 24:10-13 “When thou dost lend thy brother any thing, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge. (:11) Thou shalt stand abroad, and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee. (:12) And if the man be poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge: (:13) In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee: and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the LORD thy God.”

Deut 24:14-15 “Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates: (:15) At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the LORD, and it be sin unto thee.”

Psalms 10:2 “The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.”

Psalms 10:4 “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.”

Ezek 16:49 “Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.”

Obviously thoughtlessness toward God and man is warned against and, with these mostly negative examples, God is teaching us that thoughtfulness toward both is a better way to go and acceptable with Him.

NEW TESTAMENT

“**strife**” ε’ριθεία *er-ith-i'-ah* - properly *intrigue*, that is, (by implication) *faction*: - contention (-ious), strife.

“**vainglory**” κενοδοξία *ken-od-ox-ee'-ah* - *empty glorying*, that is, *self conceit*: - vain-glory.

“**in lowliness of mind**” ταπεινοφροσύνη *tap-i-nof-ros-oo'-nay* *humiliation of mind*, that is, *modesty*: - humbleness of mind, humility (of mind), lowliness (of mind).

“**esteem**” ἀ’λλήλων *al-lay'-lone* - *one another - each other, mutual, one another, (the other), (them-, your-) selves, (selves) together*

“**other**” ἡ’γέομαι *hayg-eh'-om-ahee* - *to lead, that is, command (with official authority); figuratively to deem, that is, consider*: - *account, (be) chief, count, esteem, governor, judge, have the rule over, suppose, think.*

“**better**” ὑ’περέχω *hoop-er-ekh'-o* - *to hold oneself above, that is, (figuratively) to excel; participle (as adjective, or neuter as noun) superior, superiority*: - *better, excellency, higher, pass, supreme.*

A working biblical definition of Thoughtful: “Giving attention and care to others, both God and Man, and putting their feelings and working toward their good ahead of our own.”

I. Thoughtfulness In All Things

As in many, if not most of the character traits we have studied, thoughtfulness is to be done “heartily,” that is, without reservation, to all people in all things as if we are doing it to the Lord Himself.

Col 3:23 “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.”

We are to be thoughtful in ALL THINGS- both physical and spiritual.
 “**heartily**” def. *without reservation*

A. Thoughtfulness toward God.

We are always to be considerate, that is, thoughtful, of what God wants and work toward it above what we may want.

Psalm 10:4 “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.”

B. Thoughtfulness toward all people.

Phil 2:3-4 “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.”

(:4) Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

We are to put others and their needs first. To do this, which is against human nature which promotes “self” above “others,” it is imperative that we develop and exhibit two other character traits of Jesus, Forgiveness and Understanding.

II. Thoughtfulness Requires Forgiveness and Understanding**A. God's thoughtfulness toward man.**

It is fairly easy to be thoughtful and exhibit that in our actions toward those who have been good to us. However, to develop the trait of Thoughtfulness and exhibit it toward those who have harmed us, we need to get help from other traits that God requires we develop and use. Because Christ demands it even toward even our enemies.

Mat 5:44 “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;”

For us to obey this command from Christ, to love our enemies, requires that we exhibit thoughtfulness toward them. And to do this we need the two other traits of Forgiveness and Understanding. For those who have harmed us, we have to look past the evil that they have done to us and do good toward them, pray for them, be mindful of their needs as Christ looked beyond our sin and exhibited thoughtfulness toward us and put our needs above His own human needs. I say “His own human needs” because although He was all God He was also all human with all of the same needs and fears that we have. This is most excruciatingly taught in His plea in the garden the night before His torture and crucifixion.

Mat 26:38-39 “Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. (:39) “And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

Luke 22:42-44 “Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from

me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. (:43) And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. (:44) And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”

Obviously He was thoughtful of both our need as well as God's will and was willing to exhibit that thoughtfulness by suffering the human agony to come on the next day. (We must always be careful to not make Christ all God and nothing human; and also take equal care to not make Him all human and nothing God. His was the “hypostatic union” which is 100% God but also 100% human with the total essences of both and, thus, exhibiting all of the characteristics and needs- and yes, fears - of both.)

B. Our Thoughtfulness toward others.

In order to exhibit Thoughtfulness toward others we need to, as God did for us, look past the evil that they have done to us and seek to understand “why” they did it and then forgive them for it. Only then will we try to help them overcome the evil and pray for God to change them. I have a prayer that I used for someone, and yes, it was a Christian, that purposely did harm to me.

**God, do whatever is necessary
IN BOTH OF OUR LIVES to make us BOTH
better servants for you.**

I prayed that way because I knew we all have shortcomings, that is the “human in us,” (remember that being “human” is a reason but never is an excuse) and I did not want to pray in a such a way that I was intending for God to “get him” for the harm that he had purposely done to me. It was someone I loved and had diligently served under as Associate Pastor and administrator of the Church's Christian School for 5 years. I was trying to understand “why” he did what he did and then work my way toward “forgiveness” for what he did. I prayed that way, at first, because God said I “had to.” Then, over a period of some weeks, it became easier and I then prayed that way because I “wanted to.” At first praying several times per day feeling God said I had to; and then, several weeks later, two or three times a week whenever the person came to mind and changing to I “want to” instead of “had to.” And then, after several months I completely wanted God to do whatever was best for that person and held no more resentment for what he had done. God answered my prayer for me by changing my heart to wanting only what was best for the other person, changing my self-centered thoughts to other-centered ones. I take absolutely no credit for this, it was God alone who brought about this transformation. He took me from “have to” praying and the feelings that went with it, to “want to” praying and the development of Thoughtfulness toward that other person. I now can see that He was also teaching me that Thoughtfulness in those kinds of situations requires Understanding and Forgiveness without which we can NEVER exhibit Thoughtfulness toward those who have

harmed us. For me, I don't think there was any other way I could have learned that lesson. God allowed that experience to happen to me over 30 years ago to teach me this lesson today.

Rom 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."

What I thought was harmful then, when turned over to God, worked for good not only for me but also for you who are studying this trait of Thoughtfulness and can learn from the lesson that God taught me by allowing those things to happen in my life- now, some 30 years later.

We studied Forgiveness in an earlier lesson so I will not go into it again. But I do want you to restudy that lesson so you can be sure you are working toward developing, and exhibiting, that character trait in your life. And we will study the trait of Understanding in the next lesson so be sure you are here for that lesson because it is needed to fill out the way toward complete development of the current trait of Thoughtfulness. And, as I said, please restudy the previous lesson on Forgiveness. It is necessary for you to do both because without development of both of those other traits you will never be able to completely develop the trait of Thoughtfulness and exhibit it toward those who have harmed you and even toward those who obviously think you are their enemy and treat you accordingly, as God required of us with His command to "love your enemies."

III. How Are We To Be Thoughtful Toward Others

A. We are not to use our position of power to oppress one another.

We are to be thoughtful of the feelings and needs of those over whom we have power.

Lev 25:17 "Ye shall not therefore oppress one another..."

B. We are not to betray one another.

Mat 24:10 "And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another."

C. We are to be thoughtful of the physical needs of one another.

John 13:14 "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet."

D. We are to love one another.

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

(Also throughout the book of I John)

Christ also included love to our enemies which we have already seen requires Thoughtfulness, Understanding, and Forgiveness.

Mat 5:44 "But I say unto you, Love your enemies..." (Also John 15:12 & :17)

E. We are to be thoughtful to prefer one another.

Rom 12:10 “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;”

prefer - *to lead the way for others, that is, show deference: - prefer*

definition of “prefer”: *archaic promote to a prestigious position*

Meaning to place them above yourself in a place of prestige- to exhibit Thoughtfulness toward them- to put them first.

F. Thoughtful to not place a stumblingblock in the way of other Christians.

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

G. Thoughtful to receive one another.

Rom 15:7 “Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.”

“receive” **προσλαμβάνω** *pros-lam-ban'-o* - *to take to oneself, that is, use (food), lead (aside), admit (to friendship or hospitality): - receive, take (unto).*

Thoughtful of the needs of our brothers and sisters and meet their needs- receive as friends and show them hospitality.

H. Thoughtful to teach and admonish one another.

Remember that “teaching” goes along with “admonishing.”

Rom 15:14 “And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.”

“admonish” **νουθετέω** *noo-thet-eh'-o* - *to put in mind, that is, (by implication) to caution or reprove gently: - admonish*

We are to be thoughtful of their need for caution or gentle reproof- this admonishment is to be accomplished through the use of the Word of God and not through our own judgments of their thoughts, speech, or actions. We can also admonish one another through godly music based upon the Word of God.

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

Obviously teaching goes along with admonishing and both can be accomplished through the Word of God directly or through giving of The Word by means of godly music.

I. Thoughtful to greet one another with our customary gesture of greeting.

In the East this gesture was, and is, a kiss on the cheek; or, in some cases, a kiss on both cheeks. In our culture the greeting is with a handshake or a hug.

II Cor 13:12 “Greet one another with an holy kiss.” (See also I Cor 16:20)

J. Thoughtful to serve one another.

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

K. Thoughtful to bear one another's burdens.

Gal 6:2 “Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

L. Thoughtful to be longsuffering and to forbear one another.

Eph 4:2 “With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;”

“forbearing” ἀνέχομαι *an-ekh'-om-ahee* - to hold oneself up against, that is, (figuratively) put up with: - bear with endure, forbear, suffer.

We are literally to “put up with one another” and all of our weaknesses and affronts.

Warning: As with other character traits, we are to never allow this to go on to the point of enabling. That is why we are to exercise the “reproof” that we are to extend toward an erring brother or sister as we studied in “G.” above. Never overlook that portion of Thoughtfulness, reproof, because it will invariably lead to enabling, which is not helping but harming the brother or sister who is thereby being allowed to continue in their slide into overt sin. We are to “forebearing” them in “love.” And to enable them is not showing them “love” but rather indifference, at the least, or, at the worst, exhibiting animosity toward them. That is, wishing them descent into evil instead of edification toward the good.

M. Thoughtful to be kind, tenderhearted, and exhibit forgiveness toward a brother or sister.

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

How far is this forgiveness to go?

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

Forebearance and forgiveness is to go as far as “Christ forgave” us!

N. Thoughtful to comfort and edify (lift up) one another.

Comfort is a form of edification.

I Thess 4:18 “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

I Thess 5:11 “Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.”

O. Thoughtful enough of their needs to exhort them whenever possible.

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. (Also Heb 10:25)

Whenever we see them, even if it is daily, we are to exhort them to prevent them from being hardened to the things of God by the deceitfulness of sin. The longer they are allowed to continue in sin, the harder their hearts will become. Therefore, we are to be Thoughtful of their need and exhort them WHENEVER POSSIBLE- EVEN IF IT BE DAILY!

“**exhort**” **παρακαλέω** *par-ak-al-eh'-o* - to call near, that is, invite, invoke (by imploration, hortation or consolation): - beseech, call for, (be of good) comfort, desire, (give) exhort (-ation), intreat, pray.

A similar term is used as a name for the Holy Ghost- *para-kletos*. So in a sense you are to be a stand-in for the Holy Ghost to comfort and encourage by exhortation an erring brother or sister. Not as a replacement for the Holy Ghost, which you can never be, but as a messenger from Him and a deliverer of his power to the erring one for comfort and exhortation from the Word of God. Which is what the Holy Ghost uses for those purposes but which the erring one may not be directly receptive to because of his or her current condition. So the Holy Spirit may, and can, use you and your direct personal human connection with the erring one to help reinforce His, the Holy Spirit's, power and thereby get His message through to the erring ones heart and mind. The Holy Spirit constantly uses willing vessels in this manner to carry out His purposes toward God's people.

John 7:38 “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

This, of course, referring to the Holy Spirit flowing out of Christians who allow God to use them in this particular way.

P. Thoughtful to provoke one another to love and good works.

Heb 10:24 “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:”

IV. A Warning Concerning A Lack of Thoughtfulness

Gal 5:26 “Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.”

Gal 5:13-16 “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. (:14) For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (:15) But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. (:16) This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

A lack of Thoughtfulness toward others leads only to the destruction of both as they war against one another. Such a lack of Thoughtfulness toward others is a demonstration of the flesh, which is the antithesis of walking in the Spirit.

SUMMARY

As in all things, it is up to us. We can be Thoughtful toward others, both God and Man, or we can be self-centered and self-serving. The first leads to edification of not only others but also of oneself. The other leads to only strife and destruction. Thoughtlessness toward God causes a loss of the blessings of God and leaves us to live in this cursed world on our own. Which can only lead to strife and destruction of ourselves. Thoughtlessness toward people leads to strife and destruction of both self and those others. The only exception would be if our “neighbor” is more spiritual than we are and returns “thoughtfulness” to us in spite of our “thoughtlessness” toward them. They can then be the peacemakers, but only if we abandon the flesh and walk in the Spirit, as they obviously are doing, and receive their Thoughtfulness and allow them to be the peacemaker. Once again, it is totally up to us!



1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this trait of Thoughtfulness?
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 Thoughtfulness, 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 FORTY-SEVEN

Understanding

REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through FORTY-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. 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. Lesson 29 showed us the benefits of obedience and the dangers of disobedience and Lesson 30 showed us the way of biblical encouragement. Thirty-one addressed the much neglected trait of Loyalty. Lesson 32 was a Review and 33 addressed faithfulness to God and man. Lesson 34 showed us the absolute necessity of being completely and openly sincere and 35 taught us the necessity of being dependable in all things. Purity and Holiness were the topic of lesson 36 and 37 addressed Wisdom. Lesson 38 showed the importance of Enthusiasm in all that we do and 39 addressed Kindness and then Generosity in Lesson 40. Of course, to get anything done we must be available; which was addressed in Lesson 41 on Availability. Initiative was Lesson 42 and Efficient was 43. Lesson 44 was Optimism and 45 addressed Diligence in all that we do. Thoughtfulness toward others was 46.

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 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 FORTY-SEVEN

Understanding

“Understanding is the ability to reason and comprehend situations.” (Psalms 119:34) Unknown author

Psalm 119:34 “Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart.”

SECULAR DEFINITIONS

understand, verb (past and past part. understood) *1* perceive the intended meaning of (words, a language, or a speaker). *2* perceive the significance, explanation, or cause of. *3* interpret or view in a particular way. *4* infer from information received. *5* assume that (something) is present or is the case.

understanding, noun *1* the ability to understand something. *2* the power of abstract thought; intellect. *3* an individual's perception or judgement of a situation. *4* sympathetic awareness or tolerance. >adjective sympathetically aware of other people's feelings.

BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

OLD TESTAMENT

understand, עָמַשׁ *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

understand עָדָה *yaw-dah'* - A primitive root; to know (properly to ascertain by seeing); used in a great variety of senses, figuratively, literally, euphemistically and inferentially (including observation, care, recognition; and causatively instruction, designation, punishment, etc.):

understanding, בֵּינָה *bene* - A primitive root; to separate mentally (or distinguish), that is, (generally) understand:

understanding, תְּבוּנָה הַנְּבוּנָה הַנְּבוּנָה *taw-boon', teb-oo-naw', to-boo-naw'*

The second and third forms being feminine; from H995; intelligence; by implication an argument; by extension caprice:

NEW TESTAMENT

“understand” συνήμην *soon-ee'-ay-mee* - to put together, that is, (mentally) to

comprehend; by implication to act piously: - consider, understand, be wise.

“understand” νοιέω *noy-eh'-o* - *to exercise the mind (observe), that is, (figuratively) to comprehend, heed: - consider, perceive, think, understand.*

“understand” ἐπίσταμαι *ep-is'-tam-ahee* - *to put the mind upon, that is, comprehend, or be acquainted with: - know, understand.*

“understand” εἶδω *i'-do* - *A primary verb; used only in certain past tenses, the others being borrowed from the equivalent, G3700 and G3708; properly to see (literally or figuratively); by implication (in the perfect only) to know:*

“understanding” σύνεσις *soon'-es-is* - *a mental putting together, that is, intelligence or (concretely) the intellect: - knowledge, understanding.*

“understanding” παρακολουθέω *par-ak-ol-oo-theh'-o* - *to follow near, that is, (figuratively) attend (as a result), trace out, conform to: - attain, follow, fully know, have understanding.*

“understanding” νοῦς *nooce* - *the intellect, that is, mind (divine or human; in thought, feeling, or will); by implication meaning: - mind, understanding.*

“not understand”

“not” οὐ *oo* - *a primary word; the absolutely negative*

also οὐκ *ook*, and οὐχ *ookh*

“understand” γινώσκω *ghin-ohs'-ko* - *A prolonged form of a primary verb; to “know” (absolutely), in a great variety of applications and with many implications (as shown at left, with others not thus clearly expressed): - allow, be aware (of), feel, (have) known (-ledge), perceive, be resolved, can speak, be sure, understand.*

“undersandeth” ἀκούω *ak-oo'-o* - *A primary verb; to hear (in various senses): - give (in the) audience (of), come (to the ears), ([shall]) hear (-er, -ken), be noised, be reported, understand.*

“without understanding” ἀσύνετος *as-oon'-ay-tos* - *unintelligent; by implication wicked: - foolish, without understanding.*

A working biblical definition of Understanding: “The ability to intelligently and purposefully comprehend or relate to people, things, and situations; while utilizing both reason and attentiveness.”

I. Understanding In Two Directions

A. Toward things, including precepts and situations.

The general idea of this kind of understanding is more of a mental comprehension, of truth and/or content.

1. Understanding toward the Law and its precepts.

Psalm 119:34 “Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart.”

“**understanding**” Heb *bene* - *A primitive root; to separate mentally (or distinguish), that is, (generally) understand:*

“**keep**” Heb *naw-tsar'* - *A primitive root; to guard, in a good sense (to protect, maintain, obey, etc.)*

“**law**” Heb *to-raw'* - *a precept or statute, especially the Decalogue or Pentateuch:*

“**observe**” Heb *shaw-mar'* - *A primitive root; properly to hedge about (as with thorns), that is, guard; generally to protect, attend to, etc.*

Here the Psalmist is asking for God to give him an **understanding** of the Torah and the precepts it teaches. And this understanding he is asking for is not a surface understanding but one which will enable him to distinguish the Torah's meaning in a complete and in-depth manner. He then goes on to promise to guard and obey it, (“**keep**” and “**observe it**”) and to do so with his “**whole heart.**” This “**understand,**” as I said, is obviously more of a mental comprehension of truth and/or content.

2. Understanding toward things.

In the following verse, “**understanding**” has the meaning of intelligence and skill to make or do something.

Ex 36:1 “Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the LORD put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded.”

“**wise (hearted)**” Heb *khaw-kawm'* - *wise, (that is, intelligent, skillful or artful)*

“**wisdom**” Heb *khok-maw'* - *wisdom (in a good sense): - skillful, wisdom*

“**understanding**” Heb *taw-boon'* - *intelligence;*

In this passage the word **understanding** concerns the intelligence and skilfulness to craft/make/build the various articles for use in the Sanctuary of Jehovah. Again, this is more than just a surface understanding. It carries the connotation of a depth of understanding/skill necessary to make articles of service **exactly** according to the specifications set down by God. This kind of understanding demands intelligence, including reason and attentiveness, in order to translate verbal instructions into physical constructs and to do so with demanding accuracy.

3. Understanding toward situations.

Ecc 3:22 “Wherefore I perceive that *there is* nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that *is* his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?”

Act 17:22 “Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, *Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.*”

“**perceive**” means to Understand or Discern; i.e., to “**see**” the truth of this situation.

B. Understanding toward people.

The general idea of this kind of **understanding** is emotional perception rather than a mere mental apprehension or comprehension.

In the last study, Thoughtfulness, we found that in order to exercise that particular trait toward people it was necessary to develop two other traits: Forgiveness and Understanding. We have already studied Forgiveness in Lesson 23 so we will now address the second necessary trait, Understanding, in this current lesson. We will examine how Understanding relates to Thoughtfulness and why it is necessary to have Understanding in order to fully show the trait of Thoughtfulness toward people. We will also see how all three character traits, Forgiveness, Thoughtfulness and Understanding, work together and are necessary complements of one another.

1. The relationship between Understanding and Thoughtfulness.

The way of Understanding and Thoughtfulness toward other people is synopsised in the following scripture.

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

- a.** In order to be Thoughtful toward others we must put them and their needs first. To do this, which is against human nature which promotes “self” above “others,” it is imperative that we develop and exhibit two other character traits of Jesus; Forgiveness and Understanding.
- b.** **To be Thoughtful we need to Understand the person we are trying to be thoughtful toward.**

Verse :4 tells us we are to consider the other person- we need to Understand them. **What** are their needs (:3)? **Why** do they do what they do (:4)? To properly be Thoughtful toward them we have to Understand the **what** and the **why** so we can decide **how** we can best meet their needs. And remember, meeting their needs is commanded of us according to verse :3.

2. The interrelationship between Understanding, Forgiveness, and Thoughtfulness.

Mat 18:21-35 “Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my

brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? (:22) Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. (:23) Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. (:24) And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. (:25) But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. (:26) The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. (:27) Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. (:28) But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. (:29) And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. (:30) And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. (:31) So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. (:32) Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: (:33) Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? (:34) And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. (:35) So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.”

The interrelationship between Understanding, Thoughtfulness, and Forgiveness is shown in this passage: The king showed Compassion toward his servant that could not pay his debt. He was Thoughtful toward him; showed Understanding of the servant's plight; and extended Forgiveness to him. However, the servant did not do likewise toward another who owed him a debt. The king would not condone such a lack on the part of the servant; who subsequently had to suffer the negative consequences of his own negative actions.

3. A Warning concerning a lack of Thoughtfulness and Understanding and the expression of that lack as Unforgiveness.

(:35) So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.”

“hearts” GK καρδία *kar-dee'-ah* - Prolonged from a primary *κάρ* *kar* (Latin *cor*, “heart”); the heart, that is, (figuratively) the **thoughts or feelings** (*mind*); also (by analogy) the middle: - (+ broken-) heart (-ed).

Obviously this is not just a superficial “from the mouth” act that God requires of us but rather a sincere forgiveness based in our **thoughts** and **feelings**. Thoughtfulness and Understanding are implicit in this type of true Forgiveness.

We see this again in the Lord's Model Prayer:

Mt 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as (in the same manner that) we forgive our debtors.

4. Our Understanding, Thoughtfulness, and Forgiveness is to extend even to those who offend us; and even if they do so repeatedly.

Luke 17:3-4 “Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. (:4) And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.”

God has commanded us to forgive- or we will not be forgiven. (We are not talking about Salvation but about trespasses/offenses we commit day by day and suffering or not suffering the consequences of them.) Again, this Forgiveness is an act involving both Thoughtfulness and Understanding.

The example in Matthew and this extreme example in Luke, a brother (a fellow Christian) that offends us often, shows that we have to add Forgiveness to our Thoughtfulness and Understanding. The Thoughtfulness causes us to want to help him and Understanding is necessary in order for us to know how to biblically rebuke him. Then we must add forgiveness (which is not condoning) in order to fulfill the command we find in those passages in **Matthew** and **Luke** and in other scriptures such as **Gal 6:1**.

II. Understanding Toward Others and Toward Ourselves.

Gal 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.”

A. Understanding toward Others.

In order to “**restore**” others we have to be Thoughtful toward them and seek an Understanding concerning the **what** and the **why** of their situation. They are “**only human,**” which is **why** they sinned; but remember, being “**only human**” is the **reason** we sin; but it is never an **excuse**! Therefore, if we Understand that there is no excuse for sin, then we will not condone their sin. To do so would leave them in it (and sin always goes deeper and deeper) which will not help them but only cause them harm. Instead, we are to be Thoughtful toward them, Understand the **what** and **why** of their situation, and seek to restore them; which is their need at this time. And, once again, Forgiveness also must come into play here.

B. Understanding toward Ourselves.

Gal 6:1 “... considering thyself...”

Because of the **what** and **why** of ourselves, essentially the fact that we also are **“only human,”** we must never neglect to be Understanding of our own selves- of our needs and our weaknesses and our susceptibility to temptations. If we are, then we will be armed against our tendencies toward sin and susceptibility to it.

Rom 13:11-14 “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. (:12) The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. (:13) Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. (:14) But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

And to follow this piece of scripture and **“make not provision for the flesh”** takes:

- 1) Thoughtfulness toward ourselves; 2) Understanding of our own needs and susceptibilities;
- 3) utilizing Reason and Attentiveness; and 4) be ready, as Christ was and is toward us, to extend Forgiveness to ourselves for past and future failures. Only then will we be able, day by day, to follow the admonitions found in this passage- **“knowing ... awake... cast off... put on... walk honestly... not in... but put ye on the Lord... and make not provision for the flesh...”**

SUMMARY

As in all things, it is up to us! Understanding is a trait that is not only required because God teaches us to be that way but it also is beneficial to us in several other ways.

1. To help us develop and use other Christ-like traits; such as Thoughtfulness and Forgiveness.
2. To help us in our relationships with other people.
3. To help us discern the truth and meaning of various situations, which enables us to properly function, that is, act or react, in those situations toward both God and Man.
4. And we are warned to be Understanding of our own needs and weaknesses utilizing Thoughtfulness and Forgiveness- with Reason and Attentiveness.



1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this trait of Understanding?
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.

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How to score yourself:

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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 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 FORTY-EIGHT

Attentiveness

REVIEW of LESSONS ONE through FORTY-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.



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SELF-EXAMINATION

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

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

If we have struggled with the last character trait 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 FORTY-EIGHT

Attentiveness

“Attentiveness will recognize the value of other people by giving them listening ears, respect, courtesy, and total concentration. This means paying attention to others, not just listening to our own needs and desires, and also giving genuine contemplation to God's Word.” (Hebrews 2:1)
Unknown author

Heb 2:1 “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.”

SECULAR DEFINITIONS

attentive, *adjective* 1 paying close attention. 2 considerably attending to the comfort or wishes of others.

attentiveness, *noun* form of attentive

BIBLE DEFINITIONS:

OLD TESTAMENT

attent, **קָשַׁב** **קָשַׁב** *kash-shawb', kash-shoob'* - *hearkening*: - attent (-ive).

attentively, **עֲמַח** *shaw-mah'* - A primitive root; to *hear* intelligently (often with implication of attention, obedience, etc.; causatively to *tell*, etc.):

attend, **קָשַׁב** *kaw-shab'* - A primitive root; to *prick up* the ears, that is, *hearken*: - attend, (cause to) hear (-ken), give heed, incline, mark (well), regard.

NEW TESTAMENT

attentive, **ἐξεκρεματο** from **ἐκκρέμαμαι** *ek-krem'-am-ahee* - to *hang upon* the lips of a speaker, that is, *listen closely*: - be very attentive.

attended, **προσεχω** *pros-ekh'-o* - (figuratively) to *hold* the mind ([G3563](#) implied) *towards*, that is, *pay attention to*, *be cautious about*, *apply oneself to*, *adhere to*

attending continually, **προσκαρτερω** *pros-kar-ter-eh'-o* - to *be earnest towards*, that is, (to a thing) to *persevere*, *be constantly diligent*, or (in a place) to *attend assiduously* all the exercises, or (to a person) to *adhere closely to* (as a servitor)

A working biblical definition of Attentiveness: “+++++++”

I. God Is Attentive To Us

A. ++++++++.

II Chron 6:40 “Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.”

II Chron 7:15 “Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.”

II. Attentive To Our Parents

Prov 4:1 “Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.”

Prov 4:20 “My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.

Prov 5:1 “My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding:”

Prov 7:24 “Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth.”

+++++

B. Understanding toward people.

The general idea of this kind of **understanding** is emotional perception rather than a mere mental apprehension or comprehension.

In the last study, Thoughtfulness, we found that in order to exercise that particular trait toward people it was necessary to develop two other traits: Forgiveness and Understanding. We have already studied Forgiveness in Lesson 23 so we will now address the second necessary trait, Understanding, in this current lesson. We will examine how Understanding relates to Thoughtfulness and why it is necessary to have Understanding in order to fully show the trait of Thoughtfulness toward people. We will also see how all three character traits, Forgiveness, Thoughtfulness and Understanding, work together and are necessary complements of one another.

1. The relationship between Understanding and Thoughtfulness.

The way of Understanding and Thoughtfulness toward other people is synopsised in the following scripture.

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

a. In order to be Thoughtful toward others we must put them and their needs first. To do this, which is against human nature which promotes “self” above “others,” it is imperative that we develop and exhibit two other character traits of Jesus; Forgiveness and Understanding.

b. **To be Thoughtful we need to Understand the person we are trying to be thoughtful toward.**

Understand Verse :4 tells us we are to consider the other person- we need to them. **What** are their needs (:3)? **Why** do they do what they do (:4)? To properly be Thoughtful toward them we have to Understand the **what** and the **why** so we can decide **how** we can best meet their needs. And remember, meeting their needs is commanded of us according to verse :3.

2. The interrelationship between Understanding, Forgiveness, and Thoughtfulness.

Mat 18:21-35 “Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? (:22) Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. (:23) Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. (:24) And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. (:25) But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. (:26) The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. (:27) Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. (:28) But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. (:29) And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. (:30) And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. (:31) So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. (:32) Then his lord,

after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: (:33) Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? (:34) And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. (:35) So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.”

The interrelationship between Understanding, Thoughtfulness, and Forgiveness is shown in this passage: The king showed Compassion toward his servant that could not pay his debt. He was Thoughtful toward him; showed Understanding of the servant's plight; and extended Forgiveness to him. However, the servant did not do likewise toward another who owed him a debt. The king would not condone such a lack on the part of the servant; who sub-sequently had to suffer the negative consequences of his own negative actions.

3. A Warning concerning a lack of Thoughtfulness and Understanding and the expression of that lack as Unforgiveness.

(:35) So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.”

“hearts” GK καρδία *kar-dee'-ah* - Prolonged from a primary *κάρ* *kar* (Latin *cor*, “heart”); the heart, that is, (figuratively) the thoughts or feelings (*mind*); also (by analogy) the middle: - (+ broken-) heart (-ed).

Obviously this is not just a superficial “from the mouth” act that God requires of us but rather a sincere forgiveness based in our **thoughts** and **feelings**. Thoughtfulness and Understanding are implicit in this type of true Forgiveness.

We see this again in the Lord's Model Prayer:

Mt 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as (in the same manner that) we forgive our debtors.

4. Our Understanding, Thoughtfulness, and Forgiveness is to extend even to those who offend us; and even if they do so repeatedly.

Luke 17:3-4 “Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. (:4) And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.”

God has commanded us to forgive- or we will not be forgiven. (We are not talking about Salvation but about trespasses/offenses we commit day by

day and suffering or not suffering the consequences of them.) Again, this Forgiveness is an act involving both Thoughtfulness and Understanding.

The example in Matthew and this extreme example in Luke, a brother (a fellow Christian) that offends us often, shows that we have to add Forgiveness to our Thoughtfulness and Understanding. The Thoughtfulness causes us to want to help him and Understanding is necessary in order for us to know how to biblically rebuke him. Then we must add forgiveness (which is not condoning) in order to fulfill the command we find in those passages in **Matthew** and **Luke** and in other scriptures such as **Gal 6:1**.

II. Understanding Toward Others and Toward Ourselves.

Gal 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.”

A. Understanding toward Others.

In order to “**restore**” others we have to be Thoughtful toward them and seek an Understanding concerning the **what** and the **why** of their situation. They are “**only human**,” which is **why** they sinned; but remember, being “**only human**” is the **reason** we sin; but it is never an **excuse**! Therefore, if we Understand that there is no excuse for sin, then we will not condone their sin. To do so would leave them in it (and sin always goes deeper and deeper) which will not help them but only cause them harm. Instead, we are to be Thoughtful toward them, Understand the **what** and **why** of their situation, and seek to restore them; which is their need at this time. And, once again, Forgiveness also must come into play here.

B. Understanding toward Ourselves.

Gal 6:1 “... considering thyself...”

Because of the **what** and **why** of ourselves, essentially the fact that we also are “**only human**,” we must never neglect to be Understanding of our own selves- of our needs and our weaknesses and our susceptibility to temptations. If we are, then we will be armed against our tendencies toward sin and susceptibility to it.

Rom 13:11-14 “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. (:12) The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. (:13) Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. (:14) But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

And to follow this piece of scripture and “**make not provision for the flesh**” takes:

1) Thoughtfulness toward ourselves; 2) Understanding of our own needs and susceptibilities; 3) utilizing Reason and Attentiveness; and 4) be ready, as Christ was and is toward us, to extend Forgiveness to ourselves for past and future failures. Only then will we be able, day by day, to follow the admonitions found in this passage- **“knowing ... awake... cast off... put on... walk honestly... not in... but put ye on the Lord... and make not provision for the flesh...”**

SUMMARY

As in all things, it is up to us! Understanding is a trait that is not only required because God teaches us to be that way but it also is beneficial to us in several other ways.

1. To help us develop and use other Christ-like traits; such as Thoughtfulness and Forgiveness.
2. To help us in our relationships with other people.
3. To help us discern the truth and meaning of various situations, which enables us to properly function, that is, act or react, in those situations toward both God and Man.
4. And we are warned to be Understanding of our own needs and weaknesses utilizing Thoughtfulness and Forgiveness- with Reason and Attentiveness.



1. How do you feel about yourself concerning this trait of Understanding?
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 Understanding, 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